

**AFRICAN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS
WITHIN THE PERSONAL INTERPERSONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP
PERSPECTIVE**

By

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DECLARATION OF ADHERENCE TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wife Lindo and Sons, Vuso and Muzi, I thank God for the gifts you bring into my life and for making our life together such a rich experience. Kungatsi Umdali, Mvelinchanti, angasibeka, sikhule, senabe, senetseteke!





ABSTRACT

Orientation: Personal experience of leadership within a religious community in Southern Africa and a preliminary literature review indicates that Personal Interpersonal and Professional Leadership (PIPL) mastery in Southern Africa needs an African spiritual consciousness (ASC) to strengthen its relevance. Conceptualising ASC requires an immersion into the narrative world of an African person to discover insights that can inform PIPL mastery within this context.

Research purpose: the aim of the study is to conceptualise ASC within PIPL using the life history of an African in order to discover African insights on PIPL mastery.

Motivation for the study: Current leadership literature on PIPL mastery does not sufficiently embrace ASC. This gap poses a challenge to the facilitation of PIPL mastery and potential realisation in the complex Southern African leadership context.

Research design: The study employed a modernist qualitative methodology and constructivist paradigm as its research approach. A case study was used as a research strategy and a life history was used as a qualitative research technique. Purposeful sampling was employed in finding a storyteller and data was collected using solicited and unsolicited sources.

Main findings: The study yielded a life history with a rich and varied description of how an African person experience of PIPL mastery. An analysis of the collected data revealed themes that can inform PIPL mastery with insights from an African experience and understanding of PIPL mastery.

Practical implications: The conclusions of the study raise awareness on the particular themes for consideration within the PIPL perspective and necessitate a further inquiry into the journey of PIPL mastery from an ASC.

Anticipated contribution: The study provides some understanding of how an African person understands and experiences PIPL mastery. This study adds to the relatively small base of qualitative research available on ASC and contributes to literature within PIPL programme by highlighting the potential themes for further exploration and research.

Key Words: Personal Interpersonal and Professional Leadership (PIPL), Mastery, Africa(n), African Spiritual Consciousness, life-history, identity and facilitation, connectedness, grounded theory, African worldview storyteller and qualitative research



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SECTION A

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY AND ITS METHODOLOGY

This section includes chapters 1, 2 and 3 which cover the following:

*In **Chapter 1** I introduce the study, setting out its background and demarcating the problem to be researched. I also identify the necessity of the research indicating its aim and anticipated contributions.*

*In **Chapter 2** I provide an overview of the qualitative research approach and indicate my epistemology and ontology for this particular study. Furthermore I discuss my approach with specific reference to casing and the life-history as a research strategy, the data collection techniques and grounded theory as an analysis technique. I conclude with a discussion on presentation tales and quality concerns for life-history research.*

*In **Chapter 3**, I provide a confessional tale of how I experienced and conducted the research. I make specific reference to the setting of the study, the structure of the PIPL programme, getting a research supervisor, data collection, data analysis, and challenges faced during the course of the research and writing up the study. It is a chronological account of the journey and the important decisions I took during the research.*

I detest racialism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black man or a white man.



CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.”

~ Lao-tzu

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was borne out of my personal and vocational journey as a Minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA)¹ over the last ten years. Eight of these years were spent in leading multicultural congregations in the surrounds of Johannesburg. Appointing black ministers in previously white congregations and white ministers in previously black congregations is part of the MCSA's journey towards building a 'one and undivided' church and society – or a 'rainbow nation' as it is often referred to in the post-apartheid South Africa (Tutu, 1999). This vision of a 'rainbow nation' has undoubtedly necessitated a shift from a liberation agenda to a transformation agenda for the church and society.

Before 1994 most of the churches' theology and leadership was geared towards an agenda of liberation as evidenced in works such as *The Kairos Document*² and the MCSA's *Obedience '81*³. In the new political context we have seen an emphasis on transformation as evidenced by the *Journey to the New Land*⁴. In my opinion, transformation in South Africa requires a particular kind of leadership that is able to transcend the political distortions of history and create a new culture of unity. Over

¹The **MCSA** is a transnational Church that includes six southern African countries: Swaziland, South Africa, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia. Most of her Ministers (Clergy) are recruited and 'stationed' across the six countries.

² *The Kairos Document* is a theological statement issued in 1985 by a group of black South African theologians based predominantly in the black townships of Soweto, South Africa. The statement challenged the churches' response to what the authors saw as the vicious policies of the Apartheid state under the State of Emergency declared on 21 July 1985.

³ *Obedience 81* is a statement by the MCSA pledging its commitment to live and work to bring into reality the concept of an undivided Church and a free and just Southern Africa.

⁴ *Journey to the New Land* was a renewal programme of the MCSA set up at a convocation in 1992, aimed at promoting and facilitating a process of ecclesial transformation in the church, so that it could be an agent of transforming mission in a rapidly changing South Africa



the last 20 years the MCSA has in its mission emphasised the need for 'healing and transformation' as the major leadership challenge for the sub-continent. This emphasis has substantially shaped my theological inclinations and my role as a spiritual leader and pastor within a congregation.

1.1.1 Leading Multicultural Congregations

After completing my academic and formational requirements in 2005, I was ordained into the ministry of word and sacrament and full service of the MCSA in the same year. At the time I was serving my second multiracial congregation near the city of Johannesburg. All my appointments to churches since 2003 have been in previously white congregations that were becoming multicultural communities. In each of these congregations I happened to be the first black senior Minister. The pastoral and leadership challenges of leading such diverse communities set me on a journey towards a deeper understanding of the Western and African approaches to spirituality and life.

In growing my knowledge of leadership and cultural integration, I spent many nights studying books on reconciliation, diversity management, effective leadership, anti-bias and cultural integration. I also began a journey of reflecting on South African history and the particular issues of existence that seemed common and different between the dominant cultures, namely black and white. I often felt I needed more than the right theological propositions on unity and diversity, sociology, anthropology and the mission imperatives for transformation and healing; I needed practical leadership knowledge, skills and abilities to translate the deep truth about humanity into liveable experiences that could create a healthy and dynamic community. Somehow the 'holy truths' could not easily translate to 'lived realities' within the community. Reflecting on these leadership contexts required a level of self awareness and personal mastery and leadership competence I seemed to lack.

Moreover, as a black male born in Swaziland, in my mid 30's, with a postgraduate theological degree, I found the work of leading and developing these congregations into communities that celebrate 'unity in diversity' very challenging. The fact that I grew up in Swaziland, and my 'outsider's' perspective of the political and social context in South Africa, were often a source of anxiety and caution in dealing with the



real stories of people. Conversely, this awareness developed a deep appreciation of the amount of hurt, anger, fear and 'woundedness' of people's perception of self, others and their socio-political context. As a result, it became clear that I needed to crystallise my understanding of personhood and identity facilitation in this emerging context, in order for my leadership to effect healing and transformation in the community.

In practice, I discovered that people's narratives or lived experiences have an ability to 'authenticate' the academic and theological knowledge I had learned. At most this realisation offered a mental framework. Real healing and transformation often emerged like a flower from the ground as people told their stories of hurt and celebration. I discovered the value of creating spaces for people to share their stories. The more I allowed people to tell stories within the community, the more the level of empathy and willingness to engage grew. In my view, the level of transformation that each of these congregations achieved can be attributed to conversations and narratives that began to create alternative ways of being. The stories were not only healing but they made people realise their potential and capacity for growth. These experiences nurtured in me the conviction that narrative approaches are important to leadership. I also believe that these experiences academically drew me towards qualitative research methods.

1.1.2 Reflections on my leadership

The **second** avenue that enabled my journey of reflection was my involvement in the interviewing of candidates for the ministry within the MCSA and being a part-time lecturer for Biblical Studies and Theology, at the John Wesley College⁵. Conducting interviews has continuously challenged my understanding of ministry and revealed the potential avenues for improvement in our training of ministers as leaders. The interviews also revealed the historical inconsistencies within the country's education systems that have affected mostly previously disadvantaged black people. These challenges were also evident in my interactions with students at the college.

⁵At the time the MCSA had a College and Student residence in Weavind Park in Pretoria and a satellite centre in Jabavu, Soweto. These centres have since been closed and the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary (SMMS) in Pietermaritzburg is the new place of education for MCSA student ministers.



The three years (2005-2008) I interacted with students heightened the need for equipping ministers with personal, interpersonal and professional leadership skills that will enable them to competently function in a culturally diverse and dynamic subcontinent. These interactions also made me realise that my theological training had equipped me predominantly with the philosophical language and spiritual reflection skills that I could not easily translate to authentic leadership practice within the congregation. Extensive engagement with students also deepened my understanding of the historical pain experienced by many South Africans as well as the challenge of diversity management facing the church and society.

The **third** stimulus for my reflection began when I was appointed as Circuit Superintendent (supervising minister) of a cluster of churches. My role at this level of leadership involved the challenge of holding in dynamic balance the conversations about race, diversity and the use of economic and human resources with a particular focus on restoring dignity to previously disadvantaged communities. Through these challenges I learned the value of stories, symbols and metaphors in shaping perceptions and setting leadership priorities. These leadership challenges also revealed to me that my leadership was situated in an African context where the expression and understanding of leadership is different from other places in the world. Often, in meetings I experienced the tension between the Western and African worldviews that shape how we understand leadership today.

Lastly, I have also been fortunate to have friends who were leaders of various organisations in the South African workplace. In our conversations about the leadership challenges facing the country I realised that my experiences within the church were similar to those faced by human resource practitioners and coaching consultants in the workplace. I also realised that most of the leadership development frameworks used in the workplace do not have a particular emphasis on African consciousness. I increasingly became aware that leadership mastery in the South African context requires an understanding of African Spiritual Consciousness.

According to Biko (1978) embracing African consciousness requires that each racial group within society (black, white, Indian and coloured) be given the opportunity to assert themselves to the point that there is mutual respect, since this is an essential



ingredient for a true and meaningful integration. In other words the journey towards integration and potential realisation begins with developing the integrity of persons within the socio-cultural heuristic. Concurring with Biko, I also believe that authentic leadership within the complex emerging South African context requires developing a framework for personal interpersonal and professional leadership mastery. The preceding questions ultimately landed me in the MPhil PIPL programme offered by the University of Johannesburg (UJ), a South African university that seeks to focus on developing leaders for emerging economies.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

"It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realise that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity..."

Steve Biko 1978

For me a nudging question is: what are African people's views of personal, interpersonal and professional leadership mastery in postmodern South Africa? Current leadership literature suggests that the answer to this question requires endogenous approaches to leadership development that seek to reclaim the aesthetics and identity of Africans (Makgoba, 1999; Mbeki, 1998). Whilst accepting the effects of colonialism and the leadership complexity of postcolonial Africa, Nkomo (2011) suggests that the way forward for African research on leadership should not be insular but an open dialogue with other leadership trends around the world. In addition, most contemporary research agrees that leadership cannot be separated from the historical, cultural, situational and practical contexts in which it is practised (Goffee & Jones, 2006).

In addition, leadership development practitioners and coaches suggest leadership mastery is an inside-out process of self-discovery, self-mastery and authentic self-expression (Cashman, 2008; Covey, 1994; Smith, 2009). According to Smith (2009) life and purpose mastery is a dynamic and continuous journey that entails personal leadership, interpersonal leadership and professional leadership. He (Smith, 2009) postulates that every human being has eight integrated life dimensions: four are

internal (spiritual, physical, emotional and mental) while the remaining four are external (social, financial, vocational and ecological). These dimensions are universal for all human beings and of these; the spiritual life dimension is the core because it is the 'place' where meaning, purpose, connection to self, others and God or Higher Power are anchored (Smith, 2009).

Key to the PIPL perspective (Smith, 2009) is the House Model (Figure 1). Within this model, the eight life dimensions are arrayed as a deliberate inside-out journey of mastery that starts from the internal and personal life dimensions (spiritual, physical, emotional and mental), moves to the interpersonal (social) dimension and ultimately to the professional dimensions (vocational, financial and ecological) of life. Smith (2009) argues that PIPL in practice provides a holistic, integrative and dynamic perspective on life and leadership mastery that enables people to deal with the existential (problems and challenges of existence), phenomenological (how life is experienced) and the anthropological (the universal basic needs and acceptable human behaviour) realities of life.

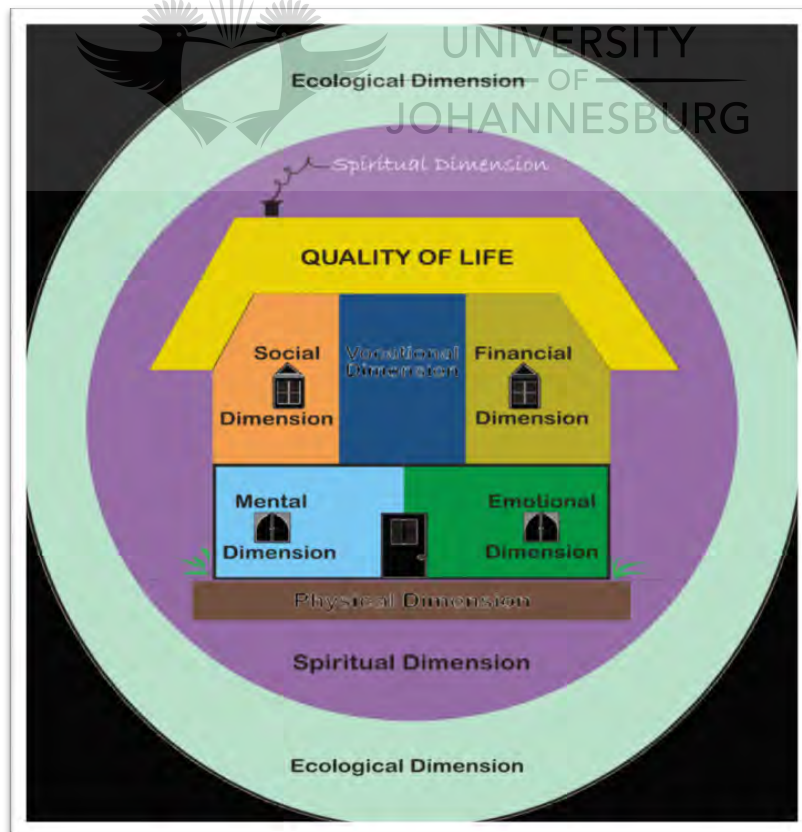


Figure 1: Smith's PIPL life dimensions model (Smith, 2009)

internal (spiritual, physical, emotional and mental) while the remaining four are external (social, financial, vocational and ecological). These dimensions are universal for all human beings and of these; the spiritual life dimension is the core because it is the 'place' where meaning, purpose, connection to self, others and God or Higher Power are anchored (Smith, 2009).

Key to the PIPL perspective (Smith, 2009) is the House Model (Figure 1). Within this model, the eight life dimensions are arrayed as a deliberate inside-out journey of mastery that starts from the internal and personal life dimensions (spiritual, physical, emotional and mental), moves to the interpersonal (social) dimension and ultimately to the professional dimensions (vocational, financial and ecological) of life. Smith (2009) argues that PIPL in practice provides a holistic, integrative and dynamic perspective on life and leadership mastery that enables people to deal with the existential (problems and challenges of existence), phenomenological (how life is experienced) and the anthropological (the universal basic needs and acceptable human behaviour) realities of life.

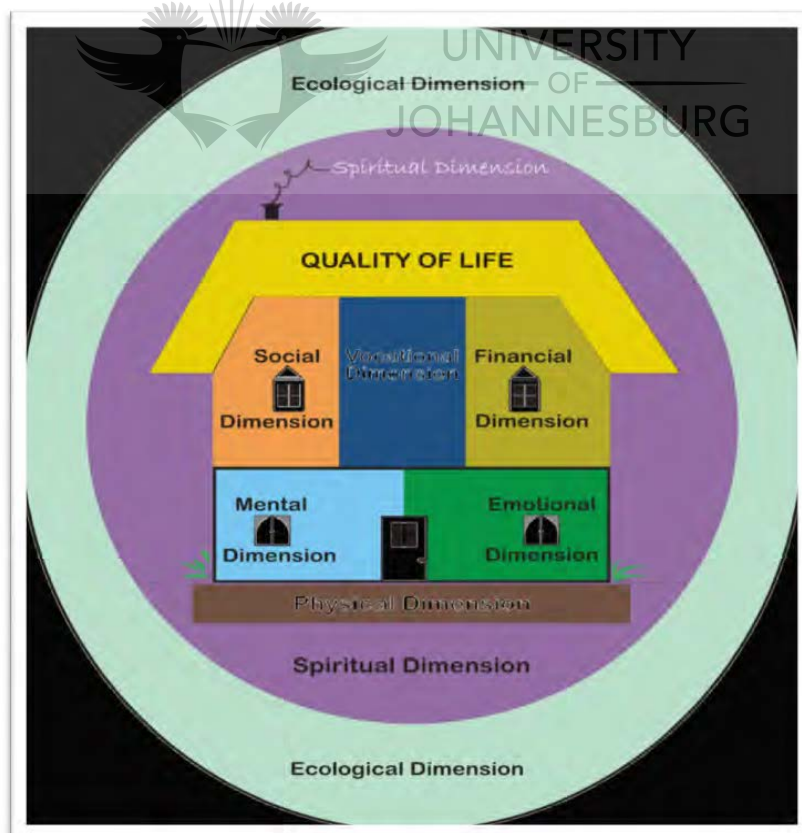


Figure 1: Smith's PIPL life dimensions model (Smith, 2009)



Smith (2009) further proposes that PIPL entails an alternative holistic leadership model that integrates traditional psychological (personal traits) and sociological (mutual beneficence in relationships) approaches to leadership. He (Smith, 2009a) refers to the EPL way of leadership which brings together the *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos* (EPL) of leadership:

- *Ethos* – ethical behaviour, integrity, stewardship, character based, principle centred and moral value orientation;
- *Pathos* – caring, empathic, compassionate, considerate, service- and team-oriented; and
- *Logos* – logical, knowledgeable, wise, competent, life of meaning.

According to Smith (2009) the daily realities of life and the problems of existence, such as, materialistic living, socio-cultural conditioning, living from our ego self, can cause a disconnection (dissonance or dis-ease) in people's spiritual life dimension. Zohar and Marshall (2001; 2004) and Twerski (2007) argue that the disconnection from the spiritual life dimension causes spiritual stuntedness (incapacity to grow) and disconnection in all the other dimensions. Smith (2009) proposes that the only way to ameliorate the problems of existence is through a process of PIPL mastery that begins with reconnecting at the core of human life - the spiritual life dimension.

In my view the current challenge facing post-apartheid South Africa lies in the complexity of the factors involved in conceptualising personal, interpersonal and professional mastery and personhood - one's sense of self and its persistence in real life contexts. These challenges create an unhealthy tension between an optimistic view on PIPL mastery and Heyes' (2007) caution that PIPL mastery in contexts where people were previously oppressed, needs to begin with allowing the necessary process of reclaiming identities and self-determination. For most South Africans self-determination and PIPL mastery begins with wading through the political, economic, socio-cultural injustices of the past as well as scientific imperialism that have suppressed, erased and misappropriated the identity of African people (Mbiti, 1990; Young, 1990; Biko, 1978).

Moreover, the concept of ASC alludes to an appreciation of the African world-view. To understand African consciousness and personhood, one needs to be baptised



into the rich ambiance of the African people's cultures, language, geography, mythology and oral tradition, and touch the real-world practices of the people (Mbiti, 1990). An immersion into the African existence reveals a particular cosmology and hierarchy that fashions their world. The African cosmology is an indivisible reality that includes humans, nature, ancestors and God (Mbiti, 1990). African cosmology is a product of a holistic and anthropocentric ontology (Mbiti, 1990; Mbigi, 2005; Viljoen, 2003). Edoho (2001) contends that communalistic life is the centrepiece of the 'African' personality and is distinctively 'African'. This cosmology influences how Africans approach PIPL mastery.

According to Forster (2006) the concept of *Ubuntu* captures the philosophical premise and offers a generous ontology that opens researchers into the integrative understanding of life within Africa. The concept of *Ubuntu* or *botho* - loosely translated as 'humanness' – is a comprehensive philosophical, anthropological, sociological and cultural premise for African thinking about human identity and consciousness (Mbiti, 1990; Setiloane, 1998; Mbigi, 2005). This concept is encapsulated by the Southern African Zulu maxim, '*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' (a person is a person through other persons). Mangaliso (2001, p.24) defines *Ubuntu* as:

humaneness—a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness - that individuals and groups display for one another. *Ubuntu* is the foundation for the basic values that manifest themselves in the ways African people think and behave towards each other and everyone else they encounter.

Forster (2010) adds that within the *Ubuntu* concept lies the framework for understanding human identity, the essence of being (spirit) and a relational way of thinking about being in Africa. As Mbiti (1990), Setiloane (1998), and Mbigi (2005) argue, *Ubuntu* is a dynamic concept with far-reaching implications for research on identity and consciousness, and, in order to understand it, one needs to glean from the deep fabric of African culture, idioms, myths and rituals.

Therefore defining African Spiritual Consciousness moves us beyond objective empirical (biology and sociology) and subjective phenomenological (such as philosophy and theology) approaches to an inter-subjective integrative approach to



human development. Forster's (2010) concept of generous ontology is a helpful bridge for the world of research as it offers an integral approach to understanding personhood and human development as illustrated by the works of Ken Wilber (1998; 2000), Judith (1996) Zohar and Marshall (2000; 2004). The following argument put forward by Forster (2010, p.12) offers a point of departure for conceptualising African Spiritual Consciousness:

The question "who am I" (subjective) is intricately related to who you say that I am (objective), and who we are together (inter-subjective). Instead of being a lone subject, or a quantifiable and containable object, we are all "intersubjects", fundamentally interwoven into a common cosmic identity and being that is run through with sacred dignity. It is not just me, it is not just you, it is not just the material reality, neither is it just the spiritual reality; true reality is a sacred interweaving of all these things – true reality is beyond one single quantifiable truth, it is generous. True identity, in this sense, is a dynamic engagement and discovery of mutual identity and shared dignity – that is, a generous ontology.

Setiloane (1998), Mbigi (2005) and Ramose (1999) who support an integrative research approach emphasise that the African worldview is a holistic one in which the internal, external and transcendent aspects of being are interwoven into the same cosmos. Mbigi (2005), Balcomb (2004) and Khoza (2011) concede that the essence and spirit of African consciousness is characterised by the values of connectedness, harmony, compassion, servanthood, integrity, efficacy, humility and empathy and a respectful relationship with creation. In view of the challenges posed by South African history and the scarcity of scholarly work on African approaches to human consciousness, individual identity and PIPL mastery in this study, I sought to explore the narrative of a black African person and how his conceptualisation of life may supplement PIPL.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Being African and having examined the process of PIPL mastery in my Masters journey I am of the opinion that African peoples will find this a complicated process due to the inter-subjective nature of identity facilitation and validation within the African worldview. Current research on consciousness does not sufficiently embrace African Spiritual Consciousness in articulating individual identity and PIPL mastery. Differently put, a review of the current body of knowledge within PIPL does not utilise African conceptions of consciousness and how these can illuminate PIPL mastery.



1.3.1 The Research Questions

In the light of the afore-mentioned, the research question is:

How can African Spiritual Consciousness inform Personal Interpersonal and Professional Leadership mastery?

Particular sub-questions of the study are:

- Can African Spiritual Consciousness be conceptualised within current leadership literature?
- How does an African person conceptualise PIPL mastery from an African Spiritual Consciousness perspective?
- How can African Spiritual Consciousness inform PIPL mastery?

1.4 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study has three related aims:

- To conceptualise African Spiritual Consciousness within current leadership literature;
- To conduct a life-history study of a person who has been involved in work relating to African Spiritual Consciousness; and
- To establish how African Spiritual Consciousness may be used to inform PIPL mastery.

It is important to note that the study does not aim to determine whether PIPL has an impact on the individual, but wants to examine African Spiritual Consciousness within the perspective, in order to strengthen its relevance for indigenous African people.

1.5 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Firstly, this study is a culmination of my exposure to the PIPL programme at the University of Johannesburg and the need to learn more about the identified problem within the postmodern South African leadership context. This exposure has also encouraged me as a leader and religious minister to develop my PIPL capacity with a particular emphasis on my African values and my postmodern context. **Secondly**,



the study was motivated by my growing inclination towards qualitative research methods. Through my work as a religious minister I have grown to appreciate the power of stories, and this study availed me the opportunity to methodologically explore the use of a single life-story to conceptualise the identified problem. **Lastly**, my leadership experience and the preliminary literature review conducted for this study revealed the scarcity of African resources on PIPL mastery. It is my hope that giving voice to the African story and perception on PIPL mastery will contribute towards a better understanding of leadership in the South African postmodern context.

1.6 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

While the study has the potential to add value in various areas, I foresee at least the following two modest contributions: (i) adding to the growing literature on African leadership and in particular the implications of African Spiritual Consciousness for leadership development studies, and (ii) offering an empirical basis for existing conceptualisations of PIPL mastery within the PIPL Masters Programme by conducting an authentic life-history.



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1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

I present the study in four parts. **Section A** deals with contextualising the study and its methodology and includes **Chapters 1, 2 and 3**. In **Section B** I present the participant's story followed by **Section C** where I present a literature review (**Chapter 5**) and apply the methodology of grounded theory (**Chapter 6**) to make sense of the participant's subjective experience of PIPL mastery from an African Spiritual Consciousness perspective. Finally, I conclude the study with **Section D** consisting of **Chapter 7**.

This chapter (**Chapter 1**) provides an overview of my personal interest in the study, its necessity, the research question, the aims of the research, and its anticipated contributions. **Chapter 2** consists of a brief overview of qualitative research methodology, my scientific beliefs (ontology and epistemology), considerations for using the life-history method, and the practical steps taken in executing the study.



In keeping with qualitative research, **Chapter 3**, is a presentation of ‘the story behind the story’ – i.e. a chronological description of my research journey, the various key decisions taken during the construction of the life-story. **Chapter 4** contains the first-order account of the life-story - that is my editing of the transcripts of our interviews as approved by the storyteller.

Chapter 5 contains a review of the relevant literature on African Spiritual Consciousness from the fields of psychology, social anthropology, African philosophy, religion, leadership and management. The insights gained from the review offer an understanding of existing knowledge and conceptualisation of ASC and how it can inform PIPL mastery.

In **Chapter 6** an interpretation of the authentic life is offered. I discuss the emerging themes using grounded theory principles. The last chapter (**Chapter 7**) is a summary of the study, its key contributions and implications, and recommendations I believe to be particularly appropriate to the current research and practice.





CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

What do you want to achieve or avoid? The answers to this question are objectives. How will you go about achieving your desired results? The answer to this you can call strategy.

- William E. Rothschild

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research philosophy, approach, design and particular methods used to address the research problem as outlined in **Chapter 1**. My study was fundamentally qualitative and it employed the life-history technique as a research strategy. In executing the study, I made use of the principles of phenomenological and grounded theory (Glaser, 2001; 2003). According to Roberts (2001, p.3) using the life-history method of qualitative research provides a good framework in which “stories of individuals and other ‘personal materials’ [are used] to understand the individual life within its social context”.

This chapter consists of four sections. The first **section (2.2)** discusses the underlying philosophical issues and the scientific beliefs relating to my execution of the study. The second **section (2.3)** is a brief outline of the research process, research setting, sampling procedure, data collection methods, recording, and analysis of the data and the presentation of the data. The third **section (2.4)** discusses the practical and the last **section (2.5)** entails ethical considerations for ensuring qualitative rigour. Central to this discussion is the explanation of the theoretical framework for life-history research.

2.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy relates to the basic features of the world and the assumptions about the mind, matter, reality, reason, truth, nature of knowledge, and proofs for knowledge (Hughes 1994). As part of my preparation to conduct the study I needed to clarify my research philosophy, theoretical assumptions, and the particular strategy for collecting and interpreting data. According to Proctor (1998), exploring personal beliefs about knowledge assists in understanding the inter-relationship



between ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues of any research inquiry. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.108) put emphasis on structuring one's research work according to one's position on the following questions:

- **The ontological question:** What is the form and nature of reality and, what is there that can be known about it?
- **The epistemological question:** What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?
- **The methodological question:** How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?

Proctor (1998) further submits that clarity on these questions enables the researcher to: (i) clarify the overall research strategy, the type of evidence to be gathered, its origin, the way in which such evidence is interpreted, and how it answers the research question; (ii) evaluate other different methods and avoid inappropriate use of techniques; (iii) be creative and innovative in either selection or adaptation of methods that were previously outside his or her experience. In addition, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p.12) state that a research philosophy shapes process of knowledge production - "how you produce knowledge ... what kind of knowledge it is, and how you relate this new knowledge to other knowledge you already have".

As the aim of this study was to conceptualise African Spiritual Consciousness within the Personal Interpersonal and Professional Leadership perspective using some principles of the grounded theory approach it is vital that I clarify my epistemological and ontological beliefs as the researcher. These beliefs are located within the qualitative paradigm and discussed in relation to the life-history method as my chosen research strategy. I now turn to a brief overview of the qualitative research paradigm

2.2.1 Qualitative research paradigm

According to Hussey and Hussey (1997, p. 20) qualitative research can be defined as "a subjective approach which includes examining and reflecting on perceptions in order to gain understanding of social and human activities." Yin (1994) emphasises that qualitative researchers actively interact with individuals and situations within their 'living context'. Put in other words, qualitative research studies social action and



events and human perspectives through the eyes of the subjects being studied to expose (rather than impose) meaning to social phenomena – with the goal of generating theory (Schurink, 2007).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) declare that qualitative research has been through a number of **moments** that still simultaneously operate in the present: (i) *traditional* - positivist and objective accounts of reality; (ii) to the *modernist approach* - interpretative in nature - taking seriously social realism, naturalism and a slice of life ethnographies; (iii) *blurred genres* – saw the simultaneous development of theories such as symbolic interactionism, constructionism, naturalistic enquiry, positivism, post-positivism, phenomenology, ethno-methodology, critical theory and semiotics; (iv) *the crisis of representation* – a more reflexive approach that highlighted the racial, gender and class as well as methods of representation and validity of previous genres; and the (v) *postmodern, post experimental enquiry, the methodically contested present and the fractured future moments*. According to Schurink (2007), current research crystallises these *moments* into three paradigms: **modernist**, the **interpretative**, and the **postmodernist**. This brief overview highlights the fact that qualitative research is continuously transforming and finding a singular appropriate research strategy; is like walking a tight rope between the related methods.

In addition to the research moments, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) argue that qualitative research strategies share a number of basic characteristics. **Firstly**, within qualitative research strategies, reality is subjective and multiple facets progressively emerge during the research process. As stated in chapter 1, my attraction towards qualitative research was the richness of people's stories and their ability to construct meaning through their linguistic ambience, cultural and semiotic context. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) emphasise that narrative descriptions (using metaphors, symbols and word images) of reality should never be abstracted from the natural context from which they emerge – all phenomena should be allowed to emerge rather than use abstract operational variables to describe them. Epistemologically, **'Context' is everything for me.**

Secondly, Schurink (cited in Tlou, 2006) claims qualitative research strategies often include thick narrative descriptions of reality that capture the processual nature of social reality. Attention to process is an important dynamic of the research process, as individuals, organisations, communities, and cultures are dynamic and constantly changing (Patton, 2002). The challenge for researchers, as Patton (2002) notes, is to be constantly mindful and attentive to system and situation dynamics. **Thirdly**, qualitative research is often inductive – it seeks to discover and describe theories as they unfold from the "bottom up" rather than deductively from the "top down". **Lastly**, qualitative research generally implies a long process that involves the researcher immersing himself or herself in the lived world of the participant and discovers stories that can be used to 'generate theory' rather than 'confirm theory'. As researcher, I am ontologically inclined to the importance constructing meaning from the bottom up as that gives credibility to the subjective nuances of people's stories.

The description of the qualitative paradigm in the preceding paragraphs gives a broad overview of the resonant characteristics of my study. It is further important that I clearly outline my specific scientific beliefs as they clarify my epistemological and ontological beliefs as well as my choice of the life-history method as data collection technique.

2.2.2 My key scientific values

In planning this study, it became evident that my **scientific beliefs are 'blurred'**. I believe that in order to construct meaning from a lived experience one needs a subjective and inductive approach to reality that unveils the *processual* nature of reality. As such, I wanted to understand how ASC could be conceptualised within the PIPL perspective through analysing the storyteller's¹ lived experience. Lived experience in this regard entails opinions, ideas, social constructions, beliefs, stories, interactions, social or cultural experiences, biographies, words and actions that give character and meaning to the subjects being researched (Goodson & Sikes, 2000; Plummer, 2001). **Firstly**, the conceptualisation of ASC within PIPL ontologically requires openness to the dynamic nature of African experiences of life. Self-understanding and meaning in the African worldview emerges from the constant

¹ The Storyteller's name for the Purposes of this study is **Muzi** – a fictitious name used to protect the individual's identity as agreed when setting out the terms of the research journey.



dialogue between the individual and the community. **Secondly**, Muzi's life-story needed phenomenological tools of analysis in order to relate the key concepts that emerge from his lived experience with scientific knowledge. **Thirdly**, for me the concept of ASC does not have an objective definition in literature, so I applied the principles of grounded theory to explore its contextual meaning. **Fourthly**, in handling Muzi's perspectives and experiences I used an inductive process of thematic analysis, deconstructing and re-constructing the theoretical assumptions of the PIPL perspective. Furthermore, for conceptualisation of ASC within PIPL, these two concepts needed to melt into each other to give birth to a contextualised process of PIPL mastery. I believe that Muzi's life-history enriches our understanding of PIPL mastery in the African context.

As the study progressed, I realised that although it was mainly a **case study** (through a single life-story/narrative study) it found favourable support from the principles of phenomenology and grounded theory. In the next section, I give an overview of phenomenology and grounded theory approaches.

2.2.3 Influences of phenomenology and grounded theory

Due to the fact that this study aims at conceptualising particular African concepts, I considered principles of phenomenology. Phenomenology seeks to "understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives" (De Vos, 2002, p. 273). It is a branch of research often associated with the fields of philosophy, psychology, and sociology with the primary focus of understanding the essence of experiences of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, I considered phenomenological principles of analysis when describing the meaning of themes, statements, and stories when reconstructing Muzi's social reality and experience. In addition to the phenomenological narrative emphasis, the research approach of this study also sought to incorporate elements of grounded theory.

Similar to the narrative philosophy, grounded theory emerged, as a reaction to research that had been predominantly positivist - based on the notion that information should and can be objective (De Vos, 2002). Grounded theory is a method that seeks to begin 'from the ground' and anticipates the emergence of theory from the data as the researcher continuously goes back and forth, iteratively,



between collecting data and analysing it (De Vos, 2002). Although the main source of evidence was the data itself, I also considered existing knowledge related to the research topic prior to data collection for its value in providing background knowledge and not for suggesting hypotheses (De Vos, 2002). In the case of Muzi, the collection and analysis of data happened concurrently and iteratively to allow themes to emerge. In essence, this study anticipates that the conceptualisation of ASC within the PIPL perspective will unfold from the ground like a flower.

In view of the preceding discussion, my approach to the study can be epistemologically summarised as constructionist with a postmodern inclination, as I anticipated meaning to emerge from the storyteller's social reality and experience. Theoretically, a constructionist approach to identity work and leadership mastery can be broadly understood as an ongoing process of interpreting social worlds and phenomena (Pye, 2005), relational meaning making (Hosking, 2008), constituting and reconstituting of realities and identities (Cunliffe, 2009). In the above **section (2.2)**, I have discussed my basic philosophical orientation towards this study. It is now important that I discuss in specific terms the life-history method as the research design I used to execute the study.

2.3 LIFE-HISTORY

Choosing a life-history method as a research strategy immediately plunged me into the vast field of stories, narratives, and personal histories. It is therefore vital to clarify the usage of these within life-history research. Simms (2003, p. 80), states that the underlying philosophy to this new approach to research is that “we understand our own lives – our own selves and our place in the world – by interpreting our lives as if they were narratives ... and life understood as narrative constitutes self-understanding.” Plummer (2001) observes that life-history or story is a case-centred form of narrative that illuminates the stories of individuals, located within a particular space, time and social space.

Before I discuss life-history as a research strategy, a word on narrative research will suffice. Moen (2006, p. 2) defines narrative research as “the study of how human beings experience the world,” and the task of narrative researchers as collecting these stories and writing narratives of experience. The unit of analysis for narrative



research is, then, the 'story' told by the participant in the study (Moen, 2006). The emphasis on 'story' also gives narrative research a quality that goes beyond pure phenomenology. It consists of stories involving plot made up of multiple events drawn together into a holistic narrative. Rather than exploring ASC as a concept in African studies, as phenomenology might do, this study sought to describe the whole process of PIPL mastery for an African person, including significant events that shaped and gave meaning to his life.

A life-story, according to Meier (in Babbie & Mouton, 2004) is a personal narrative that illuminates the course of a life over time, allowing its interpretation within its historical and cultural context. Plummer (2001) defines a life-history as the story a person tells about the life he or she has lived. For Atkinson (1998), it is "a fairly complete narrating of one's entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects" (p. 8). According to Thomson (in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) collecting stories of real lives helps to conceptualise particular themes or construct a comparative argument on the themes raised by the stories. Thomson further notes that life-histories seek to interpret life-stories in order to "understand and report the views and culture of those being studied" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 201). All these definitions have a slightly different emphasis and meaning, but all focus on the first person accounting of a life that creates a descriptive case of the person's lived experience (Plummer, 2001).

According to Atkinson (1998) through the telling of stories we are guided into context and recognise meaning as the unspoken is made understandable, the hidden revealed, the unformed is given shape and the confused given clarity. In listening to the life-story, we also gain access to the person's role in the bigger community and their understanding of that role. Plummer (2001) also states that the exploratory journey into the complex nature of a life-history can be either a long life-story or a short life-story. A long life-story could be the length of a book collected through a number of mediums, such as tape-recording, interviews with friends, family and colleagues (Plummer, 2001). On the other hand, short life-stories take less time, are more focused, and one can publish them as one of a series of stories. In most instances, life-history researchers use in-depth interviews of 30 minutes to 3 hours to probe and focus on their subject matter.



Most scholars (Plummer, 2001; Babbie & Mouton, 2004) contend that the life-history researchers concern themselves with the socio-cultural influences that shape the creation of meaning and the individual's experience of life. Babbie and Mouton (2004) further assert that most life histories aspire to find a patterned or thematic residue of the important clusters of experience and life-course effects of the dynamics of one's life. According to Plummer (2001), there are three main types of life-stories:

- **Naturalistic life-stories** – these are the stories that occur when people reminisce and write autobiographies or diaries, or when a job applicant writes a letter of application.
- **Researched life-stories** – the stories that are solicited by researchers with a socio-scientific purpose in mind
- **Reflexive and recursive life-stories** - recognising a life-story in which the interviewer is implicated.

Plummer (2001) concludes that, in social science, life-stories exist in many forms: long and short, specific and general, fuzzy and focused, surface and deep, realist and romantic, modernist and postmodernist. Researchers use a plethora of terms to denote them: life-stories, life histories, life narratives, self-story, my-stories, autobiographies, auto/biographies, oral histories, personal testaments, and life documents.

Generally, life histories can also be categorised into three basic forms, namely, *the complete, the topical, and the edited life-history* (Goodson & Sikes, 2000). The complete life-history aims to cover the whole life-story, usually implying a long and complex study. Secondly, the topical life-history shares all the features of the complete form, except that only a particular phase or theme(s) of the person's life is scrutinised. Thirdly, the edited life history, either topical or complete, continually mixes explanations and questions by someone other than the focal subject (Plummer, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2000). Regardless of the form the life-history takes, Plummer (2001, p.81) contends that "the life-story in its various forms is seen as a journey towards an ultimate, truer understanding of a unique inner being, an inner quest for self: the injunction to know yourself".



From this brief discussion of life-history methods, it appears that a *short topical life-story* with elements of a long story is more suitable for researching a particular topic in order to give conceptual clarity on the topic as experienced by the individual. Such an approach, according to Plummer (2001) is a *critical humanistic approach* that takes seriously the concrete human experiences (feelings, words and actions), human subjectivity and creativity and the principles of grounded theory. In this study, understanding ASC needs an in-depth analysis of concepts, thoughts, and experiences of being African and its influence on the facilitation of PIPL mastery. In the study, I recognise that in South Africa, self understanding is heavily influenced by the country's political history over the last 60 years, so there are elements of the life-history that are tainted by the long life-history method. In the main, the study reflects elements of a short life-story and a researched life-story. I chose these approaches since I want to understand the conceptualisation of a particular concept (African Spiritual Consciousness) within the PIPL perspective.

As stated earlier, this study takes the form of a narrative (life story) and is ontologically positioned within the *modernist* paradigm; it is important to outline how these philosophical beliefs discussed above were used as a framework for the research design. A research design according to Yin (1994) is a blueprint (plan) of research, dealing with at least four problems: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyse the results. According to Atkinson (1998), the purpose of data gathering in life-stories is to put together the central elements, events, and beliefs in a person's life and integrate them into a whole. In addition Plummer (2001) suggests that during the data collection process, the researcher should also include historical and cultural demographics, the age, generation cohort and critical life events surrounding the person's life-story.

According to Roberts (2001), analysing life-history data should always hold in balance method of data gathering and the source itself (the person and the data gathered). The scientific beliefs (**Section 2.1**) and the principles of the life-history method (**Section 2.2**) shaped the research strategy used for the research journey.

2.4 LIFE-HISTORY RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design described in this section includes a brief overview of the research process, research setting, how a life was chosen, how the material for the life-history was collected, recorded, analysed and presented.

2.4.1 An outline of the research design

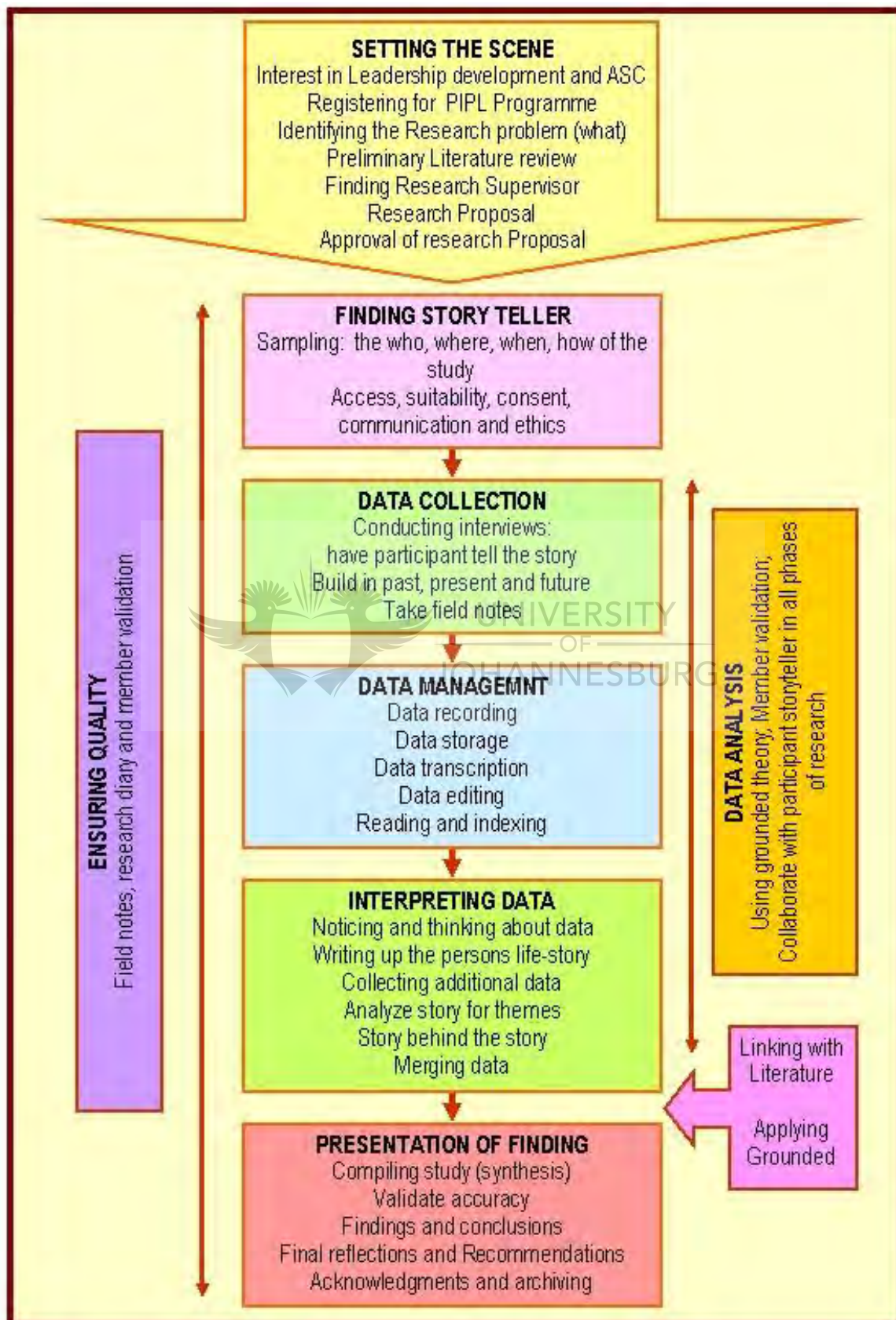
With regard to the broad research framework, Plummer (2001) lists seven stages of life-history research.

- I. **Identifying the Research Problem** – the ‘what’ (clarifying research problem) that determines the research method (the how of the research) – deciphering the problem.
- II. **Planning** – deciding the ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the study. This involves deciding about the sampling process, data collection, and whole execution plan.
- III. **Doing the research** – doing the actual fieldwork, preliminary literature review, conducting interviews, taking field notes, and collecting related artefacts.
- IV. **Managing the process** - recording, indexing, transcribing and storing the data in a safe place and doing backups.
- V. **Analysis and interpretation** – the whole process of noticing and thinking, making connections, explanations, comparisons and interpreting the data at an in-depth level.
- VI. **Presenting the data** - re-arranging the data in a way that meets the research objectives and writing up the study.
- VII. **Archiving** – The finalisation of the research project and documenting the finalised documents

It is worth noting that the research process (as is often the case in life histories) involves a number of distinct, iterative, cyclic, and interconnected stages. **Figure 2.1** is a graphic presentation of these steps.

Figure 2.1 Graphic Presentation of the Research Process

(Adapted from Bester, 2007)





Plummer's (2001) research analysis approach (as outlined here) underpinned the whole research process and I used it to ensure validity, transferability, and reliability of the research outcomes.

2.4.2 Sampling – selecting a life

From a qualitative research perspective, I based my sampling decisions on the suitability of the storyteller, the setting, and processes of the interview. According to Plummer (2001), two basic elements apply to the life-history sampling procedure: selecting the sample by chance or luck and being pragmatic and selecting the sample based on clear and conceptual criteria. Plummer (2001, p.133) further makes us aware that, in life-history sampling, “qualitative researchers only seek samples that are ‘information rich’ and are less concerned with representativeness”. Ragin (1994) contends that sometimes cases are chosen not because they are special or unusual or significant in some way, but because they typify the phenomenon under discussion.

In the study, I did purposive sampling on the basis that the participant is deeply involved in his cultural and professional context to give a current conceptualisation of the research subject (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The life-history research was conducted on an ordinary black, middle-aged (mid forties), South African person living in the Johannesburg area. According to Roberts (2001) life-history research involves the process of co-creating (between the researcher and the participant), and this necessitates accessibility of the research participant. The freedom to simply ‘look for the right person’ who typifies the basic elements of the envisaged inquiry differentiates the life-history from other qualitative methods (Plummer, 2001).

The selection of Muzi happened after an initial approach to two other possible candidates, who were not available due to work commitments. Muzi was the next possible candidate because of his knowledge of African spirituality and black consciousness. My initial contact with him revealed a sense of his ability to conceptualise and engage in an in-depth and broad discussion on the research subject. Therefore, my choice of Muzi is an example of purposive sampling by virtue of his specific experience, insight, and exposure to leadership and his understanding of the historical dynamics and current issues of identity facilitation in leadership. Muzi



was also willing, available, and articulate and had a good story to tell (Plummer, 2001). As part of the journey, we also covenanted to values of integrity, privacy, and his anonymity.

2.4.3 Data collection methods

Data collection methods within qualitative research take on a variety of forms. The following research methods were used to explore the conceptualisation of spiritual consciousness within the PIPL perspective. According to Goodson and Sikes (2001), one-on-one interviews are the best methods for collecting life-history data. I used one-on-one semi-structured and unstructured interviews for the research study. Goodson (as cited in Goodson & Sikes, 2001) calls this type of interview a 'grounded' conversation with purpose. In view of this study, this means that I approached the study from a specific paradigm and seeking a specific response – evidence for the conceptualisation of African Spiritual Consciousness.

2.4.3.1 Interviews

Rubin and Rubin (2000) describe an interview as a study in which data gathering happens through direct researcher-respondent conversations. The data gathering process of the research entailed in-depth interviews, using open-ended questions. According to Wilkinson and Young (2004), open-ended questions are a part of the discovery-oriented method of gathering and processing data that takes seriously the participant's coding and shaping of personal narratives. Plummer (2001) proposes that in collecting life-history data the researcher uses various types of questions:

- *Substantive questions* – these questions were used to find out how the participant understood the conceptualisation of ASC within his real life context.
- *Social scientific questions* - these questions help in understanding and interpreting the subject matter within the participant's personal, interpersonal, and professional context.
- *Ethical and political questions* – these questions relate to the manner in which you appropriate the research within a real life context and how the research safeguards the integrity of the circumstances and people involved.



In this study, I have utilised intensive semi-structured and unstructured interviews to obtain data from the social world of the life-story subject. The face-to-face interviews elicited relevant material from the detailed experiences and thoughts from Muzi's story. During the interviews, I observed the surrounding and non-verbal communication cues. Our first meeting was primarily to covenant on boundaries, and to describe the purpose of the study in detail. A sequence of six meetings over a month was scheduled to discuss the questions related to each of the eight life dimensions of the PIPL perspective. The meetings took place in Muzi's office, as this was convenient for his busy schedule and accessible to me.

2.4.3.2 Data capturing and storage

The term *data* in this regard refers to the rough material collected during the research process that forms the basis of analysis (Plummer, 2001). The data collection process was a cyclic one. The collected data included Muzi's life history, personal artefacts, and photographs. Goodson and Sikes (2001) suggest that timelines are often helpful in collecting data, sorting and identifying themes within the story. Throughout the process, I recorded what I heard, saw, and experienced and my hunches and reflections on the process and data.

In the course of my interviews with Muzi, I took short notes of what happened, the interactions, the key issues of the content and general impressions on the process. I digitally recorded each interview using two electronic devices (Blackberry 9800 Smartphone as Voice Notes and Standard Audio Recorder). All the collected data was stored in both house and office. According to Schurink (2011), using recording devices reduces the amount of disruptions and frees the researcher to concentrate on the process of interviewing. Recording also provides a more complete and detailed record than the interviewer can ever provide in his or her notes. Once the interviews were completed I immediately downloaded from the digital device and transcribed within a week.

Within three hours of the interview, I downloaded the recorded data into my computer and wrote it into a Recordable CD. I stored the CDs in my office to ensure safety. As a further safety precaution, I purchased an external hard-drive on which to store all my research information. Muzi also asked to have copies of the CDs for his

own personal use and reflection after each session. The next challenge was transcribing the information, which proved very slow because of my poor typing skills.

Transcribing helped in classifying the information into the interpretative categories listed above. Plummer (2001) notes that the process of transcribing is often slow and a time-consuming exercise but it is already a step towards data analysis. Once I had transcribed the data, I began the process of editing and interpreting the data. Using the grounded analysis techniques discussed above I started developing the life-story from the evidence. In this regard, Plummer's (2001) techniques of ordering data into a coherent and readable document were helpful. Despite all the challenges of the analysis process, I was able to present a coherent story that captured the essence of Muzi's life and views on ASC within the PIPL perspective.

2.4.4 Data analysis

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990) qualitative data analysis is a process of systematically *noticing, collecting* and *thinking* about the transcripts, field notes and other relevant material the researcher has accumulated. Seidel (1998) postulates that the process of analysis contains three key principles: (i) it is *iterative* and *progressive* because it is a cycle that keeps repeating - an infinite spiral; (ii) it is recursive because one part can call you back to a previous part and accumulatively you notice themes developing; and (iii) it is a holographic process, in that each step in the process contains the entire process. Seidel (1998) presents this journey in the data analysis diagram below (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Siedel's model for qualitative data analysis (1998)

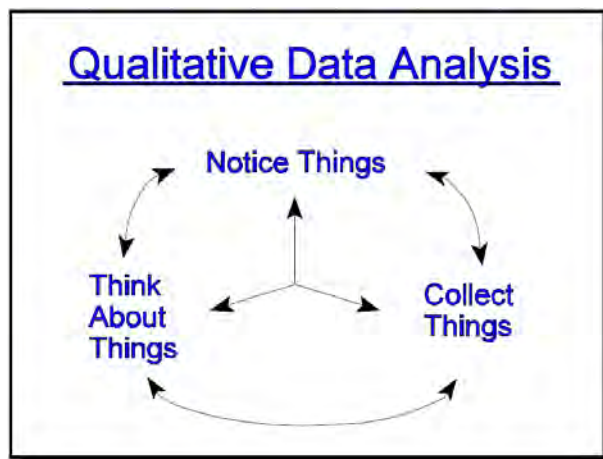




Figure (2.2) summarises the process of qualitative data analysis into three cyclic dynamic processes. In practice, as the researcher notices, collects and thinks about data, and the kaleidoscope of themes, new aspects of data and themes emerge. The double-pointed arrows and the linking arrow in the middle of the diagram represent this continuous journey.

Furthermore, the process of **collecting**, **noticing**, and **thinking** as illustrated in the figure (2.2) systematically moves from clarifying the specific things you need to collect for your data and the process of noticing those things, putting the data into a workable jigsaw puzzle and ultimately making sense of everything. According to Jorgenson (1989, p.107) the process of analysis involves,

...breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion.

While keeping the above epistemological suggestions in mind, I used Krueger's (as cited in Rabiee, 2004) framework for interpreting coded data: word analysis, context analysis, internal consistency, frequency and extensiveness of themes, connections (with past, present and future), intensity of comments and the big general ideas and conclusions. Specifically, although I considered elements of phenomenology I used grounded theory techniques to analyse Muzi's life-story. According to Glaser (2001; 2003), grounded theory analysis involves three stages:

- I. **Open coding** - the initial process of identifying, selecting and naming categorising of the collected data;
- II. **Axial coding** - the process of putting together the data through identifying causal relationships between categories and explaining how they give shape to the phenomenon to which they relate; and
- III. **Selective coding** – the process of selecting and identifying the core categories and systematically validating those relationships, filling in, and refining and integrating them into a grounded theory – the research outcome.

In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert that the progressive redefinition of the phenomena through these stages of analysis produce inductive evidence from the



world from which the phenomenon has emerged. Plummer (2001) also notes that the iterative and discursive nature of grounded theory makes it the most suitable approach in analysing case studies and life histories.

In this study the grounded theory analysis technique was used not only for the above but also for its ability to modify existing theory and universalise essential features of a phenomenon through its definitional emphasis (Manning, 1991). The process of noticing, coding, and analysis used in this study follows the general practice of contemporary qualitative research. Conceptualising ASC within PIPL demands a systematic and inductive analysis of the existing theoretical framework in order to enrich and broaden the current understanding of leadership and practice.

2.4.5 Data Presentation

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), there are several styles of writing used in qualitative research. Central to the quest for presentation of data in social research is the honouring of the researcher's voice, experience, creativity and authority (Jacobs, 2008), and in doing so "loosen the grip of specific styles of writing within the social science community" (Sparkes, 2002, p. 9). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p.280) make us aware that in qualitative research writers allow "themselves to be present in their writing." In qualitative studies, you typically apply the following different styles to present your data:

- i. *The scientific tale*: Bruner (as cited in Sparkes, 2002) postulates that scientific presentations aim to be formal, logical, mathematical explanations of data in order to convince their audience of the validity of their claims.
- ii. *The realist tale*: According to Van Maanen (1998 – as cited in Sparkes, 2002) the realist tales are characterised by extensive, closely edited quotation marks. This is to illustrate that the views articulated in the document are the true comments of the participant and not of the researcher. The central aim is to give as much expression as possible to the participant's voice in shaping the meaning and conclusions of the research.
- iii. *The confessional tale*: The confessional tale foregrounds the voice and concerns of the researcher in a manner that takes the reader behind the scenes to reveal what happened during the research process from start to finish. The human



characteristics of the researcher are often the centre and the readers are thus able to identify with the researcher. The aim is that the researcher sends the message across to readers that he or she is exactly as they are, with the same struggles and vulnerabilities. Another feature of the confessional tale is that the researcher is an active agent who usually works in challenging circumstances.

- iv. *The auto ethnographical tale:* Some scholars in the social sciences have used their own experiences of analysis and have produced narratives of self or auto ethnographies. In this mode of presentation, the researcher is aware that writing can be a form of self-revelation; revelation of aspects about self and the making of implicit interpretations of the information received through life-stories.

Of the above tales, my research journey consisted mostly of confessional and ethnographic tales as I revealed things about myself as well as the participant without forcing my own interpretation on experiences. My active listening during the interviews was guided by my intention to explore the nuanced dimensions of African life experiences, yet also giving due credibility to the storyteller.

2.5 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE QUALITY RESEARCH

Any research is subject to a variety of factors that might affect the quality of the research process and findings. This study employed the standard principles of ensuring reliability, validity, critical humanism, and representativeness throughout the research process as suggested by Plummer (2001). The following guidelines were also critical with regard to research ethics.

2.5.1 Ethical Considerations

It is worth noting that there has been measurable criticism for and against life-history material. Most of these criticisms have been around the scientific validity, representativeness, generalisability, and reliability of life-history data and theory generating processes (Tlou, 2006). This criticism being noted, Marshall and Rossman (2011) assert that qualitative researchers (including life-history researchers) have consistently worked hard in strengthening the ethics and trustworthiness of research processes and outcomes. Marshall and Rossman (2011) also note that “the older terms - *reliability, validity, objectivity and generalisability* -



and their modernisation by Lincoln and Guba (1985) – *credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability*”- tended to primarily focus on the design stage of research rather than its process and outcome. The postmodern and constructivist turn in research has increasingly questioned the ‘regulatory demands’ implied by these validity codes.

Cho and Trent (as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2011) offer the notions of *transactional validity* and *transformational validity* as a way of addressing the issues of rigour within research. Cho and Trent argue that traditional approaches to validity (including the work of Lincoln and Guba, 1985) can be called *transactional approaches* in that the techniques used for ensuring validity are seen as an accurate medium to ensure accurate reflection – validity a product of the process. The transactional approach has been criticised for “its emphasis on convergence and corroboration and for its assumption that procedures can help ensure a more accurate rendering of the topic. The alternative approach that has emerged is called transformational validity. According to Cho and Trent (cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.42) transformational validity

...takes seriously the notion (central to qualitative inquiry) that multiple perspectives, including those of the researcher-writer, exist...thus [it is important to] grapple with ways to ensure that those voices are represented transparently and that the full dynamics of the research process are examined and critiqued.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011, p.42) typical examples of transformational validity include the works of Lather’s (1993; 2001) catalytic validity - “the manner in which the process of research re-orientes to their reality to stimulate transformative possibilities” - and Kirkhart’s (1995) multicultural validity which carries an explicit social justice agenda. For this particular study, I assumed a transformational validity stance anticipating that the research process transforms both the participant and me. Furthermore, the principles of validity, representativeness and reliability as postulated by Plummer (2001) and Lincoln Guba (1985) were applicable. It also emerged in the process of gathering the data required that a crystallisation of the emerging themes was required. The concept of crystallisation is an alternative to triangulation as it allows the researcher to move beyond the fixed points of the triangle and embrace the multifaceted nature of a



crystal that offers multiple perspectives, colours, and refractions. Conceptualising validity through the metaphor of the crystal, calls on a methodology that demands self-critique and self-reflexivity (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

In addition, Greenhalgh and Wengraf (2008, p. 245) articulated the constructive list that guided this research process: the research must be undertaken with the explicit intention of furthering a body of knowledge; the research questions must be clear; the data collection process must be robust; analysis must be rigorous and transparent; there must be clear links between findings and conclusions; the researcher must be aware of and report possibilities for error and steps taken to minimise that error; the researcher must acknowledge inter-subjectivity; and the research must follow proper ethical considerations.

Lastly, the research participant in the study was appropriately consulted for consent to participate in the study via telephonic conversation, followed by a written outline of the expected relationship, including the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality (**Appendix ASC 01**). In summary, rigour in any qualitative research process means that the mapping of the findings of the research should closely reflect the evidence as gathered through a rigorous process and the meanings of the participants (Furman, Lietz, & Langer, 2006).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I reviewed the key aspects of the qualitative enquiry and discussed the different facets of life-history research. I highlighted my particular scientific beliefs and the main influences on my research design. In my research design, I systematically outlined the process I followed to gather, order and analyse the data I collected for the study. Included in the same outline are all the components that safeguard the integrity of the research process and the research participants.

CHAPTER 3

'THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY'

People seem not to see that their opinion of the world is also a confession of character.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Wherever man goes to dwell his character goes with him.
African proverb



3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present my story about the way in which I went about doing research for my degree. This reflection covers my journey as a Masters student within the PIPL programme, a summary of the steps and decisions taken through the research journey and my account of the construction of Muzi's story. In essence, the chapter is a 'confessional tale' of the practical steps taken throughout the research process (Sparkes, 2002). I also include accounts of how I dealt with challenges I faced along the journey.



3.2 SETTING OUT ON THE JOURNEY

The word journey has become a very common feature in my vocabulary. In many ways, it summarises my analogy of life and approach to reality. The journey towards doing a study in **PIPL** began formally around 2007. As stated in **Chapter 1** it was motivated by my work as a religious minister in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) and a personal interest in human development. My vocational roles as a preacher, teacher, administrator, facilitator, and worship leader within a multi-generational, multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic congregation, I discovered an affinity with people's stories and the role of insightful leadership in society. My belief in the possibility of an 'alternative community'¹ was confirmed by the way I often witnessed how the sharing of personal narratives drew people together and began to weave their stories into a tapestry of a new community.

The second major influence that nurtured my curiosity about personal, interpersonal, and professional leadership mastery was my involvement in the leadership and strategic role of Circuit Superintendent; the assessment of candidates for the Ministry; marking assessment portfolios of ministers in training; anti-bias training; and lecturing in Theology and Spirituality. The conversations that emerged within these roles heightened my need for an African consciousness in facilitating leadership mastery. Reflecting on these experiences, I increasingly felt the need to do a formal degree in leadership, as this would enable me to lead and coach people towards being an alternative community.

3.2.1 Registering for the PIPL programme

Before registering for the PIPL programme, I tried to find a theological degree with a strong focus on leadership development. The few that I came across seemed to have a strong theological content and were mostly limited to leadership within religious contexts. On further reflection, I became convinced that my interest in leadership studies went beyond meeting institutional needs (MCSA), and was a search into how African Spiritual Consciousness (ASC) informs PIPL mastery leadership within a broader context. My inclination also had a qualitative slant from the beginning

¹ A community that transcends the historical hurts and cultural limitations of our generation - a community where all people can self-assert and realise their full potential.



because I wanted to study how the way leaders tell stories can change and advance society. In addition, I had a clear sense that leadership requires a good integration of personal, interpersonal, and professional aspects of one's being. It was also important for me that my inquiry into leadership took seriously the complex and evolving cultural discourse within Southern Africa – often marked by a sensitive discourse on identity politics². Enrolling in the PIPL programme seemed to provide a reasonable bridge between my challenges and the envisaged future. Thus, I registered for the course and formally began the journey in January 2010.

After registering for the programme, we were oriented with the structure of the course. The first year of the programme involved doing six of the eight modules for the course; Personal Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Research Methodology, Emotional Leadership, Interpersonal Leadership, and Professional Leadership. As part of the first year, the research proposal was a critical aspect. The second year entailed the two remaining courses (Personal Health and Total Well-being; and Individual Facilitation and Coaching) and the writing up of the mini-dissertation and article for publication. Below are some specific details of the journey.

3.3 THE FIRST YEAR - 2010

The first year began with an orientation week at the end of January. During the orientation, we received general guidelines from the Department of People Management and Industrial Psychology within UJ and its research approaches and emphasis. At the end of the study orientation, we were requested to start writing a 3-page proposal as a way of starting our research journey. I went home and started working on my proposal. I remember that from the very beginning the words 'spirituality', 'Africa', 'leadership' and 'coaching' stood out for me as the key concepts that informed my journey. I drafted the three-page proposal on the *'Influence of*

² The term *Identity Politics* has been used in political and academic discourse in the United States since the 1970s with the aim of empowering the oppressed to articulate their oppression in terms of their own experience (Heyes, 2007; Taylor, 1992). In this study, I use the term to refer to more than the issues relating to political modernism to include the process of consciousness-raising using the whole array of cultural and academic instruments to fight back the beast of existential insecurity and to discover PIPL mastery.



African Spirituality on Leadership Coaching'. Another initial temptation was to contextualise the study within the MCSA with the title: *'Influence of African Spirituality on Leadership within the MCSA'*. These thoughts formed the basis of my thinking around the research subject. Going through the first semester, these concepts evolved.

3.3.1 The first study school

A few weeks later, in February, we had our first study school. During the school, we received a broad overview of the course and its academic value. At the end of the study school, we had covered three modules for the semester and received a list of the prescribed books. Each of the modules had on average three assignments and an exam at the end of June. As soon as I left the study school, I discovered that I needed to do a lot of reading. The rest of the year was quite a challenge because of the amount of work and balancing that work with my busy schedule at the church where I serve. The fact that whilst doing the research proposal we had to study and complete assignments for the semester modules complicated the process. I also struggled with the material because I came into the programme from a theological background, so I needed to read more into the fundamental disciplines that form the PIPL perspective, namely, amongst others: psychology, industrial psychology, leadership, anthropology, and sociology.

3.3.2 Finding a research supervisor

By the end of the study school, the programme director asked us to give the names of the people we would prefer as study leaders. Over the study school, I had enjoyed presentations done by Dr Errol Sundelowitz and Dr Rica Viljoen. I enjoyed Dr Sundelowitz's insightful presentation on research writing skills and his interest in African spirituality. On the other hand, I wanted to work with Dr Rica Viljoen because of her presentation on Spiral Dynamics, and her international exposure and work on leadership development and diversity in different cultures around the world. I therefore put both their names on the list as prospective supervisors for my research. In response, the programme director, Mr Albert Wort, gave me a third alternative for a supervisor, who turned out to be unavailable. Therefore, Dr Sundelowitz, who had also shown interest in my initial thoughts, became my allocated supervisor. I



journeyed with Dr Sundelowitz for about four months. This journey included refining the research subject and putting together the research proposal.

3.3.3 Doing the Research Proposal

The process of working with Dr Sundelowitz began by setting up the channel for communication. On 19 March, I met with him at his home office and we discussed how we would communicate. At that stage, we had already had contact via e-mail and telephone. We decided that the major channels of communication would be via e-mail, telephonically and by means of personal contact³. I found this process to work well, particularly when, on a few occasions, we had to cancel due to my work commitments.

Having sorted out the communication channel we embarked on the research proposal journey. This journey began with a preliminary literature review on ASC and PIPL. It became clear from the literature review that there was no explicit definition for the concept of ASC. This led us to the decision that a grounded theory approach using three cases on South African leaders would be an appropriate way of allowing the concept to emerge through the study. I liked this decision as it was also in favour of my newly-found qualitative inclinations. Dr Sundelowitz introduced me to the relevant literature on qualitative research and case study methods. Refining the research proposal happened section by section between March and the submission date in June. Throughout the journey I discovered that I had to work hard at refining writing skills, as my language seemed to be predominantly spoken English. By 18 June, I submitted the proposal to be marked as a research methodology as well as in preparation for the proposal review panel in September.

3.3.4 Change of Supervisor

Once I had submitted the research proposal in June, Dr Sundelowitz informed us that he was no longer available as supervisor. This was sad as it meant finding a new supervisor for my research. I often referred to Dr Sundelowitz as a 'slave driver' as he really pushed for results and progress right through the journey. The **Figure (3.1)**

³ See **Appendix ASC 01**.



below is an extract from the message I received from Dr Sundelowitz informing me of his decision:

Figure 3.1 – Extract from an email from Dr Sundelowitz

From: Errol Sundelowitz
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2010 4:58 PM
To: "Undisclosed-Recipient"
Subject: Sad News!
Importance: High

Hi All my PiPL Masters students

....I am withdrawing from working on the PiPL program in all capacities with immediate effect. I will therefore not be available to continue as a study leader for the four of you with whom I have been working and who have managed to hand in worthy research proposals ON TIME!

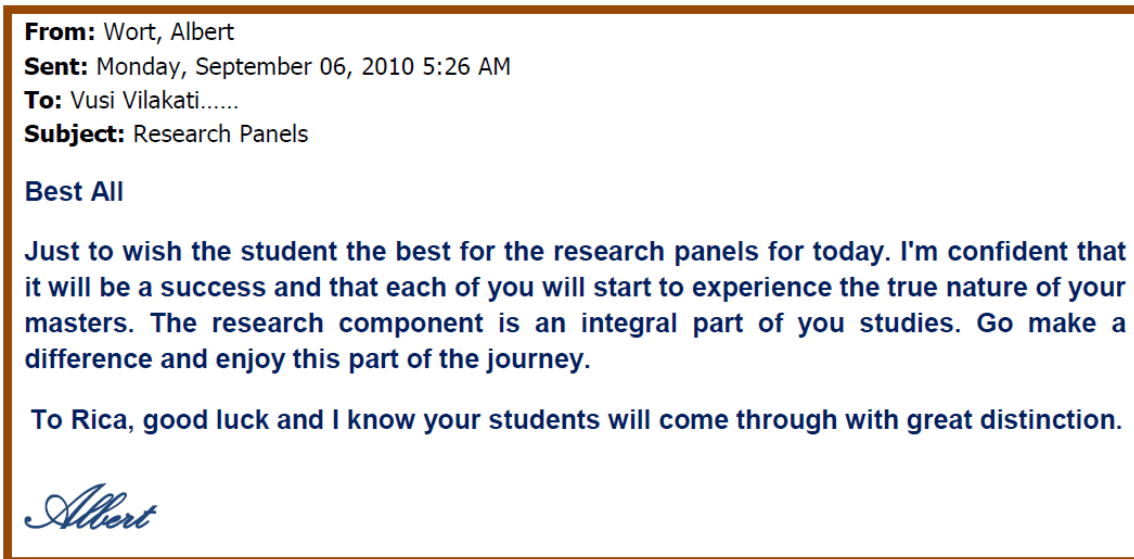
In the following week I received a call from the Programme director to discuss my next possible study leader. After the discussion, we agreed that Dr Rica Viljoen would take over as study leader/supervisor. I contacted her and we subsequently met on 31 August to discuss a way forward. She affirmed the work I had done so far and recommended that we prepare for the panel with the current research proposal as had been prepared with Dr Sundelowitz. I agreed.

3.3.5 Meeting the Proposal Review Panel

The research review panel, comprising the programme director and three other Academics from the Department, including my study supervisor, Dr Rica Viljoen, met on 6 September. The extract (**Figure 3.2**) is a message I received from the programme director on the morning of the Panels.



Figure 3.2 – Email Sent by Mr Wort – The Course Leader



I came to the panel with mixed feelings. On one hand, I was feeling confident about the amount of work I had put into the proposal, yet on the other hand, I was feeling anxious because the person I had worked with was not there to help me justify the thinking behind the study. I was also confident because when my research proposal was marked at the end of the first semester I received very high marks. As it turned out my anxieties all came true in the meeting. I presented the study and the fundamental thinking was accepted. There were major criticisms on the methodology and cases selected for the study as well as the lack of emphasis on the PIPL perspective as developed by Professor JPD Smith. A vigorous debate ensued on the concept of African Spiritual Consciousness and the suitability of the research methodology.

I was able to argue my way with the concept and the research approach. I was glad that the programme director confirmed my assumption that the current PIPL programme did not take seriously ASC when he said 'your study stands to make a critical contribution to the module'. The painful aspect of the meeting was my discovery that even the panellists did not agree on their views towards the proposal. Overall, the discussion raised pertinent questions that resulted in a number of adjustments. Firstly, we adjusted the topic to ***Conceptualising African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL perspective***. I agreed to this new topic as it



captured the basic concepts that my study sought to answer. Secondly, we changed the methodology from three case studies to a single life-history. This suggestion came from Professor Willem Schurink (one of the panellists) who subsequently became a co-supervisor to advise on methodological issues. Finally, the committee accepted the research proposal and subject and advised that I adjust the methodological issues and the motivation as per the agreed changes.

After the Panel, meeting Dr Viljoen phoned me to check how I was feeling about it I expressed my disappointment and what I thought was a failure by the committee to listen deeply to the research proposal as I had prepared it. I also had a sneaking suspicion that the resignation of Dr Sundelowitz was a factor. Dr Viljoen' support was a great gift in this regard because she helped to apportion everything in its rightful place. As we talked, we separated the sentiments from the important comments that needed attention.

3.3.6 The second study school

The second semester began with the study school that took place in the middle of August. In this study school, we covered three modules: emotional leadership, interpersonal leadership, and professional leadership. Doing these modules further clarified the scope of PIPL mastery. It gave me a clearer perspective on how personal mastery leads to the interpersonal professional mastery. By the end of the second study school, I felt better placed to do my literature review for my research.

3.3.7 Refining the research proposal

Based on the comments of the research panel, I started refining the research proposal. Dr Viljoen immediately made available to me a copy of Plummer's (2001) book on life-history research. This began a journey towards the second draft of the research proposal. In two weeks, I had made all the necessary changes to the research proposal and sent it to my supervisor. Dr Viljoen was very happy with the progress and we submitted the edited version of the proposal. This draft became our final proposal. We submitted and registered the proposal and the title of the study with the University.



3.3.8 Receiving results for the year

By the end of the first year, I was looking forward to my results. I generally performed well in all the modules, with one exception where I passed with low marks. This was quite a challenge because it was a mark I had hardly experienced throughout my academic career! Nevertheless, I enjoyed my Christmas holidays because I had a great sense of achievement, both with my studies and at work. During the Christmas holidays, I also took with me a number of books on leadership and African philosophy in order to start shaping my thoughts for my literature review.

3.4 THE SECOND YEAR - 2011

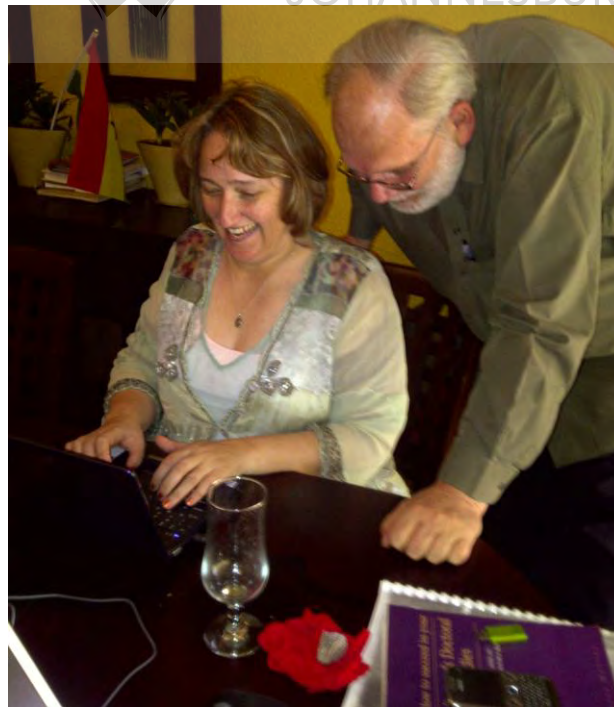
The second year began with the study school in the middle of February. This was our last study school for the programme. In this study school, we covered two modules – personal health and total wellbeing, and individual facilitation and coaching. At the end of this study school, I felt everything within the programme had come full circle and I was ready to do my research. I grew to appreciate the potential contribution that the PIPL framework can make towards understanding leadership development. This framework became the premise for my research process. It also became clear that most of the resources used did not specifically embrace African philosophy and consciousness. This became the specific avenue for contribution through this study. At the end of the study school, we had six assignments to do over a period of four months. The assignments took quite a substantial amount of the time I had planned to do my research. As a result, my research eventually started a bit later than the planned schedule.

3.4.1 Clarifying the research methodology

Before embarking on the data collection process, I had to clarify a number of process and content issues. I was also aware that the actual process might vary as issues emerged during the data collection process. The **first** thing I did was to re-structure the research proposal into an introduction and orientation to the study (**Chapter 1**). The most helpful aspect of this chapter was outlining the research objectives and the chapter outline. These features enabled me to classify and demarcate the stages of the research journey. This process took three weeks of the month of March. I then sent the chapter to my supervisor for her opinion. Dr Viljoen was happy with the

content, but cautioned that this might change slightly once we had tidied up our methodology as the study unfolded.

The **Second** aspect was to clarify the methodology for the study as outlined in **Chapter 2**. At face value, this chapter seemed easy to manage, but it became a very difficult chapter to put together in academically sound language. At this stage, Dr Viljoen brought Professor Willem Schurink (a qualitative research specialist) into the picture, and he exposed me to the delicate nature of ensuring academic rigour within qualitative research. He also introduced me to qualitative research and life-history material such as Plummer (2001), Goodsen and Sikes (2000) and Sparkes (2002). He emphasised the work of Mouton (2001) and Guba and Lincoln (1994). I had to read carefully through these books as they each highlighted critical components of the research process. Prof. Schurink emphasised the need to clarify the research approach used in the study from the three main approaches, namely - pre-modern, modernist, and postmodernist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In view of the preliminary literature review and discussions with Prof. Schurink, I decided to follow a modernist approach.



Picture 3.1 – Dr Rica Viljoen and Prof. Willem Schurink

(Working on my Methodology Chapter – Picture taken in Randburg on 08 September 2011)



The **third** decision we had to make in terms of the research design was how I was going to use life-history as a research strategy. This related specifically to how I was going to gain access to the storyteller, how I decided on the sample size, and how I was going to collect the data. After a number of deliberations with Dr Viljoen and Prof Schurink, I decided to make use of **one case only**. According to Silverman (2005, p. 9) “qualitative researchers are prepared to sacrifice scope for detail”. This was true in this regard, as I thought a single case would give us enough detail to conceptualise African Spiritual Consciousness. Plummer (2001) actually states that sampling within the life-history method can be the individual’s ability to effectively communicate or tell a story. With Muzi’s ability to narrate his life story and discuss his understanding of ASC, one case proved to be sufficient.

The **fourth** decision I had to make was how I planned to use Plummer’s (2001) methods of handling qualitative data during the data collection process. This method included the importance of keeping a research diary, taking field notes and ‘member validation’ as a way of ensuring rigour within qualitative research. Prof. Schurink emphasised that field notes and keeping a research diary were critical in the process of writing the story behind the story. In the actual process of doing the interviews, the notes became handy in terms of picking common themes and identifying gaps in the content. They also helped in capturing the surrounding issues that influenced each conversation with the storyteller. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), field notes are a written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting data and reflecting on the data gathered during the course of a qualitative research process.

Fifthly, Prof. Schurink advised that we should carefully select a method of analysis that aligned with the methods used for data collection. In **chapter 2**, I discussed how I used grounded theory (GT) with a consideration of the principles of phenomenology. I should also note here that at a one point analytic induction (AI) as analysis strategy also seemed a possible route but through the advice of Prof Schurink and Dr Viljoen, I aborted the idea. The main reason for this was the fact that I struggled to link the varied principles of GT and AI to form one analysis strategy. It just became methodologically confusing. I therefore settled for my initial method – GT. As the

study progressed, I was sometimes not sure how to integrate the concepts in the actual management of the data. This is where the insights of Dr Viljoen and Prof. Schurink helped me to re-align my key objectives with the data analysis process. I discuss the data analysis process in detail in **Chapter 6**.

But how did I identify the storyteller? At the beginning of the year, I had spoken to three people whom I envisaged as possible participants in the research process. The first person was unavailable due to the demands of his work as a medical surgeon. The second person was initially keen, but had to take on a project at work that took him out of town for most of his time. Before I finally settled for Muzi, Dr Viljoen made a suggestion of another possible candidate who we struggled to find and so we aborted that avenue. Choosing Muzi as the storyteller was based on Plummer's (2001) criteria for selecting a life. With regard to the criteria mapped out by life-history researchers, he perfectly suited the purposive sampling criteria.

In the adjacent Picture (3.2) Muzi is walking out of his workplace in Houghton



Personally, I have known Muzi for about nine years and have witnessed his ability to engage and express a particular consciousness on African issues. He has balanced knowledge of black consciousness and spirituality. His contribution to the MCSA in advancing issues of black empowerment and equality also added to the practical qualitative sampling requirements. I should add here that in choosing the storyteller, I carefully considered the wisdom of conducting research with a colleague, which is often not recommended. This was always in the background of my journey and I tried

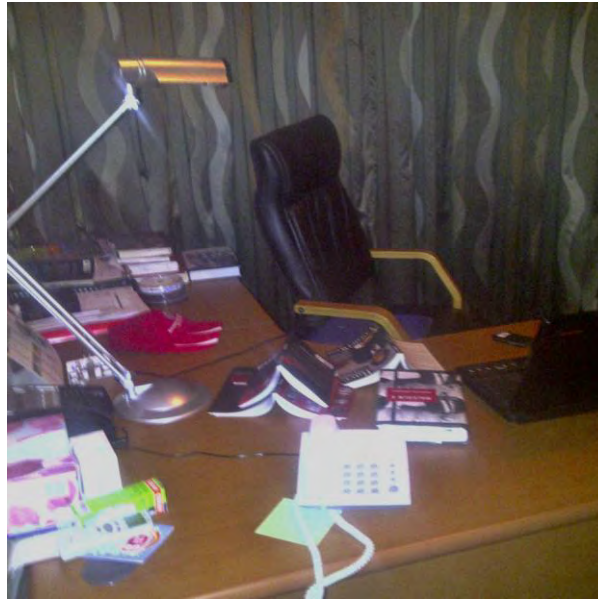


to keep a level of objectivity. I decided on Muzi as a storyteller in spite of Bogdan and Taylor's (1975) advice to avoid selecting a research participant with whom one has a professional or otherwise special relationship. I believed that the kind of relationship the two of us would develop would be different from the one we had when we used to work together (in this regard see Tlou, 2006).

3.4.2 Data collection

The second stage was conducting the interviews. We agreed that the life-story would be captured through digitally voice-recorded interviews that would be transcribed to construct the written life-story. The use of a digital voice recorder enabled me to capture as much as possible and listen attentively to the spoken and non-verbal communication during the interview. Each interview took approximately an hour – with a few going slightly over an hour due to the content dictating the process.

The two preparatory meetings happened over a light lunch in one of the eateries at the Killarney Mall. Our conversations were interspersed with work experiences, commentaries on current events and occasional good laughs. This was for me a good foundation for the subsequent conversations, as we seemed to connect easily as people and in terms of the content of the conversation. The first two sessions were essentially the covenanting process and a brief overview of the intended study, general details about the research method, consent guidelines, and timeframes. After these meetings, I emailed Muzi the consent form and research guidelines, which he signed before the first formal interview. By the end of the second meeting, Muzi was already giving his opinions about leadership around the world, which got me excited about the journey – I began to enjoy his perceptive and conversant nature. After the second meeting, I phoned (as agreed) to sort out the appointments with his secretary and six appointments were set within the months of June and early July 2011. My observations over these two sessions were that Muzi is a calm person, who listens attentively, confidently engages, reads broadly, and is connected with world news and history. This raised the bar of my expectations – and it proved to be true as the research progressed. Muzi further agreed to check the transcribed data as a way of ensuring validity and accuracy.



Picture 3.3 - A view of Muzi's office

For the subsequent sessions, we used Muzi's office in Houghton, Johannesburg, as this seemed convenient and suitable to both of us. The offices are attached to other buildings and they are well decorated with attractive furnishings and curtains.

Four of the appointments were set for 11h00 and two were set more mid-afternoon. On each occasion, as I arrived at Muzi's office, the secretary offered me something to drink, which was very hospitable. On three occasions, Muzi was just finishing an appointment with other people, and on two occasions, we had to quickly set up and start the interview due to time limitations. His office is also well furnished, with dark furniture, although the relatively dark surroundings were well illuminated by the table lamp. Overall, his office is a comfortable working space with a small bookshelf. On the shelf there are books by a few South African writers – others are on leadership and spirituality. Each time I arrived, his laptop was on his desk, together with an open book or documents. Generally, the space met the criteria for our conversation as there were no distractions and the sound levels from the neighbourhood were very low.

Each conversation was prefaced with a brief chat to catch-up with how each one of us was feeling and the logistical issues of the research process. I would then locate and test the digital recording devices for best quality recording. In all the sessions,



the recordings went well with no disruptions. The first interview covered Muzi's background and laying out the conceptual framework, as this study had a specific focus – conceptualising ASC within the PIPL perspective. It seemed to me that Muzi's grandmother had a huge impact on his upbringing. Throughout the interviewing process, Muzi's life-story was interspersed with a number of examples and descriptions of cultural symbols that shaped parts of his selfhood. The intensity and fondness with which the story is told unveils a sense of connectedness with his personal history and how that history shapes who he is today. At the end of the interviewing process, I felt that his story had covered a broad range of the themes of interest in my study.

3.4.3 The literature review

The literature review began from the very beginning of the study and was finalised just before the analysis chapter after the data collection process. From the conception of the study, it was essential that I review current literature within the relevant disciplines in order to discover the current level of conceptualisations of ASC within literature. I found this journey very exciting as I discovered that both the literature review and Muzi's story lamented the scarcity of African sources on PIPL leadership mastery. It was also exciting because there were issues that emerged within Muzi's story that I went home and started reading about. Once I had finished doing the literature review, I discovered that doing the processes concurrently enabled themes to emerge right through the process⁴.

3.4.4 Data analysis

From the beginning of the data collection process, I had a framework for data analysis. The topic of the study had specific limitations to the inquiry. The primary aim of the study is to conceptualise ASC within the PIPL perspective. The PIPL grid became the key framework for analysis. I then adhered to the principles of grounded theory⁵ to analyse, interpret, and allow ASC to emerge within the different dimensions of PIPL mastery. The challenge I faced in the process of collecting and analysing data was fitting all the evidence within the primary dimensions of the PIPL

⁴ These themes are discussed in detail in **Chapter 6**.

⁵ See Chapter 2.



dimensions. So I decided to allow further issues to emerge in their own right -which is in agreement with Bloor's (1978) concept of 'situational adaptability' that allows the researcher to have an open-ended approach.

As soon as I started transcribing the data, I realised that I was already cutting and pasting and rephrasing certain sentences to create cohesion. This made me realise that the transcription process is part of the analysis process of coding information. It was at this stage that Dr Viljoen and Prof. Schurink emphasised the importance of maintaining the storyteller's voice. I found Plummer's (2001, p. 177) comment helpful in this regard:

Here perhaps is the most common strategy for writing up life document research: get your subject's own words, really come to grasp them from the inside, and then yourself turn it into a structured and coherent statement that uses the subject's words in places and the social scientist's in others but does not lose their authentic meaning.

I therefore decided that once I had finished the transcribing I would send the story back to Muzi to check and approve the content, as agreed with him prior to the interview process. As I came to the end of the transcribing, I also discovered that there were gaps in the collected data. I therefore called Muzi and arranged for further data collection. I should mention here that the transcribing was very difficult. Seeing the speed at which I was going, I then requested a friend Liz Willis to help with the transcription. I am grateful that she was able to take some of the pressure off me at this point. I then took the written story to Muzi to read and approve. I thought this was an important step of the journey because within the life history method *member checking* is an essential part of enhancing validity and authenticity. After spending some time reading the story, he made a couple of improvements on the written document⁶. This was part of the authentication process of the study. The analysis and interpretation of the emerging themes also happened concurrently with the writing up of the story. After completing the transcription, I merged the data from the interviews with that of the essay to compile a more comprehensive story.

⁶ See **Chapter 4**.



I read the story and started listing the emerging themes under each life dimension. I did this with a particular view of how ASC informs that particular aspect of Muzi's life. There were phrases and metaphors that became repeated as key words in the telling of the story. Muzi has a particular way of using stories to make his point about a specific subject. In most of the interviews, the values he spoke about were always enshrined in a cultural narrative. This confirmed the belief that most African values are communicated through proverbs, stories, and illustrations.

I should further state that in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data I discovered elements of ethnographic. There were moments where I felt like an active participant in the story rather than a researcher. Although the chosen strategy was a grounded theory narrative case study I occasionally found myself as an active participant in the narrative – and this is evident in the data analysis (Chapter, 6). As a researcher, I also wondered whether I kept true to the principles of grounded theory and life history research. In finalising the study, I thought it proper to clearly, state that the outcome of the exploration was like a meandering river. The outcome of the study became a constructivist combination of a variety of some principles of grounded theory, phenomenology, life history, and ethnography.

3.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION

Doing the study was a journey of both 'mountain top' and 'valley' experiences. During the first year, it was generally hard to balance the studies, having a new baby in the family and being in a new work environment. Sometimes I tried to fit everything into a working routine but this seemed very difficult to balance, particularly when the little baby could not sleep well at night. I am deeply grateful to my wife for filling in the gaps and allowing me to study and spend many nights in the study reading and writing. When I finished the assignments and all the exams for the first year, I was literally ill due to exhaustion. The one morning I arrived at my office and my personal assistant told me to go and get medication and sleep it off. However, the amount of knowledge I gained in the research process is invaluable.

The second year began relatively well, until I was involved in a car accident on 21 June. On this day, I was driving to drop off books at the University Library when



somebody drove across a red traffic light and hit my car. I was very angry with the person, but as I started talking to him I realised that, due to his life circumstances, he was in a far worse state than I was at the time. Somehow, I could forgive him beyond my feeling of being violated and hurt. I did however sustain minor neck injuries, which was quite a drawback for my study, as I had to wear a neck brace for a few weeks. This made it difficult to sit for long hours to write and read.

A week later, we received the news that my father-in-law had passed on. This was another major blow for us as a family, particularly because we had a very close relationship with him. My wife took the loss even harder than we anticipated. I am grateful that my congregation gave me both some time to heal and to be with the family. In reality, these challenges disrupted a whole month of my research schedule. Fortunately, by the time all these events happened I had already done about two thirds of the study. After these incidents my energy levels were quite low and I realised I needed to take some time off from work. I was able to keep my diary relatively clean for about two weeks to give myself time to recover. By this time, it was already August so I had to clean-up the study and start doing my analysis.

I am also grateful that Muzi was gracious with his time as he allowed me to move two appointments further out during the process of the grief and recovery. Throughout the experience, I was quite amazed at his deep sense of humility and sensitivity. For instance, when I came for the next appointment after the accident and bereavement, he spent some time connecting with me about the two incidents. This displayed in a practical way the values that he spoke about in his story. Many times during the interview, I felt that his ability to integrate knowledge and experience is astounding. Throughout the study, I personally grew to appreciate more and more of the gifts that community offers. Right through the experiences, my family had incredible support from relatives, friends, and our congregation. I even asked myself how people without a support network really survive. In summary, the journey through this study has been a real blessing and a real gift in my personal journey towards personal, interpersonal, and professional mastery.



3.6 REFINING THE STUDY

Throughout the study, I wrestled with the amount of information I had collected and meeting the requirements of a mini-dissertation. When I finished writing up the study and sent it to my Supervisor at the end of August, I expressed to her that I was anxious about structure. This culminated in a meeting with Prof. Schurink and Dr Viljoen. During this meeting, we took a closer look at the content of the study and decided that we would try to balance the requirements of the life-history research method and the requirements of a PIPL Masters programme. In practice, this was more difficult than envisaged. We actually decided to re-organise the study to extend it to seven chapters, as this would give clarity to the building blocks of qualitative research and the life-history strategy. From the first week of September to the submission date we worked tirelessly with Dr Viljoen to restructure and give perceptual clarity to the study. In the middle of the last week we decided to finalise and prepare for printing and submitting by the following Monday. Therefore, I sent the finalised documents to Dr Viljoen and to friends Dr Mahlaba, Joan Bevan, and Liz Willis to proofread aspects of the study before I submitted it.

3.7 SUBMITTING THE STUDY FOR PEER REVIEW

The last stage of the project was compiling and printing each aspect of the study. This involved checking each chapter, making sure the referencing was done according to the prescribed standard, and that the tables, pictures, figures were included, and all necessary appendices were included. My supervisor approved the study and we sent it in for peer review on 26 September.

3.8 COMMENTS BY EXAMINERS

The following are comments from two external examiners;

Examiner 1

This is a very ambitious research project and probably well beyond the scope of a minor dissertation. The research is well planned, utilized appropriate research methods and techniques, and is well executed. The student succeeded in making sense of a large amount of data and linked fairly well with the literature on African Spiritual Consciousness. This is commendable...The candidate should be awarded the degree with distinction.



Examiner 2:

Once I started reading this mini-dissertation, I was unable to leave it until I had finished. The student should be complemented on a well-executed exploration into a very complex topic...The study is quite relevant and timely.

When the study came back from the external examiners, it had more positive feedback than corrections. Generally the feedback was meant to crystallise thoughts and clarify content. On a few instances a resource or reference was suggested which sometimes I thought it was the Examiners preference or an input they were missing from the discussion. Within two weeks, I had incorporated the comments and sent the report back to my supervisors and they found it acceptable. We then submitted the report to the faculty and waited for the final feedback.

On receiving a letter that confirmed that I had passed my degree Cum Laude, I was extremely overjoyed. There was also a deep sense of fulfilment as the outcome justified all the sleepless nights and the amount of work I had put into the study. My deepest gratitude goes to my family, my supervisors, and the many friends who encouraged and supported me over the journey. A few days later, I began to feel the empty nest syndrome and I wonder what is next on my list....

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented an account of how I executed the study. This research story is a portrayal of intimate reflections on experiences and occurrences throughout the study. I tried to illustrate personal reflections, frustrations, shortcomings, and learnings that I encountered. Sparkes (2002) refers to these stories as confessional tales, since they relate to expressive personalised stories of what went right, or what went wrong during the research process. My account also contains elements of an auto-ethnography. I presented my story about the way in which I went about doing research for my master's degree; I describe the manner in which I planned the research and the decisions I took and I shared challenges I faced. Finally, and importantly, I offered this chapter to serve as an internal audit trail that is used in qualitative research to assess the quality of the research.



SECTION B

THE LIFE STORY



Here I present in his own words Muzi's life-story and understanding of African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL perspective



CHAPTER 4

MUZI'S LIFE STORY

'All Life Is Connected In Africa'

PART 1: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

4.1 FAMILY BACKGROUND

I was born in a small town called Oudtshoorn in the Southern Cape. I grew up in a relatively big family under the care of my grandmother and grandfather. My grandmother, as my main caregiver, was a very strong woman who was discipline orientated. She was the matriarch of the family – the centre of the family! I remember my grandfather as a disciplined and focused man whom you could trust for good advice. My parents were married and separated quite early in my childhood. Due to my parents' separation I never spent much time with my father. My grandfather and father have since died. I would describe my relationship with my parents as warm and close enough to experience the love and comfort of a parent. I have three sisters. With my siblings, I have enjoyed a healthy relationship. When I was younger, my elder sister took good care of me and I did the same with my younger sisters. That is the family background I come from.

My first point of reference was being always surrounded by people and often moving between the paternal and maternal families. My family home was always open and everyone who came was always welcome; that included both relatives and ordinary people from the township. As children, we were always made to feel that we were part of the community. Sometimes we would have meals at different homes in the neighbourhood. If we didn't like what was being prepared at home at any particular day, we simple went next door and there we were always offered something to eat, sometimes even a better meal. We belonged to the community. Our broader community had its own struggles but we were generally a healthy community. Such an upbringing opened me to the many engagements and influences in the community around me. Looking back at my background, I can almost see the flux of influences (good and bad) I had to engage, in creating and shaping my identity.



4.1.1 Schooling

I attended my primary and secondary school in the local schools in the township. When I look back at my schooling days a few things stand out. I remember that our schools had poor resources and we had to grow with the scarcity of teachers. Sometimes it was difficult to find good teachers. In some cases, we were subjected to pathetic teachers and disparaging teachers. On the other hand, we had very dedicated teachers! Most of these teachers were not well equipped academically but they did their best within their means. They were punctual, committed, meticulous, and disciplined. They were not just disciplined in their own right but they also disciplined us as students in and out of the classroom. Often your teacher would also be part of other community gatherings like church. Therefore, we could not escape from them. They were parents and the glue of society – the custodians of societal values.

Through the dedication of such teachers and their commitment to our well-being which went beyond our academic life, I learned the value of treating people with dignity. This was often true in the way they treated us. Those that could not excel academically were valued for their sporting skills and other activities they were able to do. There was a real sense of solidarity and connectedness of community in this regard. As kids, we often made fun of each other and mocked our friends in different ways. I remember us doing that to a boy who came to school with shoes that had no soles underneath. We made fun of him until one day he turned to us with tears and said, “You don’t know what makes me have no shoes”. As a boy, I found this challenging but also began a journey of reflecting on the reality of poverty within my community. Somehow, the community solidarity helped us cope with the poverty through values such as compassion.

4.1.2 The Church

In my community, the church became a very important place of guiding wisdom. Through the church, we learned to engage the issues of poverty and were encouraged to care for the vulnerable. However, sometimes the church was a place of disagreement especially in response to the political situation of the time. The younger generation’s views often clashed with those of the elders. Our engagements



in church sometimes led us to asking the real questions about God and the reality of living in a segregated community. On the whole the church, to which I later offered to be ordained as a religious minister, played a pivotal role in shaping my worldview.

4.1.3 The Political situation in the country

As a young boy, I was always inquisitive and sought to make sense of things around me. By comparison to the so-called 'coloured' township near us and the town where white people lived, my community was backward in terms of development and investment of resources. As children, we were told that in this coloured township white people used to live together with black people before the apartheid regime. White people occupied the town itself. Stories of being a united community, black and white people standing together were spoken about in my community – but I never experienced it. Parents would tell stories of how they used to live together with so-called 'coloured people' closer to town with white people, and how they were separated and moved to the township where I grew up. This reality generated a curiosity and concern in me.



So as young people in the township, we become politically conscious. My township in the Southern Cape was pivotal in shaping the resistance against the apartheid system. In the Youth Movement, we had lots of debate, many disagreements, and sometimes moments of anger at the situation. In many respects, non-racialism became a real question for all of us. In my own mind, the possibility of a non-racial community that my parents spoke about became a possibility, but that required hard work to achieve.

4.1.4 University Years

Upon finishing school I was lucky to be one of the few people in my township to escape ignorance and went to study theology at Rhodes University. All the activities within my community and my theological training were foundational in shaping my worldview and frame of reference. The best way I can describe myself as a student is that I valued academic rigour – the ability to think with depth and humility and link those thoughts to practical actions. From an academic perspective, I have always been fascinated with the art of argumentation, theory, philosophy and the challenge



of aligning academic conceptualisation with praxis (practice). I have always held onto the idea that in life I need to apply the same intensity of discipline to thought as to action.

As students in the theology department, we often had to engage with social and political issues of the day. Through a number of engagements like solidarity strikes and marches, I became deeply aware of the plight of the poor and the vulnerable of society. As a person, I believe that academic excellence should be nourished and challenged by the question: *how does it give voice to the plight of the vulnerable of society?* Consequently, I think I came out of university with a 'nuanced' outlook on life. I came out with the view that truth is relative, life offers no complete answers, answers are always conditional, all people are innately good, and there are no absolute truths. Although this stance shies away from dogmatism, I do have a hermeneutical framework for viewing the world. I should say those years refined my journey of self-actualisation.

4.1.5 Marriage and Family

I got married in the year 2000. The journey of marriage has been a wonderful journey of growth and challenges. My wife and I have had many beautiful times together. Of course, there have been times where the beauty has been intertwined with difficulty. The interesting thing in our African culture is that marriage is much bigger than the union of two people; it includes your in-laws and the broad families. The relationships with the extended families can be a source of great joy but can be very challenging at times in terms of giving attention. In many ways, my marriage has stretched and kept me grounded and allowed me to appreciate the essentials of life. Hence, my family has been a great source of support.

Reference to family for me includes our children – the nephews and nieces we take care of. Although we do not have children of our own, taking care of four children has been a challenge. They can be quite expensive. Not just financially but in terms of what you can give and get from them in relationship. The exciting thing is that you have the wonderful opportunity to share your life with them and to be joined to their life-stories. Our moments together as a family have always given me a sense of



connectedness through the unfolding moments of life. In the broader scheme of things it is a recurrent reminder that I do not live only for myself but I have a responsibility towards my family. I have a sense of posterity and the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy.

4.1.6 My work experience

I have never really worked anywhere else except in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. I have been generally happy with my service to God through the Church. When I left University, I started working in Mabopane for a year and moved to Soshanguve where I served for 11 years. Currently I serve a church community based in Houghton. In each of these places, there were opportunities and challenges. Soshanguve was good for me because the community was open to risking and exploring with me. That gave me the opportunity to grow together with the people in our ability to live and work together. As a leader, I enjoyed the ways in which we ventured together into many new places. You see, I have a fundamental belief in people - I believe that every person has something to give. I often say, even a dead clock for one minute in a 24-hour cycle is on time. My belief in people has taken out the best in me and in others.

This belief has shaped my relationship with people and the way I lead. I strongly believe that leadership is a combination of what I bring to the table and what others bring as well. So competence and excellence in leadership cannot be attributed to an individual but the team. Even the least efforts contribute something to the broader community. Of course, leadership comes with its own challenges related to context and resources. Over time, there have been obvious challenges personally and institutionally. A number of times I have struggled with relating to my superiors when we have had clear differences in outlook and approach. This proved to be difficult to manage within self. I have grown through such experiences as I have grown to appreciate difference of opinion and roles. At other times, I have battled with the question of expectations. What do you do when the system has different expectations from what you believe you are about? I am still battling with this reality. At a personal level, I still battle with managing detail and the discipline of



administration as a leader. From a broader perspective, I still long for African approaches to leadership that will set us free from western paradigms.

4.1.7 Reflecting back on my journey

Looking at the work I do and back to my upbringing, I am grateful that my community taught me the connectedness of life and living. There are a number of examples of this sense of connectedness. When you slaughtered a sheep or a goat, part of the discipline was to share with your next-door neighbour and those who were in need. This taught us the challenge of sharing. Another example would be, even if you might have the money to buy the salt or the sugar, the shops might be closed. So you could go to the neighbour and ask for the salt in order to make your meal complete. You needed your neighbour for your livelihood – interconnectedness. Death of a family member, next door or in the next street was the death of the whole community. The focus of the community would be in that house. The whole community would go out and help cleaning out the yard and the mothers in that area would go and clean the house and help the women of that house.

For me the fundamental thing within African life is the issue of connectedness. This connectedness transcends even the classical definitions of love. Africans live at their best when they reflect connectedness, both in terms of needs and when celebrating life and achievements. For instance, if someone succeeds in sport within a township, everyone shares in the glory and pride as if it were their own. The community guards your talent jealously because it is the talent of the community. On the other hand, even the weakest of that society is protected and given a sense of dignity. Therefore, when people misbehave within a community they are reprimanded and reminded that they are embarrassing and disgracing the whole community. All that I have become has been shaped by this view of life. You may call it my interpretative framework for reality and experience – a hermeneutical tool.



PART 2: AFRICAN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN PIPL

4.2 DEFINING AFRICAN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

4.2.1 What is an African view of life?

The term African in itself is a very vague concept. Part of what creates the definitional complexity is that Africa is made of different cultures and subcultures. Crystallising a definition of Africa or an African risks losing its very essence because in our modern context definitions are often used in a commercialised sense. For me, African would refer to the simple little thing – how African people define for themselves what life is about - our notion of existence as living because others are living. Being alone and disconnected in the African worldview is almost equivalent to death. Death is a state of being alone. The worst form of punishment in African society is not even the death penalty but exclusion. Throwing somebody out of community destroys their sense of identity and primary focus of existence – it is a state of death.

In our common understanding, we have come to call this connectedness **Ubuntu** in Zulu or **Botho** (humanness) in Sotho. For me the essence of *ubuntu* is connectedness to something greater than my own existence, which includes finite and infinite aspects of life. In a real way, our existence is beyond the time and space of my individual life. My being is connected to the generations (through my clan) that have come before me and is connected to those who are still to come- I am almost like a part of a stream of being. This sense of connectedness is beyond just human relationship (past, present, and future) but also being connected to nature and to the land. The Pedi culture has an expression '**Ngoana mmobu**' directly translated as 'Child of the soil', which highlights the significance and sacredness of the relationship between the soil and people. My clan name, for instance, is '**Mfene**' (loosely translated as an Ape or directly as a Baboon). All life is connected within the African worldview. In addition, this life needs to be harnessed rather than exploited.

4.2.2 What would you then define as African Spiritual Consciousness?

The difficulty with defining spirituality in the contemporary sense is that you have to almost abstract and distil it as an independent expression of life that has a life of its



own. In African culture the whole of life is a spiritual experience, so spirituality is not something you connect to. Africans exist within a realm which includes the living present, the 'living' dead (ancestors), nature and God or Supreme Being – **Modimo, uThixo, uNkulunkulu** (African names of God). African spirituality, for me is the very essence of my life, which I cannot simply define as an entity because it is a way of life. The best way to view it is an emerging sense of being that we can learn to redefine as we move with life. The dichotomy between the spiritual life and the temporal life, spirituality and life does not exist in the African mind. In my view, the notion of dissecting and distinguishing spirituality from other moments (parts) of existence is a western conception.

4.2.3 What is an African understating of the spiritual life dimension?

There is no doubt in the African mind that life is bigger in essence and depth than what we see in the here and now. We do not exist to eat, sleep, die, and disappear. We are created to express and grow our sense of being within the community. There is a clear consciousness in the African mind that life is held together by a Supreme Being and that Supreme Being is edified greatly when we live in solidarity with one another; seeking to serve the common good and seeking to embrace the stranger – and this is not just an expression of charity but of being. The Sotho people have an expression that says '**etla moyeni re je kawena**' - 'come stranger let us have a feast on your behalf'. When strangers are received into the community it is a celebration moment, it is a moment of great joy. The host even sees it as a blessing that the gods, as you wish or the ancestors, have come to bless us through strangers (**basilethele inhlanhla** - strangers bring good luck). The underlying conviction is that in receiving the stranger we are opening ourselves to blessings from God and from the ancestors because we are connected.

Some years ago, I got home and there was something called **Inhlombe** (ritual for initiating traditional healers) which could form a modern equivalent of church. In this function people traditionally get together to edify the ancestors and worship God. Throughout the ceremony traditional doctors lead the community in chants and narratives that invite both the ancestors and God. This ritual is similar to those in the Hebrew Bible performed by the chief priests. The essence of the ritual is the historical narrative of the community, which is interspersed by what I would call



prayers of intercession – asking God and the ancestors to give us prosperity, wisdom, guidance. Towards the end of the chant they would say ‘**siphe indwendwe**’ - ‘*give us visitors*’. I found that interesting since I am now part of a modern culture that views visitors as a burden and expensive to host. Here are these people almost pleading to be given visitors. A very interesting phenomenon! The idea is that we are all connected and that part of serving a visitor is part of serving God. This resonates with the Christian rule of life – loving your neighbour as yourself.

There is creative tension, in my view, in the spiritual consciousness in the African mind - the tension between the angry God and God who is full of grace. It is interesting that the gods in African culture would be angrier with you for what you do to others than what you do to God himself. This God or gods are comfortable (secure in being God and not demanding exclusive rights) in themselves that they almost do not need to be worshipped except through healthy relationship with others and the environment. You do not get the sense of a God who is saying to his subjects or people ‘here are these rules; if you don’t obey them, I’m going to do this’. There are rituals and they have more to do with how we deal with ancestors and not God.

Within the African culture, your understanding of your physical sense of being and maturation is mediated through rituals. In my culture, for instance, when you are a young man and you go to the mountain for the circumcision ritual of initiation to manhood, your father does not become directly responsible for the journey. An uncle and other men in the community are invited to take responsibility for your journey. Once on the mountain, you are appointed an ‘**ikhankatha**’ (a mentor or guide) and his job is to stay with you for the journey. This person is responsible for you, physically (they almost become your doctor), emotionally (to keep in touch with your feelings) and psychologically (to track how you are developing into being a man). This person is responsible for your formation as a man. The most subversive thing about it is that often the person that occupies the lowest status within that society - probably a person who drinks a lot is afforded that role. In most instances, it is the people you would not give much time of day, and yet in this context they get elevated to become a mentor to you, even if you come from a well-to-do family. As such, the lowest within that society get elevated



Part of the introduction to the journey to manhood also includes a time where people from the village may shout (in most instances insults) at you derogatory and humiliating statements, thus stripping you of any form of preconceived identity and dignity. For the duration of the process, you live in a boma (mountain hut) and you are under the instruction of the **ikhankatha**. Your attitude should be of great respect to this person because he is responsible for coaching and mentoring you through your transition in life. You have to give this person a certain name – we often call it **lqephe** in Xhosa. He has the responsibility to teach you and make a contribution to your becoming a human being. The challenge within this ritual is in learning to respect human beings and not just the status they hold – to treat whoever I meet with great respect and great dignity. The extreme side to this ritual is when it leads to the treatment of other people (those who are not men) as inferior.

4.2.4 PIPL mastery...How would you define that?

I will answer this question through outlining the process of becoming a man in the men's school in my Xhosa culture. Through a variety of challenges and tasks, you are taught what it means to be a man. These include things you are not supposed to do. For example, you learn, amongst other things, self-control, how to go through pain and persevere, honesty and humility, your responsibility towards your family and society - with the hope that you will come through the process well grounded. When you come back from the school, a cleansing ritual is performed and then comes a big celebration. Everyone from the community comes to your house and as you come out there is this elaborate ritual. Before eating, the men of the community come and you sit there and they do what we call **ukuyala** and whatever you were taught in the school is emphasised and elaborated. The issue is that you are a man now and are expected to have values that indicate you are a man. Even the women come and they tell you what it means from their own experiences what a good man is, and how he deals with his family and society. The values you are taught during **Ukuyala** need to be re-encouraged from time to time.

One of the greatest insults that a man can endure as part of societal response to misbehaviour is when you are asked **ubungayalangwa na?** (Were you not instructed?). **Mhla ubuyalwa kwakukho umoya** which means 'on the day you were instructed there was wind, the words didn't stay, they were blown away by the wind'



because that is not how a man behaves. Mastery happens through the ridiculing process. For instance, young girls draw a line on the ground and society expects that you will not cross that line but walk on and not even become angry at the girls. This may mean you have to change your path and take a longer route. The line is one of the symbols used and by not jumping over that line you are making a promise that you will keep control of your own emotional state, and not even lift your head and focus on your journey. How developed is that for calling it self-mastery? I do not know but it teaches you self-control. If you cross that line or lift your head and show your anger, you have failed the test of mastering your own emotions as a man is supposed to.

There might not have been a distinction between personal, interpersonal, and professional, but the way society was being built and how the individual is helped to become a member of the community, shares the fundamental principles. The way homes were managed like small businesses for sustaining the family and community livelihood, from my perspective has links with the personal, interpersonal, and professional perspective. It is worth mentioning here that there is a compartmentalised view of life in the African worldview, but one that is dynamic and open, where there is always a blurring of boundaries between the individual and the community. Major critics of African life argue that the blurring of boundaries might lead to a weaker personal identity and the individual might take longer to emerge. From outside, African culture might seem chaotic, but from inside there is a definite structure that keeps the individual in check as he progress and grows. Sometimes this hierarchy within the culture can lead to the lack of experimentation, clumsiness, and messiness that introduces transformation and growth.

4.2.5 How does African culture speak to other cultures?

In my opinion, humanity has evolved and African culture is no exception. As my point of entry, I regard myself to be mainly influenced by African and Judeo-Christian cultures. In both these cultures, there is a strong emphasis on human connectedness – in particular the welcoming of the stranger. So in my trying to understand myself as an African person, I tread very carefully with the awareness that who I am has been influenced by other cultures I have been exposed to, either through experience and or the media.



Firstly, I am also conscious that I am part of a world in which family connections are no longer valuable; people no longer spend time getting to know their cousins. Families have become more nuclear, with less personal engagements. A simple example is that, I do not know my neighbour, the owner of the business next door and what he does. Secondly, I wrestle with the challenge that our generation lives under the empire called the United States of America. I say this because I believe America dominates our media (80% of the movies we watch are from America), the markets (we just signed an agreement with Walmart to take over a chain of stores), and subsequently culture. Both the media and economic influences not only exchange money but they also convey a culture of mediocrity and individualism. In Africa, America is basically everywhere!

Thirdly, I'm concerned about the competitive nature of our current culture that erodes the very values I believe are central to our African way of being. Our culture has evolved to the place where people believe 'I have to compete and not only win, but crush the enemy'. In the last 20 years, materialism as a search for itself, has taken over the world. Success has become something you can individually possess and own. Power has become this seductive tension between money and relationship. If you have money, you have influence over those in power. These materialistic attitudes influence a number of essential spheres of life such as education, health care, political decisions, economic policies, sports, and the entertainment industry.

Having grown up and been formed within the African frame of mind, I think the essence of African culture poses an appropriate critic to our current culture. The temptation of the current culture is the creation of the illusion that this world is for the winners and yet history tells us that all empires crumble under that illusion. The model of domination, materialism, and individualism is not sustainable even for its own proponents. The current political issues here in South Africa, in Africa, the Islamic threat in the world is an indication and symptom of the competitive nature of our culture. The dichotomy and distance between those who have and those who do not, is too big and cannot be redressed by education alone and is unsustainable. Its effects on the earth itself are unimaginable. I believe the African perspective, which



values co-operation and collective development, rather than competition, is a solution to this impasse.

Lastly, the competitive and individualistic nature of our culture leads to the commoditisation of people and resources. Our approach to relationships has become economic rather than for the purpose of contributing to the greater good of humanity and the environment. Kings and leadership in the African context were not (and should not be) about self-gratification and unaccountable spending of wealth, but about servanthood and stewardship. Kings in the African mind were not evaluated by the amount of cattle they had but how they took care of the weak in their society. In addition, they created a society where those who had more, brought something to the king's kraal for the king to redistribute to the poor. Therefore, the greatest kings were known for their wisdom, which was measured by how they managed the contradictions and tensions in their society, how they gave voice to those who had little or nothing. Let me state here that not every king lived up to these values; some exploited people and fed their own greed.

In cases where people were exploited by the king, poets and musicians of the time would write poetry and music respectively that criticized the king. In my own search I ask myself how that worldview, reflecting African Spiritual Consciousness, compares to the world we have become. I think we are meant to become critics of our current state, analyse where the sources of influence comes from, analyse the power dynamics we serve, analyse the influences that engage us and see how best to minimise their power and influence over us.

4.2.6 Do you sense a voice of African Spiritual Consciousness in the current discourse of leadership?

The challenge is, any critique of a dominant culture, seems impossible because of its pervasive nature. For instance when I watch TV I am immediately exposed to an automatic export of American culture. Unconsciously you are seduced into their perceptions about personhood, family orientation, and community organisation to the very extent of economic and political theories. In my opinion, the dominant culture is characterised by competition, materialism, greed and individualism, often at the expense of the weak and vulnerable of society. Any critical voice that takes on such



a pervasive and entrenched worldview, demands astute awareness and courageous people. Such people should be persistent and stand up to say, 'this is not what life is all about!' Currently those voices are not given space because they are not commercially viable either for the media, markets or individuals who want to succeed in life. Therefore, the only way is to continuously and resiliently highlight the alternative perspective such as African Spiritual Consciousness.

4.3 PERSONAL LEADERSHIP MASTERY (INTERNAL DIMENSIONS)

4.3.1 The spiritual life dimension

In simple terms, being spiritual means being connected to something bigger than myself; something or someone that I depend on, engage with, get sustenance from, get formed and embraced by. In other words, there is a Being outside of myself who is greater and bigger than me and to whom I am connected. This Being is also the source of all things. My connection to this Being nurtures me, my family, my community as well as the inanimate aspects of creation. The essence of my spiritual life is the quality of my engagement with that Being as evidenced in the different aspects of my life. I believe that this engagement should be dynamic and consistently mirror the greatness of that Being. My relationship with this Supreme Being should also reflect their love for me, others and the world. For me, as a Christian, this Being is God. The Greeks call this Being 'the gods' whilst others call it a creative force in the world or the universal spirit. Being spiritual therefore is living in connection with God and that God in a Christian sense is manifest in Jesus Christ.

In practice, this connection (within the Christian framework) begins with the personal encounter that one has with God - a personal experience of this God who reveals himself continuously through history. In the person of Christ, we come to know His acceptance and love for us. In my opinion, when one encounters God and when God encounters us, it is an enlivening of the relationship rather than initiating it – because we are never out of relationship with God, our Source of Being. The relationship does exist, even when we are not aware of it, because it is our belief that we are connected and therefore we need God's sustenance. Methodists would call that prevenient grace - but fundamentally the relationship will exist between us and God and that relationship will manifest itself in how we relate to ourselves, with other



people, and with God. In addition, God, we believe, reveals Him- or Herself to us through encounters in our own personal lives that invites us into a direct, deliberate, intentional relationship with God. God is the source of and Sustainer of my life.

For me this encounter with God happened in the year 1984, where in my hour of need I encountered this God in what seemed ordinary as an experience. However, its symbolism and depth didn't escape my mind, didn't escape my soul – meeting God in that real sense of the One who cares enough to engage with me in a manner that cares for me. I grew to discover God is so intertwined with seeking to serve the world with justice and mercy. This sense of justice and fairness is deeply entrenched in the core belief that God is fundamentally love (which is much more than sentimentalism) and is radically committed to the well-being of me as a person and the whole world. The interesting thing for me is that experiencing God (Him or Her) through Jesus Christ; you are invited into a community form of existence. You go beyond yourself to experience all other people as brothers and sisters. These brothers and sisters are not necessarily blood relatives, but made so by the waters of our baptism.



This form of existence moves you from your individual world and deeply connects you with your family and relatives; your neighbours in your street; from your street to your block; from your block to your village; from your village to your nation; from your nation to the world – everybody becomes family. Through this expansive experience of being, you are able then to find that God is encompassing all of us. This expression takes shape as we encounter God more and see the best we can become in God and God calls us to that. At a spiritual level therefore, it is a journey to rediscover who I am at my best, through the eyes of Christ, who other people are through the eyes of Christ and how creation is at its best, through the eyes of Christ.

As I stated earlier my life has been influenced by the African, Judeo-Christian and western worldviews. I have grown to appreciate that as much as I value the sense of connectedness I experienced growing up, the Christian perspective has helped me to make a personal commitment to the fundamental truth about human existence. The issue of personal commitment and choice towards personal development is not a critical focus within the African perspective. My Christian upbringing, particularly



my Methodist tradition, lays substantial emphasis on personal commitment to revealed truth and personal responsibility in shaping my spirituality. I am also aware that personal responsibility and choice in this regard should not lead to individualistic tendencies but should be deeply entrenched in my experience of community.

At a community level, there are rituals and key moments that help us express our relationship with ourselves and with others and with God. Within the church environment, these rituals include baptisms, confirmations, and Holy Communion. The idea is that as a community we get together to celebrate the presence of God in our lives. The calling therefore is for us to get together in worship. In my African culture, there are also rituals that are essentially meant to nurture and reinforce the ideas and teachings, ethos, morals and ethics that are inspired by our connectedness to others, to ancestors and to God. Typical examples are the initiation rituals when girls and boys mature. The essence of this ritual is to mentor and coach the boys and girls into becoming men and women. When you get married, when you come of age, then you have those rituals that we perform. Some are done at ethnic level, some at a national level, and others at a clan level and maybe even some at a family level. These rituals teach us about our roots and culture as African people. The rituals are a particular art of community building that knit us together as a community.

During such rituals there is a lot of celebration, dancing, eating, drinking - through which you are constantly reminded you are not alone in your life's journey. Symbolically some of the food is taken to the centre of the family house (usually a thatched house at the centre of the homestead) to ensure that the ancestors (**abaphansi** – those beneath) participate in the meal – joining the living and the living dead. For instance, when a young man leaves home to seek employment in Johannesburg (or other bigger towns), there is a ceremony, we call **umsindleko**. This is a gathering of the family and people that have nurtured you, to wish you well and usher you into the next phase of your life. Through these rituals, the moral and ethical issues of personal and communal behaviour are reiterated with a particular emphasis on the connectedness of life.



My Christian experience has taught me the need to create personal spaces for reflection where I become consciously aware of God's presence and influence. Inadvertently, individual experiences and personal choice are not emphasised in African spirituality. Instead personal spirituality is located within community expressions of spirituality. The reality is, there is no distinction between life and spirituality in the African mind. I therefore think the Christian perspective brings into the discourse the need for personal responsibility in nurturing one's spirituality. In my experience I have become more intentional about creating and developing personal disciplines of prayer, reflective and meditative reading, and conversation about scripture, contemplation, quiet time and meditation. In both my African and Methodist tradition it is important that you balance personal acts of 'piety' and public acts of compassion.

4.3.1.1 Where would you locate and define the 'spirit'?

My understanding of God from my African mindset suggests that God is 'spirit' and this spirit exists everywhere – there are no time-space limits to the presence of God. The spirit of God is personal, communal and transcendent and manifests its essence as love in the private and public domains of my life. So there are no boundaries to being spiritual. This 'spirit' also holds all things together: it binds the community and challenges it to create space for the individual. In the individual, we find a different expression of the spirit. The spirit also manifests in my personal circumstances, embracing my personal questions, weaknesses, aspirations, dilemmas, hopes and every other aspect of my life. I believe that at the core of my existence resides the spirit of love. Sometimes when I interact with the world I experience the spirit as an unquenchable energy in others, as clarity of purpose or the questions that rise within me in silence.

The spirit also draws the personal and communal aspects of my life into constant conversation. Often when this dialogue between these aspects of my life happens, the spirit invites me to contrition and conversion. Conversion in my view is turning around to rediscover, with the essence of my being, love and reconnecting to the love of God. So I do not repent because I am a sinner but as an invitation to the very essence of my being - love. Sin in this regard is a reflection on how much I have



secluded myself from God and moved from the centre of my being, which is love. So the spirit exists as the love that constantly reveals to me how much love is still available out there and how much I have fallen short of reaching it. This is my interpretation of the classical Christian definition of sin as 'missing the mark of pure love'. In essence, this love is always inviting me to more.

I find the Christian concept of Trinity a very helpful way of thinking about my spiritual life. In the talk about the Trinity, reference is often made to the concept of divine *perichorosis*. This is the belief that there is a constant and dynamic outpouring of God the Father to the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Son to the Spirit and the Spirit to the Father. What this means is none of the aspects of God exists independently from the other. I believe that life is a constant outpouring of self within my personal life dimensions and the public spaces of family, community, family clan, politics and many other spaces of interaction. Life emerges as the essence of this dynamic interaction. The ultimate challenge is to constantly deepen one's experience of life – going beyond any philosophical pursuit to discover the unfolding depths of love.

4.3.1.2 What is the purpose and function of being spiritual?

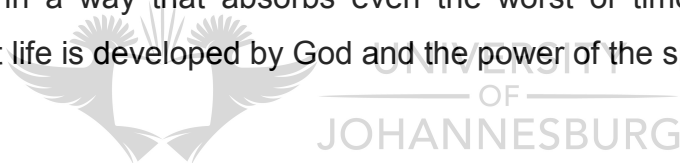
In the traditional African sense of being, you do not do things because of their results but because they are inherently good. Therefore, the concepts of function and purpose allude to a functionary understanding of life. Spirituality, in my view connects us to an ever-deepening relationship with life as mediated by the existence of God. It seeks to remind us in a profound way how we are connected to one another (not as mere things to be tolerated) but in a way that transcends all the things that separates us and the camouflages that make us feel different. Such a connection leads to solidarity with all people – solidarity with their pain, their fears, longings, and aspirations.

In the Xhosa tradition there is a saying that goes, '**ngumntu lo**' literally meaning 'this is a person'. When someone says these words, they are inviting you to see the other person as sharing the same existential realities with you. Therefore, when you say **ngumntu lo**, you are affirming the person's innate dignity. For instance when someone is being violated or oppressed or even literally being beaten up, when someone walks into the situation and says '*stop doing that, ngumntu lo!*' they are



actually inviting you to recognise the person's humanity beyond the perceived wrongs. The statement also affirms the reality that all human beings experience the same feelings.

In conclusion, there is also a danger we often overlook when talking about spirituality – the individualisation of spirituality. When spirituality becomes an individualised enterprise (that is, it is no longer based on the principle of the interconnectedness of life) it has the potential to create disharmony, exploitation, domination, and competition. When spirituality fails to connect us, it becomes an abstract and escapist endeavour that only serves to stroke the individual's ego. It is almost like what Karl Marx calls utopia and the essence of his famous dictum 'religion as the opium of the poor'. Furthermore, my spirituality enables me to deal with the extremes of life – be it extreme joy or pain. Spirituality gives me the capacity to absorb the worst and the best of life and still be convinced of its essential goodness. In the worst moments, I can go beyond mere optimism to hopeful living, because I am connected to life in a way that absorbs even the worst of times. I believe such hopefulness about life is developed by God and the power of the spirit.



4.3.2 The Emotional Life Dimension

4.3.2.1 Describe what you understand about emotions from an African perspective?

I feel, I laugh, I cry, I get sad and I get angry. All these realities are true for my life. I believe how I feel is mediated by both universal existential realities and circumstances. For instance, if I prick your finger with a needle, you do not need to be told that it is painful. If I prick you without warning, you feel the sting more; but if I go to the doctor to test for diabetes, I will feel the pain with a different response. This is due to the fact that the doctor will prepare me for the moment. Although this is a simple illustration, it suggests that emotions are not entirely neutral, they are affected by universal factors, circumstances, perceptions, and how we frame reality. Having said that, I believe that in the past 200 years of human evolution, the world has sought to create a dispassionate society - the desire to make people feel less and understand more. People like Socrates are known for dismissing human emotions and making them look suspect. A story is told that when Socrates was on his



deathbed and his daughter cried he asked people to take her out because she was making him weak. This led people to believe that emotions could not be trusted.

I am constantly learning to acknowledge my emotions and use my spirituality to control and use them in ways that enhance life rather than diminish it. This includes how I deal with my emotions, be it pain or anger. Often I try to go behind the emotion and seek to know the basis of that particular hurt or any other emotion. My spirituality also grows my awareness of the ego self at play in my expression of emotions. The challenge is that when I do not give careful attention to my emotions they can control my behaviour. For instance, I will express my anger in destructive ways. Sometimes I also feel weak and go through what *St John of the Cross* called 'the dark night of the soul'. These are the moments of spiritual and emotional agony. Understanding my emotion within that darkness comes as an illumination that draws me to the light of God which reveals the emotional danger zones that need transformation. On the other hand, there are times when I certainly feel in tune with my emotions – I can feel my anger, know my pain, and feel my joy. At such times, I feel more in control of my circumstances. I think the goal of emotional leadership is to be emotionally in tune with self and others.

In my opinion, dealing with emotions begins with self-knowledge. Self-knowledge helps one to deal with the false self that make us want to be better than others. Most of us grow up with the idea that we have to justify our existence and project ourselves as different and distinguished. The need to be different to others, better than others, makes us pay a heavy emotional premium throughout our lives. I have stopped looking for the illusion of perfection, but I search for the dream of love. The dream of love is to develop self-knowledge, self-love, the love of others and creation. These things teach us to respect life and understand our own emotions better. Emotional alertness is nurtured through retreating to reflect on one's emotions. When I am emotionally alert I have a clear sense of the moments where I tighten up, become impatient, and then I stop to listen to myself and others. One writer suggests that emotions need not be removed, but you learn to dance with them – creatively managing them. Marcus Aurelius once said "I respect a man who can master his environment but I respect a man more if he can master his internal environment."



Emotional intelligence is the outcome of constantly practising habits that deepen your emotional awareness and control.

4.3.2.2 How has your African upbringing helped you better understand yourself as an emotional being?

As children we were discouraged from expressing feelings of weakness. For instance, when a man would cry as an expression of pain, the men around him would say '**yiba yindoda**' (become a man!). The implication is, men are supposed to endure the pain and sometimes pretend that pain does not exist. Sometimes, there was a disconnection between expressing emotions and what needed to be done in a situation. There were times when we had to ignore our feelings and do the task at hand. On the other hand, women are allowed to express emotions especially pain - for instance, crying and weeping during bereavement. This 'gendered' approach towards emotions is true for most women in African cultures.

At another level, views about emotions were quite ambivalent. There were times when, as a boy, when you cried you would be called a sissy. At other times emotions like anger were encouraged and said to portray masculinity, and were used in defence of the community. In reflection I think as men we were not allowed to clearly express both positive and negative emotions equally. In general, I repeatedly heard that great men do not wear their anger on their sleeves – 'real men don't show their anger'. So it was difficult to discern which emotions were acceptable and which were not. I think the lack of a coherent approach towards emotions still persists in many African communities.

At a practical level, we were taught that in order to make good decisions you don't need to be emotional. Kings, for example, were judged by their ability to keep their composure even during difficult issues and circumstances. If they felt emotional about the situation, they would postpone judgement and come back when they had cleared their mind about the situation. Such kings were deemed to be wise, because they managed their emotions well. The clear thing is that kings were expected to be compassionate in their judgement. I can conclude that there is no consistent



teaching on understanding and managing emotions within the African mindset. This is an avenue for further engagement by scholars.

4.3.3 The physical dimension

4.3.3.1 What do you understand physical well-being to be?

I understand my physical well-being as the ability to keep my body healthy enough to perform its functions at a level that maximises the flexibility of my limbs; a way that also enhances my personal well-being and enables me to contribute positively to the lives of those around me. This should lead to optimal functioning within the limitations of my physical body and gifts. It is therefore vital for me to keep my body healthy.

4.3.3.2 How did you develop that perception of the body?

I never received any clear teaching on how to grow and nurture my body except that we grew up playing sports and walked long distances for a number of reasons. We walked to school, to fetch water and sometimes to town. Out of necessity, our bodies had exercise in doing the daily tasks at home and within the community. We also got training from the physical education we received at school. What also contributed to our physical fitness was the amount of manual work we had to do at home, like cleaning the yard, constructing a house, or restoring a fallen wall and other such tasks. All I remember from my childhood were cautions about avoiding sickness rather than developing a healthy lifestyle.

4.3.3.3 Would you say there is a particular African approach to how you view your body?

I think different cultures in Africa have different views on the human body. Some cultures allow piercing of the body while others do not believe in piercing (and tattoos) as a sense of reverence to its sacred nature. It is a fair generalisation to say most African cultures view the human body as a sacred entity. The body is the temple of the Lord. Underlying this notion is the belief that “**umzimba wakho**” (your body) is the best gift you have and it needs to be treated as a gift and respected.



There was a clear sense then that certain body parts (both male and female) would symbolise certain things and needed to be treated with respect.

4.3.3.4 Are there any dietary and other means in the African culture that help the body to function optimally?

It is difficult to speak of a specific diet within African culture, as most food choices are linked to specific geographic areas and cultural groupings. Sometimes choices depended on what was available in that community and what the family could afford. Growing up, my diet included a bit of protein (meat in particular) and ‘**umifino**’ (green vegetables) as these were planted in gardens within the community. We also ate what is called ‘**umphokoco**’ (refined mealies cooked and taken with milk). We had access to fruits from neighbouring communities, and as a community we were also close to the sea, so had access to fish.

There were times when we were denied certain foods as children. I am not sure whether it was just economics or whether those foods would make us susceptible to certain diseases. The interesting realisation for me is that (although not formally researched) it seems that our parents and grandparents suffered less from hypertension, diabetes and heart problems than we do. I think our food choices are poorer than theirs, and our levels of physical activity are lower than theirs. Even their cooking methods and the amount of flavouring were different. It seems to me that some of their decisions on food were a lot more health conscious.

Apart from the food, it seems our parents and grandparents had a better balance between work and rest. In addition, in our fast-paced world there is a lot more work and intrusion into personal spaces and less physical activity. For instance when we came back from church on Sundays we spent the afternoon sitting under trees relaxing and having conversations. I think such activities contributed to lower stress levels and better health. In context, there were no deadlines to chase – people worked hard and recuperated as they needed to.

In addition, Africans give a lot of value to allowing the body to heal itself. Healing aids were often recommended when the body was resisting healing itself. In such



circumstances certain plants and trees were used to heal particular ailments. There is a spiritual interpretation of ailments that goes beyond the physical understanding of the body. In the African mind, sickness is not only about the physical, but also about your surroundings and your connection to your family, community, ancestors and God. For example, if you had a wound, you would be told to clean it, if you had a headache, you would be told to take a purgative route to clean the system. Sometimes induced vomiting or a certain type of food would be advised as a means of getting rid of bodily excesses. In essence, illness is never disconnected from external realities of the individual.

4.3.3.5 It is interesting that you speak of disease or illness as an interconnected thing....

There are layers about that in the African mind. There is no sickness that is merely physical – it has layers of interpretation. Something may be physical but it could point to other aspects of your life that are out of balance – often pointing to something outside your body - perhaps an imbalance between you and your family, or you and your ancestors, and so on. If a link from the connectedness of life is broken, it needs to be fixed. Therefore, healing might include something to deal with your physical ailment and rituals to bring that balance back between you and your family or your ancestors. From a physical well-being perspective, your body is an avenue that both reveals the stability of your connected life as well as being the avenue for the expression of what might be wrong.

Obviously, the weakness of the African perspective is the lack of knowledge on the biological and scientific mechanics of the body. For example, someone might have cancer, which is something in the mechanics of the body, and would treat it as if it is simply an indicator of discord in our other relationships – I might have excellent relationships, but this does not immunise me from cancer. The African mind does not necessarily give due regard to the mechanical operation of the body. That being said, we need to learn that there is a link between my mechanical body and how I live my life and the circumstances thereof. The more disconnected I feel, the more my body is vulnerable to disease; the happier I am, the less susceptible to diseases – and this enables my body to respond resiliently in different situations. Fundamentally, the African mind invites us to view the body as part of the bigger



whole that is affected and it also affects the other parts of the whole - and how this happens is part of the continued journey in discovering the unity of the whole.

4.3.4 The mental life dimension

4.3.4.1 How do you understand mental well-being?

Mental wellbeing for me is the capacity to think, and this does not merely mean thinking to confirm what has been given, but to critically engage it. My challenge in defining this is also the fact that even the very language in which we are framing these concepts is western. Nevertheless, my view on mental well-being means the ability to make sense of life, to engage life and to ask questions of life and existence. This capacity has been given to all human beings, and it is what distinguishes human beings (to some extent) from animals – essentially, because we have the capacity to interpret experiences and learn from them through engaging them. In my own upbringing, I learned that the ability to engage critically with the key issues of what makes us human and what makes life 'life', or the search for meaning(s) are a given for all of us. In my current perspective (which is a mixture of African and western), I have learned that in order to understand life, we seek to apply our minds as rational beings. We do this without idolising rationality of thought but holding a good tension between the rational and the mystery of life. To keep mystery as part of our journey enables us to be humble enough to know that we are unable to know everything. In Socrates' words 'I am wise because I know that I know very little'. Holding this perspective taught me openness to learning without claiming absolute knowledge of things. It also taught me the curiosity to penetrate life with questions and continue to ask questions about my assumptions.

4.3.4.2 In the African way of life, are there many pointers how people are taught to take care of or nurture the mind?

The compartmentalisation of life is not the natural African expression of life. The African mind, from my perspective, uses a narrative pattern of thought. We tell stories about what wisdom is, and through these stories values and teachings are being carried through generations of people and cultures. Through images, metaphors and aphorisms imbongis (poets) would celebrate community strength or call into question those in authority. Sometimes teaching happens through



participation in community rituals, meant as means of communicating cultural truth and human values of dignity. Family life was also an important medium of instruction. As boys, we were taught within the family how to plant and do carpentry and many other handy jobs. Within the community, people would be recognised for their area of excellence almost as we do with certificates in our formal education system. Within the community, there will be skilled farmers, and teachers (who taught culture and history). Whatever you wanted to learn within the community, there would emerge an individual to guide you in that discipline, because the community knew the skills that were available within the community.

I should say though that, in terms of methods of thinking, I do not remember ever being given a lesson on the art of rhetoric or the art of argumentation. Most of the learning was experiential, often without structure. Issues of allegory, drama, irony, and how to tell a story were learned in practice without labelling them as such. I had informal exposure in the method of thinking always communicated in the community.

Like in other cultures there are words in African culture (like **ukuphambana** in Xhosa) used to define the people who fail to think coherently. You can call it mental illness. **Ukuphambana** in its fundamental sense means the person is not in touch with reality and is unable to link consistently with reality. There is also, what in the western context is called altered states of consciousness, which for us is basically accessing the reality beyond the comprehensible. It seems to me that there is an open gate between this life and the next. This space is accessed through dreams, visions and through certain rituals used by African healers. The African mind does not reject that which is mystical and inaccessible within the limits of the physical mind. So African healers help us receive messages and views from beyond reality. Sometimes this takes the healer to connect with that reality through means of going into a trance and particular habits that attune with that reality. Often the messages received are in service of the greater good.

It is interesting to me that there is a recent spurge of movies that are beginning to explore the world of magic and the afterlife or 'beyond reality' experiences. Movies like ***Here and After*** and ***Harry Potter*** suggests to me that the West is beginning to embrace the reality of what we see and can know. This brings me to the conviction



that as there are internet airwaves around us, there is also more that is going on with life than meets the physical eye. In the African mind, this is critical, as it humbles us to know that all truth and reality are partial. There is always something deeper than what we see and the ability to access that is a gift from God. In our modern context, we are also beginning to hear people speak more of words like intuition, as a way of connecting with that which is beyond the physical reality.

4.3.4.3 *What are the great lessons from Africa on mental wellbeing?*

It is clear to me that from an African perspective the mind cannot be treated as the absolute arbiter of reality. There are facts that the mind does not understand, but that does not mean you discount them. The mind has its limits! Like in any form of knowledge system, African thought also has irrational episodes that can only be interpreted by history. The mind is also connected to that bigger expression of life and it contributes to the totality of experience and life. Again, the mind in the African sense does not perform its function for its own sake – it is always the servant of the greater good. Therefore pursuit of knowledge, understanding and new discoveries, are linked to how that serves humanity. Lastly, in the African mind there is a deep humility and openness because there is a deep appreciation of the mystery aspects of life. This inability to fathom and understand all, creates the possibility for being wrong and open to correction. I believe that the African mind is more inclined towards consensus with other minds than competition with them. The importance of dialogue in the African context is based on this reality. Mental well-being, therefore, is openness to growth and changing your mind for the better.

4.4 THE INTERPERSONAL LEADERSHIP (The Social Life Dimension)

4.4.1 Please describe leadership in your social life dimension

In a very minimalistic sense, within the African worldview, there is no existence outside the social domain. I do not regard myself as existing outside of my social network. The popular maxim is ‘**umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu**’. I think the worst punishment anyone can get in life is not death but social exclusion. There is no construct outside the social construct – you exist because others exist. Being a social being is a fact in the African mind. When you experience bereavement, for instance, the whole community gathers around you because you are one of them.



For instance, women leave their homes and spend the whole time with you to help during that time. When your child excels, the whole community comes and celebrates with you.

The only way I can understand myself is through how I relate with other people. Any measurement used to evaluate your worth and your value as a human being, is located not in the individualistic sense of personal mastery that elevates you out of the community, but within the community. I am measured through the question, 'how do I relate to others?' The greatest compliment you can get is when people say, **ngumntu lo! ke motho!** (This is a person!). In this compliment is embedded the idea that you have lived your life in a harmonious encouragement and transforming experience with other people. Individualistic achievements are not the core definer of a meaningful life, but how the achievements are used to enhance other human beings. If I have cows, money, food, and skills and no one benefits from that, then I am less human. I am measured by how I add value to others.

In essence, the best way I can define myself is in the 'we' – how I live my life in a way that contributes to the broader community. I am at my best when I express myself in a way that adds value to my community. Of course, the challenge is how, as an individual, I get space to be an individual within the community. This for me, and I guess most African people, is a difficult thing to balance. The danger is when the individual is totally subsumed into the collective and cannot find individual expression. As an individual, I am given space within the community to find myself in order to contribute to my community. The mere mention of my name reminds me of my relationship with my family, my community, and my clan. There is no space for me to develop myself in a way that dislocates me from my family and community. Personal interests almost take second place in my order of priority. The quality of strength, intelligence, wisdom, and abilities are not measured as personal properties but by the extent to which they add value to the community. This is a major deviation from western culture as popularly known. In the western world, the more the individual stands out, the more they are celebrated. I should add that individualism in the west is probably about 400 years old, possibly born out of the Reformation.



I have to say that in the modern world it is difficult to speak of a purely African worldview or western worldview, since our modern world cultures have affected each other. There is no doubt in my mind that the world has been heavily influenced by the individualistic view of life. For instance, the construct of our conversation begins with the personal, and moves into the interpersonal and professional dimensions; the underlying belief is that the personal is the foundation of all. Therefore, the image of the individual as the ideal is heavy in our consciousness. In my experience, most of our language and concepts are dominated by western language, almost to the extent that I have to think in a western frame of mind in order to express myself well in the social space. From my school days, I had to read *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, Kant, and Descartes amongst others – even the construct of our frame of reference for our conversation is English. Our dialogue with the world is skewed towards the west. The dominance by the west does not only happen with language but with culture and how we perceive ourselves as social beings. I personally cannot think in a purely African perspective.

A typical example in popular culture would be an interview between Oprah Winfrey and Nelson Mandela. In the interview Oprah kept on insisting on talking about Nelson Mandela, the individual, and Mandela always made his point of reference the collective people of South Africa, in particular the African National Congress as the abode of his heroism. Oprah wanted Mandela to individually accept credit (and be the exception) for the peaceful transition in South Africa and yet Mandela perceived himself as part of the whole. Nelson Mandela in his own mind is part of the collective. Oprah on the other hand struggled to comprehend how Mandela could not own his personal contribution to the struggle. For me that is the essence of an African understanding of life. Actually, Mandela as an individual had to be formed by the collective that included communists and trade unionists – he was somehow forced to transcend being a nationalist and being a Xhosa man, in order to become the person we now know as a hero. To be frank, Mandela had to deal with his own bigotry and transcend it. In my view, it is the ‘movement’ that produced Mandela; yet from the western perspective it is the individual who changes the world – i.e. it is Woodrow Wilson, Winston Churchill, and Mahatma Ghandi who changed the world. In truth, to treat individuals as heroes becomes a major distortion of history and this is true of South African history – it is bigger than Mandela.



Our dependence on oral tradition and the lack of African literature means we are dependent on literature that celebrates the individual more than the collective. It is critical that African people begin writing stories, poetry and drama that will give the African mind a point of reference for debate and conversation about human identity. This conversation should include how we understand personal and professional leadership from an African mindset. The challenge with the ubuntu concept of being also has its own limitation, which often finds expression in ethnic identity. This leads to a limited sense of identity - when resources become an issue, identity becomes limited. Ubuntu can be limited by those who seek to protect resources. As human beings, when we compete for resources, we narrow our definition of humanity. For instance, in Rwanda when resources became an issue, people stopped being human and became Hutus and Tutsis. This means that we need to always be careful of how we live with each other.

4.4.1.1 Therefore, what is relationship mastery?

The concept of mastery is one of those slippery notions, which I am a bit hesitant to use. The beauty of relationship comes from its unpredictability and messiness. I do not think you can master how we relate with one another. There are no guarantees - my wife may wake one day and think 'I thought I knew him...maybe I married the wrong person'. There are moments when relationships are thrown into chaos. The extreme in African culture has been to structure relationship into a definite hierarchy that defines the role of the man, woman, wife, cousin, children, and the expected relational codes. Therefore, there would be specific 'rules' of behaviour.

Relationship mastery is about opening up oneself to the contradictions that exist in relating to people. I can never predict or control how the other person relates to me. For me the bottom line is 'don't kill!' - meaning 'do not destroy life'. This goes beyond physically destroying life but doing anything that takes away from the integrity of life. We can live in a society that does not kill, but still destroys life through unjust systems that do not enhance the life of others. Mastery for me therefore means developing the patience and capacity to deal with the daily contradictions of life (or relating with people) and still contribute positively towards others. This might in some instances include dealing with my disappointments with the others. It also means



living in a dynamic relationship with others that anticipates the best of others. It further means developing self-awareness that allows me to live dynamically with people in a way that reminds them who they are at their best and who they can still become. You do not master relationships by control, but by dynamically managing the nuances of living in relationship.

4.4.1.2 How does African consciousness influence relationships in the workplace?

For me the concept of **ubuntu** fundamentally cuts across the dislocation that creates workers and customers and treats people as people. In our current workplace, people are treated as functionaries who are selling a service in order to receive an outcome (money). Therefore, there is no sense of connectedness to the basic humanity of people. The African perspective says to me that my fundamental dignity should be valued, whether I am a sweeper of the floor or CEO – seeing all people as sharing the same primary values, and bringing the human face to the workplace. If you begin looking at people as people in the workplace, you will understand how a person who comes to work in a taxi differs from one who drives a few minutes to work. You begin to think about their work, their families and the circumstances that influence their productivity. As the person becomes a fuller person – with a family, hopes, fears, dreams and weaknesses and strengths, the workplace will become healthier. Leadership from an African perspective means embracing the person as a whole in every situation.

4.5 PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

4.5.1 The Career or Vocational life Dimension

4.5.1.1 How do you understand your vocational life dimension as an African person?

From an African perspective, what I do is derived from who I am – who I am influences what I do. In a sense, what I do becomes an extension of the self in the context of community. My being calls out what I am supposed to do as a vocational choice. Diviners, for instance, receive their calling through visions, voices and dreams and they respond by going through initiation. You seek to do what you believe is your role in the community, which in some cases, emerges as you are channelled towards by your experiences within the community. There are also



people, like kings, who by virtue of birth are expected to take up certain responsibilities within the community. There is also the issue of discovering your talent. Your talent indicates to you what you should do. Some people are good with farming - rearing plants and cattle. Discovering your calling happens in a number of ways, including personal experiences, conversation, practice of certain arts, experience with God (and/or ancestors) and other people noticing and affirming your gifts and talents. Once you discover your calling, you are then encouraged to pursue it. If someone has a gift of poetry, they will be given space in community functions to perform as a way of nurturing and growing their talent.

There is a hierarchical progression of developing your talent. Diviners, for instance, are taken into a school as initiates (**umkhwetha**) and once they pass that stage they are given a mentor as they start their practice. Your growth within a vocation is engendered, encouraged, and kept within the discipline of that particular school. For me this is similar to the Judeo-Christian perspective of nurturing prophets, and how I discovered my own vocation. At another level, vocation within the African mindset was never seen as a means of providing a livelihood; nor was it seen as a process of accumulation. It was rarely linked to material gain – it was always about service. In my community good traditional doctors would not charge for the services rendered – they would send you away to first experience the healing or resolution of your problem, and then you would come and give them something in gratitude. Any doctor who would require payment upfront would be regarded as a sham.

The commoditisation of services is a modern phenomenon that has taken away the view that work was meant for the greater good of society. No painter or poet was paid; their gifts were for the community, and the community supported and celebrated them. Individuals did not feel the need to commodify their service to community, as the community had a way of making sure that no one went hungry. As a general ethic, everyone within the community was expected to do their share of responsible work to create a sustainable community. Individuals were encouraged to learn and develop skills. Often during public events, people were encouraged to display their particular gifts – be they artistic gifts, such as dance and music, or any other trade. Once the skill was recognised the community had the responsibility of giving them the space to perform.



If by any chance someone had misfortune and lost their means of livelihood, the community came around them to help them restart their life by loaning (or giving) cattle and land for them to restart their life. There was an underlying economic activity that provided security for all people. Somehow, the culture also provided means for accountability to the whole in terms of your contribution. It is unfortunate that this view of vocation does not overtly inform the current workplace, as it promises a better economic view of the world. In the current worldview, I think economics no longer serve the politics of the world – instead politics serves economics. Those with money inform what needs to be done economically. Bill Clinton was credited with the statement that 'it's all in the economy'. Education, health and entertainment, amongst others, are determined by those who run the big companies that regulate policy and sharing of the world economic resources. Talent, vocation, and skills are merely being sold as items of the economy.

Our modern culture is characterised by competition, climbing the pyramid and satisfying the pyramid creators, unaccountable business leaders, presidents using dodgy rhetoric to avoid reality and truth, materialism and greed. In such a world vocation becomes a selfish pursuit that is disconnected from the social setting of people and serving the greater good. The danger with such a culture is that money eventually runs out of things to buy, and that leaves the individual empty. The African culture with its nuances promises a co-operative existence and a fair sharing of the world's resources.

4.5.2 The Financial life dimension

4.5.2.1 How would you describe your financial life dimension?

I prefer to use the word resources rather than financial well-being. For me there is a distinction between money and resources. In the African sense, any person (especially men) within the community had to have means of providing for their family. Women (except where they were queens and took leadership in the public domain) were often subjected to the patriarchal nature of the culture, so they could not actively participate economically. Actually, they were treated as minors – to be taken care of. Individuals needed to be able to provide sustainable food, shelter,



cattle, land, and other forms of resources. So each person needed to work hard to earn their own living. For instance if you did not have cattle in the community you needed to work hard to buy some as a sign of wealth and provision for the future. In the case where someone went through a difficult time, the community (your clan) would give you a cow and a goat or two to rear – not to eat.

When you got married as a young man you were often given a cow or two with the clear instruction to only use the milk and not to slaughter the cow. This was seen as an investment in helping you set up your home as a man. The underlying belief was that nobody in the family and community had to be dependent but everyone needs to have means for a sustainable livelihood. Accumulation of wealth was never high as a motif within the African culture. As a result, when you had reared enough cattle, you could slaughter some and celebrate life as a community. Sometimes, you would give them away to the less fortunate within that community or within your own clan. In Africa you were never measured by how much you have, but by your ability to share with others. For instance, when my grandfather would make us work in his orchard for the whole year, he would harvest his fruits and share with the neighbours. So he would fill buckets and send us to a couple of homes around the community. It seems to me that sharing is a means of securing one's future. In a community you are not expected to take away and be a burden, but to add synergistically to create greater life within the society.

In our current context money has become important for its own sake. It has become the primary motivator in life. This is a challenge for our society which has an insatiable appetite for money. Money has its own place in my life and I believe for everyone. What I try to live towards is that the money that I make or earn becomes a means to an end, rather than the goal. I have to buy food, shelter, clothes, a car and other necessities of my life. The ultimate challenge is to balance my ability to work and share my resources, and still take care of myself and my family. As a person I am very conscious of the fact that our culture idolises individual success – individuals who accumulate shine beyond the rest of society. That for me is the essence of individualism and materialism.



Each moment I try and work against the culture that emphasises individualism and the elements of globalisation that are seeking to silence the alternative voices of African values. The truth is, I don't see McDonalds at the corner on my street, but I see it every day in my house through my television. This is how my culture is being silenced by dominant voices which make it irrelevant economically. In a nutshell, I believe that money should serve my basic needs and the needs of the greater good of my family and community.

4.5.3 The ecological life dimension

4.5.3.1 Please tell me about leadership within your ecological life dimension....

Some wisdom literature purports that we wake up, eat, sleep and die – a scenic view towards reality. According to Marcus Aurelius, we are tiny and minute, mere human beings with limited time-spans – for instance I might live up to 80 or 90 years within a time space of billions of years. On the other hand, I can think of myself as someone who makes a difference and changes the world – my time and space matters. From this perspective, I choose to die to myself or experience rebirth as a way of learning to become a deeper human being. Through this self-transformation, I learn to go beyond my assumptions and presumptions and develop new ways of being human. At a personal level, I see myself as someone on a journey of constant engagement, questioning, transformation, seeking the best and seeking to evolve into higher and deeper states of being. The challenge often is that as you pursue this journey you discover there is a lot to learn in terms of self-knowledge and growth.

I see myself as a connected being - connected to other human beings. From a family level to absolute strangers (e.g. the person in China/India who made the jersey I am wearing), I ask myself the question: how do I engage in a way that transforms their own journey? The challenge in our generation is the commoditisation of relationships – the measurement of human relationships in monetary terms. Yet in reality, my mere warmth this winter is linked to someone across the globe who has dreams and hopes. Maybe this person has a dignified job or is exploited in order to bring me warmth. My hope is that in life between birth and death, I can encounter people and people can encounter me as a sacred being. We need to encounter people in a deepening and transforming way; experience our sacred inner space/ lived reality in



a way that transcends cultural orientation, our need for comfort, our need to consume and our need to relate to people in terms of what they can do for us.

My hope for our generation is that we bequeath a legacy that adds value to what we have received from previous generations; a value that transcends the finite limitations of life and leaves a legacy that deepens and enriches the experience and understanding of the infinite life in a tangible and valuable way. Ecologically this forces us to co-exist with other parts of life and existence. This means that I stop viewing other parts of life as meant for my consumption and personal entertainment – because such an attitude is exploitative of people and other forms of life.

4.5.3.2 How does being African influence this view?

This is for me a bit difficult to explain, because one would need to compare with, say Greek, Indian or the western evolution of cultures. In African culture, there is a close connection between human beings and nature. This is often illustrated by the way in which particular clans use certain animals as part of their clan symbols or praises. Within the African culture, there is a sacred relationship between people, animals, mountains, trees, and rivers. As people, we are meant to nurture this relationship. Furthermore, Africans in my grandfather's generation did not value accumulation as does our modern generation. Animals were reared for both multiplication and slaughtering in community functions – they were sometimes given away (or loaned) to others in need. In African culture the ecosystem needs to be sustained as nature and humans are interdependent. This does not mean there was a highly evolved theory of climate change, i.e. global warming issues, deforestation, and desertification had not evolved in theory. Theories are a phenomenon of our time. On the other hand, land was rotated for cropping and animals were treated with respect – if the land was over-used and the water resources were threatened, they moved to another location.

The African perspective consists of basic spiritual, religious, sacred, and practical principles that sustained the whole ecosystem. A typical example is the clan name 'umajola' which is a name given to a particular snake that would come to the homestead around childbirth. This snake would sneak to the place where the child is

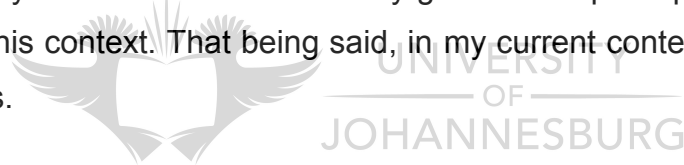


and enfold the child and leave after some time. The presence of this snake meant that the ancestors have come around to accept the child and embrace it as their own. For me such stories and particular African myths that carry the same symbolism signify the interconnectedness of reality and life.

4.6 FINDING THE PIPL LIFE BALANCE

4.6.1 How do you, as an African person, work towards balance within your personal, interpersonal, and professional life dimensions?

Just thinking about your question, I do not see myself as a purely African exhibit. I am a coming together of the African, Judeo-Christian, western and other models and ways of existence. Some of my ways of existence are relatively foreign to the African perspective and mind. My life and sense of being is located in a rushed, very activity-oriented society - in a results-driven and purpose searching kind of life. Therefore, I do not respond to you as an African exhibit or expert. Probably 10% of my daily activities and reality still resonate with how my grandfather perhaps lived his life and found balance in his context. That being said, in my current context I find balance in the following ways.



At a personal level, I allocate time: to myself; time to pray; time for family, friends, and colleagues; and time to read. My personal time includes time for entertainment, such as movies (when I have the money), jazz festivals, theatre shows and time I spend in my own company. The time I spend in my own company allows me to be with myself and God in prayer. My prayer includes moments of silence where I can deeply connect with God. Sometimes I have extended times, where I can retreat for days to be alone and with God. These are the places where I draw strength. The combination of these becomes what I call 'time for self'. I also enjoy reading. I make it a habit to choose healthy reading material, which allows me to feed my mind, and opens me to new possibilities of being.

In my personal space, I seek to find balance through creating a healthy distance between what I do and who I am. I separate what I do and the results thereof. In the context of the work that I do, I release what I do as a preacher and its influence on the listeners into the hands of God. I express myself through what I do – but it does



not define who I am. As a person, I am much bigger than what I do; I am a social being with a family, friends, and colleagues. I love Orlando Pirates Football Club, rugby and have a keen interest in justice issues. My sense of self-awareness helps me to know that what I do has an impact on others. As a social being, the time I spend with family and friends is for reflection, fun, and support, although sometimes there is no healthy balance between the dimensions. The balance challenge is not only experienced in the internal and social life dimensions but in the vocational and financial dimensions as well. Especially in the financial life dimension, we live with the illusion of balance, yet only managing debt. In the bigger scheme of things, the challenge is to keep our levels of consumerism in check! Keeping my consumerism in check saves me from the illusion and seduction of credit.

As a professional person, I have connection with friends and colleagues who support me. I also see myself as a contributor to those around me rather than being in competition. When I am at work, I seek to add value. When a colleague does not perform well, it does not only say something about them, but also about me. So I do my part to develop my professional skills and those of my colleagues. Ultimately, for me, balance is a very dynamic feature that needs to be constantly worked on. The nurturing of one's personal life and professional life should never be done in isolation from the community. The community is the location of being. I exist because I am connected!

4.6.2 What can an African perspective on leadership mastery offer?

I think if we work towards an African leadership development framework, we can achieve a number of things. My major criticism of the current worldview and perspective on leadership is that it leads to compartmentalisation, commoditisation, specialisation, and dislocation. When we separate what people do from the rest of who they are, we risk treating them as commodities. When we define a few set of roles and career specialties, we run the risk of only defining people by what they do. In essence, what they do then becomes their access to life and relationships. The quest for specialisation ignores the underlying qualities of being human that can never be reduced to compartments or a few dimensions. The negative result of all these problems is that people become dislocated from the completeness of life.



The ethical dilemmas of our current context are a result of the failure to treat people holistically and teach them that behaviour should be congruent whether they are within a system or at home. The promise of African Spiritual Consciousness in leadership is that people can begin to value the essentials of life in the values of ubuntu, harmony, co-operation and collective growth and development. A leadership development framework based on these values will certainly provide resources for PIPL mastery that values the connectedness of life.

4.7 CRITIQUE OF THE PIPL PERSPECTIVE

I want to acknowledge that I have not engaged the PIPL perspective fully, but within the few weeks of the conversation, I like the fact that it seems to provide a holistic approach. It moves us beyond seeing leaders as functionaries and locates them within the broad framework of life. In my sense, it begins to connect with the African concept of **'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'**. For me the eight life dimensions should be treated as a framework for engagement rather than compartments of being, because that is contrary to African consciousness. As a person, I always carry with me my personal experiences and my social experiences each time I encounter the world. Leadership therefore should encompass how I relate with my whole world. I think the perspective offers a dynamic approach to engaging leadership in our current context. Life in the African sense is dynamic and open, so it is vital to keep that sense of openness.

SECTION C

MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA

This section includes chapters 5 and 6 in which I cover the following:

*In **Chapter 5** I **firstly** review leadership theories that inform current leadership research and practice. **Secondly**, I discuss the presuppositions of the PIPL perspective from a cross-section of disciplines that underpin its anthropological, ontological, teleological and phenomenological framework. **Thirdly**, I examine the African philosophical, religious and phenomenological conceptions of personhood that inform African Spiritual Consciousness. In **concluding** the chapter, I link current research on human consciousness research to ASC and offer a tentative conceptualisation of ASC within the PIPL perspective as suggested by the literature review.*

*In **Chapter 6** I discuss the process of noticing and thinking about the themes that emerge from Muzi's story. I discuss how I categorised these themes using the PIPL framework and the grounded theory analysis technique. After identifying the critical themes I substantiate them with findings from the literature review.*

"One is fully conscious when he or she is the result of having been informed and instructed by the experience of his or her ancestors. And to use that knowledge to master, understand and become able to create institutions that allow him or her to live in harmony with the rest of nature and the universe."

Professor James Small



CHAPTER 5

LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The key focus of this chapter is the conceptualisation of African Spiritual Consciousness (ASC) within the Personal, Interpersonal and Professional Leadership (PIPL) perspective. This aim is achieved through conducting a review of current and relevant literature in the fields of Psychology, Anthropology, African Philosophy, Leadership and Management. Fink (1998, p.3) defines a literature review as “a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting the existing body of recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners”. Mouton (2001, p.87) proposes the following reasons for doing a literature review: (i) to ensure that one does not merely duplicate a previous study; (ii) to discover most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject; (iii) to find out the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study; (iv) to identify the available instrumentation that proved validity and reliability and; (v) to ascertain the most widely accepted definitions of key concepts in the field.

This chapter is divided into nine sections. The **first section (5.1)** is a brief overview of the leadership theories that inform current leadership research and practice. Leadership challenges in our emergent context and their implications for future leadership are discussed. The **second section (5.2)** discusses the foundational presuppositions that act as the starting point for PIPL mastery. These assumptions are from a cross-section of disciplines and they underpin the anthropological, ontological, teleological and phenomenological realities that form the integrated theoretical framework of PIPL as discussed in the **third section (5.3)**. This section further includes the psychological approaches to personality and how they are relevant to the PIPL perspective. In the **fourth section (5.4)** through to the **sixth section (5.6)** the African philosophical, religious and phenomenological conceptions of personhood that inform African Spiritual Consciousness are presented and examined. The **seventh (5.7)** and **eighth sections (5.8)** link consciousness research to ASC to PIPL and current leadership literature. The chapter concludes



(ninth section – 5.9) with the conceptualisation of ASC within the PIPL perspective as suggested by the literature review.

5.2 LEADERSHIP IN THE FUTURE

The study of PIPL is situated within the broader fields of Leadership and Management Science and Industrial Psychology. It is therefore necessary to offer a brief history of leadership theories that inform the current leadership context. These theories are discussed in order to draw attention to the leadership challenges of our emergent context and their implications for PIPL mastery. In this section I discuss four issues: a brief overview of leadership as understood in the past; contemporary challenges for leadership; the characteristics of leadership in the future and directions for holistic leadership development in the future.

5.2.1 Leadership from the past to the present

Having conducted an extensive review of leadership literature, Smith (2008) conceded that leadership definitions can be essentially divided into two main categories: leadership as essence of character (a psychological construct) and leadership as influence (sociological construct). Leadership within the psychological framework is defined in terms of certain desirable personal qualities of the leader, such as honesty, integrity and the general strength of character and charisma of the leader (Smith, 2008). The sociological framework of leadership involves the intentional exercise of influence by one person over one or more individuals, or a team, in an effort to guide activities towards the attainment of some mutual goal (Smith, 2008). In essence, leadership can be understood to consist of both these constructs.

Historically, literature on leadership can be traced back as early as the sixth century BC, within Latin, Greek, Roman and Chinese genealogies. Models and perspectives of leadership have been developed and have shifted over time (Smith, 2009; Bass, 1990). Most contemporary theories of leadership suggest that leadership cannot be separated from the historical, situational and practical contexts in which it is practised (Leithwood, 2003; Goffee & Jones, 2006). The following brief categorisation of leadership theories from the last few decades has been included in



this review, in order to make out how they give birth to current leadership approaches and challenges.

Formal academic research on leadership only began to emerge in the 1930s. Since then, numerous shifts in the paradigm of thoughts on leadership have happened (Bass, 1990). These shifts in thinking can be attributed to the philosophical shifts from pre-modern, to modernity and postmodern understanding of knowledge and culture (Kezar, 2006). The influences of these theoretical and philosophical shifts are evident in Kezar's (2006) assemblage of leadership theories over the last 60 years:

5.2.1.1 1950-1960s: Functionalist Paradigm

In this category leaders are regarded as having inherent cognitive traits that lead to particular functional leadership behaviours. The two main theories in this category are the *Functional and Trait Theories* (Burns, 1978). Proponents of the trait approach usually list leadership qualities, assuming certain traits or characteristics will tend to lead to effective leadership. Functional leadership exponents list the functions that a leader needs to perform such as environmental monitoring, organising subordinate activities, teaching and coaching subordinates, motivating others, and intervening actively in the group's work (Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Morgeson, 2005; Klein, Zeigert, Knight, & Xiao, 2006).

5.2.1.2 1960 -1970s: Social Constructivism

The social constructivism/ behavioural approach emerged as a critical response to the trait approach and postulated that leadership is not so much a set of traits, as a pattern of motives that leads to a set of behaviours. McClelland (cited in Kezar, 2006), for example, evaluated the behaviour of 'successful' leaders in order to determine behaviour taxonomy and identify broad leadership styles. Furthermore, the behavioural approach towards leadership evokes the *nature and nurture* debate within leadership research. The nature and nurture debate concerns itself with the extent to which human behaviour is determined by the integration of genetics and the environment (Kassin, Fein & Markus, 2008).

In essence, constructivism is an alternative view of the environment that suggests that people contribute to the construction of their own environments; they shape their



own environments by the way they respond to the environment (Kassin et.al, 2008). A number of current leadership frameworks (Cashman, 2008; Smith, 2009; Wheatley, 1999) hold in creative tension the biological or behavioural characteristics of individuals that elicit particular responses from others and their environment; hence the social constructivism conviction that leadership is a function that can be taught, justifying the need for leadership courses today. By contrast, functional/trait theorists highlight the inborn qualities (genetic) of leadership that develop as part of the human developmental process and maturation.

5.2.1.3 1980-1990s: Critical Era of Contingency Theories

The emphasis within this era of leadership practice and research was the link between leadership character and contextual (organisational, national, cultural, political, and economic) variables of the world. Examples of the situational and contingency theories include the Fiedler contingency model, the Vroom-Yetton decision model, the Path-goal theory, and the Hersey-Blanchard situational theory (Bass & Bass, 2008). The main assertion in this category was that 'different situations call for different characteristics'. Leadership practice in this view is a combination of what the leader brings, the organisational and the contextual variables.

5.2.1.4 1990- present: postmodern paradigms

This era saw the emergence of transactional, transformational and servant hood leadership theories. The defining features of most of these theories include; chaos, relativity, flat structures, inside-out approaches to leadership development, and flexibility within a turbulent environment (Wheatley, 1999). The *transactional leader* is given power to perform certain tasks and reward or punish for the team's performance (Burns, 2008). The *transformational leader* (Burns, 2008) motivates the team through effective communication towards goal achievement with the strong focus on the final desired outcome. Transformational leaders also focus on the big picture and need to be surrounded by people who take care of the details.

According to Dotlich, Cairo, and Rhinesmith, (2006), servant leadership is a model of leadership that combines head (cognitive abilities), heart (emotional leadership) and guts (right and responsible action) through serving first before being served.



According to Greenleaf (in Spears, 2002) servant leadership is a dialogical form of leadership characterised by listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. To these theories one further thought is worth including with regard to African leadership. Servant leadership resonates with African scholars (Van Rensburg, 2007; Mbigi, 2005; Broodryk, 2005) because it shares the fundamental characteristics of the African philosophy of *ubuntu* - communalism, compassion and courage, power of being, teamwork, connectedness, wisdom and trust.

As the century turned, leadership approaches did not lose the theoretical grounding but there was a greater integration of the cognitive, behavioural and affective approaches to leadership development and practice (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). The booming of emotional intelligence tests, cognitive process profiles and personality tests (Murphy, 2010) demonstrates the shifting understanding of leadership and leadership requirements. This brief categorisation of leadership is only meant to give context to the leadership landscape and challenges in the current context - which I discuss in the rest of this section.

5.2.2 Contemporary challenges for leadership

According to Kets de Vries (2001) there are distinguishable features between the world of leadership in the past and the current leadership context. He (Kets de Vries, 2001) claims that in the past leadership was shaped by stability, hierarchy and autocracy; by contrast the emerging culture of leadership is characterised by continuous and discontinuous change, a reliance on social connectedness and a subscription to respect-based leadership rather than position-based leadership. Naisbitt (2006) and Aburdene (2005) in agreement with Kets de Vries (2001) postulate that the emerging culture of leadership is putting more emphasis on people and the quality of their interactions within the world of work – relational leadership. Aburdene (2005), Biko (1978) and Mbigi (2005) further postulate that organisations throughout the world are struggling to holistically embrace the person or the human ‘spirit’ in their effort to meet the leadership challenges of the world.



Recent scholars, such as Cavanaugh (1999), Wong (2003) and Mitroff and Denton (1999) hypothesise that there are social and economical changes in the world (like the recent recession) that are adversely affecting and reshaping the character of leadership and the demographics of the workplace. Current literature (Aburdene, 2005; Cavanaugh, 1999; Wong, 2003; Covey, 1999) reveals the following complex challenges facing the world: workplace instability as a result of layoffs, downsizing, mergers, and globalisation; moral complexity, and rapid shifts in attitude, social and political circumstances, economic conditions and technology; declining job satisfaction and increasing incidents of depression and burnout; environmental pollution and the energy crisis; scandals of unethical corporate behaviour; lack of shared vision, and values; poor strategic plans; poor alignment between structure, people and values; clashing leadership philosophies; lack of personal and interpersonal skills; low trust, co-operation / teamwork and no self-integrity and more.

In addition to these, Koortzen and Cilliers (2005) concede that the complexity of roles, the pace of change and contextual variables of the world of work confuse the existential (what you believe you are doing), normative (what you have to do) and phenomenal (what others believe you are doing) roles of leaders within organisations. In South Africa, for instance, leaders of different racial (black/white/coloured/Indian) and gender (black/white male or black/white female) groups carry specific historical symbols related to the apartheid past that confuse conscious and unconscious dynamics of functioning in the workplace (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2005). Mbigi (2005) also points out that the failure to understand the conception of personhood in Africa is an added challenge in understanding African leadership.

Mitroff and Denton (1999) further allege that all the above leadership challenges are caused by the lack of holistic and dynamic approaches to leadership development. They (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p.4) capture this outcry as expressed in the workplace in the following comment,

Being forced to split off fundamental parts of oneself at work, being asked to give more of oneself without having one's whole self acknowledged in return, being asked to care for the soul and its concerns in one's own time rather than in company time—these and similar laments were refrains we often heard throughout our research.



Luthans and Avolio (2003) argue that forcing people to live disembodied lives in the workplace leads to lack of authenticity. Authenticity or Authentic leadership, when applied in context means more than being 'true to oneself' but includes self-awareness, relational transparency, an internalized moral perspective and a balanced way of processing information and acting congruently in complex leadership contexts (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

Mitroff and Denton's (2003) outcry also resonates well with African leadership scholars (Mbigi, 2005; Mbiti, 1990; Biko, 1978; Broodryk, 2005) who also persistently draw attention to integrative African approaches in shaping leadership consciousness in the world. African scholars are not alone in the call for revisiting our current leadership theories of human development and the practice of leadership. Wong (2003) and Cavanaugh (1999) assert that the world should move beyond leadership approaches that compartmentalise and alienate the person from their life context and develop models that create a sense of purpose, meaning and community in the workplace.

Some scholars (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Cashman, 2008; Dotlich, Cairo, & Rhinesmith, 2006) have attributed the challenges to the lack of inside-out approaches to personal leadership development and the neglect of spirituality in the workplace. Dotlich, Cairo, and Rhinesmith (2006) and Aburdene (2005) argue that new leadership paradigms should be inside-out and integrative. Aburdene (2005, p. xxiv) makes a specific suggestion for future leadership by stating that "the cornerstone of effective leadership is self-mastery, and that is exactly what is missing in business today. The surest route to self-mastery is spiritual practice. Worldly power without self-mastery is the downfall of leadership."

In view of the above, leadership development practitioners and organisations need to hold in creative tension the psychological, sociological and spiritual aspects that shape organisational culture. Zohar and Marshall's (2000; 2004), ground-breaking research on spiritual intelligence, is a helpful bridge in understanding human functioning within leadership contexts. According to Zohar and Marshall (2004) people have three forms of intelligence: the linear (logical) Mental Intelligence (IQ), the associative Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and the uniting Spiritual Intelligence

(SQ). They further make us aware that spiritual intelligence provides the integrative bridge from the right and left brain thinking models to a transcendent form of thinking that elevates the leaders to an increased level of self awareness, other awareness and reality awareness (Smith, 2009a).

5.2.3 Characteristics of the Future Leader

Current scholars (see **Table 5.1** below) theorise that the nature of leadership development and practice within the emerging global culture should be multi-dimensional. According Kets de Vries and Cheak (2010) organisations need leadership frameworks that can contain the micro (holistic view of the individual), the macro (the organisational systemic and cultural) and the global and political aspects of understanding leadership processes. The critical qualities of future leadership can be summarized as follows:

Table 5.1 – Critical leadership qualities for the future leader

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FUTURE LEADER		
AUTHOR	KEY FEATURES	DOMAIN
Aburdene, 2005	Restraint, modesty, tenacity, integrity	Personal and interpersonal growth leading to professional growth with emphasis on the spiritual life dimension
Adair, 2005	Energy, enthusiasm, initiative Problem solving, creative thinking and decision making Speaking, listening, writing and self management	Emotional Spiritual Dimension Mental life Dimension
Allen, 2009	Self awareness, emotional intelligence	Personal and interpersonal growth through Emotional intelligence and leadership
April, Macdonald & Vriesendorp, 2000	Leading by following – followership, openness and authenticity, passion, complexity and ambiguity, organisational conversations, storytelling , relationships, letting go and awareness	Emphasis on servanthood leadership characterised by strong interpersonal skills
Brady & Woodward, 2005	Personal growth through building character, getting things done (tasks) and resilient relationships. Influencing others through performance	Holistic approach
Carroll, 2007	Simplicity, poise and newness, respect, courage, confidence, enthusiasm, patience, awareness, skilfulness and humility	Emphasis on spiritual qualities of leadership
Geoffe & Jones, 2006	Being authentic through self revelation Self awareness and self leadership Clarity of being, values and purpose Ability to create strong relationships	Self leadership based on authentic values and self revelation.



Table (5.1) above provides an overview of the emergent themes in leadership in current leadership literature. Common themes include; self leadership, authentic values, spiritual leadership, servant leadership, emotional and spiritual intelligence, communication and interpersonal growth, ability to lead and manage complexity. There is also a dynamic integration of the personal, interpersonal and organisational dynamics of leadership. Aburdene (2005) and Cashman's (2008) assertion that future leadership will be characterised by a stronger recognition of leadership as an inside-out journey and anchored in the human 'spirit' (authenticity, intuition and True North values) is affirmed. In summary, this table presents a dynamic, holistic and integrative view of leadership in the future.

5.2.4 Leadership development in the future

From the above discussion on leadership, we can postulate that the future of leadership mastery should be holistic, integrative and dynamic to meet the complex world, culturally relevant, be anchored in the spiritual life dimension and take seriously the cognitive, affective and behavioural domains of the individual. Western (2008) argues that leadership development (which he terms developing eco-leaders) in the emerging context should take seriously; individuals, teams and the whole organization; local and global approaches to leadership; work context, history, place and purpose and requires both an informal and a formal process - a holistic and eco-systemic approach. Pawar (2003) summarises these domains as personal, interpersonal and organisational, communal and ecological dimensions of life. Based on the above arguments, it is my contention that the PIPL perspective provides a dynamic and holistic framework for thinking about and growing leadership because it takes into account anthropological, phenomenal and existential realities of leadership (Smith, 2009).

5.3 THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PIPL PERSPECTIVE

The second aim in this literature review is to outline and discuss the essential presuppositions and processes of PIPL mastery and to give a clear understanding of the relevant avenues of PIPL within which African Spiritual Consciousness can be conceptualised. The PIPL perspective is based on the presupposition that human beings are integrated and dynamic beings that need to be viewed holistically.



Inherent in the perspective, is a practical orientation towards continuous and never ending progression towards optimal health and well-being. Leadership mastery within the PIPL perspective is an inside-out interdependent journey that begins with personal mastery to interpersonal and ultimately professional mastery (Verrier & Smith, 2005). The eight life dimensions within these three pillars form the natural reality of a person's life (see chapter 1).

The basic presuppositions that underpin the PIPL perspective are gleaned from philosophical, anthropological and psychological realities of human existence. The foundational assumption of the PIPL perspective is that, the quest for knowledge and wisdom should be based on a combination of scientific research, personal experience, specific insights and practical examples (grounded in reality) from people in various contexts - family members, professionals, leaders, friends, members of society, etc (Verrier & Smith, 2005).

Secondly, from the PIPL perspective, as Krotyski (cited in Covey, 2004) points out, "the map is not the territory". This means that human beings are endowed with the capacity to change their beliefs, perceptions and attitudes about their world and by doing that also change their responses to the reality of their circumstances (Greenberger & Padesky, 1996). The motivation and impulse towards change and growth is based on Frankl's (1984) belief that human beings are intrinsically 'meaning searching creatures'. This involves an intentional PIPL journey away from living in existential vacuum (lack of meaning) towards the deepening of meaning in life and potential realisation (Frankl, 1984; Smith, 2009). The emphasis and focus on potential and growth within PIPL departs from traditional psychology's concern with, *inter alia*, describing behavioural difficulties, categorising them, and searching for historical causes (past and present focus) – dealing more with pathology than potential (present and future focus).

Thirdly, the assumption within the PIPL is that human beings are blessed with a subtle form of energy called the vital force, L (Life)-force or L-Energy (Pearsall, 1998). The L-Force could possibly carry the Heart's Code and can be referred to as the human 'spirit' – the spiritual life dimension. Smith (2008) also argued that human beings are open energy systems that receive energy from the environment,



transform it and dissipate it back to the environment. This means that people are not only determined by their genes, education and environment but they have the freedom (and capacity) to choose how their circumstances or social environment are going to affect them.

These presuppositions not only underpin the basis of the PIPL perspective but also expose the potential contribution it can make to leadership mastery at all levels of life. The practical actions that lie at the core of the PIPL perspective include: personal development and self-awareness, maintaining a creative life balance, developing and maintaining total health and well-being, the constituent building of good relationships, living authentically and expressing oneself authentically, and living a principle-centred and value-centred existence.

5.4 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PIPL

The PIPL perspective is founded on ontological, teleological, phenomenological, anthropological and psychological fields of inquiry. Each of these fields contributes particular features towards our understanding of human experience and PIPL mastery (Verrier & Smith, 2005). Any scientific study carries within itself the philosophical assumptions and beliefs about reality (ontology) and the teleological (*telos* is the Greek word for goal or aim) dimension (Verrier & Smith, 2005). It is thus necessary at this point to identify the playing field or research domain of PIPL, as well as its goal.

5.4.1 Ontological and teleological bases of PIPL

Essentially PIPL mastery is about human development and potential realisation. Human development is approached from various paradigms. Leading proponents of these paradigms are psychology, sociology and education and other related fields of study. The limitation of these fields as they are traditionally known is their specialised focus on one or a few dimensions of a person's life. This is where PIPL makes a significant contribution because it takes a holistic view of the human condition within internal and external life dimensions (Smith, 2008). PIPL as a leadership perspective assumes that a synergistic, holistic and dynamic development of the human being from personal mastery, interpersonal and consequently professional mastery will ameliorate the existential challenges faced by all human beings (Smith, 2009). Thus



the essence and nature of PIPL can be encapsulated in Personal leadership, Interpersonal leadership and Professional leadership.

In addition, the PIPL approach does not seek to deal with only the external manifestations of leadership (charisma and personality) but works from the inside-out and discovers the essence of leadership that can lead to authentic self-expression that adds value to others and the world (Cashman, 2000; Covey, 1994). The ontology of PIPL concerns dealing with existential realities of life within the internal personal life - spiritual, mental, emotional and physical - dimensions **(personal leadership)**, the problems and importance of developing healthy relationships **(interpersonal leadership)** and the problems and importance of competently applying self within the workplace and life situations **(professional leadership)** (Smith, 2009a).

5.4.2 Anthropological presuppositions of PIPL

The word anthropology is a combination of two words, *anthropos* (man or humanity) and *logos* (word, evaluation, thinking about, distinguishing, and discussion). Thus, anthropology is the scientific study of humanity that takes a holistic view of their being-in-the-world, and seeks to answer the question 'who am I as a human being?' Within PIPL it is critical to analyse how people 'see' themselves and others as this is foundational to the understanding of the perspective or lens through which a person's life can be understood. The perspective from which a person sees the world and human existence is the basis for behaviour. Anthropological presuppositions help us better understand the human condition and offer solutions that will improve human existence and development.

The PIPL anthropological presuppositions at a personal level include the basic spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological needs for development, safety, security, response-ability (choice) and achieving dynamic wellbeing. At a social (interpersonal) level people are social beings with the need to belong, to be loved and to be accepted in meaningful and fulfilling relationships – also dependent on others for their growth and development. At a professional level human beings have the need to work and to leave a meaningful and value-adding legacy – Covey's



(2004) 4L's - to live, love, learn and leave a legacy that positively contributes towards their immediate environment and making the world a better place.

5.4.3 The phenomenological presuppositions of PIPL

According to Moustakas (1994) phenomenology concerns itself with describing the deep *meaning* and *essence* of the experience of a phenomenon (or concept) in order to “understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives.” (De Vos, 2002, p. 273). The PIPL perspective therefore investigates and attempts to solve various ‘phenomena’ that are characteristic of contemporary people and society. These problems interdependently fall into the personal, interpersonal and professional contexts. In the table below, the existential challenges that are faced by individuals in personal, interpersonal and professional contexts are classified. This list (Table 5.1) in each of the categories is not conclusive, but enough to capture the manifestations of incongruence at all levels of human existence.

Table 5.1 - THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF PIPL	
CONTEXT	PROBLEMS
Personal Level	Negative attitudes/thoughts; spiritual crisis, for example lack of meaning, emptiness/purposefulness; feelings of imbalance; struggling to find solutions to personal problems; inhibiting effects of negative conditioning on self esteem and potential realisation; emotional illiteracy and the inability to handle emotions; not thinking much about life anymore; lack of love/loneliness; lack of self-control; no quiet time; depression; anger; anxiety/fear; insomnia; dependency on drugs or alcohol; self indulgence; not taking responsibility (ill discipline); intolerance; living reactively and blaming others; instant solutions; materialism; false emphasis of the personality ethic
Interpersonal Level	Lack of empathy; superficial relationships; lack of trust; lack of commitment; envy; lack of forgiveness; generation has now become ‘generation chaos’; people are mediums for my own benefit; racism/sexism; prejudices; broken families; undesirable peer group; disrespect; jealousy; we don’t listen; neglect; criticism/slander; lack of morality/collapse in normative frameworks
Professional Level	Work has become meaningless; lack of vision, direction and time management; burnout and rust-out; lack of empowerment; lack of acknowledgement and appreciation; stress; suppression of creativity; lack of commitment; gossip/reputation damage; anger outbursts; favouritism; lack of fairness; paying lip service to values; poor client service; unethical business strategies; theft (time/money); unreasonable expectations; ‘cliques’; secrecy; grapevine miscommunication; incompetence; overemphasis of status; workaholism; lack of principles.

Table 5. 2 adapted from Verrier and Smith (2005)



At the personal level, the above table illustrates how disconnection at the personal and internal life dimensions leads to incongruence at the interpersonal and professional life dimensions. According to Smith (2009), Aburdene (2005) and Twerski (2007) disconnection (or dissonance) at the spiritual life dimension, leads to poor cognitive, behavioural and affective expressions that affect all our relationships and professional competence. Twerski (2007) further makes us aware that disconnection with one's true-north values leads to stuntedness – the inability to grow and develop oneself. All the above attitudes and behaviours are experienced within this stuntedness condition. By contrast, connection in the internal (personal) dimensions leads to healthy external (interpersonal and professional) dimensions (Smith, 2009).

The above phenomenological, ontological and anthropological presuppositions form a philosophical grounding of PIPL that give it its distinctive position within academic literature as a holistic, integrative and dynamic perspective. However, PIPL also has a strong psychological grounding to which I turn next.

5.4.4 The psychological foundations of PIPL

The study of personality is predominantly a feature of the field of psychology. According to Meyer and Moore (2003, p.11) "personality is the constantly changing but nevertheless relatively stable organisation of all *physical, psychological and spiritual* characteristics of the individual which determines his or her behaviour in *interaction within the context* in which the individual finds himself or herself". It is the characteristic structure, combination and organisation of behavioural patterns (including thoughts and feelings) that make a person unique. Studying personality, therefore, allows us to understand the dynamics and nature of the multi-dimensional personality of human beings. Noting the complex and multi-faceted nature of personality theories, Meyer and Moore (2003, p.16) have classified them according to history of origin or 'schools of thought', namely *depth psychological approaches*, the *behavioural and learning theoretical approaches*, the *person-oriented approaches* and other *alternative approaches*.



5.4.4.1 Personality in depth psychological approaches

The key feature of in depth psychological approaches to personality is the emphasis on influence of the 'deep', unconscious (drives, instincts, anxiety, pressures, memories, perceptions, etc) aspects of personality. Depth psychologists argue that the unconscious (irrational) forces have greater influence on the above the surface, conscious (rational) behaviour. According to Meyer and Viljoen (2003) Freud's (1856-1939) significant contribution to our understanding of personality is his classification of personality into three parts: (i) the primitive, innate component (**id – animal-in-me**) of the psyche which contains the driving energy for human behaviour. (ii) The **ego (the 'I' in me)**, which is the rational self, formed early in life that mediates between the ego drives and the superego demands. The ego is formed with contact with the outside world and serves the id by finding suitable objects for the drive satisfaction. (iii) The **superego (society in me)** – these are the intrapsychic representatives of society's moral codes. It serves to persuade the ego, through guilt and punishment to abide by these codes.

Meyer and Viljoen (2003) assert that the fundamental hypothesis of depth psychology is that a person's inner, subjective conscious consists of various layers that differ in depth and the extent to which they are conscious or unconscious. They further note that recent depth psychology scholars such as, Hillman (1997) and Lacan (1968) amongst others; display a growing shift from the psychological and biological emphasis made by Freud and emphasize that the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the individual have equal validity in determining personality.

Personality according to depth psychology is a biological, psychological, social-moral and spiritual (Jung's individuation and transcendence theories) combination (Jung, 1960). PIPL notes the recognition within depth psychology that existential challenges are resident in past memories and unconscious processes of self and can be dealt with through 'making the unconscious' conscious. According to Korotov (2010) most leadership and executive development programs used today employ psychodynamic conceptualisations, the object relations theory, cognitive and behavioural interventions (brain profiling tests, temperament typologies and Emotional Intelligence Inventories –EQI's). Most of these programmes and tests have their feet in the Jungian typology or framework.



Theoretically, PIPL differs from depth psychology in that it believes that conscious (rational) choice has more power in the shaping of human behaviour than the unconscious processes. PIPL understands that our conditioned ego has strong influence on our perception of life but also believes that this conditioning can be validated and dealt with consciously. Another point of agreement between PIPL and psychoanalysis is the intentional dealing with growth challenges (anxiety and stress invoking behaviours) in order to achieve balance and harmony in life.

5.4.4.2 Personality in behavioural and learning theory approaches

Behavioural psychology concerns itself with observable behaviour that can be measured through objective observation - such behaviour should be accessible through elemental and reductionist analysis. Such emotions and thoughts are accepted as valid constructs of personality only in so far as they can be measured in observable behaviour (Meyer & Moore, 2003). *Radical behaviourists* (Skinner and followers) claim that all behaviour, with the exception of certain innate responses, is acquired through conditioning - and psychology should exclusively focus on establishing the lawful relationship between stimuli and responses. *Moderate behaviourists* (often referred to as learning theorists) expand their conception of personality to include the internal dynamics of the organism - stimuli-organism-response (Meyer & Moore, 2003).

The social-cognitive learning approach is an outcome of a further expansion of the behaviourist approach to highlight that personality is a direct outcome of the interaction between the person and situation. A typical example is the work of Albert Bandura which successfully integrated great traditions of psychology – behaviourism, Gestalt psychology and cognitive psychology (Meyer & Moore, 2003). Smith (2009) adds that people behave in certain ways because they have primary (food, shelter, sex) and secondary (to be self-sufficient, to be accepted socially) needs. PIPL accepts that behaviour is partly formed by rational learning and conditioning but emphasises the person's ability to choose the responses. Two particular approaches within the cognitive-behavioural learning approaches are Ellis's rational-emotive behaviour therapy (RET) (Ellis, 2004), and Beck's cognitive



behaviour therapy (CBT) (Illman & Carter, 2004), based on the premise that *what we think influences the way we feel*.

These theories attempt to help the individual who is experiencing problems to change the way he feels by changing his thoughts, beliefs or assumptions to more helpful ones. This perspective highlights the cognitive as a critical aspect of behaviour – as a result balancing the strong behaviourist slant. The cognitive/behavioural learning approach seems to provide a reasonable balance between the internal and external life dimensions.

5.4.4.3 Person oriented approaches

The person oriented approach is not one single view but a movement that accommodates a number of humanistic, phenomenological and existential schools that complement each other. Typical examples of this approach include the Self-Actualizing theory of Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), the Self-Concept theory of Karl Rogers (1902-1987), and the Existential Theory of Victor Frankl (1905-1998). Person oriented approaches depart from depth and behavioural psychological approaches in that they claim that the person is neither a victim of unconscious drives and societal codes nor can be elementally analysed as segmented objective data, but is a dignified integrated whole (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003). The person as an integrated being is an active participant, with conscious rational processes and the freedom to choose his or her behaviour in particular circumstances. In contrast with earlier approaches which often begin from pathological states of being, person oriented approaches begin from the premise that psychologically healthy states of being should be the criterion for examining human functioning (Viljoen, 2003).

The philosophical underpinnings of person oriented approaches include existentialism, phenomenology, holism and humanism. According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2003), Maslow and Rogers' humanistic theories are representative of humanistic psychology that hold that the person is a growth oriented being who is always striving towards holistic **self-actualisation** – the innate *self-actualising tendency* of human beings (Moore, 2003). The first approach is Maslow's self actualisation hierarchy that sees the person through stages of personal development. Moore (2003, p.357) asserts that the significance of Maslow's theory



lies in its presentation of the person in totality in which “the biological and psychological and also the role of the past, present and future expectations are included...and the environment is not so much the manipulator of behaviour...but provides the opportunities and space in which actualisation can take place.”

The second approach is Rogers’ view that the person is more humanistic and phenomenological, stressing people’s self concepts and the importance of subjective experience. This approach acknowledges that the person has the freedom to change when he or she experiences unconditional positive regard. The person is a psycho-physical ‘**organism**’ with a **self concept** (picture of self and value attached to self) and **phenomenal field** (perceptions of internal external objects and meaning making) who can grow to great heights of being – a strong focus on human worth and potential (Moore, 2003). The third approach is Victor Frankl’s existential theory of personality. Frankl argued for a three-dimensional ontology – physical, psychological and spiritual levels of existence. According to Shantall (2003), Frankl further believed in the following presuppositions about human beings and personality:

- **The freedom to will** – the capacity of self-determination through the existence of choice;
- **Existential neurosis** – the spiritual or mental anguish and existential despair people suffer when they see no meaning in their lives;
- **Meaning of life** – that life never ceases to have meaning and that meaning can be found in all circumstances, even in suffering and death;
- **Will to meaning** – The intrinsic desires to self-develop and find meaning and purpose;
- Meaning is not prescribed to people but their attention is drawn to it; and
- Meaning in life can be found in three ways: the creative things we do, the uplifting things we experience and the kind of attitude we have towards situations of unavoidable suffering.

PIPL also accepts the important place of the individual in the shaping of his or her reality of life. Even though PIPL does not necessarily take a theocentric or humanistic approach, it believes that the spiritual life dimension is the core of the



human being (Smith, 2009). The experience of meaningful existence is also central to the journey of PIPL mastery.

5.4.5 The PIPL Perspective

The PIPL perspective does not focus on the external dispositions such as character and personality but focuses on an inside-out process of self discovery that leads to authentic self expression in social and professional life situations (Verrier & Smith, 2005). The PIPL perspective provides a holistic, integrative and dynamic perspective towards life and leadership mastery that enables us to deal with the existential (problems and challenges of existence), phenomenological (how life is experienced by the individual) and the anthropological (what are the universal basic needs and acceptable human behaviour) realities of life (Smith, 2009). As cited earlier the PIPL perspective believes that it is futile for anybody to try and master relationships and professional situations without mastering self (Verrier & Smith, 2005).

According to Smith (2009) **personal leadership** entails mastery of the four internal life dimensions of which the spiritual dimension is the core. Mastery at this level entails: discovery of personal direction and purpose; learning proactive behaviour, being response-able (i.e. not to blame, to be a victim or to be reactive), value-driven time and life management, having a burning desire and commitment to achieve one's goals, possessing a determination to realise one's potential and living a principle-centred life. Personal mastery means having a sense of connectedness with one's inner core (inner identity) and authentically expressing oneself in the world. This further includes the optimal realisation of one's inner potential in relationship with other people and the environment (Smith, 2009; Cashman, 2008).

Interpersonal leadership is about optimal fulfilment in primary and secondary relationships in life (Verrier & Smith, 2005). According to Verrier and Smith (2005) interpersonal leadership is achieved through self transcendence that leads to altruistic behaviour characterised by being caring, empathic, compassionate, service-oriented, considerate and team-oriented. This component includes the basic anthropological human need for relationship with self and others (Verrier & Smith, 2005). This also involves developing a healthy self concept and self esteem.

Cashman (2008) makes us aware that interpersonal leadership leads to expressing self in a way that adds value, makes a difference and enriches those around us.

According to Verrier and Smith (2005) professional leadership is a culmination of **Character** (personal mastery), **Caring** (interpersonal mastery) and **Competence** (professional mastery) - the 3Cs of PIPL. Competence is characterised by being logical, knowledgeable, wise, and competent and having a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The underlying principles of professional leadership are spiritual connectedness, trust building, empathetic listening, and commitment towards a common vision, win-win attitude, synergy, respect and appreciation. Within the workplace someone who has mastered leadership to this level will energize the environment with a sense of flow. The figure below integrates all the Leadership development components into the PIPL pyramid of leadership.

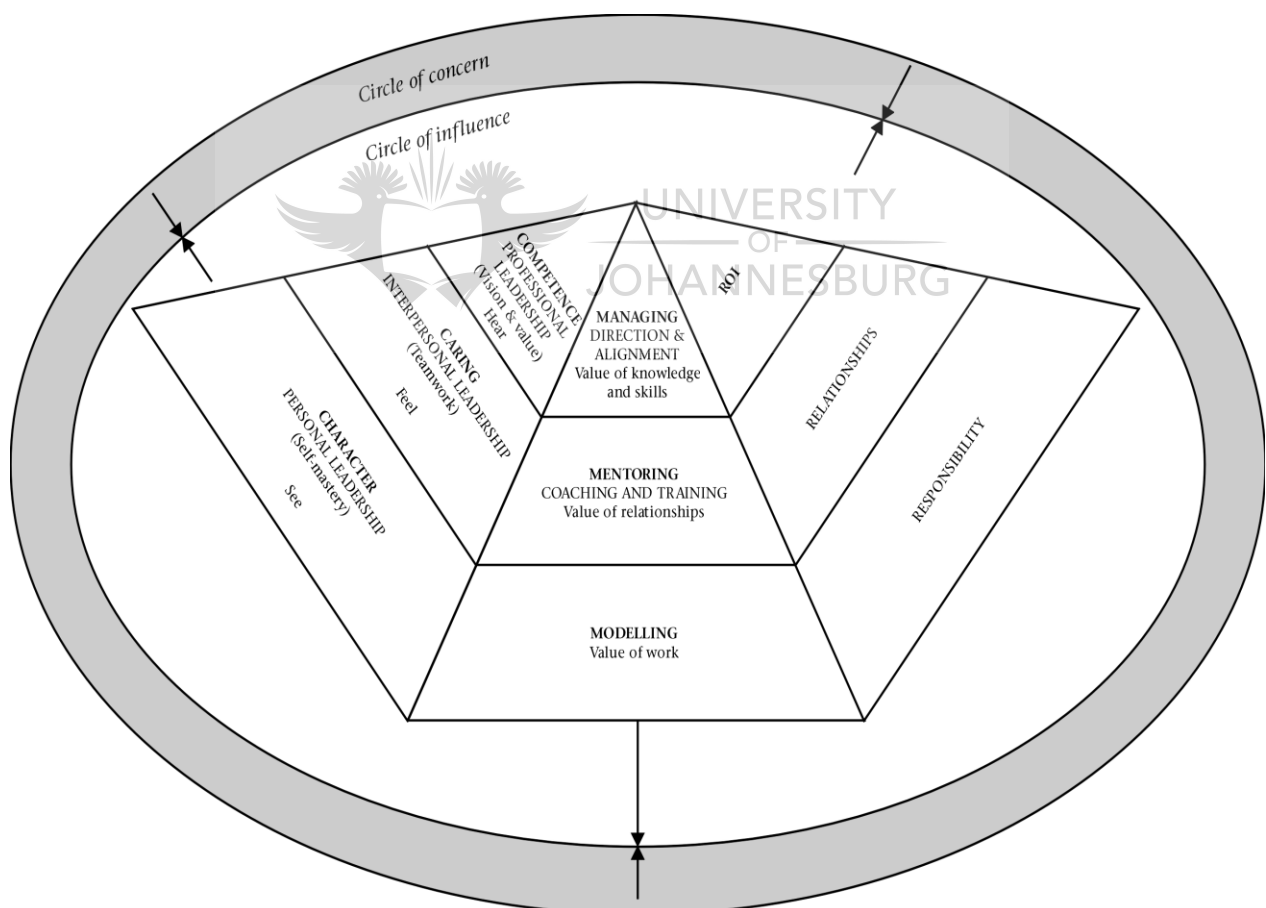


Figure 5. 1: The PIPL pyramid of leadership and influence (adapted from Verrier & Smith, 2005)



In sum, Smith's (2009a) PIPL paradigm is a Third Alternative to Leadership, which integrates the Psychological and Sociological Phenomenon of Leadership constructs. In PIPL the psychologically desirable personal traits of charisma and strength of character, are integrated with the sociological exercise of influence to attain mutual goals. To the aforementioned constructs, PIPL adds the inside-out approach, personal accountability, principle centring and moral judgment.

Furthermore PIPL defines the three perspectives, as building blocks, of *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*. These building blocks represent; Ethos – ethical behaviour, integrity, stewardship, character based, principle centred and moral value orientation, Pathos – caring empathetic, compassionate, service, considerate and team oriented; and Logos – logical, knowledgeable, wise, competent, life of meaning. This represents the EPL Way.

The EPL Way is a 'system holistic' approach based on quality of life and well-being for the areas of Existential, Phenomenological and Anthropological realities of life. The EPL Way further develops awareness of reality, self and others (people). PIPL promotes a holistic quality of life, well-being and balance across eight life dimensions; spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, social, career, financial and ecological. The spiritual dimension is viewed as the core dimension and postulates that deficiencies in this dimension will lead to problems in other life dimensions.

5.5 AFRICAN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

"You're not an African because you're born in Africa. You're an African because Africa is born in you. It's in your genes.... your DNA....your entire biological make up. Whether you like it or not, that's the way it is. However, if you were to embrace this truth with open arms....my, my, my....what a wonderful thing."

-Marimba Ani

The third aim of this literature review is to conceptualise African Spiritual Consciousness. This aim is based on the researcher's assumption that PIPL mastery in the African context is (or should be) informed by a particular form of consciousness. In the above discussion on leadership, the foundations of the consciousness were loosely discussed as the essential 'awareness' in the process of



growth and development. In this section of the study, the concept of consciousness has been purposively localised within the African context and positioned within the field of spirituality – forming the caption, 'African Spiritual Consciousness'. A search in current literature reveals no discreet and distinctive definition of African Spiritual Consciousness.

Furthermore, I assume that ASC is a result of historical and theoretical dialogue between African research and the fields of philosophy, religion, socio-cultural and humanistic psychology, anthropology and leadership. In this section, I elementally define and trace the concept of ASC from the fields of philosophy, socio-cultural psychology, religion and leadership. Discussing ASC is crucial for this study, as it unlocks the foundational philosophical, ontological, religious and spiritual presuppositions of African thought and reality that influence the personal, interpersonal and professional dimensions of the African person.

5.5.1 Foundations of African philosophy

To understand the African conception of personhood and leadership mastery, it is vital to explore the fundamental tenets of African reality and thought. The African (like the Eastern) perspective on personality is currently emphasised within literature as a departure from Western ontological and epistemological approaches to reality (Viljoen, 2003). The Western approach comes from a philosophical and scientific approach that is strongly embedded in a positivist empirical view of the person, with the goal of analysing, predicting and controlling human behaviour (Viljoen, 2003). African approaches and Eastern, similarly originate from a subjective and experiential paradigm of understanding personhood, typified by integrative intuition. Western theories not only rotate around the individual, they also view PIPL mastery as an extension of the individual. Eastern and African approaches on the other hand begin from a collective analogy of being that transcends the idea of the individual self.

In as much as Africa shares an affinity with Eastern approaches to personality research, no African theory of persons has been reached within academic literature. Viljoen (2003) advances three primary reasons why an African theory of personality has not been reached at this stage: Firstly, African research is in a transitional



phase of decolonising the euro-centric theoretical approaches to understanding African existence. Secondly, most Africans are within a continuum of defining their own identity that spans the traditional life style and the modern life style - with its marked influences from the West. Lastly, Africa still suffers from the scarcity of appropriate academic technical tools to lift African terminology to the same levels enjoyed by Western philosophy and academic language (Hountondji, 1983). Viljoen's (2003) point of view is not new, as it echoes a number of African scholars who also mourn the lack of academic resources that can permeate the subjective and non-textual world of African existence to give conceptual clarity to the ontological and philosophical foundations of the African reality (Mbiti, 1990; Forster, 2006, 2010; Setiloane, 1998; Biko, 1978).

5.5.2 Research traditions on African philosophy

In order to understand an African perspective of life, it is necessary to define and distinguish African philosophy from other perspectives. According to Mbiti (as cited in Oladipo, 2006, p.12) African philosophy "refers to the understanding, attitude of mind, logic and perception behind the manner in which Africans think, act and speak in different situations of life." Oladipo (2006) in agreement with Mbiti argues that Africa, like other parts of the world, has its own philosophical paradigm that defines its beliefs about existence and reality.

Oladipo (2006) further makes us aware that African philosophers have taken two approaches to studying African philosophy. Some scholars believe that African philosophy should be a descriptive documentation of African indigenous beliefs and thought systems, whilst others argue that African philosophy should be a reflective inquiry that focuses on both African experiences and human experiences in general. These two paradigms can be summarised as follows:

- *Traditionalist view* - culture can be understood through listening to unedited stories and poems to discover and record the untainted version of African philosophy of being. Practitioners in this regard can be seen as guardians of tradition.
- *Modernist view* – working towards a critical, conceptual and reconstructive approach. This view distinguishes between the content of philosophy preserved through oral tradition and critical philosophy. This is the communal,



unwritten, un-systemic wisdom transmitted from generation to generation through socialisation – *folk philosophy*. Critical philosophy on the other hand is the intellectual quest for ratiocinative and critical theories using modern logical and conceptual techniques.

Oladipo (2006) therefore contends that African philosophy at best should be: (i) critical and reconstructive of the traditional views and build on the positive aspects; (ii) the domestication of intellectual resources of other cultures to benefit our changing context; (iii) a critical engagement with our daily experience of life to reveal the unproductive beliefs and values that make us less productive and less prosperous; and (iv) the development of a broad-based approach to African philosophy to provide a rigorous and sustained idealisation of better life at all levels of human existence. It is my opinion that Oladipo's (2006) contention is both integrative and dynamic in holding together the different facets of the African philosophy agenda.

A further important issue in African philosophy and personhood is the issue of language. Most of the current theories of human development are generated from a Western philosophy and language. African linguistic philosophers argue that the conceptualisation of personhood using colonial elements (synthetic and analytic elements) of language may lead to the misconception of the African person (Afolayan, 2006). Although there are biological and psychological structures that are universal for all human beings, the cultural and linguistic coding of these structures alter the ontological and phenomenological appreciation of selfhood (Afolayan, 2006). The cultural and linguistic relativity also render the perception of ontological issues of existence relative.

Afolayan (2006) and Hountondji (1983) assert that African philosophers need to domesticate and decolonise foreign concepts, synergise traditional and post modern/colonial polarities of African issues of existence and present the dynamic contextual challenges of understanding human existence and development in Africa. Biakolo (2000) makes a further point and emphasises that researchers of African philosophy need to oscillate between the pre-logical and logical, perceptual and conceptual, oral and written, religious and scientific paradigms of thought in order to



fully appreciate African culture and philosophy. In addition, Hountondji (1983) points out that taking seriously the African world view sets the researcher towards the collective and communal nature of African thought - often resident within the uncritical world-views of indigenous communities. Forster (2010) cautions us that doing such work requires the researcher to move beyond the objective and subjective fields of study into an inter-subjective approach.

5.5.3 'African' ontological basis of personality

A general Google search for a definition of "African" came up with countless definitions that can be summarised as... '*of Africa*' - relating to any part of the African continent, or its peoples, languages, or culture of African people, people who live in Africa or trace their ancestry to indigenous inhabitants of Africa. The African continent is home to many different ethnic and racial groups, with wide-ranging phenotypical traits, both indigenous and foreign to the continent. Many of these populations have diverse origins, with differing cultural, religious, linguistic and social traits and mores (Viljoen, 2003). Distinctions within Africa's geography, such as the varying climates across the continent, have also served to nurture diverse lifestyles among its various populations (Oladipo, 2006).

The adjective African can be understood as a function of geography or the existential life conditions of African peoples. According to Oguejiofor (cited in Oladipo, 2006) "the adjective African should therefore be understood in such a manner as to be all-inclusive, embracing all possible meaning of the term: geographic, political, cultural, ideological, religious, and so forth." Although some scholars would like to define African as exclusively referring to black people, there is a plausible argument that African people cannot be simply defined by racial groupings, as there are people who have become Africans by other means other than descent (Oladipo, 2006; Ekanola, 2003). It is also interesting that Africa as a continent is geographically sandwiched between the East and the West, almost symbolically suggesting a cosmic place that integrates reality.

5.5.4 Some African conceptions of the 'person'

Theoretically every part of the world has different perspectives on reality and experience. Just as there are different views in the Western and Eastern world of research, there are also countless views on reality and personhood within the African



continent. Despite the underlying differences within (as elsewhere in the world) Sow (cited in Meyer et.al, 2003, p. 531) describes a unity in the diversity of African culture, that can be referred to as an African perspective of personhood:

“...unity that is evident in the realm of spirituality as well as in that of representation and expression, from art to behaviours manifested in everyday life... there is no doubt that, with a few variations, African thought has a distinctive character, deriving its principles from symbols and myths (merging into one the universe and the society in which the African person/personality is formed) as well as from a collective ritual (permitting precise location of the individual in relation to his environment and the course of his development).

The integrated nature of being in the African continent described by Sow has great support from African philosophers, theologians and anthropologists. Senghor (cited in Oladipo, 2006, 61) poetically conceptualises the African person as follows:

“The African is, as it were; shut up in his ~~black~~ [sic] skin. He lives in the primordial night. He does not begin by distinguishing himself from the object, the tree or stone, the man or animal or social event. He does not keep it at a distance. He does not analyse it...”

This Senghor citation reveals a mode of knowing that is holistic, in which dualisms between man and nature, subject and object, mind and matter, are totally absent (Ekanola, 2003). Viljoen (2003) contends that fundamentally in African thought, the idea of an ‘individual self’ – the ‘I’ centred self’ in Western philosophy - is replaced by the ‘contextualised self’ that highlights the concept of the ‘familial self’ (the ‘we’-centred self) and the spiritual self (the transcendent nature of being). In Africa and the East, self-actualisation and personal development is more about self transcendence in order to connect with the collective rather than self-extension of the ‘I’ that only glorifies the individual. The following are three representative approaches of African conceptions of personhood.

5.5.4.1 The person as vital force

According to Placide Temples, African people think of their being as forms of energy or essential forces. In his (cited in Khapagawani, 2000, p.67) words, “in every Bantu language it is easy to recognise the words denoting a force, which is not used exclusively for bodily sense, but in a sense of integrity of our whole being”. Temples equates this ‘force’ with ‘being’. As a force, each person is connected with other human and natural forces (nature, ancestors and cosmic force including God).



'Being' for Bantu people is living a life with an optimal degree of energy. Temples bases this argument on the notion that a number of African greetings inquire into the amount of this vital force within the person or the person's sense of harmony with their environment – energy flow. Death, therefore, is anything that diminishes this vital force – which makes the person unable to give to community the energy they contribute to the collective. Notable in Temples' analogy, the person (*umuntu* (human) – in Zulu), is a non-sexist reference to the person who is endowed with life force that can be expressed as reason and volition.

5.5.4.2 The individual and communal identity

According to Mbiti (1990) the major distinction between the African view of the person and the Western view, is the communal approach to personhood. Building on Temples' idea of people as one vital force, Mbiti (1990) makes a concrete claim that in Africa, the community is primary to the individual. For Mbiti, who is famously known for his maxim, "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am", loosely translated in Zulu as *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (I am a person because of other persons), the person's self definition is intricately connected to their community. There is no individual without the community. This conception of the person according to Shaw (2000) deviates from the Western approach that analyses personhood as the individual 'interior' psychological essence by locating it in the 'exterior' behavioural essence. In essence the 'I' almost only exists within the 'we' as a part of the whole.

5.5.4.3 Humans as unique beings

According to Kagame (cited in Kaphagawani, 2000) human beings differ from other beings because they are animated with a second immortal force that gives them a specific form of intelligence, free will and moral values. Secondly, Kagame argues that humans differ from animals in that they possess a 'heart' - the disposition to act in morally qualifiable ways. Hence, when a person acts in a way that is immoral, it's regarded as having a 'bad heart' or behaving like an 'animal'. Kagame's view endows human beings with the capacity for rational thought, memory, intention and motivation. It is notable that while Kagame's conception of the person highlights the individual's cognitive, affective and behavioural capacities, it does not depart from



the idea of connectedness that runs like a seamless thread through African philosophy.

These three approaches are representative of the main features of African approaches to personality. In the African perspective personhood is characterised by: (i) the unity of the person with their environment, (ii) the vital life force that connects people intrinsically with others and nature, (iii) the unique space-time consciousness, intelligence and moral capacity, and (iv) the desire to collectively develop without high levels of competition. According to Nsamaneng (1995) the features described above cannot be analysed through traditional analytic and deductive approaches but through inter-subjective and inductive gleaning from the wisdom embedded in African folklore, the idioms, stories, artwork and spatial use of cues: doing this will contextualise and fill in the data gaps, in our endeavour to understand the African person. On the contrary, Kaphagawani (2000) claims that most of the arguments advanced by African scholars have socio-cultural and philosophical bases rather than universal biological structures of the human condition.



5.5.5 An African cosmology

As cited above, to fully conceptualise the African world-view, one needs to be baptised into the rich ambience of the African people's cultures, language, geography, mythology and oral tradition, and touch the real-world practices of the people (Mbiti, 1990). An immersion into the African existence reveals a particular cosmology and hierarchy that fashions their world. Mbiti (1990) makes us aware that in the African cosmology there is an indivisible reality that includes humans, nature, ancestors and God.

According to Mbiti (1990), Mbigi (2005) and Viljoen (2003) the African cosmology is a product of a holistic and anthropocentric ontology. This unity of being in Africa is captured by the speech made by Thabo Mbeki (1996), the Former President of South Africa, during the acceptance of South Africa's constitution in 1996:

"I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land. My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the

warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightning, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope. The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld, the dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg...At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito. A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say - I am an African!"

Central to Mbeki's expert speech is the rich cosmology that intertwines human existence with animal life, nature and the cosmos. Sow (cited in Viljoen, 2003), maintains that within this indivisible cosmic whole, three realities can be theoretically distinguished - namely the macro-, meso-, and micro-cosmos. The following table is a combination of citations from Mbiti (1990) Oladipo (2006), Ekanola (2003), Nsamaneng (1995), Setiloane (1998) and Mbigi (2005). The macro-cosmos refers to the universe (and all its contents) in which God is encountered as the source and purpose of creation. The meso-cosmos refers to the spiritual realm (situated in the world of the individual and transcendent) where energies interchange and the micro-cosmos refers to the physical domain (the cognitive, affective, behavioural and motivational daily existence) of the individual, yet influenced by the meso-cosmos and macro-cosmos.

In the table (**Table 5.3**) the key characteristics of each domain within the African cosmology have been listed. Notable in these features is the interrelated nature of these domains.

Table 5.3 - THE THREE DOMAINS OF AN AFRICAN COSMOLOGY		
The macro-cosmos	The meso-cosmos	The micro-cosmos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The universal reality domain in which God is encountered • The spiritual and religious realm of existence that enfolds all human existence • The place where God exists transcendentally with ancestors (the living dead) and can be eminently/inherently experienced in daily routines of life. • Anchored in this domain all life is spiritual • There is an open door between 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The domain of the spirits – <i>a no man's land</i>. • The spiritual world where all forces coincide – ancestors, malignant spirits and sorcerers' operational realm. • Situated in the world of the individual and collective imagination – involves ancestors, human and animal life and the natural physical reality • The spirits in this realm influence human behaviour – almost to the point of regulation and control • The space that gives form to good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The domain of the individual and their daily collective existence • It is wholly influenced by the macro-cosmos and meso-cosmos based on the following principles: survival of the community (tribe); union with nature; co-operation; interdependence; collective responsibility • In this domain Western psychological values of 'individuality', 'uniqueness' and 'differences' are often replaced by 'communality', 'group orientation' and 'agreement'.

<p>sensible (perceptible and physical) and a non-sensible (non-perceptible and spiritual)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophically in this domain there is no distinction between: the sacred and worldly, religion and non-religion, the spiritual and physical • Everything belongs together in this realm like one big ecosystem – no dissection of the world and people – the collective functioning of people and natural reality • People and nature live in partnership 	<p>and bad fortune, desires, fears and hope for success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour cannot always be explained in empirical and rational terms; it is always attributed to powers beyond • This is the domain of human dreams and motivation • Forces in this domain are channelled through ritual to become goodwill and protective care for the individual – in bad instances they can come as punishment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self concept is 'we' / 'us' rather than 'I' • Logical choice is an outcome of the objective personal and subjective collective sense of being • The individual is an active force that is expected to contribute positively towards the community • Characterised co-operation rather than competition • Values and ethics are normative rather than individualistic • Personal development is community achievement
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According to Viljoen (2003) the above illustrated African cosmology highlights the integrated nature of reality that gives the human being a pivotal place within the dynamic universe. In essence the African cosmology functions in holistic and systemic spatial terms where people live in a dynamic relationship with God, ancestors, each other and the natural environment – creating an ecosystemic field of energy and existence. In support of the essence of African culture, Biko (1978, p.46) argues that African thought and comprehension of the world has a particular contribution to make on the world stage:

We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.

5.5.6 Spiritual and religious perspectives of personality

Historically the link between personality and religion has been studied as an academic entity in psychology of religion and comparative religions. The first notable conceptions of the influence of spirituality (or religion) on personality were in depth psychology – the branch of psychology which focuses on the conscious and unconscious processes of the human psyche. Although in the beginning *depth psychology* (through Freud's psychoanalysis that dismissed religion as an 'illusion') had a negative view of religion, its recent theorists show that spirituality plays an important role in the formation of the person's '*moral ego*' (Wulff, 2010). The second psychological approach is the *psychogenesis* theory (Jung, 1875-1981; Maslow, 1908-1970; Fromm, 1900-1980) that locates the origins of spirituality in the human psyche, either as 'projection' of human attributes or as part of the innate self-



actualisation tendency of human beings (Wulff, 2010). The third approach is the *psychomorphosis* approach that is represented by the work of scholars like Frankl (1984), who pointed out the positive effects of spirituality in helping people find meaning and value in their lives. The fourth approach is *psychotherapy*, which is predominantly used in healing and nurturing positive choice in an individual's life (Wulff, 2010). Current literature (Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Wilber, 2000) further suggests that spiritual experiences cannot be fully explained by empirical studies because of the transcendental nature of those experiences.

There are also those who approach spirituality from a sociological point of view. When sociologists study religion or spirituality they concern themselves with how religion promotes lives and helps deal with social evil within community structures. There is also a strong moral inclination in their analysis of religion, such as the work of Karl Marx who saw religion as a 'sigh' or 'cry' of the oppressed. Sociologists (Connolly, 1999; Wilson, 1992) have also challenged religion for its contribution to the problems of evil in the world. In short, the social functions of religion include uniting society, providing consolation to the afflicted, hope and courage for community progression, motivation and meaning. From a PIPL perspective sociologists highlight the social nature of the human being and community building.

As highlighted earlier, spirituality and religion also deal with the fundamental issue of human existence – philosophy. In my opinion, the philosophical arguments of spirituality can be classified into five categories (which will not be discussed in this paper as they are similar to the philosophical issues of the PIPL perspective): ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral and mystical religious experiences.

All the above philosophical, psychological and sociological approaches to spirituality and religion are evident in the major monotheistic religions in the world that have historically shared the major religious perspectives of most people in the world, namely: the Judeo-Christian perspective, the Islamic perspective, the Eastern spiritual (Buddhist) and the African religious perspective (Omeregbe, 1993; Smith, 2009a). Together these traditions have philosophically and theologically shaped more than half of the world's population.



5.5.6.1 Judeo-Christian perspective

Broadly the Judeo-Christian scriptures understand human beings to be spiritual beings who are primarily in relationship with God (primary relationship), in a relationship with 'the self' (secondary relationship), in relationship with other people (community as sacred place of nurture) and in relationship with creation. The spiritual life dimension is core to the experience of human purpose and meaning. The scriptural foundations of this perspective present human beings as multilayered beings with a 'heart', 'spirit', 'body', 'flesh', 'soul' and 'mind' (Verrier, 2005; Smith, 2005). These concepts are not technically precise concepts but they are multilayered concepts that are sometimes used interchangeably or as functional and moral dispositions. PIPL agrees with the essential integrated nature of the human being as held within the Judeo-Christian perspective. Sin in the Christian perspective is 'missing the mark' or 'violating' the sacred relationships between God and the individual, the individual and the community and the cosmos (Hicks, 2003). Human beings, as rational beings, are expected to employ their body/strength (physical dimension), spirit/soul (spiritual dimension), heart (emotional dimension) and mind (mental/psychological dimension) to worship God and work towards the realisation of the kingdom of God - a world-put-to-right by God righteousness and sense of justice (Abraham, 1985; Smith, 2009a).

5.5.6.2 The Islamic perspective

The term *Islam* means submission, surrender or obedience. Within the Islamic perspective, human beings are intrinsically bound to God and can only know Him through obedience (Smith, 2009). Each person is composed of three parts -spirit, carnal soul, and body. These components are so interrelated, and their needs are so different, that neglecting one will result in our failing to attain perfection (Omeregbe, 1993). God-directedness is an indispensable prerequisite for living a meaningful and purposeful existence. The most consummate happiness is to embody and manifest the Divine attributes and characteristics. The soul of a truly happy person develops by knowing and loving God, and is illuminated by spirit emanating from the Godhead (Abrahams, 1985). Human beings can choose to be free from God and or volitionally obey God and realise their potential (Connolly, 1999).



5.5.6.3 The Buddhist perspective

Humans are interconnected and interdependent beings with an inseparable relationship with other people and the Transcendent. Our essence of being, thoughts, actions and feelings and capacity to flourish are enormously influenced by our relationships (Smith & Verrier, 2005). A person realises true humanness in his or her ability to transcend the 'self', connect with others and discover his or her purest sense through detachment from material reality. Human beings also have the freedom to choose well-being, irrespective of their circumstances- behaviour is basically an outcome of the decisions and choices and circumstances (Viljoen, 2003).

5.5.6.4 African religious perspective

African approaches to spirituality share the same ontological and phenomenological premise with African philosophy (Mbiti, 1970; Setiloane, 1998; du Toit, 2004; Ramose, 1995). African spirituality and theology distinctively highlight the holistic 'meaning-giving horizon' and the supremacy of deity (du Toit, 2004; Mbiti, 1990). In the African cosmology God is the supreme creator of the universe and people, who is both transcendent and immanent (Mbiti, 1990; Setiloane, 1998). The reference to people within the African cosmos includes past (ancestors or the living dead), present and future generations (Teffo & Roux, 2002; Mbiti 1990). According to Mbigi (2005) the attachment to land and natural environment within the African mind is not only about taking care of the received heritage but also about the responsibility to sustain the environment that is part of my identity - a gift towards future generations. The environment is a deeply spiritual and sacred avenue (Mbiti, 1990).

According to Ekanola (2006) the traditional African world view is also replete with 'spirits'. The concept of spirit is the constant feature amongst African belief systems. The term 'spirit' refers to the intangible and usually invisible that is generally understood as a "special mode of being or an entity of existing in that mode" (Horton, cited in Ekanola, 2006, p.78). The spirit in African thoughts is as real as any object and affects material existence indirectly or even directly if it becomes visible. It is resident in the human body, in the three cosmic domains, with ancestors and God and can move between the different entities of the cosmos. The spirit is invoked through ritual and can act as a guiding presence or purging presence in the



community. Sometimes particular rituals are performed to remove 'bad spirits' (usually natural catastrophes, evil spirits like death) from the community (Setiloane, 1998). In essence the person in African thought is both spirit and conduit to the spirit – life force of the community.

5.6 CONSCIOUSNESS RESEARCH AND AFRICAN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

To understand African consciousness it needs to be contextualised within the broader framework of consciousness research. According to Zelazo, Moscovitch and Thompson (2007) contemporary research on consciousness has taken a trans-disciplinary nature that is sometimes difficult to classify and locate in one discipline. Broadly, consciousness research covers a broad range of fields, including cognitive, socio-cultural, philosophical, anthropological and neuro-scientific approaches to research (Zelazo, Moscovitch & Thompson, 2007; Wilber, 2000; Lancaster, 2004). Lancaster (2004) classifies contemporary studies on consciousness into; spiritual/mystical, neuro-physiological, cognitive and neuro-psychological and depth-psychological approaches. Forster (2006) and Arden (1998) make us aware that consciousness research can either take an objective empirical approach (biological and sociological areas – studying the functions of the brain) or the subjective phenomenological one such as in religion, philosophy and psychology.

Lancaster (2004) suggests that an integrative approach that does not diminish the specific contribution of each discipline proves more beneficial to study the nature of consciousness. Wilber's (2000) asserts that an integral approach to psychology and research on human consciousness bridges the gap between the diverse disciplines. Lancaster (2004), whilst in agreement with Wilber, notes that the major critique on integrative approaches is the lack of specificity and the integration of methodologies. Currently research (Judith, 1996; Wilber 1997; 2000; Zelazo *et.al*, 2007 & Lancaster, 2004) on human consciousness features in a number of disciplines, namely; Cognitive Science, Philosophy, Neuropsychology, Individual Psychotherapy, Social Psychology, Clinical Psychiatry, Developmental Psychology, Psychosomatic Medicine, Eastern And Contemplative Traditions, Quantum Consciousness and those who study Subtle Energies. It is on the basis of this spread of academic



endeavours that Wilber and Lancaster postulate that future studies in human consciousness should be integrative.

5.6.1 An integral approach to consciousness

The African philosophical presuppositions above suggest an integral approach to African reality and personality. According to Wilber (2000) and Forster (2010) the best way to work towards a dynamic and holistic appreciation of human beings is to take into account the 'four quadrants' of human existence – the intentional, behavioural, cultural and social. Wilber (2000, p.72) argues that these quadrants are an integration of numerous fields of knowledge and developmental theories that have credibility within various branches of human knowledge – “from stellar physics to molecular biology, from anthropology to linguistics, from developmental psychology to ethical orientations, from cultural hermeneutics to contemplative endeavours – taken from both Eastern and Western disciplines, and including pre-modern, modern and postmodern sources. Wilber (2000) further argues that this broad spectrum of research embraces the exterior-individual (or behavioural), interior-individual (or intentional), exterior- collective (or social), and interior-collective (or cultural) realities of existence.

When contextualising consciousness research within African philosophy and existence, Forster (2006; 2010) contends that this is a helpful bridge between subjective, objective, inter-subjective, and inter-objective world of research and existence. Such an integrative approach to consciousness is reminiscent of African formative theories of personality like the concept of *ubuntu* and the holistic nature of the PIPL perspective. Forster (2010) calls the emerging consciousness and approach to personhood, a generous ontology.

5.7 CONCEPTUALISING SPIRITUALITY WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP DISCOURSE

I should point out here, that the reference to spirituality or the spiritual life dimension within this study is based on two premises: the first is the assertion made by scholars (Aburdene, 2005; Hicks, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999) on spirituality in the workplace that spirituality will be a major driver (megatrend) of the workplace in the future; and the PIPL belief that the spiritual life dimension is the core dimension of



the eight life dimensions of a human being. Hicks (2003) make us aware that the study of spirituality within psychology and leadership sciences uplifts it from the traditional view that spirituality is a subset of religion. Smith and Smith (2009) further note that centuries of research on the concept of 'spirit' have not yielded an accurate definition of the concept of 'spirit' and 'spirituality'. Even though there are countless words and metaphors within cultures, languages and continents that define 'spirit', none have been adequate. All definitions have only served as windows and pointers to a bigger reality (Gibbons as cited in Klenke, 2003). Narayanasamy (in Ledger, 2001) takes the argument further, stating that spirit (or even spirituality) is not only a difficult concept to define but that it also cannot be easily measured – it is like trying to measure or contain the immeasurable.

Recent scholars (Smith & Smith, 2008; Tolle, 2005; Klenke, 2003; Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Prescott, 2000; Judith, 1996) agree that the concept of 'spirit' can only be known in terms of its essence, because its true depth is intangible. Tolle (2005) contends that the essence of spirit is 'being' – the innermost, ever-present, invisible, indestructible true nature (being). Prescott (2000) uses a musical concept of the piano to illustrate this essence – the keys of a piano are the body, and the music that comes out when playing is the spirit. Zohar and Marshall (2004) and Prescott (2000) further make us aware that the spirit is the part of being that gives conscious awareness of self, connects us to the universe and is not bound by time, space and age.

There is substantial agreement that the spirit is the formless, non-local, L-energy (Life and Love energy), that gives life to the individual and connects us with our higher consciousness (Dyer, 2001; Prescott, 2000). In essence, a spiritual person will be characterised by consciousness, purposeful life, connectedness, ability to detach from material stuff, transcendence and compassion (Smith & Smith, 2009). Unlike other research disciplines that use the words 'spirit' or 'soul' interchangeably, within the PIPL perspective, there is a further distinction between these terms. According to Smith and Smith (2008) the 'soul' (a synonym for 'psyche') is the central focus within psychology studies. Psychology as it were studies the mind, thoughts and emotions, memory, personality, conditioning and the will. And these are all resident in the subconscious or psychological mind (Soul mind – Ego mind)



(Smith & Smith, 2009). On the other hand, spirit represents our higher consciousness (Spiritual mind) that is non-local and transcendent.

From a functional perspective, Hawks (1994, p. 6) summarises the goal of spirituality as:

[Having] a high level of *faith*, hope, and commitment in relation to a well-defined worldview or belief system that provides a sense of *meaning* and *purpose* to existence in general, and that offers an ethical path to *personal fulfilment* which includes *connectedness with self, others, and a higher power or larger reality*.

Hawks (1994) further notes that spirituality has four domains of spirituality – the personal, communal, environmental and transcendental aspects of one's spirituality. In agreement with Hawks (1994), Coyle (2002) states that spirituality has a number of functions: (i) *transcendental* - intrapersonal and transpersonal transcendence or **connectedness** that provides mental attitudes that enable calmness and balance in different life situations; (ii) *Structural - behaviourist approach* – certain values or **belief systems** (i.e. Theological and Metaphysical principles) lead to appropriate behaviour in life and work situations. For example, in an organisation the organisational structure and ethics code should lead to certain behaviours, and (iii) *the value-guidance function* – **acquiring knowledge**, clarifying personal values (or universal principles), growing one's sense of identity and beliefs leads to awareness and competent and ethical behaviour.

According to Smith (2009a) spirituality at its best should connect the person to their life source (higher self) and to their purpose and meaning in life. Disconnection from this core dimension leads to dissonance in all the other dimensions. Twerski (2007) calls this disconnection Spiritual Deficiency Syndrome (SDS) in which a person experiences dis-ease or an existential vacuum (Frankl, 1984). According to Zohar and Marshall (2000), spiritual self is the only aspect of our life that is able to transcend any reality and help us reconnect to our true-north values. The use of the concept spirituality in this discussion refers to all these broad categories of understanding spirituality.



5.8 ASC AND PIPL MASTERY

The PIPL perspective and ASC thrive on the overlapping and compatibility of theoretical assumptions from a number of theoretical perspectives. The literature review above suggests that ASC can be conceptualised as a narrative, integrative, ecosystemic, inter-subjective consciousness of personhood. African philosophy (Aladipo, 2006; Mbiti, 1990; Ekanola, 2006) scholars suggest that the African reality is a residue of a narrative inquiry to the non-textual world of the African people. Such a narrative journey exposes one to the ecosystemic world of the African people. According to Moore (2003) an ecosystemic view begins from the interrelatedness and integrated nature of all living organisms and phenomena – how they interact, counteract and co-operate to create a dynamic systemic optimal life within its system and subsystems. The narratives that people tell about their personal, interpersonal and professional dimensions create ecology of ideas that shape the essence of their existence. In this context, the individual exists as a subset of the community that functions as the bigger ecosystem. Wilber's (2000) and Forster's (2010) concept of inter-subjective consciousness enables us to understand that identity and personhood in the African world view does not begin from the Newtonian view of reality as objective but from an integral approach that can only be socially constructed. Personal identity in this vein of thought emerges from a generous ontology that holds the objective and subjective spheres of knowledge and experience in creative tension.

ASC also highlights the importance of the spiritual life dimension. It seems that life in the African world view is a seamless liturgy mediated through family and communal rituals. The role of self-transcendence and connectedness with self, others and higher power needs to be further demystified for the modern work place because as Biko (1978) argues that, it will restore the human face to the discourse on human existence in the world. Smith's (2009) conception of the three minds – ego mind, conscious mind and spiritual mind – provides a creative bridge that begins to honour the depth of human existence.

According to Western (2008), the emerging eco-systemic approach to leadership (Eco-leadership) focuses on value of connectivity, inter-dependence, ethics and



leadership spirit within organisations. In practice it aims at creating distributed leadership, encouraging leadership from the edge and building networks that are responsive and adaptive to change. To achieve this model of leadership within the current workplace requires recognition of the workplace as an interconnected ecosystem that can only be natured by sustaining strong networks and building coalitions and collaborative relationships. Embracing African Spiritual Consciousness within such organisations requires new business models, new organizational forms and new leadership development paradigm that are sensitive to the emerging forms of personhood and motivation.

In summary, PIPL development within this framework requires an integrated approach, as suggested by Kets de Vries and Cheak (2010). An integrated approach is a multidisciplinary approach that will bring together the philosophical, psychological, spiritual, psychodynamic and humanistic approaches to leadership development. PIPL mastery in the African context requires a wider base of resources than the traditional individualistic approaches.

5.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical and philosophical assumptions of the PIPL perspective. I have also made a case for ASC in understanding personality and leadership development. Relevant input across the disciplines of leadership, psychology, African philosophy and religion have been used to merge the conceptual framework for understanding PIPL mastery from an African perspective. The following chapter (**Chapter 6**) is an integrative analysis of the themes that emerge from both this literature and the data collected through the life history in chapter 4.



CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS

Actual human interdependence is far greater than our contemporary values recognize. Understanding this interdependence is critical to our health, our sense of belonging, and even the survival of the human community.

Where interdependence is nourished, it provides a healing web with remarkable powers for regeneration of the human potential.

Pilisuk and Parks (1986, p. xi)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

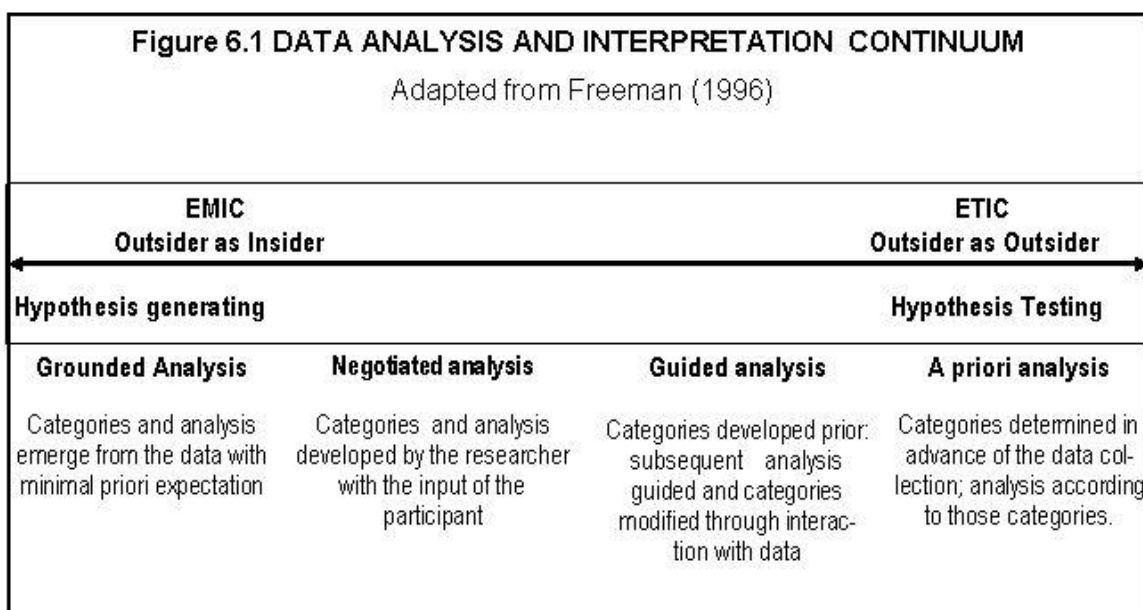
As stated earlier in Chapter 2 and 3, I employed the grounded theory (GT) approach to data analysis in order to conceptualise African Spiritual Consciousness through conducting narrative inquiry into Muzi's social world. According to Strauss and Corbin (1994; 1998), there are four critical aspects of GT analysis. This process begins with **highlighting key passages, phrases and words in the transcripts** that the researcher deems as '**critical content / instances**'. The formal processes of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding respectively follow the highlighting. In this chapter, I discuss how I analysed Muzi's story using these techniques. I also discuss how the emerging themes relate to the current literature within PIPL (as discussed in **Chapter 5**). The goal of this analysis is to identify a core category or general themes that can form the basis for theory generation.

6.2 THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

I believe that the data analysis process for this study began from the very start of the data collection process. Fundamental to my analysis was my attempt to give voice to the conceptualisation of ASC within the PIPL perspective. I believe that both the research participant and I were aware that I was attempting to verbalise and make sense of his understanding of ASC within PIPL mastery. The data collection journey necessitated the use of an "iterative" rather than a "linear" data gathering process (Freeman, 1996). Although I outlined most of the methodological issues and philosophical beliefs about the research process in **Chapter 2** and **3**, the process of the research revealed a number of issues that I had to consider.

I had to consider how I was going to link the analysis outcomes with the literature review in a way that respects the integrity of the GT method. This was a challenge because the process of data collection was a combination of prior defined categories of PIPL and life history interviewing techniques. According to Freeman (1996), data analysis exists within a continuum of hypothesis generating and hypothesis testing. From a hypothesis testing (or '*priori analysis*') approach, the categories for analysis are determined in advance of the data collection and the analysis proceeds in relation to the pre-specified categories. According to Dhunpath and Samuel (2009), this approach is akin to empirical studies. On the opposite end of the continuum of data analysis is the *grounded analysis* approach, which allows the categories of analysis to emerge from the data with minimal a priori expectation.

This approach is particularly resonant with the grounded theory approach that aims at generating hypotheses as the outcome of research. Freeman (1996) argues that in between these two extreme analytical categories exist two further categories called *negotiated analysis* and *guided analysis*. Negotiated analysis refers to an analysis in which the researcher, with the input of the research participant, develops the categories of analysis. Guided analysis involves developing categories in an a priori way, but subsequent interaction with the data guides the analysis and modifies the categories (Samuel, 2009).



Although, the PIPL framework was a *priori* template for the interviews (see Appendix ASC 02) I used GT analysis to generate ASC themes within the existing PIPL framework. In a way data analysis was guided to an extent by the PIPL framework.

6.3 THE CODING PROCESS

In Chapter 2, I defined the stages of coding information from a grounded theory perspective. The first thing I did was to read the story a few times and in the process highlighted key words and phrases as I went along. Highlighting key words and phrases guided my process of open coding. **Figure 6.2** illustrates the technique of **highlighting key features** I used to identity initial critical words and phrases in Muzi's story. The use of different colours helped to cluster themes into related subjects.

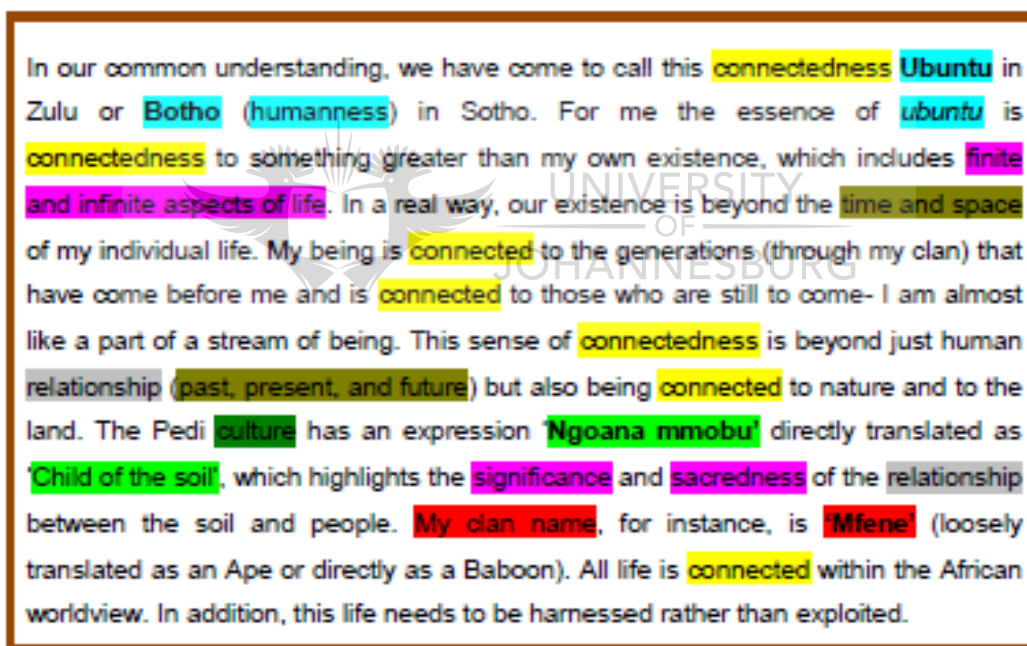


Figure 6.2 – Example of highlighted key words and phrases

The next stage of analysis was the open coding. After highlighting the documents I sat with an excel spreadsheet and began putting together key phrases that I found to be giving meaning to Muzi's story. The highlighted words and different colours began to create a tentative patchwork of themes that came out of the story. The key for me was to search for uniformities in the data as suggested by Holloway and Wheeler (1996). In the **Table 6.1**, I present some of the key themes and insights from Muzi's story.

TABLE 6.1 – SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING THEMES

no.	Theme
1.	Belonging, collective solidarity, connectedness, dignity, harmony and authenticity
2.	Family and community as a place of support, belonging, care and interdependence
3.	Apartheid vs. non racialism - Reconciliation and Forgiveness
4.	Celebration as a way of building, nurturing and strengthening community
5.	African versus Western paradigms of thought
6.	Ngoana mmobu – we all belong to the same ‘soil’
7.	Ubuntu – an African ethic of being that can be employed in developing leaders
8.	Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu – I belong therefore I am (Mbiti, 1990)
9.	God, Modimo, uThixo, Supreme Being, Ancestors – source of life and all being
10.	Community as custodians of the talents and skills of their people
11.	Kings and chiefs – as custodians of society – distributors of wealth – protect the vulnerable
12.	Worship as a way of edifying God and enriching human life
13.	Ikhankatha - a mentor or guide
14.	Ukuyala – instruction and training
15.	Competition, materialism, greed, individualism as threats to society
16.	Storytelling, poetry, music and community rituals of initiation and mentoring
17.	Loving self, loving others, loving creation – preserving rather than destroying life
18.	Sacredness of all life – living in harmony with nature
19.	Link between personal health and harmony within the community
20.	Language as ontological premise
21.	I vs. We - identity
22.	Life as dynamic and evolves
23.	Ubuntu vs. resources – when resources are few, ubuntu is threatened
24.	Commodification of skills, and people
25.	Accumulation as a goal leads to emptiness
26.	Meaning through harmonious relationships
27.	Co-operation vs. Competition
28.	Hospitality, compassion, empathy, tolerance and respect
29.	Interconnectedness of reality and life
30.	Compartmentalisation as threat to life
31.	Individualistic growth vs. collective growth
32.	Openness, humility and supportiveness
33.	Mhla ubuyalwa kwakukho umoya – it was windy on the day you were instructed
34.	Culture and rituals as a way of preserving society, values and guarding heritage
35.	All people have innate value
36.	There is an open door between life and death
37.	Living in such a way that you leave a legacy and a positive heritage for future generations
38.	‘etla moyeni re je kawena’ – come stranger and make the feast complete
39.	Charity – your humanity is measured by how much you contribute to other people’s lives
40.	basilethele inhlanhla – strangers as a source of goodwill

After identifying the themes through open coding, I considered an approach for conducting axial coding on such a wide range of themes. With the advice of Dr Viljoen I decided to use the PIPL framework to map the interrelationship and categorise the emerging themes. Although this study used a grounded theory method of inquiry, that does not mean that knowledge and theory related to the topic are not explored at all. In fact, part of the literature review I presented in **chapter 5** happened prior to data collection in order to lay a foundation for the research on conceptualising ASC within PIPL. The rest of the literature was finalised after the data collection process. In my final coding, I also considered important insights gained from Muzi's story and the literature review. Therefore, the following discussion integrates the overall findings of the study.

6.4 ANALYSIS OF THEMES IN MUZI'S LIFE STORY

In the following discussion, I discuss the insights I gained through coding Muzi's story. I also provide summative paragraphs that give an African perspective on each of the dimensions of PIPL.

6.4.1 Personal background - the connectedness of life

As children, we were always made to feel that we were part of the community. Sometimes we would have meals at different homes in the neighbourhood...Looking at the work I do and back to my upbringing, I am grateful that my community taught me the connectedness of life and living...I can almost see the flux of influences (good and bad) I had to engage, in creating and shaping my identity.

The word connectedness is littered throughout Muzi's story. This suggests to me that **'relationships' and 'being connected'** to other people within the African perspective are critical elements in defining one's identity. As I listened to Muzi I increasingly became convinced that people (family and society) play a critical role in how he has come to define his priorities in life. In his own words, Muzi argued, "my humanity is measured by my connectedness to others". I also noted in Muzi's story that this connection goes beyond human beings. It emerged that most Africans view their personal behaviours as intertwined with the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others with whom they share interdependent relationships (Hanks, 2008). **Life in Africa is an endless web of connections.** When these connections are severed, life loses its integrity and unity.



Linked to the concept of connectedness is the idea of **'belonging'** as a basic premise of self-understanding - this is a critical feature in African thought. According to Tutu (1999):

A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.

Most of the personality theories discussed in **Chapter 5**, with the exception of the Eastern and African theories, conceive personhood based on personal attributes, personality, and psychological realities of a person. The underlying consciousness in the African worldview is that "to do wrong does not mean merely to be individually in disharmony with the order of nature, but rather to harm and disorganise this order itself" (Van Vlaenderen, 2001, p. 152). Harmony, co-operation, and interdependence are more than idealistic concepts in Africa.

Living from the principle of belonging to something bigger than an individualistic pursuit, you prize the values of solidarity, partnership, and co-operation more than competition and self-centred accumulation. As it came out in Muzi's story, his relationship with people begins from the premise that he lives to contribute to others rather than take away from society for personal gain. If I belong to something bigger, I have a challenge to treat people and the environment with care because they constitute part of my identity. This view of life resonates with Cashman's (2008) definition of leadership as an authentic self-expression that adds value to self and others.

In my experience within the Swazi culture, when you meet an elderly person on the road they ask you; *uwakabani* or *ungumsa wabani?* (What is your surname or who is your father?); and *uwekuhleza phi* (which clan or area do you come from?). Often people ask these two questions before they even ask you your name. The significance of your social relatedness as a primary depiction of your identity almost to the point of making personal attributes secondary is a common feature within African cultures. Positive behaviour not only edifies your personal identity but also brings honour to your clan and ancestors. Often when they congratulate you people



would exclaim, *hhawu atala emaphephetse*¹! (Your clan gave birth to a real son or daughter!) or *abatalanga babola ematfumbu!* (You were born from a defiled womb!). It is therefore vital in our current leadership discourse to engage the issues of belonging and connectedness in identity facilitation at personal, interpersonal and professional levels of life.

Forster's (2010) concept of an inter-subjective approach to identity facilitation is a challenge in the current leadership context. As Muzi noted, there is still a lack of literature on African approaches to PIPL mastery. Whilst saying that, Muzi explains a number of rituals of initiation, mentoring, and coaching informally used by African societies that leadership theorists have not sufficiently embraced. Forster (2006; 2010) proposes that scholars should make a journey towards an inter-subjective approach to understanding individual identity. Both the literature and the life-story bemoan the lack of stories that validate the subjective realities of African leaders that shape their leadership practice. I think such stories can reveal the wealth of wisdom resident in the poetry, metaphors, and stories of African peoples.

Muzi's story also highlights the importance of the subjective experiences in creating meaning in life. As social constructivists point out, identity and meaning emerge as products of the natural as well as the eco-systemic (created within a particular construct of relationships or sociology) aspects of life (Burr, 1995). Current research on human development suggests that identity and meaning are products of biology, socialisation, and choice or intention (Seligman, 2002). In this regard, I suspect that taking seriously the **narrative and subjective experiences of African leaders would bring us to the verge of new leadership development theories.**

From the life-history, there is evidence of the impact of the Apartheid system on the people's access to human development resources such as education. Muzi jokingly notes that his gaining access to university was an 'escape from ignorance'. He also notes the lack of good teachers and the resultant poverty that devastated many. On the other hand, he also speaks about the way his parents and grandparents looked back with nostalgia on the days when as black people, they lived with white people

¹ My clan name



and 'coloured' people in the same community. Despite the remaining challenges of transformation and restoration in South Africa, Muzi's story still holds a strong vision of a community characterized by sharing, solidarity, and tolerance. In my opinion, the political challenges within the Southern African region continue to pose major challenges for leadership and PIPL mastery.

Muzi's life story also stands as a challenge towards current leadership development approaches. Current literature (Cashman, 2008; Covey, 1994; Smith, 2009a) predominantly understands personal leadership mastery as an objective 'inside out' process of self-mastery. Muzi's story suggests that this view needs to be further analysed, as there are obvious subjective realities that affect the process of self-mastery. A further question that rises from Muzi's story is the relationship between behavioural and cognitive psychology approaches to identity facilitation. This challenge leads us to the unending debate on nature and nurture² aspects of individual identity. This suggests that the behavioural elements of identity have a critical role in shaping experience. In my opinion, (as discussed in **Chapter 5**) Muzi's assertion exposes the limitation of individualistic approaches to personal mastery and calls for a holistic approach. I now turn to discuss the ASC insights that emerged from the Personal, interpersonal and professional dimensions of Muzi's life-story.

6.4.2 Personal leadership mastery

From a PIPL perspective, personal leadership mastery entails growing your reality awareness and realising your potential in a way that enables you to find a dynamic balance within your internal life dimensions – spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental dimensions (Smith, 2009). The basic assumption is that the internal dimensions filter, transform, and return all forms of energy received from the environment. Of the four internal dimensions, the spiritual life dimension is regarded as the core dimension. According to Muzi, personal mastery in the African context is not a distinctive process as it happens as part of the growth and maturation process. There is also no distinction between the personal, interpersonal, and

² The **nature versus nurture debate** concerns the relative importance of an individual's innate qualities (nature, biological, genetic heritage) versus personal experiences ("nurture," i.e. empiricism or behaviourism) in determining or causing individual differences in physical and behavioural traits.



professional domains of leadership. This is based on the assumption that '*in Africa you do not compartmentalise life*'. However, there are lessons on each of these dimensions that can be gleaned from the cultural experiences of people.

6.4.2.1 The spiritual life dimension

The current framework of PIPL acknowledges that the spiritual life dimension is the core dimension of the human being. It is evident from the life-history that spirituality filters into every dimension of life. In Africa, there is also a basic belief in the connectedness of life. This life and the universe are held together by the spirit or 'spirits'. According to Muzi, spirituality in the African context is not something you connect to and disconnect to, but it is the very essence of life. According to Ekanola (2006) the African worldview is replete with spirit(s) and these spirit(s) are conceived as the animating, sustaining and creative force of the universe that control and direct human behaviour and dispositions. According to Muzi this spirit is transcendent – (*I am connected to something bigger than I am*) and immanent (*the spirit of the Supreme Being connects me with family, my community, nature and myself.*) From both Muzi's story and PIPL, the spirit also has ethical and motivational attributes. This means it energises people to move towards realising their highest potential and guides them towards ethical behaviour within the community.

The preceding thoughts are consistent with Coyle's (2002) contention that spirituality functions as a means of connecting with the immanent and transcendent aspects of life, structuring values, and priorities, guiding behaviour, and anchoring meaning and purpose. The insight that comes out clearly from the life-history and the literature is that connectedness in one's spiritual dimension should manifest in the quality of relationships at the personal, interpersonal and professional dimensions of life. The African perspective emphasises that connectedness with people and the environment is the goal of life. As Muzi clearly stated, if you do not live in relationship in Africa you are almost regarded as non-existent (a form of death). The worst form of punishment in Africa is isolation (Muzi). Spirituality within the African worldview creates a particular ecology of relationships (God, ancestors, people, the environment, and the individual) that span the past, present and future. In Africa, spirituality is the goal of life because being spiritual is not an individual



endeavour but an ongoing journey of nurturing your connectedness with all reality. According to Muzi, the individualistic pursuit of spirituality is foreign to Africa and has often led to abstraction and self-centred views of life.

When spirituality fails to connect us, it becomes an escapist endeavour, almost like what Karl Marx calls utopia and his famous dictum 'religion as the opium of the masses' - escapism. At its best, spirituality gives me the capacity to absorb the worst and the best of life and still be convinced of its essential goodness.

This does not discount the value of a personal commitment to nurturing one's spiritual well-being. According to Ekanola (2006), Africa's contribution is that the human being is an admixture of the physical and spiritual – and these are inseparable.

I believe that life is a constant outpouring of self within and between the private and personal spaces, family, ethnic, communal, political and many other spaces of interaction....Life emerges as the essence of this dynamic interaction. The ultimate challenge is to go into a deeper experience of life, seeking to go beyond what philosophers sought to understand into experiencing it as deeper love.

In my opinion African spiritual consciousness can expand our conception of the journey towards self-discovery beyond the individualistic tone of spirituality in the current leadership literature on spirituality within the workplace. There are clear connections between African and Western notions of spirituality as a form of connectedness.

6.4.2.2 Emotional life Dimension

Overall, there is no consistent teaching on managing emotions within the African mindset.

Although there is a lack of consistent teaching within African literature, there are lessons on understanding, managing and using emotions in life relationships. It is also evident that there is a gender-based analogy on expressing emotions. For instance, when men expressed emotions of vulnerability they would be told to 'men up' ('yiba yindoda' -become a man). Seemingly, from Muzi's account, African women have a better way of expressing emotions because the culture has elaborate rituals which force them to express emotions – especially during grief.



That being said, Muzi came across as one with a deep level of self-awareness of the importance of owning and expressing emotion appropriately.

I feel – I laugh, I cry, I get sad, I get angry. All these realities are true for my life....there are times when I feel weak and go through what St John of the Cross calls ‘the dark night of the souls’....Understanding my emotion within that darkness comes as an illumination that draws me to the light of God which reveals the emotional danger zones that need transformation.

Beyond the overt patriarchal nature of understanding emotion within the African context, there are very positive narratives on how to manage emotional issues. Through the examples of kings and community, Muzi revealed how leaders earned respect through their ability to contain emotion and make clear decisions without using inappropriate or emotional judgments. This suggests self-awareness and emotional intelligence. In Muzi’s story, there is a clear link between emotional intelligence and control, and being connected to others connected without avoiding emotions. I should note here that as I listened to Muzi’s story I realised that there is no clear research on emotional intelligence within African literature, except through the stories and narratives of leaders who lead with emotional intelligence and control. I think the contribution that ASC can make in understanding is through the way narratives code and help express emotions. There is a need for further research on the cultural location of emotional literacy which current leadership literature has not expressed.

6.4.2.3 Physical life Dimension

According to Muzi, the body is fundamentally a sacred gift that needs to be treated with respect. Even though there is no particular emphasis on understanding the body as a biological entity within the African worldview, the need to eat well and healthily is a given. Physical well-being is encouraged through idioms that encourage activity and discourage sloth. As discussed earlier (**Chapter 5**), in the African mind, the human body is both a physical and a spiritual entity. As such, the way we relate to our bodies should have long-term effects. In my culture, people often speak of living to see your children get married and play with grandchildren. Muzi also pointed out the continuity of life beyond the physical body. “There is an open gate between this life and the next; such that when someone dies, he or she returns to being a spirit and still communicates with those in this current reality”. So



respecting life, treating the body well is a vital task because it is a way of caring for the eternal spirit within the body.

The implications of viewing the body in this manner have clear links to the way Africans perceive disease:

In the African mind, sickness is not only about physical, but also about your surroundings and your connection to your family, community, ancestors and God. For example, if you have a wound, you would be told to clean it, if you have a headache, you would be told to take a purgative route to clean the system. In essence illness is never disconnected from external realities of the individual...your body is an avenue that both reveals the stability of your connected life as well as the avenue for the expression of what might be wrong.

The emphasis in the African perspective is in the dynamic relationship between the human body and environmental factors. This resonates with the PIPL perspective of the human body as a dynamic entity that is in constant relationship with its environment (Smith, 2009). Regrettably, there is no evidence of advanced knowledge of the biological factors of the human body within African literature. As a result, the experience of disease is often attributed to mystical spirits – sometimes said to be sent to you by witches. Muzi notes that this mythological view of the body can lead to a low regard for the specific scientific views on physical well-being. It is my contention that there is still reasonable room for research in this dimension of African peoples.

According to current studies (Smith, 2009) there are a number of African people who die of diseases that could be prevented. A *World Health Organisation* statistic taken in 2008, alleges that one in every four people in South Africa is obese and the life expectancy in the country is 48 years. Whilst acknowledging that the causal factors are beyond the health awareness, there is a low understanding of the biological factors that lead to poor health and premature death. The practical manifestations of the poor regard for health within the workplace are stress, lack of vitality in the workplace and lack of life balance between rest and activity. An added challenge for black male African people is that they are more prone to cardiovascular diseases than any other race and gender groups (Hales, 2007; Smith, 2009)



6.4.2.4 The mental life dimension

The African mind uses a narrative pattern of thought...we tell stories about what wisdom is and though these stories values and teachings are being carried through generations of people and cultures. In the African mind, there is a deep humility and openness because there is a deep appreciation of the mystery and connectedness of life...[therefore] the African mind is more inclined towards consensus with other minds than competition with them.

The above excerpt from Muzi's story has a number of dimensions of African views on the mind. From a cognitive psychology perspective, African thought seems to lean more towards the intuitive and associative approaches to knowledge rather than the serial and linear forms of thinking. According to Zohar and Marshall (2001; 2004), the future of leadership will be in the ability to use an integrative form of intelligence, which they call spiritual intelligence (SQ). The narrative nature of the African people suggests that SQ has been at home in Africa from antiquity. The challenge for the African person is to integrate general Intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). The narrative nature of the African mind also alludes to a narrative approach to leadership in the workplace, leadership development and coaching. In practice, narrative approaches to leadership tend to be holistic in essence – and this in turn will enable organisations to embrace people more holistically in the workplace.

An essential feature highlighted by Muzi's story in both PIPL and ASC is the need to keep an 'open mind' because knowledge at any given time is always partial. Cultivating this quality within the different leadership domains enables mental agility and dynamic mental well-being.

6.4.3 The interpersonal leadership mastery

I do not regard myself to exist outside of my social network. The popular maxim is 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (I am a person through other persons). I think the worst punishment anyone can get in life is not death but social exclusion. There is no construct outside the social construct – you exist because others exist.

According to Broodryk (2005), the concept of *ubuntu* (humanness) is a comprehensive framework through which African people view the world. According to Mutahhari (cited in Broodryk, 2006) a worldview entails a deducible premise that



gives meaning to reality and existence, motivates, and fosters commitment to ideals. As a relational ontology (Forster, 2010) *ubuntu* embraces “the values of non-discrimination, co-operation, cohesion, goodness, dignity and someone striving to master the life-coping skills of being human” (Broodryk, 2006, p.22).

In Muzi’s experience when someone says *ngumntu lo! Or O, ke motho!* (This is a person!). This literally means that you have lived your life in a harmonious, encouraging, and transforming experience with other people. The essence of personal identity within the African context is measured by one’s ability to add value to the lives of others. Personal mastery within the African context is not measured as an extension of the individual but as the person’s ability to live in peaceful and synergistic relationships. As Muzi pointed out when someone fails to live in a way that adds value, they can be referred to as a predator (or having lost their humanity). In this regard, *Ubuntu* is not only a value guidance principle it is also a philosophical basis for the preservation of the humanity of a people. In the case where a person is oppressed, the same phrase (*ngumntu lo!*) also invites the perpetrator to treat the other person as someone with equal worth. Furthermore, it is evident in Muzi’s story that within the *ubuntu* principle there is also a motivational dimension. Most communities in Africa celebrate and guard the talent of individuals by giving them space within the community to display their talents during community celebrations.

Some scholars (Oladipo, 2006; Mbiti, 1990; Viljoen, 2003) note that the down side of the *ubuntu* concept is the challenge of maintaining an individual identity within the community. Notable in Muzi’s narrative is that in the current African (particularly South African) context, the concept of *ubuntu* is threatened by the scarcity of resources. In Muzi’s words “in Rwanda when resources became an issue, people stopped being human and became Hutsis and Tutsis”, meaning that people begin to use other labels of discrimination when resources are scarce. In my view, the current discourse on Black Economic Empowerment and sharing of resources in South Africa is a typical case in point.

One further point on the African relational ontology is that there is a clear hierarchy on how family and community relationships work. As Muzi notes, the hierarchy is a helpful relational tool but it still needs to be challenged in terms of its patriarchal



nature - particularly on issues of gender justice. African leadership scholars, like Mbigi (2005) point out that the hierarchical nature of African cultures creates a particular leadership dynamic and relationship with authority in the workplace. Cilliers and Koortzen (2005) argue that, for black African men their understanding of authority and its boundaries is deeply influenced by the fact that they occupy a role within the cultural hierarchy superior to women. Kassin et.al (2007) cautions that, for better interpersonal relationships in the workplace, there is a constant need to check the cultural heuristics at play within relationships. In essence, as Muzi asserts:

Relationship mastery for me therefore means developing the patience and capacity to deal with the daily contradiction of life (or relating with people) and still contribute positively towards others. It further means developing self-awareness that allows me to live dynamically with people in a way that reminds them who they are at their best and who they can still become. You do not master relationship by control but by dynamically managing the nuances of living in relationships.

According to Van Vlaenderen (2001) any form of knowledge in the African world view is for a practical purpose, namely to be safe and prosperous - and this cannot be achieved by any person in isolation. Therefore, the practical aim of PIPL mastery is the social welfare of the group. The good is never seen as an individualistic advantage but always contains the perspective of participation in the communal life (Van Vlaenderen, 2001; Tutu, 1999).

6.4.4 Professional leadership mastery

The PIPL perspective of professional leadership mastery includes the vocational, financial, and ecological dimensions of life. From a theoretical perspective it entails an ethical, companionate, and logical application of self in the workplace in a way that synergistically and dynamically adds value to self and others (Covey, 1994; Cashman, 2008; Smith, 2009).

6.4.4.1 Vocational and financial life dimensions

Our modern culture is characterised by competition, climbing the pyramid and satisfying the pyramid creators, unaccountable business leaders, presidents using dodgy rhetoric to avoid reality and truth, materialism and greed. In such a world vocation becomes a selfish pursuit that is disconnected from the social setting of people and serving the greater good.



The above citation from Muzi's story summarises his inclinations and views on vocational well-being. In my literature review, there are very limited resources (Mbigi, 2005; Brookryk, 2006) on African views on vocational well-being. In Muzi's story, it is evident that African people have a structured way of allowing people to find their vocation and express it. Poets, farmers, musicians, and leaders would emerge through certain cultural practices. Once the skills have emerged, initiation and mentoring becomes the place of honing those skills. There is also a clear link between discovering your vocation and community service. In Muzi's words 'the commodification of services and skills is a modern phenomenon...in the African world view work was rarely a means of providing livelihood or a process of accumulation...it was always about service to the greater good and community well-being'.

The African perspective on vocation resonates with the PIPL perspective. Vocation from the PIPL perspective is about fulfilling one's deepest goal and through doing that you can provide for your needs and serve the community. Furthermore, the African community expected everybody in the community to work hard and not take away from the community but add value. Adding value in this regard meant that each person needed to avail their skills to the broader community to help the vulnerable secure a meaningful life. This in African cultures was (and still is) done through giving the vulnerable people cattle or goats or loaning a field to plough as a way of helping them find their feet. In the current worldview, African spiritual consciousness stands as a critique of the materialistic and individualistic culture promoted by leading economies in the world.

Just as selling one's skills was not a major motivation for work in the African perspective, the accumulation of wealth was not a high motive within that worldview. Muzi argues that 'money was not important for its own sake' but for the benefit of the family and the community. Muzi further acknowledges that culture has indeed changed (so has he) to the point where work and earning money is a vital component of life. In his argument, Muzi is adamant that "*if money becomes an end in itself, it will sooner or later run out of things to buy*". According to Muzi, "*money should serve my basic needs and the needs of the greater good of my family and community*". This conception of money is in agreement with the PIPL perspective



that views money as a means towards an end – how it can be used to deepen the meaning of life. The greater purpose of work and earning money is to fulfil one’s deepest goal and meaning in life – so work and money cannot become the master of the person’s heart.

6.4.4.2 The Ecological life Dimension

I see myself as a connected being...This means that I stop viewing other parts of life as meant for my consumption and personal entertainment – because such an attitude is exploitative of people and other forms of life...it measures human relationships in monetary terms...my mere warmth this winter is linked to someone across the globe who has dreams and hopes. Maybe this person has a dignified job or is exploited in order to bring me warmth.

In this extract lies Muzi’s fundamental belief about his place in the universe. As cited in the literature review (Chapter 4) the African world view seamlessly spans across the past, present and future. This worldview also includes the equal existence of animate and inanimate beings. According to Conradie (2006), the African perspective offers a respectful relationship between creation and human beings and halts the urge to exploit nature because it belongs to the human species. Hanks (2008, p. 127), in agreement with this worldview concedes:

There is a web of interconnectedness not just between peoples, but among all forms of life, and it is universally believed in Africa that humans are part of the natural world, not dominant over it. African worldviews place a great deal of importance on harmony with nature. Every aspect of life, animate and inanimate, is respected and revered by the African.

In my opinion, ASC departs from the egocentric and anthropocentric view of creation and the resources of the world and paves a possible route that can restore the dignity of creation and curb the prevalent ecological crisis of the world. The PIPL perspective has a slightly limited view on this subject matter as it only focuses on how the ecological space threatens the well-being of the individuals and their environment - it is human centred.



6.5 CULTURAL VARIABLES AND PIPL MASTERY

Throughout the reconstruction of Muzi's social reality, the subject of culture became unavoidable. The cultural dimensions of our life manifest in the personal, interpersonal, and professional dimensions of our lives. According to Kets de Vries (2001), we can no longer ignore the cultural elements and expressions of leadership within the global context. By culture, Kets de Vries (2001, p.228) refers to the "ideals, values, and assumptions about life that are widely shared among a population...that guide specific behaviour patterns...the habitual ways in which people of a nation deal with their internal and external reality. We all carry cultural stereotypes that need to be consciously engaged and countered when necessary. Kets de Vries (2001) further argues that culture influences the way leadership is perceived, the style of decision-making, the way motivation and control is understood and how one manages multicultural groups.

Kets de Vries (2001, p.231) summarises the cultural dimensions of leadership as follows: (i) *Environment* – how people perceive reality, goodness/evil, what is certain/uncertain, how to achieve control/harmony and the trust-mistrust continuum; (ii) *time* – monochronic/polychronic and past, present and future orientations of time; (iii) *thinking* – inductive and deductive, holistic/part oriented; (iv) power – egalitarian/hierarchic and ascription or achievement orientation; (v) relationships – some people view the world from individualistic/collectivistic, universalistic/particularistic, competitive/co-operative orientation; (vi) space – private/public orientation; (vii) language – high/low context language often influenced by the culture of orientation; (viii) action orientation – being/doing oriented and internal or external control and meaning; and (ix) emotion – expressive or inhibited.

In the literature reviewed for this study (chapter 5) and in Muzi's story, it is evident that African culture(s) are generally inclined towards a collectivistic and co-operative relational stance, inductive and holistic thinking, hierarchic power, and a polychronic time orientation that values past, present, and future as equally important. In addition, African culture has a narrative and dialogical approach to leadership. It is my contention that the West has subjected many a time Africa to cultural colonisation to the extent that leaders have to become clones of leaders



elsewhere. The future of leadership in the world needs to be both global and contextually relevant.

In the immediate South African context, many black African leaders have been subjected to competency and leadership development frameworks that have an individualistic approach to leadership. In Muzi's terms, this leads to reducing people to a set of skills required for a particular job rather than a full person at work. The challenge for human resource practitioners, academic researchers, and leadership development schools is the development of culturally relevant assessment tools in-tune with the contextual cultural variables. That being said, Kets de Vries (2001) further cautions that cultural sensitivity is not the ultimate goal; the goal is that leaders will fully embrace their culture and transcend to a plain where they are also globally competent. In that case, the cultural influences of the leader become a gift to the world's understanding of leadership.

6.6 EMERGING THEMES: ASC WITHIN THE PIPL PERSPECTIVE

The above analysis reveals a number of related themes that emerge from both Muzi's story and the reviewed literature. According to Henning (2004), using grounded theory analysis anticipates the emergence of theory from the causes and conditions of the studied phenomena. The following are some of the dominant themes that emerge from Muzi's conceptualisation of ASC within PIPL.

Firstly, in Muzi's story the connectedness of life echoes through as a foundational African perspective. This connectedness invites us to view leadership mastery from a holistic perspective. It also emerged that the connectedness of life within the African perspective seems broader than it is currently envisaged within PIPL. PIPL begins and ends with the individual mastering leadership in the three domains of life, and yet the African perspective highlights the social location of any human endeavour towards mastery. Mastery within ASC begins and ends with the ecosystem. Mastery is never an individual pursuit but a journey of growth that adds value to self and the community.

The **second** insight is the lack of compartments within the African worldview. As Muzi noted, although the current PIPL perspective has a holistic outlook, its endeavour to achieve specificity in the different dimensions of life leads it to the



verge of compartmentalisation. In support of the PIPL perspective, Wort (2011) argues that the eight life dimensions exist like atoms feeding from the same centre and constantly receiving and transferring energy to one another like a cog-screw. Smith (2009) uses the analogy of a transformer that receives energy from the environment, transforms it within the internal life dimensions and dissipates it to the environment (external life dimensions). The challenge remains: the PIPL emphasis is still anthropocentric and fails to validate other parts of creation in their own right.

From an African relational ontology, people exist within the ecosystem and they thrive through their connectedness (*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*). According to Wilber (2001), Forster (2006; 2010) and Viljoen (2003), the African perspective is based on an inter-subjective form of consciousness that integrates the objective and subjective components of human existence and reality. ASC emphasises that this connectedness is not an individualistic endeavour but a co-creation of identity through authentic relationship with other human beings and creation. It is my contention that the African ontological assumptions suggest that **personal mastery in not only an inside-out (objective) but also outside-in (subjective) process of growing self-awareness and potential realisation** – an inter-subjective approach to identity facilitation.

Thirdly, to come back to the pursuit for specificity, Muzi's story highlights the danger of trying to define matter into the finest detail. As he clearly states, specialisation and specificity are commodities of a market related approach to human relationships. Muzi laments that specialisation and specificity commodifies people and their skills. It reduces them to a few skills that are often defined by those that control the markets. The insight that emerged for me was the untested relationship between development and cultural erosion. According to Aburdene (2005) the danger of having markets without the spirit is the dehumanising nature of work. This insight for me highlights the need for spiritual consciousness in the workplace.

Fourthly, both PIPL and ASC begin from the premise that the spiritual life dimension is the core dimension of the human being. According to Mbiti (1990), all of life in Africa is spiritual and there is no exclusive dimension that can be called the



spiritual dimension that does not fill everyday existence. Based on this premise, the spiritual life dimension exists as the abode of meaning, value guidance, motivation, and purpose and the uniting Love-Life Energy force of life. The PIPL perspective places particular emphasis on the individual's ability to transcend the personal ego (soul mind –survival mind based on stored memory and fear driven) to connecting with the spiritual mind (connection to God or Supreme Being or universal force) and consciously (from the Conscious Mind – present awareness) living in the present from one's True-North values (Smith, 2009a). ASC locates the 'spirit' in the texture and content of relationships – poor relationships lead to spiritual death (dissonance). The African perspective bridges the gap between the transcendental elements of spirituality and the behavioural components to develop healthy relationships.

The **fifth** insight relates to the theoretical framework of both PIPL and ASC. The basic premise of PIPL is that it is an alternative form of leadership that integrates the sociological (leadership as influence - behaviour) and the psychological (character traits) aspects of leadership (Smith, 2008). In my view, the African perspective highlights the sociological aspect of leadership. As Biko (1978) once asserted that the African continent has the potential to give the world a human face, I think ASC within leadership stands as a suitable bridge for authentic PIPL mastery in Africa. In essence, ASC has the potential to create leaders within the African context who are grounded in the African reality and conception of life. I think this has promising prospects for the workplace.

Sixthly, the research process revealed the importance of the non-textual world of narrative and stories in the context of leadership development and mastery. As Drake (2008, p.52) wisely asserts “we use [stories] to remember and organise our past, communicate about and negotiate our present, and envision and act into our future”. It is my contention that leadership in the future needs a narrative approach as evidenced by the growing field of coaching psychology. Within the African context, in particular, narrative leadership development and coaching promises a respectful interaction with the cultural world of the African peoples that is filled with stories and metaphors. In the process of this study, Muzi told a number of stories



about leadership development, initiation, mentoring as well as celebration of achievement that grounded the theories of leadership in a real cultural context.

Seventhly, the location of identity within community in the African perspective has the potential to confuse the task, role, and boundaries for the individual in the workplace. According to Koortzen and Cilliers (2005) there is often an amount of conflict within the workplace that emanates from the failure of individuals to understand their normative (what they are suppose to do), existential (what they believe they are doing) and phenomenal (what others perceive them to be doing) roles. Koortzen and Cilliers (2005) add that the lack of understanding of the conscious and unconscious influences of African people's behaviour contributes to the poor sense of boundary; it often leads to conflict, failure to understand their own authority and ultimately role confusion.

Finally, the life history highlights that the essence of an African worldview of life is the desire for harmonious existence. The story revealed that such harmony could only be achieved through co-operation, compassion, unity and the ethics of *ubuntu* as outlined by African scholars like Mbigi (2005), Broodryk (2002), and Mbiti (2005). Upholding these values will lead us away from the competition, materialism, and individualism that dehumanise and commodify people. I think Mnyandu's (1997, p.81) conception of *ubuntu* provides a helpful hint of the promise of PIPL mastery from an African perspective:

Ubuntu is not merely positive human qualities, but the very human essence itself, which lures and enables human beings to become *abantu* or humanised beings, living in daily self-expressive works of love and efforts to create harmonious relationships in the community and the world beyond.

Therefore, these meta-insights and emerging themes have given voice to the conceptualisation of African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL perspective. As the outcomes of a grounded theory research journey, they have also opened avenues for further research using life-histories.



6.7 CONCLUSION

The above findings have primarily given voice to an African person's life-history. I have also given a rich, detailed, and varied description of the person's conceptualisation of ASC within PIPL. Although no specific trends related to PIPL mastery in the African context emerged, the description of his experience is helpful in that it adds greater depth of understanding to a body of research on ASC within PIPL that is lacking. Finally, out of the data also emerged a few themes that help to define how Muzi and current literature conceptualise ASC within PIPL mastery processes. These themes reveal that there is room for further investigation and theory building.



SECTION D

CONCLUDING THE STUDY



This section consists of Chapter 7, in which I provide a summary of the study, and discuss its important findings, implications, and contributions. I highlight the noticeable shortcomings, present implications for future research and finally make recommendations for practice.

“To finish the moment, to find the journey's end in every step of the road, to live the greatest number of good hours, is wisdom”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey. - Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this concluding chapter, I **firstly** provide a brief overview of the study. **Secondly**, I summarise this study's most significant contributions. **Thirdly**, I discuss what I deemed to be limitations in this study. Whilst I discussed my qualitative journey in **Chapter 3** in the fourth section, I offer a few reflections on my experiences while conducting the research. **Fifthly**, I make some recommendations, and **finally**, I conclude the chapter by offering some suggestions for future research.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was conceptualising African Spiritual Consciousness (ASC) within the PIPL perspective using a single case of an African person. This aided me to understand how ASC informs the process of PIPL mastery for an African person. I presented the study in four parts. **Section A** is about contextualising the study and discussing its methodology and this comprises **Chapters 1, 2, and 3**. In **Chapter 1**, I gave a brief background to the factors that influenced the study and how it fits within the leadership discourse in South Africa today. I cited some of the key challenges that complicate the journey towards Personal, Interpersonal and Professional Leadership (PIPL) mastery from an African perspective. I presented my primary aims and how I was going to use a single life to explore how ASC informs PIPL mastery. After doing a preliminary literature review, it became evident that there is no explicit conceptualisation of ASC within current leadership literature. Therefore, I felt that I would be able to make a modest contribution to the current body of knowledge specifically within the PIPL programme and the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management.



In **Chapter 2**, I presented an outline of the qualitative research approach used in this study. Drawing heavily from Denzin and Lincoln (1994) I explained my scientific beliefs and located my study within the blurred genres paradigm – predominantly modernist, with a gentle flirt with postmodernist sentiments. Having discussed my epistemology and ontology, I then outlined the practical steps taken in doing the research. I also discussed why I chose a single life story and how I used it to explore the social reality of an African person. Having read a number of approaches to life stories, I settled for Plummer’s (2001) critical humanistic approach towards the individual’s life story. As it turned out, the participant’s story was a short story with elements of a long story. Furthermore, I discussed how I used the grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis (Glaser, 2003). I also planned to ensure quality in re-constructing the person’s life history. I expounded on how I ensured reliability and validity in relation to qualitative data and discussed terms such as “generalisability and representativeness” and “objectivity”.

In **Chapter 3**, I presented the natural history of the research. I described how I became interested in PIPL mastery and ASC, and indicated my inclination towards life-stories. I also described how I balanced doing the research and the modular courses within the two years of the programme. I cited major challenges faced along the way and discussed how I collected the data, recorded it, transcribed and analysed it. Lastly, I presented my personal reflections of the journey.

Section B contains Muzi’s first-hand account and my editing of how he experienced and understood PIPL mastery from an African perspective. I constructed this story over the period June to September 2011.

Section C consisting of **Chapter 5** and **6** is about applying the methodology of qualitative research - making sense of ASC within the PIPL perspective. In Chapter 5, I conducted a literature review of the key concepts of the PIPL perspective and ASC. The literature review covered a broad range of disciplines, including psychology, religion, leadership and African philosophy amongst others. The main features include the leadership challenges facing the current leadership context, the emerging approaches to PIPL mastery, the theoretical framework of the PIPL



perspective and a broad discussion on African Spiritual Consciousness. Evident in this literature is the lack of African Spiritual Consciousness in facilitating leadership development. The primary intention of this chapter was to discover the current level of knowledge on PIPL mastery from an African perspective. I conducted this literature review concurrently with the life-history data collection. The review revealed the gaps in knowledge and formed a framework for the analysis in Chapter 6.

In **Chapter 6**, I presented an analysis of the authentic life-story. I discussed the process of noticing, thinking, analysing and presenting the emerging themes from Muzi's story as presented in Chapter 4. Muzi's socio-demographics can be summarised as a married black Xhosa male in his early-forties. At the time of the study, he was a Minister in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in a church in Houghton, Johannesburg. He is passionate about issues of justice, black consciousness, and leadership in the African context. Apart from being willing to tell his story, I found him to be well-spoken and knowledgeable on African Spiritual Consciousness.



I also explained how I started to make sense of Muzi's experience of PIPL mastery from an African perspective by making use of grounded theory within a modernist qualitative research approach. This process started with open coding to break down the data and followed with axial coding to re-construct Muzi's experience. In the breaking down, I ended up with about 40 broad and much related themes. Substantially African Spiritual Consciousness according to these themes includes concepts like connectedness, belonging, co-operation, relationship, compassion, African spirituality, and *ubuntu*. I then did the axial and selective coding process using the PIPL framework to categorise and discuss the emerging themes. The use of the PIPL framework enabled me to conceptualise how ASC could inform the eight life dimensions of the PIPL perspective. In the discussion, it became clear that there are definite overlaps between the personal, interpersonal and professional aspects of life - certain themes kept recurring in different ways.



7.3 DISCOVERIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Firstly, in view of the lack of literature on ASC, I am convinced that Muzi's story and conception of PIPL mastery opens avenues for research about narrative African conceptions of PIPL mastery. The recurring themes I identified point to some practical ways in which African people perceive their identity and the journey towards PIPL mastery. Both Muzi's story and the literature review reveal that African people predominantly locate their sense of identity in the way they relate with other people and the environment. Relationships give character and shape to identity. The practical implication for leadership mastery is to investigate further the role of the inter-subjective nature of identity facilitation for African people.

Secondly, Muzi's story revealed the ways in which individualism and materialism as promoted by the media threaten the core of African value systems. The African worldview values co-operation and common good more than competition and personal gain (Brookryk, 2005). The media and market policies that support capitalistic notions of existence mostly propagate the materialistic and individualistic values experienced in our current context. Muzi's story constantly points out that competition and materialism are values foreign to the way African communities structured their lives. It is worth noting here that Muzi is also clear about the challenges brought about by the evolution of culture. He suggests that the best way of coping within a dynamic culture is through constant dialogue about values and emerging cultural trends.

Thirdly, Muzi's life-story, as well as the literature I reviewed, reveal that most of the development frameworks used in the workplace do not sufficiently embrace ASC. My conversations with friends, and Muzi's story, reveal that most development frameworks begin with an individualistic approach that fails to take seriously the inter-subjective nature of identity facilitation in the African context. Leadership development from an African perspective needs to take cognisance of the social and cultural factors that shape people's identity and perception of reality.

Fourthly, the study exposes the lack of resources that holistically embrace the African perspective towards PIPL mastery - in particular, resources that are able to



uplift the narratives and stories of African people that give shape to their conceptualisation of human development. Often this leaves African people at the mercy of theories developed from the Western world. Mbigi (2005) notes this challenge and calls for leadership development specialists and practitioners to embrace the African philosophy of *ubuntu* in the workplace. These discoveries also had certain implications and made certain contributions.

Lastly, the issue of consciousness within the African context is not resident in objective appraisal of reality as in the inter-subjective world relationships. Personal consciousness cannot be divorced from the consciousness of those around us. Our sense of self emanates as the residue of the personal and relational aspects of our being. Intelligence and wisdom are not merely personal gifts; they are relational gifts. It is also notable that within the African worldview most of the unconscious aspects of behaviour are attributed to a supernatural force. From this view, people do not have ultimate control of their existence, but God and ancestors are the final arbiters of reality. The practical challenge raised by this is that people often fail to face the practical realities of life and project them onto a supernatural force.

In summary, the conceptualisation of PIPL mastery from an African perspective needs further exploration. Muzi's life story revealed varied avenues for future research.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Firstly, the findings and the emerging themes of this research endeavour have implications for leadership facilitation and development programmes as well as coaching. According to Koortzen and Cilliers (2005), executive coaching and development in the current work context should validate both the conscious (rational) and unconscious (irrational) dynamics of individuals and groups. PIPL as a perspective is founded on the principles of growing reality awareness, change mastery, and potential realisation. A holistic approach to leadership development and potential realisation should include the cognitive, behavioural and affective, and cultural aspects of the individual. According to Kets de Vries and Cheak (2010), any leadership and coaching approach should deal with the individual's internalised



schemas for self-understanding and meaning making, developmental issues and motivational issues to enable positive reframing of the self within the organisational context. In my opinion most of the work that has been done to validate African spiritual conscious and *ubuntu* as a leadership paradigm has been descriptive of the core characteristics, most of which already exist within leadership vocabulary. I think the next step is to research and create models on how ASC can inform leadership paradigm and culture within organisations.

Secondly, from a practical point of view, the inter-subjective (relational ontology) nature of ASC calls for an inquiry into the existing instruments of assessing and developing competency frameworks for organisations. For instance, most 360 degrees feedback instruments begin and end with feedback to the individual (Kets De Vries, 2010). It is my contention that the new clinically based psychodynamic models of group coaching and facilitation unveil an opportunity to develop more relational tools for facilitating leadership development within organisations (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2005). The psychodynamic model has its strength in its ability to narratively deal with the conscious and unconscious realities within relationships.

Thirdly, the use of life-history methods in the field of human resource management needs to be encouraged as it promises to bridge real life experiences and academic research work. For instance, the use of the life-history method in this study gave voice to particular nuances that embrace cultural and racial realities within the larger social and political contexts in which leadership is practised. Voicing alternative perspectives of PIPL mastery provides a critique of the dominant notions of leadership as objective, neutral, and/or detached from social issues and relationships. Thus, the use of life-history in this study has illuminated some of the practical challenges of facilitating leadership development within the domain of Human Resources Management and Industrial and Organisational Psychology. A case in point is the lack of resources that begin from an African consciousness. Furthermore, the combination of grounded theory and life-history allowed me to reach an in-depth interpretation of the life-story that would have not been possible with other methods.



Lastly, the study has revealed the lack of scientifically verifiable data on African Spiritual Consciousness and how it currently informs leadership practice. A further challenge is the contextualisation of existing approaches on PIPL mastery within the African context. More research in this regard can lead to a better understanding and application of African leadership perspectives.

7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As a particular form of qualitative study, this research used a single case, which made it difficult to generalise about its findings. Generalisability was not so much the point, however, as allowing the richness and depth of the participant's unique story and his conceptualisation of PIPL, to be heard, hopefully contributed to emerging theory. Nevertheless, it would be important for this study to be replicated or studies similar to it to be conducted so that the body of knowledge and theory related to ASC within PIPL may grow. There is no doubt that there exists a need for more research and for more narratives on African Spiritual Consciousness to be heard. My study was also limited in being partial fulfilment of a mini-dissertation. While the amount of data collected was enormously rich and detailed, it was overwhelming for a study of this size. I have done my best to express the richness and detail but there is possibly more that could have been done in this regard.

7.6 CONCLUSION

I believe that I have met the goal and objectives of this study. As a qualitative study that sought to conceptualise within the PIPL perspective, the life-history and worldview of an African person has been heard, the anthropological and phenomenological assumptions of the PIPL perspective have been reiterated and the eight life dimensions of the PIPL perspective have been discussed from an African person's perspective. The outcomes of the research journey have also enriched the foundational assumptions of PIPL and opened the door to further research on their influence on leadership mastery. Ultimately, the journey towards conceptualising ASC within the PIPL perspective has begun.

Figure 7.1- Vusi and Prof. Willem



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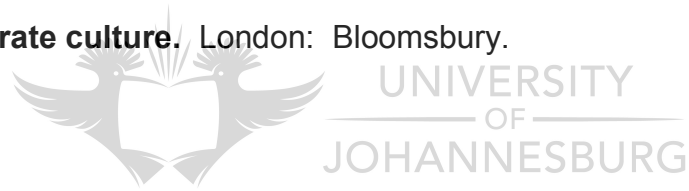
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Appendix ASC 01 - Informed Consent Form
RESEARCH AGREEMENT FOR LIFE HISTORY

May 20, 2011

This agreement serves to confirm that the research participant mentioned below gave his consent to participate in a qualitative study regarding the 'Conceptualisation of African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL perspective'. The research participant agrees to provide the researcher with his experiences and views of the area of research to the best of his ability.

The undersigned understands the purpose and nature of this study (as discussed in our negotiation meetings) and understands that his participation is voluntary and that he may stop the interviews and compiling other relevant data. The participant also grants permission for the data collected to be used in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree MPhil including a report and an article to be submitted for marks at the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Johannesburg and any further publications.

The collected data will be used for research purposes only, and as the researcher I undertake neither to disclose the identity of the participants, nor the origin of any of the statements made by them. However the undersigned understands that in terms of the study's methodology, the researcher is obliged to make use of verbatim statements from the transcribed taped interviews and or excerpts from the solicited data in other documents or visual data to illustrate meaning and the world of the participant.

The participant further grants the researcher permission to tape interviews and take notes of his views and experiences. The participant on the other hand undertakes to give a true representation of his or her perspectives and experiences.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned research participant, agree to meet at mutually agreeable times and duration(s) or through other means of communication, e.g. email, as reasonably necessary to the researcher, Martin Vusumuzi Vilakati, to gain a thorough understanding and experience of the concept being researched. I further acknowledge that I received a copy of this agreement and that I may contact any one of the under mentioned if I have any subsequent queries.

Signatures:

Research Participant

Researcher

Title: _____

Employer: _____

Signed at: _____

Date: _____

Contact: (w) _____

(c) _____

Research Supervisor: Dr Rica Viljoen (contacts removed)

African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL Perspective

GUIDELINE QUESTIONS FOR LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The following is a suggested framework for exploring the concept of African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL perspective. The ultimate goal is to discover through narrative exploration of your life-history the phenomenological and experiential conceptualisation of PIPL Mastery from an African Spiritual Consciousness premise. I suggest the following general route for the journey, which of course you have full right to alter and change.

General guidelines:

Apart from the general principles in the informed consent letter, the following guidelines apply;

- *You can start wherever you like with the story*
- *You can take the time you need and use the language that best describes your experience*
- *As the researcher I will listen first and ask questions when necessary for clarification purposes (otherwise I won't interrupt).*
- *I'll take some notes for personal reflection and in case I have any further questions after you have finished telling me your story.*

SESSION 1: PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUALISATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Thursday 9 June @13h00

- As you know, I'm interested in the *Conceptualisation of African Spiritual Consciousness within the PIPL perspective*". Please tell me your life story - all the events and experiences that were important for you, personally, up to now. Particularly events that have had a major impact in shaping who you are. Start wherever you like. (Could include growing up, schooling, fun or entertainment, home life, work, pivotal relationship....)
- How would you describe the concept, African Spiritual Consciousness? (Could include your view of the key words Africa(n), spirituality, consciousness)
- What does Personal, Interpersonal and Professional Leadership Mastery mean to you?
- Do you think there is a possible relationship between ASC and PIPL?

SESSION 2: PERSONAL MASTERY - INTERNAL LIFE DIMENSIONS

Tuesday 14 June @ 11h00

Your internal life (Spiritual, emotional, mental and physical) dimensions are the basic filters of your experience of life. This session and the next will explore your understanding and perception of the impact of these dimensions on your well-being. How does being African influence your understanding of these dimensions?

My Spiritual Wellness

- In your experience, what does it mean to be spiritual?
- What is the purpose and function of being spiritual in your life?
- Tell me about your experience of the spirit and its impact on you and your environment.
- How does your being African influence your understanding and experience of being spiritual?

My Emotional Wellness

- Please tell me about your understanding and experience of emotions in your life.
- Is there an African understanding of emotions?
- Please tell me about how your ASC influences the way you perceive, interpret, control and use emotion in real life situations.
- How do you deal with positive and negative emotions from an African perspective?

SESSION 3: PERSONAL MASTERY – INTERNAL LIFE DIMENSIONS

Thursday 16 June @ 11h00

Mental Dimension Wellness

- What is your understanding of mental well-being?
- Describe how this understanding developed in your life?
- Is there an African approach to mental well-being?
- Is mental well-being an important feature within African communities?

Physical Dimension Wellness

- Please describe your relationship with your body and how that relationship developed?
- In your life's journey, how has ASC influenced your attitude and behaviour towards your body?
- What is your understanding of physical well-being?
- Any other African wisdom with regards to physical well-being?

SESSION 4: INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE DIMENSIONS (EXTERNAL)

Tuesday 21 June @ 11h00

The interpersonal dimension of life relates to one's ability to live in healthy and meaningful relationships. The professional dimensions relate to one's understanding of work and money as an aspect of life and one's general relationship with the world.

Social (Relationship) Wellness

- Describe what social well-being means to you.
- Describe your experience as a social being and how that experience influences your 'self' understanding.
- How does ASC influence your ability to be in relationships (pivotal, friendships, community and professional)?
- What are the boundaries of relationship within the African perspective?
- What is social well-being from an African perspective?
- What are the important social values in African society?

SESSION 5: INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE DIMENSIONS (EXTERNAL)

Thursday 23 June @ 11h00

My Career/ Vocational Wellness

- How do you understand career wellness?
- Describe your experience of work and what it means to you.
- How does ASC influence your understanding and experience of work?
- What are the important elements of vocational well-being?
- What is the relationship between your work and your other life dimensions?

My Financial Wellness

- What is financial well-being?
- Describe how your thoughts, attitudes and behaviours towards money developed.
- Does ASC have any influence on the way you view financial well-being?
- What are the important factors of financial well-being for you?

SESSION 6: INTERPERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE DIMENSIONS (EXTERNAL)

Tuesday 5 July @ 11h00

My Ecological Wellness

- What is an African world view on family, community, nations and the world?
- How do you feel about the values and behaviour of the majority of people in your country/town/city?

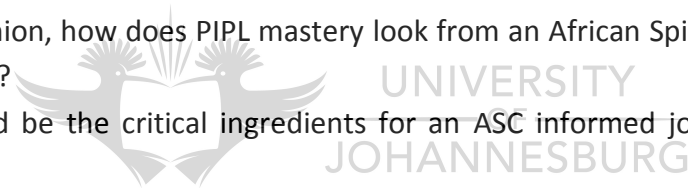
Other Issues

- Having discussed these dimensions, how do you perceive PIPL mastery and life balance?
- Any other aspects of your life-history that you would like to include in the story?
- Any other documents, photos and writings that you would like to share?

SESSION 7: CONCLUDING SESSION – ASC APPROACH TO PIPL MASTERY

Thursday 7th July @ 11h00

- In your opinion, how does PIPL mastery look from an African Spiritual Consciousness perspective?
- What would be the critical ingredients for an ASC informed journey towards PIPL mastery?
- How did the research process help your journey towards PIPL Mastery?



FEEDBACK FROM PRATICIPANT

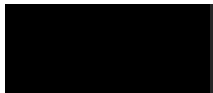
A note received from the participant about the outcome of the study.

23 September 2011

Dear Vusi

Thank you for giving the opportunity to participate in your study. I found it a very exciting experience. It was interesting to read the story as a documented piece of work. I really liked the final version. I feel it represented my journey and thoughts on African spirituality and leadership well. Wish you well with the rest of your study. I hope everything goes well.

Best regards



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Figure 7.1- Vusi and Prof. Willem

