

TOP MANAGEMENT'S ROLE IN MANAGING CHANGE: A CASE OF FAILURE

Edwina Ann Hollings

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Abstract

Underlying the dominant rational-logical approach to management is the assumption that the top management team is an incontrovertible prescription. The view that the top management team acts as both a unified and unifying body pursuing organizational goals for the collective good of the organization, is a key tenet within the managerialist literature on change. The critical examination of the role and importance of the top management team, focusing on the introduction of Total Quality Management (TQM), provides the basis for the challenge to the assumption that the notion of the top management team is unproblematic. The research undertaken is based on a case-study of a manufacturing organization that engaged in the introduction of a TQM initiative in the 1990s and focuses on the actions and behaviours of senior managers as the programme of change proved to be unsuccessful. The dissertation examines key ideas within the literature on change and, more specifically, explores the role of senior management in introducing TQM as identified by the contemporary literature of the time. The dominant literature presents the role of senior management and its commitment as essentials requirements. As such, the dissertation reviews the literature on senior management teams and the centrality of the debate that suggests the unified characteristics of team-working is an unchallenged predetermination of top managers in action. The analysis of interviews with significant individuals and groups over the change period, through the application of techniques associated with hermeneutic phenomenology, lead to a justification for challenging the dominant managerialist ideology of how managers manage and lead. The research presents evidence from the case that identifies that team-working at the top of the organization is not the reality of these senior managers and that the implicit assumption of senior management commitment is also flawed.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The subject of organizational change is a central theme for management. Those who make key decisions in organizations to achieve competitive advantage by differentiating their organizations in a more successful way than their competitors are experiencing increasing pressure to manage change effectively. The notion of competition is no longer a feature of the private sector and the rise of the importance of league tables and reduced funding in the public has forced all organizations to consider how they can become more successful.

This dissertation examines the importance and impact of senior management commitment in an organizational change situation. The argument will be made that it is the lack of senior management unity that is the barrier to successful change and not commitment. The managerialist literature places a significant emphasis on the commitment of the senior management team as a major constituent of successful organizational change and as the dominant discourse on organizational change, this literature is influential (Grieves, 2010) but tends to present ideas as non-contestable debates. This dissertation seeks to explore the robustness of that claim by examining the consequences of senior management team commitment using a case of failure to introduce a strategic change initiative. The dissertation then presents a challenge to the dominant discourse by exploring whether the literature is flawed in assuming that senior management team commitment is unproblematic and inevitable, thereby suggesting that the team behaviour of a senior management cannot be assumed. Senior management commitment appears as a self-evident prescription which has been largely unchallenged and there are two problems with this unquestioned view (Lamsa and Savolainen, 2000). Firstly there is a question of commitment and can its self-evidence be assumed and secondly, the self-evident prescription that senior management is a unified and unifying team will be the challenged.

The dissertation will review the management of change literature but in particular the attention that is given to senior management in the change process. The chapter on change will progress to focus on the introduction of Total Quality Management

(TQM) which was a dominant approach to achieving organisational differentiation during the 1990s. This review will explore the debates and discussions about TQM that were prevalent during the 1990s and the implications for the management of change that emerged as the literature on TQM developed. The literature review then focuses on a consideration of the literature on teams and particularly senior management teams. As the literature review will demonstrate, whereas the first focus on organizational change and its management is faced with an abundance of literature, the opposite is the case of the literature on senior management teams.

The research approach undertaken follows the interpretive paradigm and is based on an epistemology of idealism which views knowledge as being developed through social construction. The goal of the research was to understand the human phenomenon of commitment and the consequences of commitment on the experiences of others. There are a variety of research approaches that are encompassed within this paradigm and the approach chosen for this research was hermeneutic phenomenology, which reflects the work of Heidegger (1962) and Van Maanen(1979) in which understanding emerges from explication and uncovering of rich texts shaped by the prior understanding and experiences of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Whilst the above applies to the research approach undertaken for this dissertation, the analysis is based upon empirical work that was undertaken for a different research programme. What follows is an explanation of what occurred and how the empirical work has been re-visited and analysed to address the 'new' research questions.

This research commenced in 1993 and was originally intended to examine the question: "TQM – what's in it for the workers?" This question was posed at a time when TQM appeared to be one of the foremost managerial preferences for organizational change and development, providing management teams with a means to gain competitive advantage. Success might have been achieved through the application of sensitive TQM techniques and not only might competitive advantage have been achieved, but the workforce also benefited from being empowered. As Oakland states 'We cannot avoid seeing how quality has developed into the most important competitive weapon, and many organisations

have realised that TQM is the way of managing for the future' (Oakland, 1993: preface)

The dominant view in the TQM literature was that employees at all levels could be won over by exposure to leadership, training and providing recognition. The belief was that involvement in continuous improvement activities would generate job satisfaction. The rhetoric espoused the notion of mutuality as a job done well by a committed, goal-directed worker would be reciprocated by the TQM organisation meeting worker needs for job satisfaction and self actualisation (Wilkinson et al, 1998). Whilst a universal and consistent definition of empowerment was not available, many interpretations were, and these seemed to incorporate ideas of employee responsibility, placing power in the hands of those who needed it most to get the job done, and creating the circumstances in which all employees could share in the pursuit of the common goal. (Clutterbuck and Kermaghan, 1995).

The approach was of a seamless unitarism based on cooperation, commitment and change. It appeared from the dominant writing that everyone in the organisation stood to benefit from the application of TQM. The popularity of TQM was based in what has been called Guru Theory which, is underpinned by five beliefs of which one proposes that an organisation can be effectively co-ordinated through its value system and culture, rather than through rules and commands. The label encompasses a disparate set of prescriptive approaches, made palatable by their apparent pragmatism, and incorporating the importance of innovation, more teamwork, more empowerment of the individual, more employee participation, fewer levels of hierarchy, and less bureaucratisation (Huczynski, 1996: 35-36).

TQM provided a system-wide programme of change that not only impacted on people as individuals and in groups, but also affected technology and operation, work organisation and design, inventory control, financing, and reward systems and performance assessment. The degree of structuralization is deep and the expectation is that the ideas and techniques become firmly established, if not permanently, within the organisation structure and processes. The attraction of TQM and its universal acceptance was about its marketing and branding as well as its applicability as a managerial tool to secure organization success. Those promoting

its importance could be described as 'social science entrepreneurs' (Watson 1980) and charged with the same comment as those purists criticising the work of earlier management gurus:

"Their work is designed to sell, whether in the form of books, management seminars, training films or consultancies.....their work is reductionist, partial, evangelistic and sociologically highly inadequate on the explanatory level with its underplaying of structural, situational, cultural and economic factors. It is ultimately simplistic by a judicious mixing of simplistic assumptions and pseudoscientific jargon it has made itself highly marketable."

(Watson 1980:38)

It was within this fervour surrounding TQM that the author posed the research question, not reflecting on the impact of TQM on the organisation as a whole, but on why individual workers should commit themselves to something that was essentially about management gain. It seemed that there was a paradox that the literature did not address, that whilst the organisation as a whole might gain from the introduction and application of TQM, there was a considerable price to pay for the individual employee. The author was less convinced by the rhetoric surrounding TQM in terms of individual gain, believing that individual employees were somehow 'short-changed'. It was these concerns that led to the design of a research project to establish what TQM provided for individual workers.

The research was conducted in one organisation that had established a programme for the introduction of TQM, that organisation thus constituted the case-study. The research was essentially phenomenological with the emphasis being on exploring what employees felt about what they were experiencing and how they interpreted their experiences against their expectations and past meanings of their surroundings and circumstances. Inevitably, the research would also lead to explanations of why particular behavioural consequences emerged.

The Organisation

TRC is a major design and manufacturer of protection and control systems for electrical transmission and distribution networks. It is part of a bigger division of a

dual-country owned major employer. The Division is supported throughout the world by more than 60 industrial and commercial units employing more than 14,000 and has a turnover in excess of 1,500M ECU. The British unit of TRC is located in a small county town in the North Midlands It was originally established in 1968 to take account of the long established protection relay business of the parent company, a highly regarded and dominant organisation in global activity. The unit still enjoys a dominant position in many of the world's markets, a position not shared by several other units in the Division which have seen their markets diminish. In 1991 its name was changed to its current title to reflect the new European partner ownership, a significant and major change for the Company which had, until then, been one of the largest organisations under private single ownership. The unit's European counterpart is based in France on a dual site and its history dates back over 50 years.

There were three main areas of activity of TRC covering 'Protection and Auxiliary Relays' for power system plant, transmission and distribution networks and industrial and marine power systems. The range includes voltage, current, power, frequency, distance, differential, time delay, tripping and auto-reclose relays. 'System Monitoring and Control', which is based in one of the French units and is a result of the specialist knowledge that the unit has amassed on power networks. The factory has designed and perfected a total package of equipment for the monitoring and control of such systems. 'Instruments and Measuring Equipment', which is based at the U.K. unit and specialises in the manufacture of indicating instruments, electrical transducers firstly and panel accessories, together with other specialist products, such as capacitor controllers and chart recorders.

TRC prides itself on its international reputation, and provides a number of client-centred services to ensure its reputation and market position remain dominant within the industry. The claims it makes in support of client responsiveness are 'Research and Development' and the group continuously analyses the needs of its customers enabling it to design and perfect products best suited to the specifications of international markets. The product range embraces both conventional (analogue) and digital technology, although future research is to concentrate on the latter. Developments are also to encompass the concept of the integrated system as well

as the traditional stand-alone products. Secondly, 'Applications Expertise' and all units provide applications teams which are at the disposal of customers to match their requirements to the specific features of the product range. Using various state-of-the-art techniques, the applications teams can replicate all known faults to ensure the correct match of protection relays to system requirements. Thirdly 'Training' and the Group is renowned throughout the world for the quality of its customer training courses which vary from annual sessions to several weeks of general theory and practical work on protection and control systems, to dedicated programmes on specific products. Fourthly, 'Quality Assurance' and the Group has always attempted to manufacture equipment which meets or exceeds the highest industry standards. In response to these standards becoming ever more stringent, the Group has implemented a total quality approach to ensure the excellence of its products. Fifth, 'After Sales Service' an area of emphasis since the reliability of power systems world-wide is becoming increasingly vital, a rapid and effective response to potential problems is essential. The Group's after-sales service teams are capable of meeting every known need including on-site commissioning, the supply of components and all stages of maintenance. Finally, 'Commercial Establishment' which provides a network of representatives, agents and manufacturing capability in more than 120 countries exists to ensure that the lines of communication between the Group and its customers are as short as possible.

In 1991, the British unit of TRC embarked on a programme of change which incorporated the philosophy of Total Quality Management.

Objectives and Methodology

The research took place over four years thus constituting a longitudinal case-study. The author was supported throughout by the TQM co-ordinator and was given access to employees at all levels of the organisation. The research involvement over the extended time period supports the view that introducing TQM is not a 'quick fix' solution to organisational problems, there is no hope of instant puddings (Logothetis, 1992; Marchington, 1995) and that time is an essential factor in securing success. However, on reflection, the length of time required to recognise the extent of change may have played a part in the definite failure of the introduction of TQM in

the host organisation. Far from viewing four years as a 'good start' it appeared that four years was 'too slow' for many of the senior managers who were looking for significant and measurable results and the questions about the support of the senior management team and their continued commitment to the change programme were emerging. The implementation of TQM in its original form was halted and this coincided with the retirement of the TQM co-ordinator. The primary research also stopped as it was apparent that an investigation into worker experience of TQM was seriously compromised by the direction that the new key players in charge of change were intending to pursue.

Throughout the research activity the author tried to ensure that those being interviewed were allowed to express their experiences in their own words, using their own interpretations and subjectivities. The popular managerial literature was very supportive of the wisdom of introducing TQM and the author did not want to bias the respondents in favour of any particular view or claim. As such, the author chose to construct a series of unstructured interviews based on general ideas on TQM that were informed by the literature but not specifically related to any particular accepted TQM 'guru'. Following the idea of Glazer and Strauss (1967) the research was designed to provide the opportunity for the development of the 'theory' that was grounded in the data that had been systematically gathered and analysed. The aim was to let the worker experience of TQM emerge and lead to (hopefully) a shared/collective view of what the worker felt s/he had gained from being exposed to the new management approach.

After the primary research activity was halted the research provided only limited insight into worker experience of TQM. This is not because the research approach was necessarily inappropriate. The problem lay with the host organisation that, after six years stopped the TQM project and as the worker experience itself was differential, there was a need to continue to monitor and review the process of implementation of the ideas and practices of TQM. As far as the original research objective is concerned the research was inconclusive not because TQM does not provide workers with a better work experience or otherwise, but because, in this case, TQM was never allowed to succeed. What does emerge from the research, after reflection and reinterpretation of the data, is a study of the interpersonal

interactions of the significant players in the programme of change. It is clear that the introduction of TQM was stopped and as such, the failure of the change was deliberate and engineered by a decision of the senior management team to bring in another change co-ordinator who was more empathetic to a different approach. However, rather than conclude that the failure was an act of deliberate sabotage of the TQM approach, the opportunity to re-visit the data and re-interpret it through narrative research has provided a method which has enabled a more satisfying and confident interpretation of the events.

The focus of the research has moved from the workers' experiences of TQM to that of the role of senior management in the implementation and sustainability of organizational change with a focus on TQM and its subsequent demise. Upper management support is seen as an essential component of strategic change (Howell and Higgins, 1990; Markham, 2000; Doyle, 2002; Drucker, 2003; Chrusciel, 2007) Quality management and the application of TQM principles and practices addresses a fundamental management objective, what must be done and how (Kotter, 1982) in order to achieve organisational goals and secure business improvement and success. Implementing TQM is a strategic change process and the role of senior management is seen as paramount, crucial and indispensable (Crosby, 1979; Deming, 1982; Feigenbaum, 1986; Juran and Gyra, 1988, Lascelles and Dale, 1990). The quality gurus make management commitment to the change preeminent and essential and regard it as a crucial requirement for success. Commitment to change is a prescription that is unchallenged and assumed of top management as part of their strategic portfolio. The traditional discourse on commitment saw it as unidimensional aimed at securing behaviour supportive to the achievement of organisational goals, a view challenged by Lamsa and Savolainen (2000) but their view is a minority voice within the mainstream managerial literature.

Following the re-visiting of the research data in light of the interest that is given to leadership and leadership development, it was decided that the empirical data provided an opportunity to explore the impact of senior management behaviour on change programmes that failed to achieve their objectives. The interviews, in particular, presented a rich commentary on change, TQM and the interplay between

key senior managers during change and their impact on shaping the experiences of workers.

The research objectives are threefold;

1. To explore, examine and understand the impact of the senior management's commitment to the introduction of TQM within a manufacturing environment undertaking strategic change.
2. To explore and ascertain whether the attributes of teamworking can be assumed to be self-evident from an examination of the impact of interpersonal relationships between senior managers on the senior management team.
3. To critically examine the dominant managerialist discourse on change and change management with a particular focus on senior management team behaviour and commitment.

Re-visiting Data

The empirical data was completed in 1997 and whilst it was always the intention of the author to analyse the data and complete the research process, family commitments and pressures and then changes in workplace demands and constraints made it impossible to finish the work. However, as time has progressed the value of the original empirical data has been re-assessed in conjunction with contemporary organizational debates and it is contended that the data has validity. A more detailed discussion of the validity of using 'old' data is given in the research methodology chapter.

Ethical Considerations

The initial empirical research was conducted over 15 years ago and complied with the ethics procedures in place at the time. The researcher undertook to ensure that anonymity was a priority and the name of the company has been changed and the participants are referred by either their job title or by another first-name. All recordings of interviews and field notes, company documents and artefacts were

kept in a secure cabinet and access was controlled by the researcher. During the research the participants had access to the researcher and could change, add to or delete any comments that they made. No-one took up the opportunity to change any statements made. Although some of the participants are still in employment at TRC and several have been promoted to more senior positions, several are retired or no longer living. There has been no contact with the company since the original research was completed. As such there has been no attempt to verify the research findings with any of the participants. All the comments made were freely given and there was no evidence of any participant engaging in the research process through coercion or under duress. However, it is contended that the re-visiting of the data does address the significant ethical consideration of non-completion of the original research, and given the time and support of all the participants in the study, completion represents procedural justice in relation to those who were involved.

The Structure of the Dissertation

The chapter following this introduction will review the literature on change and change management with particular reference to the ideas and models of change that were pertinent in the 1990s. There will also be a focus on the literature on the introduction of TQM and the debates that were emerging about TQM as a strategic change process and the role of senior management as a central component of achieving the change to TQM. The next chapter addresses the literature on teams and particularly the literature that is pertinent to top management teams. Within this chapter some attention is given to the involvement of senior managers in strategic decision-making in recognition of the strategic nature of TQM and the decision process that supports such a change and the implied commitment to those strategic decisions. These chapters reviewing the literature central to this research are followed by the chapter explaining the research methodology which follows the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology which reflects the characteristics that the focus is on the intentional acts of individuals and that they are interpretative. The main source of data for the research is the interviews that took place in 1994 and 1997. The transcripts of the interviews are included in the appendix. The research methodology is followed by the chapter on analysis of the empirical evidence, the

findings and discussion in relation to the research objective and finishes with the implications of the research and potential avenues for further research.

Following the analysis of the transcripts in relation to the research objectives, the research concludes that the assumption presented by the dominant managerialist literature that senior management commitment to strategic change is an unquestioned prescription should be challenged. Furthermore, the assumption that the senior management is a unified and unifying entity should also be challenged. The research uncovers that the behaviour of individual senior managers on the senior management team do not demonstrate those commensurate with effective team-working. These behaviours can be so idiosyncratic, that the notion of a senior management team is far from unproblematic with inevitable consequences on the actions and activities of those lower down the organization, often to the detriment of organizational change goals.

Chapter 2

Managing Organisational Change

Introduction

Organisational change is one of the perennial issues for organisations and management (Senior and Swailles, 2010). Despite the universality of the topic, the literature is engulfed with a wide variety of approaches to analysing what constitutes organisational change and, perhaps, more importantly, how to manage change (By, 2005). Few can doubt the importance of being able to identify where an organisation needs to be in the future and how best to accomplish the changes needed to get there (Burnes, 1996). The importance of change at both the strategic and operational level has meant that its management has become a highly valued management skill (Senior, 2002, By, 2005) and during the 1980s and 1990s there was a significant emphasis on how change could be managed (Kotter, 1996). Although some studies have emerged that acknowledge the problems of fully controlling and anticipating an organisation change process (see for example Christensen and Overdorf, 2000; McKinley and Scherer, 2000) the literature remains largely rationalistic and managerial in its perspective with the focus on reason, logic and control in the pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency (Knights and Willmott (2007). This is perhaps not surprising given the rewards to be gained for anyone able to apply sound management practices to achieving organisation success and continuity. The predominance in the literature on management and organisations for linking the management of change with organisation success and survival is underpinned by the view that change is possible to control, plan and manage like any other organisational process (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000; Beer and Nohria, 2000). Grey (2009: 93) suggests that change 'provides a kind of 'meta narrative', an overarching rationale or assumption which then acts as an explicit or implicit justification for specific change programmes in organizations'.

This chapter explores the literature on managing organisational change with the focus on the introduction of Total Quality Management. The aims of the chapter are to:

1. Explore the literature on managing change with a particular focus on the dominant theories of the 1990s and how the literature developed following criticisms of the planned and prescriptive approaches to change.
2. To review the literature on Total Quality Management, with a focus on the work of Deming as the main TQM guru identified in the case organization, and to explore the tensions and perspectives that emerged in this literature.
3. To explore the similarities that emerged in the discussions and debates on change management and TQM, with reference to the linkage with the developing Human Resource Management (HRM) debate, and to present the case for a focus on top management teams.
4. To provide, through the review of the above, the rationale to explore further in the subsequent chapter, the role of senior management in change and to challenge the prescription that senior management acts as a team.

The chapter will progress through a discussion of the context in which change takes place with a focus on the importance given to TQM as a major change initiative in achieving organizational success. There follows a review of the major change models and frameworks that emerged and were adopted with an emphasis on prescription and linearity as change champions and gurus presented their credentials for securing organizational advantage. This literature clearly identifies the support for top managers as the dominant players in establishing the organizational agenda and leading the change through approaches that reinforced and sustained their self-evident position.

The chapter progresses to examine the move away from prescription to look at the paradox in the change theories that debated adaptation versus constancy. Attention is given to the recognition that much of the earlier work on change presented almost an oxymoronic position of declaring for adaptation and yet prescribing constancy. This discussion then leads onto a re- focused review of the change debate, moving through the literature following an underlying chronological framework before developing into a criticism on the uni-dimensional change interventions and recognition of the dilemmas and contradictions that are endemic in the mainstream literature. This section finishes with a discussion on the development of social constructive views of organizational change with an emphasis on culture and the

importance of people within organizations as they make sense of their experiences and surroundings and the developing importance of storytelling in discourse analysis in relation to getting changes accepted. This discussion moves into a focus on TQM as a popular rationale for organizational change with a reflection on the dominance of particular TQM gurus, in this case Deming (1986). The problems associated with definition and therefore application of techniques and models are addressed before moving onto an exploration of the demise of TQM. It is accepted that there is a wide range of debates being introduced but this is considered necessary to build the case for a focus on the challenge to the assumption that is present throughout the literature on organizational change, that top management support is an unequivocal facet within organizational change programmes. .

Throughout the chapter, emphasis will be made of the attention given in various mainstream approaches to gaining the support from senior management if change is to be successful. The assumption that senior management establishes the new routines and orders the resultant employee responses is endemic in much of the work, especially, and not surprisingly, that which adopts a 'managerialist' stance (Burnes and Jackson (2011). Lamsa and Savolainen (2000:301) note that

'the quality gurus underscore upper management's role and commitment and, in the literature, managerial commitment appears as a self-evident prescription widely regarded as a crucial requirement for successful quality improvement efforts'.

The review of theory and research on organisational change conducted by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) identifies that despite some differences in the models and frameworks in practice in the 1990s, exemplified by Kotter (1996) and Lewin (1951), there is remarkable similarities between them as well as empirical evidence to support them. In identifying eight factors which inform change leaders' thinking, the first (Ensure the need) describes the need for managerial leaders to verify and persuasively communicate the need for change and craft a compelling vision for it. As such, the chapter will establish the basis upon which a more detailed examination of senior management teams will be constructed which will be developed in the following chapter.

Key Components of Debates on Change and its Management

In reviewing the management of change and the particular emphasis given to the popularity of TQM Daft and Marcic (2011:41) identified the four significant elements that marked TQM as forefront management approach of the 1980s and 1990s. These were; employee involvement, focus on the customer, benchmarking and continuous improvement. These underpinned the new set of beliefs that were embedded in the new way of working at for many organizations and were communicated throughout the organization in a way that was intended to help employees embrace assumptions about the nature of the competitive environment in which organizations were competing, the managerial style, organisational leadership and operational routines that were considered to be essential for future success. The 1980s and 1990s saw the competitive environment in which many organizations operated, especially those in manufacturing, becoming more uncertain (Nasim and Sushil, 2011). Many change programmes were focused on the introduction of TQM as the way forward to ensure the success and continuity of operations.

Whether TQM was heralded as a new practitioner paradigm (Hill and Wilkinson, 1995; Kanter, 1992) or something much looser and less definite, a “ubiquitous organisational phenomenon” (Dean and Bowen, 1994: 393) or a “useful tool” for managers to apply (Hill, 1995, 1991) many strategic management teams decided that their way forward was through its introduction and application. Customer choice had broadened and companies were facing a situation that had not been high on the management decision-making criteria agenda. Organizations were finding that product superiority was no longer enough to secure customer loyalty, now service was critical to the maintenance of hitherto long-standing relations. Priority was given to key competitive criteria such as lead times as the critical success factor; these had to be reduced drastically and to do so require a new way of working, managing and thinking. Contemporaneous on the management literature agenda, TQM was being presented as being an important competitive weapon involving the design of organisations to please customers day in day out (Drummond, 1993).

However, there are many ways of understanding and managing change. The literature on change is extensive and offers no easy route to follow with many

dilemma and paradox to the explanation of organizational change (Nasim and Sushil, 2011). Kirkbride et al (1994) usefully suggest that how an actor views the world will lead to different assumptions about how change should be interpreted and influenced. Change seen as being reasonably predictable would be classed as a modernist perspective; where the world of change is perceived as being unpredictable, a sophisticated modernist perspective would be apposite; and where the world is viewed as being chaotic and random, the perspective would be postmodern. In brief, the assumptions that follow are, for the modernist, change follows a linear path with clear expectations of what should happen and why, of cause and effect and how to make outcomes happen. Those adopting the view of the sophisticated modernist see change following a circular path “moving in a complex and dynamic fashion from emerging strategy to deliberate strategy and back again (Kirkbride et al,1994:157) and where change is created in response to emerging strategy (Mintzberg, 1990). For the postmodernist, change can occur at any time and in any direction, there is no regular patterning, linearity or notion of progress(ion) and there are certainly no recipes for success (Burrell,1992; Parker,1995).

The modernist view may be linked to a hard systems approach to change in which the situation demonstrates attributes of quantifiable objectives, constraints and performance indicators, a systems/technical orientation, limited potential solutions, clear problem definition, clear resource requirements, structural solution methodology, reasonably static environment, known time scales and a bounded problem with minimal external interactions (McCalman and Paton, 1992: 19). The sophisticated modernist view linked with a soft systems approach, such as Organizational Development (OD), where the situation shows characteristics the opposite of those attributes outlined above. The postmodern view of change presents an approach difficult to pin down and compartmentalise into a model that demands a structure. Whilst an acceptance of differing philosophical standpoints can help observers understand and explain why change initiators and leaders may opt for different strategies, it is for the key actors in a change situation to accept and tolerate these differences if the information is to be helpful in practice. Whilst the literature has moved to addressing a paradoxical view of organizational change rather than adherence to the either-or approaches, the shift has largely been post

1995 (Nasim and Sushil, 2011). Collins and Porras (1994) advocated the ability to recognise and manipulate the extremes of a number of dimensions at the same time rather than choosing between them, and their view has been developed into a growing literature on balance within and ambidexterity towards change in working with opposing forces (O'Reilly III and Tushman, 2004; Birkinshaw and Gibson, 2006; Raisch and Birkinshaw, 2008).

However, to explore the management of change in relation to this research requires a step back in time to understand the predominant ideas of the early 1990s. What might on reflection and with hind sight seem naïve actions and strategies may, at the time, have seemed 'cutting edge'. What might at the time have been well thought through, well executed but a profound failure, may on reflection have been a shining example of change management, but failed due to another, less easily explained intervention. The main problem with the published approaches to change is that they have produced very low success rates (Kotter, 1996; Beer and Nohria, 2000) and that Pfeifer et al (2005) suggest that success from re-engineering or strategic re-orientations reach at best 30%. In their review of dominant views on organizational change using a 'paradoxical lens', Nasim and Sushil organise the literature into nine categories reflecting 'dilemmas, concerns and the emerging paradoxes in the epistemology of organizational change' (2011:187-195) culminating in a call for more research to be undertaken on their model refining the link between change and continuity paradox and organizational performance.

The dominant and most influential view of the last century and still applied by academicians and practitioners is the planned approach to change and presented as the polar opposite to the emergent approach to organizational change allowing for prescriptive approaches, frameworks and models to emerge. A discussion on the planned and emergent approaches to change will be developed after considering the impact of prescriptive approaches and the influence of gurus on the design and development of prescription in change management.

Prescription and Linearity

One of the emerging dimensions of the approaches to change of that period which was significant was the convergence of ideas that enabled prescriptive approaches to managing change to achieve prominence. The managerialist literature presented the 'hard'/'soft' duality with great confidence especially in the areas of change management, TQM and HRM. Managers were encouraged to use techniques such as the TROPICS test (McCalman and Paton,1992) to locate a change situation on a continuum from hard to soft (Paton and McCalman (2000) or difficult to messy (The Open University, 1985; Ackoff, 1993). Once located, the manager could then decide on the appropriate response and to generate the 'recipe for success'. Situations that could be identified as hard/difficulties, being bounded and more easily defined with few 'people' issues, would be better resolved through the hard systems approaches (Senior and Swales, 2010) whereas those problems that are unbounded, difficult to define and require the engagement of people in the resolution of the problem, tend towards soft systems models for change. The two approaches would also support a management dichotomy based on an operations and project management perspective on managing a change programme and, at the opposite end of a continuum, a people management perspective of change in action.

Beer and Spector (1994:63-66) also offer a prescriptive approach based on an analysis of vital ingredients and the necessary sequence. If any closely aligned change effort is to succeed, they say that organisations must be unhooked from their traditional hierarchical and functional moorings and then reattach to horizontal, cross-functional processes and then go on to say that successful implementation will only be successful if six steps are followed.

Step 1: Trigger change by combining external competitive pressure with clearly defined direction from the organization's leader.

Step2: Develop on the part of the top management team agreement on, and commitment to, the belief that quality improvement is the key strategic task of the organization.

Step 3: Form ad hoc teams around processes to be improved.

Step 4: Create an organization-wide change oversight team which promotes learning and systemic change and helps to overcome resistance.

Step 5: Enable teams to analyse and take action through:

- the delegation of decision-making authority;
- the provision of necessary team skills; and
- the information necessary to understand, analyse, and re-engineer processes.

Step 6: Align formal measurement and information systems with the cross-functional processes (Beer and Spector, 1994: 63).

Not only were these steps seen as being essential, but they were also sequential and hierarchical, with non-conformance to the 'recipe' leading to a 'forced' return to earlier steps (Spector and Beer, 1994). The writers offered their prescription as a guaranteed success and given the eminence of the authors in the field of management studies, such a prescription would almost without question, achieve credibility and support amongst the managerial ranks.

Prescriptive approaches to the management of change were plentiful. For example, Carnell (1990) offered his Strategy for Effectiveness providing guide-lines, techniques and 'role models' for more effective management practice in managing change. He too used the metaphor of the recipe and ingredients for success. For help in analysis he provided check-lists with suggested solutions to 'potential problems' and 'self-assessment' of strengths and weaknesses. Another influential example would be Dunphy and Stace (1988; 1993) who presented their model for planned change strategies that dispensed with the need to choose strategies on the basis of personal value preferences. They argued that strategy selection should be made on the basis of dominant contingencies, which in their model were the scale of change and the style of leadership required to bring about change. Alternatively, Leigh (1988) offered his 'twenty ways to make effective change happen' that includes help in defining a personal model of change and lists of guidelines on each topic discussed. The publisher (the Institute of Personnel Management) described the author as having 'distilled the wisdom of the experts and produced the incisive practical advice that managers need' (back cover). As commented by Graetz and Smith (2010: 150) 'traditional frameworks represent change as a programmatic, step-

by-step process with a clear beginning, middle and end' leading to 'one-dimensional thinking'. This tendency towards presenting more controllable frameworks that reinforce the controlling order are explained to those subject to change as classic, linear stories. Criticisms of the 'n-step guides for change ' suggests that they are unable to provide neither real insight nor understanding of the process of change in the real context of organizations (Collins,1998: 82-99).

Perhaps the most widely quoted, dominant and pervasive theories within the literature on planned change are Kurt Lewin's (1947, 1951) three-phase model and the Organisational Development (OD) approach. These two approaches were widely published in management texts and were a staple part of business and management studies programmes in the UK, America and Australia. The OD approach consists of many different models, but in general, has been described by Huse (1982:555) as 'the application of behavioural science knowledge in a long range effort to improve an organisation's ability to cope with changes in its external environment and increase its internal problem-solving capabilities'. It is based on a human relations perspective which emphasises the importance of social processes within the work experience. OD stresses the importance of collaborative management and involves the use of a change agent or 'catalyst' and the use of theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research (French and Bell, 1999).

OD generally consists of a number of steps commencing with the appointment of a change agent, usually from outside of the organisation, who acts as a catalyst to start the process. There are six major steps that present a linear programme, although invariably the sequence is ongoing and therefore cyclical. The OD programme comprises: identifying the need; selecting the intervention technique; gaining top management support; planning the change process; overcoming resistance to change; evaluating the change process (Aldag and Stearns,1991:724-8). It is a top-down approach with change strategies being applied gradually downward throughout the organisation. However, the approach adopts a normative framework and assumes that the one best way that is chosen leads to both organisational improvement and employee well-being. Furthermore, the OD consultants have been charged with being only interested in a set of normative prescriptions that guide their own practice in managing change, with little regard for

furthering research or development of theory (Ledford et al, 1990:4-6). Whilst applications may have had some underpinning from established behavioural science theory, much was also characteristic of what Woodward and Buckholz (1987) described as 'rah rah management'. Credibility of idea and approach was assumed following successful application, and failure was the result of those being managed, not the change agent or his/her tools and techniques. Many of the approaches to managing change seemed to involve 'firing-up' the workers and applying selling and marketing ideas to gain support (Carnell, 1990)

Lewin's (1947) three general steps comprise unfreezing existing attitudes and behaviour by the application of force field analysis changing the organisation through the implementation of new systems of operation; and refreezing the new ways of working by reinforcement of desired outcomes to help internalisation of the new attitudes and behaviours. Huse (1980) based his seven-stage approach of OD on the earlier work of Lewin to give his planned model of organisational change. Schein (1988; 2004) also presented his theory of planned change that elaborated the original work of Lewin to include mechanisms for the generation of motivation to change and developing cognitive redefinition. The strength of the Lewin-led approaches is in the simplicity of representation, but they also present change as a unidirectional activity with a tendency to over-simplify the complexity and dynamics of the process (Weisbord,1988). Lewin's view of the organization tends towards one of a well-integrated system, with force-field theory, groups dynamics, action research and his three-step approach providing a congruent approach to achieve a unified whole (Hughes, 2010).

A popular and dominant 'staged' approach was presented by Kotter (1996) in which he led those leading change through a series of 8 stages starting with 'creating the urgency' whereby he raised the problem of complacency and the need to get the majority of organizational members to recognise the need to change. Stage 2 identified the need to establish a 'powerful coalition' not rely on one leader, but a team of influential people who can persuade others of the need to change and way to change. Stage 3 requires the 'creation of a vision for change' into which all can subscribe and commit with the establishment of a sense of direction. These three stages form the emotional environment in which change will take place as a climate

for change is developed and the workforce ready themselves for the new ways of working. Stages 4, 5 and 6 focus on engaging the workforce in the actual change that will occur as the change leaders 'communicate the change' so that all understand their role and purpose in the new way of working, although stage 5 recognises that there will be some areas of resistance and barriers so that there will be a need to 'remove obstacles'. Stage 6 identifies the need to be able to maintain employee commitment and belief in the process and so identifies the value of 'creating short-term wins' as a means of ensuring employees support. Stages 7 and 8 focus on implementation and sustaining the change with stage 7 proposing the change leaders encourage the adoption continuous improvement programmes as a means to 'build on change' to ensure that over-reliance on short-term wins does not happen. In stage 8, the role of the organization's leaders in supporting the change is again paramount as the 'changes are anchored in the corporate culture' and expressed through the dominant values and beliefs as manifested and practised by the all the employees but especially those in positions of influence.

Whilst the stages are both prescriptive and linear, the popularity and credibility of the approach reflects the standing of the author as one of the leading 'gurus' on change and leadership. It remains one of the most used and quoted management approaches to change. Whilst Collins (1998) is reluctant to endorse the n-step approach to change, Graetz and Smith (2010) recognise the sustainability and ever-popular application of these driven-from-the-top, goal-directed linear frameworks. The traditional approaches as exemplified by Kotter's 8 stages to Transformation (1996) requires the buy-in of employees to the purpose and direction chosen by the guiding coalition and relies on a well communicated story to engage and involve workers in the process. Its relative easiness of understanding can be seen as a strength in gaining support but perhaps most important, the way that it presents the actions of those key influencers in securing support and commitment to the vision reinforces a culture of hierarchy and sustains the position of those at the top.

Clearly, what the literature on Change Management has presented is an abundance of approaches, techniques and tools that could be applied in the workplace with confidence. Many of these were personally endorsed and branded by people whose

names became part of the general conversation and rhetoric in the workplace. Perhaps what is most interesting about these earlier approaches to change is what By (2005) noted when reviewing the wide range of literature on the subject, in particular in the need to achieve stability and the aim was to manage out constant change. This desire for stability was also identified by Luecke (2003) who suggests that organisational performance improvement achieved through effective employee behaviour required routine and constancy. What emerged as a shared key feature of the prescriptive approaches was a desire to achieve the classic management objectives of conformance and control. In response to the developing managerial focus of change, Sturdy and Grey (2003) recognised that the change literature was presenting an epistemological bias toward pro-change and that the alternative was not an option for managers, thereby confirming organizational change management as both managerialist and universalist.

Adaptation versus constancy

The developments in the research and the subsequent literature on change in organisations re-positioned the debate to recognising that change is continuous and cannot be stopped, 'frozen' or returned to a status quo. The general theme was one of people needing to learn to cope and adapt to constant change (Burnes, 2004, 2005). Clarke (1994) reviewed the 1980s as a time when change was an 'accelerating constant'. Carnell (1995,) suggested that "in a changing world the only constant is change" and Nadler and Tushman (1999, 45) observed that "poised on the eve of the next century we are witnessing a profound transformation in the very nature of our business organisations". There was a significant convergence of the literature on TQM, approaches to change and HRM that was useful to those promoting and practicing change management whether from a soft or hard perspective. However, what also emerged was a debate, driven by leading UK writers, which did not easily fit with the humanistic orientated perspective on TQM. In emphasising the soft issues the literature took on a much more critical view of what was happening to people who were involved in TQM. Rather than a consolidation of the three discourses, a divergence of ideas appeared to leave TQM, in particular, in a more ambiguous position over its claims of employee liberation and personal growth (McCardle et al, 1995).

Before examining these interpretations and the developing debate on change management, it is useful to reflect on the ready acceptance of guru management theory. Certainly for Marchington (1995) much of the material produced for the popular management press tended to be superficial, lacking integrity and trivialising the conflict and tensions that exist within organisations. “Fairy Tales and Magic Wands” were much in evidence in the accounts of successful turnaround stories. This was a sentiment echoed by Micklethwaite and Wooldridge (1997) who suggest that management gurus are conmen, likening them to witch-doctors whose jargon confuses rather than clarifies and whose ideas rarely rise above common sense. Jackson and Carter (2000) drawing on analytical work of Grint (1997) suggests five explanatory approaches to explain the popularity given its inadequacies. These are the rational, structural, charismatic, institutional/distancing and rhetorical approaches. The rational approach encompasses the view that these theories become accepted because they appear to ‘work’. There is a pragmatic nature about them which appeals to managers. Huczynski (1996) proposes that these theories provide managers with support to enable them to fulfil needs of understanding (especially of unpredictability and change in contemporary capitalism and the behaviour of those who work) control (especially the means to tame uncertainty) and esteem (as those who are successful are elevated to ‘heroic’ status in the minds of the populace).

It is also important to reflect on how managers have been developed, with an emphasis on analysis and planning, a linear activity that utilises the quantitative modules based on rationality and logic. There is an assumption that if data can be channelled into a formula or model, a working solution can be found (Hunsaker and Cook, 1986). These theories are driven by the skills that require left-hemisphere brain activity and it is not surprising that both Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1986) describe this dominant learning style as ‘accommodator’ and ‘pragmatist’ respectively. The domain of this type of learner is ‘doing’, the carrying out of plans that lead to real experiences. The business-schools’ curricula was dominated by this type of training, especially in relation to strategic management and the development of strategy (Kolb, 1984). The influence of the North American Business School Strategic Management Model cannot be understated.

The structural approach emphasises the importance of historical circumstances for conditioning the acceptability of particular ideas and theories. The charismatic approach addresses the personality of the individual leading the idea and his/her persuasive qualities in being able to influence others and gain popularity. In particular, the use of the 'hero' metaphor that enabled some industrialists to attain celebrity status and achieve cult-like following. The institutional/distancing approach stresses the importance of imitation and 'getting on the bandwagon' as identified by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). This explains the 'snowballing' effect of a theory as it gains credibility by being applied in successful companies which are then presented as 'benchmark' organisations that others wish to copy a trend that Grey (2009: 97) refers to as the 'treadmill of change'.

The rhetorical approach explores the contribution of the attractiveness of the discourse of the guru theories to explaining their widespread acceptability to managers and the seductive nature of their message, particularly in times of uncertainty, which is profound. The language of 'quality' being a discourse to which all could readily subscribe and to which opposition of the concept would be highly questionable. As Munro (1995:131) argues, that it is not a question of being for or against quality, for who can be against quality? The message was often presented in evangelical style and content by charismatic individuals. There was a contingent movement in the direction of the cult(ure) of the personality and 'talking the talk' and 'walking the walk' became something of a mantra. However, as Watson (2002) points out, whilst the work of 'gurus' can act as a crutch to managers in dealing with the complexity of organisational activities; managers are less impressed with 'hype' and the tendency for some writers to dress-up established and common-sense ideas in new guises.

Re-focusing the change debate

Various reviews of the plethora of organizational change literature have been undertaken. Both Graetz and Smith (2010) and Nasim and Sushil (2011) explore the continuity and change paradox with the former examining ten organizational change philosophies and the latter categorizing dominant approaches into nine view

perspectives. What is more useful to explore in more detail because of its value in helping secure a link with TQM, is the work of By (2005) which attempts to provide a useful framework that draws a plethora of theories together. By uses Senior's (2002) three categories of change to provide the link for the framework – change characterised by rate of occurrence, change characterised by how it comes about, and change characterised by scale. As By (2005: 370) points out, some change initiatives such as TQM embrace all of these characteristics but he chooses not to address individual initiatives per se. By's review is useful for his re-consideration of various writers' descriptions of change (Burnes, 2004; Grundy, 1993; Balogun and Hope-Hailey, 2004; Holloway, 2002) characterised by rate of occurrence and his subsequent re-definition of their descriptions into a more accessible framework. Consequently, he characterises change by the rate of occurrence as:

- Discontinuous change
- Incremental change
- Bumpy incremental change
- Continuous change
- Bumpy continuous change

By (2005: 372)

Bumpy continuous change is offered as an additional category to account for organisational-wide strategies that demonstrate periods of relative stability punctuated by periods of accelerated change and would encompass the type of change brought about by introducing TQM.

Plowman et al. (2007) develop a model that demonstrates change by pace (episodic or continuous) and scope (convergent or radical) and defines the differences between the four categories of change through:

- The driver of change (instability or inertia)
- The form of change (adaptation or replacement)
- The nature of the change (emergent or intended)
- Types of feedback (negative that discourages deviation from the current activities or positive feedback to encourages deviation)
- Types of connection in the system (loose or tight)

Continuous and convergent change is slow and channelled into changing systems and practices within the existing organisational framework and patterns.

Episodic and convergent change is quicker and relates to a crisis or shock but still maintains the current organisational template. Episodic and radical change is quick and responds to a major organisational crisis that brings about a significant change to the organisational patterns and framework. Continuous and radical change arises out of the synergy generated by many small changes that lead to a change in the template as new rules, values and norms reinforce the change. This would be the quadrant in which the introduction of TQM would be located.

Using Senior's second criteria: by how change comes about, By then looks further at characterising change. He describes four approaches of which the most common are the 'planned' and 'emergent' debates, with less development of the 'contingency' approach (Dunphy and Stace, 1993) or 'choice' approach (Burnes, 1996).It is perhaps the debate over planned change that is of greatest interest to a consideration of the introduction of TQM. Grieves (2010) suggests that since the late1980s OD as an exemplar of planned change has led to criticisms being directed at TQM initiatives in particular, observing that they have been so susceptible to selective use of OD techniques to render them mechanistic in approach rather than organic and evolutionary.

Research undertaken by Dawson and Palmer (1995) noted that unforeseen events that happened during the introduction of a TQM initiative proved to be critical in their impact and impeded the progress of the plan of action or even pushed the initiative down a different route. Unintended consequences of planned change were also observed by Jian (2007) in his research on an organisation introducing cost cutting initiatives. Such research observations suggest that far from achieving a planned approach, planning fails to provide a guaranteed solution. Consequently, the planned approach to organisational change attempts to explain the process that bring about change and especially emphasising the states that the organisation will have to go through to achieve a new, desired state. As described by Bamford and Forrester (2003) there is considerable attention given to the need to discard old behaviours, structures, processes and even culture before adopting a new approach. However, despite the planned approach being considered as highly effective (Bamford and

Forrester, 2003; Burnes, 2004, 2005) it is limited in its applicability to large scale change, especially transformational and rapid change (Burnes, 1996, 2004, 2005; Senior, 2002, 2010).

Limitations of the one-dimensional change interventions

Criticisms of the planned approach reflect concern that the organisation is considered as operating under constant conditions and that change relates to a move from one stable state to another (Burnes, 2004). However, the pace of contemporary change challenges any approach that is governed by timetables, pre-determined objectives and a succession of discrete events and Wilson (1992) suggested that the approach placed too much reliance on senior managers who often had little awareness of the consequences of their decisions. As such, critics of the planned approach suggest that far from following a planned direction of action in a linear manner; change is 'messy', complex, temporal and iterative (Grieves, 2010; Stacey, 2003; Burnes, 1996, 2004, 2005; Dawson, 1994; Pettigrew and Whipp, 1993). The alternative to planned change models has been the emergent change model (Burnes, 1996) or the 'processual change approach', (Dawson, 1994).

The idea of emergent change is linked to the concept of organisations as open systems (Senior, 2010). Change is considered to arise out of ongoing activities and reflects the view that decisions, especially strategic decisions are made in spite of formal planning systems rather than because of them (Stacey, 2003, Senior 2010,). Hughes (2010: 95) suggests that emergent modules were developed out of a need to 'both guide and explain the major changes' taking place. With particular relevance to storytelling, he cites the work of Eccles and Nohria(1992:87) as an underpinning reason to move away from planned approaches, as strategy itself, emerges as participants in the organisational strategic process 'respond to and reinterpret their sense of organisation's identity and purpose'.

The notion of change being something that is not well planned and scripted is further challenged by the work of Weick (2000) in his analysis of the ASDA supermarket change experience. He noted that that the successful change programme was a series of localised initiatives, informal routines and events that were incorporated and legitimised and even experiments that were tried and adopted. He concluded

that change is dynamic and not tied to a predetermined form; it evolved, was continuous and synergistic. The notion of the organization being subject to constant, naturally occurring and microscopic changes that create uninterrupted change that reflects the organization actually 'becoming' what it is, is a powerful and important argument presented by Tsoukas and Chia (2002) and again highlights the significance of very small changes being no less important than major 'set-pieces. Also of usefulness is the work of Leybourne (2006) in recognising the importance of improvisation alongside planned change – the localised interpretation of new ideas that are necessary to embed change into the existing order of play. However, whilst improvisation might suggest recklessness and serendipity, Leybourne presents an argument for a reasoned and informed choice by management leading to an information-based process through design not 'gut-feeling'.

Despite presenting the emergent approach as an alternative to planned change, in his more recent work Burnes (2009) is careful to point out that it is not sensible to make an either/or choice but to recognise that both have their merits and that different situations warrant different emphases to achieve success. What is important to the debate is the emphasis given to the dynamics of change and the focus on the lived experience of change, rather than explain organisational change from a static perspective. This need to explore and manage the paradox or dualities is echoed in the review of organizational change literature by Nasim and Sushil (2011) and draws attention to the contradictions in the various approaches that are espoused by the wide range of writers and their ideas (see Graetz and Smith, 2010).

The processual approach (Dawson, 1994, 2003) to change developed from the earlier work of writers such as Whipp et al (1987) Clark et al (1988) and Pettigrew (1985) who established a 'contextualist' framework. This development emerged in response to the need to go beyond a rationalist model of change to include an explanation of the political arena in which decisions are made, to incorporate the historical perspective of the organisation under examination as well as an appreciation of the drama that unfolded as organisations underwent transition. Pettigrew (1990:269) argued that much of the research on organisational change was 'ahistorical, aprocessual and acontextual in character' and that it lacked a temporal analysis. However, the criticism of the contextual framework was that it

lacked ease of application. In addressing the problem of practical use, Dawson (1994:36) presented a solution that broke the temporal analysis into three timeframes:

- The conception of a need to change
- Process of organisational transition
- Operation of new working practices and procedures.

Interestingly, this is not dissimilar to Lewin's (1951) three general steps of change. However, what was different was the emphasis given to the impossibility of giving a definitive list of tasks, activities and decisions associated with the management of change. That in practice, the actions of individuals and groups would emerge in response to decisions that were being made, that these would be the result of various influences and expectations. And, that far from being linear, the transition process was complex and non-linear. Furthermore,

“That certain individuals may act as major facilitators or inhibitors of change and prove instrumental in the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of programmes which seek to provide new organisational arrangements”

(Dawson, 1994:36)

Conversely, Dawson also proposed that there were ‘critical junctures’ during the transition that shaped the process and that there were three major determinants of change that needed to be located on the temporal framework. These determinants were the:

- *Substance of change – the type and scale of change
- *The politics of change – the political activity of negotiation, consultation, conflict and resistance.
- *The context of change – the past and present operating environments and future projections and expectations of operations including in the analysis the impact of and on human resources, administrative systems technology and the history and culture of the organisation as well as the wider business domain.

Dawson (1994:41-43).

In applying the processual approach to seven case studies Dawson was able to establish fifteen major practical guidelines (1994:179). On reflection, whilst the content of the 'list' gives more attention to the impact of people, as individuals or collectives, on change; there is a sense of the message of 'self-help' reminiscent of the quality gurus' recipes for improvement. In condensing the complexity, inconsistencies and messiness of change to a 'manageable' list, Dawson seems to lose the very essence of the purpose of his research. After all, who, *in practice* is going to read the (whole) book when, in the end, it can all be expressed in fifteen practical guidelines?

Knights and McCabe (2002) argue that the processual approach presents a more sophisticated managerialist line of argument than the rationalist approach to change particularly involving TQM, because it emphasises some of the socio-political aspects of the organisation. Unfortunately, for them, the approach fails to make sufficient use of the emphasis and is often under-theorised in respect of the broader social and political issues that impact on the implementation of TQM. Consequently, whilst Knights and McCabe (2002:240-244) recognise that the processual approach acknowledges social order within organisations as the product of social interactions and negotiations and not simply a construct that is ordered and imposed by some (ruling) body; and, that the theory highlights the role of politics in mediating conflicting interests, they also postulate that a preoccupation with improving communications to restore order is a reversion to functionalism. They believe that there is an inability to explain persistent inequalities in organisations, because of a persistent naivety in political awareness of how organisation practices emerge. They view the emergence of practices as a reflection of the power struggles taking place as individuals or groups attempt to create or sustain identities and compete for power and status.

Knights and McCabe also argue that processual theory fails to take account of the importance of identity in symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934, Blumer, 1969), especially in relation to how self-identity is constructed and how precarious it is. They suggest that individuals, surrounded by political struggles in a context that has been constructed through power/knowledge relations, will inevitably feel anxious and insecure. The tendency is for processual approaches to take a fixed, unitary

conception of the self (Knights and Willmott, 1999). With making change through TQM initiatives in particular, there is a failure to take account of the 'natural' self in contrast with that which is artificially constructed to play out the prescribed role of being of service to, and, in the service of, the customer. Furthermore, having constructed an identity that conforms to the preferred behavioural model, tensions will mount when contradictory demands are placed on the individual that compromise subjective role (being customer aware) over functional job (achieving targets) requirements. The models of TQM are "insensitive to the emotional energies required of staff on the front line" (Knights and McCabe 2002:244).

To address the inadequacies of the rational managerialist, critical and processual approaches, the writers turn to a consideration of power/knowledge relations and subjectivity drawn from the work of Foucault (1977; 1980; 1982). In particular, they challenge the prevailing views that assume that the embracing of the TQM discourse will lead to the generation of a preferred domain of personal thinking and identity in a "unidirectional or totalizing fashion" (Knights and McCabe, 2002:247). That power, from the rational managerialist perspective is unproblematic and resides largely with those in the upper echelons of organisations or, from the critical thinking perspective that power has shifted to self-discipline but in the pursuit of the management objective. That even from the processual approach, which recognises the notion of power as being contested and therefore wielded by all parties in the process of negotiation, the scope of negotiation is constrained within a (pre)-determined domain and the process is the pursuit of compromise.

People as 'actioners' of change

The biggest objection for Knights and McCabe appears to be in the apparent lack of attention that is given to the importance of identity being social. A central tenet of their argument is that there is not enough consideration to the view that far from being passive and conforming objects of socialisation, people are active, creative participants who construct their social world. Furthermore, they do so in a way that may not be in concordance with the stable norms and values so preferred by the rational managerialist writers and the self-disciplining interpretations of the critical writers. A key feature of their debate stems from the Foucauldian view of

power/knowledge relations and subjectivity and how individuals can only consider themselves subjectively in the context of social relations. As such, and following the views of Goffman (1958) the context in which a person is operating becomes the theatre in which the role is played and the script is improvised on the basis of the scenario to be played out. The introduction of TQM becomes the scenario and the scene is set which encompasses various symbols and the actors then negotiate their reality. How well, or otherwise, the actors improvise depends on how each chooses to construct their role within their interpretation or understanding of the role and the scene they are to act.

The rational managerialists, critical writers and processual approach promoters, could be viewed as seeing the scene as being well scripted, thus leading to conforming behaviours. On the other hand, using a Foucauldian interpretation, the scene could be seen as being poorly scripted with the actors having far more freedom to behave as they wished. This notion of change as an improvisation or an unfolding conversation, with a script or story that emerges, has further resonance in recent literature on storytelling and discourse analysis. Whilst the importance of story and storytelling has long been included in the literature of organisational culture, and story and storytelling clearly expresses culture (Boyce, 1996), there is evidence of a re-emphasis on the dynamic role of language in shaping processes of change (Francis, 2003). Story and storytelling in organisations provide an important role in the development of organisational culture and how individuals become immersed in organisational life and living. In terms of understanding the role of storytelling, particularly in relation to change, it is the importance that listeners to the story place on the content, what meaning is attributed to the story and what credence the storyteller has, that will influence the reaction of individuals.

The research of Mitroff and Kilmann (1975: 18) identified the concept of 'epic myth' which they describe as the capturing of the unique quality of an organisation. In so doing the epic myth gives both meaning to the members of the organisation and is helpful in socialising new members. They focused on the importance that was placed on shared stories as an approach to large-scale, organisational problem-solving. In this respect the epic myth has much in common with the definition of culture presented by Schein(1985:14)

“Organisation culture is the pattern of basic assumptions which a group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to problems”.

What is implicit in Schein’s definition is the role of a significant group in establishing the content of the story to be told. Also he implies in his work that an organisation’s senior management can manipulate the culture. This was not a unique view and was echoed in several important studies: Clark (1970, 1972), Hackman (1984, cited in Meyerson and Martin, 1987) Martin et al (1983), Schein (1985) Pettigrew (1979) and Wilkins (1983). The clear theme that emerged from these studies was that culture was shared, that a founder is the creator of culture, and that the shared understandings are a reflection of the personal convictions of the founder. Essentially, the culture literature was reinforcing a unifying view of organisations that supported a managerialist stance. Furthermore, it has a strong resonance in the leading change approach as presented by Kotter (1996) in which the role a management in anchoring changes in the corporate culture is essential to successful change.

However, following a series of studies which began to raise questions about the notion of *who was sharing what with who?* Martin (1992) defined a three-perspective framework about organisational culture. The dominant perspective, and that which persists, she called the integrative perspective. Literature that is underpinned by this view tends to emphasise the function of leaders in control of organisational change, very much a top management view of how organisations should be managed. Meyerson and Martin (1987) were critical of those who researched from this perspective in not systematically determining exactly who shares what. An alternative perspective was that of differentiation, in which organisations are made up a collections of subcultures that are actively created by leaders and other members. Culture is shaped by forces beyond the control of the founder. Writers from this perspective give prominence to the differences of class and power within organisations and present the official organisational culture as a myth in itself (Jermier et al, 1994, Van Maanen and Barley, 1984, Smircich, 1983). The third

perspective is that of fragmentation, which brings ambiguity to the forefront of organisational study. This perspective focuses attention on the complex array of relationships that exist in the culture with constant flux being the reality. Rather than a sharing of ideas, values and basic assumptions that bond the members together, the organisation is represented by a mixture of shifting consensus, disagreement and indifference that prevents any ongoing agreement on values or basic assumptions. Clearly within this perspective, conflict is seen as the norm with reality being constantly constructed and reconstructed due to member interactions and changing environmental influences. Essentially the debate moves towards a critical management perspective reflecting the labour process debate of Braverman, 1974 and Sturdy et al,1992.

Whilst much of the literature on culture and managing/changing culture inevitably reflects an integrative perspective, with the emphasis on stories of great leadership (Boyce, 1996) and creating new meaning that is reflective of greater commitment; Martin's three-perspective framework allows for contemplation of the role of other organisational members in shaping meaning, understanding and direction.

Whose story and what story?

Another way of viewing storytelling within the organisation is to envisage the organisation as a storytelling system. Boje (1991) presents storytelling as a natural occurrence in the organisation and focuses on the management of sense-making as storytellers and listeners interact to control the story's unfolding. As such, the story is told according to a chosen interpretation, a decision about how much to reveal and a constant referencing to cues and nuances. Boje draws attention to the uses of storytelling by internal stakeholders in predicting, empowering and fashioning change; and by external stakeholders in negotiating new interpretations; and to the dynamics that vary story performance (1991:124). Clearly what Boje is alluding to is the probability of more than one story being told, and often more than one version of the same story. In his 1995 study at the Disney Studios he identified a mix of discourses and by accepting a multiplicity of stories being the more realistic premise on which to start research, demonstrated an approach to plurivocal story interpretation.

It is this awareness of different interpretations and stories that Boje's approach and Martin's fragmentation perspective provides an important point for reflection. If another perspective is taken, rather than the dominant integrative paradigm, then there is more attention given to the validity of 'other' voices. Whilst rhetoric might be promoted by the dominant group, there is no reason to believe that all members of the organisation will interpret the meaning in the desired way. Clearly, such a legitimisation of the probability of resistance and dissonance is not the preferred interpretation of the managerialist tendency, nor does it sit comfortably with those who propose improving communication as being the way to overcome conflict and achieve change. What is clearly implied is that if the story is not palatable to the listener, then simply restating or retelling it will not be successful.

Storytelling is dependent upon the ability of the teller to engage the listener and, as such, the use of language is paramount. Language is essentially a dynamic social process that is not simply representational of the world, but also shapes and constructs the world in meaning (Fairclough, 1992:64). The careful use of language in sense-making, particularly following shifts in language-use, will inevitably provide opportunities for those in positions of influence to shape constructions of organisational reality.

Ford and Ford (1995) suggest that organisations undergoing change are experiencing 'shifting conversations'. They identify four conversations of change: initiative conversations, conversations for understanding, conversations for performance, and conversations for closure. Clearly what is being proposed lends itself to a processual approach to change. Whilst the authors offer some guidance as to what would characterise each 'conversation', it is also apparent that despite the initial conversation being introduced by managers, how change unfolds is then subject to what other organisational members are prepared to listen, and what interpretation they place upon the content.

Despite the obvious linkage to processual approaches to change, as presented, the four-phased process of shifting conversations suggests that change is controllable and that conversation control is the prerogative of management. Whilst Ford and

Ford (1995) recognises that shared meaning is achieved through a process of negotiation and/or conflict, it is the focus on shared meaning that is important – the focus is integration. During times when new ideas, and especially new language, for example ‘empowerment’, ‘total quality management’, ‘cell manufacturing’, are being introduced; the opportunity to manipulate those without knowledge is great. However, there is no guarantee that once the knowledge has been shared and understood, the listener will act as required.

It is this implicit assumption that better communications will achieve successful change that is one of the reasons for Knights and McCabe (2002) to find the processual approach lacking. In citing Fairhurst (1993) they describe her work as adopting a ‘comparatively unproblematic conception of both the employment relationship and TQ’. She believes, for example, that managers need only talk and act consistently in order to successfully implement TQ. Such a view ‘lacks a political awareness of how organisational practices are a reflection of struggles to create and sustain identities and compete for power’ (Knights and McCabe, 2002:243) However, what is also important is that Fairhurst was writing in 1993, when a critical view of TQM was in its infancy. Clearly the debate about the capability of TQM to achieve organizational success was beginning to emerge but the dominance of the prescriptive models of change and the unquestioned capability of management to secure support were paramount.

Total Quality Management as the focus of Organizational Change

What follows is a discussion of Total Quality Management which provided the focus and rationale for change in the research organisation. The main discussion is on Deming, the Quality guru whose work underpinned the approach taken by the research organization. The choice to focus on Deming is made whilst recognising the context of great confusion at the time about what constituted TQM, it was an evolving concept, organizations that were adopting TQM were at different stages of transformation and it was also recognised that organizational variation required different forms of TQM,(Bounds et al,1994) At the time the ideas of the quality gurus were expressed prolifically in ‘how-to’ books in improving quality that were then adopted by consultancy groups that proposed the way to facilitate the

implementation of quality programmes (Almaraz, 1994). The definition of quality was often expressed in measures that reflected the operations management literature, not surprisingly given the very heavy reliance that had hitherto been placed upon the management services function in determining organisational practice and success.

The definition related to three success criteria:

User-based definition: Quality is measured by the degree to which the wants and needs of customers are satisfied.

Product-based definition: Quality refers to the amount of desired attributes contained in the product.

Manufacturing-based definition: Quality is measured by the percentage of scrap or rework required during the production process, specifically addressed by the reduction in lead-time.

Each of these success criteria is quantifiable and easily reported through statistical analysis and diagrammatic representation, a technique that was utilized extensively by Deming. His definition of quality also included that of satisfying the customer, not merely to meet his/her expectations, but to exceed them (Deming, 1986). He stressed the need to stay ahead of the customer, thus anticipating their needs, and adding value to their wants. Anything that did not add value was not, by definition, a quality feature. For Deming the means to improve quality are in the ability to control and manage systems and processes properly, and the nature of management responsibilities in achieving this. He required those involved to identify 'common causes' and 'special causes' of variation in production. Common causes were seen as being systemic and shared by many operators, machines or products. They include poor product design, incoming materials not suited to their purpose, and poor working conditions. These he saw as the responsibility of management and he also saw management as being responsible for most quality problems (anything from 85-94%). Special causes relate to the lack of knowledge or skill or poor performance and these he saw as the responsibility of operators and workers.

Deming stressed the need for top management to take the lead in changing processes and systems. This requirement places TQM as a strategic change within organizations and provides a critical link to the previous discussion on change and

top management responsibilities. Management should give workers clear standards of work performance and provide the essential tools to achieve those standards. Included in his 'toolkit' was the appropriate working environment and climate for work. This he defined as a workplace free of fault finding, blame or fear in which variations could be explored without threat of recrimination or retribution. To achieve this all employees would have to participate and he strongly promoted employee participation believing that employees should be enabled to contribute to continuous improvement through their understanding of the processes and how they could be improved. He also advocated educating employees to understand the processes employed in organisations and the causes of variation, as well as the need for team work. Teamwork reflected Deming's view that traditional approaches to management had broken down having created barriers to organisational success. He proposed viewing the organisation as a system with its interdependent parts linked in a process chain which included suppliers and all internal company functions focusing on meeting the needs of the external customer.

Central to Deming's approach to the achievement of quality success was his 14 points or guidelines for managers (Deming, 1982). Whilst not presented as 'tablets of stone' they were readily adopted by those seeking a framework on which to bring about change. However, Deming was not the only quality guru to offer a step-by-step approach to TQM success, Juran et al (1974) advocated an approach where quality was judged by the user or customer and proposed 10 steps to quality improvement. Crosby (1980) directly addressed his intended market of top executives and defines quality as 'conformance to requirements'. Like Deming, he offered a 14 step programme for quality improvement with a particular emphasis on management commitment. Feigenbaum defined quality as "the total composite product and service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacture and maintenance through which the product and service in use will meet the expectations of the customer" (Feigenbaum, 1986) recognising quality as a multi-dimensional entity. He advocated 'total quality control' and presented this as consisting of 4 main stages. Taguchi presented quality concepts that had 5 key elements (Taguchi, 1986) and Ishikawa stated that quality began and ended with education and gave 7 basic tools of quality (Ishikawa, 1985).

While each of the gurus on quality presented his own distinctive approach, there is much that they have in common (Ghobadian and Speller, 1994) all present the quality objective as a company-wide activity that is the responsibility of management and not the workforce. As such it is imperative that management has a clear understanding of the process. Management also has the responsibility to determine the climate and framework of operations and develop a 'quality' culture by changing perception of, and attitudes towards quality. Also, there is a clear emphasis on education and training as the vehicle through which beliefs, attitudes and competencies are changed and there is a clear priority given to the human process. There is a general agreement that all aspects of activities should be considered and that functional integration is an important ingredient of TQM. There is an emphasis on prevention of product defects and reduction of the costs of quality to improve competitiveness. All also consider quality as a process, not a programme nor an instant cure, something to produce benefits over time whether developed continuously of project by project.

The aim of TQM was to increase collaboration across functions and departments by managers and employees, customers and suppliers as they sought to identify areas for improvement, however small, in the pursuit of zero defects and ultimate customer satisfaction (Daft and Marcic, 2011). Quality and its policing became the responsibility of each employee within an overarching ethos of de-centralised control based on commitment with organizational goals rather than compliance to rules and procedures. Alongside the four key elements requiring companywide participation in all aspects of quality management and its control, commitment to the identification and satisfaction of customer needs and expectations, compulsive mimeticism as a minimal standard in the pursuit of achieving at least as good as what other organizations do, and on-going incremental improvements; TQM was signified by other 'kite-marks' of successful implementation. These included quality circles, Six Sigma principles; European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), ISO 9000 (and its ante and post-cedents) reduced cycle time and teamworking. All these techniques depended to a greater or lesser extent on a major commitment from top management to ensure their adoption and were often accompanied by a common language constructed to complement the efforts to engage employees and earn their reinforcing commitment (Smith and Blakeslee, 2002).

In their consideration of the various gurus of quality (Deming, Juran, Crosby, Ishikawa, Feigenbaum, Grocock and Taguchi) Ghobadian and Speller (1994:56-67) identify top management commitment as being essential in each of the approaches and that it is also essential that top management provide leadership, a clear understanding of the process and have responsibility for quality, not the workforce, providing support to technical and human processes. Knowledge and understanding of the initiative, the aims and underlying principles of the approach being adopted are clearly implied.

Despite the lack of a unifying conceptual framework and a well thought through instructional methodology (Garvin, 1988, Chase and Aquilano, 1989) to allow a connection of the general quality concepts and ideas to the specific circumstances of an organisation; the quality revolution showed little signs of slowing down its spread beyond manufacturing organisations to both private and public service industries during the first half of the nineties. Farnham and Horton (1996) estimated that by the middle of the decade more than 31,000 'gurus' were in business worldwide. TQM was both a highly visible product of the demand for 'instant' management theory and, in general, susceptible to 'branding' (Klein, 2000; Collins, 2001). However, if the readiness to adopt TQM as a critical feature of organisational success was seen as having long-term relevance to senior decision-makers, the actual demonstration of its success was less convincing. A survey in 1993 reported 86% of US CEOs believed that TQM would remain a top priority in the year 2000 (Nadler, 1993). Other research showed an intriguing dichotomy of experience – intense expressed support coupled with significant failure, and this was not confined to the US. EEC research echoed the pessimistic assessment of upwards of 75% failure of TQM initiatives to live up to expectations of their champions.(Mathews and Katel, 1992; Pifer, 1992). It would appear that the introduction of TQM into organisations was very much dependent upon 'hype' as opposed to proof. There was intense publicity and high profile attention attached to its strategic linkage to increased competitiveness. This coupled with the application of 'foolproof' techniques leading to instantaneous success - more akin to the waving of 'magic wands' (Marchington, 1995) meant that TQM remained largely unchallenged in terms of its claims, particularly in the area of organisational change.

Whilst the limitations of TQM were being addressed from a research perspective, there was an important dichotomy of emphasis on both sides of the Atlantic. In addressing the shortcomings of existing organisational research, the predominant view of the North American writers was to explore TQM from a rational managerialist perspective, whilst, in the UK, more fundamental issues were being explored that presented a critical control focus. Whilst the former celebrate the effectiveness of management control, the latter actively speak against its claims (Knights and McCabe, 2002). What is important to consider, is the role and acceptability of the rational managerial message over the critical control perspective in terms of the target audience of TQM. Clearly, a highly influential group of intended recipients of the rhetoric of TQM were those in senior management. Whilst the message of the writers from the critical control perspective may have held an enticing content to those less enamoured by the activities of managers in a (seemingly) legitimate pursuit of organisational efficiency; in terms of which was going to get business coverage, there was little contest.

There are two points that are important. Firstly, the messages about techniques and approaches for achieving organisational success from the US were still highly regarded by UK managers. The resurgence of the managerial prerogative and unitarism that had emerged during the 1980s had considerable empathy with the strong management ideology that was imported from the US. Secondly, most of the US journals ignored the ideas of 'parvenu' writers (Aldrich, 1979) with most adherents of the dominant paradigm recognising little threat to their privileged position. As Clegg and Hardy (1990) suggest, such determination to ignore anything new may have stemmed from the institutionalized practices of the academic and publishing arena in the US that made inroads by 'alternative' researchers, extremely difficult. As such, what was presented in the leading North American journals and subsequently translated into management texts represented a protectionism of the entrenched views and a preservation of the knowledge that maintained the power base (ibid:6). What emerged was a continuous informing and re-informing of theory and practice that re-affirmed the existing dominant rationalist, quantitative, normative approaches associated with functionalism and managerialism. Whilst both

Deming(1986) and Juran(1988) were concerned that US companies should change their managerial styles and personnel policies in order to enable employee participation, the prevailing Scientific Management principles and Fordist production systems tended to create a highly functional and job-orientated HRM system. This system led to features that did not embed an inclusive culture with highly motivated, committed employees that were empowered and team orientated (Zhuang Yang, 1994)

This omission of TQM in organisational behaviour literature was only slowly beginning to unfold during the early 1990s and the emerging debate was more prominent in the UK than in the US. Almaraz suggested that the reason for the lack of the development of the quality management paradigm in organisational behaviour was due to the non-typical evolution of a traditional organisational research issue (Almaraz, 1994). Her argument was that the origins of TQM in statistical control of the manufacturing process relegated its study to those in operations research leaving the study of behavioural issues only cursory attention.

The hard-soft duality and concomitant resonances

In the UK recognition of the omission was addressed much sooner leading to TQM being treated from two perspectives. The first, as exemplified by writers such as Oakland (1989, 1993) Dale (1990, 1994) and Dale and Plunket (1990) reflected the maturing of the operations management perspective on quality. These writers had established considerable credibility for their work both intellectually through research and practically through application. These writers also tended to focus on the 'hard' side of TQM, emphasising a range of tools and techniques that addressed measurable aspects such as costs and production performance. These tools and techniques were presented as being necessary if continuous improvement was to be achieved (Dale, 1994) and most had been developed by the Japanese to collect and analyse non-qualitative and verbal data.

Conversely, with the maturation of these production/operations-orientated approaches to TQM came an increasing acceptance of the importance of addressing social factors involved in TQM. Hill (1991) Wilkinson (1992) Marchington et al (1993)

and Wilkinson et al (1993) identify the inadequate attention given to human resource considerations. Hill (1991) commented on the anomaly between the fully specified solutions to technical issues and the gap in the literature on the treatment of the social features of TQM. Wilkinson clearly established the need for people to be included in the implementation of a strategy, however brilliant its conception (Wilkinson, 1994). Although noting that human resource issues are not wholly ignored, they were addressed in only a limited way that denied a true examination of their impact. What emerged was an argument that emphasised the need to consider the 'soft' side of TQM that addressed employee involvement and commitment.

The debate centred on the ultimate objective of TQM being culture change and the inadequacies of the existing analysis of how companies might successfully implement the principles of quality. If a new culture was to be embedded then although structures, systems and procedures were important, they were secondary mechanisms of change (Schein, 1985; Hill, 1991). Primary tools included leadership and education, but also the more persuasive levers of change that could be deployed by top managers by virtue of their command of organisational power and the use of rewards and punishments. The comparative analysis of Ghobadian and Speller (1994:67) identified not only the unifying points in common of the 'quality gurus' but also their different in emphases and dominant factors. Whilst all supported the notion that it was imperative for management to develop a quality culture through changing perceptions and understanding of quality, their approaches did not agree as to whether the approach was customer or supply-led, whether the emphasis was 'people', 'process' or 'performance', nor in what was the dominant factor in the purpose of the approach. Their review showed that there was consistency in the view that a culture had to be developed, but there was an inconsistency in how this was to be achieved.

Consequently, although the 'soft' issues were being addressed, the literature on TQM still tended to present a rationalist and functionalist view, but, the links with HRM were being considered. In an attempt to move away from the dominant discourse Wilkinson et al (1991) presented the argument that TQM was consistent with a move towards strategic HRM. They postulated that as with HRM, the underlying philosophy was unitarism with the assumption that implementation was

fairly unproblematic, being only a matter of employee motivation and correct attitudes being instilled through appropriate training programmes. There were other similarities too, both assumed that employees were committed to the aims and objectives of the organisation, and both assumed that the management of people was the responsibility of line managers.

Furthermore, just as TQM was described as being both 'hard' and 'soft', so too was HRM (Goss, 1994; Legge, 1989; Storey, 1992) with considerable empathy between 'soft' HRM techniques and the 'soft' TQM issues and likewise with 'hard' HRM and TQM. Guest (1992) argues that TQM and HRM are inextricably linked through the vehicle of training because of the need for committed employees. So, just as 'soft' TQM could be described as a vehicle through which employees could become involved in all aspects of the organisation, and through which their influence and control was increased; so 'soft' HRM techniques aim to achieve high levels of employee performance, flexibility and commitment through the application of 'humanistic' ideals that place the employees at the centre of organisational success. However, as Marchington points out, there are contrasting and competing definitions of the terms that leave the employee with minimal contribution in the improvement process and very little influence (Marchington, 1995).

The demise of TQM

By 1996 a different perspective on TQM had emerged that questioned its claims of all-inclusive advantage for employees that promoted job satisfaction, empowerment and job well-being. Indeed Grey, (2009) suggests that TQM and the quality revolution of the 1980s was seen as being inadequate for the 1990s because of its adherence to incremental change techniques. Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) took on the mantle for a while but it too was ultimately seen as limited as an answer to successful change. Knights and Willmott (2012:268) suggest that quality is still very much a key feature of contemporary management practices and that a broader form of TQM is still supported, whilst BPR was too rigid in both its insistence of continuous top-down application and the assumption that employee empowerment would result. Some critics of TQM pointed to tighter managerial control as the objective of a reduction in variance was pursued (Parker and Slaughter, 1993).

Some pointed to the increase in surveillance arising out of the quality measurement systems introduced (Delbridge et al, 1992: Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992). Others viewed TQM as a vehicle through which workers were forced to indulge in their own work intensification and exploitation (McCardle et al, 1995). Many of these ideas came together in a text book that sought to provide an “alternative to the conventional wisdom in the field, which often tends to assume quality is universally beneficial” (Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995: preface). Clearly though, the seductiveness of TQM as a panacea was dwindling and its capability as a vehicle for successful organisational change was under attack.

A further group of writers understood TQM to foster values of quality and customer service that led to both collective and individual self-discipline and control (Boje and Winsor, 1993; Steingard and Fitzgibbons, 1993). Tuckman, (1995:58) describes the conceptualisation of internal organisational relations exemplified as the customer-service chain as representing manacles as well as links. Whilst Munro (1995) develops the customer link further by focusing on the insidious nature of the intensification of accountability when constantly tied to the customer. But what these writers share with the previous group is a belief that TQM increases the scope of management control, not the opposite. Wilkinson et al (1997) considered a duality of TQM expressed as the ‘bouquets’ of TQM as described by its advocates, and the ‘brickbats’ as identified by its critics. Their analysis shows in stark contrast the polarity of the debate between the rational functionalists and those of a critical thinking stance. The reward of *education* claimed by the former being declared as *indoctrination* by the latter; *empowerment* contrasted with *emasculatation*; *liberation* with *control*; *delaying* with *intensification*; *teamwork* with *peer-group pressure*; *responsibility* reinterpreted as *surveillance*; *Post-Fordist* practices re-defined as *Neo-Fordism*; a *blame-free culture* being replaced with *identification of errors*; and the prize of *commitment* being dammed as *compliance* (Wilkinson et al, 1997:800)

What was highly significant about the debate was not that the claims of either group were being dismissed, but that the claim of each group was that the very opposite was true. TQM presented a fundamental paradox, not just an ambiguity that could be explained away as being insignificant, but an absurdity in the literature. The claims and counter-claims could not be (easily) reconciled. Wilkinson et al (1997) proposed

a pragmatic response to suggest that the two 'camps' were blinkered by their own debate, that what was missing was to put TQM into the context of each organisation. For these writers making sense of TQM could only be achieved if the researcher accepted the variety of versions of TQM and the implementation of *some* version within a context. In their solution was a proposal that was far removed from the prescriptive approaches of the gurus. As such, what was being advocated was an approach to TQM that was based more on empiricism and focused on the process of transition. If TQM was no longer the vehicle to bring about organisational change, interest in managing organisational change was becoming a central theme for management (Grieves, 2010: v). Senior (2010: xiv) suggests that 'organisations must co-exist with change or they will drift out to the margins of survivability and perish'. Balogun and Hope-Hailey (2004) suggest that the rate of change has never been greater than in the current business environment, a sentiment shared by most contemporary writers on change.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a review of different ideas on how organisational change (in particular, the introduction of TQM) has been treated by different writers from various perspectives. What is apparent is that the subject has been dealt with an ever increasing level of sophistication and a move away from the prescriptive approaches that reinforced the dominance of the functionalist paradigm. This development is effectively reflected in the work of Graetz and Smith (2010) who have reviewed the complex territory of approaches to change into ten thematic philosophies of change and Nasim and Sushil (2011) who categorise the mainstream ideas into nine dominant views and posit the need to manage change through balancing various paradoxes. Both sets of writers attempt to explain why the application of only one approach to change will be unsuccessful when applied to the complexities and ambiguities of workplace environments. In identifying different philosophies Graetz and Smith highlight the dangers of applying uni-dimensional approaches to the management of change. Instead they argue that organisations should 'value the nexus between multiple philosophical perspectives (2010:150) and appreciate that competing value systems may, in practice, be complementary and not dysfunctional. Nasim and Sushil highlight a perceptible transfer of support from

'either-or' trade-off approaches to paradoxical thinking and the need to balance the paradox of continuity and change in particular (2011:193).

This chapter has explored the literature on the management of organisational change and how it can be explained, understood and debated. There appears to be a clear chronology of thinking as expressed by the work of Graetz and Smith (2010) and the earlier review of By (2005). The discussion on change is illustrated by a parallel discussion on TQM which formed the reason for action in the research organisation. Various tensions emerge throughout the chapter: hard-soft approaches, TQM – BPR, linear – non-linear change, operations management – human resource management, top-down – organisation-wide frameworks, control and consensus – ambiguity and dis-sensus, rational managerialism – political constructivism; they all have a credibility and present an opportunity for taking a particular view of organizations and offer a framework for explanation. Some have more durability than others or are more 'useful' to particular perspectives or paradigmatic standpoints. However, the review of the change literature in general and the introduction of TQM as a major strategic change initiative in particular, has provided the evidence to support a deeper exploration of the consequences of the actions of senior management teams on organizational change. Furthermore, the review has provided a rationale as to why the literature on the prescriptive assumptions underpinning the role of senior management teams should be challenged.

Chapter 3

Top Management Teams

Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the nature of top management teams and the reality, or otherwise, of shared views in decision-making. The chapter will develop a number of themes in the attempt to challenge the notion that top management as a team is a self-evident prescription that requires no justification. In particular it will explore the assumption that is often expressed from the rational management perspective that the best decision having been chosen will lead to consensus and uniform behaviour by the top management team. It is the issue of solidarity that is of interest, given the highly individualistic rise to top management status of the members of the team and also the imperative significance of the decisions that are being made. The review of the literature on senior management 'teams' is essential to enable a response to the implicit assumptions made by the writers on TQM and its demand for presumed unilateral senior management commitment, support and leadership. Such presumptions are littered throughout the managerialist literature as exemplified by Isaksen and Lauer (2002:74) who assert that 'senior management must work together as a team to build a shared vision and strategy for the organization'. The chapter will commence with a brief discussion of the link between the actions of the top management organizational performance and the assumptions that are highlighted in the literature that create a cause and effect relationship between the two.

A discussion of top management as a team and whether the soubriquet 'team' is synonymous with team working is presented to open up the discussion on whether team behaviour is as unproblematic as much of the literature presents, This discussion is developed through a review of the role of senior management in strategy-making and implementation, which is often presented as the key activity of the senior management group. A discussion on interpersonal tensions within top management groups and the activity of individual behaviour is introduced to lead into a discussion on decision making and the implications and assumptions that are made from the dominant rational-functional paradigm in relation to how top

managers actually behave to enable a critical debate to emerge about teams at this level. The final section reflects on how the literature has moved away from a discussion of senior management to senior leadership with a further reinforcement of the unproblematic nature of the dominant decision-making group. In reviewing the literature the focus of attention is given to the actions of the executive directors in their day-to-day roles and does not address the roles of the whole board of executive and non-executive directors and the responsibility for corporate governance.

Top Management and Organizational Performance

Throughout the literature on the introduction of TQM great emphasis is given to the need to have top management commitment to the process. In reviewing the work of the 'gurus' of quality management Ghobadian and Speller (1994) identify that they share a view that top management is responsible for quality, for providing leadership and commitment to the process, and to demonstrate an understanding of the process. The collective contention of the quality gurus is that it is also the responsibility of top management to develop a 'quality' culture by changing perception of, and attitudes towards, quality. Beer (2003:623) proposes that the introduction of TQM depends on the capacity of the senior management team to communicate the direction of the TQM strategy and develop a commitment to achieving the aim by demonstrating behaviours and making decisions that are consistent with the strategic intent.

Higgs (2007) reflects on the paucity of evidence from research into the impact of top teams on organisational performance despite the assertions of a clear relationship made by Hambrick and Mason (1984). Despite Higgs' reservations, the literature is dominated by claims made that either as 'top management', or more latterly as 'the leadership', senior organisational players are essential to organisational change and success. Snape et al (1995) pose the question "what change levers are available to top management in the bid to build a quality culture?" (1995: 43) clearly affirming the significance of this group in introducing TQM. This affirmation is supported by the view of Kettinger and Grover (1995) who assert that top management play a . key role in establishing and maintaining innovative and creative organizational cultures. However, it is to research undertaken by Zqikael et al (2008) that the direct link

between top management support and project success is made. They reflect on the project management literature that highlights the top management support as a defining success factor, but they also demonstrate that top managers should focus on delivering six specific processes that will lead to project success: communication; quality management; advanced project management techniques; project management assignment; project success measurement and; an organisational knowledge management system. Simmons et al (1995: 85) make the statement that “top leadership support has long been recognised as important to a major change programme”. Their point is made after reviewing the successful integration of TQM and HRM which was achieved through the orchestration of a team of senior executives at corporate level. Interestingly, their assertion also implies an assumption that the senior management team is unproblematic, that its activities present a unified and apolitical approach.

This assumption is not supported by Marchington (1995) and Wilkinson and Witcher (1993) who have raised the problems of ignoring the political realities of organisations and posit that the preference for a unitary perspective for the framework for organisational change has meant that power and politics in decision-making was largely ignored, a point of view supported by Buchanan and Badham (2008). Yet Peterson et al (1998) found that effective senior management teams play a greater role in company success than charismatic CEOs. Their study of nine leading companies in the USA that had gone through good and bad times during the period 1970 to the early 1990s, found that successful top management teams had a sense of control, optimism, group cohesiveness, a willingness to risk take, strong ethics and decentralized decision-making. They also concluded that the efforts of strong CEOs can be undone by dysfunctional senior management teams and where companies were weak, executive activity was characterised by egocentric behaviour and a lack of company loyalty. However, in successful organisations, the CEO fostered constructive group dynamics among the senior executive team, allowing them to demonstrate their ability to overcome problems and create new opportunities for growth. These findings contradict the views of Katzenbach (1998) who suggests that senior management teams find it hard to achieve high performance, partly because of poor training in team collaboration, but also due to the nature of the tasks undertaken that demand solutions in time-scales that do not allow due deliberation to

achieve optimum decisions. There is also disagreement from Nadler and Spencer (1998) who suggest that the CEO is the team leader and exercises strong control over the team, to the extent that the authority the members exercise depends entirely on the desires of the CEO.

The above comments lead to the question as to whether or not senior managerial and top teams do, or are intended to, act as a team and whether the team metaphor is a useful one for this influential group? Stott and Walker (1995) and Spencer and Pruss (1992) in their typologies of teams include the board as a team but point out that the objectives and roles of the board are often less clear than for other management teams that exist below board level. Hurst et al (1989) suggest that strategic management teams are constrained by the conventional strategic management process to such an extent that, whilst the team might share a 'cause map' (Weick, 1979) or a 'dominant logic' (Prahalad and Bettis, 1986) such unity denies the accommodation of innovative and radical ideas needed for renewal and recreation.

Furthermore, Hurst et al (1989) suggest that whilst those individuals with a predisposition towards the conventional strategic management activities of plan-act-evaluate and rational thought would 'fit in' the top management group, those that tended towards intuition, insight and subjective analysis would not. As such, the team might in itself be self-limiting because of the reinforcing nature of the rational, analytical approach based on normative structures. These cannot deal well with novelty and ambiguity, but these, by their nature, are the characteristics of change and difference. The exclusion of those individuals with a predisposition towards insight and feelings, may deny the exploration of things that are new and alien to the established way of doing things.

Lorenz (1994) argues that it is problematic to consider top management teams in the widely accepted use of the term. He suggests that far from acting as a team, the individuals who comprise the group are leaders within their own functional specialism. In so being, they tend to compete rather than seek consensus. He concludes that the reality of a team in the traditional sense is unlikely and that the idea of a top team working together is a contradiction in terms. Lorenz's comments

would suggest that the commonly held view of the top management team is naïve and lacks critical examination. This is a view that is supported by the useful qualitative study of Eisenstadt and Cohen (1990) that concluded that top groups encounter difficulty in working as a team, with members tending towards behaviours not conducive to team working. They suggest that attempts to retain the support of the CEO led to 'safe' behaviour that was unlikely to cause offence. Such behaviour is also unlikely to lead to decisions designed to significantly shift the organisation forward. In a study of directors Lorsch and MacIver (1989) found that despite feeling confident and competent that they were properly exercising their board governance; they were in practice, creating and maintaining board relationships that led them to have inadequate power.

Argyris (1990) describes the development of counterproductive behaviours as organisational defence routines. He lists Seven Worldwide Errors that top management believe violate the principles of sound management, yet continually and skilfully perpetuate (1990: 6-9). The seventh of these errors is that "The management team is a myth" and he comments on the emphasis that many executives give to the importance of team work and team building, the huge sums of money spent on team-building events, yet the results are in doubt. Quoting Peterfreund (1986) he presents the view that references to "our management team" only perpetuate the myth, not create the reality. These contrary views raise questions about the rationale for committing so much of organisational resources to the creation of a cohesive top management team. Despite these conclusions that suggest that top managers do not readily form a team, the literature on TQM remains committed to the concept and argues for the consensus view.

Top Management and Teamworking

However, if the view were taken that top management teams operate as a team and teamworking is unproblematic, then it would be useful to explore the advantages of such teamworking. The potential benefits of teams can be summarised as follows:
*Teams tend to be more productive than individuals operating independently or groups operating on a competitive basis (Tjosvold, 1991; Blake et al, 1987; Higgs, 1999)

*Teamworking leads to greater satisfaction amongst team members and more positive attitudes and perceptions of the members (Higgs, 1999; Adair 1986; Tannenbaum et al, 1992).

* Teams pool information to solve effectively a variety of tasks and because they provide the facility to express and discuss minority views, the quality of the decision-making is improved. The process is further enhanced by high commitment (Higgs and Rowland, 1992; Higgs, 1999; West and Slater, 1995).

Whilst the above claims have support, as Tannenbaum et al (1992) highlighted following an extensive review of the research on teams and performance, that although evidence could be found to demonstrate the positive impact of team working on individual attitudes and perceptions, there was no evidence to link this to performance improvement. If anything, the support for team working reflects the prevailing view of those who use it as a workplace modus operandi. Furthermore, despite a vast literature on teams and team working, there is a significant under-representation of senior management and executive teams within this literature (Pettigrew, 1992; West and Slater, 1995). What is important is that despite there being some evidence from comparative team performance analysis (Belbin, 1981, 1993; Mumma, 1994) and work done by Pettigrew (1992) suggesting that as far as top teams are concerned, there is much more that needs to be done to understand the mediation effect of process in the input to output relationship. The activities of the top managerial group are seen as being different from other teams within the workplace. Whilst other teams implement the strategic initiatives identified by the senior management team, the senior management team has to generate the strategy, making its work much more creative and imperative. In a survey of 218 directors conducted by Coulson-Thomas for the Institute of Directors in 1990, over 75% of whom were either the chairman or the chairman and CEO of their companies, 'teamwork' was presented as the principal boardroom issue. Whilst 'teamwork' was considered important throughout all levels of the organisation, good teamwork at board level was considered essential for setting the example and as a role-model for others to mirror.

Sadler (1997) proposes a balanced board made up of complementary skills, experiences and talents. He suggests that such a mix can provide the firm

foundation for teamwork. Sir John Harvey-Jones (1989) believes that the size of the board, where it meets, seating arrangements, how information is presented, the degree of informality, and the use of humour all affect the dynamics of the process of team working and are thus major contributors to effective teamwork. Hambrick (1995) found that the five most commonly reported concerns CEOs expressed about their top management team were: individual capabilities, team process shortcomings, internal rivalries, group think and fragmentation.

These concerns are echoed by Demb and Neubauer (1992) Coulson-Thomas (1993) and Coulson-Thomas and Brown (1989) who suggest that the search for unity, shared values and common approaches should not be carried to the extreme. The board can be seen as a constraint on change and should not be allowed to become a 'cosy club'. The concern is that team building suppresses the opportunity to challenge and speak out. Because teams like to present a united front, radical ideas and change may not form part of the agenda. However, harmony is not something that can be taken for granted and assumed. Personal ambitions, the pursuit of corporate power, private agendas, internal rivalries, undercurrents and resentments, may all be present within the top team and the board itself should review constantly how effectively it is working as a team.

Hambrick (1995) points out that the director skills gaps that were the concern of CEOs were considered as 'higher level' relating, as such, to interpersonal skills and strategic perspective. Higher order value added business capabilities are identified by Kakabadse and Korac-Kakabadse (2000) as being one of three critical domains in the work responsibilities of top management teams. In his consideration of the attributes that lead to successful influence and direction Coulson-Thomas (1993:16, 35-36) suggests that qualities that distinguish a competent leader in the strategic arena are:

- Vision, acumen, leadership and integrity
- Breadth of vision, conceptual thinking, strategic awareness
- Strategic perspective, breadth and a customer focus
- Business/commercial awareness and development
- People and organising perspective, team and individual focus
- Ability to contribute to strategic direction and governance.

These qualities are those expected of the top management team and what is important is the developing tendency in the literature to merge the two concepts so that they become interchangeable, a point expanded upon later. Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that it is important to review the top management team in the strategic context. He found that factors that aided the team's ability to make fast strategic decisions were: speeding up their cognitive activity, the use of effective processes and procedures to enable better information analysis, putting the team under pressure to reach 'good/wise' decisions and to present such decisions and strategic intentions with confidence and certainty.

With regard to the separation of top management teams from other teams within organizations Eisenstat and Cohen (1990) identify six specific requirements:

- a need for decisions to take account of a range of interests
- a need for more creative organisational solutions
- a need for a higher level of understanding for the decisions they are involved in
- more sophisticated communications
- a need to spread the burden of managing the organisation in general
- a need to continuously develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of each member.

Eisenstat and Cohen concluded that whilst these requirements could apply to other types of teams, the complexity of the context in which top management teams operated meant that there was a significant difference in the complexity of the input and processes elements in achieving the decisional outcome. This focus on contextual complexity was also an issue highlighted by Hurst et al (1989). If anything, the issue of organisational and contextual complexity increased throughout the 1990s (Jackson et al, 2003). If organisations are to compete successfully, then they must adopt a broader outlook, become more open to external opportunities, and maintain a culture of constant learning (Goodwin and Fulmer, 1995:9).

Strategy-making and implementation

The top team is responsible for designing and implementing strategy in the organisation. As the dominant coalition and decision-making body, top management

teams could ultimately be held responsible for all decisions throughout the organisation. However, there is no ideal form and composition to the top team, or an 'ideal way in which it works (Jackson et al, 2003). What emerges is a mix of personalities, competencies and specialisms, and as the board is a living entity, how these personalities interrelate will evolve and change over time and as circumstances change (Coulson-Thomas, 1993; Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2001). Despite variations in board composition, the board accepts ultimate accountability for the decisions it makes, although the practice of delegation of authority to other senior managers is widespread (Dulewicz et al, 1995). If there is no blueprint for an effective board this suggests that attitudes and behaviour, rather than structure, may be the critical factors in achieving effective performance (Coulson-Thomas, 1993, 1981). Demb and Neubauer (1992) found that similar approaches are adopted by different board types. They identified that the need to confront pervasive challenges in the business environment has forced responses that have common elements. These responses are characterised by certain forms of behaviour that have emerged independently of the board's formal structure.

A study by the Institute of Directors (1995) into the standards of good practice for boards of directors in the UK established 12 broad areas of knowledge and six broad areas of competency. These it was proposed, should provide the inputs into the process activity of the board. The areas of knowledge fall into three general categories:

- Matters relating to the board itself
- Matters relating to the external environment
- Technical subjects

The broad areas of competency are:

- Strategic perception and decision-making
- Analytical understanding
- Communication
- Interacting with others
- Board management
- Achieving results

These alone would not secure success because a third, subjective, assessment is made of each director. Essentially each director is perceived by his/her co-workers and an assessment of their ability/potential ability is made. The qualities of those in the position of organisational leaders, as identified by Coulson-Thomas (1993) help establish the impression that is made by the director and enhances/diminishes his/her reputation. All stakeholders have to believe in the capability of their leaders and without that belief, the ability to influence direction is hindered (Jackson et al, 2003). Consequently, the ability to invoke belief in the legitimacy of the individuals to be in superordinate positions at the top of the organization by especially, but not exclusively, those lower down the organization who are expected to implement decisions, is an essential skill by those in the top positions.

If the knowledge that the directors possess, their competency and the perception of their capability present the inputs into the process to achieve the outcomes of board activity, then it is equally important to consider what constitutes the mediating effect of the processes in the input-outcome relationship. Frustrations with the lack of understanding of these processes, made more problematic by the accessibility difficulty (Lorsch, 1989; Pettigrew, 1992) led to a major research project to identify senior managerial team process factors (Higgs and Dulewicz, 1997). They established a 12 factor model:

1. "Team Relationships: The perceived nature of personal and professional relationships and interpersonal behaviours encountered in the team.
2. Team Focus: The extent to which the team members perceive themselves to be operating in a way that encourages team working.
3. Approach to performance: The way in which the team is perceived to set goals and focus on monitoring its achievements.
4. Leadership Style: The perceptions of the team leader's predominant style of interacting with the team.
5. Team Discipline: The approaches adopted by the team to provide a context for their actions, behaviours and disciplines.
6. Team Decision-Making: The extent to which the team arrive at decisions through the majority vote.
7. Team Confidence: The perceptions of the team's confidence to think in new ways and invite others in to enhance their thinking.

8. Contributions: The extent to which contribution is evenly distributed and valued.
9. Decision Focus: The nature of data which informs decisions.
10. Social Contact: The extent to which social interaction among team members is important.
11. Process Focus: The team's perceptions of the importance of how they work together as well as the tasks and outcomes.
12. Consistency: The perceptions of the team's ability to perform consistently in differing circumstances and contexts."

(Higgs and Dulewicz, 1997:55-56)

These twelve process factors were then considered in relation to three elements of performance (outcomes) previously identified which were: team cohesion/climate; team achievements and overall team improvement orientation (Higgs and Rowland, 1992).

The research indicated several important findings of which the following is particularly pertinent to this research. The process factors of team focus, team discipline, contribution and consistency all positively correlated with the performance outcome of improvement orientation. This outcome describes the team's creativity, forward thinking and proactivity. The process factor of contribution impacts on all three of the performance outcomes, that is: team cohesion, improvement orientation and team achievements. The composition of this factor relates to involvement and participation, recognised by several researchers as being significant in team performance success (Hackman, 1990; Tjosvold, 1991). The overall combination of these processes can be seen as contributing to a team's abilities to engage in strategic thinking and decision-making (Higgs and Dulewicz, 1997; Hackman, 1990; Michel and Hambrick, 1992).

A further factor affecting a senior management team's strategic decision-making capability is that of climate (Amason, 1996). Climate refers to factors such as openness, candour, co-operation and creativity and the extent to which these are encouraged or otherwise. It also encompasses the atmosphere generated as the members interact and the extent to which this provides a positive ambience in which decisions can be made. The climate also considers such variables as the prevailing

mood and whether this is hostile, or one in which the members can enjoy their role; the circumstances in which the activities of the team are taking place and the extent to which the team varies its performance in accordance with those circumstances; and the efficacy and confidence of the team in terms of knowing how it adds value (Institute of Directors, 1995; Dulewicz, 1995). Clearly, what this discussion of climate is inferring is that strategic decision-making takes place within a political environment. This needs to be considered with the team process factors identified as impacting on strategic thinking and decision-making, those being:

team focus highlighting challenge, clear dialogue and communication, risk-taking and questioning;

team discipline highlighting thoroughness of preparation, high level of commitment by all and good time-management;

contribution with its assumption of equal distribution of input; and *consistency* with the expectation that performance will not vary.

What emerges from a reconsideration of these process factors is the underlying feature not highlighted at all - political activity and the importance of unequal distribution of power within the team and how this impacts on decisions and their implementation.

Jackson and Carter propose that decision-making is a universal activity and that the decisions that managers make are made in the same way as everyone else and are often the same kind (2000:224). However, there can be no doubt that the impact of the decisions made by the senior management team have bigger consequences than those made by individuals lower down the organisation. Perhaps to follow the example of Jackson and Carter, it is probably more of a truism to say that a single decision made by a worker lower down the organisation could have disastrous consequences for the organisation as a whole, but the deliberations of the senior management team are intended to have a continuous consequence on the operations of the organisation.

Interpersonal tensions and top management

Using the 'Nine Building Blocks of Teamwork' questionnaire as devised by Woodcock and Francis (1981), Arroba and Wedgwood-Oppenheim surveyed 10 top

corporate management teams to ascertain satisfaction/dissatisfaction with each aspect of team working. They found that “clear objectives and agreed goals” scored notably higher than any other score reflecting dissatisfaction with this aspect (Arroba and Wedgwood-Oppenheim, 1996:8). The next aspect reflected difficulties with co-operation and managing conflict with individual elements of behaviour coming to the fore, including internal politics, protection and aggrandisement. They propose several reasons for goal setting being perceived as so problematic:

- *Teamwork is taken for granted and its particular purpose is not open to question.

- *Because the reason why a team is needed at the top is seemingly so obvious, the assumptions of the CEO and the directors are not shared.

- *Because the purpose of the team is so accepted in the minds of the team members, the purpose does not warrant discussion. It is accepted that the purpose of the corporate team is to achieve the corporate objectives (Arroba and Wedgwood-Oppenheim, 1996::9).

It is also the purpose of the top management team to identify, as well as pursue, the corporate objectives. Consequently, there appears to be a potential tension between setting the objectives and getting on with things -with action being preferred to reflection. What is emerging is a suggestion that whilst the top management team might be seen to act as a team in relation to getting things done, the decision about what needs to be done is not the result of team activity. These big decisions are left to powerful individuals or a powerful coalition (Butcher and Clarke, 1999; Arroba and Wedgwood-Oppenheim, 1996). Furthermore, such teams are capable and adept at masking their errors and shortcomings by bypassing and cover-ups with (1990) concluding that those responsible for resolving problems that are threatening (that require big decisions) are more likely to bury the problem under layers of corporate camouflage. This view is far removed from the mainstream managerial literature that proposes strategy making as a rational, logical process, open to debate and discussion as interested parties share their knowledge and experience in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. In this literature, the emphasis is on unity and pulling together, the creation of a culture of openness, transparency and trust, and behaviours that emphasise support and co-operation.

Such views of organisational are seen as unrealistic and naïve (Butcher and Clarke, 1999; Buchanan and Boddy, 1992). The reality is seen as an organisation in which political activity is endemic and in which political fluency is a necessary and essential management discipline (Buchanan and Badham, 1999, Butcher and Clarke, 1999, Butcher et al, 1997). Buchanan and Badham (1999:210-214) citing Chanlat (1997) suggest that there are three triggers to political activity: personal characteristics, decisional characteristics and structural characteristics. Personal characteristics that trigger political activity are those associated with ambition and career advancement in which the personal goal is achieved through the application of political ploys including: forming coalition, sustaining attention to your preferred agenda and marginalising the opposition.

If such behaviours are the characteristics of ambitious individuals, there is no reason to expect them to stop once their ambitions are achieved, nor to assume that the attainment of top management team status is the manifestation of ambition achievement. It is also likely that those who attain the position of top management are likely to demonstrate a high need for power (nPow) (McClelland and Burnham 1976). Whilst the authors distinguish between social powers, exercised in the pursuit of common good; and personal power, exercised in the pursuit of personal gain; who is exercising what type seems to depend on who is doing the evaluation of the experience. Clearly, what is also a consequence of groups of individuals who have high nPow, is an inevitable power play as each is motivated in accordance with his/her dominant motive need.

Decisional characteristics relate to the extent to which decisions are unprogrammable (programmable decisions being structured, routine and subject to known decision rules). Unstructured decisions are those characterised by ambiguity and susceptible to value judgements, disagreement, personal experiences and interpretations. The political tactics become apparent as individuals consider their personal positioning, reputation, future plans and status. Such individual attention leads to personal strategies designed to help win the preferred decision outcome and strategies that will conform with the individual's conventions. Structural characteristics lead to political behaviour that is an inevitable consequence of structural differentiation (Johnson and Gill, 1993). Those at the top of organisations

are invested with the authority to control and co-ordinate those below them. Yet those below are not passive and will exercise both self-control and the need to gain self-control (Hopwood, 1974). There are also differences between horizontal groupings with functions and factions developing different goals, priorities and interpretations based on different frames of reference. These differences led Buchanan and Badham (1999: 212) to argue that

‘the concept of the organisation as a united community in pursuit of shared goals is a fiction of the management literature and corporate publicity’.

This politicised view of organisations in which decentralisation, disaggregation, disorganisation and delaying are the norm (Thompson and O’Connell Davidson, 1995:17) and in which individuals will be more dependent on their own personal resources and interpersonal skills is inconsistent with the mainstream management literature. In particular, the preference for writers such as Handy (1997) Wright and Taylor (1994) and Smith et al, (1983) is to discuss the organisation of the 21st Century in terms of organisation communities in which employees are citizens thus demonstrating care for their communities other citizenship attributes. In this literature the focus is on consistency of values, identity and purpose, thus ignoring the reality of power-inequalities and power-plays. The emphasis is on harmony with an ideological constraint on challenge and resistance to the dominant paradigm. To accept that organisations are representations of politically motivated and power-driven individuals is to accept the premise that where decisions are made in agreement with others, to do so, is itself the result of a politically motivated decision. As this is the preferred view of the author, then the notion of the top management team demonstrating those attributes associated with ‘good’ team membership become less problematic. What is more pertinent is the process through which decisions are made and the process for successful implementation or the process through which decisions are never successfully implemented.

Decision-making and the role of senior managers

There are various models of decision-making that exist within the literature. There are those that deal with decision-making in conditions of certainty. These start with the work of Taylor (1911) and technical rationality and the assumption that agreed

objectives in relation to clear-cut problems, will lead the decision-maker to make objective/factual observations and thus rational conclusions. However, recognising the unlikely conditions for technical rationality, Simon (1960) introduced the notion of 'bounded rationality' which accepted the imperfect world in which decisions are made, yet still gave precedence to the idea that rational process could still work within these limits. Far from pursuing the action that maximises the outcome, managers limit their search for the solution that 'satisfices'. Two other features of decision-making within the framework of bounded rationality led to the implicit acceptance of politics within the process, but 'sanitised' them out in favour of the impression of a united and unified management. Firstly the use of bureaucratic procedures, as commented on by March and Simon (1958) Cyert and March (1963) and Simon (1960) through which managers attempt to establish rules of action and standard operating procedures that set precedents and remove the need to keep making decisions afresh each time. Secondly, there is the tendency to reflect the wishes of the most powerful coalition when objectives and interests conflict (Cyert and March, 1963).

Key to both approaches is that they see the organisation as seeking satisfactory attainment of known objectives according to known criteria for success and failure. The approaches are unidirectional and based on an attempted comprehensiveness of information and analysis. The processes are algorithmic and the bounded rationality approach differs only in as much as it involves rules of thumb to proceed by trial and error, dealing only with what are considered to be the most important bits of information for those circumstances (Stacey, 2000). There is considerable correspondence between linear models of change and classical, rational decision-making (Jones and Gross, 1996).

Trial and error is emphasised in Quinn's (1980) research into strategic decision-making. In the resulting model, the organisation is driven by a central intention with respect to the goal, but there is no central intention with respect to how the goal should be achieved. The goal is reached through step-by-step actions, described as logical incrementalism, during which actions are taken at various locations in the organisation. Each initiative is championed by a key influencer addressing a particular strategic intent, but operating independently of other initiatives. However,

the whole process is presented as being orchestrated by the senior management team who do so in an orderly, logical way sustaining purpose and intended destination. In a similar vein, in formulating his “science of muddling through” Lindblom (1959) had argued that decision-makers are more likely to make incremental decisions that do not vary much from the status quo. His argument was based on the observation that decision-makers found it much easier to assess the impact of marginal changes than of significantly different alternatives. Other models of decision-making deal with situations of uncertainty. These models assume neither knowledge of the final destination nor the outcomes being aimed for. As such, it would not be appropriate to assume the route to be taken. Collingridge (1980) calls for decisions under circumstances of uncertainty to be considered using a completely different mind-set on which the focus is on searching for error rather than being obsessed with the search for the right choice. The focus is on valuing mistakes and the learning that can be gained from being wrong. The assumption is that by recognising the mistake then it can be corrected soonest rather than be concealed or *rationalised away*.

Mintzberg et al (1976) formulated as descriptive model of decision-making that presents the process in three basic stages, each demonstrating a number of routines. The stages are:

1. Identification
2. Development
3. Selection

In the first stage someone has to recognise that a decision needs to be taken. The recognition comes from interpreting stimuli from the environment. As Johnson (1987) points out, such recognition will depend on the frame of reference of the individual, which will inevitably lead to some stimuli being ignored. What is clear from the description of this stage is that the routine for recognising a problem is bound by the attributes of the people involved in recognition, their relationships with each other, their expectations and goals, and their values. In short, this process is subject to political activity and what decision is taken to deal with the accepted problem will probably have been subject to much debate and political manoeuvrings. In the second stage of development, search and design are crucial routines. But as Mintzberg et al observed, the tendency is to be drawn to solutions that have been

used before and that can be applied to the current problem. As such, innovative approaches to strategic decision-making are avoided. Regardless of the uncertainty and therefore, 'newness' of the problem, tried and tested approaches are reinvented as the pressure to reduce uncertainty is a dominant driver for the decision solution. The final stage of selection involves the routines of screening, evaluative choice and authorisation. However, as Mintzberg and his colleagues noted, the process was far from analytical and depended rather on the reputation and personal standing of the person pushing for a particular solution. Intuition and personal judgement, often reinforced with reference to precedent, imitation or tradition, were found to be the main criteria used to evaluate the options. Far from a rational approach to decision-making, the process highlights the political nature of the activity, although there would likely be some ex post facto rationalisation to justify the preferred decision choice.

Whilst Lindblom (1959) had formulated his "science of muddling through" in which managers choose the ends and the means simultaneously and the judgement of a good policy is the one that achieves most support; he was to synthesise the approach into the model of 'disjointed incrementalism' (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Lindblom, 1965). Jones and Gross (1996) observe the similarity between disjointed incrementalism and the processual approach to managing change as described by Dawson and Palmer (1995) and the research of Petigrew and Whipp (1991) in which both studies reflected on the continuous need for managers to revise their decisions making continual assessments, repeated choices and multiple adjustments to meet unpredictable and unfolding conditions.

Jones and Gross (1996:25) describe four major characteristics encapsulating disjointed incrementalism. Firstly the incremental characteristic which identifies the likelihood that decision-makers will move incrementally in the desired direction but will not necessarily look for a solution whilst at the same time disregarding (for sound reasons) other possible moves. Secondly, the characteristic of reconstructive analysis in which the 'problem' is continuously redefined to make it manageable, rather than keeping on attacking an impossible one. Thirdly, is the characteristic of serial analysis and evaluation in which decision-makers know that they need not seek a 'right' solution because they will return to the same problem area endlessly.

Consequently, they seek only a serial step in the attack on the problem. Lastly is the characteristic of remedial orientation in which problem solving is less about aspiration to achieve a future state and more about remedying or removing imperfections. The suggestion is that by drawing attention away from the future and dealing with the present, there is an immediate simplification of the problem. Decision-making is thus presented not as a linear activity linked to exact computation of what needs to be achieved, but as a series of remedial steps that deal with anticipated adverse consequences as new problems and unanticipated problems emerge. The attention is given to things that happen rather than attempting to anticipate every contingency and plan accordingly. Serious, lasting mistakes are avoided because the changes that are being made are only small steps.

Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) described organisations, particularly public sector ones, as organised anarchies operating garbage-can decision-making. They found that organisations that demonstrated certain conditions, especially where there is no simple and clear hierarchy and where the distribution of power is close to equality, then choice of decision occurs largely by chance. The choice depends largely on the context in which it is attended to, the level of attention it is given in relation to other issues, the personnel present and how they participated, and how others interpreted the participation. Intention is lost in the flow of events and goals are the product of sense-making after the event (Stacey, 2000:97).

There are several important points that emerge from the discussion of decision-making. Firstly that political activity is more of a reality than the classical, rational approaches to decision-making present. As such, power is a critical factor. Secondly, that where individuals and subunits do not have clear goals and where no individual has much power and the distribution of power is not stably determined by sanctions, interdependence and contribution, then decisions are likely to be more subject to chance. Thirdly, that there is an implicit assumption that whilst politicking occurs in the process to reach a decision, once made, it is unchallenged (Jackson and Carter, 2000) there does not appear to be further discussion regarding getting the decision overturned. These points would appear to fit with the ideas underpinning a senior management team that makes decisions on the basis of unity in the best interest of all. They also support the idea that if a team is led by a strong leader, in which there

is a hierarchy and a clear power structure, then decision-making will be less subject to chance and will be purposeful.

However, what if the senior management group was to demonstrate characteristics that led Cyert et al (1972) to describe organised anarchy? What if, within the SMT, the distribution of power over time is not constant, nor is it over issue? Might then there be evidence of choices being avoided, choices being deferred, choices never being implemented or sabotaged, or choices being made by habit and lack of due consideration? That, despite the abundance of literature to support a quasi-logical process, in which a team of (supposed) like-minded individuals come together to debate and discuss strategic direction and choice, the reality is far more ambiguous. The reality of decision-making, even at the top of organisations, is apparently, more a reflection of who has power to determine what is discursively approved - or not approved, who has power to construct the agenda, and who has access to the means to implement the decision – or otherwise.

Senior Management and Senior Leadership

Whilst senior management teams may or may not exist as ‘real’ teams (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993) or are more akin to formulaic prescription (Knights and Willmott, 2007) there is also an issue that needs to be addressed as to how the literature on senior management teams has melded into the literature on leadership. Following Parker’s (2002) useful discussion of ‘management’ as both noun and verb; it seems that the distinction lends itself to a valuable application to ‘leadership’ where, in the context of the organization, as the collective noun and definite article ‘The Leadership’ clearly implies the senior management team. The significance of the abstraction of ‘the senior management team’ into a single entity ‘the leadership’ again reinforces the notion of unification and an unproblematic relationship. Whilst observers of leadership in action such as Knights and Willmott (1992) document the dual layered impact of the CEO as leader on the leadership team, presenting a complexity of teams within *the* team to enable the leader to assert and re-assert ‘his’ authority, such opportunities to observe leadership in action are not common.

From the functionalist paradigm perspective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), leadership is characterised by a concern to provide social order, consensus, solidarity and preservation of the status quo. But whilst such an interpretation serves to promote and reinforce the managerialist prerogative, more recent developments in thinking about organizations and how they are led, for example: Foucault, postmodernism, poststructuralism and feminism, provide less flattering frameworks for analysis of senior managers in action. As Fournier and Grey (2000) and Grey (2005) warns, whilst Burrell and Morgan offer a seminal approach to different interpretation, their four paradigms inevitably constrain thinking, not liberate it. Notwithstanding Grey's concern, the functionalist paradigm is still dominant in the managerial literature.

Consequently, the actions of the leadership taking place at the higher levels of the organisation require the identification of the means by which the organisation will gain a distinctive capability, which is unquestionably good. De facto therefore, if what is being done is good, the leadership cannot be involved in anything bad and there is no need to question what constitutes 'the leadership'? Despite the tendency to treat top management teams as a unified and unifying entity, Higgs et al (2005) considered that the research to date was both limited and contradictory with regard to the link between top management team behaviour and performance. Later work by Higgs (2007) following the behaviour of 54 senior management teams, concluded that not only are there successful team processes that can be followed, but that the mix of personalities and how these interact are important to determining successful team outcomes. Improving team performance can be achieved through enhancing the mix, which itself requires developing member competencies and changing behaviours, and enhancing the processes through which the members interact. Whilst team-building activities are implied, what is stated is coaching and development and, whilst not the purpose of this discussion, it is worth noting that two significant areas of *management development* are those of leadership development and executive coaching.

Conclusion

The previous chapter identified that the organizational change literature and especially the TQM literature states universally that the support of top management

is essential in securing acceptance and adherence to the principles and practices of TQM. The chapter has sought to explore the notion of the unity of the top management team, questioning whether senior managers can and do act as a team and the consequences of lack of team behaviour of decision-making and support for initiatives such as TQM. The dominant literature tends to accept the notion of a team operating at the strategic level of the organization presenting a unified and unifying body acting in the best interests of the organizational community. The literature has also seemingly drifted into a focus on leadership rather than top management in a re-establishment of the authority and influence of the dominant coalition. Higgs (2007) has demonstrated that a balanced mix of personalities and good team processes will lead to improved organisational performance.

Despite the contrary arguments of critical management writers, the leadership literature remains supportive of the importance of effective leadership, whether by a single person or a group of senior managers. The various interpretations of processes adopted and the mix of personalities of the senior management at TRC will be considered as part of the contributing factors that led to the failure to implement change and introduce TQM to the company. What is clear from the literature however is that senior management is just as susceptible to dysfunctional team behaviour as any other level within an organisation and membership of the senior management does not confer functional and effective team behaviours as an automatic set of personal attributes.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter the approach to the research design, conduct, analysis and interpretation is discussed. There are two aspects to this discussion with the first focusing on the original research and data collection. The second aspect addresses the refocus onto the more specific research question that emerged out of the original research. Consequently, this chapter aims to explain the research methodology that informed the reasoning behind the collection of the material and then explain the new research methodology that underpins the analysis of the interview material that was collected as one aspect of the original empirical process. The rationale behind using data that was collected 15 years ago was discussed in the introduction but it is essential to demonstrate that the interviews present a credible and authentic data source that meet the need for research validity. For the purpose of this dissertation the second research methodology is the subject of analytical scrutiny, but as it obviously depends on the original data collection approach, some discussion of the first is appropriate. Both methodologies are underpinned by the interpretive research paradigm and are examples of qualitative research with the aims of emphasising discovery, meaning and description rather than prediction (Laverty, 2003). The first methodology was grounded theory and the second is hermeneutic phenomenology.

The original research approach.

The original research question proposed the inquiry of *Total Quality Management: What's in it for the Workers?* The focus of the research therefore, was very much on worker experience of Total Quality Management practices and what impact these had had on worker feelings about being at work and doing work. The point of inquiry was essentially that having been exposed to new working practices that were based on the principles and assumptions of TQM, did the workers perceive that there was a difference and, if so, how was that difference translated into behaviour? Two points emerge from this research enquiry, firstly, that the author had identified a group for study that needed further clarification. The intention was to focus on worker experience of TQM, but this required a refinement of what was meant by 'worker'.

The ambiguity about the term worker is significant because as an organisation-wide initiative, exposure to TQM is not optional or partial (Hill, 1991, 1995; Wilkinson et al, 1992) everyone, at all levels is affected. Consequently, who is classed as 'worker' is subjective and open to different connotations. The title 'worker' cannot simply be assumed to be anyone who is not classified as supervisory or management. Also, as TQM tends to cascade through the organisation, 'bottom-level' worker experience would depend very much on how TQM initiatives had been experienced, interpreted and disseminated by those higher up the organisational hierarchy. Worker experience therefore could not be assumed to be the same throughout the organisation.

The second point was that the question suggests that the author was concerned with the claim of the TQM rhetoric that worker aspirations are seen to echo organisational goals(; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992 Tuckman, 1995) itself a furtherance of the neo-Human Relations project, in particular, Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). The question clearly indicates a view that workers may not experience what the popular literature suggested they should, and that workers should be given greater credibility for their actions (Smith and Thompson, 1992, 1998). The concern of the author was that although the objects of the discourse of TQM are people and the discourse is about the experience of people at work, the discourse did not appear to include their interpretation of what that experience is. The critical theorists were only recently emerging to question and restate what TQM might mean (Hill, 1991; Wilkinson and Sewell, 1992) the largest proportion of the literature on TQM remained firmly signified by managers and managerial academics (see for example, Dale and Plunkett, 1992 and Oakland 1993) thus reinforcing the managerial view of what TQM should mean from that particular perspective. As such, the discourse defined what the experience was and what it should mean, because it reflected what was relevant and acceptable to those that had the power to signify the preferred meaning. The experience, in the language of those who were the objects of the discourse (the workers) was not evident in much of the literature, and therefore appeared to be irrelevant. Rather than interpreting workers as the beneficiaries of the TQM project, they could be interpreted as victims, spoken about but unable to speak, described and signified in a language that was not theirs (Lyotard, 1984). In

effect, the development of the 'accepted view' was in itself an act of supreme power (Jackson and Carter, 2000).

The refinement of the research enquiry meant that the research was probably better undertaken in the manufacturing sector, and certainly at the time the research began, systematic service quality management had not been studied and practiced as long as goods quality management. 'The first general efforts with regard to services were not reported until the 1980s. Consequently, service quality is in this respect an underdeveloped field' (Gummesson, 1993:10). Also, the research needed to be undertaken in organisations that were big enough to have a statistically significant number of workers at all levels. Because the research required those being studied to reflect on both prior and post-experience of the introduction of TQM practices, it needed to be conducted over a length of time that would incorporate the introduction, the transition and the 'skilled' operation of TQM in practice. In this context the use of the word 'skilled' does not necessary imply that the work was being done well in a qualitative sense, but that the work was being done sub-consciously, that is, that the 'new' working practices had been normalised (Argyris, 1991).

The key features of the research design suggested that a survey to elicit comparative data was not likely given that organisations would not be experiencing the introduction of TQM over the same time scales. Furthermore, a survey would probably not generate the rich data needed to capture worker experiences. Secondly, given that the intention was to explore the notion of worker experience of TQM and was not testing out a hypothesis, quantitative research was not appropriate initially. Thirdly, because of the time scale involved in studying the introduction and practice of TQM, it was decided that a single case constituting a longitudinal study of the organisation over four years would be the most appropriate methodology in the first instance. This would allow an inductive study that would lead to the construction of explanations and theories of what had been observed (Kolb, 1984, Johnson and Gill, 1991) that in turn could be tested using deductive reasoning to establish the probity of those explanations and theories (Johnson and Gill, 1991).

The strengths and weaknesses of using single cases for inductive theory building have been discussed in depth by Eisenhardt(1989,1991) Dyer and Wilkins(1991) and Yin(1984). Despite some disagreement, they do agree that deep, clinical, single case-studies are useful for inductive theory building in the early development of a field of research. Given the above reasoning and following the method of research strategy choice as described by Johnson and Gill (2002) the research strategy decision was a case study. The main strength of the longitudinal perspective was the ability it offers to evaluate change over time (Saunders et al, 2008). By being able to gather data about people and the events they were exposed to over time, some indication of the impact of interventions upon those variables that are likely to affect the change can be obtained (Adams and Schanefeldt, 1991). It could be argued that the study design was before-and-after (Kumar, 2011) as there were only two contacts with the study population and the focus was on studying the extent of change in worker behaviour/experience. However, whilst one study group (the main group) was only visited twice, other important study participants were visited more often, in particular the TQM Co-ordinator and the author contends therefore, that the design is a longitudinal case-study and not two case-studies separated by time.

A qualitative research methodology was appropriate and the strategy of inquiry following the practices of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss,1967; Charmaz, 2006) was chosen. Van Maanen(1979) describes qualitative methods as being similar to the interpretative procedures that people make use of in our configurations of personal everyday experiences. Grounded theory is the discovery of theory from data systematically collected from effective and carefully constructed social research that can then be tested and deductive methods of research and analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). However, whilst a grounded theory approach was the original intention, because of what emerged from the inductive process, there was no opportunity to develop deductive research to answer the original research focus. What follows is an explanation and discussion of the research methodology that incorporates the original research approach, grounded theory, and case-study which was to provide the basis upon which to develop inductive theory (Gersick, 1994; Gioia and Chittipeddi,1991; Partington,2000) and to explain how the empirical data was 're-cycled'.

The purpose of the case-study changed to become one used to explain the phenomena not explore or stimulate further research. In essence the case-study became an *intrinsic* case-study as opposed to an *instrumental* case-study in that it became the focus of attention rather than the means of facilitating the understanding of something else (Stake, 1994). The case study is underpinned by a constructivist-interpretive paradigm and the ontology and epistemology for the constructivist paradigm is relativist (multiple realities) and subjective, in which the researcher and subject create understandings (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, following the ideas of Stake (2006) the key features of the case informed by the constructionist ontology are that the design is emergent, the sample can be a single case, the analysis is within the case and the theory that emerges from the rich picture of the case may or may not be generalizable to other contexts (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008).

The Research Process

The author began the research process by locating a research organisation that was at the appropriate stage of introducing TQM and met with the research constraints as identified earlier. Initial contact to identify potential participant organisations was made through students on a part-time MBA programme which included many senior managers. One participant who was particularly interested was the Managing Director of another business unit within the group that included TRC. After an extensive interview the author decided that his company was not appropriate as it was unlikely that the introduction would reflect the complexities related to the introduction that were anticipated by the author and that there would not be in-house expertise that could provide in-depth information on the issues (Ghauri et al: 1995:91). The Managing Director was, however able to put me in contact with the Total Quality Manager at TRC. After discussions with the new contact, it was considered that TRC met the research criteria of being the right size, in manufacturing and at the right stage of introducing TQM.

The research process was intended to observe, elicit information and review the permeation of TQM throughout TRC, after agreement at board level to its introduction. Following the recommendation of Strauss and Corbin (1990:50) the

author began the research with some background in the technical literature of TQM but not having conducted an extensive literature review. Van Maanen et al (1982:16) note that investigators should attempt to avoid a priori commitment to any theoretical model. Because the focus was on 'worker experience', about which very little had been written, the hope was to be effective in the analysis of the data to allow this new category of literature to emerge. As Strauss and Corbin explain (1990) "it makes no sense to start with received theories or variables (categories) because these are likely to impede the development of new theoretical formulations". What knowledge the author had was used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity, formulate some areas of inquiry and to guide initial observations.

The main method of primary data collection was through interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to allow participants too reflect on recent experience and behaviour. Because the introduction of TQM was current, any changes in workplace experience would be easily retrieved from the participants' memories, enabling reconstruction of events to be more reliable. Interviews would allow the author to trace the development of TQM within the organisation, as perceived by those exposed to the new practices. As Wilson (1977) suggests, human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs and so it is important to study the behaviour in that situation in which all contextual variables are operating.

Several other methods were used to generate primary data and included attendance at a Board of internal Directors meeting enabling the opportunity to observe them as working group; informal discussions with the TQ Manager and during the later stages his assistant, and finally it was intended that an employee attitude survey be administered. Although the discussions with the TQ Manager and his assistant were informal these discussions were never classified as either being 'on' or 'off the record', but as their content was focused very much on the research topic, it was impossible to ignore what was being said. The employee attitude survey, was agreed and designed for implementation towards the end of the second year of the research. However, just before this was due to be administered to all employees, the senior managers decided that it may be too controversial at that stage and withdrew their support. The author was unable at the time to find out the cause of the senior managers' concern; however, subsequent discussions with senior managers

identified the decision as a political tactic related to the replacement of the TQ Manager. The attitude survey would have constituted quantitative research and would have supported the qualitative research and analysis in accordance with the views of Jick (1979) and Miller and Freisen (1982) that longitudinal designs to analyse organisations benefit from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Johnson and Gill, 1991: 160).

Secondary data was collected from a variety of sources. The company published several different documents on the introduction of TQM. There was an employee magazine produced monthly and a weekly bulletin for the staff notice boards. The author was taken through the *Introduction to TQM* training manual that was presented to all staff on a rolling two- day programme. This induction programme made clear statements about the aims and objectives of TQM within TRC, and established expectations about employee participation and contribution. There were ad hoc notices about Total Quality activities as they took place and these were publicised either as notices on the notice boards or as 'coffee-table' leaflets distributed in the communal areas. The final sources of secondary data came from memoranda and printed communications between the various interested parties. The participants on an informal basis gave these to the author. Clearly these last sources were subject to personal bias depending on the agenda of the contributing person, and lacked reliability because they were partial. However, their face validity was high and because they were frequently used to support a point that an interviewee was making they increased the credibility of what the interviewee was saying. The use of various different methods of data collection was important to the reliability, validity and quality of analysis.

The case data types share a common representational process of multi method immersion (Stablein, 1996). The term most commonly attached to this activity is 'triangulation', defined by Denzin as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (1979:297). He describes four different types of triangulation, data, investigator, theory and methodological (Denzin, 1978). Two types were to be used in the original research, data and methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation presents the researcher with a more holistic view of the setting (Morse,1996) although it is important that the methods are

not muddled (Stern, 1994). However, in this thesis, only data triangulation is presented. Campbell and Fiske (1959) proposed that the use of multiple methods would lead to convergent validation and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest that triangulation strengthens qualitative research. Stake (1994) suggests that triangulation is generally considered as a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, as no social phenomenon is capable of perfect repetition triangulation serves only to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen (Flick, 1992). It is proposed that triangulation in this research reflects the viewpoint of Flick.

The next important question that needed to be addressed was the choice of sample. The choice per se, largely became a *given*. Careful negotiations were required between the TQ Manager, who took on a *gate-keeper* role and the senior managers. The main issue was one of gaining trust and therefore acceptance of the importance and credibility of the research. However, at this stage the author was not given the opportunity to address the issue directly with the senior managers, all discussions were conducted with/through the TQ Manager.

A key commitment essential to the author was the need to have access to employees representing all levels of staff and both direct and indirect labour. It was accepted that any attempt to establish a sample on the basis of statistical determination would be ignored, and might put the whole research project at risk. The acceptance of the research itself was in delicate balance and any attempt to appear to force the senior management into a decision was judged to be inappropriate. It was also considered by the author that, at this stage of the introduction of TQM, the main focus needed to be on the management of TRC and their experience, as worker experience at this stage was very limited. Following negotiations it was agreed that the following would constitute the research group:

Managing Director

Personnel Director

Manufacturing Director

TQM Manager – later supported by his assistant

Chief Development Engineer

Tendering Manager

Production Manager (the first interviewee took early retirement and the second interview was with his replacement)

3 Trades Union Representatives (1 representing each of the three trades unions on site - E.E.T.P.U., A.U.E.W., T & G W. U.)

5 Production Operatives from Assembly

5 Production Supervisors (job title at TRC is 'chargehand')

5 Production Operatives Engineering

5 Staff Personnel

Note: the three directors constitute 50% of the operating board, the other members were the Finance Director, the Sales Director and the Technical and Quality Director.

It was also agreed that to generate as little disruption as possible the meetings with the supervisors, Trades union representatives, operatives and staff personnel would be group interviews. Although using these as focus groups was not entirely satisfactory to the author, one-to-one interviewing was not an option. The meetings were also conducted away from their normal work- stations creating a risk of discomfort because of unfamiliarity of environment for the interviewees, something not shared by the managers who were, without exception interviewed in their own offices. The feature of venue unfamiliarity does have significance in relation to worker experience within the organisation, especially how those in the study groups developed their constructs of their workplace and how they would interpret their exposure to TQM. At no point during the research process was the author taken into any production area. There also appeared to be a degree of ambivalence by the respondents about the roles and responsibilities of those not directly connected with those in his/her focus group, or even within the focus group.

Within the supervisors' study group, only one supervisor was female and out of the three groups of production operatives and staff personnel, only 4 of the 15 participants were female. Proportionally this was a realistic representation as TRC is a significantly male dominated organisation. At the time of the research 80% of the workforce was male, 97% of managers were male and at the supervisory level, only 5% were female. The male/female divide was best highlighted in the interview process when three of the male supervisors would not be interviewed with the

female supervisor present. Their reason being that she would not understand their views as her experience was not the same. As far as the men were concerned she did not know what she was talking about, and should not be treated in the same way as them. Given that the interviews were set up with this preference respected demonstrates the degree to which the management of TMC were prepared to tolerate and sustain misogyny. Easterby-Smith et al suggest that the most fundamental of all qualitative methods is that of in-depth interviewing (1991:72). The flexibility generated by the semi-structured interview provides a greater breadth of rich information that is distinct from that generated by structured interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (1994) structured interviews aim to capture precise data of a codable nature in order to explain behaviour within pre-established categories. In-depth interviews, on the other hand, are used in an attempt to understand the complex behaviours of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry. In this research the aim was to generate the information that would describe and therefore help understand the behaviours of those involved and exposed to the introduction of new working practices. It was important that the respondents were able to express their experiences without being forced into a framework that was a reflection of the understanding of the researcher.

The structure of the interviews was informed by the work of Fontana and Frey(1994). Each interview session was one to one-and-a-half hours in duration. The interviews followed a similar format starting with a session in which the respondents were asked to explain their *biographical* details in relation to their employment with TRC. There were two reasons for starting with this information. Firstly it was important to establish to what extent they had experience of the current practices of TRC and therefore their ability to comment on change. Secondly, this sort of information is unthreatening and non-testing to the respondent and was used to help provide an element of comfort. When the question did become more sensitive, it was hoped that the respondents would not feel threatened and would answer the questions without fear of reprisal. All the interviewees were assured of confidentiality. Furthermore, at the start of the interviews held with anyone who was not a member of the Senior Management Team the author took time to explain the purpose of the research and the research process. It was essential that the respondents were fully informed about

that in which they were involved and felt that their rights were being properly regarded.

Clearly the strategy worked because the extent of willingness to share their feelings and experiences was surprising. As the interviews progressed, the interviewees responded to the basic questions posed by the researcher to develop structure and to allow follow-up questions subject to responses and prompts, and as such, whilst all respondents shared a frame of reference, the data generated was rich and varied making comparison that much more problematic. The author had to be very careful to ensure that there was enough information on which to base comparative analysis and to enable the coding process to occur. Inevitably, information gained in the earlier interviews would influence the questions posed to those at the end of the interview schedule and the author needed to ensure that the freedom gained from conducting unstructured interviews did not lead to researcher bias (Kumar, 2011).

The first set of interviews were both tape-recorded and noted. Lofland, (1971) and Ghauri et al (1995) but following the writing up of the transcripts the researcher decided that on balance, note-taking had been more effective and that tape-recording would not be used for the second set of interviews. Following the interviews the author took care to note any important points regarding the interviewees such as whether they appeared to be withholding information and had needed to be encouraged into providing what was needed; whether they were enthusiastic and entered into the spirit of the research; their manner in dealing with the author; their manner in relation to their colleagues/staff/managers. It was this reflective process that added 'colour' to the interviews and reinforced the feeling that all was not as had been described by the Managing Director and the TQ Manager in relation to TQM in TRC.

The New Methodology – Secondary Analysis

The goal of the new research study was to examine the role of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in the change process which specifically addresses the commitment of the team to the introduction of TQM (in line with the wisdom of the dominant managerial literature) and then to review the behaviour of the senior

managers to examine whether they behaved as a team. What is posited is that success or failure does not depend upon the commitment of the senior management, but more on the ability of the senior management to act as a team. Consequently the focus of the research has changed from examining the experiences of those exposed to TQM, and especially those workers in organisational hierarchical terms at the bottom of the organisation, to those who initiated the change that is, those at the top of the organisation.

It is clear that the data being analysed is, in research terms, 'old' and although the data is empirical, some might question its relevance to contemporary organisational studies. Corti and Thompson describe a 'new culture of the secondary use of qualitative data' (2004:341). Andrews describes the advantage of re-visiting data as providing

'new ways in which to make sense of accounts of those who participated in my research...not so much a journey back to that time, as much as an exploration of that moment from the perspective of the present, with all of the knowledge and experience that one has accumulated in the intervening time' (2008:89).

Heaton (2004) describes the increasing interest in using secondary-analysis as a 'new and emerging methodology' (2004:35). Secondary analysis involves the use of existing data that may have been collected for a different research interest than the subsequent research. Heaton identifies three main focuses of analysis:

- additional in-depth analysis: provides a more intensive focus on a particular aspect or finding undertaken as part of the primary activity
- Additional sub-set analysis: provides a focus on a sub-set of the sample from the original study which warrants further analysis.
- New perspective/conceptual focus: provides a retrospective analysis on the whole part of the data set from a different perspective.

The research undertaken demonstrates application of the second focus.

There are those who raise deep concerns over the recycling of old data, especially on the grounds of temporal validity and re-interpretation of others' data, (eg.

Hammersley, 1997 and Mauther et al, 1998. Thorne (1994) argues that where a researcher was not part of the original research team, research experience is essential to overcome the difficulties of doing secondary analysis in an independent capacity. However, the arguments for its use are compelling. In this case, there is no 'other' as the data being re-interpreted was based on research by the author. Whilst the time period is long between the gathering of the data and this interpretation, Andrews (2008) proposes that different interpretations exist on a continuum, not as discrete, bounded categories. Revisiting data allows an interpretation of the research moment from the perspective of the present which is, inevitably, different. The passage of time allows the development of another layer of understanding. Brockmeier (2006, cited in Andrews, et al 2008, p. 89) argues that there is no *a priori moment* from which the interpreter can gain a truer and more authentic insight and Reissman (2004) that there is never a single, unequivocal meaning to a particular moment. Heaton (1998) suggests that there is an interesting question regarding where primary analysis stops and secondary analysis starts as qualitative analysis is an iterative process and grounded theory especially requires the reformulation and refinement of questions over time. As the only researcher involved in the research process, there needs to be clarity of whether the research is part of the original enquiry or sufficiently distinct to qualify as secondary analysis. In this case, the research focus is different.

There are a number of ethical considerations when using data for secondary analysis. These include questions about the 'fit' between the purpose of the analysis and the nature and quality of the original research data (Thorne, 1994). There is also the need to ensure as far as is reasonable that the quality of the original research is not compromised by missing data necessary for the secondary analysis, a potential problem when using semi-structured interviews (Hinds et al, 1997). It is also essential that the issues of confidentiality and consent are resolved prior to the acquisition of data (Corti et al, 2000). These are often the major obstacles to archiving a dataset, when they have not been clarified and agreements made with interviewees (Corti and Backhouse, 2005). As the researcher is the author of the primary data there is no issue of access to and ownership of all the original data including tapes, field notes and case-company documentation and the research data was extensive. Both the original study and data collection procedures and the

processes involved in categorizing and summarizing the data for secondary analysis have been included for consideration. In terms of the sensitivity of the data, a judgement has been made that the passage of time provides enough protection for the subjects in the original research and that the re-use of the data does not violate the implicit contract that exists between subject and researcher during the original research process (Hinds et al, 1997). Consequently, the researcher is confident that the empirical data is robust and will be valid and effective in addressing the research objectives and that by taking a secondary analysis approach to the data, the thesis will be rigorous, methodologically sound and will provide new knowledge to the literature.

The interview transcripts provided the research data for the examination of senior management team behaviour in a change programme and also led to a change in research methodology to hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962). Hermeneutic phenomenology gives a particular prominence to interviews which are used as a means for gathering stories about the experiences being researched in the participants' own words and also emphasises the need to develop a dialogic relationship with the participants about the meaning they are attributing to those experiences (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007) This methodology remains within the interpretivist paradigm but now focuses on developing meaning that emerges from the interpretive interaction between historically produced textual data and the researcher as reader and author (Laverty,2003; Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007). The appeal of this approach is the expectation that the biases and assumptions of the researcher are considered essential to the interpretative process and are embedded within the interpretation and help inform it (Laverty, 2003). Given that the researcher is reflecting back on the research undertaken 15 years ago and, as a person, has developed in terms of knowledge, experience and maturity, this opportunity to address the research data and interpret it from a distanced standpoint has led to a more critical and less emotional review and evaluation. As such, it is contended, this has provided a richer and more reliable analytical process.

The interpretative research paradigm is underpinned by the epistemology of idealism in which the development of knowledge is based on social construction and, drawing on different approaches, the paradigm seeks to interpret the social world (Higgs,

2001). The goal of this research is to access meanings of participants' experiences, in this case the senior management team who constructed their interpretations of their experiences of change and TQM based on the context in which they set themselves and their frames of reference that they applied to give meaning and make sense of their experiences (Crotty, 1998; Weick, 2001). This research methodology embraces the values of the researcher in the interpretative process and subjectivity is seen as a positive attribute and not negated (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007). Given the time lapse between data collection and data analysis, the justification of the inclusion of the researcher's values and experiences developed during the intervening time, added another aspect to the research process and gives credibility and validity to the research. Furthermore, as hermeneutic analysis is based on the reflective interpretation of text to develop a meaningful understanding and is especially applicable to a study in history (Moustakas, 1994; Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004) the research methodology emerged through best-fit justification as the most appropriate and enables the establishment of conceptualisations from the ground upwards (Lamsa and Savolainen, 2000).

Data Analysis Methods

The transcripts presented actively constructed narratives in which the participants had been encouraged to speak freely about their experiences following limited prompting from the researcher. These narratives then required further analysis and could not be treated as giving a direct access to experiences as a clear descriptive study (Silverman, 2010). The full transcripts were divided into 'meaning units' (Moustakas, 1994, Mostyn, 1985) which delineated the transcripts into discrete significant statements that could be a phrase, sentence or series of sentences which provided an idea, set of perceptions or fact (Burnard, 1994). Every significant statement was treated as having equal value and whilst in some studies repetition is treated as irrelevant and repeated statements are deleted, in this research repetition was considered as a significant reinforcement of feelings or opinions (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2003). The meaning units were then categorised into themes following extensive review of the delineated text. The inductive category system should emerge out of the data and should be meaningful to a reader. To check for validity the researcher asked another researcher to develop her own category

system from a sample of the transcripts and then discussed the categorization process to check for congruency. Despite differences in the actual names the categories demonstrated considerable similarity and the themes were established. By using letters to symbolise the categories, the meaning units were then classified into those categories after being labelled with the appropriate letter and then sorted alphabetically to establish the populated categories. To enable issues relating to the year in which the interview was taken to be identified, the two sets of statements were signified by different fonts allowing any emerging theme relating to chronology to be recognised.

Once the categories had been populated the researcher could then start to see patterns in the data and also develop sub-categories in those categories that contained large numbers of statements. The sub-categories greatly assisted the ease by which emerging patterns were recognised and so aided the development of discussion and interpretation. The analysis took two perspectives, an organisational and a group view. The organizational analysis examining senior management team commitment will use specifically the categories which have been considered hierarchically, following the ideas of Frontman and Kunkel (1994, cited in Johnson and Christensen, 2010:512). The hierarchy is based upon the following linkage of constructs to establish meaning: the achievements of the change programme are the outcomes and depend upon the commitment of the senior management team – according to the literature. Consequently, there are several categories that reflect upon the commitment of the SMT, and these are considered next. However, the choice about commitment is affected by other knowledge-based information about change and TQM and the categories dealing with this knowledge provide a separate and further response.

Finally, there are features of the experience that can affect the knowledge of what is supposed to be experienced and these categories are reviewed as a separate group. A separate group analysis reviews the complement of the senior management team and the expressions that they make of each other.

Categories for Analysis

- Achievements

This category examined what the respondents saw as the achievements of the change process and was based on the assumption that if senior managers have identified the expected achievements, then we should expect to have evidence of those achievements being reflected by the respondents. The underlying presumption being that a committed management team would have engaged in communicating the expected characteristics of success.

The next three categories present 'cause and effect' relationships whereby the literal statements of commitment and the perceptual judgement of the commitment of other senior managers links the expectation that commitment leads to success (or lack of success) as defined by a committed senior management team.

- As a senior manager am I committed to TQM
- Do I think that other senior managers are committed to TQM
- What other managers think of the senior management team – the view from below.

These three categories offer direct comments on the behaviour of the senior managers as the top management group.

The next three categories provide 'attributional' relationships linking them to senior management commitment as features of that commitment.

- Views of the TQM experience.
- Was change necessary
- What is TQM?

These three categories offer a different level of analysis which presents the opportunity for inference analysis and assumptions to be drawn that can inform the previous level of analysis. For example, if TQM had been understood then the achievements should be recognised and agreed, if they are not then this suggest s that people have not been able to make a reasonable judgement of the success or otherwise of the change initiative and this must lead to questions about senior management being concerned about what it wanted people to experience.

The third group of categories again link 'cause and effect' relationships to the previous group and address the areas of what could stop the experience of TQM.

- The trouble with HRM
- Barriers to TQM
- Who led the change?

These three categories provided a third level of analysis, particularly about where the problems with introduction can be focused and again, present further information on which to draw inferences and assumptions about senior management commitment. For example, were those who were perceived to lead the change congruent with the people who were expected to lead the change? If not, then questions about why those with authority to ensure the correct leadership behaviour were not engaged with the process can be asked. The wrong people leading the change could result in contra-experiences of TQM.

Having examined the role of the senior management team in the change process, the micro analysis of the senior management team as a team will use category:

- What the senior managers think of each other.

This category relates directly to the question regarding whether it is reasonable to assume that senior managers act as a team. However, as with the macro level analysis, consideration of other categories added further inferences to enable a richer analysis to be developed. For example, analysis of the categories 'The qualifications I hold', 'What I do as a senior manager' and 'How I describe me' enabled commentary on views of qualifications and professionalism to inform the specific comments on the individuals in the team as well as their views about how they see themselves as individual senior managers in what they do.

The findings were linked to the literature and other research findings in an attempt to provide further validation of the discussion and debates that emerged and to give credibility to the conclusions. Throughout the analytical process care was taken to ensure that the voices of the participants and the researcher are manifest in the text in an attempt to ensure authenticity (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). The methodology reflected the principles underpinning the hermeneutic cycle (Heidegger, 1962) which

presents a metaphor for the process of understanding and interpretation and is seen as circular, iterative and continuous flow between data as the 'parts' and the evolution of understanding as the 'whole'. Throughout the process the researcher questioned how meanings and interpretations were emerging in an attempt to secure the convergence of insight between the researcher and the texts that were informing the research until the researcher was comfortable that a sensible interpretation and meaning had been reached (Laverty, 2003; Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007).

The interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to access the meanings of the participants' experiences and the hermeneutic approach and the use of secondary analysis of revisited data allowed for new layers of interpretation and re-interpretation of the data providing a new angle for making meaning of the phenomenon. Revisiting the data presented the opportunity for a different interpretation of events to emerge and reflection on the discussion and debate has provided the researcher with the basis for a more confident story about the failure of the change and the impact of a key group within the change process. The use of multiple methods and sources of data collection enabled the achievement of richer reflexivity, transparency and rigor of the research (Mays and Pope, 2000) and the multiple constructions of events and experiences enabled the research to achieve greater authenticity, especially given the historical nature of the data. The findings of the analysis are presented in the next chapter

Chapter 5

Case-Study: Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This is the analysis of the case of TRC and reviews the attempt to introduce TQM into the organization and the impact of the senior management team on the lack of successful implementation. The focus of the analysis is firstly from an organizational perspective examining the senior management commitment as a team to organisational change and the introduction of TQM. What follows is a group perspective which examines whether an assumption of senior management team commitment is, in itself flawed, and that senior management team commitment is not an unproblematic concept as the predominant literature presents. The quoted statements have been numbered and the originator identified in the appendix.

Interpretation of the Empirical Evidence

According to Hill (1991) top management is the main driver of TQM as it represents a strategic initiative and therefore the domain of senior managers. Furthermore, TQM requires top management to secure the support of those lower down the hierarchy without compulsion and tends to rely on systematic education/training, effective leadership throughout the change and recognition and reward for achievements (Hill, 1995). Popular management texts such as Kanter (1990) and Peters (1988) proposed that top management set the standards on which all others should model themselves and that leading by example was an expression of integrity and commitment to what was being proposed. Furthermore, Peters (1988:518) suggested that double standards and behaviour that did not match what was said was a guarantee of failure. Webb (1995) suggests that the ability and willingness of senior management to translate the philosophy and purpose of TQM into specific and relevant organisational practice is an essential factor in contributing to successful implementation.

The approach chosen by TRC to underpin the organisation's TQM initiative was that of Deming (1982). Deming explains his scope for quality in terms of quality of design, quality of conformance and quality of the sales and service function. Deming expects

the managers to change through developing a partnership with the workforce and to manage quality through the application and constant use of statistical measures to ensure manufacturing performance against specification and without resort to cost-of-quality measures. People are key to success and his insistence on the need for management to change the organisational culture and for top management to lead the drive for quality improvement and be involved in all stages of the change and improvement programme.

Analysis of the comments relating to Senior Management Commitment

The category related to 'Achievements' numbers 26 comments of which, and interestingly, only 7 are from 1997. Some of the comments develop into co-occurring comments and fall into two meaning units. The greatest number of comments relate to the change in how people were working and thinking about how they work with especial attention given to the involvement in projects and decision-making. For example:

'We are doing things differently and this has been brought about by the change in people. A major emphasis has been a much closer examination of the methods that we have been using.' ¹ and

'We have had some very positive results on many of the projects that have been undertaken.' ².

A small group of comments (three) relate to the way that workers are thinking about their relationship with customers and suppliers and the need for a service ethos.

Three comments relate to the more strategic intentions of growth, better managements links and the overall company position in the market, although the statements are generalised and not substantiated with evidence.

What is a cause for concern are the comments that relate to negative experiences of the workers:

'There has been a part-de-skilling with a reduction in the added-value of personal input' ³ and

'We've reduced the amount of return work but we're still treated like second-class citizens.' ⁴.

Overall the comments on achievements do not present an unequivocal endorsement of the TQM programme and there is little evidence to suggest that the employees are

looking to assess their experiences against the intentions of a Deming-based approach. Those comments reflecting the strategic perspective do not present an enthusiastic set of statements of support for the initiative and it would seem at this stage that the senior management team presents an ambivalent response to what has taken place. Given that by 1997 the programme had been in place for six years, the indifference to the programme in terms of achievements is a significant contra-indicator when looking for senior management commitment.

Category 'I am committed to TQM (Senior manager)'

Commitment can develop around different targets such as the organization, the group, career, the leader and the manager (Pierce and Newstrom, 2006; Meyer and Allen, 1997). It would be reasonable to assume therefore, that during the interviews the senior managers would comment on their commitment to the change being introduced, as it was intended to improve the organisation's performance.

On review of the interviews there were seven references to commitment made by the three senior managers who were interviewed, five during the interviews in 1994 and the others in 1997. Only the Managing Director presented a positive commentary in support of the programme in his interview in 1994, but even this was wrapped in a narrative about his general commitment to the organisation demonstrated by his decision not to seek employment with a competitor,

'I could have gone for a better job with one of our competitors, but I chose to stay. One thing is true; I don't work for financial reimbursement.'⁵

Other comments address the inability to actually 'do what I could'⁶ and needing to be 'proactive'⁷. It would appear from the lack of convincing endorsements of the TQM programme that senior managers did not recognise their role in supporting the introduction and sustaining commitment to its principles and practices. By 1997 the most positive comment that was made could not be counted as fulsome support – 'I'm sure that change has benefitted the company. With hindsight I should have taken a more proactive role'⁸. Which suggests that this senior manager was beginning to question his own contribution and whether he could have made a difference. However, when considering the comments made about what they do as senior managers (category I) there is considerable value given to being left alone to do what they want if they can demonstrate success;

‘I enjoy a lot of freedom. It’s quite common to be given freedom to operate as long as what you do is considered as being to the benefit of TRC’⁹

and ‘The best feature of my job is the amount of freedom I have and the degree of influence I exercise. The worst feature is not always getting what I want and having to wait for others.’¹⁰

and ‘Management freedom is also dependent upon the degree of profit that is made, so being pretty profitable also means that I tend to be left alone’¹¹.

What these comments suggest is that these senior managers are able to operate to their own agenda, that there is no-one to whom they are responsible with regard to the overall change, and that within their frames of reference, either subjectively or objectively through any form of management appraisal, they have not recognised TQM as being part of their portfolio of accountability.

Whilst the senior managers appear to demonstrate indifference, some middle managers have demonstrated more positive commitment and have engaged with the change programme. As the following comment demonstrates, their commitment suggests that they believe that the senior managers are trying to achieve something,

I am committed to what we are trying to achieve as far as the management team is concerned’¹².

But what is not clear is whether they are committed to TQM and there is little evidence to suggest that the senior management team has issued a clear message with regard to what it is supporting. This lack of clarity with regard to the change and middle management commitment to an ambiguous construct will be reviewed later.

Category ‘Do I/we think that the senior managers are committed to TQM?’ provides the opportunity to explore whether others thought that the senior managers were committed to the introduction of TQM. Over the two sets of interviews there are fifty-nine comments with only 1, from the managing director, providing an unequivocal statement in support of their commitment. However, despite what he said, his lack of commitment was commented on in 1997,

‘I told the Managing Director that he must be completely involved for at least 50% of the time, but right from the start his involvement was only slight’¹³.

As early as 1994 the commitment of the Managing Director was being questioned, 'If the M.D. isn't seen to be committed. After all, what message does that send out?' ¹⁴. Twenty-seven comments relate to the perception that they are not committed, fifteen are not sure or not convinced by the behaviour of the managers to enable them to believe that they are committed, three describe the senior managers as off-loading their responsibility to the TQ Manager which suggests that they are not committed themselves, ten identify a lack of visible support from the senior management team, and three offer a resigned belief in their support. The comments are emphatic in many instances leaving very little evidence in support of the senior management team demonstrating Deming's (1986) second point for management – Western management must take on the challenge, learn their responsibilities and take on leadership for future changes. Instead, the employees at TRC witnessed their senior management as, 'just haven't got their finger on the pulse' ¹⁵, 'Secondly there was no direction and visible commitment from the senior management team' ¹⁶ and 'the biggest let-down has been the lack of commitment from the senior management team' ¹⁷.

The most frustration was expressed by the TQ Manager,

'The gurus say 'what does TQ need – top management commitment, top management commitment and top management commitment. I never had any visible commitment from day 1' ¹⁸.

Three comments specifically identify toxic characteristics such as 'paranoia', a blame culture, and 'self-preservation' which suggest there are behaviours being practiced that are not within the spirit of a supportive culture in which people can feel safe to try out new things. Wilkinson et al (1998) identify the implicit unitarism that is a fundamental aspect of TQM which assumes that everyone in the organisation shares values and common interests which is melded together by a strong culture. Deming (1986) calls for management delegating responsibility for quality and improvement to all employees rather than seeking to blame workers for mistakes, so the comment on a 'blame culture' is especially worrying within an organisation seeking to establish TQM. For example:

'People agree in small groups but then when they get to the bigger arena they back down. There's a classic blame culture and lots of paranoia' ¹⁹

and 'If I had got more personal satisfaction out of the job then I wouldn't be going. The politics have got to me. The management team and the departmental heads have made this a nightmare. It's all been about self-protectionism' ²⁰.

Both of these statements were made in the 1997 interviews and clearly indicate a level of intolerance and frustration with what has been experienced. Far from enabling people to blend together and tackle problems within a culture that reflected the integration perspective (Martin and Frost, 1996) in which the values espoused by top management are adopted and demonstrated through compliant behaviour and commitment to the organisation message, TRC was demonstrating signs of a disparate and disintegrated workforce.

It appears that the pursuit of seeing organisation members demonstrate consistent practices based on shared attitudes and values (Ashkanasy and Jackson, 2001) reflecting the principles of TQM had failed. Even more problematic for an adoption of TQM is the impression that senior managers are only looking after themselves and there is no evidence of a unified and unifying presence to encourage the workforce to work as a homogenous unit.

The lack of direction from the senior managers emerges frequently in the comments from 1997 and there are several consequences of this, firstly that the managers lower down the organisation are putting their own interpretations onto what is supposed to be happening meaning there are 'lots of different stories flying around' ²¹ and 'I'm making up my own script as I go along' ²², and in addition, the lack of visibility is re-interpreted as management indifference and impacts on motivation and commitment below,

'Secondly there was no direction and visible commitment from the senior management team. Now this I find very difficult to answer because I never heard the message. I now doubt if the vision has even got down to the people so how do they know what the vision is?' ²³

and 'However, if we don't have commitment (from senior managers) then we shouldn't bother, we'd be wasting our time' ²⁴ and

'They'll raise the flag but not run with it. It's motivation isn't it? You can't always sustain motivation and enthusiasm if you see indifference from above'²⁵.

The lack of visibility is captured in the separate category 'Senior management Visibility' and of the thirty-seven comments made; thirty discuss the remoteness and distance of the senior management. Certainly the remoteness did not improve over the three years between the two sets of interviews and even the managing Director admits to agreeing with the criticisms that are levelled at his colleagues. What is also interesting about the comments made on the lack of senior management visibility (except for the Manufacturing Director who constantly walks the factory) is the reference to what takes place at the Toshiba factory, to which the supervisors were invited for a factory visit and it is clear that the Toshiba experience made a very positive impression. The lack of attempt to imitate the Toshiba experience in TRC is also indicative of the senior management indifference to introducing TQM into TRC. Category 'The view from below' captures the comments made by the other levels about the senior management.

The views in 1994 are more supportive of the senior management team and there are several comments that recognise the influence of the senior management team, the tone of the comments, although varied, suggest an air of optimism about the introduction of TQM. Some of the individual directors are identified specifically with the manufacturing director getting most support, mainly based on his visibility. The HR Director is described as 'sliding through the corridors'²⁶ giving him an almost reptilian image, but he is also identified as being very influential. The newest director with the quality portfolio is frequently described in positive terms in 1994 which also suggests that at that stage, there was a positive feeling towards the introduction of TQM.

By 1997 things had changed with the management team coming under more criticism for its lack of support and realism. Throughout the interviews there are references that allude to the TQM programme having not been successful and people looking to apportion blame;

'A lot of people have not had the guidance and I blame the M.D.. He's taken it on as a set of management techniques which he wants reports back on'²⁷ and 'I'm now pressing the works-study manager to come up with a new payment system. This has been lodged with the HR and Manufacturing Directors, but thereby hangs a tale'²⁸ and

‘Total Quality Management- we’re not there, the Board must do that and the Manufacturing Director has been the stumbling block. He says the right things but doesn’t follow them up’ ²⁹.

The comments also imply that the employees and junior managers are not convinced that the senior managers actually understand what they are dealing with which suggests that their personal credibility is also under question;

‘People need a real jolt, but is the Management Team capable of doing it? I think they’re frightened to do anything in case they get asked questions they can’t deal with’ ³⁰ and

‘Senior managers must have the bottle to tell people what they want and what they must do, otherwise nothing will happen’ ³¹ and

‘They (senior managers) give the impression of having a report-back mentality they’ll read reports and write back but they don’t seem to want to discuss things’ ³².

These comments point to a workforce that is frustrated by a senior management team that is unable to respond to what is needed. Other comments refer to a senior management team that is not being ‘honest’ ³³ in relation to achievements and also whether they do act as a team with references to ‘the management team is influential but as individual members – a comment from 1994’ ³⁴ and ‘they are classed as a team but are they a team?’ ³⁵ – a comment from 1997 suggesting that the impression has not improved. The view from below is one that seems resigned to the failure of the TQM project and by 1997 the sense of disappointment and anger is palpable.

Whilst an analysis of these categories provides clear prima facie evidence that the senior management team was not committed to the changes being undertaken at TRC, there needs to be further exploration of other categories to enable a more conclusive deduction to be made. The introduction of TQM requires a clear message of intent with a major emphasis on an educative process that incorporates training, effective use of in-company media and briefings, all of which were in evidence at TRC with the training being led by the TQ manager a former training professional. Participative structures such as improvement and action teams are also key features of the TQM experience and again, within the interviews there are numerous references to team-working and cell manufacturing. Both of these aspects of TQM,

education and participation, strive to ensure that those exposed to the new ways of working understand and demonstrate the features of TQM that the top management have communicated. Consequently, it would be reasonable to expect to have shared experiences of the TQM programme and process described by the interviewees. Category 'Views on TQM' contains 152 comments over the two interview sessions which relate to the experiences that the interviewees have of TQM. These 152 comments have been grouped into 6 sub-categories (these are not hierarchical in terms of significance):

<u>Comments on: Views of TQM</u>	Number of responses
Positive and hopeful views of TQM	42
Mixed experiences depending on whether the employee have been exposed to TQM	20
Interest in TQM has dwindled over time, the change has been too slow, TQM was wrongly or poorly initiated and developed and there is a need for a re-launch	26
Negative experiences, TQM is not as good as other techniques	16
Employees are sceptical, disappointed, ambivalent and over-exposed to TQM	38
Not enough authority was given to the TQ manager and employees not having a good enough understanding of what TQM should achieve	10

Table 1 Views on TQM

The longitudinal data provides an opportunity to see how the perceptions of TQM have changed over the three years, if at all, and what inferences might be drawn from a comparison of the two points in time.

Further examination of the positive and hopeful comments shows that there was a reduction in the support for the initiative. In 1994 there were twenty-six comments made in support of the initiative compared to sixteen in 1997 showing a significant cause for concern with regard to peoples' experience of the TQM programme. This interpretation is reinforced by the supporting evidence of a significant increase in the number of negative comments made about the experience of TQM in 1997 by

comparison with those in 1994. The increase is from three to eleven. This suggests that in 1994 the people interviewed were generally interested in and supportive of the TQM initiative and hopeful of its success but by 1997, support had been lost. This trend is supported by the comparative analysis of the degree of scepticism, disappointment, ambivalence and intolerance towards TQM that employees were sensing in 1997, which had risen from twelve comments in 1994 to twenty-six in 1997. All these figures point to a problem in sustaining commitment and support for the TQM project which appeared to have generated a desire to see it succeed in 1994 and are encapsulated in this comment from 1997,

‘Some people have taken on TQ and have tried to improve the way they do their work. Others just don’t want to be involved and when you come up against someone like that it affects motivation and it becomes difficult to change them’³⁵.

By 1997 that support had diminished with more people needing proof about its value and some even suggesting that people were ‘sick of TQM’³⁶ and had been ‘suffering from a surfeit of TQM’³⁷. There are twenty-six comments that identify dwindling support, a feeling that the TQM programme had been incorrectly introduced or developed and/or that it needed re-launching. Consequently, whilst there is less support for the TQM programme in 1997, there is also some suggestion that the programme is not ‘damned’ but that people would like to see it rejuvenated. There is not enough evidence to suggest that the workforce has lost its belief that TQM could be a useful initiative for the organisation.

The sub-sections on ‘different experiences’ and ‘not enough authority given to the TQ Manager and lack of understanding of TQM’ provide an opportunity to explore another perspective on the changes between 1994 and 1997. In relation to those experiencing TQM and being involved in the projects, there were twice as many comments focusing on the problems of people not engaged or involved in 1997 than in 1994. Consequently, the inference that can be drawn is that despite the attempt to communicate and to involve everyone in the programme had not been achieved by 1997. It seems that the acceptance of TQM was dependent upon being involved in one of the projects that had been initiated, whether one of the ‘big’ cross-functional projects or smaller in-section actions. It appears that experience of TQM in action had a significant impact on people’s support for the principles and practices of TQM

and that non-involvement led people to being more sceptical and ambivalent towards the programme. The following comments the first from a production supervisor and the second from a group of production operatives from 1997 reflect the problems of differential experience:

'TQ seemed to go off with a bang but now it's fizzling out. I was involved in a couple of projects at the start, one was a waste of time because we spent a lot of time proving that we shouldn't change , but I've had very little involvement over the two years. Some good has come out of it though, like the training project' ³⁸ and

'People read Feedback and bin it....The attitude is that it doesn't concern them.....People aren't involved in TQ. It's still not in practice' ³⁹.

The company-wide communication 'Feedback' was identified as both a useful source of information and 'a waste of time' ⁴⁰ with people reading it and finding it useful, to those who ignored it and those that looked at it before throwing it away. Interest in the articles on the TQM developments again appears to be focused on those actively involved in the projects and it appears that rather than developing a unified workforce, the TQM initiative and its attendant support mechanisms may have proved to be divisive.

Part of the problem of non-involvement is linked to a lack of understanding about what TQM was intended to achieve and what people should be experiencing as implied in the following comment:

'We have spent time considering the progress of the core projects and we're now going to have to take steps to force/coerce more people into viewing TQ as an everyday run-of-the-mill event. There has not been enough people involved. Too many still see it as an add-on not integral to their everyday activity' ⁴¹.

This lack of understanding of what TQM is and how it impacts on how people work must reflect on the activities of the TQ Manager, who, whilst securing a considerable amount of personal support, was described in mixed terms by the employees.

However, several comments identified the lack of authority invested in him which hindered his ability to assert his ideas and expectations and the senior management team were criticised for not enabling him to achieve the agenda. Interestingly, the

failure to get employee engagement in the TQM programme is not levelled at the TQ Manager's inability to engage people, but at the people above him who 'off-loaded'⁴² their responsibilities onto him, did not offer his support and did not give him the authority to act. That he appears blameless in the failure to secure support is worthy of further research and analysis. As the person given the role of change-agent, the TQ Manager's actions and approach were critical in securing employee commitment and yet his personal support and credibility appear to have remained intact despite the obvious loss of support and frustration that the workforce demonstrated.

One of the other major issues highlighted in this category is the tension that developed between the supporters of other management techniques and processes and the impact of TQM. Most of the comments relate to the practices of the production managers who are fully trained in production management/management services techniques and their belief that TQM offers nothing new for them. So in 1994, one person commented on the production men as being 'cynical to ultra-cynical about TQM'⁴³ and another commented, 'management services applications have had a much greater impact on the way that things are done than Total Quality'⁴⁴, whilst a third person asserted,

'Total Quality could just turn out to be a management fad, after all it is really an extension of works study and its philosophy of improving things on a team basis'⁴⁵.

A further comment that suggests a potential conflict between the production managers and the TQM initiative is, 'They also found some of the original philosophy and ideas insulting and condescending'⁴⁶.

Given such hostility to the principles and ideas that underpin TQM, lack of support for the initiative seems inevitable.

This tension can be explored further by examining the comments in Category: What is the purpose of TQM? The approach chosen by TRC for its TQM programme was underpinned by the ideas put forward by Deming (1986) usually expressed in his 14 points. Consequently, when asking people what TQM meant to them, the expectation was that Deming's ideas would feature strongly in the responses. However, given that at the 1995 Annual Business Review where only three of the Directors identified correctly the guru approach used by TRC there was little

confidence in the workforce being able to recognise and report the characteristics of Deming. There were sixty-three comments in total expressing opinions about the key characteristics of the initiative or whether successes could be attributed to TQM.

<u>Comments on: The purpose of TQM</u>	Number of responses
To secure accreditation	14
More bureaucracy	4
Success is not from TQM	10
Miscellaneous confused responses	5
Business Process Re-engineering	5
Improvement projects/company projects	6
Cell manufacturing	5
Kanban	3
Teamworking	3
Change people	4
Right-first-time	1
Management Fad	2
At TRC it's antique	1

Table 2: What is the purpose of TQM?

The most popular view was that the purpose of TQM at TRC was to secure accreditation such as ISO9000/1 or BS5750, with a further four identifying more paperwork and bureaucracy as being the outcome of the change programme. Of the comments made that attributed success to techniques other than TQ the most popular were management services and/or production techniques. A few comments were clear that the authors were confused or did not know with a further person suggesting that the TRC approach comprised lots of models taking bits from a variety of sources. The comments referring to Business Process Engineering are interesting and certainly towards the latter days of the programme BPR principles became more prominent. Some interviewees obviously felt comfortable quoting their specific experiences and so referred to the 'improvement projects' and another to big projects versus small projects, and comments were made about the cell

manufacturing that was introduced with some success and three talked positively about Kanban. A few comments addressed the experience of team-working and several identified the need to change people, although there was no confidence that people could change; one thought that the point was to achieve right-first-time and two described the initiative as a management fad. There was disillusionment too, following the visit to Toshiba which precipitated the comment to describe the TRC approach as 'antique' ⁴⁷.

What is apparent from this initial analysis is that there are no dominant features that suggest a shared understanding or shared experiences. There is nothing that suggests that the workforce bought into a collective identity of what TQM was to TRC. Different people and groups have experiences within a frame of reference that was poorly explained, Consequently there are comments about the meaning of TQM that include issues about taking on something that was not understood:

'We hadn't identified what we were trying to do and so identify potential problems. What we did was identify a solution and then identify a problem' ⁴⁸ and '

We bought into it without knowing what we were buying. As a result we've taken out middle managers who were our most important group' ⁴⁹ and

'People here have been trying to interpret TQ against their own preferred frame of reference, and in the majority of cases this was Quality Assurance and they have drawn a veil over what they prefer to not understand' ⁵⁰.

These comments were made in 1997 and questions have to be raised about what was undertaken to communicate the TQM message. The project started in 1991 and yet six years later people are still expressing confusion. Furthermore, these comments made after six years identify problems with the start up of the project but do not make reference to any attempt to rectify those problems. There are no references to evaluation of the change process itself, and whilst the performance of the projects was monitored, there is nothing on the change process itself and its impact on people, leading to one commentator making the following observation,

'This factory does not seem to view TQ as a "people" thing. So much of the emphasis has been on the changing of the processes or specifications without considering the people' ⁵¹.

Whilst Deming does place a significant emphasis on Statistical Process Control and analysis, his approach is also very focused on the need to engage people in the changes and that it is through people that TQM will succeed. Where the main tensions appear to be in TRC are with the Production and manufacturing units within a highly successful organisation that has been led by production management techniques and the new approach that was led by the ex-training manager, who has a people-focused approach to change and quality. Despite a similarity in language, and often a shared language, as in teams and team-working, the execution and practice were very different. The dominance of the production-led culture at TRC was not going to be an easy change to make and the introduction of 'soft techniques' especially a change in culture was going to need considerable support, especially from the HRM function (Wilkinson et al, 1994). Added to the conflict endemic in the different constructs of what a quality-led organisation required - between the 'hard' and 'soft' approaches, there was also the obvious personal losses to be felt by those very influential production managers in terms of the inevitable redistribution of power, a factor identified by Hill and Wilkinson (1995).

Another factor that needed to be considered was the support for change, with an underlying assumption that if change was not considered necessary then any attempt to introduce new approaches and practices would be met with little support. Change will only be supported if there is a motivation to change (Tosi et al, 1990; Lewin, 1951; Cummings and Worley, 2009) and motivation needs an assessment that something is worth putting the effort in, that the change offers something better than what the individual has at present and that there is dissatisfaction with what is currently being experienced. One of the most common comments throughout the interviews was reference to how successful TRC was and for many of the interviewees, there was an underlying question regarding why there was a need for change.

However, Category: 'Is change necessary?' addresses the need for change specifically and although there were only ten comments, seven felt that change was necessary, and three identified an issue with people not seeing the need for change. Of these three, two were stated in 1997 suggesting that the workforce had still not

accepted the opportunities to be experienced through TQM. This complacency is demonstrated by the following statements:

‘One of the biggest disadvantages to TQ is the fact that TRC is still the most successful company within the Group. People still ask why they need to change and they still need guidance and direction’⁵² and,

‘The atmosphere has not changed - perhaps a bit more unrest. But there is still a feeling of complacency. People don’t want to do anything differently. People still don’t see the need to do things differently’⁵³.

Yet the dominant feeling in 1994 was the definite need for change, despite ‘not being good at it’⁵⁴. The problem appears to be not whether change was needed, which seems to be accepted, even if it was seen as a continuous experience of the current production techniques, but what change was needed? Given the decision date of 1991 to introduce TQM and the attendant expense of employing a consultant for 3 years and the establishment of a dedicated TQ Manager role, it appears that a commitment to change was given but not, perhaps, to *the modus operandi*. Indeed the third comment from 1997 addresses both the need to change but does not make any supportive reference to the impact of TQM, exemplified by a comment made by one of the managers who had expressed great support for the TQM project and found it to have been very successful in his area of the organisation:

‘The trouble is that this company is in a fur-lined-rut. It believes that it is safe and I don’t think it is. It must change its culture from one of ‘lugubrious elephant’ to one of “demented wasp” if it is to address the competition with an intent to succeed’⁵⁵.

In examining the linkages of analysis to this point it has been established that there is no evidence of clear achievements associated with the introduction of TQM, particularly those which would be associated with Deming. In linking into the senior management commitment, a key requirement for any introduction of TQM initiative, it can be established that the evidence to propose that there was no commitment from the senior management team that subsequently impaired the introduction of TQM is inconclusive. Despite there being enough *prima facie* evidence to suggest that the senior managers were not supporting the initiative, their own views of their own contribution, their views of each others’ contributions and the views from the employees below the senior management team left further questions to be

answered. The third layer of review examined whether the failure to introduce the new approach might stem from there being no support from below because people did not see the need for change, whether people understood what TQM was and what the experiences of the TQM change programme were. The review questions at this level sought to establish a link between what people were experiencing and whether the lack of top management support was a major contributor to the failure to implement TQM. Again, despite some evidence to suggest that people were looking for senior management commitment to the introduction of TQM as an important reinforce for their own commitment, there were other contra-indicators to suggest other influences on the behaviour of the workforce and members reluctance to embrace the TQM initiative.

The next level of analysis examines issues and consequences that emerge from the previous analyses, namely the involvement of the HR function in relation to the need for people issues to be reflected in the programme of change; the perception of who led the change and the implications of the leader frame of reference on what was introduced; and the barriers to TQM that were experienced.

Category 'Who Led the Change?' provides interesting perceptions with regard to the leadership of the change programme especially given the role of the TQ Manager as the focal point for the introduction of TQM, and arguably as the change agent, It would appear that he took on the role that Schon (1963:84-5) first identified as the 'champion of the idea'. There were many positive comments made about the TQ Manager and many interviewees expressed their belief that it was the effort and enthusiasm of the TQ Manager that kept the change programme going. Whilst these comments recognise the contribution of the TQ Manager and his salutary performance, they are countered by the comments that express concern or resigned belief that on his retirement the programme will cease. Whilst the TQ Manager's activities cannot be understated, there is a significant difference between leading the change and maintenance of the change.

<u>Comments on: Who led the change?</u>	Number of responses
Production Managers	7

Senior Managers	4
Managing Director	2
Middle Mangers	2
One of the Departmental Heads	2
Shop Floor	1
An 'other' manager	1
The TQ Manager	1

Table 3: Who led the change?

Whilst the very low recognition of the role of the TQ Manager is significant, it is the perception of the leadership role of the production managers that presents the most interesting perspective for analysis. This is especially so when linked with the views people had of TQM and how people defined TQM. Most of the comments on leading the change were made in 1994 and at that time the responses covered a broader range of functional areas taking on a leadership role, suggesting that at that time there was a wider interest in what was taking place. By 1997 comments such as:

‘The whole of the activity has been driven from and by Production and not across the Company, under the leadership of the Production Engineers’⁵⁶ and

‘I’ve (Production manager) made a commitment to my boss and his designate that my managers and I are the ones to drive this forward’⁵⁷ and

‘I have found that production identifies an agenda and the HR and Manufacturing Directors then attempt to support it’⁵⁸.

Taking these comments in conjunction with the perceptions of TQM as an extension of production management and management services techniques which were applied to secure the accreditation of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO9000) there is a definite tension developing between the ‘message, promoted by the powerful and influential production managers, and that of the personable but comparatively ‘powerless’ TQ Manager. The comments above and those following reinforce the interpretation that with the problem of introducing change within what is perceived to be a very successful production-led company, the re-interpretation of the Deming approach to reinforce the production managers’

views that this was what they had been doing all along, the likelihood of failure of the TQ programme becomes more inevitable:

‘I was trained in management services and all of what is being talked about now I’ve been practicing for years. We’ve been applying these techniques all along’⁵⁹ and,

‘I said to the Manufacturing Director that the very last place where we needed multi-cross-functional operations was in manufacturing. It’s only ISO 9000 done in a similar way’⁶⁰.

A range of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ techniques were identified by the British Quality Association which was instituted in 1982. The foremost strategy of the ‘soft’ approach is the development of customer care programmes driven by empowered employees delivering quality to external and internal customers. The soft side focuses on the management of human resources with a primary focus on changing culture. The ‘hard’ aspect focuses on systems, data collection, statistical process control, control charts and cause and effect analysis, quality function deployment and emphasises the importance of documented systems (Wilkinson et al, 1998; Oakland, 1989, Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995). The BQA suggested a third way of a ‘mixed’ approach and, as noted by Hill and Wilkinson (1995) the leading proponents of TQM in the UK came from the operations management field which emphasised the ‘hard’ approaches. The involvement of employees in TQM in either accepting accountability for quality improvements or in the introduction and demonstration of team-working as a means to achieve improvement are seen as essential components of TQM (Hill,1991; Wilkinson et al, 1998) and this requires a meaningful involvement of the HR function in supporting employee involvement initiatives. Consequently, an examination of the role, involvement and contribution of the HR function – most often represented by the HR Director, will provide a useful basis on which to assess the impact of HRM in the introduction of TQM at TRC.

Category: ‘The role of HRM’ focuses on the activities and perceptions of the HRM function of which there are 47 comments. Twenty-six comments identify the HR Director and describe his behaviour and/or involvement in largely negative terms. Of the other twenty-one comments only two might be interpreted as being in favour of

HRM taking on a higher profile in the TQ programme suggesting that there is very little respect for the contribution of HRM. Both the comments were made in 1997:

‘Had HR led the TQ initiative then people would have seen it as an HR project, there is still the tendency to see HR as being separate from manufacturing. HR should have taken on a higher profile role’⁶¹ and;

‘It would have to be the HR Director if TQ went to management’. Carol: “Not him, he’d be hopeless”. Alan: “Forget the body that’s the position. It should be the MD”. Helen: “I agree”⁶².

The comments made about the HR Director identify real issues for perceptual dissonance in terms of what he might have been expected to do and how he, and ultimately his functional area of responsibility were judged.

The most emphatic statement of frustration with regard to the HR Director is:

‘My biggest sense of anger is with the HR Director, it’s as if people are simply not important’⁶³.

This statement takes on even greater significance when taken in conjunction with various comments that suggest that he is far more involved in other commitments that take him away from the factory, for example:

‘The HR Director is too far out of touch with all his other commitments’⁶⁴ and

‘The trouble is that the HR Director doesn’t have the time to give to the works problems and issues, he’s always somewhere else’⁶⁵ and

‘The HR Director basically has too many other concerns. We need someone who is concerned with the factory all of the time and who can make decisions’⁶⁶.

The frustration with the HR Director was very obvious when his colleague on the Senior Management Team stated:

‘Three years ago in my appraisal I told him (the MD) that the HR Director wasn’t here enough to do the job, he’s got lots of other things that he’s involved in like being on Industrial Tribunals and being a J.P. and advising other companies – you get lots of words and little action. I told him that we must have someone who is here 5 days of the week who can make decisions’⁶⁷.

Whilst this last statement alludes to a Director who is abdicating his responsibility for TQM and seemingly many issues associated with the factory, his lack of involvement

in the factory might have been mitigated by others in the HRM department taking up that work and responsibility. The comments would suggest that rather than fill the HR vacuum created by the Director, the overall department was very poorly regarded:

‘I am a real champion of change, certainly it is not anyone in HR’⁶⁸ and

‘They are a nuisance. Human Resource Development and Personnel should be separate from IR. At the moment IR overwhelms Personnel and all sorts of pirate services have been set up as a result of the lack of policy’⁶⁹ and ‘I get very frustrated with the HR department’⁷⁰.

This inability to make a good impression is perhaps not surprising when in 1994 the HR Director describes his own department in very negative terms:

‘We still don’t have a good HR Professional function in TRC. We need to improve the quality and status of HR in the business. Others are coming round to my point of view and I am getting more support. I don’t see myself in TRC in 5 years’⁷¹.

This lack of regard for the function was reiterated by, ‘I would also disband the HR Department in the form that it is’⁷².

Three years later the support for the HR Department had not improved and the comments from other areas had focused into a clear idea about what HR should be doing for the other areas:

‘The HR Department ought to be a servant of the executives who get the job done -that is the technical people and the production people: but HR doesn’t do anything for us all. They rarely get down to talking to their customers’⁷³ and

‘The HR Department should be providing a service to the projects and helping get more people involved, instead they’ve not been involved. For example, the wage system should have been reviewed right at the start, but it wasn’t and the HR Director would not get involved. It has become a significant issue and now he wants to get involved because it’s the stickiest issues that has had to

be handled yet. It's become a part of establishing the importance on one individual, not about creating a better environment for the majority' ⁷⁴.

The view that HRM is a service provider and not an equal partner in the process is clear but it is unlikely one that is shared by the HR Director who is exhibiting classic characteristics of senior HR professionals in organisations demonstrating 'Best Practice' HRM (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2012) who are invited to take on roles on public bodies or advisory roles on people management issues. There is a clear tension between the two functional areas with the production managers frustrated and angered by the behaviour of those in HRM who are not acting according to expectations. This frustration is exemplified in the following dismissive comment,

'The HR Department is a waste of space, despite its shining new star' ⁷⁵.

The comments relating to the HR Department headed by the HR Director present a very clear message of a function that is disengaged from the TQM project and disregarded by the other functional areas. The actions and behaviour of the HR Director are subject to many criticisms and yet he appears to remain resolute in his determination to not become involved in the change programme. The following comment made by him in 1994 suggests that he was well aware of what he was doing and that he was not likely to modify his behaviour to satisfy the views of others:

'My relationship with my colleagues has changed. I have greater influence on the other UK units and I spend less time on problems here, possibly to the detriment of things here. I think people understand this and are tolerant of my actions' ⁷⁶.

It would appear that the HR Director's assumption that his colleagues were tolerant of his activities was misjudged. What is also illuminating and important is the consonance of the Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) consideration of the roles of people management and development within organisation that is reflected in the situation of TRC. The dichotomy between the HR Director and his staff is clear and the lack of regard for the H.R. function from those at the core of the organization's activities is palpable. Whilst the HR Director may well have been

attempting the role of strategic partner, his staff were firmly established in roles below the 'strategic line' as administrative experts.

It has been established that the change was led by the Production Managers and that the involvement of the HR Department was minimal, which caused tension and frustration. What now needs to be ascertained is what was perceived as the barriers to the introduction of TQM, if any. What is being reviewed here is whether any barriers were perceived and, if barriers were perceived what was done to remove those barriers and if nothing was done, were there any reasons as to why those barriers were not removed?

Category: 'Barriers to the Implementation of TQM' comprises sixty comments that related to perceived obstructions to the introduction of TQM.

<u>Comments on: Barriers to the implementation of TQM</u>	Number of responses
Production Managers and the production function	13
Being a successful company	7
Not enough support/interest/engagement	16
Contradictory assessment of the change	9
Middle Management behaviour and actions	5
Managing Director /Senior Managers	6
TQ Manager	4

Table 4: Barriers to the Implementation of TQM

The most significant group of comments in terms of numbers and source of obstructive behaviour are the comments identifying the production managers and function. Despite their belief that they were the leaders of change and the most knowledgeable about TQ, their behaviour was identified as having a negative impact on the change programme. In relation to the principles that the TQ Manager was

trying to introduce the view of the production managers was that 'the Production men are cynical to ultra-cynical' ⁷⁷.

The important development was that by 1997, action against one of the Production Managers had been taken and the reflections of his impact are particularly revealing about both his influence and the willingness of senior managers to act sooner.

Consequently, comments such as:

'Certainly in Production we have not been proactive enough. Actually, Production didn't get involved, the guy before me didn't want it, he wasn't a supporter of TQ and so took a very hands-off approach. His lack of activity was not expected and he got away with it because everyone else was doing it for us' ⁷⁸ and

'I think that he (Production Manager) wanted to prove that cells would fail. I blame senior management for not dealing with him sooner' ⁷⁹ and

'The Production Manager who took accelerated early retirement had got away with things for too long' ⁸⁰.

It is emerging that the reputation of the Production Managers may have affected the evaluation process that should have identified the problem sooner and enabled remedial action to be taken more quickly. The reputation of the Production Managers as the key players within the organisation is supported by the perception that the company was very successful and that success compounded the reluctance to alter the ways of doing things. Several comments identified the 'problem' of being successful as a barrier to the introduction of TQM. Clearly it must have been very difficult for people to change their behaviour when they had been successful. Also, to subsequently find that rather than being celebrated for that success, they had become 'villains' in the new regime reflects very much Schein's (1985) commentary on Lewin(1951) that in securing motivation to change when something new is to be learned, something old must be unlearned. In this case, it is hard to see what might have motivated the Production Managers to change. This lack of enthusiasm for the TQ approach is captured in the following comment from one of the Production Managers:

‘TQ to me is a niggle. My standards are already high and I have enough confidence in my own ability that I can succeed without the prompting of TQ’

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and from another manager, ‘To start off with there was too much inertia with people being too relaxed and confident of their position to take TQ onboard’⁸².

A significant number of comments identify that either there was not enough support for the initiative, or that people were not interested in/not engaged with the ideas and opportunities presented by the introduction of TQM. There were some contradictory assessments of the outcomes of TQM with some people facing the ultimate fear that TQM would lead to job losses and others commented on the inadequate or inappropriate rewards associated with the implementation of TQM. This group of comments suggest that there were problems with how TQM was introduced and that there was not enough understanding of what could be achieved for individual workers by the introduction and application of TQM principles and ideas. The comment made in 1994 would support this suggestion

‘However, I do believe that the speed at which TQ has been introduced has been too slow. The shop-floor has never got to see or experience TQ and it was well over a year before it filtered down to the lower levels of management’⁸³.

Several comments identify middle management behaviour and actions as the reason for the non-adoption of TQM. It was suggested by one interviewee that the middle managers had been left out of the programme and were experiencing insecurity and had become a ‘huge anti-faction’⁸⁴ that needed to be overcome. Reflecting on the contribution of the middle managers one senior manager realised that ‘the middle managers created a resistance movement’⁸⁵. These reflections certainly raise a question about how the change programme was being monitored and as these statements were made in 1997, these obstructive strategies had been in action for up to six years. Further comments level the fault at the Managing Director and/or the Senior Management team. One of the problems identified senior management not taking advice given by the consultants, choosing to adopt a project that was “quite difficult and of course messed up”⁸⁶ rather than take on projects that were winners.

Another manager felt that “there was no pressure on the executives”⁸⁷ to bring about enough cross-functional work and there was a realisation by several of the senior managers that they had not done what they could. Again the question has to be asked about the review and evaluation process that was taking place and some of the answer links back to what how the projects were chosen, what the success criteria were and whether the projects would have succeeded without TQM.

The most significant criticism of a senior manager is levelled at the Manufacturing Director, paradoxically as he was usually referred to in almost heroic terms, but on this occasion he was unreservedly blamed for the failure to act against the Production Manager who was perceived to have caused most of the damage to the change programme:

‘The whole operation of the Functional Steering Groups was a total and utter disgrace. Production never did act as ‘one’ and he just let his production managers do what they wanted. The one production manager who took early retirement should have been sacked much sooner for how he sabotaged the TQ initiatives and was allowed to get away with it’⁸⁸.

Wilkinson et al (1993) in a report for the Institute of Management identified lack of senior management commitment as barrier to quality management describing it as a ‘major difficulty’ by 18% of their respondents and a ‘minor difficulty’ by 19%. Middle management was identified by 11% as a ‘major difficulty’ and 33% as a minor difficulty. The findings from TRC would appear to support their research in identifying both senior and middle management as a source of obstruction (although in the case of TRC ‘lack of commitment’ is an assumption that can be drawn from comments made rather than a specific cause). The characteristics attributed to ‘lack of commitment’ in the I.M. report, scepticism, lack of enthusiasm, unwilling to commit resources, and short-termism, are all characteristics that have been used to describe all levels of management in the TRC interviews and cannot be contained to senior managers alone.

Interestingly, there were a few comments identifying the TQ Manager as a barrier to the implementation and success of the TQ programme. The suggestion from these comments is that the TQ Manager did too much himself rather than ‘pushing’ others

to engage in what was required and that TQ was not 'sold well enough at the start'⁸⁹. Another comment 'damns him with faint praise' by recognising his enthusiasm but also his lack of authority putting him in a 'no-win situation'⁹⁰ whilst the final comment, from the Managing Director is a stronger condemnation of the TQ Manager's failure to progress:

'Because there has not been enough rebuffering and taking of responsibility TQ has not progressed fast enough. The TQ Manager's frustrations are his own inadequacies and therefore his own doing'⁹¹.

What is significant about this comment compared with comments about the TQ Manager made by other managers is that the Managing Director talks about the TQ Manager not 'taking' responsibility whilst others make comment about him not being 'given' authority to act. These contradictory assessments about the parameters in which the TQ Manager could/should act suggest a tension and frustration developing between the Managing Director and his TQM champion. What is also apparent is the emergence of a significant contributory factor in the failure of the TQM programme that centres on the actions/qualities/inabilities of the TQ Manager.

This completes the first stage of the analysis focusing on the impact of the senior management team on the introduction and implementation of TQM. The literature on introducing TQM is universal in its identification of Top Management commitment to TQM as being an essential requirement for success with the senior management having a primary responsibility for establishing an organisation-wide commitment to quality(Wilkinson et al, 1998). Whilst the analysis completed thus far has identified that there were serious shortcomings in terms of the level of commitment of the senior management team to the TQ programme of change conducted at TRC, the analysis does not support the view that lack of senior management commitment leads to failure of the change programme. In the case of TRC there are a variety of contributory factors of which senior management commitment is one and which inevitably impacted on some of the other factors. However, to attribute the failure of the programme directly to the lack of the senior management commitment would be wrong; middle managers and especially the production managers played a major role in the lack of success, the lack of involvement of the HR function and the much criticised activities of the HR Director played a role in the failings of the change

programme, and the TQ Manager as the TQM champion was also responsible for failing to secure support and employee engagement in the change. The different levels of analysis suggest a complexity of factors impacting on experience of TQM, and the tendency to simplify and rationalise the reasons for failure do not do justice to the reality of the situation.

Analysis of the Senior Management as a Team

A further contention of this research is that the tendency to collectivise senior managers into a single, unified team is also a simplification that is not realistic. It is the purpose of the next stage of the analysis to explore whether the dominant managerialist preference to focus on top managers as a team detracts from providing an authentic analysis of change by assuming that 'the top management' is unproblematic. In the mainstream management literature teams tend to refer to a special type of group that has positive traits (Bratton et al, 2010; Hertog and Tolner, 1998). Special attention tends to be given to collaboration between members, mutual support and sharing of skills as well as sharing knowledge and skills in decision-making (Buchanan and Hukzynski, 2007). Consequently, when reviewing the comments made by the senior managers about their colleagues on the senior management team, it would be reasonable to expect a high level of mutually supportive comments and praise of each others' contributions. The interviews elicited 53 comments from the three members of the senior management team that were included in the research.

The Managing Director, who saw himself very much as the 'first among equals' and a real champion of change, very capable and highly thought of by his colleagues, was very supportive of his fellow directors. He gave especial recognition to the Manufacturing Director valuing his experience, foresight and willingness to listen amongst his attributes. The Managing Director was very secure in his opinion of his capabilities and talks in terms of him having 'an impressive reputation and there is also a mythology that hangs over me' ⁹². His tenure in office on the Board meant that he was one of the longest serving members but was relatively new in the Managing Director role. In reflecting on his contribution he felt that achievements, 'stem from his belief that it is extremely important for me to be seen to be practicing what I preach, otherwise how can I expect others to follow my instructions?' ⁹³. This

comment is particularly important from two perspectives, firstly it identifies the 'need to be seen' and a constant criticism levelled at the senior management team was its remoteness and lack of visibility – except for the Manufacturing Director who constantly walked the factory, making this a virtue of his style. The Managing Director recognised in 1994 that his colleagues were 'too remote from the workforce and was trying to change this' ⁹⁴, a challenge that proved too great as the lack of visibility was a considerable source of discontent for the other employees and was used as a rationalisation by some for not demonstrating commitment themselves. Clearly, he was right in talking about the need to practice what he preached, but the message that was received lower down was the opposite to that which was important.

The HR Director adopted a very different stance and was deliberately remote from his colleagues and the workforce, unless involved in activities with the Trades Unions. He valued the freedom that his success had earned him and he recognised that he was more often away from TRC with other commitments than in attendance at the factory. He was careful not to discuss his other senior management colleagues but his reference to external senior managers that he respected and that influenced him, suggests that his internal colleagues did not match his needs. This lack of regard for his colleagues was also reflected in his dismissal of the HR function and how he saw the role as a chance to develop his own career;

'Working for TRC is at times frustrating but exciting. I'm always busy and I need additional staff. I work hard and play hard. The opportunities are considerable if you are prepared to play the game. I enjoy the 'buzz' and I can influence people considerably. I saw a vacuum and filled it, there was a need for co-ordination across the 4,500 employees across the UK and the role did not exist until 4.5 years ago' ⁹⁵. and

'I'm not a member of the institute (CIPD) and believe that you should not have HR specialists as they are at best, practitioners and do not contribute to strategy. I have found that engineers are distrustful of non-engineers and so my background is an advantage' ⁹⁶.

The HR Director had a high profile outside of TRC but a very poor reputation within the organisation. It is interesting to speculate that his lack of professional experience and knowledge may have given him the impetus to establish his credibility with people who did not know him and would not, therefore, challenge his credibility. Certainly his dismissal of HR as a strategic functional area of management leads to some explanation about why the HR department was not visible in the introduction of TQM. Firstly he did not put himself forward as the sponsoring Director for the programme, despite the change agent being from the training and one of his direct reports, preferring to hand over responsibility to the new Quality and Information Services Director, and secondly, he deliberately refused to get involved in Team Briefing- 'the brainchild of the M.D.' because it 'did not involve people'⁹⁷. Given that the Team Briefing approach was that designed by the Industrial Society, it is hard to imagine how this could not 'involve people', and yet his decision to disassociate himself from the process was not challenged.

Despite the HR Director claiming to 'quite'⁹⁸ liking being a member of a team, and seeing his role as being that 'to generate a better team spirit'⁹⁹, the role and behaviour adopted by the HR Director demonstrates a 'maverick' in action which does not lend itself to any form of effective team behaviour. Even the allowable weakness of the 'plant' (Belbin, 1993) – ignores details and is too preoccupied to communicate effectively; assumes involvement in team activities and the HR Director appears to shun opportunities to engage.

The most illuminating comments about the senior managers are made by the Manufacturing Director, who was the longest serving member of the board and saw himself as 'an anchor-man'. The most acerbic comments are made about the HR Director and the Managing Director, but it is clear that he has very little regard for the capability of the senior managers as a whole: 'I have told the M.D. that his senior management team needs weeding out. They are not good enough for the job ahead and to steer the business through'¹⁰⁰ and 'There isn't one of them who could become a real international manager. In fact, of all the managers at TRC there is only one person who has the potential'¹⁰¹ and 'Running a business that is going well is a 'piece of cake', but I seriously doubt whether there will be people who will have the vision to manage the company when business drops'¹⁰².

These comments suggest both a frustration about the quality of the senior managers and a great concern about the future of the company. The Manufacturing Director had spent quite some time in the interviews talking about his commitment to management development and his ability to identify and nurture management potential and was especially proud that several of his previous protégés had gone on to become very senior managers in the parent organisation. The evidence would suggest therefore, that he was able to identify 'quality' and 'capability'. This ability to identify good people was recognised by the M.D. who commented on the Manufacturing Director's ability to 'certainly sort out the wheat from the chaff' ¹⁰³.

Unfortunately, the views are not reciprocated. The Manufacturing Director's opinions of the Managing Director are damning. Although he recognises that he will make decisions, his overall assessment is of a man who has: 'not got the general experience to be an M.D. He's not as clever as he thinks he makes out, he's got a phenomenal memory but intellectually he's not agile' ¹⁰⁴ and 'It's a bit sad really, it's the M.D.'s fault he's not capable of creative thinking' ¹⁰⁵ and 'He's the second longest serving M.D. that I am aware of and I don't know where he can go next. He would be 'shown up immediately elsewhere. Is this why he surrounds himself with limited people I ask myself?' ¹⁰⁶.

The disrespect for the Managing Director and his view that he is inadequate for the job is obvious and is something that has clearly been allowed to get worse over the intervening period between the interviews as the comments above were made during the second interview. Furthermore, it is not as if the two men do not talk because the following comment demonstrates that they do have 'frank' exchanges, 'I've told him to stop bullying people but he won't listen' ¹⁰⁷. The frustration that the Manufacturing Director is experiencing is evident throughout the comments and it becomes especially focused in his anger with the HR Director and the M.D.'s inability/unwillingness to deal with him: 'He's not bright enough to see if people aren't doing their job properly, like the HR Director' ¹⁰⁸ and 'I am astounded at the M.D. for letting the HR Director get away with this' ¹⁰⁹.

In these two comments there is the seed of a suggestion that the M.D. might be intimidated by the HR Director in some way and the HR Director certainly enjoys a great deal of freedom to act as he wishes.

Of the HR Director the Manufacturing Director makes the following observation;

‘The HR Director hasn’t picked it up (Management Development). He’s very insecure and hides behind words ad nauseam. His actions are few. He has no leadership role and doesn’t have the confidence to go ahead with new concepts - he’ll often just tear them to pieces’ ¹¹⁰.

These points of view are absolutely dismissive of the HR Director and clearly identify a major rift between the Manufacturing Director and his HR board colleague. It would seem to be almost impossible to assume that any shared decision-making and team-working could take place when there is such hostility and lack of regard for the personal credibility of another party in the group. What is interesting however, is that despite the anger and frustration expressed towards the HR Director and the often expressed support for the Manufacturing Director from all of the interviewees, without exception, it is not necessarily so straightforward in identifying who is the isolate in the group. At several points in the interviews the Manufacturing Director identifies his and his managers’ needs to have someone that they can talk to, preferable a man, about the problems and issues in the production areas. The following comments suggest that perhaps he is the one out of touch and that despite his popularity, his views are no longer carry the weight they used to;

‘I still have no-one I can talk to about my ‘now’ questions. Both the HR Director and the Quality and MIS Director just do what they want and not what their customers need’ ¹¹¹ and

‘I recognise that the HR Director is a protagonist for bringing in the ladies, but I needed a man who could speak to my men and who they could talk to. I went down to see the M.D. about it. What do they do? They appoint a 26 years old woman from the Electricity Board who is apparently red hot at reducing numbers’ ¹¹².

The Quality and Management Information Services Director also comes in for serious criticism: ‘As it is she (the Customer Services Manager) will be reporting to the Quality and MIS Director who’s a nice enough bloke but drives everyone mad with his pickiness’ ¹¹³ and ‘It killed the TQ Manager’s pig too find that having escaped the HR Director he ended up under the Quality and MIS Director, and he’s made

hardly any difference to the organisation' ¹¹⁴ and 'The trouble with the Quality and MIS Director is that he is very stubborn. I have lost my temper with him on several occasions because he is so stubborn and dogmatic. He's always telling people what they ought to have said or what they meant' ¹¹⁵.

On the operations of the management team the Manufacturing Director is also highly critical of the level of discussion;

'The management meetings are only about results, there are no meaty discussions. The meaty discussions take place once a year at the annual review, but the discussions are in syndicates which keep things 'safe'. Syndicates are about the process not the results' ¹¹⁶ and

'This organisation is absolutely rubbish at managing its own decisions and will remain so until it accepts that its managers are always flying off somewhere'¹¹⁷ and

'The guy who is taking over from me commented on there being no interaction between the Management Team, there's no communication between the members, that's how the HR Director has got away with it, and the Managing Directors have always appeared to be nervous of the directors getting to do things together' ¹¹⁸.

All of these comments point to a man who is angry and frustrated with the organisation and the people with whom he is working. He appears to be no longer able to command the regard and respect from others who now seem to be doing things differently to how he has done things, and he does not seem to fit in. His style has apparently become anachronistic and there are those who have identified him as 'a problem'. Whilst all of these comments from the Manufacturing Director have to be taken in the context of someone who was retiring within three months, following his doctor's recommendation, 'I'm going on April 25th. I've had enough and my doctor has told me that I'm getting too angry to stay, I haven't been well' ¹¹⁹. The evidence is clear that the senior management group is dysfunctional. The Manufacturing Director comments on them 'all paddling their own canoes' ¹²⁰ and there is not a great deal of evidence to support and demonstrate collective action that would meet with the expectations of effective team-working. Although only three of the senior

managers were interviewed, they are the most 'senior' members of the group and their views and opinions were not constrained to each other.

What this group analysis of the 'senior management team' has established is that the individuals who make up the Board of Directors of TRC do not operate as a team, whether the other directors demonstrate a closer relationship cannot be established (although there is prima facie evidence based on the comments of other interviewees that they do not). It is clear from this analysis that the Managing Director values his management colleagues and has high expectations of himself and his leadership. Unfortunately, his opinions of his approach and capability are not shared by the Manufacturing Director who thinks he is inadequate. The HR Director likes to do his own thing and does not seem to give much time to TRC, nor does he appear to offer much direction to the HR function.

Despite the HR Director not being greatly involved with the company, he seems to wield considerable influence with the M.D. who provides him with considerable freedom. The HR Director also appears to be externally focused liaising more with external, senior group managers than his internal counterparts. There appears to be a big tension between the Manufacturing Director and the HR Director, although this seems to be more one-sided with the Manufacturing Director more troubled by the relationship than the HR Director. The Quality and MIS Director has not met the expectations of the Manufacturing Director and he too is considered inadequate by the Manufacturing Director. Overall, regardless of the success of TRC, the Manufacturing Director has a very low opinion of his senior colleagues. Whilst the Manufacturing Director is being removed from the group, it is clear that team effectiveness is utterly compromised at the time of the second interviews and had been for some time. However, the team was not 'paralysed' by its inadequacies. Plans were already in place to move forward in a new direction. The retirement of the TQ Manager as well as the Manufacturing Director enabled the establishment of a new set of actors to take the change programme forward. This time the Quality and MIS Director was very much in charge and what he had in mind was not TQM but BPR and he had found his own champion.

Chapter 6

Discussion, Conclusion and Further Research Opportunities

This research was undertaken to examine a failed management of change programme that was focused on the introduction of a Deming-informed TQM initiative. The programme commenced in 1991 and changed direction into a BPR programme in 1997. The case-study was based on a large manufacturing unit which was very successful and the researcher had access to a variety of people and groups from all levels of the organisation and undertook extensive interviews over two periods 3 years apart. However, rather than seeking to explain the failure of the implementation of TQM per se, the author was particularly interested in the role of senior management in the failure process.

The TQM literature places a very heavy emphasis on the importance of senior management commitment to the process, for providing leadership to the process and a responsibility for quality. Disengagement by senior management is not an option for the quality gurus. The corollary of their insistence of senior management commitment is that without it, any TQM initiative is likely to fail; ergo the assumption therefore, is that the commitment of the senior management is essential for success. Following this rationale, and by process of deduction, if a researcher can find that the senior management was not committed to the change programme, then cause and effect can be established. For the researcher however, there was a significant flaw in the logic of the cause and effect relationship, which whilst seemingly reasonable, was based on an assumption that the senior management operated as an effective collective. The managerialist literature actually created a 'fail-safe' position for senior managers in not drawing attention to the potential dysfunctionality of the individuals in the top group.

This research focuses on that perspective and challenges the dominant literature by suggesting that regardless of a lack of senior management commitment to the introduction of TQM, there could never have been senior management commitment because there never was a senior management *team*.

However, to do that, the researcher had to first establish whether the senior management was committed to the change programme or not. Ascertaining commitment required a multi-layered analysis, *asking* whether there was commitment was too simplistic and there were several indicators of commitment or otherwise. In fact, given the importance that is placed upon senior management commitment to change and the introduction of TQM, it would have been highly unlikely that any senior manager would have said they were not. Cameron and Green (2012) point out that as the senior management team at the top of the organisation is likely to be held responsible for any success or failure, its pivotal position will mean that its members are most likely to initiate and manage the implementation of change. As such, there is an implied expectation of commitment and desire for control within that group. The first step that reflects that desire to see change implemented is the active engagement in verifying and persuading the workforce of the need for change and craft a compelling vision of what change would achieve (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999).

A classic strategic management control perspective on reviewing change would examine the resources that were allocated to the change. All changes carry with them a cost implication (Hayes, 2010) and with a planned change such as the one being studied, there were considerable cost implications of the major training and education programme that was initiated. Following the advice and recommendations of the consultant, the TQM message was cascaded through the organisation with the intention of spreading the message to all members of the company. The introduction of TQM would have met the characteristics of Dunphy and Stace's Scale Type 4, 'Corporate Transformation' (1993) and represented a radical shift in the Business Strategy and revolutionary changes in the way that people conducted themselves in revised interaction patterns, altered power and status relationships and reorganizations that affected how they did things. The main stay of the change was teams and cellular manufacturing and a requirement for people to accept their responsibility for quality and improvement. Balogun and Hailey (2008) suggest that top-down approaches are best when rapid organisation-wide responses are required in times of crisis, but that was not the situation at TRC, although there was a general feeling that change was necessary.

In considering whether the change was resourced properly and adequately there are several indicators that suggest that a serious investment was made. Firstly, a consultant was contracted to make recommendations and retained for several years to help the change process and act as a mentor to the TQ Manager. Secondly, a training programme was designed and planned to be rolled out to all members of staff. Such an extensive training exercise carries with it a significant cost implication and more than hints at a perception of commitment by the senior management team to make TQM inclusive. Whilst the majority of the employees and all managers were involved in the training exercise, there were many operatives who were not. Consequently, an important group of people were left marginalised and excluded with a resultant cynicism and reluctance to engage. Thirdly, not only was a consultant engaged to help the programme, but a new post was created, the TQ Manager and later, his assistant, the Customer Services Manager. Although these two posts were filled by internal members, there are many costs associated with people taking on new roles and activities. Again there is prima facie evidence of commitment to seeing the programme succeed.

Despite the financial investment that was made there are several contra-indicators that lead to the need to explore the findings more rigorously. It is clear from that case that despite the heavy investment there was no serious attempt to evaluate the success of the training programme both in terms of coverage and message. What TQM actually meant was very confused by the interviewees at all levels and this was after six years of involvement with TQM. The projects that were initiated were measured in terms of cost savings but not in relation to behaviour change. The actual experience of change at TRC created tensions between the espoused theories and the theories-in-use (Argyris, 1991) in which the employees were exposed to soft ideas and initiatives in the training sessions, but were exposed to top-down, results-driven actions resonant of the hard, cost reduction or control approach (Hayes, 2010). Consequently, what was achieved over-ruled how things were achieved and as one of the emphases within Demings approach to TQM was about behaviour and the need to change how employees engage with quality, the emphasis on cost-saving countermanded the potential for behaviour change. However, finance is but one type of resource and Nadler and Tushman (1988) identify senior management time as a resource that can also be in scarce supply to

the detriment of the change initiative. In the case of TRC, lack of senior management visibility was a major source of contention and dissatisfaction by those lower down the organisation. Consequently, on the one-hand there appears to be a plentiful financial support for the programme but less evidence of an emotional engagement in the actual change programme. Several comments were made by the respondents about the senior managers off-loading their responsibility onto the TQ Manager, suggesting that money had been directed at the initiative and that was all that was needed to ensure success.

The approach adopted by TRC following the recommendations of the consultant reflects the life-cycle process to change (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995). The introduction of TQM was a 'text-book' re-enactment of the dominant functionalist ideology of that time. Hughes (2010) suggests that functionalism dominates the literature on organisational change because it emphasises unity and the pursuit of shared understanding achieved through rational, logical and management-led decision making and control. The change is planned and strategic with the role of senior management sustained and reinforced through the successful application of tools and techniques designed and implemented to ensure compliance with the way that things should be. The 'top-down' approach cascaded the content, structure and objectives of the training programme that reflected the desires and expectations of the senior executives.

The approach used at TRC demonstrated the tendency of organisational managers to adopt the ideas of the gurus of the time, and especially in this case, the 'righteous stance' in which the words of the guru are held in awe because what is advised is recognised as being right (Jackson, 2001). The guru of choice for TRC was Deming (1986) and the application of his 14 Point Plan for TQM. Whilst the off-the-shelf approach might seem naive and an abdication of decision-making responsibility, as Fincham and Evans (1999) suggest, the gurus created a real sense of achievement about change and Huczynski (2006) notes that with their assertions of success came the promise of competitive advantage. It is suggested therefore, that such claims might lead a senior management team to believe that the simple application of what is recommended will lead inevitably to success, that what the gurus offer is a magic wand (Marchington, 1995) and the management of the process is incidental.

The discussion above consistently implies that change depends on a competent and committed senior management team with the concomitant assumption that failure to change will result if senior management is not competent or committed. Consultants extolled the role of top managers as the main drivers of TQM (Munro, 1995) and quality became a strategic issue for corporate managers within their responsibility for organisational governance. Senior managers were required and expected by example to lead the quality agenda by setting the quality priorities, establishing the appropriate systems of quality management and procedures for action, and providing the resources to achieve the objectives (Hill, 1995). As a corporate initiative, senior management commitment and visibility within the process of TQM implementation and maintenance was assumed without debate. With TQM's emphasis on teamwork and the expectation that top management would lead by example, the assumption that top management act as a team would appear to be rational and logical.

Top management commitment to the change programme is highlighted in various perspectives, models and approaches to change. Beer and Spector (1994) place the development of top management's agreement on and commitment to the belief that quality improvement is the key strategic task of the organisation as the second step on the prescriptive list of actions to achieve change. Top management support is an essential requirement in the OD model as generalised by Aldag and Stearns (1991). Kotter (1995) adopts a process perspective on change that endorses the need for top management commitment as leaders and whilst he recognises that not all the senior managers need to be a part of the guiding coalition, he raises the importance of signalling commitment through the symbols of power and authority that are communicated through titles, reputations, contacts and resource control.

The analysis of the empirical data suggests that the senior management team of TRC was not committed to the introduction of TQM. What remains inconclusive from the analysis is the subsequent view that the failure of the change can be attributed to the lack of senior management commitment. The remoteness of the senior managers was interpreted as a lack of commitment from the senior management and this had some impact on how people were responding to the change. Whilst some of the interviewees noted that in having observed the behaviour of senior

managers they took their cues from them in relation to their own behaviour, there were other, more significant groups in terms of observed behaviour that had an impact. Consequently, individuals interpreted the lack of engagement by the senior management as a lack of commitment and responded likewise. Their commitment was not secured because the context of action within which work is carried out did not encourage the appropriate psychological state to lead to the pressure to act in the desired way (Oliver, 1990). Furthermore, it is important to recognise that although the programme in general did not succeed, there was one pocket of success in which the principles and practices associated with what the TQ manager was seeking to achieve had been successfully introduced and sustained. What cannot be deduced from the remote behaviour of the senior managers is that they were not committed, that can only be implied.

What the lack of visibility of the senior managers did enable was the opportunity for the middle managers, particularly the production managers, to fill the 'visibility-vacuum' and, in the absence of an alternative story being communicated they were able to reinforce their preferred interpretation of what TQM meant. This might explain how their message which essentially favoured the hard operations management perspective of TQM was so easily transmitted and adopted. What it does not explain is why the Manufacturing Director, the senior manager with leadership responsibility for the manufacturing area and who was exceptionally visible did not recognise that there was a contradictory story being told and that TQM was essentially being undermined. In fact he did recognise the problem and took action by pushing the most influential of the production managers to accelerated early-retirement, but it was felt by everyone that his action was too late. So, the question has to be asked, why did it take so long to recognise the problem?

Another key actor in the change process was the TQ Manager and the lack of influence that he demonstrated has to be considered. The questions that have to be asked here are why could he not get anyone with power and influence to listen? And why was he so ineffective? Although many of the interviewees talked about the TQ Manager in complimentary terms and valued the effort he put into the change programme and his enthusiasm, he was not thought of as the driver of the change. The TQ Manager makes many references to the lack of support from the senior

managers and this was a significant factor in his decision to take early-retirement. The Managing Director did consider that perhaps with hindsight the TQ Manager should have reported to him, which suggests the he was questioning whether the senior manager with responsibility for TQM (the Quality and MIS Director) had given enough support.

Essentially the TQ Manager had two senior managers to whom he could reasonably go, the Quality and MIS Director who was his direct reporting line, and the HRM Director to whom he had previously reported when he had been training manager. The former demonstrated very little support for the TQM approach being used, overtly supporting the appointment of a new co-ordinator to take over from the TQ Manager but who was clearly going to be pushing the BPR agenda. The assumption can be made that given the director's area of expertise, BPR as an approach to organisational design that proposes information technology as the main driver for change (Knights and Willmott, 2012:609) would have been something with which he might find greater empathy. The HR Director had chosen not to be the senior team's sponsor for TQM and absented himself from the organisation. Consequently, the TQ Manager is isolated in his role; he has no senior manager with whom he can discuss the TQM programme and neither of the two Directors who might step forward to help seem willing to engage with him.

The role of the HR Director and the HR Department also needs to be considered. It is clear from the interviews with the HR Director that he did not see himself being involved in TRC to a great extent. His commitment to the wider organisation appears to be his priority. HR issues are critical to the successful implementation of TQM (Wilkinson et al, 1998). Well designed and professionally applied HR policies and procedures underpin the culture change needed to ensure TQM in practice. The implementation of a quality culture is a strategic initiative and a congruent HR Strategy helps ensure the integration of employees with the business plan for success. The language and practices of effective strategic people management and development also mirrors the need for employees to engage with delivering the quality service within a high performance culture (Kerfoot and Knights, 1995). The softer approaches to the effective management of people seek to capitalise on the investment in quality programmes and develop the creative and innovative

capabilities of the workforce (Knights and Willmott, 2012). This was clearly not the case at TRC where the HR department was conspicuous by its absence. The HR Director appeared to have little tolerance for either his staff or the function and paid little attention to the requirements of the internal customers for the services of HRM. The lack of involvement of the HRM function is perhaps another reason why the operations management paradigm remained unchallenged. The lack of direction from the head of the service left the HRM function as a peripheral player when it should have been core.

The evidence from the case-study interviews would suggest that the senior management was not committed to the introduction of TQM, yet the decision had been one taken at the strategic level. The resource allocation had been extensive and a significant investment had been made in terms of time, people and money, but the impression made by the senior management team was one of non-commitment and lack of engagement. The programme of change ran for 6 years and only towards the end do they start to reflect on their contribution, at no time prior to that did the senior managers look to change their behaviour, they must have thought they were doing it right. If they thought they were doing the right things, then what else would they have thought to do and who would have told them? Certainly not the TQ Manager! But was the lack of commitment of the senior management team to blame for the failure?

There is perhaps some circumstantial evidence that would suggest that senior management was to blame, there is perhaps the managerial rationale that says the senior management team has ultimate responsibility but the situation at TRC is so complex with so many counter-productive actions and interactions, that to conclude cause and effect is too simplistic. This conclusion supports the view of Higgs (2007) who suggested that there was little evidence to corroborate the claims that top management teams did have an impact on organisational performance and whilst this research is focusing on change and the introduction of TQM, the rationale for TQM was directly linked to improving organisational performance.

Through the interrogation of the interviews a more revealing layer of debate has emerged which proffers a better opportunity to find an explanation for the behaviour

of the senior managers at TRC. Whilst the literature on change and especially the literature on TQM is insistent on the importance of the top management involvement in managing change, other writers on top management teams suggest that there are potential problems in making generalised assumptions about team behaviour. Peterson et al (1998) identified the problems for Chief Executive Officers who were undermined by a dysfunctional management team, or where organisations were in a weak position, executive activity was characterised by egocentric behaviour. Whilst TRC could not be described as being in a weak position from the business perspective, the Managing Director was not a strong leader and both the HR Director and the Manufacturing Director demonstrate highly individualistic behaviours.

The inability of senior managers to develop effective team processes have been established as a cause for CEO concern for some time (Hambrick 1995). Other research pointed to the inability of senior management teams to succeed due to lack of training in team collaboration (Katzenbach, 1998). The CIPD annual Learning and Talent Development Survey (2012) identified that 65% of the responding organisations thought that their senior management were deficient in leadership and management skills, especially in the area of leading organisational change, but when asked to comment on what leadership development activities would be undertaken, there was no mention of team-building or team collaboration development. Once again, there appears to be an implicit assumption that once in situ, a senior management team will 'just happen' a feature of top management teams noted by Arroba and Wedgwood-Oppenheim (1996).

There is other compelling evidence to endorse a view that senior managers do not easily meld into effective teamworking (Eisenstat and Cohen, 1990; Lorenz, 1994; Saloman, 2007) and the actions of the individual directors at TRC and the views expressed about their competence verify this point of view. Argyris (1991) described the senior management team as a 'myth' and the reinforcement of the myth led to ineffective behaviour (Peterfreund, 1986; cited in Argyris, 1991) and this too is substantiated by the behaviour of the senior managers at TRC who would periodically come together as a management board but would then break away to individually lead their functional specialisms or pursue an individual agenda. Buchanan and Badham (2008) in their discussion of political behaviour identify the

significance of sustaining attention to the individual's preferred agenda and marginalising the opposition which reflect closely the behaviour of the HR Director. However, the interviews with the senior managers describe very clearly the individuality of purpose and action of all the main players on the senior management team, often in direct contravention of conventions of teamworking and unification. It is interesting to focus on the Managing Director's reflection on his own way of leading within the team, which he enjoyed being a part of and valued its purpose as well as believing that his team skills were positively recognised on the 'global' scale. He notes that he led by example and posed this as important in getting people to follow his instructions, a confusing set of rationalisations given his belief in teamworking. But his view is akin to that noted by Knights and Willmott (1992) in which they identified the dual layered impact of the CEO as leader which enabled 'him' to assert and reassert 'his' authority.

Conclusion

Whilst it appears conclusive that the senior managers at TRC were not operating as a team and given the strength of feeling expressed by the Manufacturing Director regarding the inadequacies of his colleagues, effective teamworking with that group of individuals would seem unlikely and work by Higgs (2007) and Zqikael et al (2008) link good project and team processes and a balance of mix of personalities can lead to successful top management outcomes. In the case of TRC, the mix of personalities has been shown to be counterproductive.

The processes recommended for effective team delivery also present an interesting set of problems. The first are for consideration is 'communications' and these were consistently criticised throughout the interviews, whether verbal or written, it is clear that the TQM message was never successfully transmitted to the whole organisation. The attempt to implement the Industrial Society's approach to team briefing was also ineffective and the HR Director refused to get involved as he felt that 'people' were not highlighted in the process. The communication strategy in any organisation is a major feature of effective people management and development (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2003) and the deliberate withdrawal of his support was an abdication of responsibility by the HR Director. The second process is that of 'quality management' and the research has demonstrated that the confusion about what

TQM actually meant within the context of TRC also shows that the senior managers failed in this area. 'Advanced project management techniques' are not evident from the senior manager interviews. What are evident are the project management applications used by the production managers as they attempted to manage the programme of change from their perspective, this taken in conjunction with the next specific process, 'project management assignment' identifies the major breach in the programme of change. The project was assigned to the TQ Manager and yet the overwhelming impression was that the production managers were the leaders of the leaders. The difference in paradigmatic interpretation between the TQ Manager and his production manager colleagues created a serious discontinuity of planned action.

It has also been established that the metrics for success were also incongruous with the TQ Manager's objectives. The projects were accounted for success in terms of SPC and costs-saved with no emphasis given to behaviour change. It would appear that the success criteria for cell manufacturing and team working was a de facto assumption that if you put people into teams they will act as a team. The interviews revealed that the majority of people lower down the organisation were not involved in the projects and therefore never, in their views, experienced TQM. The final process identified by Zqikael et al is an 'organisational knowledge management system' and there are several contra-indicators to suggest that this was not in place. Despite the TQ Manager's cascaded training programme which was intended to be inclusive and organisation-wide, the programme faltered leaving people excluded and alienated.

Secondly, the interviews identified that there was a significant criticism about management development, especially the lack of engagement in the design and delivery of an effective HRD programme and of any succession planning by the HR Director as head of the HR function. These two areas of learning and development and talent management suggest that a holistic knowledge management system was not a feature of TRC. It appears that all of the six specific processes to be delivered by top managers working as a team to achieve project success are compromised within the case of TRC's change initiative.

The evidence to support the view that the top managers at TRC were not a team appears to be incontrovertible. Whilst they may have come together at certain times

to discuss business issues of a strategic nature does not mitigate for their dysfunctional behaviour in terms of this major change. The significant consequence of this research is the challenge to the over simplistic claims of the managerialist literature with regard to senior management commitment. Whilst this research established that the senior management were not committed the research has also shown that cause and effect for the failure of the change initiative cannot be established. There were other significant factors that had a major impact on what took place at TRC. Despite the Managing Director being personally committed to the introduction of TQM he was seemingly unable to secure enough support from his senior managers.

This senior management could never offer commitment to the change because it was never acting as a team. Before the change was initiated, what should have happened was a review of the senior managers as a team and to then have the confidence that they would, in turn, act as a team in supporting the change programme. It was not enough to assume that because a strategic decision had been made, the senior managers were able and willing to act as a single, unified entity in support of the change. The research supports the assertion that change requires top management support, but it also identifies a further stage in the change process: for change to be successful top management need to be assured and can demonstrate that they are a team.

Contributions of this research

This thesis has presented a range of discussions that culminate in a reasoned support for a challenge to the assumption that senior management behaves as a committed team. This assertion is dominant in the managerialist literature on change and change management. This prescriptive stance taken by writers (Lewin, 1947; Kotter, 1996; Chattopadhyay et al, 1999) including those focusing on the introduction of TQM (Deming, 1986; Juran et al, 1974; Crosby, 1980; Feigenbaum, 1986) is not reflected in the research undertaken and the collective attention of the senior managers in the case-study was both minimal and unsustainable. Self-promoting political behaviour and deliberate strategies to marginalise and alienate other members of the senior management group were common activities of the individuals

in the research group. Furthermore, their behaviour was neither covert nor inauthentic and appeared as normal, accepted and legitimate by other members of the organization. The importance of this research to theory is that neither commitment nor team behaviour was evident. Of the two, the most significant was the highly individualised behaviour and the dysfunctionality of the senior manager as a group, let alone a team. It would be reasonable to assume that if team behaviour had been the norm of senior management teams, the lack of commitment would have been recognised and acted upon. It was not the lack of commitment that was the source of the failure to achieve the change, it was the lack of cohesiveness of the senior managers as a leading group. Team behaviour of senior managers is a naive and potentially damaging characteristic to assume.

The second contribution that the research makes is to research methodology. The research was based on data that had been collected fifteen years earlier. The empirical work, although generated and 'owned' by the author provided a the opportunity to engage in secondary analysis and as such, supports the views held by Heaton (1998) Andrews (2008) and Corti and Bishop (2005) that revisiting and re-analyzing original transcripts offers the opportunity to both re-interpret and ask new questions of the original data. In this research, the richness of the empirical data provided the opportunity to focus on a different aspect to what was the intended research question and to exploit the data to secure a valid interpretation of a contemporary issue. This research supports the growing interest in secondary analysis of qualitative data.

The research also highlights the value of secondary analysis within hermeneutic phenomenology. Texts within the transcripts enabled the author to interpret the phenomenon of the behaviour of senior managers though the lens of the author's own experiences and background. Interpretation allowed shedding light onto the taken for granted experiences of senior managers as team-players and presented a challenge to that prescription. The phenomenon of team-working emerged from periodic revisiting (over fifteen years) of the data that told the story of an unsuccessful change programme. The emphasis of the analysis was on context and behaviour and the interpretation reflects both the relationship of the whole to the parts and the parts to the whole (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). The act of

interpretation represented a steady convergence of insight by the author and the text and led to something that was far more meaningful as an interpretation of what had occurred than had hitherto emerged. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided the methodology to exploit and analyse empirical data that had been generated for another research question and this research demonstrates that it has much to offer the qualitative researcher of organizational behaviour.

Further Research Opportunities

Clearly the research undertaken at TRC provides scope for further development. Firstly, the role and behaviour of the TQ Manager throughout the change programme deserves further investigation especially his inability to secure support for the change, despite seemingly having the resources to implement the new approach. Consequently it would be reasonable to assume that the fault lay with him and his lack of personal skills, and a review of the process through a storytelling lens might prove fruitful. The power of rhetorical practices as leverage in organizational change cannot be understated (Flory and Iglesias, 2010) and the case presents a realistic opportunity to apply storytelling as a rich method of analysis and interpretation. Secondly, the role of the HR Director and the HR function, both in relation to change and organizational influence is of interest to a researcher of the development of strategic HRM and the potential contribution, or otherwise, that effective people management and development makes to organizational success. Given the highly visible role of the HR Director beyond the confines of TRC, which implies an influential reputation, the question must be asked as to how common is the TRC approach to HR Management in other organisations?

The current research has also identified areas for further development that go beyond the remit of this research but that need to be explored more generally in other contexts. The case-study presents unique features about both the introduction of TQM and the actions and behaviours of the top management team, but clearly the findings may be generalizable to other situations and organizations. There are grounds for challenging the rational- logical managerial literature in its assumptions that top management act as functional teams and other investigations need to be undertaken to provide more evidence. Lastly there is clearly a gender perspective

that can be explored. The culture at TRC was overwhelmingly masculine and the resultant dismissal of TQM in favour of BPR may well reflect the denial of the soft TQM style that the TQ Manager was trying to promote. The skills associated with soft TQM are those that tend to be considered more feminine and it would be useful to investigate further the consequences of introducing soft skills and approaches into cultures that are dominated by hard systems and controls.

Endnotes

1. Managing Director- 1994
2. Manufacturing Director- 1997
3. Tendering Manager- 1994
4. TU Reps- 1994
5. Managing Director- 1994
6. Manufacturing Director- 1997
7. HRM Director- 1994
8. HRM Director- 1997
9. HRM Director- 1994
10. HRM Director- 1994
11. Manufacturing Director- 1994
12. Production Manager 1- 1994
13. Manufacturing Director- 1997
14. Production Manager 1- 1994
15. TU Reps- 1997
16. Managing Director- 1997
17. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
18. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
19. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
20. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
21. Production Manager 1 (New Manager)- 1997
22. Production Manager 1 (New Manager)- 1997

23. Managing Director- 1997
24. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
25. Staff Employees- 1997
26. Production Operatives- 1994
27. Manufacturing Director- 1997
28. Production Manager 1 (New Manager)- 1997
29. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
30. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
31. TU Reps- 1997
32. Chief Development Engineer- 1997
33. Tendering Manager- 1994
34. Staff Employees- 1997
35. Staff Employees- 1997
36. Chief Development Engineer- 1997
37. HRM Director- 1997
38. Staff Employees- 1997
39. TU Reps- 1997
40. TU Reps- 1997
41. Managing Director- 1997
42. *Several people are referred to as 'off-loading'
43. Manufacturing Director- 1994
44. Manufacturing Director- 1994
45. Manufacturing Director- 1994
46. Manufacturing Director- 1994
47. TU Reps- 1997
48. HRM Director- 1997
49. HRM Director- 1997
50. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
51. Chief Development Officer- 1997

52. Manufacturing Director- 1997
53. Total Quality Manager- 1997
54. Managing Director- 1994
55. Chief Development Officer- 1997
56. Manufacturing Director- 1997
57. Production Manager 1 (New Manager)- 1997
58. Production Manager 1 (New Manager)- 1997
59. Production Manager 1- 1994
60. HRM Director- 1997
61. HRM Director- 1997
62. Staff Employees- 1997
63. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
64. TU Reps- 1997
65. Manufacturing Director- 1994
66. TU Reps- 1997
67. Manufacturing Director- 1997
68. Production Manager 1- 1994
69. Manufacturing Director- 1994
70. Manufacturing Director- 1994
71. HRM Director- 1994
72. Manufacturing Director- 1994
73. Manufacturing Director- 1997
74. Chief Development Engineer- 1997
75. Manufacturing Director- 1997

(The reference to the shining new star is the appointment of a 26 years old female, an appointment which itself caused anger from the production managers who had wanted a man. The organisation shows many characteristics of a chauvinistic culture and the intolerance of women was reinforced by comments made about the only female supervisor and the Customer Service Manager who was working with the TQ Manager.)

76. HRM Director- 1994

77. Manufacturing Director- 1994
78. Production Manager 1 (New Manager)- 1997
79. Production Supervisors- 1997
80. HRM Director- 1997
81. Production Manager 1- 1994
82. Chief Development Engineer- 1994
83. Chief Development Engineer- 1994
84. Manufacturing Director- 1997
85. Manufacturing Director- 1997
86. HRM Director- 1997
87. Manufacturing Director- 1997
88. Total Quality Manager (with Customer Services Manager)-1997
89. Manufacturing Director- 1994
90. Manufacturing Director- 1997
91. Managing Director- 1997
92. Managing Director- 1994
93. Managing Director- 1994
94. Managing Director- 1994
95. HRM Director- 1994
96. HRM Director- 1994
97. HRM Director- 1997
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99. HRM Director- 1994
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115. Manufacturing Director- 1997
116. Manufacturing Director- 1997
117. Manufacturing Director- 1997
118. Manufacturing Director- 1997
119. Manufacturing Director- 1997

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