The technical expert assumes managerial responsibilities: an Interpretivist perspective on transition in Australia

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DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgements has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

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Date
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Abstract

In this study, Interpretivist epistemology and abductive research strategy were used to examine transcripts of sixteen two-hour focused interviews. The research sample was a group of technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities within their organisations (transitional managers). The subjectively perceived experiences of the transition were examined as well as the respondents’ intersubjective interpretations of the transition from the organisational perspective. The aim was to explore the perceived characteristics of the transitional experience.

The main findings of this study could be summarised as follows: firstly, it was found that there were three main types of transitional managers: the unwilling, the pragmatic and the eager managers. Secondly, the key motivations to take the manager role for all three categories were higher remuneration, technical peer respect and the respondent’s new role as an organisational decision-maker.

The third finding of this study was that there were two types of transitions, the complete transition which the majority of the eager managers went through and the technical transition which was experienced by the unwilling and the pragmatic managers. Related to that finding was the link between the type of organisation, its culture and the leadership skills required in that organisation.
The fourth finding was that, irrespective of the amount of time in the manager role (six months to eleven years) or the type of transition (complete or technical), all respondents in this study continued to identify themselves as technical experts with the respondents who underwent a complete transition also seeing themselves as managers. Related to this finding was the respondents’ continued identification as technical experts being largely due to their need to identify with their peers (other technical experts).

The fifth major finding of this study related to a lack of career planning by the respondents and little or no succession and management development planning by the respondents’ organisations.

In a contribution to the theory of leadership studies, this study examined leadership as a social process, building on the existing leadership concepts and theories and putting them in a social context of subjective efforts by the researcher to interpret the respondents’ transitional experiences through typification of the leadership characteristics into seven themes. The need to apply an individual contextualisation was seen as essential to understanding the transitional managers’ response to their own transition. In doing so, the study has contributed towards narrowing the existing empirical literature gap on the transition processes.
Abstract

The contributions of this study need to be seen in the context that explorative research such as the one carried out here is not considered generalisable, as its aim was to explore and describe particular phenomena. Nevertheless, insights from this study were eight “tentative hypotheses” which could be used as the basis for future research.
Chapter One - Introduction

1 Introduction

In this research a sample of individuals, from three different tertiary sector industries, was explored. Specifically, the respondents’ perceptions of the transition from a technical expert to a manager were examined. Through an exploration of the characteristics of respondents’ experiences, an insight into the transition from the organisational perspective was also gained.

Before examining the empirical and the theoretical research carried out to date, the key terms, as applicable to this research, are worth defining. In the context of this research, individuals with technical, specialist knowledge were referred to as technical experts. Transitional managers were defined as technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities within the same organisation and the term transition was used to describe the process technical experts went through when they assumed managerial responsibilities. Authors cited in this study referred to technical experts as “professional specialists” (Preston and Biddle, 1994; Clarke, 1998; Albert and Adams, 2002); “staff professionals” (Walsh, 2003); “functional managers” (Gabarro, 1985:116), “knowledge professionals” (Drucker, 1977) or “knowledge workers” (Drucker, 2006; Abzug and Phelps, 1998; Alvesson, 2002; and Alvesson, 2004). It should be further noted that Alvesson’s (2004) definition of a “knowledge worker” was specific to certain industries. That definition will be further elaborated on in Section 2.4.
In relation to the transition process and based on his empirical work with fourteen new managers, Gabarro (1985) explored how newly appointed managers built effective working relationships with their subordinates. He referred to the transition as taking charge and defined it as “the process of learning and taking action that a manager goes through until he (or she) has mastered a new assignment in sufficient depth to be running the organisation as well as resources and constraints flow” (Gabarro 1985:111). This definition was not specific to technical experts assuming manager roles rather it referred to any individual stepping into a new role.

This distinction is important because a new manager may imply an organisational or an industry insider, or an individual outside either the industry and/or the organisation stepping into a new role. The transition of a technical expert who assumed managerial responsibilities in the context of this study referred to individuals with the industry and organisational experience who had expertise in technical areas before assuming managerial positions within their organisation. In other words, the transitional managers in this study were a subset of Gabarro’s (1985:111) new managers.

The need for a study carried out here was identified by a number of authors. Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:149) called for leadership to be studied as a broader perspective process, and emphasising leadership concepts and theories as subjective efforts by social scientists to interpret ambiguous events in a
meaningful way (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:186). Alvesson (2002:94) similarly emphasised the need for a shift in the academic work on leadership away from positivist bias and questionnaire studies. Alvesson (2002:104) further called for a better understanding of the social context of leadership as a social process with a particular emphasis on the cultural context of leadership. Hellbrunn (1994:69) identified the need for further leadership studies in a situational context.

A further need for a study such as this one was identified in by Burke and McKeen who argued that little was known about the transition made by technical experts as they entered management positions (Burke and McKeen, 1994a: 16). Similarly, this study wanted to further explore Burke and McKeen’s (1994b:11) proposition that not all transitions were successful.

An Interpretivist epistemology was chosen for this research as the purpose of the research was to interpret and understand the transition from the point of view of the intersubjective social reality of transitional managers. By acknowledging this epistemologically interrelated relationship between the researcher and researched (Collis and Hussey, 2003:48), the social reality was made intersubjective and the researcher could understand the meanings the participants produced and reproduced on a daily basis (Schütz, 1963:242; Blaikie, 1993:48; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003:218). This was because “social reality is pre-interpreted, even before social scientists begin their task of interpretation” (Blaikie, 2000:116).
Abductive research strategy was selected in order to derive at technical concepts and generate social scientific accounts and “tentative hypotheses” from the respondents’ meanings and accounts of their transitional experiences (Blaikie, 2000:114). In other words, the aim was to understand how participants made sense of their leadership role as managers of their areas and to distill the main concepts and patterns in their accounts of the transition. These interpretations and explanations were constructed by forming technical concepts from everyday concepts such as:

- The respondents’ perceptions and subjective meanings they assigned to leadership and management;
- The respondents’ perceptions of a technical expert and manager;
- The respondents’ perceptions of career progression and professional development; and
- The respondents’ perceptions of their own identity following the transition into management.

1.1 Aims of the research

The research aims were to:

1. Investigate perceived characteristics of the transition from a technical expert to a manager as experienced by the respondents;
2. List skills and experiences as perceived by the respondents in order for an effective transition from a technical expert to a manager to be achieved; and
3. Describe reasons behind the decision by the respondents in this study to take on a role of a manager.

1.2 Research question

The empirical work in this study was designed to initiate the process of answering the following research question: what are the characteristics of the experience of technical experts who assume managerial responsibilities?

As part of this overarching research question, a number of aspects will be considered, including an exploration of:

a) How the transition happened for the sixteen respondents in this study;

b) What distinguished the experiences of the respondents who described their transition as a successful transition;

b) What leadership skills, as perceived by the respondents, were required of a technical expert to successfully assume managerial responsibilities; and

d) What impact, if any, did the transition have on the identity of the respondents?
Chapter One - Introduction

To sum up, leadership of a group of transitional managers, as a social process, in a social and situational context was examined in this study. This was done by building on the existing leadership concepts and theories and putting them in a context of the intersubjective efforts by the researcher to interpret the respondents’ transitional experiences when they took formal responsibility for leadership in their area by assuming manager roles. A contribution towards narrowing the existing empirical literature gap on the transition process was made, as well as an insight into what made some transitions successful while others failed. Contributions towards the existing leadership concepts and theories need to be seen in the context that explorative research such as the one carried out here is not considered generalisable (Hallebone and Priest, 2009:110). Nevertheless, insights from this study could be seen as “tentative hypotheses” following Merriam (1998:41) and used as the basis for future research.

In the next Chapter a review of the literature on leadership and management will be presented in order to set the context for the remainder of the study.
2 Review of the research literature

As this research was founded on the discussion on leadership and management from the literature review, a summary of the main discussion points in relation to these two key terms will be offered first. Although the literature on leadership and management covers a wide variety of different theories in a number of different contexts, the review here primarily focused on the application of leadership and management themes and theories to the transition process of a technical expert assuming managerial responsibilities. An effort was made to present only the key thinkers in the field. The latest editions of those works appear below, hence where appropriate, bringing a rethinking on the original ideas. For example, in 1960 a book by Douglas McGregor was published that changed the thinking on leadership. The latest edition of that book (McGregor, 2006), further evolving McGregor’s ideas, and was used here.

The literature review starts with a general discussion of leadership including that leadership does not automatically mean leaders (Section 2.1.1) This is then followed with a review of works that consider the skills and competencies required of an individual in a leadership and management role is explored (Section 2.1.2 – Leadership competencies). Then, transactional and transformational leadership will be discussed, including: the difference between management and leadership (Section 2.2.1); the origins of the transactional and transformational leadership terms (Section 2.2.2.1 – Bass’s transactional and
transformational leadership); and the effective leadership as an influencing skill (Section 2.2.2).

The role of a technical expert in management positions is the focus of Section 2.3. That discussion continues onto the following two sections with Section 2.4 examining the importance of personal identity of a technical expert and Section 2.5 looking at the intersection of leadership and power as key leadership attributes and the relevance of these attributes to the topic of a technical expert transitioning into a management role is explained. This is followed by a section highlighting communication skills and people skills as other important leadership attributes.

The remaining sections of this Chapter deal with the literature review in the context of the research aims and provide an overview of the current thinking in relation to the transition process and specifically the research to date on the likelihood of the transitional success (Section 2.7); the extent to which leadership is an acquired skill (Section 2.8). Organisational development and training invested in the manager is the focus of Section 2.9 while Section 2.10 addresses the benefits of promoting from within the organisation. Reasons for the transition, including career progression and technological advances will be the focus of Section 2.11. Before providing a summary of the Chapter, this study will be placed in the context of the existing literature.
Chapter Two – Review of the research literature

2.1 Leadership context

There appeared to be no consensus on the definition of leadership or its roots. A continued controversy around the definition of leadership could be due to the concept itself being ambiguous (Johnson, 2002:241), with over three hundred and fifty definitions (Bennis and Nanus, 1985:4) and different meanings and values assigned to the term by different groups (Alvesson, 2002:94); leading to a conclusion that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns, 1978:2). This is perhaps because “leadership [is] best understood as a phenomenon constructed in the minds and eyes of the audience, as much as in the deeds and character of the observed leader” (Sinclair, 2005:176).

Furthermore, in an attempt to focus the discussion on leadership effectiveness, Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:149) argued that “a definition of leadership should not predetermine the answer to…what makes a leader effective or ineffective”. Leadership effectiveness will be discussed in Section 2.2.2 – Effective leadership as an influencing process. Similarly, acknowledging numerous leadership discussions, Collins and Porras (1994:173-174) argued that the focus of the leadership discussions needed to be not on the quality of leadership, but rather on the continuity of quality leadership, as it was due to that continuity that organisations prospered.
In an overview of the literature on organisational leadership, Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) observed that over the years, leadership has been defined in terms of individual traits (looking at whether leaders were born or whether leadership can be taught), leader behaviours (with the focus on accomplishment of tasks), interaction patterns, role relationships, follower perceptions and finally, influences over followers, task goals, and organisational culture (with the emphasis on transactional and transformational leadership).

In a theoretical article where a historical context of leadership was provided, Heilbrunn (1994) placed a particular emphasis on situational leadership. He argued that:

“The field of leadership studies has remained hobbled by its epistemological commitments [and] loses sight of one of the principal reasons for its subject’s essentially unpredictable nature – the environment in which leaders function…” (Heilbrunn, 1994:69).

That leadership needed to be placed in a situational context is an important point for an Interpretivist study looking at the leadership of a group of transitional managers.

2.1.1 Leadership and leaders

Before some of the more recent definitions of leadership are discussed, it is worth briefly discussing the difference between leaders and leadership, recognising that technical experts may be leaders in their technical field, but that this expertise may not automatically mean leadership. The articulation of the difference will further be useful when, in this study, an examination of how
technical leaders were chosen for management roles takes place. The difference between leadership and management and how the two terms will be used in this study is the focus of Section 2.2.1.

As definitions of leadership evolved, so has the difference between leadership and leaders. Burns (1978), for example, argued that “if we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little about leadership” (Burns, 1978:1. Original emphasis). However, twenty years later, Rausch (1999) pointed out that “it seems we can teach about ‘leadership’, but not how one can become a leader” (Rausch, 1999:171. Original emphasis). Kotter (1990), Parry (1998) and Ryan (1994:55-60) also argued that leadership may not automatically imply leaders. For instance, in a theoretical article on the historical role of leadership Ryan (1994:55) suggested that leadership may be provided by a group rather than an individual. He went on to call for “leaders, but not as generally as they suppose, and leadership, but not always provided by leaders, and not always in the form of rallying the people behind a particular project” (Ryan, 1994:60).

Robbins, et al. (2001) were other authors who attempted to differentiate a leader from leadership when they described them as a:

“[leader is a] person who consistently influences and develops individuals and teams over time towards a worthwhile purpose, whereas leadership occurs as a moment-by-moment process that may arise from anyone to achieve a valued outcome” (Robbins et al. 2001:401. Original emphasis)

That leadership can be provided by anyone in the organisation irrespective of their level was first recognised by McGregor (2006) who in the 1960s introduced
a new organisational paradigm stressing potentials, growth and role of individual
in achieving the organisational outcomes. For him, different areas of the
organisation had different leadership skills and ability requirements. “Every
successful foreman would not make a successful president (or vice versa!). Yet
each may be an effective leader” (McGregor, 2006:249). Similarly, Bass (1989:1)
argued that leadership was not just the province of people at the top.

2.1.2 Leadership competencies

Leadership was seen as the key factor in the success or failure of an
organisation by a number of authors, including Bennis (1984) who saw
leadership as not just the factor that empowered the workforce, but the key to
improvement when strategies, processes or cultures change. Based on his
interviews with ninety outstanding leaders and their subordinates – looking into
what made real leaders (as opposed to effective managers), Bennis (1984)
identified four leadership competencies: management of attention, achieved
through a set of intentions or a vision in a sense of outcome, goal, or direction;
management of meaning – communication and alignment of the vision;
management of trust with the main determinant of trust consistency and
reliability; and management of self – knowing one’s skills and deploying them
effectively (Bennis, 1984:17-18 and Bennis 1989:19-21).

Bennis and Thomas (2002:45) further refined those competencies and argued
that the management of self, what they termed “adaptive capacity” was the most
critical skill that made great leaders. They described “adaptive capacity” as a
Chapter Two – Review of the research literature

combination of hardiness and ability to grasp context: “an almost magical ability to transcend adversity, with all its attendant stresses, and to emerge stronger than before” (Bennis and Thomas, 2002:45).

Other authors used a modified version of these competencies, either emphasising a particular competency or adding others. For example, in a theoretical article by Abzug and Phelps (1998) advocating employee empowerment via participative leadership, management of trust was highlighted. Abzug and Phelps (1998:213) argued that employees had the knowledge and the ability to direct their own work and that trust can be built through cooperative, empowered and participative values and behaviours. Similarly, Mole (2004:125) emphasised management of self as the key leadership competency and argued that it was impossible to lead others, without a deep understanding of oneself. For Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe and Waters-Marsh (2001) management of self was part of emotional intelligence.

Goleman (2004 and 2005), who coined the term “emotional intelligence”, argued that the qualities traditionally associated with leadership – intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision – were not sufficient, as effective leaders were characterised by a high degree of emotional intelligence. In a theoretical article, drawing on the links between leadership and emotional intelligence, Goleman (2004:3) called emotional intelligence “the sine qua non of leadership”. Similarly, Robbins et al. (2001) argued that “IQ and technical expertise while
necessary will not determine the success or otherwise of one’s leadership” (Robbins et al. 2001:405).

According to Goleman (2004), emotional intelligence comprised of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2001:4) explored the science of mood and suggested that the leader’s mood impacted on the performance of those around him or her. In a theoretical article, introducing social intelligence as the link between brain studies and leadership, and building on their previous work on emotional intelligence, Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) introduced a concept of social intelligence, a relationship-based construct for assessing leadership, and defined it as a set of interpersonal competencies built on specific neural circuits that inspired effectiveness:

“The leader-follower dynamic is not a case of two (or more) independent brains reacting consciously or unconsciously to each other… [T]he individual minds, become…fused into a single system” (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008:2).

They emphasised leader’s instinct as a talent that enabled the leader to recognise patterns using their experiences and argued that:

“leading effectively is…less about mastering situations – or even mastering social skill set – than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in the people whose cooperation and support you need” (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008:2).

In a similar theoretical article on the link between neuroscience and leadership effectiveness, Cooper (2000:13) argued that the only statistically significant factor differentiating the very best leaders from the mediocre ones was caring.
Bennis' four competencies were also expanded by Fernández-Aráoz (2005) who in a theoretical article using his experiences in recruitment of top executives, argued that many senior posts were filled with poor appointments. According to him “the differentiating competencies for top leaders are usually in ‘soft’ areas, such as the ability to develop people, lead teams, collaborate with others and manage change efforts” (Fernández-Aráoz, 2005:68).

For Kouzes and Posner (2002), leadership was not about personality but about practice. In their model of leadership, Kouzes and Posner (2002) identified five practices exemplary leaders needed: modelling the way; inspiring a shared vision; challenging the process; enabling others to act and, what they called “encouraging the heart”: praising and acknowledging and celebrating successes (Kouzes and Posner, 2002:13).

To sum up, in this section a number of ambiguous leadership definitions were examined (Johnson, 2002:241; Bennis and Nanus, 1985:4; Burns, 1978:2; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:149). The key role of leadership in an organisational success was acknowledged (Bennis, 1984; Parry, 1998). While suggesting that organisational success required a greater consideration, this led some authors to focus their discussions on the continuity of the quality of leadership (Collins and Porras, 1994:173-174). After a brief discussion on the difference between leadership and leaders, conclusions were that, in the context of this study, it was
possible for a technical expert to be a leader in a technical field, while at the same time recognising that technical expertise may not translate into leadership. Leadership competencies and their consistency through the changing focus of leadership definitions were also highlighted.

The discussion on leadership will continue in the next section where leadership will be examined in terms transactional and transformational leadership. These two concepts will be introduced for two reasons: firstly, the differences between the two terms help in the distinction between management and leadership, the difference of which will be explored in Section 2.2.1. Secondly, the transactional and transformational leadership definitions lend themselves to exploring different types of relationships between the leader and followers and the type of relationship needed for effective leadership. This will be the topic of Section 2.2.2 – Effective leadership as an influencing process.

2.2 Transactional and transformational leadership

Transactional leadership (management) and transformational leadership (leadership) will be examined from the following aspects: firstly, Mintzberg’s (1989) definition of management will be discussed. Next, the current writings on leadership and management will be considered to highlight an evolution of the two terms from being described as different functions, to being seen as different but complementary, to finally, leadership being viewed as a subset of management. Then, the two terms will be discussed in the context of Bass’s
transactional leadership (or management) and transformational leadership (leadership). Examining management and leadership terms and the difference between the two was important for a study examining characteristics of the transitional experience by technical experts who assumed managerial roles. Lastly, a definition of effective leadership as an influencing process will be considered.

Drucker (1977:14-17) traced the origins of management to the early eighteen hundreds, however the three key management questions: (1) productivity and motivation; (2) the relationship between the worker and the work; (3) worker and the enterprise and worker and management; were not addressed until the 1820s. Drucker (1977:28-32) saw contemporary management as needing to perform three tasks: (1) fulfil the specific purpose and mission of the institution; (2) make work productive and the worker achieving; and (3) manage social impacts and social responsibilities. Rather than being additional tasks, Drucker (1977) saw time and administration and entrepreneurship as additional dimensions of management. Drucker’s definition of management saw management as the organ of the institution with no function in itself. “Management divorced from the institution it serves is not management” (Drucker, 1977:27).

Mintzberg (1989:15-21) further evolved management concepts and argued that the job of a manager consisted of ten roles, divided into interpersonal relationships (figurehead, leader, liaison); informational (monitor, disseminator,
spokesperson) and decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator). Based on his study of the work of five chief executives on how various managers spent their time, Mintzberg (1989:9) concluded that management was not a science, as it was not possible to define what managers needed to learn. That could be because managers seldom performed activities themselves and management was seen as the process by which a cooperative group directed actions toward common goals (Massie, 1987:3).

Following the work of Mintzberg, Kotter (1990:4-6 and 2001:86) listed functions of management as: planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, controlling and problem solving. Kotter (1990) further contrasted those functions with the leadership functions: setting a direction, aligning people, motivating and inspiring. Drucker (1977:54-56); Massie (1987:5) and Maccoby (2000:58) produced similar management function lists.

In a theoretical paper on improving leadership competence, Rausch (1999:170) argued that it had not been widely understood how much societies lost because managers were not sufficiently competent and unaware of the importance, the implications, and the scope of the leadership issues. However, as discussed at the beginning of this Chapter, that could be because the scope of leadership itself was not unanimously agreed and understood. Management incompetence translated into wasted time; insufficient work; ‘bureaucratic’ practices; mistakes; conflicts between people, organisations and cultures; and wasted materials...
(Rausch, 1999:170). Similar conclusions were reached in a 1995 report on leadership and management skills required of Australian managers to meet global challenges. In the report, known as the “Karpin Report”, it was argued that visionary managers were the key to a more competitive economy and higher performance enterprises.

So far in this Section, management was discussed from its origins in the early eighteen hundreds (Drucker, 1977) to today’s emphasis on management as a process rather than a function (Massie, 1987:3). A point was made that managers were not always aware of the importance, the implications, and the scope of leadership issues (Rausch, 1999). This lack of awareness of wider leadership issues could be because the scope of leadership itself was not being unanimously agreed and understood.

The discussion on transactional and transformational leadership will continue in the next section when the differences between management and leadership are examined in more detail. Exploring this difference is particularly important for a study wanting to explore the characteristics of the transitional experience of technical experts who became formally responsible for leadership within their area by becoming managers. By assuming such a role technical experts needed to make sure that their technical area was understood by the organisation and that the client needs were met.
2.2.1 Differences between leadership and management

Zaleznik (2004) argued that managers and leaders were different in that “they differ in motivation, in personal history, and in how they think and act” (Zaleznik, 2004:75). To Zaleznik, the distinction was between “a manager’s attention to how things get done and a leader’s to what the events and decisions mean to participants” (Zaleznik, 2004:78. Original emphasis). Bennis (1984) similarly argued that “leaders are people who do the right thing, managers are people who do things right. Both roles are crucial, and they differ profoundly” (Bennis, 1984:17). According to Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) leaders were able to “influence commitment, whereas managers merely carry out position responsibilities and exercise authority” (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:148-149). Similarly, Maccoby (2000) argued that leadership was “a relationship between leader and led that can energise an organisation…” (Maccoby, 2000:57. Original emphasis). As already established, management on the other hand was seen as function.

While organisations needed both managers and leaders, it has been recognised that rarely, management and leadership skills existed in one individual. Developing both “requires a reduced focus on logic and strategic exercises in favour of an environment where creativity and imagination are permitted to flourish” (Zaleznik, 2004:74). Bennis and Nanus (1985) further argued that many organisations, particularly those which were failing, overmanaged and underled. A possible explanation for that trend was given by Kotter (1990) who in his book on the differences between leadership and management argued that “finding
people with leadership potential and then nurturing that potential is much tougher than finding people with managerial potential and then developing those skills” (Kotter, 1990:17). He nevertheless asserted that it was possible for an individual to be a leader-manager (Kotter, 1990:125, 151). Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) pointed out that “a person can be a leader without being a manager, and a person can be a manager without leading” (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:148). This was taken a step further by Buckingham and Coffman (1999) who in a book based on interviews of over 80,000 managers argued that:

“Managers were not just leaders-in-waiting...They look inside the company, at individual’s goals, needs and motivations. Great leaders look outward. They are visionaries.” (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999:7).

For Alvesson (2002) managers could be “only managers” or they can be leaders also:

“It is...possible that most managers having a personal and non-coercive influence beyond pure 'management', are mixing elements of management and leadership and that the latter element is far from unconstrained by formal position and bureaucratic constraints, but typically intertwined with management” (Alvesson, 2002:201).

Maccoby (2000:57) similarly stated that “ideally a manager is also a leader that people want to follow” (Original emphasis). The notion that management and leadership were complementary was emphasised by a number of authors. Kotter (1990) proposed that management and leadership, while different, cannot function in isolation with organisations that embrace both can thrive in turbulent times (Kotter, 2001:85). Eisner (1997:114) argued that leaders were a “subset of good managers with extra qualities that transcend the skills of even the best
managers". Maccoby (2000:58) distinguished between the two kinds of leaders: strategic (i.e. leaders) and operational (i.e. managers). For Massie (1987:99) “leading is a final act of a manager in getting others to act after all preparations have been completed”. Robbins et al. (2001:6) also emphasised the complimentary nature of management and leadership when they suggested that when managers motivated staff, directed their activities through effective communication channels and resolved conflict, they were leading.

Lastly, in a study within an Interpretivist perspective, employing ground theory and looking at the difference between management and leadership of a group of nurses in Australia, Stanley (2006) observed that managers were seen as having more authority than leaders; however they were also seen as “somewhat removed from care and more intent than leaders to climb the managerial career ladder. Thus they lost clinical credibility and effectiveness when compared with leaders” (Stanley, 2006:35). Other empirical studies looking at the difference between management and leadership will be discussed next in the context of Bass’s transactional and transformational leadership.

2.2.1.1 Bass’s transactional and transformational leadership

The theory of transformational and transactional leadership was first introduced by Burns (1978), while Bass (1985, 1990) applied the theory to effective leadership in an organisational context and distinguished between leadership, or transformational leadership, and management, or transactional leadership.
Bass (1985:13) described transactional leadership as a set of transactions between the leader and followers where the leader recognised and rewarded the role of the followers in attaining the organisational outcomes. Emphasising this interrelationship between leaders and followers, Burns (1978) posed rhetorical questions of how leaders lead followers without being led by followers? (Burns, 1978:2). The term followers in the context of this study will be used to include the individuals subservient to the leader as well as superiors, peers and others, following Yan and Hunt (2005:51).

In his subsequent work, Bass (1990 and 1998) further developed the transactional and transformational leadership theory to define a superior leadership performance (transformational leadership) in terms of the leader’s effect on followers:

“The leader gets things done by making, and fulfilling, promises of recognition, pay increases, and advancement for employees who perform well... Transformational leaders achieve these results in one or more ways: they may be charismatic to their followers and thus inspire them; they may meet the emotional needs of each employee; and/or they may intellectually stimulate employees” (Bass, 1990:20-21).

For Bass (1985, 1990), the similarity between the transactional and transformational leadership definitions was the leader’s intuition of the follower needs. The key difference, however, was that the transformational leaders were able to raise “consciousness about higher considerations through articulation and role modelling” (Bass, 1985:15). In other words, transformational leadership extracted from the follower commitment and involvement because the
transformational leaders moved the follower beyond self-interests as a result of their charisma, intellect or individual consideration (Bass, 1998:3-4).

In a more recent, positivist, paper on the relationship between leadership and management more broadly and transformational leadership and human resource management most specifically, Zhu, Chew and Spangler (2005) defined the focus of transformational leadership as:

“…The focus is on the relationship of the leader to other organisational members as well as the impact the leader has on others” (Zhu, Chew and Spangler, 2005:40).

However, transactional and transformational leadership were not seen as mutually exclusive, as Bass (1985) argued that the two types of leadership can coexist in the same person. Similar argument was made by Parry (1996) in the application of transactional and transformational leadership to the Australian organisational development context. This was also established by Eagly and Carli (2007) who found that although transformational and transactional leadership styles were different, most leaders adopted some behaviours of both types.

Transformational leadership will be examined further next, in the context of the interactions between the leader and followers, and the leader’s impact on followers.
2.2.2 Effective leadership as an influencing process

In the 1960s McGregor introduced the concept of Theory Y, the term that has evolved to participative management and interactions between leaders and followers in the current writings on leadership. McGregor (2006:249-250) called for leadership to be seen as a complex relationship among variables where leadership functions were shared rather than a property of the individual. He proposed the following four leadership variables: (1) the characteristics of the leader; (2) the attitudes, needs, and other personal characteristics of the followers; (3) characteristics of the organisation, its purpose, structure and nature of tasks performed; and (4) the social, economic and political milieu (McGregor, 2006:250).

This led to a number of key definitions that described leadership in terms of relationships between the leader and those around the leader. Burns (1978), for example, described leadership as a process of evolving interrelationships in which leaders influenced followers, with leaders being influenced in turn to modify their behaviour as they met responsiveness or resistance:

“Leaders and led have a relationship…of mutual needs, aspirations, and values… [I]n responding to leaders, followers have adequate knowledge of alternative leaders and programs and the capacity to choose among those alternatives… [L]eaders [need to] take responsibility for their commitments – if they promise certain kinds of economic, social, and political change, they assume leadership in the bringing about of that change” (Burns, 1978:4).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) took that a step further, emphasising effective leaders and argued that effective leaders needed to:
“assume responsibilities for reshaping organisational practices to adapt to environmental changes. They direct organisational changes that build confidence and empower their employees to seek new ways of doing things. They overcome resistance to change by creating visions of the future that evoke confidence in and mastery of new organisational practices” (Bennis and Nanus, 1985:18).

Examining historical definitions of leadership Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:148) concluded that the influence process was the only commonality across all definitions in determining leadership effectiveness. Hence, they described leadership as:

“influencing the task objectives and strategies of a group or organisation, influencing people in the organisation to implement the strategies and achieve the objectives, influencing group maintenance and identification, and influencing the culture of the organisation” (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:149).

Furthermore, Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152-168) identified four sets of skills that led to leadership effectiveness: (1) technical skills; (2) cognitive skills (these first two sets of skills determined the leader’s motives and his or her ability to process information about a situation); (3) interpersonal skills (determined the leader’s ability to respond to problems and opportunities), and (4) administrative skills (defined as an ambiguous skill category involving a combination of specific technical, cognitive and interpersonal skills).

The notion of shared leadership was further highlighted by Parry (1998:76) who suggested that follower commitment and motivation needed to be seen as part of the leadership challenge and addressed throughout the organisation. Jackson
and Parry (2008:85), calling for more empirical research on concept of shared leadership, advocated for co-leadership and distributed leadership irrespective of the formal roles. Similarly, in two theoretical papers on the shared leadership responsibility, Smith and Sharma (2002a) and (2002b) argued that all employees had the responsibility for leadership, not just those in leadership positions.

In a further building on McGregor’s work on seeing leadership as an interactive process, other authors added cultural and situational context to the definition. For example, in a book on leadership and culture, drawing largely on his previous empirical work in organisational culture and leadership, Alvesson (2002:95) was critical of the lack of appropriate emphasis of the role of culture in leadership. He described leadership as “a culture-influencing activity” with a shared understanding of objectives, technologies and environment (Alvesson, 2002:105). According to Alvesson (2002):

> “[L]eadership must be understood as taking place in a cultural context and all leadership acts have their consequences through the (culturally guided) interpretation of those involved in the social processes in which leaders, followers and leadership acts are expressed” (Alvesson, 2002:101).

In other words, leadership was seen a complex social process in which the meanings and interpretations of what was said and done play a crucial role. That leadership did not exist in a social vacuum was further argued by Garnier (2008:74) who, in a theoretical article on the pharmaceutical industry and how to improve the shareholder value, argued that “only when the right leaders are in place will the right culture emerge.”
In another theoretical article, on the socialisation processes of new managers to an organisation, Reichers (1987:285) concluded that interaction frequency was the primary mechanism through which newcomers became insiders. A similar point was made by Watkins (2004), in a theoretical paper on leadership strategies and how to ensure the leader’s success. Specific to the transition process of a new manager, Watkins (2004) asserted that, when a new manager underwent the transition process, all the people in, what Watkins called, “the impact network” (Watkins, 2004:15) were also involved in that transition.

Approaching the issue of leadership from a social-cognitive perspective, Yan and Hunt (2005) argued that effective leadership depended not only on the technical abilities of a leader and the leadership-like behaviours, traits or characteristics did not make a person a leader unless he or she were perceived as a leader by the followers (Yan and Hunt, 2005:51). They went on to propose a theoretical model to explain the influence of leadership processes and effectiveness in cultural and societal settings.

A number of empirical studies looked at the interaction between the leader and followers and the impact the leader had on followers, including studies by Church, Allan and Waclawski (2000); Berr, Church, and Waclawski (2000); Preston and Biddle (1994) and Spinelli (2006) with a particular emphasis on leader’s personality type. These empirical studies, both positivist and Interpretivist, will be briefly discussed next.
In a positivist study on the impact of differences in self-assessed individual personality orientation and follower perceptions, Church, Allan and Waclawski (2000) found that personality orientation affected the degree of managerial self-awareness exhibited. In a similar positivist study analysing manager personality types and preferences in a health services organisation, Berr, Church and Waclawski (2000) found that senior managers in their study had personality preferences somewhat similar to those in other executive populations, leading to a conclusion that all executives had similar personality preferences (Berr, Church and Waclawski, 2000:141). Another value of their study was in enabling organisations to guide and assist managers in making them aware of the impact personality preferences had in an organisational setting.

A leader’s personality type was also examined by Preston and Biddle (1994). They used a reflective action learning approach that enabled sixteen participants to undertake an explorative program of self-identifying whether the shift to management was possible. They found that “many managers have a strong extroverted function, thereby getting energy from dealing with people, and are prepared to make quick decisions” (Preston and Biddle, 1994:29). Preston and Biddle (1994) therefore called for a better understanding by the individuals of their own personal preferences and values before they embarked on changes in their professional orientations.
Chapter Two – Review of the research literature

The last study on the interaction between the leader and followers and the impact the leader had on followers to be mentioned is by Spinelli (2006). In a positivist application of Bass’s transformational leadership model to a hospital setting, Spinelli (2006) conducted a survey evaluating the relationship of leaders’ behaviours to subordinate managers’ perceived outcomes looking at the factors leading to effective and optimal administrative and CEO leadership.

Finally, it is worth making a few observations in relation to gender and leadership. Sinclair (2005), whose research was on the relationship between leadership, masculinity and sexuality, argued that gender was a fundamental part of leadership. Alvesson (2004:202) observed that organisational instability in particular, had an impact on female leaders’ self-esteem and work identity. This was supported in a survey examining career successes and life satisfaction of healthcare managers by Wiggins and Bowman (2000:8) who found that women had different career paths and that an increase in income did not necessarily increase life satisfaction. Robbins et al. (2001:404) observed that even though there were a number of similarities between men and women in leadership positions, leadership style was the key difference with female leaders preferring to share the power and enhance the followers self-worth. Male leaders, on the other hand preferred direct command.

Such observations pointed towards female leaders exhibiting more of the transformational leadership characteristics than male leaders. For example,
emphasising that gender differences in social intelligence were almost non-existent in among the most successful leaders, Goleman and Boyatzis (2008:4) argued that female leaders, on average, were better equipped in immediately sensing other people’s emotions, with male leaders displaying more social confidence. Similarly, in a previously mentioned analysis of interviews with women leaders, Eagly and Carli (2007:67) found that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders, especially in relation to giving support and encouragement to the subordinates.

In Section 2.2 transactional leadership (management) and transformational leadership (leadership) were discussed. Specifically, Mintzberg’s (1989) definition of management was considered. The evolution of leadership and management terms was also discussed – from being described as different functions, to being seen as different but complementary, to finally, leaders being viewed as a subset of good managers. Bass’s transactional and transformational leadership were also considered.

In the concluding remarks of the Section a definition of leadership was offered, where leadership was seen as a complex socially interactive process between leaders and followers in which the meanings and interpretations of what was said and done play a crucial role. Examining management and leadership terms and the difference between the two was important for of a study looking to explore
characteristics of the transitional experience by technical experts who assumed managerial roles.

Having established that technical skill was a key skill to leadership effectiveness, the next section will examine the role of technical expertise in management in detail.

### 2.3 Role of technical expertise in management

With the need for the role of a manager identified two hundred years ago (Section 2.2), it would appear that many managers have traditionally tended to rise through the organisational hierarchy on the basis of technical competence and personal compatibility from which they formed, what Clarke (1998:193) called, stable views of themselves (i.e. their identity) and their environments.

It would appear, however, that the trend had continued, so even in today’s knowledge-based economy, this career trajectory to management positions was the most common one. For instance, in a conceptual guide to effective leadership offered by Walsh (2003), it was observed that expertise in a technical field, coupled with the ability to adopt to the new role, were the key factors in the selection of a new manager.

In a theoretical article, promoting the merits of a general management program for technical experts, and recalling the experiences of technical experts with
future management potential who took the program, Clarke (1998:198) argued that the question of how a technical expert can become a manager was a paradoxical one. Mole (2004) pointed out that “the technical component of leadership...is generally (and often deliberately) underestimated and understated” (Mole, 2004:135).

The benefits of a technical expert moving into a management role were recognised as early as 1886. Acknowledging the rarity of both technical and managerial abilities in one individual, Henry R. Towne described the process of becoming manager:

“To insure the best results, the organisation of productive labour must be directed and controlled by persons having not only good executive ability, and possessing the practical familiarity of a mechanic or engineer with the goods produced and the processes employed, but having also, and equally, a practical knowledge of how to observe, record, analyse and compare essential facts in relation to wages, supplies, expense accounts, and all else that enters into or affects the economy of production and the cost of the product... [T]his combination of qualities has its highest effectiveness if united in one person, who is thus qualified to supervise, either personally or through assistants, the operations of all departments of a business.” (Towne in Campton, 1997:111).

Examining the relationship between technical experts and managers, Drucker (1977:52) called for technical experts to take responsibility for leadership within their areas of expertise. Drucker (1977) went on to offer a useful definition of management in the context of technical experts needing a presence of a manager:

“It is the job of the manager to make the specialists realise that they cannot become effective unless they are understood, and that they cannot
be understood unless they try to find out the needs, the assumptions, and the limitations of their ‘customers’, the other people (and, often, specialists in their own areas) within the organisation. It is the manager who has to translate the objectives of the organisation into the language of the specialist, and the output of the specialist into the language of the intended user…” (Drucker, 1977:51-52).

This was further supported by Garnier (2008) who, in an article on the role of leadership in the pharmaceutical industry, argued that:

“the way to solve the productivity problem is…to return power to the scientists by reorganising R&D into small, highly focused groups headed by people who are leaders in their scientific fields and can guide and inspire their teams to achieve greatness” (Garnier, 2008:70).

Empirical evidence supported this: In positivist studies by Goodall (2006a and 2006b), looking at the leadership skills in academic institutions, it was argued that there were two distinct components in leading research universities: the managerial expertise and the inherent knowledge of academia (knowledge borne out of expertise gained through academic research). This is a key point, first mentioned by McGregor (2006:249) in Section 2.2.2 where he argued that different areas of the organisation had different leadership skills and ability requirements. This argument could be extended to different types of organisations, requiring different abilities in their leaders. The identity of an organisation and its needs will be discussed in Section 2.4.

Goodall’s (2006a) study further found a correlation between the appointment of a scholar with management and leadership experience and successful organisational outcomes. Lowendahl (1997:56) further made a link between the
need for technical experts with excellent professional reputations to occupy leadership and management positions as they were more readily accepted by their peers.

Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2002) argued that “to enlist people in a vision, leaders must know their constituents and speak their language” (Kouzes and Posner, 2002:15). They further suggested that the complexity and multifunctionality of organisations meant that leaders cannot be the most technically competent in their fields, particularly those leaders at more senior levels (Kouzes and Posner, 2002:30). This was further supported by Preston and Biddle (1994:28), who based on their Interpretivist perspective study, observed that “…as professionals move up an organisation’s hierarchy, the fewer tasks they undertake in their chosen field of expertise and the more tasks they are required to perform of a managerial nature” (Preston and Biddle, 1994:28).

Gabarro (1985:123) advocated for a combination of broadening the experience of the management talent pool by putting technical experts in charge of units slightly outside their experience base. This was further supported by Pagonis (1992) who, in a self-reflective article on his own leadership experience in the army, argued that “most leaders first achieve mastery in a particular functional area…and eventually move into the generalist’s realm” (Pagonis, 1992:120). Similarly, in a theoretical article on the links between managerial background and organisational outcomes, Hambrick and Mason (1984:199) suggested that
leaders brought to their roles an orientation developed from their previous technical experiences.

Management of a technical area was also examined by Maccoby (2000) and in particular different options available to organisations when hiring for a manager position. Maccoby (2000) argued that while different people within the organisation could take over the management functions, it may be in the interests of technical experts to have a non-technical manager who could “take care of the bureaucratic stuff so they [the technical experts] could remain free to do more interesting work” (Maccoby, 2000:57). Implementing such a structure could further result in no change to the relationship between technical experts, as “technical staff, like professionals in other fields, don’t like to evaluate or discipline colleagues. They would rather hire a manager to do that kind of dirty work” (Maccoby, 2000:57).

Maccoby (2000) went on to acknowledge that hiring a non-technical manager to manage technical experts could be problematic if technical experts perceived that a manager did not understand technology or the nature of their work, while managers in turn may have demanded realisation of tasks and goals that did not make sense to technical experts. That could lead to a possibility that “technical teams…would be fed up enough to take over the management function” (Maccoby, 2000:57).
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Highlighting the complex relationship between the manager and the technical expert, Drucker (1977:52) argued that technical experts should be ‘superiors’ of their manager. In a further questioning of the role of a general manager, Gabarro (1985) used the findings of his empirical study to argue that “the all-purpose general manager who can parachute into any situation and succeed is a myth” (Gabarro, 1985:122).

The impact of the transition into management of a technical expert on their identity will be discussed next.

2.4 Identity – the crucible of leadership

Bennis and Thomas (2002) drew on interviews with forty three leaders in public and private sector organisations and decisive moments in their lives that shaped them as leaders and pointed out that negative life experiences shaped leader’s style and potential. For Bennis and Thomas (2002) crucible experiences shaped the leader’s identity. A crucible was defined as “a transformative experience through which an individual comes to a new or an altered sense of identity” (Bennis and Thomas, 2002:40).

Looking at identity across individual, organisational and social levels, Alvesson (2004:188) emphasised identity as critical to not just understanding how individuals related to their work but also to how organisations functioned. Alvesson (2004:194) differentiated between positive and negative work identities
and described positive work identity as being facilitated by education, status, high pay, and interesting work tasks. Organisational identification was important as it consisted of internal corporate pride and perceived status of being affiliated with a prestigious organisation (Alvesson, 2004:210). This led Alvesson (2004:206) to conclude that an individual’s motivations were contingent upon self-construction. Therefore, if through their self-construction individuals formed views of themselves as technical experts, they may find it difficult to alter their identity construction and become managers.

Exploring the notion of an individual identity is therefore important because the view that an individual has of themselves has consequences for their priorities and motivations and how others see them. As Alvesson (2004) argued:

“We form identities through social groups, and how others relate to us is crucial to how we see ourselves. Organisations are sources of identity of the employed. Identity is not fixed, but is to some extent an open question” (Alvesson, 2004:188).

Alvesson (2004:238) saw the role of management in trying to regulate identities, but the acceptance of prescribed identity was not being sufficient with the identity being constantly evolved and developed.

Furthermore, Alvesson (2004:1) argued that work in knowledge-intensive organisations was around the use of intellectual and analytical tasks, requiring an extensive theoretical education and experience. Symbols such as words, ideas, plans, maps, as well as knowledge in itself were knowledge work according to Alvesson (2004:238). Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152) also argued that skills
requirements were influenced by the type of organisation. According to them even for the same type of organisation, the ideal pattern of skills varied depending on the current business environment and the prevailing business strategy. Examples of knowledge-intensive jobs included those jobs requiring some degree of creativity and adaptation to specific circumstances, such as the legal and the public sectors.

Albert and Adams (2002) looked at the transition process in a law firm and the impact of the transition on the identity of transitional managers. They argued that a balance in identity of a lawyer as a technical expert who moved up the organisational hierarchy was due to the transition taking a number of years (up to nine years). Albert and Adams (2002:38) went on to point that the conflict between the two identities should be encouraged because no matter how internally conflicted; organisations that embraced two or more identities had staying power. The hybrid identity organisations – those organisations that embodied two or more identities at the same time (Albert and Adams, 2002:35) – were sustainable because, despite the internal contradictions built into the hybrid form, those organisations survived and prospered.

A similar point was made by Goodall (2006a) and Goodall (2006b). Looking at leadership in academia, Goodall (2006b) found that the skills required of leaders in academia were specific to universities. Moreover, Goodall (2006a:13) argued
that there was a link between organisational performance and the technical proficiency of the leader as technical expertise was a proxy for leadership ability.

These important points by Alvesson (2004); Yukl and Van Fleet (1992); Albert and Adams (2002); Goodall (2006a); and Goodall (2006b) highlight organisational influences over the identity of technical experts and the roles they are in, as well as the influences of peers on how technical experts view themselves. According to Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152), more research was needed to link skills to the unique skill requirements of different types of leadership positions within the social and political context. The extent to which technical expertise of a manager needed to vary from one type of organisation to another was examined in this study.

It is important however to emphasise that the technical expert’s position when they assume managerial roles and their work identity are not the same. As Alvesson (2004:189-190) pointed out, the role an individual occupied referred to external expectations and the position an individual took when interacting with others. Identity, on the other hand, was a subjective and an individual’s view of themselves. With such definition of identity, it was then not surprising to find that in two different theoretical articles on different identities a manager needed to assume relative to the managerial skills, Freeburn (1994) argued that the most important thing for the manager was not to attempt to change their personality and to stay as “self” (Freeburn, 1994:23). Similarly, for Reichers (1987) a
complete identity formation occurred when “the individual adopts the attitudes of others toward the self” (Reichers, 1987:280).

In a theoretical paper looking at the impact international postings had on leaders’ identity, Kohonen (2005) argued that “identity as a concept is a complex, multi-layered and difficult to define unambiguously” (Kohonen, 2005:23). When applied to the transition process a transitional manager makes, this complexity could be due to the fact that the transition from being a technical peer to managing staff, while maintaining a sense of authenticity as a technical leader, could be difficult to pull off (Eagly and Carli, 2007:67; Alvesson, 2004:206).

Another contributing factor to the complexity of identity and its formation could be due to the future ambitions and the different personality types of technical experts and managers (see the discussion in Section 2.2.2 on the personality preferences of leaders and the personality type influences on the interaction between the leader and followers). As Kohonen (2005) pointed out:

“in the post-modern, globalised world, people are searching and continuously working on their identities. In doing so, they are constructing biographies, which tie the different aspects of their fragmented selves into a unified entity” (Kohonen, 2005:24).

In a contribution to the discussion on the identities of technical experts and managers, Preston and Biddle (1994:29) suggested that technical experts and managers had different sets of values with a principal difference between the two in the “diametrically opposed” scope of their respective fields of expertise:
technical experts were expected to develop expertise in a niche area, whereas managers were expected to develop expertise in a broad range of areas. This confusion over the “diametrically opposed” scope of the managerial and technical fields of expertise and hence the different set of values each role had, was further supported by Eagly and Carli (2007) who observed that “leadership is not synonymous with socialising… [as] even though on a technical level, staff are their peers, at the managerial level, it is not possible to be friends with everyone” (Eagly and Carli, 2007:67).

Such observations suggested that for technical experts finding themselves in managerial roles, the tasks of managerial nature may come at the cost of the tasks in the technical field of expertise. This would result in a shift in the individual’s value system during the transition process. As Walsh (2003:39) argued:

“once staff managers have established a baseline of their current business knowledge…many become immediately aware that they have been programmed to view themselves as experts rather than as business people who happen to have some form of staff expertise. Organisations have done a terrific job in institutionalising the narrow focus of staff professionals.”

To sum up, identity of a technical expert assuming managerial responsibilities was examined in this section. In the discussion about an individual’s identity during the transition process, the diametrically opposed core values between the roles of technical experts and managers were emphasised. The organisational influence over the construction of an individual identity was also highlighted.
Lastly, a possibility that different types of organisations required different skills in their leaders was postulated.

The role of power in the interactive relationship between the leader and followers will be examined next. This is an important aspect for a study looking to examine characteristics of the experience of a group of transitional managers and within that, the respondents’ perceptions of their own identity following the transition. Therefore, the role of power needs to be seen in the context of how an individual identity is developed.

2.5 Leadership and power

The link between identity of a leader and power was made by Alvesson (2004:190) who argued that “the exercise of power is...about the development of subjects tied to particular identities regarding how one should feel, think, and act.” Bennis and Nanus (1985:15), using the data from the previously mentioned ninety interviews with successful private and public sector leaders, observed that if vision was the commodity of leaders, power – the quality without which leaders cannot lead – was their currency. Similarly, Drucker (2006:206-207) argued that knowledge was power that came from transmitting information to make it productive.

Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:162-163) distinguished between two types of power: the personal power included expert power, referent power, and persuasiveness,
while the *position power* was about legitimate authority, reward and coercive power, and control over information (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:161) with effective leaders needing to rely mainly on personal power to motivate subordinates. Personal and position power needed to complement each other with aspects of personal power, such as expert, technical power, being the key in motivating commitment to tasks that required high effort, initiative and persistence. Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) concluded that the empirical research was ambiguous on how much power was needed for leadership effectiveness and how power was exercised.

Specific to the power in the hands of technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities, empirical studies by Goodall (2006a and 2006b) and Stanley (2006) attempted to close the gap on the ambiguity of leadership and power. In a positivist study by Goodall (2006b) looking at the correlation between global ranking of a business school and the reputation of its Dean, it was found that individuals with a high level of technical expertise had a greater status and more negotiating power when dealing with staff. In the previously mentioned Interpretivist perspective study, differentiating between managers and leaders, Stanley (2006) found that managers depended on their position, title and hierarchical status (i.e. what Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:163-164) called *position power*), while leaders depended on their knowledge, experience and ability to inspire people (i.e. Yukl and Van Fleet’s (1992:163-164) *personal power*).
So far, the relationship between the leader and followers was examined through the leader’s identity and organisational influences over that identity, as well as the role of power in that relationship. In the next section, the impact of the relationship between the leader and followers on communication skills will be explored.

2.6 Communication skills

In a theoretical article by Hamm (2006:116), recalling his work as a leadership coach, it was argued that the job of leadership was to inspire the organisation to take responsibility for creating a better future. Effective communication was the leader’s most critical management tool for making that happen (Hamm, 2006:116). A similar point was made by Ready (2004) in another theoretical article using past examples drawn from his consulting work on growing leaders.

Those authors who conducted empirical studies looking at the transition process from a technical expert to a manager similarly found that a technical expert needed to have specific attributes in order to be a manager and a leader. Communication skills and people skills were highlighted as particularly significant attributes in a successful leadership (referred to as ‘soft’ areas in the theoretical article by Fernández-Aráoz (2005:68) in Section 2.1.2). However, according to a number of authors who conducted empirical studies relating to the transitions of technical experts into management, communication and people skills were not readily attainable in technical experts (Preston and Biddle, 1994; Verner and
Evanco, 2005 and Eubanks, 1991). For example, in a previously mentioned action learning study by Preston and Biddle (1994), an argument was made that:

“Typically, professionals....are generally lacking skills in communication, managing people and learning how to achieve results through others. Consequently, when professionals reach their ceiling to further promotion they are generally ill-prepared for the managerial roles expected of them” (Preston and Biddle, 1994:28).

This was further supported by Verner and Evanco (2005) who conducted a positivist study with twenty one senior software practitioners at a large financial organisation to examine successes or failures of software projects. They found that while technical competence was important, a broad background, managerial and interpersonal skills were more useful than expertise in any particular technical area (Verner and Evanco, 2005:87).

Other empirical studies reached similar conclusions. Eubanks (1991) who, in a study of health industry human resource experts, found that “former clinicians in new management positions tend to need more help with the ‘people’ aspects of the job than others” (Eubanks, 1991:61). This point was reinforced by Eisner (1997) who, in a book on project managers, as one example of technical experts who transitioned into management, described good managers as those requiring skills and awareness to deal with the human aspect of managing other people. Eisner (1997) pointed out:

“bad managers may know ‘nuts and bolts’ of project management, but if the execution is devoid of an understanding of how to relate to people, the project will usually get into trouble. People just do not put forth their best effort for a bad boss” (Eisner, 1997:95).
Drucker (1977:51) offered an explanation as to why the communication skills were a major problem for technical experts when he argued that technical experts:

“cannot be effective unless their output becomes the input of other people. But their output is ideas and information. This requires that the users of their output understand what they are trying to say and to do. But, by the nature of their task, they will be tempted to use their own specialised jargon.” (Drucker, 1977:51).

So, if leadership was an interactive process between the leader and followers, and the leadership effectiveness was realised through communication skills, people skills and the use of technical expertise as a form of personal power, how does a technical expert move into management successfully, acknowledging that one of the roles of a manager was to integrate and translate their area of knowledge and expertise to the organisational performance? (Drucker, 1977:51). This question, crucial to this study, will be addressed next and will begin with a discussion of a successful transition.

### 2.7 The likelihood of the transitional success

The work by Bridges (2003 and 2004) will be briefly discussed first, noting that his work was applicable to personal changes and transitions in a career cycle, however, it will be argued here that the same arguments were valid and can be applied to the transition process transitional managers undertake as one
example of life changes and transitions. The discussion will start on the
difference between a change and a transition.

According to Bridges (2004:xii) transitions and change cannot be seen as the
same terms. For him, changes were situational, while transitions were
psychological, dealing with re-orientations and self-redefinitions. In order for a
change to be successful, a transition needed to take hold. In his other work,
Bridges (2003:3) described transitions as a three-phase process that individuals
went through as they internalised and came to terms with the details of the new
situation that the change brought about.

The three phases of the transition, according to Bridges (2003 and 2004) were:
(1) letting go of the old ways and the old identity – what Bridges (2003:4) called
the ending; (2) going through an in-between time with the old gone but the new
not fully operational – what Bridges (2003:5) called the neutral zone, which
according to him was key for psychological realignments and repatternings to
take hold; (3) coming out of the transition and making a new beginning – what
Bridges (2003:5) called the new beginning, with the new identity and a new
sense of purpose occurring. This is an important point for a study looking at the
characteristics of the transitional experiences for a group of transitional
managers. This study will further examine if “letting go” was what was needed to
ensure a successful transition or if the respondents in this study defined a
successful transition differently.
For Gabarro (1985:111), transition that a *new manager* (see discussion in Chapter One) went through consisted of five stages, with each stage taking up to eleven months: taking hold, immersion, reshaping, consolidation, and refinement. According to Gabarro (1985:111) on average, the transition process took two to three years and in some cases longer (Gabarro, 1985:111). This transitional length was different from the reported observations by Albert and Adams (2002) who in Section 2.4 concluded that the transition in a hybrid organisation took around nine years.

Gabarro (1985:111) further argued that there were a number of factors that shaped the success of the transition, including a new manager’s experience, whether the business needed turning around, the person’s managerial style and personal needs, their relationships with followers, and whether the manager’s management style conflicted with that of their supervisor (Gabarro, 1985:116). In an attempt to define a successful transition, Gabarro (1985:119) pointed out that the most salient difference between the successful and the failed transitions was the quality of the *transitional managers’* working relationships. He defined a transitional failure as firing of the new manager within the three years of assuming the managerial role (Gabarro, 1985:117).

In two theoretical papers, offering guidance on how to reduce instances of failure by managers appointed from outside the organisation, Burke and McKeen
(1994a:18) defined a successful transition as the *new manager* keeping their job after the transition had ended (with the definition of the *new manager* borrowed from Gabarro, 1985). They emphasised the experience base as key to the successful transition. At the same time, the technical experience base could be the case of a transition failure. In a previously mentioned theoretical paper on leadership strategies that lead to success, Watkins (2004) argued that individuals failed in making a transition because they “typically model their own transition on a limited set of experiences” (Watkins, 2004:15). He gave an example of a functional vice-president making the transition to a general manager and argued that “every leader who makes this leap encounters similar challenges, such as the need to let go of reliance on functional expertise” (Watkins, 2004:15).

Burke and McKeen (1994b) argued that what was needed were ways to increase the success of the management transition process and shorten the time required, they fell short of suggesting how to increase the transitional success rate. To add to the confusion, a number of authors suggested that organisations rewarded excellence in technical expertise through promotion (this was discussed in Section 2.3 – Role of technical expertise in leadership). The implication of that was that the new manager was led to believe that applying the same set of (technical) skills was what would make them successful in the manager role as well (as discussed in Section 2.6, communication skills and people skills were integral).
According to Clarke (1998), usually shortly after the technical expert started in the management role that they realised that applying the same technical skills may not work. However, by that stage, admitting this could be considered as a failure by the individual and/or their superiors. A similar observation was made by Rausch (1999) who, in a previously mentioned theoretical paper on improving leadership competence pointed out that:

“because many managers usually make sound decisions in their respective fields, they have a tendency to think that they are also quite good at leadership decisions... They may do what comes naturally – following their inclinations and what their past experiences may have taught them, but that is not enough.” (Rausch, 1999:170).

That led Walsh (2003:45) to suggest that the transition from a technical expert to a manager “requires strong motivation and commitment to change deeply ingrained patterns. The process of meaningful change is analogous to melting an ice cube and then refreezing the water into a new shape.”

Another factor found to be contributing to the unlikely success of the transition were the peers of the technical expert. For instance, in a previously mentioned study on the transition process in the medical field by Eubanks (1991), it was found that technical peer pressure was a significant factor in preventing new managers from embracing their new role and acquiring skills required to perform in the new job. Eubanks observed that:

“because of their competence in technical clinical work, a new manager might give into the urge to continue performing clinical tasks instead of delegating them.... There is also the possibility that former clinical peers might exert pressure on the new manager to remain directly involved in clinical activities” (Eubanks, 1991:61).
In another empirical study a similar approach to defining a successful transition was used by Walsh (2003) who pointed out that “effective staff managers needed to examine their current level of satisfaction and competency with respect to their functions and their organisation” (Walsh, 2003:45).

A possible reason for a lack of clarity and consistency in the literature on the competencies required for a successful transition could be that there were no transitional competencies specific to the transition from a technical expert to a manager, in other words, that transitional competencies were, in fact, leadership competencies. Indeed, it could be argued that the transitional failure as described by Watkins (2004) could be applied to any leadership failure: “failure is never about the flaws of the new leader. Transition failures happen when new leaders either misunderstand the essential demands or the situation or lack the skills and flexibility to adapt to them” (Watkins, 2004:15).

This was further supported by Stanley (2006). Based on the findings of his study, looking at the difference between management and leadership in a group of nurses, Stanley (2006) argued that the drive to place technical experts in key leadership roles was hindered by a commonly held misunderstanding about the difference between leadership and management. He concluded that his study participants (nurses) were ill prepared for the managerial roles they were placed in, particularly in relation to leadership issues (Stanley, 2006:31).
Chapter Two – Review of the research literature

With ways of increasing the success of transitions not being clear, the research literature appears to be similarly divided on how the potential for a management role was identified and more specifically if it should be identified by the individual, their supervisor or their colleagues. This will be briefly discussed next.

2.7.1 Identifying management potential

According to Clarke (1998:193) one of the most difficult decisions facing a technical expert was whether to stay within their chosen discipline or move into a management role. It would appear however that the literature is divided on how the potential for management was identified and more specifically who identified it: the individual (i.e. the technical expert), their supervisor or colleagues of the individual, i.e. the followers as per the definition discussed in Section 2.2.1.1 and adopted from Yan and Hunt (2005:51).

In many organisations, superiors ‘encouraged’ technical experts to move away from their chosen field of technical expertise and take on management roles. A personal reflection of this was offered by Pagonis (1992:120) who gave an account of his leadership trajectory: “Because I had [technical, Army related] expertise, I was successful; and because I was successful, I was identified by my superiors as a potential leader” (Pagonis, 1992:120).

Preston and Biddle (1994:29), on the other hand, argued that technical experts needed to identify within themselves whether the transition into management was possible. In making such a decision, they needed to take into consideration their
system of values, they future ambitions and their personality type (see discussion in Section 2.3 on empirical studies on the interactions between the leader and followers with a particular emphasis on leader’s personality type).

Clarke (1998:198) argued that for the transition from a technical expert to a manager to be a successful one, the personal development needed to be combined with the organisational demands where, through the personal development, reflective choices were made about the work of transitional managers and how they went about that work. The need for an individual to take charge of their personal development and growth was introduced by McGregor (2006). This was because “the concept of integration and self-control carries the implication that the organisation will be more effective in achieving its economic objectives if adjustments are made, in significant ways, to the needs and goals of its members” (McGregor, 2006:69). This it not to say that it was possible to achieve a perfect integration of organisational requirements and individual goals. Rather, McGregor (2006) called for a “degree of integration in which the individual can achieve his goals best by directing his efforts toward the success of the organisation” (McGregor, 2006:75. Original emphasis).

One of the drawbacks of the developmental process being led by the organisational development (which often included the corporate culture change, what Alvesson (2004:212) called “ideology”), was that it could have a potential to
restrict the individual’s ability to undergo the change process. As Clarke (1998) argued:

“Attempts to harness the value of the...manager through culture change programs seem particularly fraught as they ultimately reduce the choices that managers can make for the benefit of their organisations” (Clarke, 1998:204).

That implied that technical experts needed to self-identify managerial potential. If such a shift was identified by their organisations first and imposed on technical experts, the transition had less chance of being successful. Support for that was offered by Pagonis (1992:123), among others, who argued that once elements of personal leadership development were in place, “a leader can concentrate on building an appropriate context for leadership.”

In a positivist study, examining two case studies to a global approach to management training, Temperley (1994) called for a balance between organisational and personal needs, particularly in light of increasing management requirements to successfully run a business; however, she did not indicate how that balance was to be achieved. The notion that the transitional success was dependent on a partnership between the technical expert undergoing the transition and the organisation was made by Pagonis (1992) who used his experiences as a leader in the military to argue that “leadership is only possible where the ground has been prepared in advance...If the organisation isn’t pulling for you, you’re likely to be hobbled from the start... The work of leadership...is both personal and organisational” (Pagonis, 1992:118).
Therefore, even though a number of authors acknowledged the role organisations played in the transition process, it would appear that there was no consensus between the personal developmental needs of a technical expert and the organisational requirements for managerial roles. The organisational pressures put on technical experts to assume managerial responsibilities were discussed in this study. For Parry (1998:86) the paradox between individual development needs and the organisational role, could be resolved with organisations role being to offer assistance to individuals to have their own developmental experiences.

In this section the likelihood of a transitional success for a technical expert who assumes managerial responsibilities was discussed. Ways of increasing the success of transitions were not clearly articulated in the literature with a number of varying definitions. The research literature appears to be similarly divided on how the potential for a management role was identified and more specifically if it should be identified by the individual, their supervisor or their colleagues.

The next section will briefly examine how leadership skills can be acquired.

**2.8 Leadership as an acquired skill**

The focus of this study was not on whether leaders were born or if leadership was an acquired skill. However, with the focus of the study on how leadership
and management skills were acquired by technical experts, examining the current literature on leadership as a learnt skill was beneficial. Looking at how leadership skills can be taught was important both in the context of how a successful transition can be achieved and from the perspective of developmental management training programs.

As early as the 1960s, McGregor (2006:243) rejected the debate over whether leaders were born or made, instead urging the focus on leadership as a relationship between the leader and the situation. Avolio and Bass (1994) used empirical evidence to argue that it was possible to teach transformational leadership. Bennis and Nanus (1985:5) similarly argued that the notion that leaders were born was false and did not explain leadership. Emphasising the point made in Section 2.1 that leadership could be shaped and reformed (Sinclair, 2005:176), Kouzes and Posner (2002:388) argued that “leadership is an observable set of skills and abilities.”

Furthermore, seeing leadership as a social phenomenon and viewing it as an interactive process between the leader and followers, Mole (2004) argued that:

“it would never be enough to teach leaders to be good at leadership; we should also have to teach all their followers to be good at ‘followership’”


Parry (1998:89-90) advocated for leadership self-development. Likewise, Collins and Porras (1994) asserted that “gone forever…is the debilitating perspective that the trajectory of a company depends on whether it is led by people ordained
with rare and mysterious qualities that cannot be learned by others” (Collins and Porras, 1994:xiv). Mole (2004:125) similarly stated that the cliché of ‘leaders are born, not made’ was often used by “those people who have already attained a leadership position…” Compton (1997) suggested that an indispensable criterion for a good leader being to want to be a leader. Individuals who by personality or motivation did not wish to be in leadership positions should not be forced into them. According to Compton (1997) those individuals who chose the management path, the learning process needed to begin at the earliest possible time. In fact, Watkins (2004) called transitions a crucible for leadership development with an overriding goal of building momentum by creating virtuous cycles that build credibility and by avoiding getting caught in vicious cycles that damage credibility.

As effective leadership needed to be characterised by the organisational emphasis on training and development (Parry, 1998:82); the organisational context of management development and training will be discussed next.

2.9 Organisational development and training invested in a manager

Adding to the ambiguity of leadership and management terms, or perhaps because of those ambiguities, it would appear that there is a disagreement in the literature on the type and value of leadership and management developmental training programs. Bennis (1989) argued that the schools of management “teach
people how to be good technicians and good staff people, but they do not train people for leadership” (Bennis, 1989:19). That, however, needed to be seen in the context of Zaleznik’s (2004) argument that there were no known ways to train “great” leaders (Zaleznik, 2004:75) and Mole’s (2004) point that “there is no single job model, no universal template, for leadership roles” (Mole, 2004:135).

In this section, leadership and management development programs will be discussed first in a wider organisational outcomes context. Then some of the thinking on the specific development programs for transitional managers will be examined.

Collins and Porras (1994:174) argued that the organisational investment in management training and development and succession planning was the key ingredient to the continuity of quality leadership and organisational prosperity. Similarly, in the previously mentioned “Karpin Report” (see Section 2.2 – Transactional and Transformational Leadership) it was argued that a strong investment in management development was critical to Australian managers’ responsiveness to change.

McGregor (2006:253-257) called for management development programs to be inclusive of as many individuals as possible, with individually tailored programs as the objective. In an Interpretivist perspective case study of four leaders who attempted to implement the learning organisation concept – embracing change
and reacting positively and proactively to change – Johnson (2002:247) found that the key to a learning organisations was the leadership and commitment of those in positions of power. Such a finding should not be surprising in line with the emphasis of the leadership definitions on the relationship and interactions between the leader and followers (see the discussion in Section 2.2.2 – Effective leadership as an influencing process).

This was further supported by Nanda (1996), whose research, focusing on knowledge-intensive organisations and their technical experts, observed that technical experts “bring unique and heterogeneous skills to their firms, and a major task of the organisations is developing, sustaining, coordinating and leveraging these skills” (Nanda, 1996:95). The importance of nurturing and developing skills of technical experts was further articulated by Garnier (2008) who argued that organisations often promoted technical experts to management positions without an adequate consideration for their leadership abilities, resulting in “teams that focus too much on process and too little on producing meaningful results” (Garnier, 2008:73).

Kotter (1990:124-125) argued that leadership development training can be provided through a range of opportunities, including through promotion and lateral moves; formal training; task force or committee assignments; mentoring or coaching; attendance at a meeting outside a person’s core responsibility; special projects and special development jobs (eg. executive assistant jobs). Similar
opportunities for leadership experiences, highlighting the role of organisations in building the career paths of individuals, were offered by Parry (1996) and Parry (1998).

Context-specific job training was also emphasised by Mole (2004:134) when he advocated for what he called “evidence-based training”. Here the leadership role was defined in terms of its content, outcomes and knowledge structure, skills and attitudes which were most strongly predicted, on the basis of empirical evidence, to be associated with successful performance of that role.

Also highlighting the job context, an empirical study by Tickle, Brownlee and Nailon (2005), looking at high performing leaders who “elicit ‘superior performance’, or performance ‘beyond normal expectations’, from those they lead” (Tickle, Brownlee and Nailon, 2005:708, definitions taken from Bass, 1985), found that a combination of training and coaching led to an improved leadership behaviour. Specific to the developmental training programs during the transition, Watkins (2004:16) called for an adoption of a standard framework for accelerated transition, however, he did not offer what that framework might look like.

A number of authors, including Clarke (1998:197), Rausch (1999) and Ready (2004) who examined wider leadership issues from a theoretical standpoint, argued that development programs were of a limited value as an aide to leadership growth. For example, Rausch (1999) asserted that there was only so
much that human resource development programs could do to assist in gaining leadership competence: “…no concentrated program, even with several follow-up sessions would generate long-lasting comprehensive behaviour change” (Rausch, 1999:170-171). He went on to point out that despite various human resource development programs to enhance leadership competence, “managerial leadership competence does not seem to have closed much, if any, of the gap between what is and what could be” (Rausch, 1999:171). One possible reason for that could be the argument made in Section 2.1 when the ambiguity of the definition of the term leadership was discussed. As Rausch pointed out one of the reasons for lack of progress in the value various developmental program offered was that little was known about leadership (Rausch, 1999:171). This argument was taken a step further by Robbins et al. (2001), who argued that:

“effective programs in leadership development do not aim to teach everyone leadership skills; they aim to develop leadership skills in people who are already leaders….maybe leadership cannot be learned but only developed in people who already have the essentials of leadership!” (Robbins et al. 2001:444).

Similarly, Ready (2004:97) was another author critical of the value of leadership development programs. He gave an example of one of the largest banks in North America which invested hundreds of millions of dollars over a few decades in leadership development programs without producing leaders able to work and think outside their technical expertise areas. Ready (2004) offered a possible explanation when he stated that the company’s:
“leadership development efforts were piecemeal, focused on particular skills and challenges, and therefore didn’t prepare employees to take on broader roles. Development was confined within the organisation’s various functional groupings” (Ready, 2004:97).

Findings such as those by Ready (2004) suggested that arguments made by authors who called for broadening of the technical experience base to other areas within the organisation (eg. Parry, 1998:83), while a key factor in ensuring the successful transition, was not enough to ensure the successful transition. Criticism of developmental programs and value they offered implied that organisations should not focus their human resource development efforts in the development of leadership efforts within various functional areas, but broadened it to include the development of leadership skills across all aspects of the organisation’s operations and more broadly the development of leadership skills outside the organisational experience.

A characteristic of the majority of the literature reviewed on the organisational development referred to the developmental programs for a new manager, not necessarily to the developmental programs for transitional managers. As argued in the Introduction Chapter, this distinction is important because a new manager may imply an organisational or an industry insider; or an individual outside either the industry and/or the organisation stepping into a new role. The transitional managers in this study were a subset of new managers and had expertise in a technical area before assuming managerial positions within the same organisation.
Clarke (1998:198) suggested six competency steps in, what he called, the “development process” from a technical expert to a manager, namely: (1) managerial knowledge; (2) influencing skills; (3) cognitive skills; (4) self-knowledge; (5) emotional resilience, and (6) personal drive. Clarke (1998) went on to point out that while some of these six meta-abilities may be developed by some individuals more than others, all six abilities were crucial during the transition process to ensure its success. A similar list to the one offered by Clarke (1998) was proposed by Compton (1997:172) who suggested that a consensus needed to be reached in terms of the technical capabilities, willingness to work in a team, the level of commitment to excellence, and the long-term potential of being successful in management.

In this section it was argued that while a number of studies have looked at the transition process from a technical expert to a manager, there appeared to be no consensus on what combination of skills, competencies and personal characteristics were required to ensure the transition was successful. This may had led to the polarity in the literature on the benefits of developmental training programs which perhaps could be due to the reported discussion in Section 2.4 by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152) that skills requirements were influenced by the type of organisation as the technical expertise a manager needed to have varied greatly from one type of organisation to another. Even for the same type of organisation, the ideal pattern of skills varied depending on the current business
environment and the prevailing business strategy. According to Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152), more research was needed to link skills to the unique skill requirements of different types of leadership positions within the social and political context. A similar point was made by Watkins (2004:15-16) who argued that the root causes of transition failure always lie in a pernicious interactions between the situation, with its opportunities and pitfalls, and the individual, with his or her strengths and vulnerabilities.

Translated to the transition process of a technical expert to a role of a manager, the literature review presented so far could be summed up as follows: the technical experts who moved into management roles can be ill-equipped to deal with the demands of the role (Preston and Biddle, 1994:28; Eisner, 1997) as they applied their technical skills to the managerial role (Burke and McKeen, 1994a and 1994b), which could lead to a failure of the transition (Watkins, 2004), particularly if they were not offered management and leadership training opportunities earlier in their technical careers (Compton, 1997).

2.10 Promoting from within the organisation

The organisational choices in the transition process will be discussed next in the context of promoting from within the organisation. This will then be tied to the larger cultural context of leadership and works by Alvesson (2002), Alvesson (2004) and Collins and Porras (1994) will be mentioned. Furthermore, as it will be demonstrated in the Findings and Analysis Chapter and discussed in the last
Chapter (Chapter Five – Discussion and Conclusions), this study has examined the subjectively perceived experiences of the transition by a group of *transitional managers*. Through that characterisation of the transitional experiences, an insight into organisational demands, natural attrition, succession planning and therefore organisational culture and organisational ideology and its relationship to leadership was also gained.

Kotter described an “insider” as an individual with five or more years experience in the new organisation’s industry (Gabarro, 1985:117). While not specific to a technical expert assuming managerial responsibilities, Kotter looked at how newly appointed managers built effective working relationships. He interviewed seven industry-insider and seven industry-outsiders and found that:

> “the importance of experience…has several implications for succession planning and career development. All other factors being equal, an insider with industry-specific or other relevant experience is more likely to take charge with fewer difficulties than an outsider without industry-specific experience” (Gabarro, 1985:123).

That implied that even if the previous and the new job required a similar set of skills, it was the industry specific or functional experience that determined the success of the transition process. In a theoretical paper by Burke and McKeen (1994a:18) it was similarly argued that industry insiders were more likely to succeed. Applying Gabarro’s (1985:117) definition of a transitional failure, as reported in Section 2.7, a successful transition could then be defined as a transitional manager not losing their job within three of the transition.
Specific to the insiders with the organisational experience, Compton (1997:197) argued that technical experts who exhibited the talent and the desire to be managers needed to be given the necessary opportunities to develop those skills. According to her, if a company frequently recruited high-level people from outside that was a sign of either a failure in earlier recruiting efforts or unwillingness to devote the effort needed to identify the potential and train and develop management and leadership skills in the existing staff (Compton, 1997:196-197).

An outsider coming into a new organisation without technical knowledge of the organisation and the industry faced a very difficult learning curve according to Gabarro (1985:122). In his theoretical article on the importance of succession management plans, Byham (2001) argued that organisations hired from the outside “when the company stands to benefit from new technology, an infusion of new ideas, or a fresh perspective” (Byham, 2001:3). He cautioned however that appointing from the outside could be time consuming and expensive with the added the fear of the unknown candidate, their strengths and weaknesses (Byham, 2001:3).

The discussion on the organisational merits of promoting from within the industry and/or within the organisation needs to be seen in a wider context of the impact of such decisions on the wider organisational culture. Arguments for strong
organisational culture as key to leadership were made by a number of authors including Alvesson (2002 and 2004). According to Alvesson (2002):

“any particular organisation represents a mix of general societal and industrial expectations and ideas, and of local, more or less organisation-specific ones. Organisational-specific cultural ideas and meanings in various ways direct and constrain managerial behaviour and leadership” (Alvesson, 2002:107).

That led Alvesson (2002:108) to conclude that individuals in leadership were more strongly influenced by organisational culture than they were involved in producing it: “the leadership of managers (and even more so of informal leaders) is typically strongly constrained by, and draws upon, the cultural and ideological context(s) of the organisation” (Alvesson: 2002:117). For Alvesson (2002), promotion was dependent on the managers’ adaptation to dominant organisational orientations. In other words, managers needed to fit into corporate culture (i.e. ideology) and drive rather than deviate from dominant patterns. It was then not surprising that Alvesson (2004:192) drew a parallel between an identity of an individual and culture, arguing that aspects of culture have indirect consequences for the identity construction. This was perhaps because “management in general...is partly about trying to control people’s identities” (Alvesson, 2004:207). Therefore, individuals were more likely to be retained by the organisation and promoted if their identity construction was in line with the identity constructions valued in the organisation (Alvesson, 2004:220).
In an empirical study on leadership and organisational culture, emphasising the fit into dominant organisational patterns, Collins and Porras (1994) examined the success of visionary companies and argued that visionary organisations were clear about what they stood for and what they were trying to achieve, making them “cult-like”, with those staff who could not align with the organisation’s core ideology not having a place within the organisation. Hence, Collins and Porras (1994:10) argued that the visionary companies were able to produce significant change and new ideas out of the “home-grown management”. They went on to suggest that organisations needed to develop and promote organisational insiders capable of stimulating change and progress, while preserving the organisational core (Collins and Porras, 1994:183). Failure to invest in the internal candidates would result in the leadership gap, what Collins and Porras (1994:175) referred to as the “dearth of strong internal candidates”.

Similarly, Byham (2001:3) saw growing leaders within organisations part of the succession management with the aim of meeting organisational goals. According to him, “promoting from within ensures continuity of management and promotes a positive organisational culture as staff feel empowered and appreciated” (Byham, 2001:3). Furthermore, investment in the development needs of the existing staff assisted with, what Byham (2001:3) called “emergency leadership needs” across all levels of the organisation.
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At the beginning of this Chapter it was indicated that the transition process from technical expert to a manager was seen as a promotion. Various reasons for the transition process, as reported in the literature, will be discussed in the next section.

2.11 Reasons for the transition

McGregor (2006:265) argued that there were three environmental conditions which affect the growth of managers, including: (1) economic and technological characteristics of the industry and the firm; (2) policies and practices of the company, and (3) the behaviour of the immediate supervisor. This study has as its focus the subjective experiences of the transition by a group of transitional managers. Therefore, the career progression as the reason for the transition into management (hence giving an insight into organisational policies and practices – McGregor’s second set of environmental conditions) and the impact of technology and technological advances on the transition (McGregor’s first set of environmental conditions) will be examined in more details next.

2.11.1 Career progression

An underlying assumption by those authors looking at the transition process was that the only path for a technical expert to a further promotion was through the assumption of managerial responsibilities. Some of the reasons behind such assumptions will be discussed below in the context of a need to recognise that
organisational structures impact on the career opportunities and the career choices employees make.

Clarke (1998) argued that traditionally technical experts were rewarded through promotion. One possible explanation for that was that the role of a manager had changed to become a more generalist one, partly as a result of the technical skills being pushed lower down the organisational hierarchy to operational personnel (Clarke, 1998:192). Similarly, Preston and Biddle (1994:28), Boucher (2005) and Drummond and Chell (2001) observed that most organisations were structured in such a way that promotions and new opportunities increased for managerial roles and remained the same or decreased for technical roles. For instance, in an Interpretivist perspective case study of two solicitors and their career choices, Drummond and Chell (2001), labelled such structures an “entrapment”, as often the decision to take on the management role was made because of the financial reasons, with the transitional managers not enjoying the management roles they were in.

Likewise, Maccoby (2000) used an example of GE/Durham plant that assembled engines for the Boeing 777, with hundred and seventy employees and only one manager, to argue that there were no incentives in the organisation other than promotion on the basis of skills, with the company technicians being motivated by the work itself, the drive for perfection and pride in their work (Maccoby, 2000:57). Robbins, et al. (2001) similarly argued that technical experts were not
motivated by money and promotion rather by a challenge in the job. Perhaps because of such motivation, their long term commitment was to their profession, their field and their expertise rather than to an employer (Robbins, et al. 2001:252).

Drucker (1977:52-53) recognised the problem with the traditional view that saw managers being ‘superior’ to other staff and therefore needing to earn more money than staff reporting to them. Drucker (1977) called for organisational structures that allowed an individual, particularly technical experts considered as leaders in their field, to earn more money and have a greater status without assuming managerial responsibilities. Similarly, based on the interview data with thousands of managers, Buckingham and Coffman (1999) introduced the notion of broadbanding and argue that promotion should not be the only way to receive higher pay. According to them, broadbanding ensured that every role, when performed at excellence, was valued.

Albert and Adams (2002) – who looked at the transition in the legal sector – described the promotion process within a law firm and the transition process from a lawyer to a senior associate to a partner. They pointed out that after a few years of practice, a lawyer would notice a shift in emphasis from just doing the work to starting to build a business of clients. Once a lawyer was promoted to the role of a senior associate, the existing partners expected the new senior associate to generate new business for the firm. Albert and Adams (2002)
Albert and Adams (2002) reinforced the point made in Section 2.7.1 by McGregor (2006), Clarke (1998), Temperley (1994) and Pagonis (1991) who called for a balance between the organisational requirements and individual development needs, when they suggested that shortening the transition time for a lawyer to move up the ladder would decrease the profitability of the firm. This would result in pressures on the law firm to act more like a pure business. Similarly, if the promotion was made too distant, a number of lawyers would have persevered, while others would have left the organisation.

While describing the process of how to move up the corporate ladder, Albert and Adams’ (2002) study did not examine the impact this climbing up the ladder had on a lawyer as a technical law expert, nor did they explain what were the “business skills” required to move up the hierarchy. The value of the study however, was in the suggestion that some industries were more predisposed to the transitional success than others. This could be because law firms were managed as businesses, while they presented themselves as a group of professionals. Law firms can be internally managed as businesses, due to what Albert and Adams (2002) called “the institutionalisation of virtue” – the fact that the law firms operated in an environment that demanded and enforced certain standards of virtuous conduct.
Similar observations were made in a number of empirical studies such as those by Boucher (2005), Stanley (2006) and Eubanks (1991) who focused their work on the transition process from a technical expert to a manager in the health sectors in Australia (Boucher, 2005 and Stanley, 2006) and the USA (Eubanks, 1991); and a positivist study by Saulwick Muller Social Research commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education on the transitional experiences of school principals. A similarity between these studies was their conclusion that promotion options within the technical field were limited. Those studies will be discussed next.

Boucher (2005) conducted an Interpretivist perspective, inductive study looking at the factors that influenced the decisions by professionals working in the health care industry (as distinct from the health care experts), to become or not to become a manager. Boucher (2005) found that there was a lack of career planning on the part of both the health care organisations and the individuals in the health sector, especially in terms of individual decisions about pursuing a management versus a technical (clinical) career path and a lack of organisational practices such as succession planning, mentoring and strategic management development (Boucher, 2005:218).

It could be argued that that lack of career planning resulted in the perception that moving into management was seen as a promotion. The significance of
Chapter Two – Review of the research literature

Boucher’s (2005) study was in the development of six categories of the career decision patterns of health care professionals in management. Those categories are worth briefly discussing as in the Discussion and Conclusions Chapter a parallel will be drawn between Boucher’s findings and the findings made in this study.

Boucher’s (2005:219-223) “born managers” were those *transitional managers* who became involved in management tasks early in their careers and who were seeking further promotion opportunities in management, hence they saw themselves as managers rather than as technical experts. “Ambivalent managers” on the other hand were undecided about their future as managers, perhaps partly because they were often unsure if they had the skills or the personal attributes to do the manager’s job and were equally concerned about losing their clinical skills. “Former managers” were those participants from Boucher’s (2005) study who originally wanted to move into management but were no longer in management due to negative experiences (mainly, stress associated with the role) they did not like the job.

“Never have been, never will be a manager” was a category of the participants in Boucher’s (2005) study who refused to take on the management role when it was offered to them, or when they had a chance to apply for it because they enjoyed their technical work or did not like the management duties performed by other managers around them. “Itinerant managers” those professionals in management
who were not in the management roles but who either used to occupy them or who would like to step into management roles. Those participants often changed their professions, and did not have ties to the health industry. Finally, the sixth category of Boucher’s professionals in management belonged to “stuck managers” who were in management roles but were seeking different careers or other non-managerial roles. What made those managers “stuck” was the salary attached to the manager role.

Boucher’s (2005) study is an important contribution to an examination of career choices and career planning by both the individual and the organisation. The sample however was too broad to specifically address the characteristics of the transition process of technical experts who became responsible for leadership within their area by becoming managers. For example, Boucher’s sample included those health professionals who were never in management positions, making it hard to associate them with a category of professionals in management. Furthermore, it is unclear how many participants in Boucher’s (2005) study were organisational insiders or how many of them were appointed from the outside and if the existing transitional managers from the sample performed any technical roles. These distinctions, while perhaps not the focus of Boucher’s study, are important as they point towards the gap identified at the beginning of this study that more research was needed about the transition made by technical experts as they entered management positions (Burke and McKeen, 1994a). This will be addressed in this study.
One of the observations made in Boucher’s (2005) study was that a number of categories belonged to the participants who experienced a high level of stress and loss of confidence because they were on a steep learning curve with changes in functions and organisational experience. It was perhaps due to that loss of confidence, that a 2004 state-wide survey of Victorian principals by Saulwick Muller Social Research found that eight in ten principals experienced high levels of stress, with the unnecessary paperwork and the managerial nature of their job being among the biggest problems reported. The survey found a conflict between the way principals saw their roles as carers and educators, and the reality of being a manager.

Similarly, in a study on nurses moving into management, Stanley (2006:36) found that “taking on managerial responsibilities was likely to be detrimental to [the nurses] ability to lead.” This was because the transition may challenge their values and beliefs, or result in “ineffective leadership and management, leading to diminished clinical effectiveness, or even dysfunctional ward or units, and therefore poor quality care” (Stanley, 2006:31).

Similar conclusions were made in a previously mentioned USA study of human resource experts involved in the transition of clinicians to managers by Eubanks (1991). Eubanks (1991) found that while a clinician as a technical expert may aspire to a management position that could be because of a general desire to
advance rather than a specific desire to do the work of a manager. The desire for advancement was portrayed through the desire of prestige, additional income and additional responsibilities (Eubanks, 1991:61). That would indicate that, at least in the health sector in Australia and the USA, there could be an insufficient path for advancement other than the management path. The extent that was the case in other industries was examined in this study.

So far in this section, career progression was introduced as a reason for the transition and theoretical works by Drucker (1977), Clarke (1998) and Albert and Adams (2002), as well as studies by Preston and Biddle (1994), Eubanks (1991) and Boucher (2005) and a positivist study of Victorian principals commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education were used to demonstrate why taking on managerial responsibilities was seen as a promotion of a technical expert and an explanation was offered that that was, partly, because of a limited career progression opportunities within the technical field. In the next section technology as another reason for the transition from a technical expert to a manager will be explored.

2.11.2 Technology as a factor leading to the transition

In 1977, Drucker predicted that:

“a primary task of management in the developed countries in the decades ahead will be to make knowledge productive... [I]t is abundantly clear that knowledge cannot be productive unless the knowledge workers find out who they are, what kind of work they are fit for, and how they work best.” (Drucker, 1977:40-41).
So, another contributing factor for the transition from the technical expert to manager to be considered is the shift to the knowledge-based-economy through technological innovations (see Eubanks, 1991:61). Indeed, Clarke (1998) argued that knowledge and know-how – the traditional sources of management power – were becoming increasingly recognised as one of the few sources of truly non-imitable competitive advantage. This point was further made by Heilbrunn (1994:66), who in an overview of the leadership studies, observed that technological changes had forced organisations to recognise employee empowerment and leader-follower relationship, resulting in a greater participative leadership. Similarly, Abzug and Phelps (1998) argued that technological forces, what they labelled “the nature of power dispersion”:

“[T]hose who do not actively disperse managerial responsibility are in danger of losing their way to the sweep of environmental forces acting as decentralising agents” (Abzub and Phelps, 1998:214).

While Drucker (1977:40-41), Clarke (1998:192), Abzub and Phelps (1998:214) and Heilbrunn (1994:66) approached technology as a factor that forced companies to reorganised themselves, their views were further applicable from a perspective of a technical expert considering the transition as one aspect of such reorganisations. Indeed, Preston and Biddle (1994) pointed out that as a result of technological advances and the changing nature of organisations, it was possible for an individual to consider more than one career:

“There appears to be growing need for individuals to have a dynamic notion of a career as not necessarily relating to the acquisition of a single set of skills, but instead incorporating the notion of continual learning and
the acquisition of multiple sets of skills, thus permitting multiple careers during an individual’s working life” (Preston and Biddle, 1994:28).

This is further consistent with arguments made by Alvesson (2004:188) in Section 2.4 when identity was discussed.

To sum up, possible factors in the transition from a technical expert to a manager were discussed in this section. In particular, a number of reasons relating to career progression were discussed, including the prestige, the additional income and the additional responsibility the managerial role may carry. Having established that taking on managerial responsibilities was seen as a promotion, the technology as another reason behind the transition was introduced. Here, the need to move with technological advances and consider more than one career path were emphasised.

2.12 This study in the context of existing literature

In this study an attempt will be made to place leadership in a context of transition the respondents in the study went through when they assumed managerial responsibilities within the same organisation, while exploring both organisational and personal background of the respondents. A further attempt will be made to narrow a developmental gap identified by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) when they called for a broader perspective on leadership processes. The emphasis will be on leadership concepts and theories as subjective efforts by the researcher to interpret ambiguous events in a meaningful way (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:186).
Therefore, leadership will be placed in the social and situational context where it can be intersubjectively constructed and studied through an Interpretivist perspective (Alvesson, 2002:94; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:186; Heilbrunn, 1994:69). In doing so, a contribution the body of available empirical knowledge on the transition process will be made. Furthermore, a link between the personal and the professional identity of the respondents and their transitional experiences will be made by exploring the transition process from the subjective viewpoint of those experiences while gaining an insight into the objective, organisational demands and succession plans.

These contributions towards the existing leadership concepts and theories as well as the existing empirical body of knowledge need to be seen in the context that explorative research such as the one carried out here is not considered generalisable (Hallebone and Priest, 2009:110). However, insights from this study could be seen as “tentative hypotheses”, following Merriam (1998:41), and used as the basis for future research.

2.13 Chapter summary

The focus in this Chapter was on the current body of available knowledge in the area of management and leadership and an attempt was made to place the research question within that context. Leadership and management and the difference between those two key terms were discussed, followed by an examination of skills and competencies required for leadership and management
roles, together with the options available to organisations when recruiting. Examples of transition processes in a number of industries were used to illustrate how leadership potential was identified; some of the dilemmas facing technical experts and their organisations in relation to the transition were discussed, including the environment necessary for a successful transition and the impact of the transition on the identity of a transitional manager.

Some of the main conclusions drawn from the literature review and as applicable to a study looking to explore the characteristics of the perceived transitional experience of a group of technical experts who transitioned into management within the same organisation, included:

- Leadership skills can be taught, with technical expertise being a key leadership skill;
- While leadership can be exhibited by anyone in the organisation, leaders were a subset of good managers, who needed to influence in order to be effective;
- The relationship between the leader and followers was one of the key contributing factors to shaping of the leader’s identity while the role of power in shaping of that identity cannot be underestimated;
- A balance between the individual and the organisational development needs was required when appointing a technical expert to a role of manager;
- Most organisations were structured in such a way that promotion opportunities increased for managerial roles while they decreased for technical expert roles;
- Lack of career options within the technical field meant that technical experts faced with a dilemma of whether to stay within their chosen discipline or move into a management role;
- A technical expert may aspire to a management position because of a general desire to advance, rather than a specific desire to do the work of a manager;
- A lack of career planning and lack of organisational practices such as succession planning, mentoring and strategic management development were contributing factors to the success or failure of the transition process.

The review of the literature presented in this Chapter suggested that there are a number of gaps in the literature to date. Firstly, the transition process and its length were not consistently defined, making it harder to ensure a greater success rate of the transition. Perhaps that was because of the ambiguity in defining leadership and management terms. Secondly, while a number of authors discussed the impact of the transition on the technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities, it would appear that there was not enough empirical research carried out asking transitional managers who went through the transition process within the same organisation how they identified themselves.
Thirdly, an assumption in the literature was that the technical experts transitioned into management roles willingly with the role of organisations being to ‘encourage’ technical experts to move into management. Empirical evidence from this study suggests that this may not be true in every case. Fourthly, there was no consensus in the literature on the value of management training or the most appropriate time during the career of the technical expert when the management training, in anticipation of a transition, could be offered. A fifth gap identified in the existing literature was that although there is a lot of literature on leadership and management, the amount of Interpretivist, empirically based leadership and management material, providing characteristics of the experience through interpretations and assigning subjective meanings to the transition process by transitional managers whose transitional experiences were within the same organisation in the Australian context, was non-existent.
3 Methodology

In this Chapter, justification for choosing the Interpretive paradigm will be given in the context of the aims of the research project as defined by the research question (see Chapter One). Interpretivist research as a socially constructed reality will be discussed in first, as a way of validating conducting the research by asking the transitional managers themselves to reflect on their experiences of the transition. In the subsequent sections this will be further narrowed to the chosen research paradigm – Interpretivism – and the research strategy used to argue from evidence – Abduction. In the remainder of the Chapter, the focus will be on applying the principles of research process and research design to the interview process and the interview questions.

3.1 Interpretivist research – a socially constructed reality

Schütz (1963) argued that the social sciences were “characterised by individualising conceptualisation and seeking singular assertory propositions” (Schütz, 1963:232). The major task of the social scientist was to discover “social reality [which] contains elements of beliefs and convictions which are real because they are so defined by the participants…” with the commonsense knowledge of everyday life being sufficient for coming to terms with social reality (Schütz, 1963:237-238). Similarly, Blaikie (1993) argued that the task of interpretive social science was to discover why people do what they do by uncovering the largely tacit, mutual knowledge, the symbolic meanings, the
intentions and rules, all of which provide the orientations for their actions. According to Blaikie, it was the everyday beliefs and practices, the mundane and taken for granted, which needed to be grasped and articulated in order to provide an understanding of these actions (Blaikie, 1993:176).

For Sarantakos (1998) interpretive social science has “the task of searching for the systems of meaning that actors use to make sense of their world” (Sarantakos, 1998:37) with subjective meanings emerging as a result of social conventions established through conversations. Circumstances that provided such contexts were themselves self-generating with each reference to, or an account of, an action. For example, the respondents’ perception of how their transition occurred helped establish a context for characteristics of the transitional experience. This account simultaneously established a particular context, which in turn became a basis for transitional managers making their own actions accountable:

“Practical reasoning…is simultaneously in and about the setting to which it orients, and that it describes. Social order and its practical realities are thus ‘reflective’. Accounts or descriptions of a setting constitute that setting while they are simultaneously being shaped by the contexts they constitute” (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003:221).

Moreover, Blaikie (2000:114) argued “the idea of abduction refers to the process used to generate social scientific accounts from social actors’ accounts; for deriving technical concepts and theories from lay concepts and interpretations of social life”. Abduction was chosen as the research strategy in order to reduce the first order constructs (from the participants’ meanings and sense of their
transitional experiences) to typifications (the distillations by the researcher and a reduction of the transcripts to a set of patterns, with a reference to the subjective meanings from which the participants’ social reality originated (Hallebone and Priest, 2009:109).

The choice of the Interpretivist paradigm for a study on leadership was supported by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:148) who argued that differences between researchers in their conception of leadership affected the choice of phenomena to investigate as well as the interpretation of the results. This could be because of a disagreement about which research methods would be more appropriate for studying leadership and what type of empirical data was needed to advance the understanding of leadership processes. The purpose of the research needed to dictate the methodology and choice of samples, not the other way round (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:183). Through the process of approximations, typical meanings used by the transitional managers in this study were abstracted in order to generate social scientific accounts and to develop technical concepts.

The research process in the context of this research was defined across five phases, following Denzin and Lincoln (2003:31), and adopted for the needs of this research:

1. Phase One – the researcher: her personal biography;
2. Phase Two – theoretical paradigm and perspective: Interpretivism;
3. Phase Three – research strategy of inquiry: abduction;
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4. Phase Four – method of data generation and analysis: focused interviews; and
5. Phase Five – the art, practice and politics of interpretation and presentation: thematic mapping.

The significance of these phases is described in the following sections of this Chapter.

3.2 Phase one – the researcher

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) described the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur*, quilt-maker, or a person who assembled images into montages. While Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argued that there were many kinds of *bricoleurs*, in this research, the focus was on the Interpretive kind of researcher as a *bricoleur* – the one who understood that research was an interactive process shaped by the researcher’s personal history, biography, gender as well as by the history of the interview participations.

My working career started, when as a student, I spent over four years working in a market and social research company, conducting thousands of face-to-face and over the phone interviews. There, I learnt the art of eliciting information, probing and making sure the interviewee answered the questions asked. Upon the completion of my undergraduate studies, I moved into the tertiary education sector where I have been for the last nine years, working in three different universities in two different states. Universities in Australia were typical examples of transition processes, where the most senior positions, such as those of vice-
chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, deans and heads of departments were occupied by academic staff who transitioned from academic roles to managerial positions within their institutions.

Those *transitional managers* were supported by professional managers (I being one of those) without technical, academic expertise. While it was likely that the trend of academics leading universities will continue, (Goodall, 2006a) and (Goodall, 2006b), increasing need for revenue raising and commercial influences were bringing change.

This personal perspective was offered here as the researcher and the researched interacted in an environment concurrently constructed and experienced, the environment where subjective meanings were not private, but intersubjective (Blaikie, 2000:115). The personal biography of the researcher formed an important feature of Interpretivist research as the researcher intersubjectively shared the same reality with the participants (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003:218).

Therefore, I, as a researcher, approached the transition topic incorporating my personal and professional experiences and used those experiences where appropriate and to the level applicable to the research topic and the participants. This experience was important in the context of interpreting socially constructed realities of the participants, partly because the questions asked were significant.
for the researcher (Bannister, 1981). In a previously mentioned Interpretivist study by Drummond and Chell (2001:189), that was labelled “a reflexive mode” in which the researcher’s inherent subjectivity with the choice of topic was explicitly acknowledged.

Now that the researcher, as the Phase One of the research process was described, the next Phase will look at Interpretivism as the chosen paradigm.

### 3.3 Phase two – theoretical paradigm and perspective

For the Interpretivist, social reality was the product of its inhabitants; it was a world already interpreted by the meanings which participants (the researcher being one of those) produced and reproduced as a necessary part of their everyday activities. Collis and Hussey (2003:48) recognised that researchers had values (Collis and Hussey, 2003:48) – values that helped determine what was recognised as a fact and the interpretations drawn from those facts, making the researcher involved with that which was being researched (Llewellyn, 1993:231).

Blaikie (1993:48) went on to argue that rather than trying to establish the actual meaning that a social actor gave to a particular social action, Interpretivists considered it necessary to work at a higher level of generality. Social regularities (eg. the participants’ experience of the transition process) were understood and explained, by constructing models of typical meanings (seven themes in this study) used by typical social actors (i.e. the participants) engaged in typical
courses of action in typical situations (i.e. the transition process). Blaikie (1993) further argued that Interpretivist knowledge is seen to be derived from everyday concepts and meanings. The end result is redictions of everyday accounts which can be developed into theories (Blaikie, 1993:96).

Giddens (1993) pointed out that “lay actors are concept-bearing beings, whose concepts enter constitutively into what they do; the concepts of social science cannot be kept insulated from their potential appropriation and incorporation within everyday action” (Giddens, 1993:13). Bauman (1992:181) argued that all meaning resulted from interpretation that can be constructed. That in turn led Gummesson (2003:482) and Denzin and Lincoln (2003:33) to argue that all research is interpretive.

Interpretivist epistemology therefore, was described as using an ontological study in which social reality became the product of processes of negotiated socially constructed meanings and the task of the social scientist was to discover and describe this ‘insider’ view, not to impose an ‘outsider’ view on it (Blaikie, 1993:176). This in turn has led Hallebone and Priest (2009:110) to call the researcher a “collaborator”, particularly in the interpretation of data. Therefore, within an Interpretivist paradigm, the focused of this research was on constructivist theory of knowledge building. As an attempt was made to illuminate the transition process a transitional manager went through, the researcher
needed to work “through an interpretive methodology in order to demonstrate how change is accomplished…” (Llewellyn, 1993:243).

A focused interview approach allowed the researcher to explore the subjective meanings the participants in the study assigned to the characteristics of their transitional experience when they became *transitional managers*. Relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology used in this study will be described in turn below. The focused interview as the approach will be discussed in Section 3.5 when Phase Four in which the method of data generation and analysis is described.

*Relativist ontology* was described as the recognition of multiple realities which shaped how the participants saw their worlds and acted in them. The focus was on the participants’ use of everyday constructs which they pre-selected and pre-interpreted as the reality of their daily lives (Schütz, 1963:242). This was elaborated by Gubrium and Holstein (2003) who argued that:

“Intersubjectively is...a social accomplishment, a set of understandings sustained in and through the shared assumptions of interaction and recurrently sustained in processes of typification” (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003:218).

*Subjectivist epistemology* on the other hand was described as a set of understandings which were a product of conversations between the researcher and the participants, using a set of natural methodological procedures. The focus was on the ways in which participants intersubjectively constituted the events
they took to be real, “to exist independent of their attention to, and presence in, the world” (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003:217).

As a result of such interpretations of specific meanings the transitional managers in this study gave to their actions, the researcher used a deductive argument made up of various kinds of propositions that postulate relationships between concepts (Blaikie, 2000:113), and embarked on, not just describing the accounts of the transition, but also on a theory building exercise. As alluded to before, findings were presented through typifications of the respondents’ transitional experiences into seven themes. This approach will be further elaborated in Phase Five when discussing the notion of thematic mapping and in much detail in Chapter Four – the Analysis and Findings.

Below is a summary of the Phase Two – the theoretical paradigm and perspective – discussion from the perspective of Interpretivist epistemology following Blaikie (1993:216) and as applicable to this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretivist epistemology in this research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of reality</td>
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<td>Starting point</td>
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<td>Role of language</td>
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<td>Lay accounts</td>
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<td>Social science accounts</td>
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<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Involved and reflective participant in the interview.</th>
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<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Relative and dynamic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory of truth</td>
<td>Consensus, pragmatic truth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aims of research</td>
<td>To understand the characteristics of the transitional experience for the transitional managers in this study.</td>
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</table>

3.4 Phase three – research strategy of inquiry

The third Phase of Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) five stage research process as applied to this research, was the research strategy of inquiry. As they put it “strategies of inquiry put paradigms of interpretation into motion… [They also] connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:36).

As indicated at the beginning of this Chapter, the chosen research strategy for this research was abduction. The abductive research strategy was described as the process used to produce social scientific accounts of social life by drawing on the concepts and meanings used by social actors, and the activities in which they engaged (Blaikie, 1993:176). In his subsequent work, Blaikie (2000) called them “technical concepts” (Blaikie, 2000:130).

The research strategy of inquiry Phase started with the research design. For Denzin and Lincoln (2003) research design was a “flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigm first to strategies of inquiry and second to methods for collecting empirical material” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:36). Therefore, within
the context of this study, the focus of the Phase was to define the purpose of the study, i.e. what sort of information provided by the respondents answered the research question and what strategies were most effective in obtaining such information (Janesick, 2003; Cheek, 2003).

The approach to the research design in this study was done following the characteristics developed by Janesick (2003). The six characteristics of qualitative research design that were applied in the design and the interview process included the holistic nature of the qualitative design as the first characteristic. The aim was to understand subjective views of the transition process as perceived by the transitional managers in this study. The second characteristic of qualitative research design was the relationship between systems of cultures (the technical expert and the transitional manager); while the third one had as its focus an understanding a particular social setting (in this case, the perceived characteristics of the transitional experience for the transitional managers).

Next, the fourth characteristic of qualitative research design according to Janesick (2003) was the researcher as the research instrument who was able to observe behaviour and needed to have both the observational skills and skills on how to conduct a face-to-face interview. Those skills were important aspects of the interview as the validity of the results could be compromised by poorly conducted interviewing (Frey and Mertens, 1995:2).
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The fifth characteristic of qualitative research design according to Janesick (2003) was *informed consent and responsiveness to ethical concerns*. They were addressed in the research design and the interview process. For example, at the commencement of the interview, each participant was asked to complete the consent form as a legal document. The researcher explained that each respondent’s participation in the study was voluntary and would only occur after they had given their informed consent. Each participant was also told that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained by keeping all material provided by them in locked files. The respondents were distinguished by the initial of their industry and the corresponding number (eg. E1, E2; A1, A2, A3; LG1, LG2, LG3, LG4, etc.). When providing excerpts of the transcribed data, names of people and organisations were changed. Appendices 1-3 (Volume Two) provide transcripts of the interviews with respondents E3, A1 and LG1 as examples of how the data was generated.

The final, sixth characteristic of qualitative research design according to Janesick (2003) was an acknowledgment of the researcher and her role in qualitative, interpretive research design. This was evidenced in Phase One – the Researcher. A further acknowledgment needed to be made for the respondents’ selective views on leadership. This is because “information obtained from…interviews may be biased by selective memory by aspects of behaviour
consistent with the respondent’s stereotypes and implicit theories about effective leadership” (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:183).

Phase Three of Denzin and Lincoln’s (2003) research process was examined in this section and Abduction was discussed as the research strategy of inquiry. An important part of that discussion included defining the purpose of the study through the six characteristics of research design. In the next section, addressing the Fourth Phase of the research process the type of information needed from the respondents to answer the research question will be explored.

### 3.5 Phase four – method of data generation and analysis

Blaikie (2000) argued that methods of qualitative analysis differed in the extent to which they attempted to “retain the integrity of the phenomenon”. In other words, “the extent to which the researcher remains close to the language, the concepts and meanings of the social actors rather than imposing their own concepts and categories on lay accounts” (Blaikie, 2000:240-241). For Blaikie (2000), the choice was between a high stance (with the researcher imposing concepts and meanings from the discussion in the Literature Review Chapter), and low stance (with the researcher deriving concepts and meanings from lay language, in other words, with the researcher constructing themes as second-order typifications from the transcripts). Blaikie (2000) went on to argue that in its purest form:

“abductive research strategy involved a low stance because it develops technical concepts and theoretical propositions from accounts provided in lay language. Technical concepts generated in this way are designed to

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be more abstract and generalisable than is possible with lay concepts” (Blaikie, 2000:241. Original emphasis).

A similar point was made by Hallebone and Priest (2009:108). In this study, a combination of theme construction and recognition of concepts from the literature will take place, in other words, a mixture of a low stance and a high stance will be used.

The specific data generation tool used in this study to capture shared, common meanings and interpretations by the participants was focused interviews.

### 3.5.1 Focused interviews

Hallebone and Priest (2009:109) argued that the focused interviews were a form of verbal accounts where a range of topics was covered rather than specific questions. The range of interview topics was structured around the research question and specifically around the four aspects of the research question. After conducting the pilot interviews and refining the range of topics, the interviews were arranged around the following four topics:

1. **The transition**: The first aspect of the research question explored how the transition happened for the sixteen respondents in this study, so the respondents were asked to describe their present management job.

2. **The transitional experiences**: The second aspect of the research question was around the positive and negative experiences of the transition, so the
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respondents were asked to describe any difficulties in their position as a manager.

3. Leadership skills: The third aspect of the research question related to the respondents’ perceptions of the leadership skills required of a technical expert to successfully assume managerial responsibilities. So, the respondents were asked to describe the type of skills they thought that they brought to the role and the type of skills the manager position required.

4. Identity: The last aspect of the research question related to the impact of the transition on the respondents’ identity. So, the respondents were asked to describe how their professional identity experiences.

The focused interview style ensured that the participants were able to provide insights into the characteristics of their transitional experiences as their respondents’ reflections on the transition were expressed in the form of answers and conversations, making them accessible to interpretation (Flick, 2002:87). Moreover, the range of topics covered assisted in answering not only how the respondents’ social reality was constructed, but the organisational context of the respondents’ transitional experiences (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003:215).

3.5.2 Sources of data

Stouthamer-Loeber and van Kammen (1995:14) argued that the ideal way to obtain a representative sample was to give every potentially eligible person a
known, nonzero chance of being selected for participation in the research. In practice, however, this was often problematic, not just because of constraints involving time and money, but also because in many instances it was considered impossible to know how many technical experts who had transitioned into management within their organisation existed.

Individuals for this research were selected using, what Blaikie (2000) called, snowball sampling: a chain referral or a network. In other words, one or two initial respondents were asked for names of other technical experts who transitioned into management who were then approached and asked to participate in the research. This enabled a “sociogram [to] be built up and…the members of the network interviewed” (Blaikie, 2000:206). Interviewing “members of the network” using snowball sampling had resulted in the participants coming from three industries, the Education, the Arts and the Local Government. These three tertiary sector industries became three representations of professional practice transition process. A brief explanation of each industry will be given below. Interviewing transitional managers from different industries enabled commonalities as well as differences between industries and between the respondents to be identified. Those commonalities and differences were shown in the distillation of seven themes and are the findings of this study.

The total number of participants interviewed was sixteen – six from the Education sector, six from the Arts and four from Local Government. This number was not
chosen arbitrarily, rather it became obvious that the sources of data were exhausted and therefore the interview process needed to be concluded when a pattern of similar responses emerged and no new contributions to the transitional characteristics were made. As the purpose of the research was to explore the characteristics of the transitional experience with the respondents, it dictated not just the methodology but also the choice of samples (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:183).

### 3.5.3 The interview process

Fourteen participants were interviewed in their workplace and two were interviewed in their homes. Both of those settings aided the responses as the participants were in a familiar and comfortable environment. At the commencement of each interview, the selection criteria used in identifying each participant as a subject was explained to each respondent (a technical expert performing a managerial role); the length of the interview (approximately two hours) and the context and a general theme of the interview (the characteristics of the transitional experience for the respondent as a *transitional manager*). Setting the context was an important aspect of the interview process, as it was an important phenomenological construct (Briggs, 1986:25).

Furthermore, the observation during the interview was an important part of the interview process (Reddy, 1987). All interviews were tape-recorded, thus enabling the researcher to observe and take notes during the interview. The observations were made while at the workplace/interview site, during and
immediately after the interview. Interviews were described as interpersonal events by a number of researchers (see Fowler and Cannell, 1996:35; Schaeffer and Maynard, 1996) and represented more than a conversation as gestures, glances, facial expressions, pauses, rate of speech were also important (Reddy, 1987). During the interviews, the researcher observed those and, where appropriate, recorded them.

The remaining, fifth Phase – the art of interpretation – of Denzin and Lincoln’s (2003) phases of research process is briefly described in the next section.

3.6 Phase five – the art, practice and politics of interpretation and presentation

This Phase is described extensively in Chapter Four – Findings and Analysis – however, the approach to analysis is worth mentioning here, noting that the Interpretivist research did not have a right or wrong method of data analysis. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argued, the researcher may use a number of different methods of reading and analysing interviews, including content, narrative, and semiotic strategies. Furthermore, Janesick (2003) pointed out that the validity in Interpretivist research had to do with descriptions and explanations and whether or not the explanations fit the description. Similarly, Flick (2002) pointed out that there was no one standard on what constituted a transcription system. The coding of the material nevertheless needed to be done with the aim of categorising and/or theory development (Flick, 2002:179).
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The interview data was reduced from transcripts and into, what Schütz (1963:243-244) called, “the mode of typicality”. Constructing typical patterns of the participants’ motives and choices using abduction as the logic of inquiry enabled a categorisation and thematic grouping to take place. This was cross-referenced via coding into typifications of experiences. Similar responses from different participants were grouped together forming like main themes.

3.7 Chapter summary

At the beginning of this Chapter, it was argued that all research is Interpretivist (Section 3.3). Therefore, a study wanting to illuminate the process of the transition a technical expert makes when they assume managerial responsibilities needs to work through an interpretive methodology (Llewellyn, 1993:243). Interpretivist research was described as a socially constructed reality (Blaikie, 2000) and it was explained how it was used to conduct focused, two hour, interviews with a group transitional managers. Their subjective, ‘insider’ views of the transition process were used to give an account of the characteristics of their transitional experiences. The research process was described in the context of five Phases, developed by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) and adopted for the purpose of this study.

In the next Chapter, Findings and Analysis, Phase Five is explored in more detail, in the context of Schütz’ (1963) first and second level constructs.
4 Findings and Analysis

As the abductive research strategy was used to analyse the transcribed data, the focus in this Chapter will be on presenting the process used to produce accounts of the transition characteristics. This will be done by deriving typical accounts, meanings and technical concepts produced by the transitional managers in this study (Blaikie’s (2000:240-241) low stance as reported in Section 3.5). These concepts and meanings are presented below in two ways. Firstly, six second-order typifications, six themes were abstracted from the meanings the respondents assigned to their transition and its characteristics. Through the final step of approximations, the seventh theme, expressed similarities and differences between the respondents’ attitudes towards the transition.

Furthermore, drawing from the literature review, a number of concepts were used in the interviews to provide an initial direction for the study (Blaikie’s (2000:240-241) high stance as reported in Section 3.5). The main constructs drawn from the literature review, which shaped the research questions included terms such as leadership and management; identity and transition. These constructs formed the basis of the interviews; however the interview approach was flexible enough to allow each respondent, through their socially constructed reality, to offer meanings and descriptions of their transition.

The aim of the interviews was to explore the meaning given to those concepts by the respondents and, through the process of interviews, discover other concepts
used by them. With that aim came an acceptance that the respondents may display different socially constructed realities, or variations on one reality (Blaikie, 2000:251), and may therefore have different ways of interpreting the transition from a technical expert to a manager. As a result, a number of excerpts from the transcribed interviews were used in this Chapter, as a way of showing the respondents’ own descriptions of their situation and meanings assigned to those descriptions. While some descriptions used below are long and focus on a particular aspect of the respondent’s social reality, they provide, what Blaikie called “a backdrop within which actions and explanations can be understood” (Blaikie, 2000:251). As referenced in the Methodology Chapter, referring to Schütz’s (1963) ideas, these subjective elements and descriptions were then constructed using the first order constructs, involved in the common-sense experience of the participants’ intersubjective worlds and upon which typifications were erected, referencing the subjective meaning of the interviews with the respondents.

4.1 The sample

Sixteen technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities within the same organisation were chosen from three tertiary industries – Education, the Arts and Local Government – because it was felt that these respondents would show diversity but also have some degree of similarity in relation to transition and their perceived views of it, therefore it was rational to include them in this type of research. Furthermore, the tertiary industry was a particularly interesting sample as “the tradition of management in most public service organisations has a
relatively short history [the authors estimated this to be dating about the 1980s]...but leadership is an even newer phenomenon” (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2004:174). Similarly, Alvesson (2002:94) argued that sectors such as schools, hospitals and universities, had traditionally downplayed the role of leadership. Although specific to the trends in Sweden, Alvesson’s observations are relevant to the tertiary industries discussed in this sample.

The Education and the Arts sectors were also examples of high concentrations of knowledge-intensive work discussed by Alvesson (2004) in Section 2.4 as in both sectors the knowledge work was about symbols of words and ideas (the Education sector) and visual symbols of art (the Arts sector). Therefore, exploring management and leadership concepts with tertiary industry transitional managers in order to understand how the type of organisations influenced the management skills required. As reported in Section 2.9, Yukla and Van Fleet (1992:152) called for further research on the skill requirements in different types of organisations.

While the respondents came from different backgrounds, they showed similarities in their career progression and the transition from a technical role to a managerial role. This background will be briefly described next.

1. Education sector

Six respondents from two different organisations were interviewed from the Education sector. Respondent E1 was a Unit Leader in a primary school of
approximately twenty staff. Her managerial responsibilities included supervision of three other teachers and various administrative duties within her unit. Respondents E2 to E6 were academic staff within a large university, with respondents E2 and E3 owning private businesses in addition to their university roles. All five of these respondents had responsibilities for managing units of various sizes, varying from three other staff and $1 million annual budget in the case of E2 to five hundred staff and $100 million annual budget in the case of E3.

Respondent E1 had the least amount of both technical and managerial experience. She was in her fourth year as a teacher and in her first one year as a manager at the time of the interview. She reflected that her managerial tasks took approximately twenty percent of her time. This can be contrasted with respondent E4 who spent more than ten years in various management roles out of his twenty year academic career and respondent E5 who reported that she spent eighty percent on managing her Department and twenty percent on technical duties which in her case were teaching and research.

Respondent E6 provided a link between the Education and the Arts sectors. The respondent was an academic with the specialist knowledge in the Arts. As such he was in the role of a Director of an art museum within his university. This respondent had sixteen staff under his area of responsibility, $2 million annual budget and had been in the role for six and a half years at the time of the interview.
2. Arts sector

Six respondents belonging to the Arts sector were interviewed. All six of them belonged to the same organisation, one of the largest art museums in Australia. The respondents described themselves as national and in some cases, international experts in their chosen field. A characteristic of this sector was that all six respondents indicated that opportunities to move into management occurred seldom. Indeed, all six respondents were in various technical roles within their organisation for more than ten years before they assumed managerial responsibilities. Respondents A5 and A6 were in their roles as Heads of Departments for only six months at the time of their interviews while respondent A3 was the Head of his Department for more than nine years at the time of the interview.

The respondents belonging to the Arts sector reported a similar transition not only to each other but also to the respondents in the Education sector with the key similarity pattern being that while the time spent on management responsibilities varied from twenty percent in the case of respondent A3 to eighty percent in the case of respondent A4, both the Education and the Arts sector respondents continued to perform technical tasks. For that reason, another tertiary industry sector was chosen – Local Government – where the respondents reported different transitional experiences.
3. Local Government sector

Four respondents were interviewed from this sector. They came from three different organisations with the most senior respondent being LG1 who was a CEO of a large council, responsible for over fourteen hundred employees. The respondents from the Local Government sector reported a different transition process to the respondents in the previous two sectors. While technical experts by background (LG1 and LG3 trained as engineers, LG2 was a youth worker and LG4 a nurse); all respondents reported that they spent one hundred percent of their time in management. The respondents indicated that, their complete transition was typical of their sector at the level of seniority they occupied (i.e. respondent LG1 was a CEO of a large council; the remaining three respondents were directors of large areas within their councils).

Another characteristic of this sector was that the reliance on the technical expertise was not as evident as in the observations of the respondents from the first two sectors. Respondents LG3 and LG4 indicated that they did not rely on their technical expertise (an engineer and a nurse respectively) in performing their current managerial responsibilities, while respondents LG1 and LG2 observed that they rarely used their technical expertise in performing their current day to day tasks (an engineer and a youth worker respectively by their technical specialities). Despite that, all respondents reflected on the crucial role their technical background played in securing them their current roles.
In this Section, it was revealed that the researcher used Interpretive social science to conduct focused interviews across three tertiary industry sectors, with each interview taking approximately two hours. It was acknowledged that the ideal way to obtain a representative sample was to give every potentially eligible participant a known, nonzero chance of being selected for participation in the research, as reported by Stouthamer-Loeber and van Kammen (1995:14) in Section 3.5.2. Nevertheless, it was impossible to know how many technical experts there were who transitioned into management within the same organisation. Practical constraints involving time, space and money also made such a proposition problematic.

4.2 Constructs that focus on social process

The themes introduced below are a way of describing the transition as perceived and experienced by the respondents in this sample. The constructs that those meanings and interpretations had produced were:

1. Leadership;
2. Technical expertise leads to the management role;
3. Factors impacting on the success of the transition;
4. Identity;
5. Remuneration structures; and
Finally typification or further reduction of those themes produced the analysis on the types of transitional managers. Therefore, the last theme to be discussed will be:

7. Types of transitional managers.

4.3 Theme one - Leadership

An underlying theme in each interview was that of leadership. Five distinct components of this theme were identified by the respondents:

a) Contextual definition of leadership;
b) Emotional intelligence;
c) Leading rather than managing;
d) Leadership as an inherent skill; and
e) Leadership as a learnt skill.

These five components will be discussed in turn next.

4.3.1 Contextual definition of leadership

In Chapter Two the most common definitions of leadership and management were provided as a useful scene-setting exercise. This study was concerned with the definitions of leadership and management as reported and experienced by the respondents through the reflections on their leadership and management roles and meanings they assigned to these two terms. As such, a number of respondents attempted to define leadership specific to their role and their
organisation. For instance, respondent E3 spoke about the importance of a vision in his role as an academic leader:

“[Y]ou have [to have] a strong sense of leadership or vision to be able to get somewhere. You can’t just manage the system which is in place, the demands of the environment are changing all the time, so if you can’t see those changes, you can’t negotiate what needs to be done at the rest of the university to allow you to make the changes – you will not be able to do the job, you will not be able to survive.”

A similar description of himself as a visionary leader was given by respondent E6.

Other respondents spoke about their roles as leaders in the context of leading and developing staff. For instance, respondent LG2 saw himself as a kind of leader who placed a lot of importance on what he called a parallel leadership:

“…you are utilising, influencing with integrity, coaching, mentoring, you are influencing the thinking, leading, you are doing practices of the managers. Parallel leadership is that you are challenging the broader domain, so that they do not stay just within their own area – they may be in children’s services but they need to think about the whole of the life cycle and parallel leadership in the sense that they all have mutual roles, obligations, responsibility to be corporate but also to spread outside their directorate so that they can influence and understand where they fit in the whole organisation.”

Respondent LG4 indicated that shepherding skills and situational leadership were the hallmarks of good leadership:

“…you need to be…a chameleon in terms of using different leadership styles for different situations. I mean, situational leadership – know when to be a follower, when to be a leader – they are the hallmarks of a good leader. Those who can stand up and guide people, for people to follow and have faith in the person, not to promise and then not to deliver…”
Along the same lines, respondent E5 indicated that she brought the following qualities to her role as a leader:

“…involving the staff, listening to what they have to say – and then you actually have to make decisions and you have to sort things out. And I think that is what I do – that I do not leave things undone, I tie in all those loose ends...”

This was further reinforced by respondent LG2 who observed that one of the key leadership abilities is:

“…being able to develop networks and the relationships and… I do not do much, but if others who work for me work in the environment where they feel that they cannot produce… I guess it is getting the best out of the people.”

In other cases, leadership was defined in terms of specific skills. A number of respondents (eg. A1, A2, A5, A6, E4) named the organisational, communication and people skills as the main prerequisites for good leadership. For example, in the role for only six months at the time of the interview, the respondent A5 remarked how she wanted to evolve into a well-organised and supportive type of a leader:

“...I am still new and still learning and I am quite aware that I have not got where I would like to be. I would like to be a well organised person – I think the organisation is the key thing – methods and systems in place; someone who is very approachable, that people can come to, not intimidating; supportive, fair; somebody who encourages people to develop so that they are satisfied and give from the job as much as they can...and are enjoying it...”

This was echoed by respondent A1 who observed that in his role:

“The biggest amount of responsibility...rests with the interaction of managing people.”

Similarly, respondent A2 described his leadership role as:
“...there is a lot of, in fact, human relation, communication, more than the management...for everyone to be happy with what has happened [a large restructure in the Department], to be confident in every role...and I realise that it is a daily work, it is not something that you do once a month, it is every day...”

The identification of the organisational, communication and people skills, as prerequisites for effective leadership, was in line with the references made in Chapter Two. As for other skills needed to be a good leader, the expertise in a technical area was mentioned only after specific probing. This was best summed up by the following insight into the recruitment policy within respondent LG1’s organisation:

“In selecting or appointing people...we look specifically at the individual’s personal skills, their interpersonal skills and the technical skills that they bring to the position, in that order. So if they do not get over on the personal skills and the interpersonal skills – well they can have the best technical skills, we will not appoint.”

This was supported by respondent LG2 who emphasised staff management skills when he indicated that:

“To me, it is the personal before the professional expertise...you are great with other people, yeah, I think you have more capacity at being a leader than someone who is very good at adding the bottom line and that is their only forte. So if they have moved through the ranks because they wanted a person who could count more accurately and faster... Or has that person grown in the roles because they have taken on leadership projects within those roles? I can’t answer that...technical expertise can be a restriction, as well as leading into acquiring new skills.”

4.3.2 Emotional intelligence

Another leadership skill that was identified by a number of respondents was what has been described in the literature as emotional intelligence, and what the
respondents called *self-awareness, self-confidence* and *self-understanding*. For instance, respondent LG2 suggested that he identified leadership qualities in himself when he worked as a youth worker and long before he found himself in a management role:

“...you start to acquire leadership aspects of the awareness of yourself and your capacity to influence and I recognised that I had a lot of shortcomings about that because you could not just be an aggressive, assertive youth worker, you actually needed to acquire the skills about how to partner, how to influence policy, how to influence decision-makers, how to become a decision-maker.”

Similarly respondent A6 indicated that one of the key leadership qualities was self-awareness and self-confidence with the assumption of managerial responsibilities being seen not just as a promotion but also as self-validation in the eyes of the respondent:

“...You think: ‘I know that I do a good job.’ But you do not know what the external perception of you is and to be promoted to a position of senior responsibility, you think: ‘OK, my sense of myself does pretty much equate to what these people around me think I am capable of.’”

This self-awareness was echoed by respondent LG4 who indicated that she knew her strengths and weaknesses and chose to surround herself with those staff whose skills complemented hers. The respondent LG4 went on to say that:

“I have deliberately recruited a couple of people who are extremely good on the detail and we sit down together and we go through... I will go through where the exposure of risk is and the nature of that and they will do briefings on various documents and papers...and that is often the first time that I go through the detail and that saves me quite a bit of time... They enjoy it, because that is their strength and I can counterbalance that with the big picture point of view.”
So far in this section it has been established that the respondents identified vision, the leader’s ability to influence and his/her interactions with followers and the leader’s emotional intelligence as contextual leadership definitions constructed by the respondents from their experiences. The differences between leadership and management as perceived by the respondents will be briefly discussed next.

**4.3.3 Leading rather than managing**

Similar to the contextual definition of leadership, some respondents attempted to define management in the context of their roles, organisations and industry. Respondent A6, for instance, suggested that:

“A good manager really needs to have both [technical and interpersonal skills], especially in our industry. It does not work well to have a manager who does not know anything about art, it would just not work. So you need somebody who does have the experience doing what we do – curating exhibitions, writing about art, speaking about art, all of that... But I think equally important is someone who is able to develop a rapport with staff and who can establish lines of communication and who can say: ‘This is fantastic.’ Or ‘This is not working.’ I think they are really important [skills] in a manager.”

Other respondents rejected the term manager in relation to themselves and made a specific point in an attempt to differentiate between leadership and management. This could be because of the emphasis on the vision that leader needed to have as seen in the previous section. Indeed, respondent E4 stated that he preferred to be labelled as a leader rather than a manager because:

“The leading bit is where all the creativity happens... Where you can make new pathways that nobody else thinks of. You can dare!... Whereas as a manager, you have to be much more realistic, you have to be down to earth, you have to work with what is there. Leading...you have to do that a
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“...you have to work out a path from A to B, so you have to know what your limitations are. But there is a lot more dreaming and planning and thinking and imagination in the leading bit than in the managing bit...”

Respondent A5 was another one who used vision as a leadership skill to differentiate between leadership and management when she remarked that:

“Leaders and managers are quite different – you can be a manager and not lead and you can lead but be a hopeless as a manager... I think that the ability to listen and learn and watch and observe and see what works and what does not work and I think as well as managing things, you need to have some vision and be a little bit dynamic and have a goal...so that you are heading somewhere...rather than the every day coming in...and it is mundane...you are a little mouse at a wheel and you are chugging along... If you have something that you can look forward to...what you are doing is getting somewhere...”

Respondent A2 emphasised communication and people skills as important parts of good leadership and indicated that

“...there [is] a lot of, in fact, human relation, communication, more than the management...for everyone to be happy with what has happened [a large restructure in the Department], to be confident in every role...and I realise that it is a daily work, it is not something that you do once a month, it is every day...”

Respondent A5 pointed out that it was important for one to be both a good manager and a good leader:

“I think it is good to become both. I think on the management side – learn from others, see what is getting the response, what is efficient, what works with other people. And with leadership...the way people...the staff...how they react, how they think: “What is happening with my life?” You are obviously not inspiring to them...I think looking at the responses gives you a good idea if you are or not...Providing that enthusiasm that is needed – that goes with the leadership.”
4.3.4 Leadership as an inherent skill

The extent to which a technical expert can assume managerial and leadership roles was one of the central topics of the interviews. In that context, a number of respondents emphasised leaders’ natural abilities while acknowledging their ability to acquire new skills. For instance, respondent A5 indicated that:

“I think people can acquire management and leadership skills, but I think that there are natural leaders and some people who just have a get up and go….”

This was how respondent LG1 reflected on this topic:

“My perception is that within a population there are a number of people who because of their personality types and their styles and their lifetime experiences…since their childhood… [This] has brought them to a position in life where if an opportunity is presented to them… I am not sure if everybody can… I think other people contribute to the society in different ways and I was probably fortunate enough to, either be born or receive later on in my life, some attributes that allowed me to capitalise on the opportunities that I was given.”

This view was also echoed by respondent LG3 who, in relation to his workplace, indicated that:

“There is a lot that can help you enhance your management skills and your ability to relate to people but if you are not fortunate to have those skills or a set of skills that come naturally…it is very hard to develop people in some of those certain areas… There is a lot of people that work for us that are very good employees that they would make hopeless managers.”

Respondent E4 similarly indicated that choosing a leader was not done by design, however, those individuals who possessed leadership attributes displayed a certain kind of behaviour that made them stand out from an early
age. Respondent LG1 for instance identified himself as a natural leader and described his development as a leader in the following way:

“I never saw it as me wanting to lead, I just saw it as me being me, doing what I was conformable with, if there was a problem and it needed a solution then I would do it... I remember at the primary school...we were building cubbies and I designed the cubby house and organised all other kids and they would bring timber and we would build it and I did not put my hand up and say: ‘Hey, guys I want to be the boss.’ We would just be friends and I had the idea and they all liked it and so we did it together. And yet, I am not an extrovert person that people would naturally gravitate to, but in the working life and in the professional environment, people want to work for me and with me.”

The fact that a number of respondents saw leadership as a skill that some individuals were more predisposed for was particularly relevant here in the discussion regarding the transition of a technical expert to a role of a manager. For instance, this was how respondent LG3 reflected on his experiences working with technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities but did not have the skills to perform the role:

“Now, because they are managers, the assumption is that they have got the skills to deal with all the personal and staffing issues. And I have had some huge challenges in dealing with some very good people who are absolutely flat out with what they are doing but just absolutely ignoring the needs of the staff around them.”

This was supported by respondent LG2 who observed that:

“I do not believe that a technical expert can always be a great leader.”

A similar point was made by respondent E5 who indicated that:

“...[T]here are star researchers in this Department who will never become a Head of the Department because I think that the head needs other sort of the attributes... I think the Head needs to be a good communicator.... I think the Head needs to be someone the academics will respect. I mean, they may...they may respect them because they are a star researcher, they may respect them because they are a star teacher, but most of all
they respect them because...they keep the Department safe in a sense, someone who will look after their interest – that is the sort of a person that they want as the Head.”

A common thread in those discussions was the emphasis on people skills as a key leadership trait. While the examples in this Section illustrated that some respondents believed that leadership came more naturally to some individuals than to others, an equally prevalent view was that leadership was a skill that can be taught, but the key to that learning was the technical expert’s empathy with those around them.

4.3.5 Leadership as a learnt skill

While the notion that leaders were born was entertained by a number of the respondents, the discussion on how leadership as a skill can be acquired was also explored. This was not surprising considering the transitional managers interviewed. Respondent E3, for instance, indicated that his leadership and management training was shaped up by his experiences in the military. In the excerpt from the interview shown below, the respondent recalled his student days and indicated that he was aware that he lacked leadership skills, but decided not to acquire them until he completed his studies. Following the completion of his study, he took the army service.

“So, coming back to the military, after the university, I caught up with that [leadership], so...I could then see how leadership could be practised, and post university I immediately saw the opportunities for...I thought that I had a bit of a backlog of personal development at that time, in not just...I would not call it management...Leadership – taking the initiative and the like – but the challenge has to be there, that is the essence, go for the challenge, take the risk...”
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Respondent LG1 similarly recalled his army training experience to illustrate his learning growth as a leader and the importance of understanding the people one was leading:

“... [M]y experience as a soldier and a young corporal in charge of a section of ten men, and I was one of the ten... You are sleeping in the bush together, you are all mates at one level because you depend on one another, you can do things on your own, but you are still the boss in that team... So, you develop your skills in working with them, setting the agenda, captaining them if you like, and being sufficiently remote to earn their respect and not compromise the role that you have and yet there is a really fine balance because you have to be a part of the team as well because they will not work with you if you are not. I was nineteen years of age when I was in that position and still at the university – but that was a great experience and very much so contributed to my human resource management skills that I employ today.”

In other words, leadership was a learnt skill as leaders learnt how to lead by gaining respect of their peers and followers.

Respondent E4 was another one who used the Army analogue to illustrate how leadership skills could be acquired. He was one of a number of the respondents who emphasised the importance of excellence in a technical role before embarking on the hierarchical management and leadership responsibilities within an organisation:

“And so [it is like the] leadership in the army: be a good soldier first, and you might make it to a good general – I wish more generals have that idea. And...in a bank, to be a good bank manager – actually, in quite a few banks now days, you cannot be a bank manager unless you have done all the jobs in the bank...”

Similarly, this is how respondent LG4 reflected on promotional opportunities within her industry:
“...in our industry, in the local government industry, there is a large number of technical experts sitting in the CEO roles...and so their view and their experience coming through has been very hierarchical and everyone has to take their turn...”

Respondent E4 went on to highlight the importance of each hierarchical step, as missing one step could have had detrimental consequences because those individuals did not have what it took to be leaders. In the following exchange respondent E4 was comparing the current Vice-Chancellor of the university in which he worked with the previous one and the Vice-Chancellor of another university:

“E4: Like the previous one...was not a good Vice-Chancellor, he did have his good points, like this one also, do not get me wrong, but they will never be in my mind, the fully, convincing Vice-Chancellor. They have missed too much of the organisation.”

“R: What does that mean ‘missed too much of the organisation’?”

“E4: Like the previous one – he was never a Head of the Department – he moved from being an academic to becoming a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)...then to Research [Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)] and then to the Vice-Chancellor job. He jumped three or four layers of the university...You can jump it. These are responsible jobs, they take a lot of effort and you have to give up a lot to take them on... Like the Vice-Chancellor of Metropolitan University, he is a hundred times better Vice-Chancellor than any of these others because he has done everything and he knows how the organisation works. He also makes mistakes, do not get me wrong, but you really have to understand the people before you can manage them.”

This emphasis on “understanding the people before you can manage them”, with that understanding coming out of having performed the same tasks others perform now, pointed towards the importance of moving up each hierarchical step, and not skipping any of the layers. It also highlighted two leadership
qualities: the leader’s ability to identify technically with those reporting to him or her, which in turn ensured the respect of the peers and followers.

To conclude, the first theme summed up leadership experiences of the transitional managers in this study. The respondents provided contextual definitions of leadership, experienced and perceived by them. They described leaders as vision focused, requiring emotional intelligence, communication, people and organisational skills. The discussion also revealed the respondents’ experiences of managing versus leading. Lastly, while to some of them leadership came naturally; others felt they needed to learn how to become a leader.

Those observations shed a light on how leadership as a skill can be acquired – the leader needed to have performed the role now being performed by those being led. This point will be examined in more detail in the next theme which will look how technical expertise leads to a leadership role.

4.4 Theme two – Technical expertise leads to the leadership role

The second theme that emerged out of the discussions with the respondents was in relation to their reflections on why they thought they were chosen for the various leadership and management roles they were in. Exploring this with the respondents was useful in terms of gaining an insight into the organisational
decision-making processes that resulted in promotions of technical experts to management roles. The first reason cited by the majority of the respondents for why they were chosen for the leadership role, was the technical expertise, while organisational knowledge was the second most commonly cited reason. Those two factors will be discussed next.

4.4.1 Technical expert becomes a manager

The first reason given by the majority of the respondents for being promoted to the role of the manager was the respondent’s technical expertise, the majority of which was gained with the present organisation. This was evident from the following response from respondent E4 who:

“All of the management responsibilities that I have had in the past have...been directly related at managing at a coalface [of teaching and research].”

This was echoed by respondent A6 who stated that:

“Out of the two people in line I had the greater experience... So, it was appropriate that I stepped up and took Senior Curator’s place... I saw it as a great opportunity to get some experience managing staff...”

The importance of becoming an expert in one’s chosen technical field before embarking on a management role was also emphasised by respondent A4 who described a situation of seven years ago where he applied for the role of manager but another internal candidate, referred to as Susan below, was successful at that time:

“With Susan managing the Department, and dealing with new staff; it let me have the time to understand the technology and to move well and truly into it. I am very lucky now that I occupy the position where I am one of
the leaders in this country in terms of the work that we do. And if I had to manage the Department back then, seven years ago, I do not think that I would have got to anywhere near the position that I currently occupy. I think it also helped me in getting the current manager’s position because of the experience that I have had. I would have fallen into it I suppose, and my management style would have been different. I would have had to rely on other people for the technical knowledge that I currently have.”

This was taken a step further by respondent LG3 who emphasised the importance of not committing to only one technical discipline for those technical experts seeking future management roles, rather that they needed to expand their knowledge of the technical field. The respondent LG3 went on to suggest that while it may be tempting for technical experts to take on the management role at the first opportunity, embedding the technical expertise and diversifying it in a number of different disciplines within the technical field may be a better career choice:

“If you have a HECS debt and a mortgage, getting an extra $10,000 is very tempting, but what people do not realise is that if you go sideways a few steps you will go up a lot more in the long run… “

However, not all respondents uniformly expressed that the success as a technical expert was responsible for gaining a management position. For instance, respondent E1 remarked that, in her view, she was chosen for the managerial role due to her age (the respondent was forty nine at the time of the interview) rather than the number of years spent as the technical expert (four years). Another respondent who challenged the view that the success as a technical expert led to a management position was respondent LG2 who recalled the following exchange with one of his staff:
“It is nice that you are now interested in a leadership position, but for fifteen years you have not availed yourself to pursue any leadership skills and competencies. Why is that? Why do you think you are entitled, what would you bring to the role?” You need to have that conversation: ‘Yes, I am willing to back you, I am willing to support you at acquiring some skills, but that does not mean that you would be the best for the role.’”

For a number of respondents, while technical competence did not automatically mean leadership competence, it was a major pre-requisite in becoming a competent leader. For instance, respondent LG2 emphasises vision as the key difference between two technical experts:

“Because their skill base is regressive, it is looking at what we have done and looking at what they have done they are still not able to inform themselves of going forward, because they know what they know, not what they do not know. So, for me that is the fundamental – people who are actually able to acquire the knowledge about what they do not know, to be able to look forward…”

For respondent LG4, recognition of skill deficiencies in technical experts when they transition into management was the key to their success. The respondent indicated that in her role as a head of human resources, she came across a number of technical experts who are managers and that:

“… [T]hey all have some weakness and really good ones recognise what they are and have other people [complementing] their skills.”

Before moving to the organisational knowledge as a second reason the respondents identified when asked why they thought they were chosen for the manager role, a few observations regarding differences in the responses between male and female respondents are worth making.
4.4.1.1 The role of gender in leadership

Eleven males (E2, E3, E4, E6, A1, A2, A3, A4, LG1, LG2, and LG3) and five females (E1, E5, A5, A6 and LG4) were interviewed in this study. Respondent E5 indicated that gender played a role in her decision to take on the role of a head of department:

“I must say that it was a chance for a woman. I would not have taken it on otherwise. Here was an opportunity for a woman in medicine to take on a leadership position and how could have I turned it down?”

Respondent LG4 spoke about organisational advantages of having a female in a leadership position:

“One of the real benefits of being a female in this job is that they see me as an exception to their experience and I am able to float from here to there and be able to do this, that and the other…”

When asked why she thought she was installed in the role of a manager, respondent A5 felt that she had better interpersonal skills and the knowledge of the organisation over other candidates. Similarly, respondent A6 indicated that her communication and people skills made her a good leader:

“I generally had very good relationships with the people around me – the people I was managing, as well as the more senior people. And that was a really crucial thing because I could go to them and say: ‘We need to do this, it needs to happen this way, or it needs to be done this time.’”

Respondent E5 emphasised her interpersonal and organisational skills:

“I was a fairly organised person... I was a dedicated - I think you have to be almost totally dedicated to the wellbeing of the department... I do not think that I favour people and I think that is very important. I also think that I am polite to the students and staff. In other words, like a leader – the person who respects other people.”
At the same time, respondent E5 spoke about the difficulties of the transition and indicated that the transition would have been a lot easier if she was a male:

“I think if I was a part of the boys’ network...I think John has a big advantage, having senior people who have been heads in the background...and I think a lot of our academic staff have better mentors than I had.”

Therefore some of the leadership skills discussed in the leadership theme – communication and people skills, organisational skills and emotional intelligence – were also mentioned by female respondents when describing key attributes they thought they brought to the role.

At this stage it is worth reminding the reader of the discussion in Theme Two where the respondents indicated that they thought they were chosen for their present roles due to their technical expertise specific to the organisation (i.e. they were not content-free and they were not from outside the organisation) and their knowledge of the organisation and its culture. The importance of organisational knowledge when stepping into a management role will be explored in the next section.

4.4.2 Organisational knowledge

The second reason given by the respondents as a possible explanation for their elevation to the management role related to the respondents’ knowledge of their organisations and culture (for example, respondent A1 was with the same organisation for twenty three years; E4 – twenty years; A3 – seventeen years; E2 – fifteen years). The knowledge of the organisation was intertwined with the specialist, technical skills as a prerequisite to the promotion to the role of a
manager. This was evident from the responses such as those by respondent A6, who observed that she thought that she was chosen over another candidate who was not with the organisation for as long as the respondent was:

“I had been a staff member in this Museum – so [I had a] greater experience in how the institution works… The expectations… and a greater familiarity with the collection and with the way that the Department works… The other curator…probably had six years experience, partly in this institution, partly in another.”

While the extensive knowledge of the organisation was clearly identified by a number of respondents as being very important, this was often expressed in terms of knowledge of organisational culture and organisational needs. Furthermore, a number of respondents spoke about parallels between their own, personal vision as it related to the organisational ideology and development and in turn the organisation’s public image and standing in the community. That parallel became a values alignment for a number of respondents, as the following example from respondent LG1 illustrated:

“[W]hen we are recruiting as an organisation…we place a lot of emphasis on the fit with our organisation and our culture…”

Other respondents provided more personal experiences. For instance, respondent A1 indicated that:

“My ambitions are…straddled between being personal and the ambitions for this institution…When you stay this long [twenty three years], it is not just about you, it is actually what the organisation…what your ambitions are for the organisation. Here is one of the great art galleries, the greatest art Museum in Australia… It is one of…the fantastic art galleries on the world scale…”
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Respondent LG2 spoke about the importance of the alignment between the values of a potential leader and the organisational values:

“Visual application of ethics, trust, confidence, acceptance, a strong sense of empathy for others, compassion as well as passion – because the whole thing about work in community services is how you are dealing with other people.”

Likewise, respondent E5 indicated that one of the reasons she was successful in the management role was:

“…I have the same values that the department aspires to – excellence in teaching, excellence in research.”

Respondent A3 took that a step further and described how he used organisational culture, its values and the high organisational standing in the community to motivate his staff:

“I think it is making them [the staff] realise what great opportunities they have and how unique this is [working for the organisation] and respecting the fact that we have a huge influx of capital expenditure spent on us, so we really are the benchmark in the nation and we are probably one of the top museums in the world in terms of what we do…and the collection that we have; what we work with and just taking the pride in the quality of the work that we do. The level of support for ideas…especially from the executive team…are…are just… They are unmatched… So, just reinforcing these things you know… This is one of the nation’s most important assets, it is a cultural asset, and it is…you know…it is a privilege to work with this collection.”

In fact, a number of respondents used their past experiences to recalled instances when an external manager appointment was made. Their labelled such appointments failures, irrespective of the manager’s level of technical content, because the external manager did not understand the organisational context and would not fit within their environment. For instance, respondents A4 and A5 spoke about the culture of the organisation necessitating the leadership
appointments to be made within the organisation rather than the organisation appointing someone from the outside. For instance, respondent A4 stated that:

“The [organisational] culture is such that you need to have good background knowledge of the department you are working in and the dependences. You need to know the personalities that you are working with because we do have some volatile personalities and some demanding personalities. Someone who does not know the culture of this institution would struggle to do that.”

Similarly, respondent A5 indicated that:

“I have been working here for ten, eleven years, so I know all the systems and processes, which has been fantastic because coming here and not knowing those would have been an even steeper learning curve…”

So far in this Chapter, two key themes were introduced. Firstly, the contextual definition of leadership and management as applicable to the respondents’ experiences was given. To further understand what leadership meant to the respondents, a second theme was introduced showing how leadership in a technical area led to a management role for these respondents. The majority of the respondents identified two reasons as the key to their elevation to the role of manager: their technical expertise and their organisational knowledge. In the next theme different factors that impacted on the success of the transition for the transitional managers in this study are explored.
4.5 Theme three – Factors impacting on the success of the transition

A number of factors, identified by the transitional managers in this study as impacting on the success of the transition will be explored. First, time as a main obstacle in performing the manager role will be introduced. However, the key to this discussion was not whether the respondents wanted more time, rather, the key to the discussion was how the time was divided between the technical and the managerial. As it will be shown below, this was particularly important considering that, the majority of the respondents reflected that they had to give up certain aspects of their technical role in order to perform the role of the manager. How the respondents managed to reconcile that and find the new balance was identified as one of the key factors to the success of the transition. Furthermore, here was the first time that the reflections of the Local Government sector respondents varied from those of the Education and the Arts sector respondents.

Management structures introduced by the respondents in an attempt to find the new balance between the technical and the managerial were another important factor that will be looked into in more detail here. Finally, the third factor leading to the success of the transition from a technical expert to a manager was the respondent’s involvement in decision-making processes since taking on the role. These three factors are discussed in more detail below.
4.5.1 Time

All respondents were asked what percentage of their time was spent performing technical tasks and what percentage was spent on managerial duties. While some respondents were able to assign a percentage to different tasks they did, others were not able to do that. In some cases, that was because the respondents saw both the technical aspects and the managerial aspects of their role as taking a hundred percent of their time. In other words, the respondents felt pressured to increase their work commitments to a higher level and double their workloads. In other cases, the difficulty in assigning a percentage to a particular task was due to the role being, what respondent A4 described as ‘technical management’, namely that the management aspects of the role were intrinsically linked to the technical aspects so the two could not be separated:

“... Because a few of my staff are fairly junior and inexperienced in museum photography and they need advice... I am always advising people all day... the requests come through: Is this the best way? What is the best approach to do something? And that goes beyond the Department. That is managing, but that is the technical management.” A4.

It was through that discussion that the issue of time as one of the key factors leading to the success of the transition was explored.

The Education and the Arts sectors respondents indicated that time was the main obstacle in performing the technical and the managerial components of the role simultaneously, with a number of respondents finding that they had to choose which aspect of the job they did next. To that extent, the Education and the Arts sectors respondents indicated that their technical role came first and foremost, as
a result of which a number of them described themselves as not very good managers. For instance, respondent E1 stated that:

“[Lack of time] is...detrimental to your leadership...because, it would be nice to have a bit more time to be able to think ahead about your leadership role but you are not given it and you are not given any extra funding to do it.”

Similarly, respondent A2 indicated that:

“...because I struggle with the time, I think I am doing it [the managing] really badly... I don’t spend enough time doing it, because I can’t.”

Both E1 and A2 indicated that they spent approximately twenty and thirty percent of their time respectively on management components of their role. This can be contrasted with respondent A4 who indicated that since taking on the management role he spent eighty percent of his time managing and leading and twenty percent on technical aspects of the role:

“[p]robably the most difficult part has been that now I find it very hard to do any hands-on photography. Personally, that has been the hardest.”

A similar point was made by respondent E5 who indicated that as a result of being a head of an academic department for six years, her academic research had suffered, as a result of which she needed to invest time to rebuild that side of her academic career once her rotation as the Head of Department came to an end.

Respondent E3 talked about the daily tension between the technical and the managerial components of his role when he stated that:
“There is a tension between the technical research...and the...management slash leadership job as the Dean. There is a huge tension between them because...of...of time.”

This was echoed by respondent A1, who reflected that:

“There is this issue of... we want leadership and we want that leadership to come from people who are really high level, practising people, who carry the vision, but are demonstrably able to deliver the end result... And the daily task is the administration of a resource [is] easily swapped or swelled up by the preoccupations of managing twenty people...”

The tension between the technical and the managerial components of the transitional manager role was taken a step further by a number of respondents as it was not possible for both the technical expert and the manager to exist in one person, if the person was to do an equally good job in both roles. Respondent A2, for instance, indicated that:

“...[I]n principle, on paper my role is seventy percent design and thirty percent of administration, management, but I have realised after one year – I have been in this position for one year – I have got one hundred percent management and hundred percent design. So I really struggle with this, so there is a kind of rethinking of the team and of the Department to...to try to make it happen, in a more efficient way...because the Department has been reshuffled and recharged for a different reason...”

Similarly respondent A5 remarked that:

“I think it is really difficult to do the balance of practical and administrative and I think you have to be really quite focused...and really concentrate and think: ‘I am going to do a percentage that is practical and I will have to work a way so that I am not stuck here at my desk.’ And whether that is delegating a little more, streamlining systems so that I do not have to spend as much time...I will learn how to do that...”

This difficulty of finding a balance was further reinforced by respondents A4 who indicated that:
“Now, I know that I have to accept that I will not be able to take big [technical] projects… I used to do most of the painting catalogues… I can’t do that any more… I could if I had someone that I could redirect some of the management tasks, but as I do not have that someone, I just pick small projects that I can do in half a day and I will give myself half a day to do it.”

Respondent A1 reflected that:

“…[I]n essence what I can say without any hesitation is that the position who runs the Department can only run the Department, it can’t be a practising person at the same time, because the engagement with your mental capacity…mental and emotional capacities…needs to be a hundred percent one or the other. These are the two areas of activity that… I suppose what I would say is that I actually have enough respect for both of those areas of activities and do not think that you can pretend that you can do them both simultaneously.”

So, even though they found themselves in the management role, the respondents from the Education and the Arts sectors retained a number of technical duties. For that reason, their transition to management was labelled as a technical transition. The above observation by respondent A1 that, in order to be successful in the transitional manager role, technical duties needed to be abandoned will be explored next as part of a complete transition Local Government sector respondents reported.

For instance, respondent LG1 described his career progression from an engineer to a CEO of a large local government council where his current role was a hundred percent a management and leadership one. Such a complete transition brought with it a number of challenges, including different ways of forging
interpersonal relationships with other technical experts as the following example from respondent LG4 illustrated:

“...One of the difficulties in the area that I operate with, is that I have the least amount of authoritative control and that sometimes is frustrated – I have to rely on the good will, the relationships, the ability to convince, the ability to lead, to get people to understand, and so... You put a lot more investment in those things...whereas someone in the technical discipline when they have the authoritative control through their structure can just say: “Do that!” So, they do not necessarily develop...all the little tricks and what have you to get that relationship to work.”

It may be possible to argue that as the respondents moved up the organisational ladder, they performed less of technical tasks and more of managerial tasks. As reported in Section 4.1, where an overview of the sample was provided, all complete transition respondents were senior managers in their organisations. Moreover, it could be suggested that technical expertise required of a manager was dependent on the type of organisation. In other words, the type of organisation and the organisation’s prevailing business strategy impacted on the type of the transition.

So far in this theme time has been identified as a major factor impacting on the success of the transition. Specifically, the balance between the technical and the managerial components of a transitional manager role and how that balance was achieved pointed towards the success of the transition. This was one of the key findings of this study, as it revealed two types of transitions: the Education and the Arts sectors respondents has technical transitions and the Local Government sector respondents made complete transitions into management. Related to this
finding was a possible link between the type of organisation and the leadership skills required in that organisation and its culture.

A number of respondents attempted to make changes to the organisational structures within their units. This will be themed as another factor impacting on the success of the transition. This factor will be discussed next.

### 4.5.2 Management structures

A number of respondents reported a variety of different management structures they implemented since taking on the manager role. That stemmed from recognition that a combination of both technical and managerial skills in one person was rare. For instance, respondent A1 stated that:

“The need [for individuals with technical knowledge to move into managerial roles] is there, but how on earth do you find the specific individuals who actually have that…the will and the desire and the thing that fires them up is actually organising stuff. And yet, they organise the stuff with the knowledge of what the stuff is, because it really needs to be that. You can talk about it in terms of efficiency – efficiency in decision-making processes, efficiency in terms of using the resources – that comes from the industry knowledge embedded in your thinking, as you are making the decisions.”

Similarly, respondent E5 indicated that:

“As an academic you come in with academic skills – I knew about teaching and about research, but you certainly do not know administrative… I did not know how to lead a Department of hundred staff. …[I]t was an absolutely unknown job to take. I did not know this job.”

A number of respondents had attempted to respond to this by creating management structures where another role was created to assist the respondent in their role. These new management structures either saw a:

a) Creation of a second in charge position. This individual also came from the technical background (eg. the structure implemented by respondent A4);

b) Creation of an operations manager position, with the incumbent being an existing technical expert (eg. the structure implemented by respondent A1); and

c) Creation of a, non-technical, operations style manager position where a manager without the knowledge of the technical field was appointed with the responsibilities for assisting the respondent with management responsibilities (eg. structures adopted by respondents E4, E5, LG3).

It could be argued that the creation of a second in charge position and the creation of a technical background operations manager position were similar solutions, as in both cases it was another technical expert who assumed additional responsibilities. This was interesting for two reasons: firstly, from the succession planning point of view, such a structure enabled another technical expert to be groomed to the role of a manager. Secondly, it was possible that the main purpose of such structures was to free up the respondents’ time. Interestingly, that was not always in order for the respondents to spend more
time on technical duties. For instance, respondent A4 indicated that the grooming of his second in charge started with assigning that person some of the respondent’s technical tasks, rather than the managerial responsibilities. This is how respondent A4 justified this:

“I do delegate tasks all the time, but I cannot delegate any of the management tasks simply because there is no one else to do that. And with Serge – the 2IC – what I am trying to do is to change the notion of him being so focused so instead of... At the moment I am purely working with him on jobs, so instead of asking him to do management jobs, I am asking him to take another photographic task or something else related to the technical side of the job.”

Another difference in the approach to finding the balance between the technical and the managerial was that those respondents who reported the creation of a professional operations manager position – effectively not utilising the existing talent pool and taking the resources away from the technical area – reported that they did so because they acknowledged that there was no management expertise from within the existing technical experts. For instance, respondent E6 observed that:

“You put [in] a very creative, flamboyant media-person type director. Behind him or her is the hard-nosed business manager. There are not too many organisations where you find the creative and the business manager in the same person. And there is often a subtle tension between the two, because it is always assumed that creativity and business management do not mix.”

Similarly, respondent LG3 described the process that led him to substitute some of the technical resources with the appointment of an operations manager with no technical expertise in the area they were managing:
“We have ten [to] twenty town planners [and], what I have actually done in that area is actually appointed a team leader, who is responsible to that manager, who has no understanding in that field, but has...a background in administration and organisational developments and HR, who looks after that side of the division – ensuring prompting, ensuring the performance development is done, ensuring the computer systems are working – and is paid very well. So, what I have actually done is take management parts away and given it to another person within that team. The manager is very happy because it has actually – the manager is still responsible, but this person supports the manager. And what I have also done is take the admin staff away from the manager and they are now also responsible to this person... It was very much welcomed; it was acknowledged that these are matters and issues of concern.”

In the examples above, the role of a non-technical operations style manager was to assist the technical expert, cum transitional manager with the managerial duties. When appointing to the manager role an individual with a proven track record in managing staff and resources but without the knowledge or the background in the technical aspects was discussed with the respondents, they all rejected such a structure as being unworkable for them, their team and their organisation. This notion of leadership specific for a specific environment will be briefly explored next. It will be examined as a precondition to the transition, rather than as a reason leading to the success of the transition.

4.5.2.1 Leadership fit for a specific environment

Rejection of a content-free manager was expressed by all respondents, including the Local Government sector respondents who no longer performed technical tasks, but who came nevertheless from a technical background. As respondent LG1 put it:

“...[Y]ou can never, ever develop management skills unless you had technical skills in some discipline. If you are a generalist and the only
training you have had...is in management theory, then I question whether you will ever make a senior manager.”

Other respondents used terms such as ‘content-free management’, ‘injection manager’, ‘professional manager’ and ‘functional manager’. For instance, respondent A1 indicated that:

“[w]hen you...have people come in and manage the situation without knowing the content of what that situation is. So to bring in somebody who is a professional manager but not have any [technical] knowledge, for me is a difficult path to go down... Even if it is in relation to the use of the budget...the priorities in the use of the budget will be determined by your knowledge of the industry that you are working in, not by an abstract idea, but by the knowledge of what the business is all about... Who ever runs the Department...has to come from the curatorial background...”

The ability of a leader to have a vision which can be articulated by an individual with specific technical background was further emphasised by respondent LG2 who indicated that:

“[Their [content-free managers’] understanding of service planning provision is too separate sometimes – they do not see the long term outcomes... So, whilst they are good at saying that is the planning aspect of the service, they do not understand where it fits in a broader social context. Challenging the status quo, so yes, I think that they are behind the eight-ball... Sometimes when the urgent takes over the important, they do not have the skill base to respond.”

Leadership based on a technical background and specific to a specific environment was further articulated by respondent E4 who stated that:

“I am certainly not unique, but a professional manager could not do it... Someone who has not done research for a substantial part of their career could not do this... When you are in an environment like ours, the skills set that you need to succeed has the research as the prerequisite, otherwise it just does not work. Like, the CEO of Melbourne Water may be
a perfect leader in that environment and may manage by leading, but that will work in that type of the environment, it will not work in this type of the environment because the type of people that they have to lead [here] is not conducive to the type of people that they lead in their organisation..

Similarly, respondent E6 indicated that:

“you need to be an academic to understand the culture of the university that you are working in and you need to be an academic to convincingly espouse the values of the research experimentation, debate, discourse…”

Respondent LG2 recalled instances when a content-free individual was put in a management role:

“That capacity to ask what it should be is better informed, if you understand what it is from the previous job... But I have seen the evidence, of people being around for too long who have been put in roles as a result of amalgamations that are totally content-free and, to be crude, they stuffed up the services, they stuffed up the outcomes for the people, because being so focused on the specifications, they have forgot that the specification of the service is not how it worked.”

Similarly, respondent LG1 indicated that:

“If a person hasn’t done the hard yards in actually having to deliver something and felt the pain of things that go wrong, the successes…and actually develop that first hand experience; then they can learn management theory from the textbooks…”

The requirement of not just a technical content, but of a technical content specific to the organisation, as a pre-requisite for a manager position is not new to this discussion. Indeed, at the beginning of this Chapter, when the Leadership Theme was introduced, the contextual definitions of leadership as articulated by the respondents were provided. In other words, the respondents provided a leadership definition fit for a specific environment. In the next Theme, a link will be made between the technical content as a pre-requisite for a manager position
and its relation to identity and peer respect. Such a link is possible based on the reflections of the respondents, such as for instance, respondent E3 who indicated that it was important that those in management and leadership positions to also be leaders in their technical field because:

“[That is the way] in which you get academic respect... I doubt whether you would be effective without the technical know-how. It is purely the credibility... If you have been a true blood academic in your own right... and you know what it is, what it takes to drive excellence, you know how your colleagues will feel, how they will react, what their value systems are... then if you... could truly understand how this person thinks, if you have not been the real academic, you will sometimes find it hard to understand why these people think in a certain way. But I think from that perspective... it is important also... you have to have been an academic. Should you continue to be an academic? No, not necessarily. If you have done it once, you have done it.”

This notion of moving from the specialist, technical area into other technical disciplines, becoming, what will be termed here a global knowledge leader was further echoed by respondent LG1:

“...I think that the disciplines that come from being a technical expert in your field of endeavour will grow you to another level, and then you put management skills on top and you are a far more capable person. Now that original technical discipline is not important, it could be human resources, it could be accounting, economics, engineering, science, it could be architecture – the discipline does not matter... But I do not get hung up about technical people having to manage their area – I mean, I am happy to have an engineer managing pre-schools and I am happy for a town-planner to manage leisure centres. I do not have problems there. But it is having gone through that...”

So far in this theme, two factors that impacted on the success of the transition were introduced. How time was divided between the technical and the managerial components of the role was discussed as the first factor. Technical
and complete types of transitions were introduced as two of the key findings of this study. Then, the second factor to do with how changes in the management structures may have assisted the respondents in finding the balance between the technical and the managerial was established. The third and final factor that was reported as being a key to the success of the transition was the respondents’ involvement in the organisation’s decision-making processes since taking on the managerial role.

4.5.3 Decision-making involvement

All respondents indicated that they were aware that they needed to relinquish certain aspects of their technical role when they took on the managerial responsibilities. In the previous sections of Theme Three different ways in which the respondents did that were examined in more detail. The key insight into what the respondents thought they gained when they moved into the role and what they thought they gained by giving up certain technical aspects of their previous role was their involvement in the organisational decision-making processes. In fact, a number of respondents indicated that since moving into the manager role they became one of the organisation’s decision-makers. Furthermore, they felt that they were also seen in this light by both the organisation’s management and the technical peers.

For instance, the respondent A2 reflected that, although the demands and the expectations of the institution on him as the manager were too great, being the
manager was aiding his technical expertise, as he was able to get results and
decisions that were not possible or available to him prior to taking on the role.

“[I]t was quite good in terms of – a decision is taken… I was able to take a
decision and before as a designer, it was quite difficult to take a decision in terms of content or in terms of a project, or whatever… There was always a buffer, a hierarchy system which was difficult to jump, because of the characters, because of the personality of the people and now I have got straight relations with the Executive and with the Directors. It is more efficient for me to get the information and at the same time to communicate that to the team so I think the team is quite pleased about it and it goes well in the communication process, we got the right information, we know where we can go, we know where we can’t go…”

A similar sentiment was expressed by respondent A5 who stated that:

“…[W]hat I find really interesting is being the key person that people
contact for information or for approval, for advice, for suggestions – so that
has been really nice… At this level you hear a lot more what is going on in
the organisation, you receive more information, there is a recognition that
people are asking for your advice, and an acknowledgement that you are
an expert...”

Another respondent who remarked that she particularly enjoyed being involved in
the decision-making process within her organisation was A6:

“You deal with the senior staff much more and you are involved in those
conversations where the decisions are made rather than decisions are
made and then just communicated to you…and your opinions are
sought…and your thoughts are appreciated and made the most of… Well,
that is the great part of working at that level.”

What made these statements by respondents A2, A5 and A6 particularly
interesting was that the recognition and acknowledgment of the technical
expertise occurred when the respondents stepped into the management role. In
other words, for these respondents the management role was aiding their technical expertise.

To sum up, this theme discussion focused on time as the biggest challenge in the daily balance between the technical and the managerial components of the respondents’ role. The way the respondents dealt with that challenge pointed towards two types of transitions. While time as a factor may have impacted on the success or failure of the transition, it was also shown that different respondents implemented different management structures in an attempt to deal with time as a hindering factor. It was also indicated that those respondents who saw themselves as their organisation’s decision-makers once they stepped into the management role reflected more positively on their managerial role. The importance of maintaining the technical aspects of the role, despite the lack of time as well as the importance of being seen as a key organisational decision-maker will be further explored in the next theme when Identity is discussed.

4.6 Theme four – Identity

Closely related to how the respondents found the balance between the technical and the managerial components of their role was how their sense of identity – both personal and professional – impacted on the success of the transition. Exploring the sense of identity with the respondents further explained why the respondents who had a complete transition saw themselves as both managers and technical experts, while the respondents who underwent technical transitions
maintained some or most of their technical duties as part of their transitional manager role.

For instance, a number of respondents who had a technical transition preferred not to refer to themselves as managers, even in instances where the word ‘manager’ was used in their title. For instance, respondent A1, referred to himself as ‘the responsible person’. Respondent E1 did not like being called a ‘unit leader’, needing to reinforce her technical identity when in a frustrated voice she stated:

“I am a teacher. A bloody good teacher, OK!”

One possible explanation for why a technical expert needed to identify themselves through their technical field and not as a manager was articulated by respondent A5, who in relation to her role as a Senior Curator stated that:

“I think that there are all sorts of managers and professions and that [the Senior Curator] is really the difference. That is what I am... That is why I bring it first perhaps... I mean you could be a manager of a bank; you could be a manager of anything... I suppose that [the Senior Curator] is the thing that makes you stand out...”

Similarly, respondent A4 saw himself in the following order:

“I am a photographer, I work for the Smith Museum of Art, and I manage the department - in that order.”

Perhaps because of their complete transition, the Local Government sector respondents saw themselves as both – the technical experts and the managers (eg. respondent A2, LG1, LG2 and LG3).
A similar observation was made in relation to the tag of a ‘leader’. Respondent A1, for instance, indicated that he considered himself as a leader in relation to his technical area, but did not see himself as a leader from the managerial point of view. He went on to say that:

“I have a view of myself as a leader. I do. I am one of the leading people in my profession in the country.”

Respondents such as A1 felt that they had to have a clear distinction between their identity as technical experts and their identity as managers. In other words, the two identities could not co-exist in harmony and the technical and the managerial where two distinct roles, not two components of the same role. For instance, respondent A1, could not see himself as the technical expert in instances where he was required to act as the manager:

“It’s very difficult to stay thinking of yourself as a curator, when you are dealing with those [people] issues... My picture of myself has to change at that point. I can only picture myself as a curator if I am working in a studio... If…my energy needs to be directed towards those other issues, I am a less of a curator and more of a person that is responsible for those issues... Issues to deal with people are the ones that tie you up in the knots the most, they are the ones where you are awake at two o’clock in the morning, wondering how you will be able to deal with this thing, so the biggest amount of discipline is required in your interactions with people... The biggest amount of responsibility, in some sense, rest with the interaction of managing people.”

All respondents indicated that dealing with, what respondent A1 called, “people issues”, was the hardest task they had to perform in their role as a manager. The difficulty arose from a shift in the respondents’ relationships with their colleagues...
who have now become staff reporting to them. For instance, respondent A4 remarked that:

“I am dealing with a few issues. One of the biggest...the biggest issues that I have had to deal with...is the changing climate or culture where for six years I had been a colleague of these people and...now there is a change in culture from a colleague to a manager, and most people have coped well with that... I mean it has been difficult and a change in both directions.”

This sentiment was echoed by respondent A6 who observed that she was aware of the change in the relationship between her and her subordinates when she assumed managerial responsibilities:

“I was conscious of it...and think that my colleague who I was on the same level might have thought that perhaps we should be sharing the role... So, I tried to maintain that peer relationship, although when it was necessary – be the manager.”

Similarly, respondent A4 indicated that since he stepped into the manager role:

“The whole issue of dealing with staff has changed... It is that changing relationship between us that I am talking about. The fact that someone that I have worked with for a long time, I now have to put them in a different position, I am now asking of them things that I would not have asked in the past... It is a difficult one, to turn around and say ‘I am sorry but you have to do that’. And as a manager you do need to do that.”

Observations such as those led the respondent A4 to remark that:

“I would like to step a bit from my role as the manager and be a little bit more a colleague.”

Similarly, respondent E5 indicated that:

“As an academic you have a strong sense of what it is that you are supposed to be doing and I was still an academic and I felt that other academics were judging me. I needed to be one of them, I had to do what they were doing, I had to write all these papers and do what they were doing and yet I had this other job...and much more [still to do] and often at
the end of the week, I did not have much to show for it, except for talking to people and solving people’s problems.”

One of the reasons why the respondents wanted to continue to be identified as technical experts was due to the technical contributions they made. So, even though they needed to assert their authority when dealing with people issues, at the same time the respondents reported that they needed to continue to be seen as technical experts in the eyes of their staff. For instance, respondent A1 indicated that:

“…[Y]ou…need to find the territory that is your territory and find the ways that work for you and things that you can do and get out there and be doing it, demonstrate and say: ‘Hey, this is me, this is my contribution, I am not sitting back, this is my contribution, I am not stepping back from them [technical tasks]…and these are my strengths…”

However, being a manager while maintaining technical collegiality was perhaps unrealistic. For example, respondent E5 reflected that:

“One recognises that when you become a Head of Department, you almost…you become different from the other staff, you are not their friend, you are the boss, and you get to say yes or no to somebody. I felt that conversation with staff when I was present was different from the one they have when I am not there.”

This was further reinforced by respondent A1 who, when talking about what makes a good leader, indicated that it is important for a leader to be seen as:

“Not putting their feet up, [but] they are actually doing the [technical] job.”

Similarly, respondent A4 reflected that:

“Occasionally I will put something aside and go and do something that anybody could do. Recently, somebody wanted to photograph a Museum space and I was in the middle of writing a report, and I should have just
continued to write the report, but I thought: ‘No, I will do it.’ And that is what I am finding. I will often pick up little jobs that could be assigned to the most junior member of staff and I will do them. It gets me out, I pick up the camera and the job is done.”

The connection between a greater technical expertise, peer respect and more effective leadership was also made by respondent E1 who indicated that:

“...you got to feel more knowledgeable than they are [staff reporting to E1] because you have to be able to lead, whereas beforehand you can just sit back and let somebody else take that on.”

Respondent E6 indicated that the pressure to maintain his technical expertise came externally:

“My board said to me, you know, they want me to do research, they want me to be a writer, and they want me to still to do some of those academic style activities.”

If the transitional manager was not recognised by the (technical) peers as having a greater technical knowledge, their leadership effectiveness was questionable, as the following excerpt from respondent A6 suggested:

“You are the leader, you are the manager...it is expected that other...your staff are learning from you... There is also that thing of being...one step ahead...staff will come to you for direction and if you do not know the detail, you need to know where to go to find the detail – and that is I suppose what I do know... I would think that if you are in that situation...if I were in that situation, working as a curator, working for a senior curator who knew less than me, you would kind of feel...a bit hard done by – that they might come to you for advice... And remuneration – that is not appropriate and the responsibility that goes with the position – it is just sort of unfair.”
The importance of being seen as a great technical expert was further echoed by respondents A4 and A5 who based on their past experiences with their respected managers – who in the respondents' assessment had a lesser technical competence than their staff. This is for example what respondent A4 stated in relation to the importance of maintaining the technical expertise:

“I know that one of the frustrations for [Susan] in the end was...the loss of hands of photography... She realised that she just had to go. But her problem was that when she did get to do something of the technical nature, she did not understand the technology side of it. And that is why I say that the best thing that has happened to me seven years ago was that I was not appointed the manager. I was...devastated by it at the time, and I thought: 'I have been doing it for so long, I am the logical choice.' But it took me a short amount of time, perhaps three or so weeks to realise that I was in the best position. Because, it meant sitting down with the consultants that we had employed at the time and working through the whole workflow with them, whereas Susan had to go to that meeting and had to go to that meeting and she found it very hard to embrace the technology.”

A similar point was made by respondent A5 in relation to her previous manager who, according to the respondent, did not have the level of technical expertise required of someone in a managerial role, hence impacting on the peer respect:

“What really irritated me in the past was that the previous person who had the job...did not have what it took and that became frustrating – to see somebody who you felt did not have the know-how, the interest, but was somebody that you had to answer to as far as the career progression... I think that someone needs to have ample experience as a technical person...the person before me didn't and I think that was really obvious, because you could not ask complex questions, technical questions...and you know that she would not have the answers and I do not think that you have quite as much respect for someone if you feel that they do not have the knowledge of...that is required...and it was not just limited to one area of art, it was just limited in the technical knowledge...it was not something that...”
The excerpts from respondents E1, E5, A1, A4, A5 and A6 further pointed to another reason that impacts on the identity of a technical expert who assumes managerial responsibilities – peer respect. For instance, respondent A5 saw the step into management as giving her kudos with her peers:

“There is the institutional recognition but also the external one and within the profession. That is also important – within Australia and also internationally the fact that you have risen a little bit higher…that makes a difference to the colleagues.”

A similar observation was made by respondent A6 who indicated that her stepping into the managerial role:

“…has changed who I am in that it is great to be recognised by your peers as someone who is capable of stepping up.”

This point about peer recognition and respect was perhaps best summed up by respondent E3, who in relation to his sector of higher education indicated that:

“[A]cademics do not follow a leader or a manager because of their position, they follow a leader or a manager because of respect and most academics do not have respect for person because of their leadership or managerial abilities, they have respect for a person because of their…call it academic or technical achievement. So, I believe it is very important for Heads of Departments, but also for Deans so still be very active and to be seen as leaders in their field… It’s…you cannot convince senior academic staff to do certain things if they do not respect you as…as an academic…”

However, the need to maintain the technical aspects of the role created an interesting dichotomy that further contributed to how the respondents saw themselves. On the one hand, the respondents needed to retain the respect of their peers, part of which included keeping up with changes in the nature of technical work as a result of technological advances. On the other hand, in some cases, their performance was assessed according to their leadership and
management abilities. This is how respondent E3 described this bipolar relationship in relation to his role as a senior leader in a university:

“I am not assessed in my job by the Council, the senior management in the University, the Vice-Chancellor or the Faculty on the basis at all about my, call it technical, research. So my technical research is…and I can stop this tomorrow morning and it will not make a single difference to the...to the way I perform my job aside from the respect issue...”

The responses from the Education and the Arts sectors respondents were different from the observations by the Local Government sector respondents as far as their identity and their views of themselves as transitional managers was concerned. As indicated in Section 4.1, the Local Government sector respondents did not perform any technical tasks in their current roles. For that reason, it was perhaps not surprising that they identified themselves as senior leaders within their organisations from a managerial point of view as well as technical experts.

In summary, the Education and the Arts sectors respondents preferred to identify themselves through their technical expertise rather than through their managerial role. This is not surprising considering that one of the key findings of this study, established in Theme Three, was the technical transition nature of their transitional experience. It could further be argued that these respondents needed to feel that they had a greater technical knowledge than their staff. The importance the respondents placed on being seen as leading technical experts
by their peers needed to be balanced with the respondents’ need to be seen as good managers, capable of stepping up and dealing with the people issues.

The Local Government sector respondents, on the other hand, saw themselves as leaders in their organisations not just from the technical leadership perspective but also from the organisational leadership (i.e. management) point of view. This may not be surprising due to their complete transitions as their managerial roles were not tied to their specialist, technical areas of expertise.

Furthermore, it has been established that one of the reasons the respondents took on the manager role was because they identified a link between management and organisational decisions-making and that taking on the management role meant becoming one of the organisational decision-makers. That in turn resulted in a better unit and organisational outcomes for the respondents’ technical areas and a greater peer respect. Other, more personal reasons for taking on the manager role, to do with promotion and remuneration, will be explored in the next theme when remuneration structures are discussed.

4.7 Theme five – Remuneration structures

For the majority of the respondents taking on management responsibilities meant a promotion and a higher salary (all of the Arts and Local Government respondents and respondents E2, E3, E5 and E6 in the Education sector); two respondents were asked to take on management responsibilities as part of their
existing duties, resulting in no change in their total remuneration (eg. E1, E4). However, in all cases the position of a manager was seen as stepping up in the organisational hierarchy. For instance, respondent A4 indicated that one of the main reasons for taking on the management role was remuneration.

“...one of the main reasons is the salary, and this is one of the huge issues for people in this industry – one of the only ways we can improve our salary is by moving up the ladder... And that is a real frustration for a lot of people here – that the only way to improve your salary is either to leave, or to became a manager”.

Similarly, respondent LG4 indicated that:

“...I realised that I was fast approaching the salary cap because of the award that we are having... Now, the award structure isn't anything to do with the organisation, it is external and the only award structure that went from the bottom to the top of any organisation was the administrative-clerical...”

Highlighting limited career options within the technical field, respondent LG3 advocated for technical experts to expand the knowledge base of their and other related technical fields, as illustrated in Theme Two. Other respondents discussed possible career alternatives to taking on the manager role. For example, respondent A4 indicated that:

“I have been here for twenty years, and perhaps I am a coward, but I like it here, I really enjoy the environment and I cannot imagine another job in photography that would be the same... I work with beautiful things. I suppose the only alternative would be to go and work for a company like Studio One, over in Sandhurst and they pay their photographers $120,000 a year, and they photograph Global Brand sheets, or they photograph cigarette packs, but that sort of photography does not thrill me. So, I want to stay here...”

A similar sentiment was expressed by respondent A5 who indicated that:
“There are limited steps up the ladder – there are only a very few organisations of fine art in Australia, so you really have to wait for someone to retire to come up the ladder... I do not think that there is one way or another...”

However, the respondent did not mind being in the role of a technical expert, waiting for more than ten years to step into the role of a manager, because of the name and prestige her organisation carried:

“Perhaps if you worked somewhere where it was not as fulfilling – here we have an exquisite collection – that might have been frustrating and it would depend on how prepared you are to wait and how passionate you are about it, but I would probably move careers [if the respondent was working anywhere else].”

Statements such as the ones above implied that the only way to increase the salary of a technical expert is for that individual to move into management or leave the organisation indicating that the ambition and the desire for managing was purely financial. That could lead to a possibility that ill-fitted-to-management technical experts would find themselves in management roles. For instance, respondent LG4 indicated that:

“I decided that, when the opportunity came up, to move to another [administrative] structure within the award...”

This was further supported by respondent A1 who saw himself as someone who was ill-suited for the manager role:

“My lack of desire to do this [be the Head of the Department] is not because I think less of this. I have too much respect for what this is, I have the same respect for what this is as I do for this other thing over there [the technical aspects of the role] and I think one of the problems for us as a country or in the whole business is that we tend to see this [the management] as a more dominant thing, we see this idea of you are going to manage the department as a more... You know, we pay it more... And I
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“think that is one of the...problems for me, that we structure the way we think about it or in business terms or however…”

The indication from the respondents appeared to be that organisational grades and salary classifications needed to be such that they recognised technical abilities and rewarded it accordingly. Different solutions were canvassed with a number of respondents. For instance, respondent LG4 advocated for a remuneration structure that rewarded technical expertise within its award structure so that those technical experts who were only motivated to move into management because of higher remuneration it attracted, were able to stay as technical experts.

“You...have to overcome some very deep seated concepts...in their mind, like you can’t have someone earning $70,000 reporting to someone earning $60,000 and I would say to them: “Why not, why not?” Well, I agree that you can have very senior technical people who do not have total authority over all the resources, only the technical area...they might be getting $130,000, but the general manager might be getting $74,000 or $80,000...and I do not see that to be an issue at all because it is all in the delegations and the decision-making responsibilities as to who owns which decision and how that works…”

One of the findings of this study was that the majority of the respondents thought they were chosen for the manager position due to their technical skills. Acknowledging that a combination of both technical and managerial skills was a rare combination, steps towards gaining more managerial experience will be discussed next.
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4.8 Theme six – Management development training

It could be argued that management development training programs was another factor that contributed to the success of the transition. Two aspects contributing towards gaining more managerial experience will be discussed:

a) Management opportunities while in a technical role; and

b) Management training.

4.8.1 Management opportunities while in a technical role

A number of respondents indicated that one of the key factors impacting on the successful transition was the number of leadership opportunities offered to a technical expert prior to them moving into management. For example, respondent LG1 indicated that:

“[T]here are people who work purely in a technical role and then they go into their first supervisory role and there is definitely a transition because they go from being a technical expert and then they supervise staff… Ideally, in the workplace you provide your staff with as many of those opportunities as possible so that they develop those skills throughout their working career… I think the people who rise to their potential are those who get the opportunity over an extended period of time. Whereas people who…miss out on those opportunities and they all of the sudden get the opportunity – it is a challenge and it is a transition and I think it is far more challenging.”

Similarly, respondent A1 indicated that in his organisation, a number of technical experts who were aspiring to become managers had completed a formal management qualification such as an MBA. He suggested that this type of training might be the way of the future for organisations in which technical experts were promoted to the roles of managers:
“...[T]here are people, you know, coming through the profession, who are also building...business administration skills, and as a said, there is a logic from the progression of that through to managing of departments.”

This was how respondent LG4, a head of people and organisational development in a large Local Government organisation, described the need for management opportunities early in a technical career and some of the challenges that presented:

“We have to identify the talent before they become the managers, we have to rotate them and that is the bit that causes the most pain... Once a manager actually gets their hands on a really good person within their professional discipline, they will not let them go... But for the good of the organisation, for the sustainability, for the succession planning and for all those things we have got to rotate people, because the risk that we have at the moment in skills shortage...There are people in a technical discipline raising far too quickly and they will get to the top and they will be in key decision-making roles and they will not have the breath of the experience and it is really a worrying trend seeing this going on...”

However, only two respondents (E6 and A5) spoke about management and training opportunities made available to them as technical experts and how those leadership opportunities early in their careers aided their transition into their current management positions. Respondent A5 for instance, reflected that:

“I have been almost solely responsible for training an intern...particularly in the hands-on, technical side of things...so I had some understanding of the structure in someone else's program.”

Similarly, respondent E6 indicated that:

“I worked as an academic and still had involvement in small Museum operations, community operations... I had, even as an academic, project and committee involvements, connections to the museum and Museum sector – at a kind of professional, insider level. That culminated when I was at a board of trustees at the Streeton Museum of Art – which is a
statutory authority overseeing the activities over there. At that point, while I had an academic career, I started to develop some major engagements with the museum profession… So in a way, the shift came through recognising that I was getting experience in one direction – that sort of behind the scenes element – but also that you can operate to get that outreach outcome more directly than teaching.”

The respondent further offered another example of how early opportunities have aided the transition in his current management role and why those experiences were important:

“I had been running student field classes in New York when I was still an academic – that was a $300,000-$400,000 trip with thirty plus customers in a foreign country so I had learnt pretty quickly some of the management skills, because you cannot screw up if you have thirty kids waiting for a bus in Manhattan… So, I think you need at least some parallel experience, you need to understand how complicated a project might be, you need to understand how complex communicating information might be… You need to be a little bit more engaged in the teamwork than a lot of the academics in the humanities are… So, you do need to have some sense of management experience.”

The difference in how the opportunity to provide those technical experts with potential for management roles was identified, and more specifically, who identified it, was interesting. At the beginning of this Section, respondent LG1 indicated that it was a part of his role as a CEO of his organisation to provide leadership opportunities to technical experts. On the other hand, respondents A5 and E6 indicated that they identified leadership potential within themselves and pursued it rather than waited for the organisation to identify the potential in them. Similarly, respondent A1 talked about other technical experts within his organisation who were pursuing training to increase their future management prospects.
Now that the first aspect of the Training Theme – management opportunities while in a technical role – was discussed as a way of examining management training opportunities prior to taking on the transitional manager role, the second aspect – management training will be discussed next. In particular, the extent to which transitional managers in this study undertook management training and the usefulness of that training will be explored. Mentoring as a form of training will also be discussed here.

4.8.2 Management training

A number of respondents reported that they were not offered, nor had they initiated any management training since stepping into the manager role. Respondent A3, referring to himself as a middle manager, indicated that:

“…there is a big gap in the middle management and…we have just been thrust in the management responsibility without any sort of formal training.”

Respondent E1 similarly stated that she managed with “gut feeling” and felt like:

“You are shoved into the role and you flounder a lot.”

Other respondents also emphasised “gut feeling” approach to management. Respondent A4 reflected that:

“…I am not sure how to, but it is just a matter of seeing what works.”

Respondent A6 indicated that:

“…you just work it out…use common sense…”
Responses such as those were perhaps not surprising in light of the discussion in Theme One about the extent to which leadership was an inherent skill (Section 4.3.4). However, demonstrating again how that view needed to be seen in a context of leadership as a skill able to be acquired, “gut feeling” and “common sense” could not be applied all the time as he following example from respondent E3 illustrated. Upon reflection, the respondent commented that the organisation behaved irresponsibly in installing him in his current role without an appropriate level of management training and mentoring:

“…[F]rom the University’s side, that was a big mistake – I mean, in hindsight, it was totally irresponsible to get this green Dean without any support – it was sort of: ‘Well, we will all be happy to talk to you if there is a problem, come and talk to us’. But, you can’t talk to your peers, because you are in a competitive situation and you can’t say: ‘Look, I do not know how to deal with this…’ You certainly can’t talk to the Vice-Chancellor, because you are in a different position, you can’t talk to the heads of departments. I have not been in those situations a lot where I felt I needed... I absolutely needed advice…”

Having established that management training since becoming a transitional manager was not coming forthright, the main training skill that the majority of respondents identified as lacking in them when they took on the leadership role was what was described in Section 4.6 when discussing identity and more specifically peer respect as “people skills and people management” and “the management speak”. This was, for example, the analogy the respondent E6 used to describe the transition and the importance of management training:

“I have landed in a foreign country and I better learn the language; what are the customs here, what do I need to do to communicate with people? So, you have to take on board...at one level it is compulsory – there are
certain procedures you have to take on. On another level, you have to understand the culture; you have to understand the mindset…”

Respondent A5 identified a number of skills she needed to learn, including:

“The main thing that I have found that I am trying to become more efficient with and learn is time management, thinking about other people’s programs as well as my own and delegating tasks to other people which is something that I have not particularly done…”

Respondent E5 completed a management course targeting women leaders, and indicated that she found it useful. At the same time she reflected that she needed counselling to help her deal with the pressures of the role:

“…I think that I just found that I was not coping initially – just feeling that I did not know where to start.”

The discussion on the timing of the training further revealed that some of the respondents who received management training since commencing in the transitional manager role indicated that they would have preferred to have received it immediately after commencing in the role. Respondents A4, A5 and A6 (in management roles for nine months, six months and six months respectively) were enrolled in management training courses, but had not commenced them at the time of interviews. Respondent A2 reported that he was receiving some in-house management training after one year into the role, which he found frustrating as he had to operate “without knowing these types of things…”

Others reported limited value of the training received. What was interesting here was that the reason why the training was of a limited value was that the
respondents felt that there was not much they could learn about management as they did not deviate in their approach to management from their approach to their technical area. For example, respondent E4 observed that he approached management problems in the same way that he approached technical issues, as he indicated that that was because he did not know any other way. Similarly, A3 stated that the training only “reinforced what I did naturally”. Such observations in relation to the value of training received were consistent with the reported reflections in Section 4.8.2 about “gut feeling” and “common sense” approaches to management.

Another, altogether different approach, was offered by respondents A1 and A2 who indicated that the approach to technical aspects of their role cannot be transferred and applied to the way they approached management issues. When talking about his managerial responsibilities, respondent A2 indicated that:

“So, this has to be organised and as a manager, it is quite…difficult in a way – I have never been trained like that. I have been trained as a photographer, as a cinematographer, as a film-maker…”

Similarly, respondent LG4 reflecting on her experiences in her current role as a general manager human resources for a large council, indicated that she was had observed a number of technical experts were forced to move into management positions and following the transition they relied on the same skills that made them successful as technical experts to also make them successful in the management role:

“So some people are forced into that [management roles] and you can see that and they would rather be doing what they have always been doing…”
And what they do when you watch them, they do not manage their staff nowhere near as well because they are still managing the detail and it frustrated the hell out of the staff who are also trying to form a career for themselves... So, you know...you think...and that sort of things becomes my problem [because of the nature of the role of the participant] and those people cannot see because they are so... single-visioned that they cannot see outside that tunnel.”

Only respondent E1, in the management role for one year at the time of the interview, felt strongly about not wanting to receive any training in her role as the manager, and not wanting her organisation to know that she had received some management training in her previous role:

“I have done Frontline Management [course]...but I do not particularly want to advertise that, I do not want to be in leadership...and if I approached [the organisation] to get help, that would mean that I am more qualified to do the job...it is a Catch-22. You would like to do...you would like to know more about it, but you don't, because they will use that so say, 'Well look...you know...you have had the training, you are in there...’”

Perhaps the biggest implication for organisational development was not just in management training or the timing of that training, but in providing a suitable mentor to the transitional manager. A number of respondents (A4, E3, and E6) spoke about the need for a mentor during the transition. As respondent A4 put it:

“[F]or me the biggest benefit would have been to have sat down with someone who was independent, one on one, and to look at the way I work, to look at the interactions with other staff...”

Similarly, respondent E3 indicated that he wanted a mentor with no technical background in his area, but someone who had experience dealing with some of the challenges he was facing. The respondent recalled a conversation with Brian, his manager in which he said:
“I need somebody with a high level experience of organisational change, who knows how different individuals work’. Brian gave me name of a very senior ex-Vice-Chancellor…academic. I said: ‘No, this is too…the environment is too familiar. I want somebody who knows nothing about universities, but knows about organisational change, knows how people’s minds work’.

The value and timing of management training course completed by the respondents was examined in this section. It was revealed that a number of respondents had no management training leading them to use their common sense and gut feeling in their approach to management tasks. Such observations were made by the respondents who received management training and those who did not. A number of respondents self-identified leadership skills they wanted to acquire, but questioned the timing of such training. Only one respondent, E3, reflected on the role of the organisation in providing the new transitional managers with training. A number of respondents reported that they valued mentoring over training. Views of several respondents differed, as they felt that they could not have the same approach to management as to technical aspects. Finally, one respondent, who did not wish to be in a management role, did not want any management training.

The process of abstraction of everyday meanings and concepts transitional managers in this study used to reflect on the characteristics of their transitional experiences distilled a final set of technical concepts and will be discussed next when the last theme – types of transitional managers – is introduced.
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4.9 Theme seven – Types of transitional managers

Before discussing the types of transitional managers, it is worth outlining the reasons that resulted in the transition to the management role. The two main reasons behind identifying a need for a manager within the organisational unit were:

a. Natural attrition – the previous manager had moved on or left the organisation and the respondent was the next most senior technical expert; and

b. The organisational evolution and developmental demands – the unit’s success brought new challenges, and progress demanded a manager of the unit.

In some cases, one of those two aspects was the cause of the transition. In other cases, respondents indicated that both factors led to their transition into management and contributed to the ambivalence of the decision of whether the transition into management was what the respondents wanted.

Based on their own descriptions, three categories of respondents who assumed managerial responsibilities were identified:

1. Unwilling manager:
   a. Forced manager; and
   b. Reluctant manager;

2. Pragmatic manager; and

3. Eager manager.
These three categories are described and discussed in turn below.

4.9.1 The unwilling manager

This category of the respondents were those technical experts who did not want to take on the management responsibilities, however they were not in a position to refuse the role. Possible reasons for that are explored below. Within this category of the respondents, two groups were identified: the forced manager (with respondents A1 and E1 belonging to this group) and the reluctant manager (with respondents E4 and LG3 being part of this group).

4.9.1.1 The forced manager

The forced manager was a group of the respondents who were not in a position to say ‘no’ when they were asked to take on the role. Two respondents (E1 and A1) indicated that they were forced to take on management tasks as part of their technical roles. Respondent E1 was on a fixed-term contract and felt that she was in no position to refuse additional management responsibilities for the fear that her contract would not be renewed.

“I was in no position to say ‘no’ because of my contract and therefore if you say ‘no’ to things... Being in that position you really have to say ‘yes’ to most things.”

As discussed in Section 4.7, even though the elevation to the manager role was seen as a promotion by the majority of the respondents, in the case of respondent E1, the promotion did not result in an increase in salary. Similarly, respondent A1 indicated that he had no choice but to take on the manager role:
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“[N]ot...at any point, did they [the organisation’s executive] really ask me if that is what I wanted.”

Neither of these two respondents reflected positively on their transition, nor could they identify many personal qualities that they thought they brought to the role. Respondent A1 indicated that he enjoyed “absolutely no aspect” of the role. Along the same lines, respondent E1 remarked that:

“What I would have loved to have done...being left just as I was...consolidating that [technical] knowledge first, but I have been yanked out of my teaching role and being put in a position that I don’t...didn’t want....”

Moreover, the relationship between the category of the transitional manager and their career progression and future aspirations is particularly interesting. The unwilling managers spoke passionately about the technical aspects of their role and were looking for avenues to relinquish managerial responsibilities. An interesting observation about this category of respondents is that none of them saw their career path staying in management. For instance, during the interview, respondent E1 indicated her desire to leave the organisation if she was to be made to stay in her leadership role. In fact, she left the organisation six months following the interview.

4.9.1.2 The reluctant manager

Reluctant managers were the second group of the unwilling manager category that emerged during the interviews. This was a group of technical experts who took on the job of a manager due to their sense of duty, in other words, as a way of paying dues to the organisation for providing them with opportunities for
technical advancement. The following exchange with respondent E4 illustrated that.

“E4: I am a reluctant manager.”
“R: What is a reluctant manager?”
“E4: Someone who does it because they believe that it has to be done. Probably can do it, but rather wishes someone else would do it... This is not something that I do because I want to do it; I do it because I find it is a duty...”

Respondent LG3 also reflected that he never saw his career path taking him into management and that he went into the role reluctantly:

“...I was told that is where I am going next.”

However, the key difference between respondents E4 and LG3 was that respondent LG3 found himself enjoying management more than his technical role to the extent the respondent made a full transition into management and no longer spent time on technical tasks.

The reader is reminded that this sense of duty was first discussed in relation to organisational culture and organisational knowledge. This point is emphasised here as a way of providing an explanation for why an unwilling manager category respondent would take on a leadership role. In fact, respondent E4 indicated that even though he was in management roles for more than ten years, he still saw himself as a reluctant manager. This category of respondents also revealed certain ambivalence towards the transition, which was also experienced with the second category of transitional managers.
**Pragmatic managers** were the second category of *transitional managers* in this sample. This category will be examined next.

### 4.9.2 Pragmatic manager

*Pragmatic managers* were technical experts who, as technical experts, did not have plans to make the transition into management, but who, when the opportunity presented itself found themselves in the role. In other words, their transition to management was unplanned and therefore accidental. Respondents A3, E2, E3 and E5 could be characterised as *pragmatic managers* based on their reflections of how they found themselves in the management roles.

For instance, the following is the description of the career progression of respondent A3 from a designer within an art Museum to a design manager. This description is particularly interesting as it encapsulates both the natural attrition and the organisational evolution as reasons behind the need for the manager role:

“When I started here there were three of us: there was a graphic designer, there was the exhibition designer who was the design manager and there was my original position which was just a designer. At that stage, we did both graphic and three-dimensional design. So, I...my design manager was moved to another position and I was appointed senior designer and then with the redevelopment of the Museum... I was...appointed to the role [of design manager]... And that was initially to take on the redevelopment of the Millennium Road [premises] and then mid-way through that process, we were half way through the design and documenting the building, the Cook Government awarded the Kennedy Towers and acknowledged that we were to have the Australian Art, so we had to commence the design concept work from scratch again and during that stage we did not have a Director, we did not have structure, so I was playing that fairly significant role in that process.”
As the above career summary shows, the respondent moved to the role of a manager as a result of the previous manager leaving and the organisational evolution demanding the role in a higher capacity.

Another **pragmatic manager** was respondent E3 who, when describing his transition from an academic to a Dean of Faculty indicated that his appointment was accidental in many ways. The respondent indicated that he was not interested in the role of the Dean because he did not participate in the Faculty management matters, but that when, as a process of elimination of other candidates, the role was still not filled, he took it because it was offered to him.

Respondent E5 was another **pragmatic manager** and similar to the respondent E3 in that she took the role because there was no one else who could do the job:

> “...In the first years I did not [enjoy the role] – I was so anxious about it. [But], there was really nobody who could do it.”

A defining feature of the **pragmatic manager** category of the respondents was that, like the **unwilling manager** category, the respondents were approached by the organisation and asked to take on the role of the manager. As indicated in the previous section, these two categories of respondents revealed certain ambivalence towards the transition. The key difference between the two categories was that the **pragmatic managers**, once they found themselves in the managerial role, worked on ways to make the transition and, therefore, their new role successful. Those in the **unwilling manager** category of the respondents, on
the other hand, were predominantly keen to relinquish their managerial responsibilities in favour of going back to performing only the technical tasks. The category of an *eager manager* will be examined next.

### 4.9.3 Eager manager

The last category of the *transitional managers* belonged to those respondents who, when the opportunity presented itself, actually applied for the role because they saw their career taking them into management. In other words, this was the category of respondents who wanted to move into management. Respondents A2, A5, A6, E6 and LG4 belonged to this category. For example, respondent A2 indicated that:

> “Of course I was interested...to go into the management role, to go to a more senior role in terms of leading content, leading team and I was quite pleased about it.”

A slightly different sentiment was expressed by respondent A5 who stated that she was seeking recognition and acknowledgment of her expertise and getting that purely through the technical field was no longer enough:

> “At the lower level while you are doing a lot more of hands-on, you do often get overlooked, and that is fine because you are often doing things that you love and get satisfaction, but sometimes you need a little bit more... It would have been thirteen or fourteen years that I have been doing practical work and while I had hoped that I can still get the satisfaction from doing the practical work and seeing other people doing wonderful treatments and being able to teach people some of the tricks that I have picked up... I hope that I can get a different type of satisfaction [being in the role of manager].”

These two examples indicated that both respondents wanted to move into management so that they would have a greater say in terms of the technical
content and technical outcomes, in other words, becoming one of the organisation’s decision-makers meant more influence.

In summary, the typification of the responses by the *transitional managers* in this study revealed three categories of the *transitional managers*: the first two categories belonged to the respondents who were approached by the organisation and asked to take on the role. The *unwilling manager* category of the respondents did not reflect on their management role positively, while the *pragmatic manager* category of the respondents adopted the management role to their career plans. The last, *eager manager* category of the respondents had plans for management to become part of their career aspirations. In fact, it could be argued that for that category of the *transitional managers*, the move into management was more of a natural progression rather than the transition.

Overall, the last two categories of the *transitional managers* shared positive experiences of being in management and the interpretations and explanations of the transitional characteristics given by the *eager managers* were, in most cases, similar to the reflections of the *pragmatic managers* with the key difference being that the *pragmatic managers* were asked by the organisation to take on the role while the *eager managers* applied for the role and went through the selection process. Finally, even though all three categories of the managers needed to give up certain or all aspects of their technical role, the *pragmatic* and *eager*
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managers found a balance that worked for them and therefore were more satisfied in their manager role.

4.10 Chapter summary

At the beginning of this Chapter a contextual definition of leadership was offered. As part of that discussion, a number of important terms were introduced, all of which shaped what leadership meant to the respondents. Specific accounts and various reflections of sixteen respondents in this study present a holistic picture of the transition process. Such a contextual interpretation of individual experiences and meanings enabled a distinction between leadership and management with a focus on vision and technical expertise a leader needed to have and processing task orientation of a manager. Different examples from various respondents also led to an identification of the following leadership skills: emotional intelligence, vision, communication skills, interpersonal skills, organisational skills and self-awareness. Some respondents saw themselves as natural leaders while others felt that once they found themselves in a management position, they needed to learn how to lead.

In the second theme, leadership skills were discussed again, but in relation to why the respondents felt they, specifically, were chosen for the roles they were in. Here, the respondents reflected on their technical expertise and their knowledge and longevity within the organisation as key factors that led to them being chosen for the management role. They further articulated an important
distinction between management and leadership, when some of them reflected that they saw themselves as leaders in terms of being leading technical experts in their chosen field, but not as leaders of staff and teams. Such an identity construction may explain why when asked what skills they brought to the leadership role, the majority of the respondents indicated that it was their technical expertise that put them above other candidates. It could be argued that those respondents were captured by their own management construct, not the leadership construct.

In the third theme factors that impacted on the success of the transition were explored. Some of the key differences between the responses from different sectors emerged here, with the Education and the Arts sectors respondents describing their managerial role as still retaining certain technical tasks, resulting in their transition being labelled a technical transition. The Local Government sector respondents, on the other hand, reported that their role was fully a management one resulting in their transition being a complete transition. Three key factors leading to the success of the transition were: (1) the balance between the technical and the managerial aspects of the role (hence resulting in the two types of the transitions); (2) management structures implemented by the respondents to assist them with the management tasks; and (3) the respondents’ involvement in the organisational decision-making.
Having established the two types of transitions as important characteristics of the transitional experience for the *transitional managers* in this study, in theme four the focus was on the impact a type of the transition had on the identity of the *transitional manager*. The importance of being seen as a technical expert revealed the extent to which peer recognition and peer respect played a role in the respondents' professional identity. The respondents who had a *technical transition* saw themselves as technical experts, while the respondents who had a *complete transition* saw themselves as both technical experts and as managers. This was one of the key findings of this study. It was further revealed that it was important for the respondents to be respected by their peers for their technical abilities. Moreover, their technical expertise needed to be at a *higher level* than that of their staff.

In Theme Five, the focus was on organisational structures and hierarchies, including the remuneration systems and limited promotion opportunities within the technical field. One of the key findings from that theme was that one of the considerations to taking on the manager role was the remuneration. In Theme Six, different forms of management development training were examined and the value and timing of management development training was discussed with a particular emphasis on mentoring. There, another key finding of this study was revealed relating to a lack of career planning by the respondents and little or no succession and management development planning by the respondents’ organisations.
Final typification and reduction of the conversations with the respondents encapsulated major characteristics of the sample – three types of *transitional managers*. One of the key differences between the three types of *transitional managers* was that taking the manager role was seen as a natural progression by the *eager* category of the *transitional managers* as they applied for the manager role when it became vacant, while the *unwilling* and the *pragmatic managers* were asked by their organisations to step up to the manager role.

Following Blaikie (1993:96) and Hallebone and Priest (2009:108-110), and as discussed in Section 3.3, the seven themes presented in this Chapter need to be seen as contributing towards theory building, not just as redescriptions of everyday meanings with an examination of leadership as a social process in a situational context, enabling a further development of knowledge that sees leadership as a complex social process in which meanings and interpretations play a key role (see Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:186) and Alvesson (2002:94) in Chapter One).

In the next and final Chapter, the findings of this study will be placed in the context of the current body of knowledge on leadership and management and, in particular, the literature on the transition process.
5 Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived characteristics of the transitional experience of a group of transitional managers. That purpose dictated the use of the Interpretive abductive framework as well as the choice of sample (see Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:183 in Section 3.1). The meanings of the study participants’ actions were the first and the most original empirical observation the researcher could make as reported in Section 3.3. The researcher retained the integrity of the phenomenon by staying close to the language and concepts used by the participants (Blaikie’s (2000:240) low stance in Section 3.5). In addition, the researcher imposed concepts and meanings from the existing literature (Blaikie’s (2000:241) high stance). As reported in Section 3.5, this mediation between the everyday language and the technical language was necessary in order to produce themes relevant to the research question.

The sample was comprised of sixteen transitional managers from three different tertiary industry sectors who participated in two-hour focused interviews with the researcher. While it is acknowledged that the ideal way to obtain a representative sample was to give every potentially eligible participant a known, nonzero chance of being selected for participation in the research as reported in Section 3.5.2; it was not reasonably practicable for the researcher to determine how many potential participants (ie. technical experts who transitioned into management) existed within each of the relevant organisations.
The variety of the sectors and the long interview times revealed: leadership orientations for the actions of the *transitional managers*; the meanings they assigned to their transitional experiences; and the characteristics of that transitional experience. The contributions of this study need to be seen in the context of the study’s Interpretivist nature – this was an explorative research, specific to the time, place and the respondents in this sample; as such the findings cannot be considered generalisable. Nevertheless, the insights from this study could be used as the basis for future research. Those insights will be called “tentative hypotheses” and their application to future research will be offered in Section 5.5.

There were five key findings in this study. The first finding related to the characterisation of three main types of *transitional managers*: those respondents who were asked to take on the manager role (*the unwilling* and *the pragmatic manager* categories) and those who actively applied for the role (*the eager managers*). Current literature on organisational leadership and development made no mention of technical experts who transitioned into management unwillingly. Rather, the literature described the role of organisations to provide an environment that assisted the technical experts’ growth and “encouraged” them to move into management.

The second finding of this study was that the key *positive* motivating factors for the respondents to take the manager role were: higher remuneration, technical
peer respect and the nature of new role as an organisational decision-making position. In contrast, the *unwilling managers* reported that they were not a position to refuse the manager role offered to them.

The third finding of this study was that there were two types of transitions, the *complete transition*, which the majority of the *eager managers* experienced, and the *technical transition*, which was experienced by the *unwilling* and the *pragmatic managers*. Related to this finding was the identification of a link between the type of organisation and its culture and the leadership skills required in that organisation. In other words, the technical expertise required of a manager was dependent on the type of organisation in which they worked and that organisation’s current business strategy.

The fourth finding of this study was that irrespective of the amount of time in the manager role (six months to eleven years at the time of the interviews) or the type of transition (*complete* or *technical*), all respondents in this study continued to identify themselves as technical experts; with even the *complete transition* respondents still seeing themselves as managers. Related to this finding was the further finding that the respondents’ continued identification as technical experts was largely due to their need to identify with their peers (other technical experts).

The fifth key finding of this study was that there was little or no career planning by the individual and little or no succession and management development
planning by the organisation. This was irrespective of whether the transition was initiated by the individual (the *eager managers*) or the organisation (the *unwilling* and the *pragmatic managers*).

This Chapter is structured around the research question that sought to explore the characteristics of the perceived leadership experience of a group of *transitional managers*. As part of this overarching research question, a number of aspects were considered:

a) How did the transition happen for the *transitional managers* in this study? This will be discussed in Section 5.1 – The transitional experiences;

b) What distinguished the experiences of the respondents who described their transition as a successful transition? This aspect of the research question will be discussed in Section 5.2 – Successful transitions;

c) What leadership skills, as perceived by the respondents, were required of a technical expert to successfully assume managerial responsibilities? This aspect of the research question will be further explored in Section 5.3 – Leadership skills;

d) What impact, if any, did the transition have on the identity of the respondents? This, final aspect of the research question will be addressed in Section 5.4 – Personal identity.
Therefore, the proceeding sections are structured around those four aspects of the research question. Each section starts with a brief answer to a particular aspect of the research question. This is then elaborated with a discussion drawing on the analysis and findings and supported by the existing literature.

5.1 The transitional experiences

The first aspect of the research question, asked how the transition happened for the transitional managers in this sample. Some respondents (the unwilling and the pragmatic managers) were approached by their organisations and asked to take on the manager role, while other respondents (the eager managers) actively applied for the role. The need for the manager role was created by the organisational demands ranging from the organisational unit evolving to a point that the need for a manager was identified, or a vacancy was created by the previous incumbent leaving the position due to natural attrition.

In this Section, three types of transitional managers and the two types of transitions will be considered. This will be followed with a discussion on the appeal of the manager role. Then, the transition process will be considered from the organisational perspective.

5.1.1 Types of transitional managers

Some of the respondents spoke about taking on the manager role because the organisation asked them to and they were not in a position to refuse the role (the
unwilling managers); other respondents reconsidered their technical career pathways and took a more practical approach when being asked to take on the manager role (the pragmatic managers) and a number of the respondents actively applied for the manager role without being approached by the organisation first (the eager managers).

The characterisation of the respondents’ experiences into the three types of transitional managers was supported by the reported findings of Boucher (2005) in Section 2.11.1. The key difference between the two studies was that this study offered a more simplified version of Boucher’s five categories due to a smaller sample size. Nonetheless, there were a number of parallels between the two studies. Boucher’s “ambivalent managers” category was somewhat similar to the pragmatic manager type of the respondents in this study. Both definitions categorised a manager as a technical expert who had ended up in the role through no action of their own. However, Boucher’s observation that those types of managers were uncertain of their own managerial abilities or uncertain of their ability to develop managerial skills, was not confirmed in this study. In this study, the pragmatic managers spoke confidently about their managerial abilities and were perceived to understand the changing balance between technical and managerial requirements of their roles.

Another similarity between this study and Boucher (2005) was that the “born managers” category of Boucher (2005) was comparable to the eager manager
type of the *transitional managers* reported in this study. All respondents belonging to the *eager manager* type, indeed all three types of respondents in this study indicated that they considered that leadership skills could be acquired. Such similarities suggest that the typification of *transitional managers* proposed here and by Boucher (2005) is not limited to nursing (Boucher, 2005) or the Arts, Education and the Local Government sectors that this study examined. Further research into other industry sectors is needed to confirm this.

A key finding of this study, diverging from other empirical studies of this kind, was with respect to the *unwilling manager* type of respondent. These were the *transitional managers* who were either not willing to move into the manager role or perceived that their organisation had forced them into that role. As indicated above, and discussed in Section 2.7, an assumption in the empirical literature, both positivist and Interpretivist, was that technical experts transitioned into management roles willingly, with the role of the organisations being to ‘encourage’ technical experts to move into management. This was reported by Temperley (1994); Eubanks (1991); Berr, Church and Waclawski (2000); Church, Allan and Waclawski (2000); Boucher (2005) and Pagonis (1992) in Section 2.7.

The implication of the *unwilling manager* type of respondents finding was that this type of manager were not appropriate leaders for the leadership roles they were in. Two reasons could be offered for that: firstly, it could be argued that they did not have the personal drive or the motivation for the manager role. This
correlation between the level of satisfaction with the role and the competence was similarly reported by Walsh (2003:45) in Section 2.7 and Clarke (1998) in Section 2.9.

Secondly, the *unwilling manager* type of respondents needed to either revert to their technical areas *only*, or they needed to accept and actively identify with their managerial status (see Compton’s, 1997:195 argument in Section 2.8 on an indispensable criterion for a good leader was to *want* to be a leader). Reverting to their technical area *only* would ensure that the *unwilling managers* from this sample would retain their status as *technical leaders*. More broadly however, the *unwilling managers* in this sample had developed what Alvesson (2004:194) was reported to call “negative work identities”, which were discussed in Section 2.4; through the self-construction of their identity, they found it difficult to alter their identities as technical experts. This is an important aspect of the personal identity and will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.4 when different leaders for different roles will be considered.

### 5.1.2 Types of transitions

Another characteristic of the transitional experience of the respondents investigated in this study was the interrelationship between the type of the *transitional managers* and the type of their transition. All but one *eager manager* had a *complete transition* and solely performed managerial tasks. Their transition was characterised by large portfolios, with responsibility both in and outside their immediate technical areas. Because of the broad nature of their roles, the
complete transition respondents accepted that they could not be the most technically competent in their specialist areas, largely due to organisational complexities and multifunctional nature of their roles. Similar conclusions were reported by Kouzes and Posner (2002:30) in Section 2.3.

The unwilling and the pragmatic manager type of the respondents undertook a technical transition, in other words, they performed managerial tasks while maintaining some, most or all of their previous technical duties. A “tentative hypothesis” could therefore be made, based on the two different types of transitions that organisational requirements determined the level of technical expertise required in a manager. This is consistent with discussions reported by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152) in Section 2.9. The respondents who had technical transitions could be seen a result of their being employed within knowledge-intensive organisations that required a high level technical expertise in a manager. This is consistent with the reported discussions on knowledge-intensive firms by Alvesson’s (2004) in Section 2.4.

A further implication for the respondents with the technical transition was that the managerial duties were aiding their technical abilities as they were able to exercise greater technical control over their areas. This was not just because those transitional managers brought to their roles an orientation developed from their previous technical experiences, as reported by Hambrick and Mason (1984:199) in Section 2.3. This study found that taking on the manager role was
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perceived by the respondents as increasing their status as organisational decision-makers. Those respondents who retained their technical duties perceived their technical area to be of a greater value in the organisation, due to their decision-making influences.

Such conclusions were consistent with the reported studies by Drucker (1977:51) in Section 2.3, where it was reported that the role of a manager was to translate the organisational objectives into a language that can be understood by technical experts and technical outputs into a language that is meaningful to the organisation. Similarly, Maccoby (2000:57) and Pagonis (1992:118) in the same section were reported to call for a greater control of technical areas by technical experts with better overall organisational outcomes being the result (Garnier, 2008:70).

So far in this Chapter, the focus of the discussion has been on how the transition from a technical expert to a manager occurred in the cases of the transitional managers in this sample. Another characteristic of the respondents’ transitional experience was the appeal of taking on the manager role.

5.1.3 The appeal of the manager role

Reasons cited by the respondents in this study for taking on the manager role were: (1) the lack of career progression opportunities within the technical field; (2) higher remuneration attached to the manager role; and (3) an increased peer respect the role generated. The first two reasons will be discussed next. An
increased peer respect as a reason for taking on the manager role will be discussed in Section 5.4. It should be noted however that the discussion below mainly considers reasons as applicable to the pragmatic and the eager managers as the unwilling managers in this study did not find the manager role appealing.

The first two reasons, career progression and higher remuneration, appeared to be interrelated; a lack of career progression opportunities within the respondents’ technical field meant that their salary increases were limited as well. Public prestige and the remuneration associated with managerial roles presented significant inducement for a move into management, even for those technical experts who may not have been interested in the transition (the pragmatic managers).

Therefore, based on the characteristics of the transitional experience of the respondents in this study, a “tentative hypothesis” could be put forward that the desire for taking on the manager role was to a large extent motivated by the lack of options within the technical field. Similar conclusions were reached in the reported studies in Section 2.11.1.

While this study focused on the perceived characteristics of the transitional experience by a group of transitional managers, and did not examine the organisational perspective on the transition, organisational perspective, as
perceived by them, was nonetheless an important characteristic of the respondents’ transitional experiences. The intersubjective meanings the respondents assigned to certain organisational processes surrounding the transition will be discussed next.

5.1.4 Transitions from the organisational perspective

Through the process of interview with the respondents, the researcher was given an insight into, not just the subjectively perceived experiences of the transition, but also the respondents’ intersubjective interpretations of the social reality and their perceptions of the organisational decisions. In other words, the social reality of the transition from the organisational perspective was pre-interpreted by the respondents before the researcher began her task of interpretation, as reported in Chapter One by Blaikie (2000:116). Therefore, the following discussion needs to be viewed in this context.

The link between the type of the transitional manager and the form of initiation of the transition was another characteristic of the transitional experiences of the respondents observed in this study. For example, in the case of the eager managers, it was their own personal ambition and need for personal development that initiated the transition. In contrast, in the case of the unwilling and the pragmatic managers, the organisational demands and the organisational evolution initiated the transition. The organisations therefore both identified the need for a manager role and also that the unwilling/pragmatic manager in question was to be the specific technical expert who was going to become
formally responsible for leadership within their area. While it is unknown why the organisations chose the *unwilling* and the *pragmatic managers* from this study to take on the manager role, as report by Clarke (1998) in Section 2.3, organisations often promoted technical excellence with a position in management.

This balance between the personal and the organisational development needs was mentioned in Section 2.7 and extensively discussed in Section 2.11.1, where it was reported that organisational requirements were one of the conditions for a transition from a technical expert to a manager to be initiated. There was however no consensus in the literature concerning the triggers that initiated the transition process. It could be the personal development and personal drive needed to drive the transition into management process (as was the case with most of the *eager managers*), or – as with the *unwilling* and the *pragmatic managers* – the process needed to start with organisational requirements.

One way to achieve the balance between the organisational and the individual development needs would have been for organisations to provide alternative career pathways, particularly to the *unwilling managers* in this study. A further conclusion can be drawn that, because of the existence of those career pathway alternatives to management structures within the Local Government sector, only those technical experts with a desire to move into management found
themselves in those roles. Conclusion of this kind is consistent with the reported discussion in Section 2.10 by Compton (1997:197).

The typification of the respondents into the *unwilling, pragmatic* and *eager managers* and the *technical* versus the *complete type of transition* were defining characteristics of the respondents’ experiences of the transition. The interplay between the type of the *transitional manager* and the type of the transition and the impact of that interplay on the success of the transition will be explored next.

The second aspect of the research question, looking at the differences between successful and unsuccessful transitions as reported in the experiences of the respondents, will be discussed next. In the context of organisational identification of a manager potential in the respondents, an appropriate level of management development training will also be discussed. As outlined at the beginning of this Chapter, the section will start with a brief, direct answer to the second aspect of the research question. The answer will then be elaborated with a discussion.

### 5.2 Successful transitions

The second aspect of the overall research question asked “What distinguished the experiences of the respondents who described their transition as a successful transition?” The respondents who identified within themselves that they wanted to transition into management (the *eager managers*) and the respondents who accepted their manager role once in it (the *pragmatic*
managers) spoke more positively about their experiences in the manager role than the respondents who were in the role because they felt a sense of duty towards their organisation or did not have a choice about being in it (the unwilling managers). In order to fully answer how a transition from a technical expert to a manager can be achieved successfully, it is important to get a full understanding on what was meant by a successful transition.

5.2.1 Defining successful transitions

Based on the reported experiences by the respondents, the researcher imposed concepts and meanings from the existing literature to find that not all transitions were successful. Indeed, as concluded in Section 5.1, those respondents classified as unwilling managers were not found to transition into management roles successfully. That not all transitions into management were successful was consistent with the reported argument by Burke and McKeen’s (1994b) in Section 2.7.

The discussion in Section 2.7 noted that there was no consistent definition of what constituted a successful transition in the literature. As reported in that Section, Burke and McKeen (1994b) argued that a success of a transition should not be measured by the transitional manager keeping or losing their job. However they did not state how a successful transition should be defined. Furthermore, the extent to which a successful transition took up to two and a half to three years, as observed by Gabarro (1985) in Section 2.7 was not supported by the findings of this study.
Some of the *unwilling managers* were in their roles for more than ten years, yet they reported few positive experiences. It could be argued that the length of the transitions was influenced by the type of the organisation and organisational needs. Indeed, in Section 2.4, Albert and Adams (2002) were reported to argue that the transitions in hybrid type of organisations took up to nine years. Lastly, if a transition was seen as part of a life cycle, then the transitions were continuously evolving. Personal change and transition in a career cycle, reported by Bridges (2003 and 2004) in Section 2.7, can be applied to the transition process of the *transitional managers* in this study as one example of life changes and transitions.

A conclusion from this study, as applicable to the experiences of the *transitional managers* in this sample, was that there were two kinds of successful transitions depending on the accepted definition of what constituted a successful transition. If the successful transition was defined by what in Section 2.7 Bridges (2003:4) was reported to call a total “letting go” of technical aspects, then the respondents who had *complete transitions* also transitioned successfully. Alternatively, if a successful transition was to be defined by the satisfaction with the manager role, then the *pragmatic* and the *eager managers* transitioned successfully.

Therefore, based on the subjective meanings assigned to the social reality of the respondents in this study, a successful transition was defined as either a
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complete transition involving “letting go” of all technical duties or as a satisfaction with the managerial role. A “tentative hypothesis” could then be made that that the type of organisation impacted on the transitions and their success. Further studies are needed in this area, exploring the type of organisations and the length and success of the transition.

Ways by which to increase the satisfaction once in the manager role were also explored in this study (Theme Three of the Findings and Analysis Chapter) and will be discussed in more detail next. Initiations made by the respondents to increase their personal satisfaction with the transition will be explored first. Then, the role of the organisations in the respondents’ reported experiences of the transition will be briefly explored.

5.2.2 Increasing the success of transitions

This study has found that the respondents increased their personal satisfaction with the transition in three main ways. Firstly, the study found that the respondents’ involvement in the organisational decision-making processes was an important factor in the success of their transitions. In other words, those respondents who, through a process of becoming managers, saw themselves as becoming organisational decision-makers were more satisfied in the manager role, thus giving their transition a greater chance of success. Their role as organisational decision-makers meant greater influence over organisational outcomes, therefore making the respondents more effective leaders. This is consistent with the reported discussions in Section 2.2.2.
Furthermore, the view of the respondents as organisational decision-makers also pointed towards decisions made by the respondents’ organisations to empower their employees (i.e. the respondents), thus engaging them in participative management. In Section 2.1.1, Abzub and Phelps (1998:213) were reported to emphasise the value of participative management in today’s organisation. The extent to which the respondents’ organisations were “forced” by technological changes to recognise employee empowerment and leader-follower relationship, thus resulting in a greater participative leadership as reported by Heilbrunn (1994:66) in Section 2.1.2 was not found in this study. The role of the respondents as organisational decision-makers will continue in Section 5.4 where this study’s conclusions in relation to the respondents’ personal identity will be discussed.

A “tentative hypothesis”, based on the discussion in relation to the success of the transition and the organisational status, would be that the respondents’ view of themselves as organisational decision-makers (both in terms of influences inside and outside their areas) was the key factor leading to the success of the transition. Further studies on the impact of well-developed management training and succession plans on the success of the transition would contribute in shaping this “tentative hypothesis”.
The second way how the respondents in this study increased their level of satisfaction with the manager role related specifically to the technical transitions, there were two important considerations for the success of the transition of the unwilling and the pragmatic managers: (1) the balance between the technical and the managerial components of the manager role; and (2) the tension between how time was divided between those two components. Solutions to that imbalance were shown in the changes to management structures initiated by some respondents, leading to improved succession planning. In other words, this study found that even though the respondents did little to plan for their own transitions into management, once in management roles, the transitional managers in this study took responsibility and showed leadership for the succession planning in their area. This was consistent with an Interpretivist perspective study by Johnson (2002:247) reported in Section 2.9.

The third and final way by which the respondents in this study increased their level of satisfaction with the manager role was related to their perceptions of organisational culture. Those respondents who assumed leadership for the succession planning in their areas had a strong sense of organisational culture and identified themselves with their organisations. By doing that, they contributed towards the continuity of quality leadership and organisational prosperity. This is consistent with reported discussions in Section 2.9 led by Collins and Porras (1994:174). The respondents’ relationship with their organisations and the organisational culture will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.
Having discussed initiatives made by the respondents to increase their personal satisfaction with the transition, the role of the organisations in increasing the success of the transitions will be discussed next.

5.2.3 The role of organisations in the success of transitions

This study found that the respondents’ organisations were not proactive in identifying and investing in management training courses for technical experts with a management potential from an early stage of their careers to enable an easier transition into management. This conclusion was also consistent with observations made by Compton (1997:196-197) and Preston and Biddle (1994:28) as reported in Section 2.11. The role of organisations in management development training programs will be briefly considered next. This will be followed by a discussion on organisational structures.

5.2.3.1 Management training

This study found that little emphasis was placed on management development training by either the respondents or their organisations. The value and benefits of the management development training of those respondents who took it after they stepped into the role was questionable (eg. in Section 4.8.2, one respondent remarking that training “just reinforced what I did naturally”). This is consistent with the reported observations by Fernández-Aráoz (2005:68) in Section 2.1.1.

Context-specific training as a solution leading to improved management training outcomes was reported in Section 2.9 by Mole (2004:134); Tickle, Brownlee and
Nailon (2005:708); and Watkins (2004:160. However, such training needed to be seen in the context of its limited value as an aide for leadership growth of, in particular, the *unwilling managers* who had no desire for changing and embracing the management role. Similar conclusions were reported in theoretical articles by Clarke (1998:197), Rausch (1999:170-171), Robbins et al. (2001:444) and Ready (2004:97) in Section 2.9.

A possible reason why the organisations of the *transitional managers* in this study were perceived to be ill-prepared in their early identification of technical experts with management potential was due to the ambiguity of leadership and management terms as reported in Section 2.1. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 2.9 there appears to be a disagreement on the type and value of leadership and management developmental training programs. Bennis (1989:19) was reported to argue that individuals were not provided with leadership training, while Zaleznik’s (2004:75) was reported to observe that there were no known ways to train “great” leaders.

The extent to which management training at an early stage in the respondents’ careers would have enabled the respondents to identify if a career path leading into management was something that they wanted to pursue (as reported by Compton, 1997:196-197 in Section 2.8), was not confirmed in this study. The *eager managers* wanted their career to take them to management. The *unwilling* and the *pragmatic managers* had no plans to transition into management. The
extent to which being provided with management training tools would have altered the respondents’ experiences, particularly in the instances of the *unwilling managers*, remained unknown.

Therefore, the next “tentative hypothesis”, based on the insights from this study and in need of future research, was that while management training may not have changed the conditions leading to the transition into management, it may have changed the characteristics of the transitional experience. In other words, while this type of the *transitional managers* transitioned into management unwillingly, once in the role, their experiences may have been different if they had any management training.

A further conclusion can be drawn, based on the experiences of the *unwilling manager* type of the respondents, that early management training would potentially aid avoiding the possibility of an employee ill-fitted-to-management finding themselves in manager roles. In fact, it could be concluded that the *unwilling managers*’ organisations had poor management development and inadequate succession planning. This may lead to, what was referred to in Section 2.10 as the “dearth of strong internal candidates” resulting in the leadership gap (Collins and Porras, 1994:175). Similarly, McGregor (2006:253-257) in Section 2.9 was also reported to be supportive of early management training. Worth exploring further would be an examination of the organisational views of the leadership of technical experts who assumed managerial
responsibilities. Therefore, a “tentative hypothesis” would be that the respondents’ organisations needed to identify technical leaders capable and willing to take the responsibility for organisational leadership. Such technical leaders should be offered management development training before their promotion to the role of manager.

Having considered the role of organisations in management development training programs, another factor that emerged as a key to the success of transitions from the organisational perspective was the structure and career pathways offered by organisations. This factor will be discussed next.

5.2.3.2 Organisational structures

Those technical experts who did not want to take on management positions (the unwilling managers) should have been offered alternative pathways to higher remuneration and promotion within their technical field. It is important to acknowledge, however, that offering alternative-to-management remuneration pathways may have not been possible for the respondents’ organisations.

This study did not address the cost of having ill-fitted-to-management technical experts in management roles as compared to the cost of changing management structures that rewarded technical excellence without the need to move into management. What was found in this study was that the experiences of the Local Government sector respondents were different as they reported that their organisational cultures and organisational structures enabled and aided their
complete transition into management. In other words, the hierarchical structures of the Local Government sector respondents were not limited on financially rewarding and recognising just the management pathway to career advancement. It should be acknowledged however that all Local Government sector respondents were senior managers. Hence it may be possible that such organisational structures were only available at their level of seniority.

A further implication of the existing organisational structures related to succession planning. It is possible to argue that the organisational succession plans were based on the immediate organisational demands and natural attrition, hence only meeting, what was called the “emergency leadership needs” in Section 2.10 by Byham (2001:3). Similar environmental conditions affecting the growth of managers were reported in Section 2.11 by McGregor (2006:265).

Another “tentative hypothesis” based on the perceived characteristics of the transition experience of the respondents in this study, was that, if it occurred at all, the succession planning did not start in anticipation of changing organisational demands and natural attrition, in other words, proactively, rather the organisational demands and natural attrition were the triggers of reactive succession planning. Furthermore, the focus on the immediate organisational demands revealed a lack of consideration for succession planning and investment in management development training by both the transitional manager and the organisation. Therefore, a related “tentative hypothesis”
emerging from this study was that such immediate organisational demands could have an adverse impact on the organisational culture, and meeting long term organisational goals. Merit for this “tentative hypothesis” was found in the reported discussions in Section 2.10 by Alvesson (2002); Alvesson (2004); and Collins and Porras (1994). In that Section, a link was made between strong organisational culture, long term succession planning and organisational longevity and prosperity.

Any conclusions about the decisions made by the respondents’ organisations need to be seen in the context of this study’s aims to investigate the characteristics of the transitional experience as perceived by the respondents. Therefore, the “tentative hypotheses” presented in this Section need to be seen through the intersubjective views of the organisational characteristics of the transition.

Leadership of the respondents who had a complete transition and leadership of the respondents who had a technical transition and the relationship between the leadership and the success of the respondents’ transitions will be discussed in the next section. As in previous two sections, the section will commence with a short answer to an aspect of the research question. The answer will then be expanded with a detailed discussion.
5.3 Leadership skills

The third aspect of the research question in this study asked what leadership skills, as perceived by the respondents, were required of a technical expert to successfully assume managerial responsibilities. When discussing leadership skills they brought to the manager role, the majority of the respondents identified technical expertise as the key leadership skill, with the respondents with technical transitions emphasising the *technical skill at a high level*. When discussing leadership in general, the respondents in this study remarked that personal and interpersonal skills mattered more in management and leadership positions than technical expertise. This was consistent with the reported findings in Section 2.6.

The important point here is that the respondents identified high level technical expertise as the skill they *brought with them* to their management positions. While other leadership skills named above could be acquired over time, technical expertise needed to be mastered *before* stepping into the manager position. The point that leadership skills could be acquired was reported by a number of authors, including Kouzes and Posner (2002:388) in Section 2.8.

The following discussion continues with the importance of technical leadership as a prerequisite to a role in management.
5.3.1 Technical leadership

The identification of technical skills as key leadership skills was consistent with leadership definitions by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:152-168) that identified technical skills as a key to leadership effectiveness, as reported in Section 2.2.2. The reported discussion in Section 2.3 also emphasised technical expertise.

What was not reported elsewhere in the literature was the overwhelming emphasis on the extent of the technical skill proficiency over other leadership skills as the prerequisite for a leadership position. The reported discussions in Section 2.3 emphasised the importance of technical expertise in leadership effectiveness.

This study has found that the respondents needed to be seen as leading experts in their field before they assumed managerial responsibilities. With a specification of the technical competence at a high level and an articulation of technical leadership at a national and/or international level, this study has demonstrated that the organisations cannot underestimate or understate the technical component of leadership.

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the respondents’ emphasis on their technical expertise as a key leadership quality leading to a role in management was part of a requirement of knowledge-intensive organisations that required a high level technical expertise in a manager. The emphasis on the technical
expertise as a key leadership quality was consistent with the respondents’ view of themselves as national and/or international leaders in their chosen technical fields. By assuming the manager roles the respondents took responsibility for leadership within their areas of expertise. This is consistent with Drucker’s (1977:52) definition of career professionals as reported in Section 2.3.

Discussion on the leadership of the transitional managers will be presented next when other aspects of leadership are discussed.

5.3.2 The leadership of the transitional managers

Deriving concepts and meanings from the respondents’ lay language and everyday meanings they assigned to their transition process and their role, the researcher drew a number of conclusions about the respondents as leaders. Irrespective of whether they saw themselves as leaders of technical areas (the unwilling and the pragmatic managers) or as organisational leaders in a management sense (the eager managers), strong leadership skills were displayed by all respondents when reflecting on their daily experiences in the manager role.

The analysis of the respondents’ reflections in relation to self-awareness, self-confidence and self-understanding, for example, in the context of Theme One, found them to display competencies required of good leaders, such as management of self, (as per the reported discussions in Section 2.1.1 by Bennis, 1984:17-18; Bennis, 1989:19-21; and Mole, 2004:125). Similarly, when other
respondents remarked that they led on their instincts and past experiences, they displayed a sense of other people’s emotions and social intelligence. This was consistent with the reported discussions by Goleman and Boyatzis’s (2008:4) in Section 2.1.1. The articulation of the communication and interpersonal skills by the female respondents showed management of meaning, as reported by Bennis (1984:17-18) and Bennis (1989:19-21) in Section 2.1.1. Those leadership self-identification skills by the female respondents were also consistent with the reported observations by Eagly and Carli’s (2007:67) in Section 2.2.2.1 that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders.

Lastly, some respondents observed that while they were peers with their staff at a technical level, they needed to create a socialising distance between themselves and their staff so that they could act impartially. Thus they displayed management of trust competency as reported in Section 2.1.1 by Bennis (1984:17-18) and Bennis (1989:19-21).

Effective leadership skills were displayed by all three types of transitional managers. While they may have been ill-fitted-to-management, the unwilling managers also showed a strong sense of leadership. For example, in Theme Four, one of the unwilling managers talked about “people issues” as “the stuff that keeps me awake at night”. This could be interpreted as a quality of a good leader. A similar argument was reported in Section 2.1.1 by Cooper (2000:13).
The identification of examples of leadership effectiveness by the respondents in this study, as discussed above, contributed towards expanding leadership theory through the empirical efforts and seeing leadership as a process. This has continued to narrow the developmental gap that was identified by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:186) in Chapter One in relation to the need to develop leadership concepts based on subjective efforts by the respondents.

So, what was the leadership definition as applicable to this study? The definition of leadership offered here came as a result of both theme construction and the researcher imposed concepts and meanings from the literature, in other words, a mixture of a low stance and a high stance (see the reported discussed by Blaikie (2000:240-241) in Section 3.5). The development of technical concepts from the accounts provided by the respondents were evident, for example, when in Theme One, one respondent indicated how she liked to surround herself with followers who complemented her skills, while another respondent talked about parallel leadership. In both instances, the respondents shared the leadership responsibility.

Hence, leadership, in the context of this study, came as a result of mastering of a technical area, which led to (technical) peer respect. The result was a definition of leadership where leadership was seen as a shared, socially interactive process between leaders and followers in which the meanings and interpretations of what was said and done play a crucial role. As outlined in
Section 2.2.1.1, the term *followers* in the context of this study, was used to include the individuals subservient to the leader as well as superiors and peers.

There are parallels between this definition and those reported in Chapter Two: in Section 2.4 Goodall (2006a:13) was reported to argue that technical expertise was a proxy for leadership ability. Furthermore, in the context of this study, leadership was seen as the leader’s impact and influence on followers as well as the leader’s impact and influence on the organisational outcomes. Similar definitions were reported in Section 2.2.2.

A definition of management also emerged from this study. Management was intertwined with leadership. In other words, it was seen as taking formal responsibility for leadership in the respondents’ technical areas, and by extension assuming the organisational leadership. Similar mixing of management and leadership elements were reported in Section 2.2.1 by Alvesson (2002:201).

In this section another aspect of the characteristics of the transitional experience of the respondents in this study was explored. The respondents’ perceptions of various leadership qualities required of a technical expert who assumed the manager role led to a conclusion that while vision, communication and organisational skills and emotional intelligence were important leadership attributes, technical skill was identified as the key leadership attribute. The respondents belonging to knowledge-intensive organisations needed a leader
with technical skills at a very high level. A parallel was drawn between high level technical skill requirements of a manager and the type of organisation, leading to an extrapolation of the definition of management in terms of organisational leadership. Leadership, on the other hand, was defined as a shared, socially interactive process between leaders and followers in which the meanings and interpretations of what was said and done play a crucial role.

Being considered technical leaders nationally and internationally was seen to be particularly important in the eyes of the respondents and it is this topic that will be explored in more detail in the next section when the impact of the transition on the identity of the respondents is discussed. As in previous sections of this Chapter, a short answer will be offered for the question, which will then be further elaborated with the discussion.

5.4 Personal identity

The fourth and final aspect of the research question in this study asked the impact of the transition on the identity of the respondents. The respondents who retained some, most or all of their technical duties (technical transitions) identified themselves as technical experts. The respondents who performed only the management duties (complete transitions) saw themselves as both managers as well as the technical experts.
The identity of the transitional manager was a key theme in this study, as it revealed how the transitional managers in this study related to their work; what their work priorities and motivating factors were; and how they related to their peers and in turn, the respondents’ perceptions on how the peers saw them. The differences in the responses between the three types of transitional managers and two different kinds of transitions, led to a conclusion that in the self-construction of their identities, the respondents whose transitional experiences were characterised by technical transitions had strong views of themselves as technical leaders. However, they had negative identity association with seeing themselves as managers. In other words, those respondents were technical leaders without being managers. Similar conclusions were reported by Alvesson (2004:188) in Section 2.4.

A conclusion that it was possible for technical experts to be leaders in their technical field, while at the same time recognising that technical expertise may not translate into management or organisational leadership is consistent with the reported discussions in Section 2.1.1 by Robbins, et al. (2001:401); Kotter (1990) and Ryan (1994:55-60). Furthermore, the respondents who had a technical transition were able to make a distinction between their personal identity and their role. A similar discussion on the difference between identity and a role an individual occupied was reported in Section 2.4 by Alvesson (2004:194).
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Complete transition respondents belonged to the eager manager category. They had positive work identities and saw themselves as leaders of technical areas and as organisational leaders from the management point of view. Contributing to their sense of identity was that they appeared to enjoy the manager roles, and higher pay and status. Similar conclusions were reported by Alvesson (2004:188) in Section 2.4. Based on such identity construction, the respondents who went through a complete transition demonstrated that it was possible for an individual to be a leader-manager. This is consistent with the reported discussions by Kotter (1990:125-151) in Section 2.2.1.

This study has found that in the self-construction of their identities, the respondents whose transitional experiences were characterised by technical transitions had strong views of themselves as technical leaders. This led to a conclusion that, as applicable to this sample, it was possible for technical experts to identify themselves as leaders in their technical field. At the same time, they only accepted the role but not the identity of the manager, thus clearly differentiating between their identity and their role. In addition, based on the identity construction of the respondents who went through a complete transition, their identity self-construction was more complex, revealing a leader-manager identity.
Another layer in the complexity of the identity construction is the influence of the organisation on the personal identity formation. This aspect will be discussed next.

5.4.1 Organisational identity

One of the findings of this study was that the majority of the respondents were in technical roles for ten or more years before they stepped into managerial positions. Such a finding pointed towards limited promotion options within their organisations. However, the technical experts in this sample chose to stay in one role for a long time while waiting for limited advancement opportunities. This cannot be underestimated, as it highlighted two important aspects of the characteristics of the respondents' transitional experience. Firstly, it showed the respondents' loyalty, not just to their technical field, but more importantly to their organisations. Secondly, it revealed that if the respondents considered their organisations to be prestigious, they were more likely to accept limited promotion opportunities within it.

5.4.1.1 Organisational loyalty

The respondents' loyalty to their technical field and their loyalty to the organisation was an important aspect of the characteristics of the respondents' transitional experience. For example, in Theme Four, one respondent was reported to identify himself through his individual, organisational and social identity: “I am a photographer, I work for the Smith Museum of Art, and I manage the department - in that order.”
Other similar arguments on the link between the individual and the organisational identities were reported in Section 2.3 where it was argued that technical experts had a long term commitment to their profession or their field of expertise. However based on the reflections of the respondents in this study on the reasons and the conditions that led to their transition, this study did not support Robbins, et al.’s (2001:252) assertion that technical experts were loyal to their technical field more than to their organisations. In fact, in Theme Seven, the observations by the respondents such as “it was my duty”, “repaying the organisational dues” and “a sense of duty” were reported. These observations indicated that the respondents’ loyalty to the organisation was a more dominant factor in stepping into the manager role. Indeed, a “tentative hypothesis” based on the characteristics of the transitional experience of a group of transitional managers in this study was that the respondents’ organisations had used the good will and a sense of duty of the respondents to make them give up certain aspects of their technical role in order to install them in the manager position, even in instances where the respondents were unwilling to do so.

Furthermore, when asked why they thought they were chosen for the role of the manager, in addition to reporting their technical skill, the respondents emphasised their knowledge of the organisation. This parallel between the respondents’ knowledge of the organisational culture and their elevation to the management role was reported in Section 2.4 where it was suggested that promoting from within the organisation and appointing to management levels of
those staff who had spent significant time within the organisation, preserved the organisational ideology (Collins and Porras, 1994:183). Similarly, Alvesson (2004:220) argued that those individuals whose identity construction was in line with the identity constructions valued in the organisation, were more likely to be promoted and retained.

That further pointed out that the respondents’ organisations were successful in indoctrinating the organisational ideology in the respondents. For example, as part of the discussion in Theme Two, one respondent discussed the alignment between his personal and the organisational ambitions. It could be concluded that once the organisational ideology was embedded in the respondents as technical experts, it showed in their actions when they became managers. This was the key to an organisational success according to the discussions in Section 2.3 and Section 2.10.

Therefore, the next “tentative hypothesis” gained from the insights of the transitional experience of the transitional managers in this study, showed the respondents’ organisations not only to be a source of identity for the respondents; moreover, the organisational influence over the transitional managers’ identity was one way the organisations retained the respondents and their loyalty. Potential support for such a “tentative hypothesis” was reported in Section 2.4 where Alvesson (2004:188) described the role of organisations in shaping identity construction.
5.4.1.2 Organisational prestige

Another important ingredient to why respondents stayed in technical roles for an extended period was that the employing organisation was considered by the respondents to be prestigious, or having a valued ‘brand’ name, had higher chances of retaining their staff, even in cases where the organisational structures were restrictive in terms of promotion within technical fields, and where opportunities for higher salary in management were rare. This is consistent with the reported arguments by Alvesson (2004:210) in Section 2.4 on the link between personal identity and the perceived status of the organisation.

While the discussion above points towards strong organisational cultures in the respondents’ organisations, this study did not reveal what the organisational preferences were. For example, the extent to which the respondents’ organisations had a tendency to recruit from within rather than to recruit outsiders could not have been confirmed in this study due to the focus of the sample on the technical experts who assumed managerial responsibility within the same organisation. It could be suggested that long periods as technical experts pointed towards an organisational preference to recruit from the outside. However, based on the intersubjective meanings some respondents assigned to their predecessors (who lacked technical skill at a high level and organisational knowledge) it would appear that the respondents’ organisations had a preference to promote from within.
The answer to the fourth aspect of the research question in this study, looking at the impact of the transition on the identity of the respondents, also requires some discussion on the relationship between the respondents’ personal identity and how that identity was perceived by the respondents’ peers. As part of that discussion, the impact on the identity of ‘manager’ and ‘leader’ tags will also be considered.

5.4.2 Peer respect

The differences in the responses between the three types of transitional managers and two different kinds of transitions further emphasised the organisational requirements of the level of technical skill in the manager. This study found that in the knowledge-intensive organisations characterised by the technical transitions, it was not sufficient for the manager only to have greater technical expertise than those reporting to him or her. The manager needed to be able to identify with those reporting to him or her by having gone through each hierarchical step and by having performed previous levels of technical roles.

Moreover, the respondents who had experienced a technical transition reflected on the pressures to remain in their technical roles. However, it would appear that the pressure was not imposed by the technical peers; rather the respondents emphasised the pressure they had put on themselves to retain aspects of their technical roles. This is different from the reported discussions by Eubanks (1991:61) in Section 2.7.
Therefore, it could be concluded that the respondents with technical transitions continued to perform technical tasks as part of maintaining authoritative control. In other words, the respondents needed to demonstrate to their (technical) peers that they not only had greater technical knowledge coming into the manager role but to be seen as having a greater technical knowledge once in the manager role. This was supported by the reported discussions in Sections 2.3 and 2.4.

Having gone through each hierarchical step in the lead to the transition into management was seen by the respondents as contributing to their effectiveness as leaders and managers. It meant gaining respect of their fellow peers through having previously occupied technical roles, as a result of which they related and identified with their staff and as a result of which they possessed, what was described in Section 2.5 as personal power (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992). It further meant that through their position power as managers they were able to influence organisational outcomes as they saw themselves as one of the organisational decision-makers.

Furthermore, the interplay between the personal power and the position power as a result of a shift from the reliance on technical skills to a greater use interpersonal, communications and people skills was particularly evident in the cases of the respondents who had complete transitions. A “tentative hypothesis” therefore could be made that as transitional managers who had a complete transition became more senior, they used their position power to assume
leadership of areas outside their immediate technical area. As a result they tended to rely less on their technical skills. This is consistent with the reported discussion in Section 2.3.

Another consideration of the identity discussion related to perceived differences between ‘manager’ and ‘leader’ tags. This aspect will be considered next.

5.4.2.1 Manager and leader tags

As discussed in Section 5.1, the respondents placed a considerable emphasis on the distinction between a leader and a manager. The point of differentiation between the two was the emphasis on vision a leader needed to have, with management being defined in terms of organisational leadership. The tag ‘leader’ was embraced by the respondents when applied to them as leaders in their technical fields, leading to a conclusion that, in the perception of their social reality, a vision of a technical area could only be articulated by a technical expert (eg. a vision for research and teaching in a particular field, a vision for improving an art collection as a cultural jewel, a vision for a better local community services).

The articulation of a difference between management and leadership was consistent with discussions in Chapter Two led by Bennis (1984:17) and Zaleznik (2004:75), who argued that managers and leaders were different, and by Yukl and van Fleet (1992:148), who argued that an individual can be a leader without being a manager or manage without leading.
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The important point here however is that the respondents with technical transitions did not see themselves as leaders of staff and teams. As argued in Chapter Four, that could be because those respondents were captured by their own management construct, and not by the leadership construct. Similar findings were reported in Section 2.2.1 by Stanley (2006:35).

Another reason why the respondents with technical transitions rejected the tag ‘manager’ could be due to people issues which a number of respondents reported as being the hardest aspect of their management role. Similar findings were made in Section 2.6 by Eubanks (1991:61) and Eisner (1997:95). However, the difficulty with managing other technical experts could be because the nature of the relationship; staff reporting to the respondents were, in fact, the technical peers. Similar conclusions were reported in Section 2.3 where it was argued that management positions needed to be held by technical experts with excellent professional reputation exactly because of the peer respect.

The respondents in this study further rejected the notion of a professional manager with no expertise in the technical area but possessing other leadership skills. This was because they saw a professional manager as not understanding and not being able to relate to their area. This again validated the definition of management in terms of organisational leadership which came as a product of technical leadership. This is also consistent with observations in Section 2.3 by
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Gabarro (1985:122) and Drucker (1977:51-52). So, based on the perceptions of the respondents in this study, and the subjective meanings they assigned to their identities, the respondents’ identities were closely linked to their type of transition.

The work presented here could be summed up in the following way: the researcher used Interpretive social science in an attempt to understand and discover the orientations for the actions of the transitional managers in this study and the meanings they assigned to their transitional experiences as well as the characteristics of that experience.

The focus of Chapter Two was on the application of leadership and management themes and theories to the transition process of a technical expert to a manager. Leadership was described as an interactive, shared process, with effective leadership and transformation leadership being the key terms introduced. The role of technical expertise in leadership was highlighted and its connections with peer respect and identity through the technical field were discussed.

In Chapter Three, it was explained that the research question was addressed using socially constructed realities. An Interpretivist paradigm was used as the purpose of the research was to interpret and understand the subjective meanings the respondents assigned to different aspects of their transitional experiences. Within the chosen paradigm, relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology
were assumed. Lastly, abduction was chosen as the research strategy to analyse and enable the data to be distilled.

That analysis of the interview, combined with the researcher notes written at the time of the interview, led to the typification of a number of key themes presented as key study conclusions. Those conclusions were based on a limited sample, time and space period and were specific to the transitional characteristics of technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities within the same organisation. In relation to the typification of the respondents’ first order constructs, seven themes presented in Chapter Four evolved around the two key second-order typifications.

In a contribution to the theory of leadership studies, this study examined leadership as a social process in a situational context, enabling a further development of knowledge that sees leadership as a complex social process in which meanings and interpretations play a key role as reported by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992:186); Alvesson (2002:94) and Heilbrunn (1994:69) in Chapter One.

In this study the existing leadership concepts and theories were further built and placed in a social context of subjective efforts by the researcher, as a social scientist, to interpret the respondents’ transitional experiences in a meaningful way and leading to “tentative hypotheses” as reported by Merriam (1998:41) in Chapter One. The “tentative hypotheses” were built on the typifications of the
leadership characteristics – the seven themes identified in Chapter Four. A contribution was made towards narrowing the gap in understanding the processes around the transition, thus adding to the body of the available empirical knowledge relating to the definition of a successful transition. The contributions of this study need to be seen in the context that explorative research such as the one carried out here is not considered generalisable (Hallebone and Priest, 2009:110). Nevertheless, insights from this study could be seen as “tentative hypotheses” following Merriam (1998:41) and used as the basis for future research. The need to apply an individual contextualisation in this study was seen as essential to understanding the transitional managers’ response to the transition and is worthy of further development by an investigation using expanded sectors and sample size.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

This research examined the characteristics of transition process for a group of transitional managers. The need to apply an individual contextualisation was seen as essential to understanding the transitional managers’ response to the transition and is worthy of further development and investigation using expanded sectors and sample size. A consideration should also be given to longitudinal research cases in this area. Furthermore, future research is also needed in the examination of the characteristics of the transition processes from the organisational perspective.
While explorative research is not considered generalisable, insights from this study could be seen as “tentative hypotheses” (Merriam, 1998:41) and used as the basis for future research. This study will therefore conclude with a brief summary of eight “tentative hypotheses” outlined throughout this Chapter. The eight “tentative hypotheses” from this study were:

1. Type of organisation impacts on the success of transitions.
   Further studies are needed in this area, exploring the relationship between the type of organisation and the length and success of the transition. Recognising that the technical transitions and the complete transitions were products of organisational needs and the prevailing business strategy that called for a particular level of technical expertise in a manager (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1992:159), future research on the type of organisations and the technical skills required of managers within those types of organisations is needed.

2. Success of the transition depends on the manager’s involvement in the organisational decision-making.
   Further studies on the success of the transition are needed with a particular emphasis on organisational contributions to, and influence or otherwise, during, the transition process. When examining the organisational influences and decisions surrounding the transition, the impact of the technical rewards system structures – that recognise technical expertise and rewards it without the need to
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move into management structures – on an organisation’s operations would be worth studying.

3. Management development training impacts on the success of transitions. Further studies on the type and the timing of targeted management development training programs are needed.

4. Succession planning and investment in training should be joint efforts between the organisation and the individual. Further studies are needed on organisational succession planning and early identification of a management potential. This should be done with the aim to eliminate any organisational propensity to transition into management those technical experts who did not have an interest in doing so.

5. Only technical leaders capable of organisational leadership should be appointed to management positions. Further studies examining the organisational views of the leadership of technical experts who assumed managerial responsibilities are needed. More research is also needed on the recognition that some technical experts find themselves in management roles unwillingly.

6. Focus on the immediate organisational demands impacts adversely on the organisational culture.
Further studies examining organisational succession planning approaches and the reasons behind organisational promotion decisions are needed.

7. Organisations retain loyalty through influence on an individual’s identity. Further research on the role of organisations in shaping identity construction is needed. Furthermore, it would be useful to further examine how managers who have had one or more transition experiences, in different organisational settings, reconstructed their identities and learned new competencies. There is also a need to further examine personal identity changes as they relate to the career expectations of transitional managers.

8. Reliance on the position over the personal power increases with seniority. Further research on the interplay between different forms of power, the different types of transitions and the different types of organisations is needed.

These “tentative hypotheses” form the basis for future research, including the prospect of examining the interrelationship between two or more of these hypotheses. Consideration should also be given to further exploring the characteristics of the transition processes from the organisational perspective and to longitudinal research, which itself has the potential to provide a more rounded understanding of the transition process. Through further research advancing these “tentative hypotheses” can improvements in management practice be realised.
6 Appendix 1 – Interview questions

1. Could you please tell me about your organisation and your job within it?

2. What aspects of your job do you particularly like? Which ones do you particularly dislike or don’t like doing?

3. Would you describe your job as a management one or as a technical specialist? Why?

4. What percentage of your job do you spend doing the management part? What about the technical part?

5. When have you stepped into the leadership/management role, ie. with what task?

6. Is there predominance in your identity to see yourself as a specialist or as a manager?

7. What management responsibilities do you currently have? Why do you think you were given them?

8. Are there difficulties in your position as a leader/manager? Would you like to speak about that?

9. Are/Were there any resources and training provided to you to assist you in the management job and specifically during the initial transition period of you taking on the management tasks?

10. In hindsight, do you believe the transition to you taking on management roles could have been handled better?

11. How long have you been in the leadership/management role?

12. What industry do you belong to?

13. How long have you been in this industry/profession?

14. What is your educational background?

15. Gender: Male Female

16. What is your age?
7 Bibliography


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