Coping with destructive leadership behaviour: A qualitative study of non-physical abuse in South African companies

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Whereas there tends to be a research focus on positive and constructive leadership, the investigation of negative or destructive leadership behaviour receives less attention. Further, with the focus of leadership being the leader, research less often gives prominence to followers and the complicated dynamic between leader and follower.

The main focus of this research was to explore followers' direct experiences with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisational contexts and coping strategies they employed to engage with this behaviour. The study was also interested in follower perceptions of the characteristics of the phenomenon of destructive leadership behaviour. In this regard, the study particularly explored participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader. To what extent does a follower's identification with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort) influence the coping process? Further, the study explored whether participants' psychological capital played a role in their coping process.

In order to respond to the explorative aims of the study and mindful of the complicated nuances of interpersonal social relationships in the South African work context, the study adopted a qualitative approach, which was informed by aspects of constructivist grounded theory. Locating the study within qualitative data gathering techniques, a semi-structured person-to-person interview approach was followed. To complement and support the interview data, participants completed the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) at the end of the interview.

The findings indicate that the managers' perceived destructive leadership styles had consequences for the participants, the managers themselves and the work unit, affecting the execution of tasks and the attainment of goals, as well as the well-being of other team members in the work unit. In order to cope with the negative relationship, participants tried to find control in the situation; they attempted to distance themselves from the situation, their own thoughts and emotions; they sought ways to affirm their closely held self-beliefs; indulged in positive and negative self-nurturing; tried to find solace in religion/spirituality; sought social and family support; and attempted to re-direct cognitions. These coping attempts were accomplished with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader played a role in perceiving the managers' behaviour as destructive; and in coping with the destructive leader

behaviour. The findings indicate that participants' psychological capital may have played a role in their coping with the managers' destructive leadership style.

The shared experiences of the participants gave voice to their intrinsic needs to be able to live their work lives in ways that were authentic to their values as expressions of their self-concepts. When the ability to live authentic lives congruent with their self-beliefs were challenged by the destructive leadership styles of their direct managers, participants' various coping attempts were largely aimed at re-affirming their self-beliefs.

OPSOMMING

Te midde van 'n neiging tot 'n navorsingsfokus op positiewe en konstruktiewe leierskap word daar minder aandag geskenk aan die ondersoek na negatiewe of destruktiewe leierskapsgedrag. Verder, met die fokus op die hoofrol van leierskap, word daar met navorsing dikwels minder prominensie gegee aan volgelinge en die ingewikkelde dinamika tussen leier en volgeling.

Die hooffokus van hierdie navorsing is die ondersoek na volgelinge se direkte ervarings met destruktiewe leierskapsgedrag in die Suid-Afrikaanse organisasie-konteks en die strategieë wat aangewend word om hierdie soort gedrag te hanteer. Die studie is ook gerig op die volgelinge se persepsies van die eienskappe van die verskynsel van destruktiewe leierskapsgedrag. In hierdie verband het die studie veral die deelnemers se persepsies van verhoudingsegtheid ("relational authenticity") met die leier ondersoek. Die vraag is gestel oor in watter mate 'n volgeling se hanteringsproses beïnvloed word deur identifikasie met die leier in terme van kongruente eienskappe, waardes en sosiale verteenwoordiging (dit wil sê sosio-ekonomiese-, rasse-, gender/geslags- en ouderdomsgroep). Die studie het ook ondersoek of deelnemers se psigologiese kapitaal 'n rol gespeel het in hul hanteringsprosesse.

Om te beantwoord aan die ondersoekende doelstelling van die studie en met inagneming van die ingewikkelde nuanses van interpersoonlike sosiale verhoudings in die Suid-Afrikaanse werkskonteks het die studie n kwalitatiewe benadering aangeneem wat geïnspireer is deur aspekte van konstruktief gegronde teorie. Om die studie binne die gebied van kwalitatiewe data-insamelingstegnieke te hou is 'n semi-gestruktureerde persoon-tot-persoon-onderhoudsbenadering gevolg. Om die onderhoudsdata aan te vul en te ondersteun het die deelnemers die *Psigologiese Kapitaalvraelys* ("*Psychological Capital Questionnaire*" (*PCQ*)) aan die einde van elke onderhoud voltooi.

Die bevindings dui aan dat die bestuurders se waargeneemde destruktiewe leierskapstyle gevolge ingehou het vir die deelnemers, die bestuurders self en die betrokke werkeenhede en sodoende die uitvoering van take en die bereiking van doelwitte, sowel as die welstand van ander spanlede in die werkeenhede beïnvloed het. Ten einde die negatiewe verhoudings te hanteer het deelnemers probeer om: beheer in die situasie te vind; hulself van die situasie en hul eie gedagtes en emosies te probeer distansieer; wyses te vind om hul selfbeskouings te bevestig; hul te wend tot positiewe en negatiewe selfsorg; troos te vind in godsdiens/spiritualiteit; sosiale en gesinsondersteuning te soek en waarnemings te

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heradresseer. Hierdie hanteringspogings is met verskillende grade van doeltreffendheid aangewend.

Deelnemers se persepsies van verhoudingsegtheid ("relational authenticity") met die leier het 'n rol gespeel in die beskouing van die bestuurders se gedrag as destruktief en in die hantering van die destruktiewe leiersgedrag. Die bevinding dui daarop dat die deelnemers se psigologiese kapitaal 'n rol kon gespeel het in hul hantering van die bestuurders se destruktiewe leierskapstyle.

Die ervaringe wat die deelnemers in gemeen gehad het, het hul intrinsieke behoeftes verwoord om hul beroepslewens te lei op wyses getrou aan hul waardes as uitdrukking van hul onderskeie selfbeskouings. Met die uitdaging van hierdie leefwyses getrou aan hul selfbeskouings deur hul direkte bestuurders se destruktiewe leierskapstyle was deelnemers se onderskeie hanteringspogings grootliks gerig op die herbevestiging van hul selfbeskouings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

STUDY ORIENTATION AND RATIONALE

For all his obnoxious behaviour, Jobs also had the ability to instil in his team an esprit de corps. After tearing people down, he would find ways to lift them up and make them feel that being part of the Macintosh project was an amazing mission. (Isaacson, 2011, p. 142).

For Sculley the problem was that Jobs, when he was no longer in courtship or manipulative mode, was frequently obnoxious, rude, selfish, and nasty to other people. (Isaacson, 2011, p. 195).

1.1 Introduction

Leadership is one of the ubiquitous constructs synonymous with corporate functioning. Reams have been written on leadership, and the concept has been defined in many different ways. Most definitions share the assumption that leadership involves an influence process concerned with facilitating the performance of a collective task. However, there may be no "correct" definition of leadership and it may be better to regard the various conceptions of leadership as a source of different perspectives on a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Yukl, 2010). Most researchers evaluate leadership effectiveness in terms of the consequences of influence on a single individual, a team or group, or an organisation (Yukl, 2010). Effective leadership involves focus on both tasks and relationships (Mintzberg, 1998). It is interesting that the 1985 predictions that the obsession with and celebration of leadership will persist, seem to have been proven correct given the continued fascination with the concept. Nevertheless, "the concept of leadership remains largely elusive and enigmatic" (Meindl, Erlich, & Dukerich, 1985, p. 78).

Although comparatively more research has investigated constructive, effective or successful leadership (Kelloway, Mullen, & Francis, 2006), far less research and theory development have addressed destructive leadership behaviours and the potential negative effects of such behaviour on organisations and individuals (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007). A growing body of work has shifted the focus from the "romance of leadership" (Meindl et al., 1985, p. 78) where actions that lead to positive growth and development are assumed, to the more seldom researched concept of destructive leader behaviour. Findings

indicate that this phenomenon includes a variety of different behaviours that are not limited to the mere absence of effective leadership behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2007; Kelloway et al., 2006; Tepper, 2000).

1.2 Rationale for the Present Study

Work plays a vital role in the life of individuals, as well as performing a principal societal purpose. For most people, working and its outcomes are considered fundamental and significant. Most individuals derive their instrumental economic well-being, as well as various socio-psychological functions and identity through their work (Harpaz, Honig, & Coetsier, 2002). There is an increasing tendency of many people to see the workplace as a primary source of community because of the decline of neighbourhoods, churches, civic groups, and extended families as the most likely places for feeling connected (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Conger, 1994). For many, the workplace provides the only regular link to other people and to the human need to connect and contribute (Brandt as cited in Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). However, because of the centrality of work in most people's lives and findings describing the effects of abusive relationships at work (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003; Tepper, Duffy, & Shaw, 2001), it might be deduced that if one or more relationships (particularly a relationship with a supervisor who is likely to have a fair degree of control over an individual's work experience) is tarnished, there is likely to be impairment to the psychological health or well-being of the individual.

Organisational research from the mid-1950s to 1990 indicates that 60%–75% of all employees reported that the worst aspect of their job was their immediate supervisor (Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzini, 1990). In the USA, job pressure has been cited in 75% of compensation claims made by workers in which mental stressors were the main cause of absenteeism, with 94% of these claims alleged to be caused by abusive treatment by managers (Wilson as cited in Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2010). A growing body of evidence suggests that there are leaders who behave in a destructive manner towards their subordinates and this behaviour has consequences for the performance, attitudes and psychological health of subordinates (Kellerman, 2004; Tepper, 2000).

Increasingly, researchers are engaged in studies that focus on the darker side of leadership (Popper as cited in Tierney & Tepper, 2007), with references in the literature to concepts such as "abusive supervision" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178), "toxic leaders" (Lipman-Blumen, 2005, p. 3), "petty tyranny" (Ashforth as cited in Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 208) and "bad leadership"(Kellerman, 2004, p. xv), suggesting that the belief in the prevalence of

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destructive leadership is of growing concern (Tierney & Tepper, 2007). Whether referred to as "mobbing" (Leymann, 1996, p. 165), "bullying" (Soares, 2002, p. 4) or "destructive leadership" (Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 208), these terminologies all seem to refer to the same phenomenon, namely the systematic mistreatment of a follower or subordinate, a colleague, or a superior, which, if continued, may cause social, psychological and psychosomatic problems for the victim. Contact with negative leadership behaviour is believed to be a more debilitating and distressing experience for employees than a combination of all other forms of work-related stress, and is viewed by researchers and the recipients of this negative leadership behaviour as an extremely harmful form of social stress at work (Zapf as cited in Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003, p. 3).

1.3 Destructive Leadership Behaviour

Destructive leadership behaviour is an "uncomfortable" subject and often avoided. This may be because bad leadership is located in what is referred to as the "untidy" world of human relations (Cleveland as cited in Kellerman, 2004, p. xv). Just as individuals are often reluctant to talk about the relationship failures in their family lives, similarly there may be a hesitance or reticence to disclose relationship failures at work. Many succumb to the allure, charm, mistreatment and undermining of these leaders and are usually left worse off than they were prior to crossing paths with them, yet many continue to follow them (Lipman-Blumen, 2005).

Although researchers have not yet adopted a common definition or conceptual framework of destructive leadership, the following definition of destructive leadership, the destructive behaviour aimed at both followers and at the organisation, has been suggested: "the systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates" (Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 208).

The development of a definition in terms of a toxic triangle, which is described as a confluence of leader, follower and environmental factors that makes destructive leadership possible, is of interest (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). In this regard, it is worth considering that destructive individuals would not necessarily make decisions that harmed others unless actions of this sort were supported by authority (Mumford, Gessner, Connelly, O'Connor, & Clifton, 1993). The culture of the work situation often moulds behaviour patterns that become part of the existing behavioural culture at work (Fleishman, 1953). Webs of leadership are

tangled, the strands being the leader, the follower (or subordinate) and the context – and it is difficult to separate the one from the other (Kellerman, 2004).

A recent study (Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013) examined the phenomenon of destructive leadership in response to the lack of unified clarity regarding the phenomenon, the multiple constructs used to describe the phenomenon, and the absence of a unified theoretical framework. The authors opted to adopt the term "destructive leadership" because they are of the opinion that this provides a good description of the "inherently harmful nature of destructive leading" (p. 1309) as it is described across studies of the phenomenon, i.e., abusive supervision, tyranny, toxic leadership and other variations. Further, the study indicated that the term "destructive leadership" tends to be widely accepted across the scientific community. The authors depart from the conceptualisation of Einarsen et al. (2007) and view destructive leadership as an intra-organisational phenomenon in which harmful behaviour is embedded in the *process of leading*, (and thus excludes counterproductive behaviours, such as stealing and gossiping), by *setting destructive goals for followers* and using *destructive methods to influence followers to achieve these goals*; with these two manifestations of destructive leadership having different predictors and consequences. Thus the authors postulate that whereas destructive leadership overlaps with activities such as counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) and workplace aggression, it is also viewed as indicative of a specific destructive style of leading. The authors continue to describe destructive leadership as *volitional behaviour* that is *intended to harm* the organisation or followers, and thus excludes ineffective leadership, for example, incompetence (Krasikova et al., 2013).

Destructive leadership can also be seen from an authentic versus inauthentic perspective. If authentic leaders are seen to be self-aware, self-regulatory in terms of internalised regulation, process information in a balanced and objective manner, display relational authenticity and transparency in showing their true self, and show authentic behaviour (Larsson & Eid, 2012), then inauthentic leader behaviour is seen to be ambiguous, vague and inconsistent in presenting themselves to followers. These leaders use emotional arguments, create dependence in their followers, foster distance and blind obedience, encourage favouritism and competition, and exploit followers' feelings. Inauthentic leaders could thus also transform and motivate followers; however, they do this to fulfil their own special interests and at the expense of their followers (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013). If authenticity in leaders is related to positive psychological functioning and subjective well-being (Goldman & Kernis, 2002), then it is likely to follow that inauthentic behaviour may

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set a leader on a downward spiral of negative psychological functioning and subjective stress and dysfunction.

A combination of dispositional traits and goal blockage (generated from organisational contextual factors) might prevent leaders from achieving their goals. The frustrations created by goal blockage could find expression in destructive behaviour, especially where there may be a reduced capacity of psychological resources in the leader (Krasikova et al., 2013).

Two groups of followers have been identified: conformers and colluders. Conformers comply with or submit to destructive leaders out of fear and try to minimise the consequences of not complying (Padilla et al., 2007). To not follow could often entail risk to family and to position; to actively protest against bad leadership takes time, energy and courage (Kellerman, 2004). Colluders, on the other hand, actively participate in a destructive leader's agenda, and tend to seek or attain personal gain from the relationship (Padilla et al., 2007).

With leadership viewed as relational and less of a characteristic or quality of an individual (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012), of special interest to this study is the role of followers' implicit beliefs about leadership and how these beliefs influence their experience of relational authenticity with the leader and destructive leadership. In this regard, relational authenticity describes the extent to which a follower can identify with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social attributes (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age attributes) (Eagly, 2005). Do incongruent relational representations influence and facilitate the casting of leadership as destructive? Why is it that some followers collude, tolerate and even celebrate leadership styles that others view as destructive (Krasikova et al., 2013)?

Further, it may also be important to consider the potential role of individual follower psychological capital in the experience of destructive leadership (Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Oke, 2011). While destructive leadership pursuits are quite likely to harm the organisation, this may not necessarily be true for all followers (Krasikova et al., 2013).

1.3.1 The Consequences of Destructive Leader Behaviour

The consequences of a leader's bullying behaviour on self can be described in terms of the impact on reputation and power. Interestingly, in some cases the reputation of abusive supervisors can enhance their image of power (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, 2007). However, the undesirable things that such leaders bring on themselves mostly result in reprimands, criminal records, tarnished reputations and further harmful consequences to self,

of which the most common is derailment, by being fired, demoted or otherwise failing to progress in the career (McCall & Lombardo as cited in Padilla et al., 2007).

Research indicates that individuals react differently to destructive leader behaviour in terms of type of reaction and severity (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwater, & Kacmar, 2007). It is plausible that the immediate effects of the threatening and intimidating behaviour that is associated with verbal bullying could produce short-lived positive effects on job performance levels as employees might tend to comply with demands; nevertheless, for subordinates the self-centred behaviour of this type of leader is more often likely to erode trust (Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Zapf & Gross, 2001). The effects of abusive supervision on followers can have an impact on job performance, job stress and job attitudes (Ferris et al., 2007). Research indicates that the category of behaviours that constitute abusive supervision can be linked to a number of negative psychological outcomes such as helplessness (Ashforth as cited in Harvey et al., 2007), decreased self-efficacy (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002) and psychological distress (Richman, Flaherty, Rospenda, & Christensen as cited in Harvey et al., 2007). Consequences also include elevated levels of emotional fatigue, perceptions of work-family conflict, considerations about leaving the job and less satisfaction with the job and a decreased sense of obligation to the organisation (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2004; Tepper, 2000). Up to 5% of an organisation's operating budget can be impacted by the resultant turnover costs (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). Employees' perceptions of unjust treatment can lead to insecurity about self-worth and abilities (Tepper, 2000). For individuals severely affected, the consequences of destructive leadership behaviour could result in the development of symptoms similar to those of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, with the most commonly reported health effects being symptoms of anxiety, irritability and depression (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). Some targets express self-hatred and may have suicidal thoughts (Thylefors as cited in Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003).

In a study of abusive leadership as experienced by young workers, the findings indicated individual outcomes to be emotional responses such as feeling hopeless, feeling humiliated and feeling anxious. Physical outcomes were revealed as justifying retaliation, distancing and leaving in order to cope. Suggestions are that the impact of destructive leadership on younger workers may be more pronounced because of their lower level of emotional regulation (Starratt & Grandy, 2010).

The literature pertaining to the conflict between work and family roles suggests that work-family conflict occurs when *time* dedicated to the demands of a particular role, the

strain that involvement in that role creates, and *specific behaviours* that is required by that role, create challenges for the individual to fulfil the obligations expected by a competing role alternative (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Destructive leadership behaviour is associated with lower job satisfaction, lower normative and affective commitment, greater conflict between work and family and psychological stress (Tepper, 2000). A possible association between abusive supervision and follower problem drinking should also be considered (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006). As suggested by Bamberger and Bacharach (2006), it is reasonable to suspect that the various effects, including symptomatic effects such as increased alcoholic consumption, are likely to impact on the quality of family life as well as family relationships.

However, not all followers react equally to destructive leadership behaviour (Krasikova et al., 2013), as the following quotes illustrate: "Some on the team found Jobs impossible to work with.' 'Jobs seems to introduce tension, politics, and hassles rather than enjoying a buffer from these distractions,' one engineer wrote …" (Isaacson, 2011, p. 112). He continued: "I thoroughly enjoy talking with him, and I admire his ideas, practical perspective and energy. But I just don't feel that he provides the trusting, supportive, relaxed environment that I need" (Isaacson, 2011, p. 112). On the other hand, "… many others realized that despite his temperamental failings, Jobs had the charisma and corporate clout that would lead them to 'make a dent in the universe'" (Isaacson, 2011, p. 112).

Given these apparent differences in followers' appraisals and experiences (Isaacson, 2011) of what could be described as destructive leadership behaviour, it is of interest to this study to explore the underlying reasons for followers' different appraisals of destructive leadership behaviour and the differences in followers' abilities to cope with this behaviour.

1.4 Coping with Destructive Leadership Behaviour

A review of the literature on coping with destructive leadership behaviour suggests that followers often have very little control in an abusive supervisory situation. The impact of abusive supervision is likely to be stronger for followers with low levels of job mobility in terms of the employee's internal and external marketability; and those employees who get the opportunity to leave are likely to do so (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Tepper, 2000). The extent to which followers, caught up in a work family conflict situation as a result of abusive supervision, may hesitate to confront the issue in a problem-focused manner could be inhibited by fear of losing their jobs and the resultant impact this may have on the economic stability of their families. Coping should not only be seen as actions taken by and for the self,

but coping includes those actions used to maximise the survival of others (such as children, family and friends) (Banyard & Graham-Bermann, 1993).

Followers with more political skills and impression management capabilities, who use ingratiation and show more positive affect, tend to neutralise the negative employee outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour. Some concerns raised by these forms of coping with abuse are that the abuse may become harder to detect and employees will be expending their time and energy resources toward these coping behaviours instead of focusing on their jobs (Harvey et al., 2007). Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) suggests that in spending time "managing upwards" instead of focusing on their core job tasks, there is likely to be a perceived threat of resource loss, actual resource loss, a perception that work demands exceed resources and an investment of resources that does not result in the anticipated return (Hobfoll, Hochwarter, Witt, Treadway, & Ferris as cited in Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007). Social Exchange Theory suggests that there is a danger of reciprocity or repayment in kind where negative treatment results in decreasing job performance (Gouldner, 1960).

The "meaning of work" implying "the value of a work goal or purpose" could be a moderator of the abusive supervision-job performance relationship (Harris et al., 2007, p. 254). Followers who report less enriched jobs showed a stronger relationship between the hostility and/or trait negative affect of leaders and subordinates' anxiety, somatic complaints, depression, dissatisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions (Schaubroeck, Walumbwa, Ganster, & Kepes, 2007).

In order to address non-physical destructive leadership behaviour, it has been suggested that followers, colleagues and those who manage other managers, need to be sensitised to destructive leadership behaviour so that these managers can be identified and encouraged to receive therapy to help them develop more adaptive approaches. Followers, by using dysfunctional responses, may also tend to create a spiral of hurtful interactions (Schaubroeck et al., 2007). Some followers, especially those scoring higher in agreeableness and conscientiousness, exhibited less dysfunctional behaviour in response to abusive supervisors (Tepper et al., 2001), however, such compliant behaviour may suggest sanctioning of the abusive behaviour.

Suggestions are that transformational leadership has both direct and indirect effects on performance that is mediated through the trust that followers have in the leader and the congruence of values (Jung & Avolio, 2000). Further evidence suggests that the relationship between mentor transformational behaviour and protégé job-related stress seems to be

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moderated by the level of mentoring functions received (career development and psychosocial support) (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

Authentic leadership theorists are of the opinion that through the development of increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modelling, authentic leaders foster authentic followers; and in return authenticity in followers is likely to contribute to follower well-being and work performance. In this process of leader and follower development over time the leader-follower relationship becomes more authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). However, there may be circumstances where, despite leaders expressing and acting transparently in accordance with their core values and beliefs, they may still fail to achieve relational authenticity with followers. The possible reasons for this are likely to be that these leaders are expressing values and behaving in ways that their followers do not identify with and that may be incongruent with their implicit leadership beliefs and expectations. This may be especially true for outsider groups (Eagly, 2005). It may, thus, be especially challenging to attain relational authenticity in multicultural organisational contexts in countries such as South Africa, where there is a political history of dissonant social relationships.

1.4.1 The South African Context

In the South African context, the "untidy" (term borrowed from Cleveland as cited in Kellerman, 2004, p. xv) legacy of human relationships from its political past in all likelihood still lingers and is likely to complicate the ways in which subordinates cope with destructive power relationships. Racial inequality and social injustices loom large in South Africa's history. Many reasons of a historical, political, cultural and demographic nature can be given for any number of these inequalities and disparities (Terreblanche, 2002). Given the complicated legacy of South Africa's historical and political past (Terreblanche, 2002), organisational members do not only differ in terms of gender, age and experience, but come from vastly different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; and they are likely to have different values and implicit beliefs about leadership.

High stress levels are reported in the South African workplace due to a variety of socio-economic factors, such as crime (fraud, corruption and nepotism), violence, workers living with HIV/AIDS and Affirmative Action (Marais-Steinman, 2003). Although South African labour laws such as the Employment Equity Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Labour Relations Act have been promulgated to safeguard employees against unfair and discriminatory behaviour (Naidoo, Pretorius, & Nicholas, 2017), the extent to which these laws are currently utilised to their fullest conclusion in addressing destructive

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leadership behaviour is undetermined (Employment Equity Act, 1998; Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997; Labour Relations Act, 1995) (Department of Labour [DOL], n.d.).

Transitioning from apartheid involved South African organisations changing the fabric of cultural, ideological, institutional and social structures (Wolpe, 1995). South African organisations were tasked with simultaneously stimulating economic growth while transforming discrimination and social divisions. Within the historic context of South Africa, job discrimination was institutionalised by law and included reservation of jobs clauses in the 1956 Industrial Conciliation Act. Later Acts, such as the Labour Relations Amendment Act (1988) abolished these discriminatory laws on the recommendation of the Wiehann Commission of Enquiry in 1979; and stated that discrimination based on race and gender are regarded as unfair labour practices. The apartheid military and security structures did not succeed in destroying the mass democratic and trade union movement which emerged during the era of government sanctioned suppression (Wolpe, 1995). Union led industrial court actions subsequently played a transformational role in confirming that discrimination on the grounds of race and gender is unlawful (Horwitz, Bowmaker-Falconer, & Searll, 1996).

With the non-racial constitution and democratic elections of 1994, the government pledged itself to consultative and transparent government. In this spirit of transformation, the Reconstruction and Development Programme represented the end of minority political governance and aimed at transforming the organs of society to represent inclusiveness (Wolpe, 1995). The democratic transformation in the early 1990s established a platform for the incorporation of the Black working classes at the political level (Terreblanche, 2002; Von Holdt, 2003). In the process of transforming the workplace, trade unions played an important role in empowering workers, a process that was largely driven from the lower levels of organisations. The role of trade unions in the transformation of the workplace helped to enable workers to re-claim their dignity and aspire towards upward mobility in organisational structures that were previously largely characterised by authoritarianism and separatism (Von Holdt, 2003).

The Amended Labour Relations Act no 12 of 2002 (DOL, n.d.) states that the purpose of the act is to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace. In order to achieve this the act aims to give effect to and regulate the fundamental rights as stipulated by the Constitution of South Africa; effect South Africa's obligations as a member state of the International Labour Organisation; and to provide a framework within which employees, their trade unions, employers and employers' organisations can collectively bargain issues such as wages, terms and conditions of

employment and other matters of mutual interest. The act also aims to promote orderly collective bargaining, collective bargaining at sectoral level, employee participation in decision-making in the workplace; and the effective resolution of labour disputes. According to section 27, the Constitution entrenches the fundamental rights of every person to fair labour practices; workers' rights to form and join trade unions and to form and join employers' organisations; to organise and bargain collectively as workers and employers; workers right to strike for the purpose of collective bargaining; and employers' recourse to the lockout for the purpose of collective bargaining shall not be impaired (The Amended Labour Relations Act no 12 of 2002) (DOL, n.d.).

The process of changing the implicit beliefs and overt actions about race and gender would by its nature be incremental because of its entrenchment in the fabric of South African society (Wolpe, 1995). Within business organisations, the Human Resource Departments in practice often treat human resource development and diversity management as two separate entities, although these could be viewed as conceptually integrated ideas. Human Resource Departments tend to focus, on the one hand, on changing organisational structures, policies and practices, and on the other hand, via training, workshops and discussions, on changing individual attitudes and values. The expectation is that better understanding and tolerance among diverse organisational members will thus be promoted (Horwitz et al., 1996).

To manage diverse employees, managers are expected to lead their followers equally, without favour or discrimination. However, an individual's culture and perceptions of the other is likely to determine how people interact with one another and these perceptions can result in either positive or negative self-fulfilling beliefs that could impact on performance and development. In intercultural exchanges, members of some groups may project themselves as superior, with members of other groups feeling inferior and inadequate (Human, 1996).

The result of these shifts in societal exchanges are that the different population groups in South Africa are undergoing "social identity re-categorisation", as well as "re-personalisation" (Booysen, 2007, p. 16). This process entails the loss of identity and boundaries that had been internalised by both those groups who have lost power and those groups who are gaining power. Therefore, despite formal legislation existing to enforce equality, embedded societal identities and the lingering effect of past discrimination are likely to endure for some time (Booysen, 2007) and may play a role in destructive and incongruent leader-follower relations that could exacerbate existing inherent workplace stress and erode psychological well-being.

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1.5 Purpose of the Study

Although destructive leadership actions can also be directed against the broader organisation, which imply working towards goals other than those defined by the organisation (Lipman-Blumen, 2005), the primary focus of this study is to explore the effects of *non-physical* destructive leadership behaviour on followers, as it manifests itself to followers in the form of verbal and subtle, passive, less overt forms of abusive behaviour. This includes behaviour such as a lack of respect, and rudeness (incivility) (Pearson & Porath, 2005), ignoring, side-lining, and excluding the individual as well as manipulative "games", such as oscillating between high praise and elevation of the follower, followed by unexpected, harsh or petty criticism that keeps the follower "on the back foot"; and *excludes* physical destructive leadership behaviour, such as physical bullying and sexual harassment in all its forms. Research indicates that individual reactions to destructive supervision vary in type and severity (Harvey et al., 2007).

Secondly, this study also seeks to examine how followers, who are on the receiving end of non-physical destructive behaviour from their manager, cope with this behaviour. In order to operationalise the concept of coping for the purposes of this study, coping is understood to include the history and process of engaging with and adjusting to the destructive behaviour for the follower to "survive" and "carry on" (and this may vary in degree of effectiveness) or fail in their ability to cope. Because of the variance in coping responses with destructive leader behaviour (Krasikova et al., 2013), I was interested in exploring, in this study, the effect that followers' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader (Eagly, 2005) has on the coping process. In this regard, the study also explores if followers' psychological capital plays a role in the coping process (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

Although there are obvious similarities among the variety of concepts used to describe destructive leadership, in that the various conceptualisations all focus on the harmful nature of destructive leadership, definitions of destructive leadership also introduce different characteristics of the phenomenon. Conceptualisations vary from descriptions of a broader range of destructive activities aimed at harming the organisation and the follower (Einarsen et al., 2007) to emphasising the harmfulness embedded in the process of leading (Krasikova et al., 2013) and inauthentic behaviours associated with destructive leadership (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013). Recent theorists have suggested a conceptual integration of destructive leadership and attempted to identify boundaries and create a more complete picture of the phenomenon (Krasikova et al., 2013). Therefore, a further question is what constitutes the phenomenon of non-physical destructive leadership behaviour, as perceived by followers. In

this regard, this study explores the role of followers' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader (Eagly, 2005), i.e., the extent to which a follower can identify with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and similar social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age), in casting leader behaviour as destructive.

In order to respond to the explorative aims of the study, and mindful of the complicated nuances of interpersonal social relationships in the South African work context, I adopted a qualitative approach in this study, which was informed by aspects of constructivist grounded theory. Classical grounded theory is a systematic qualitative research methodology that emphasises the generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research, usually verbal accounts of people's experiences. Rather than beginning by researching and developing an hypothesis, the first step is data collection, which contradicts the traditional model of research, where a theoretical framework is chosen which is then applied to the studied phenomenon (Giles, 2002). However, this study was informed by Starratt and Grandy's (2010) position that described a constructivist grounded theory approach, which allowed theory to assist in guiding decisions about what to include or exclude in the research design.

Locating the study within qualitative data gathering techniques, I followed a semi-structured person-to-person interview approach. The interview was once-off and conducted in a private setting. The data gathering mainly focused on the "slice" of the participants' work life that entailed a challenging experience with a particular manager and the meaning of that experience for the participants. Though constructivist grounded theory methodology informed the data gathering process, the gathering of qualitative data was not overly prescriptive and restricted (Charmaz, 2003) to a grounded theory approach. As the grounded theory approach considers everything as data (Glaser, 2002, p. 1), the expressed and unexpressed emotions, verbal habits, tone, observations by the researcher and pre-existing contextual information were all considered as data and informed my interpretation.

Constructivist grounded theory promulgates reconstructing theory or theory building (Charmaz, 2006) and informed the research, in that this study included the aim of exploring the potential for theory or concept development with regards to the relationship between perceptions of relational authenticity and the casting of leadership behaviour as destructive; and the potential role of psychological capital in coping with destructive leadership behaviour.

A discussion of these central constructs and objectives of this study is presented in Chapters Two and Three. Core constructs such as "leadership", "relational authenticity",

"destructive leadership behaviour", "coping with destructive leadership behaviour", "psychological capital" and "the South African context" are defined and discussed, with an overview of the literature on these themes. The research methodology is described in Chapter Four. The research findings are reported in Chapter Five and the discussion and implications of the findings are presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP

2.1 Introduction

When followers respond to the behaviour of those who lead them, some followers may experience a certain leader's behaviour as positive or acceptable, while others may be negatively affected by the leader behaviour. The behavioural dynamic between leaders and followers could be seen as an outcome of the constructions made by followers (Meindl et al., 1985) and the evaluations of leaders might be saying more of followers than of leaders themselves (Bligh, Kohles, & Pillai, 2011).

This chapter provides a brief overview of organisational leadership theories that are considered to contribute to our understanding of destructive leader behaviour and coping with destructive leader behaviour.

2.2 Leadership

The volume of theory and research devoted to the study of leadership over decades testifies to its prominence in the collective effort to understand and improve organisations (Meindl et al., 1985). Today leadership can be regarded as an interdisciplinary field that includes contributions from various fields of study such as psychology, sociology, political studies, history, education, military sciences, biology, medicine, anthropology, agriculture, public administration, community studies, law, and management (Christensen, Levinson, Goethals, & Sorenso, 2004). This fascination with what leaders do, what they can achieve and the general impact they have on the lives of others remains (Bligh et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the assertion by Meindl et al (1985) that there seems to be a lack of understanding of leadership that resonates both intellectually and emotionally, still manifests today in the often conflicting and diverse perspectives in leadership research that pays testimony to this ambiguity (Bligh et al., 2011).

A romanticised and heroic view of leadership in terms of what leaders do, can achieve, and the scope of impact leaders have on the lives of others tends to be generalised and prevalent (Bligh et al., 2011; Meindl et al., 1985). One of the principal elements in this romanticised conception is the view that leadership is a central organisational process and the foremost force in the scheme of organisational events and activities. This amounts to a faith in the potential, if not in the actual efficacy, of those individuals who occupy positions of

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formal authority, and these individuals tend to be anointed with esteem, prestige, charisma and heroism (Meindl et al., 1985).

It may be important to consider that the opportunity to become and to continue as an effective leader does not only depend on the behaviour of the leader. Followers' attributions, the way followers process information, their beliefs, assumptions and expectations also influence leadership success. In a survey based study of 145 highly qualified clerical workers from a financial services company in Germany, participants, who were mostly women, who had to make several managerial decisions in an experimental simulation, the overall findings indicated that participants' decisions were based on information of both the leader and the situational context (Felfe & Petersen, 2007). However, it was found that the information about the leader was more influential than the information regarding the context in determining the approval of projects and that participants' romance of leadership served as a moderator for the relationship between information about the leader and project approval.

Nevertheless, it is suggested that the powerful symbolism attached to leaders may also convey something about followers – it could be that to respond and be committed to the demands and aims of the organisation, followers need to sustain the aura of esteem and mystery associated with leadership (Meindl et al., 1985). Grint (2004) cautions against the complete or radical removal of the heroic in leadership, as this may result in the removal of decision-making and disablement of leadership.

It is important to consider how followers conceptualise leader behaviours and the impact of such behaviour (Schyns & Bligh, 2007). It may be that followers need to believe that there is someone in control that influences events because that makes them feel safe and secure. It could be that social groups, no matter the human culture they belong to, may tend to view as leaders those persons who seem to be more in control of events than they themselves feel (Beyer, 1999).

This study explores whether the willingness to view the leader behaviour of others as positive and as positively directing events; and anointing the person as being a good leader might be explained from a relational authenticity perspective. Depending on the degree to which a follower experiences the leader's behaviour as promoting the interests of the community to which they themselves belong and communicate similar values, the follower can relate from a personal identity perspective to the leader and it is thus that the leader is given legitimacy or not (Eagly, 2005). The different qualities and behaviours that leaders display may be experienced as more or less attractive, persuasive and instrumental depending on the followers' receptivity to that type of leader (Beyer, 1999). The significance of

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relational authenticity for viewing leader behaviour as destructive is suggested by the following assertion:

Followers' willingness to extend legitimacy is necessary for the resolution of differences regarding values or reaching agreement on how to honour and execute value commitments. Even when the values expressed by leaders and followers concur, if the leader is not perceived as legitimate, followers are unlikely to identify with the leader to pursue successful outcomes (Eagly, 2005).

A mismatch between the traits and behaviours of the leader and the expectations of leader behaviour by followers can influence the assumption of leader effectiveness and followers' experience of that behaviour (Schyns, 2006).

The observation that it may be more challenging for outsider groups to achieve relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005) has interesting implications for leadership and followership as it is presented across cultural, racial, gender, age, socio-economic and personality variants in South African organisations.

2.2.1 Contextualising and Defining Prominent Terms

2.2.1.1 Leader and Leadership

The word "leader" was first used in the English language in the 14th century. Its root "leden" means "to travel" or to "show the way" and the term "leadership" came into usage approximately five centuries later. The scientific study of leadership developed largely in the United States of America in the 20th century (Christensen et al., 2004).

Leadership is regarded as a multilevel phenomenon that involves individuals, group and organisations (Day, 2004). Researchers tend to define leadership according to their individual perspectives and the aspects of the phenomenon of most interest to them (Yukl, 2010). The most common way of describing leaders is as those people who are in charge of organisations and the units of organisations and such people are then regarded as leaders (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Definitions of leadership tend to describe it as a deliberate activity aimed at influencing, guiding, structuring, and facilitating work actions and relations in a group or organisation. The following broad definition of leadership attempts to establish some conceptual inclusivity with regard to leadership: "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2010, p. 26). Nevertheless, depending on people's experiences, background and development level,

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leadership can mean a variety of things for different people. Further, the distinction between leaders and followers can be regarded as arbitrary as individuals tend on occasion to act as either a leader or a follower (Day, 2004). As such, leadership can be viewed as a collective process including both leaders and followers (Ladkin, 2010).

From a *genetic perspective*, individuals are regarded as having a genetic, innate predisposition for leadership and that individuals are "born to lead". The propensity to occupy a leadership position is the product of environmental and genetic influences (De Neve, Mikhaylov, Dawes, Christakis, & Fowler, 2013, p. 45). Closely associated with this view is the *trait perspective* that views personality as predicting leadership. Personality determines the manner in which a particular individual's leadership style would present itself. This view assigns leadership success to having the desirable qualities for success and that failure is likely to be the result of having undesirable qualities (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). However, others are of the opinion that leaders are made and not born and that it is how they are developed that is critical for organisational success or failure (Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

Situational or contingency approaches emphasise that the effectiveness of a particular leadership behaviour or style depends (is contingent) upon features of the task and environmental situation (Chemers, 2004).The managerial job is believed to be too complex and unpredictable to rely on a set of standardised responses to events and these approaches argue that effective leaders are continuously reading the situation and evaluating how to adapt their behaviour to it (Yukl, 2010).

Others view *leadership as a relationship* that develops from the repeated interactions between leaders and followers, as building relationships is a core ability of organising and directing actions (Gantz, 2004). In successful organisations people are united, share understanding, participate, take initiative, act and share a sense of purpose. In unsuccessful organisations people are divided, confused, passive, reactive, inactive and tend to drift (Gantz, 2004). Thus effective leadership is integral to achieving the company's corporate goals through conducive interactional behaviours with staff.

The constructivist or *social constructivist approaches* to leadership focus on how the phenomenon is recognised and the reasons why it is regarded as important. According to the social constructivist approaches, schools of thought cannot be regarded as objective truths, but as reflections of the eras in which these conceptualisations are located. The roots of this approach to understanding leadership can be found in postmodernism that construes reality or a relative reality through individual and social interpretations of it. In this vein the construction of leadership is also a feature of culture, and what is seen as good or bad

leadership depends on not only individual views but also on when in terms of time and space the quality of leadership is evaluated. Churchill, for example, is today regarded by some as a warmonger; however, at the time of his leadership of Britain during the Second World War, his actions were seen as an essential symbol of British resilience (Grint, 2004). Leadership philosophies develop in agreement with the cultures within which they function (Booysen, 2001). Following on from the above views, in the South African context the construction of the leadership efficacy of Apartheid leaders such as Verwoerd and De Klerk is likely to be construed differently across cultural and racial groupings, as well as across time and space.

Follower perceptions and attributions are considered by other researchers in the field of leadership as critical in the sanctioning of a leader. "An *attributional model of leader behaviour* examines the process by which followers assign leaders responsibility for the outcomes of the situation. More specifically, this research explores how observers decide if the outcome was due to the leader's behaviour or to situational factors" (Norris-Watts & Lord, 2004, p. 61). Thus attributions of causality could be seen as saying as much or more about followers as it says about leaders (Bligh et al., 2011) and misattribution or over-attribution could also direct blame to leadership for negative outcomes as a matter of convenience (Bligh, Kohles, Pearce, Justin, & Stovall, 2007).

As one of the more prominent recent conceptualisations of leadership, *Authentic leadership* is viewed by some researchers as the "root construct underlying all positive forms of leadership" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 316). A key issue is the importance of followership and its relationship with authentic leadership and its development. It is "through increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modelling, authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers. In turn followers' authenticity contributes to their well-being and the attainment of sustainable and veritable performance" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 317). The four core elements of authenticity are considered to be: self-awareness, unbiased processing, relational authenticity and authentic behaviour/action; and can be defined as "the unobstructed operation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise" (Goldman & Kernis, 2002, p. 19).

Of particular interest to this inquiry is the concept of *relational authenticity* that involves "valuing and achieving openness and truthfulness in one's close relationships". Relational authenticity involves an active process of self-disclosure and the development of mutual intimacy and trust so that intimates will see one's true self-aspects, both good and bad" (Goldman & Kernis, 2002, p. 20). Others argue that more is needed from leaders than transparency in communicating and acting on their values. Accordingly, relational

authenticity requires followers to give leaders the legitimacy to advance a set of values on behalf of a community and that it is only under these conditions that leaders will be able to evoke the personal and social identification of followers in order to establish group success. Achieving this identification is likely to be more difficult for outsider groups (Eagly, 2005). With regard to relational authenticity, it might be of interest to refer to the differences in experiences from different followers with regards to Steve Jobs from Apple. Some followers seemed to identify with his leadership behaviour and elevated him to heroic levels, whereas others experienced his leadership behaviour as destructive and interpersonally damaging, questioning whether the interpersonal behaviour and decision-making style justified the outcomes of corporate success (Isaacson, 2011).

While the above attempt at clarifying the concept of leadership is by no means exhaustive, it aims to introduce conceptualisations of leadership that might to a greater or lesser extent be pertinent to the aims of this study; to ultimately explore how followers cope with destructive leader behaviour in a South African context.

2.2.1.2 Leadership versus Management

Management is about how aims can be accomplished best (Nirenberg, 2004); it is about efficiency and doing things right (Bennis, 1959; Covey, 1989), whereas leadership deals with the higher order conceptualisation, such as what it is that wants or needs to be accomplished (Nirenberg, 2004) and whether the right things are being done in the right way (Covey, 1989).

This distinction is, however, ambiguous, as can be derived from the following classification in which leadership had been described as one of ten managerial roles (Mintzberg, 1973). According to this classification, the leadership role includes motivating subordinates and creating favourable working conditions; whereas the other nine roles (liaison, figurehead, monitor, disseminator, spokesperson, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator) involve distinct managing responsibilities, but leadership is viewed as an essential managerial role that pervades the other roles (Yukl, 2010). Individuals who are likely to acquire managerial and professional success are understood to have the ability of knowing how to make power dynamics in corporate life work for them, instead of against them. Therefore, there seems to be no reason to assume that it is impossible to be both a manager and a leader simultaneously (Kotter, 1985, 1988). Suggestions are that attempting to define managing and leading as distinct roles, processes, or relationships may encourage

simplistic theories about effective leadership and a flexible, more integrative model is proposed (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005).

2.2.1.3 Subordinate, Follower and Followership

The term "subordinate" describes someone "whose primary work activities are directed and evaluated by the focal leader" (Yukl, 2010, p. 27). The word "follower" has its origin in Old High German, "follaziohan", which described the action of assisting, helping, succour or ministering to. There seems to be suggestions of a symbiotic relationship of equals with the concept of "leader" that, in Old High German, described to undergo, suffer or endure. Therefore, the suggestion is that, in its original meaning, followers were seen as helping to take care of leaders (Kelley, 2004).

Yukl's (2010, p. 27) definition of a follower describes a person "who acknowledges the focal leader as the primary source of guidance about the work, regardless of how much formal authority the leader actually has over the person". As such, followers may include people who do not directly report to the leader, for example, co-workers, team members, partners and outsiders. Followership can be categorised in two behavioural dimensions: independent, critical thinking and a ranking on an active-positive/passive-negative scale. These followership styles may vary across situations (Kelley, 2004).

In this study I favour the use of the term "follower" in acknowledgement of its suggested symbiotic relationship with leadership (Kelley, 2004). This approach is an attempt to express and acknowledge the conceptual equality in stature of the concepts "leadership" and "followership".

2.2.1.4 Power and Influence

Power and influence are concepts that are closely related (Neider & Schriesheim, 2004). "Power involves the capacity of one party ('the agent') to influence another party ('the target')" (Yukl, 2010, p. 199); and this influence could be over a single person or over many people. Power is a dynamic and can change as circumstances change (Yukl, 2010).

There are various types of power and these are: interpersonal (reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power and referent power); structural power that depends largely on the context such as the person's position, the control of resources such as access to information, and interpersonal connections with key stakeholders that may make a person indispensable. A person's position in the organisation and personal disposition (charisma,

expertise, emotional intelligence and political orientation) can be viewed as sources of power (Neider & Schriesheim, 2004).

How power and influence is used by leaders is dependent on leader disposition and contextual factors. Destructive use of power and influence is likely to be influenced by a leader's ability for self-control in terms of the choices made with regards to action taking and the level of control mechanisms in the organisation (Krasikova et al., 2013).

How followers respond to power is likely to be a function of the perception of their own levels of power and influence (Tepper, 2000, 2010); characteristics in terms of compliance or critical thinking (Kelley, 2004); perceptions of psychological empowerment (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995); and enabling mechanisms in the organisation for responding to perceived abuse of power and influence (Krasikova et al., 2013). It may be that followers decide to condone destructive styles of power and influence because they can identify or agree with the ultimate goal and thus tolerate or even celebrate such behaviour (Krasikova et al., 2013). In this regard it would be of interest to explore the role of relational authenticity in terms of sanctioning or not sanctioning the way in which power and influence is used by a particular leader.

2.2.1.5 Relational Authenticity

Relational authenticity emphasises that (a) leaders promote the interests of the larger community and transparently convey these values to followers, and (b) that followers personally identify with these values and accept them as appropriate for the community in which they are joined to the leader – be that a nation, an organisation, or a group (Eagly, 2005). This study includes in its operational definition of relational authenticity the extent to which a follower can identify with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age).

2.2.2 An Overview of Perspectives on Leadership

Leadership research perspectives are grouped in various ways, such as according to trait; behavioural; situational or contingency approaches; and theories of transformational or transactional leadership; procedural justice and compliance with authority; cognitive and constructivist theories of leadership and leaders schemata, that include implicit leadership theories (Sorenson & Goethals, 2004). Others view leadership from a perspective of power and influence (Hollander, 2004; Neider & Schriesheim, 2004) It is important to emphasise that these perspectives are not strictly linear or discreet, and there is a tendency for

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approaches to overlap or to fall from favour, only to emerge in some form or another at a later stage (Sorenson & Goethals, 2004).

Levels of conceptualisation for leadership theories view it as an intra-individual process, a dyadic process, a group process, and an organisational process; and these levels can be viewed as hierarchical, with individual at the bottom and organisational at the top (Yukl, 2010). Which level will be emphasised depends on the primary research question, the type of criterion variables used to evaluate leadership effectiveness and the type of mediating processes used to explain leadership influence. Multi-level theories include constructs from more than one level of explanation (Yukl, 2010).

The following discussion gives a brief overview of a selection of leadership theories that contribute conceptually to the main premise of this study in exploring the nature of destructive leadership and coping with destructive leader behaviour, including the potential contribution of a relational authenticity perspective.

2.2.2.1 Earlier Theories of Leadership

The following theories of leadership, summarised in Figure 2.1, could be broadly categorised as "earlier theories". However, although these theories tend to have been more strongly in vogue in the past, the conceptual positions taken by them continue to find resonance in current theorists' attempts to seek new answers to leadership dilemmas, such as destructive leadership behaviour (Krasikova et al., 2013).

Earlier Theories of Leadership	Focus
Trait Theories (1930 -1940's)	Characteristics of leaders
Contingency Theories (1960's)	Leader effectiveness in varying situations
The Contingency Model	High and low LPC leaders
Path-goal Theory	Leaders influence follower perceptions
Cognitive Resources Theory	Influence of stress on cognitive ability utilisation

Figure 2.1. A limited selection of earlier leadership theories. (Source: Leadership-central.com)

2.2.2.1.1   Trait Theories of Leadership

Trait theories emerged early in the 20th century - "trait" refers to a person's general characteristics and includes capacities, motives, and patterns of behaviour. These theories viewed the characteristics of leaders to be different from those of non-leaders (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Personality depicts a generalisation about human nature and systemic accounts of individual differences. The concept can be defined as how a person thinks about self (self-identity, beliefs) and how others think about the person (a person's reputation, an indication of a person's success in life). Reputation can be regarded as having two sides: the bright side (social performance at its best) and the dark side (impressions created when one's social guard is down and a person is stressed or ill) (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). In a later section in Chapter Three, destructive leadership traits, or the so called "dark side" of leadership, will be discussed more fully.

The five-factor model of personality consists of the following dimensions: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1985). Neuroticism can be described as the tendency to show poor emotional adjustment and experience negative affect, such as anxiety, insecurity, and hostility. Extraversion describes the tendency to be sociable, assertive, active and to experience positive affect, such as energy and zeal. Openness to Experience depicts the tendency to be imaginative, nonconforming, unconventional and autonomous, whereas, agreeableness describes a tendency to be trusting, compliant, caring, and gentle. Achievement and dependability comprise the conscientiousness dimension (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Others categorise leadership traits according to drive (achievement, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative), leadership motivation (personalised vs socialised), honesty and integrity, self-confidence (including emotional stability), cognitive ability, knowledge of the business, and other traits, such as charisma, creativity/originality, and flexibility (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

The study of traits as predictors of leadership success has not been without its controversy (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Questions about the relationship between traits and leadership behaviour were asked by researchers such as Stogdill (as cited in Judge et al., 2002), who concluded that it takes more than a combination of traits to make a leader (Judge et al., 2002; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Nevertheless, the literature on trait theories indicates that, although in general less popular today, there are strong supporters for its correlation with leadership (Hogan &

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Kaiser, 2005; Judge et al., 2002; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991) and recent studies focusing on emotionality and leadership, including both leader and follower emotional management, have gained ground (Kollée, Giessner, & van Knippenberg, 2013; Rajah, Song, & Arvey, 2011). Investigating emotional exchange between leader and follower in two laboratory experiments, Tee, Ashkanasy, and Paulsen (2013) found that followers' mood influenced leader mood and task performance. Leaders whose followers displayed positive mood were evaluated as performing more effectively and expediently than leaders whose followers expressed negative mood states. Further, it was found that leaders with high neuroticism performed less effectively than leaders with low neuroticism when interacting with followers' negative mood.

As the popularity of trait theories waned, situational or contingency theories gained in popularity during the mid-1960s (Sorenson & Goethals, 2004). The next section describes leadership theories that emphasise the impact of the situation on the effectiveness of leaders.

2.2.2.1.2   Contingency Theories of Leadership

In essence, contingency theories of leadership attempt to explain the degree of effectiveness of leaders' behaviours, leader style or orientation in varying situations, such as the characteristics of the task, in terms of structure, clarity, and predictability; the formal or informal authority of the leader; and the ambiguity of organisational roles. The premise is that these situational variables create a context in which particular behaviours or behavioural strategies are likely to be more effective than others (Chemers, 2004). A number of theorists developed perspectives that could be grouped under the umbrella of contingency theories; of these a few are commented on:

The *Contingency Model*, as presented by Fiedler (1964), has as its basic premise the theory that "the performance of interacting groups is contingent upon the interaction of leadership styles and the favorability of the situation for the leader" (Mitchell, Biglan, Oncken, & Fiedler, 1970, p. 253). The focus of most of the research in this field is on the leader's "esteem for his least preferred co-worker", the so called LPC score. The LPC score is calculated from the ratings given by the leader on 17 bipolar adjective scales, for example, pleasant-unpleasant. The sum of these ratings is the LPC score, with the high LPC leader regarded as being interpersonal relations oriented and the low LPC leader viewed as more task oriented (Mitchell et al., 1970). Situational variables are position power, task structure and leader-member relations; and the situation is considered to be more favourable for the leader when relations with subordinates are good, when the leader has power of position, and

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the task is highly structured (Yukl, 2010). Suggestions are that the directive, task-oriented leadership style achieved the best results in predictable situations and when a total lack of predictability and control gave directive leaders the opportunity to create structure and clear direction. The more follower-oriented style, with a tendency to care more about relationships, had better results in situations of moderate control and is conducive to creativity, and the solving of complex problems, as a greater emphasis is placed on eliciting contributions from follower members (Chemers, 2004).

The *path-goal theory of leadership* explored how the leader's behaviour influenced levels of satisfaction and motivation in followers. In this regard, leaders influence the perceptions of followers in terms of their belief in the result of expressing effort. The nature of the task, the work context and the characteristics of the followers determine the "best" behavioural style for the leader, for example, supportive, directive, participative or achievement-oriented (Yukl, 2010). The path-goal theory of leadership introduced a degree of follower focus in the contingency approaches (Chemers, 2004).

Cognitive resources theory describes the impact the stress created from a leader's response to stressors in the situation, such as, for example, the unrealistic demands from a boss, aspects of the work environment, and a lack of resources. An impediment of resources can include characteristics from followers in terms of skills shortages or interpersonal aspects. The more stressed the leader is, the less capable he or she becomes of utilising cognitive capabilities, as stress interferes with information processing and decision making (Chemers, 2004; Yukl, 2010).

The range of contingency theories (of which three were presented here) tend to complement one another and helped to place leadership in a social context (Chemers, 2004). However, this field of leadership research has elicited a number of criticisms, some of which are: conceptual ambiguity; a "blurring" of the interaction relationships between variables; reliance on a linear model of assumption; embedded symmetrical and nonmonotonic assumptions (Schoonhoven, 1981); and the continuous, increasingly complex, and shifting situational environment that leaders are required to respond to (Yukl, 2010).

2.2.2.2 More Recent Theories of Leadership

The more recent studies of leadership from the 1970s and early 1980s show an increasing interest in the relationship between leaders and followers, with a shift in emphasis to the quality of the relationship and, in particular, the effect that the quality of the leader-follower relationship has on the experiences of the follower. In this regard, assumptions suggest that

happy and engaged followers are likely to perform better (Bass, 1990; Hogg, 2004a). A further development in the study of leadership has been an interest in the attributions of both leaders and followers in terms of how the "leader" concept is constructed and the "fit" between followers' constructions of their own and social identity in relation to the constructed identity of the leader (Eagly, 2005; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Schyns, 2006). Although these theories, in the main, have separate focus areas, there is also a tendency to integrate schematic and relational approaches in an attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge in leadership and followership (Eagly, 2005; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005).

More Recent Theories of Leadership	Focus
Leader-member Exchange Theory (1970's)	Quality of dyadic relationship between leader & follower
Implicit Leadership Theory (1990's)	Follower implicit beliefs about leader behaviour
Identity & Social Identity Theory (1970's)	'Who am I' & 'What are my actions'
Transformational & Charismatic Leadership (1970's)	Broaden and elevate Follower interests
Servant & Spiritual Leadership (1970's)	In service of others & inner life, meaningful work, community
Authentic Leadership (2000's)	Leader self-awareness

Figure 2.2. A selection of pertinent leadership theories contributing conceptually to the main premise of this study. (Source: Leadership-central.com & Toughnickel.com)

2.2.2.2.1 Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory can be regarded as a transactional theory of leadership in that the emphasis is on the relationship that exists when one person leads and another follows; and on the transactions that occur in order to attain equity with regard to the provision of resources (Hogg, 2004a). Others view LMX as both transactional and transformational, with the relationship beginning as a transaction that over time becomes a transformational relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

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At the time of its initial emergence, LMX was differentiated from other leadership theories by its focus on the dyadic relationships between leaders and members or followers. In this regard it moved away from the tendency at the time to largely focus on the leader, aspects of the situation or an interaction between leader and situational factors, such as was the focus of studies in the trait and contingency research approaches (Gersten & Day, 1997). This introduced a new level of theoretical analyses for the study of leadership that included the follower on an equal domain level of analyses as the leader domain. LMX conceptualisatons of leadership include the dyadic relationship domain in the levels of study (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The focus of LMX theory is the quality of the dyadic relationship, which reportedly can range on a continuum from high-quality LMX relationships (indicating high levels of trust, respect and obligation) to low-quality LMX relationships (indicating merely adherence to the formal contractual agreements between leader and follower). High-quality LMX relationships favour certain followers who are then the recipients of coveted resources, which include material and psychological resources. In return, favoured followers internalise the goals of the leader and the group and make these goals their own. Followers in low-quality LMX relationships would merely comply with what is expected of them and do not internalise leader and group goals. This relationship building occurs in stages, namely, the role taking stage, role making phase, and role routinisation stage. The rationale is that busy managers realistically can effectively focus on only a few resources at a time (Hogg, 2004a).

In a review of the literature on LMX, Gersten and Day (1997) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between LMX and its correlates, issues related to the LMX construct, and measurement and leader-member agreement. The results indicated significant relationship between LMX and job performance, satisfaction with supervision, overall satisfaction, commitment, role conflict, role clarity, member competence, and turnover intentions. The relationship between LMX and actual turnover was found to be not significant. LMX was found to be congruent with numerous empirical relationships associated with transformational leadership.

LMX research had been criticised for a tendency to continuously re-define conceptualisations without sufficient reason given for these changes; its measurement techniques and diverse item content have been questioned; and few LMX studies adopting proper domain level analyses (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). Other issues to consider could be the impact of perceptions of fairness (Yukl, 2010). It could also be of interest to consider the role constructions of identity, social identity, and congruence in

perceptions of relational authenticity, might play in the relationship forming between high and low LMX relationships (Eagly, 2005; Hogg, 2001).

2.2.2.2.2 Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT)

Follower perceptions and attributions in sanctioning a person as a "leader" or "non-leader", are important in judging the capabilities and effectiveness of a person in a leadership position, and this judgment could be based on a follower's own implicit belief (implicit leadership theory – ILT) of what a leader is or should be (Norris-Watts & Lord, 2004). The suggestion is that through socialisation and past experience with people in leadership positions, followers develop implicit leadership theories, which can be explained as personal constructions of the traits and capabilities that are required to be a leader (Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney & Blascovich as cited in Epitropaki & Martin, 2004).

Research findings indicated that the premises of ILT theory can be generalised over different work groups and settings, implying that workers in different positions and different stages of their work lives have similar beliefs about what makes a leader, suggesting ILTs as being holistic, context free constructions of ideal leadership. Mean differences among employee groups suggest that women's perception of the ideal leader is a person who is more understanding, sincere, and honest and less domineering, pushy, and manipulative than male perceptions of the ideal leader. A follow up study indicated that participants' ILTs remained unchanged for those groups whose managers remained the same, as well as for those groups who had changed managers (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004).

A longitudinal study that explored the relationship of employees' ILTs on the quality of leader-member exchanges, and subsequently on their perceptions of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and well-being, found that the closer followers' perceived their actual manager's profile to be to the ILTs they valued, the better the quality of LMX. Followers' perceptions of congruent ILT values with the manager had indirect effects on organisational commitment, job satisfaction and well-being. Further findings suggested that ILTs stayed constant across contextual and individual differences and that the implicit leadership beliefs determined the quality of the leader-member exchange (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). This finding was also supported by the results of an earlier study by Engle and Lord (1997) that found perceived similarity significantly predicted the quality of the leader-member exchange.

Of interest is a study by Keller (2000) using survey data from student samples attending leadership classes. The study explored the individual differences in implicit

leadership theories as a function of personality traits and perceived parental traits. The overall results suggested that idealised leadership images reflect personality traits in that it is possible that individuals may regard themselves as potential leaders and project their own traits onto expectations of leadership in consistency with positive self-illusions. Further, this tendency is reported to extend to both positive and negative parental traits that are reflected in ideal images of leadership, for example, domineering, tyrannical parental traits are converted into idealised leadership behaviour (Keller, 2000).

Exploring the role of implicit leadership theories in the performance appraisals and promotion recommendations of leaders, findings suggested that when there is a poor fit between the ILT of a supervisor and his perception of a subordinate leader, there is a decrease in the subordinate leader's performance appraisal. The subordinate leader's chances for promotion is also reduced. When there is a poor fit between the ILT of a subordinate leader and his perception of the supervisor, the reverse is true in appraising the performance of the leader (Schyns, 2006).

The above studies of implicit leadership theory suggest that this attributional perspective of leadership has contributed to our understanding of the leadership process by emphasising the role pre-conceived beliefs of leadership, in both leaders and followers, have on positive and negative work group outcomes.

2.2.2.2.3   Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory

According to Stets and Burke (2000), conceptually identity theory and social identity theory have much in common but may differ in terms of emphasis. In identity theory, the basis of identity is the view an individual holds of his or her role, of "who am I?", whereas in social identity theory the emphasis is on the individual's view of the group as the basis for identity, "what are my actions?". These authors believe that both "being" and "doing" are core aspects of a person's identity and that these concepts would be better served if incorporated in one theory of social identity (Stets & Burke, 2000).

From a social identity approach, an individual has the ability to consider and perceive herself/himself in various ways. A person can view and evaluate him or herself in terms of distinctive personal attributes, for example, being honest, clever, or friendly and/or in terms of his or her interpersonal relationships, for example, being a certain person's friend, wife or mother. In this manner an individual constructs a personal identity. A person's social identity is construed in terms of the attributes that define specific groups to which that person belongs, for example, being female, a lawyer, and African (Hogg, 2004b). The more "proof

of fit" between a person's self-categorisation and his or her sense of belonging to a group is found, the more psychologically salient these social categorisations become.

This process of seeking "fit" or "matching", or viewing oneself as "one with the group" involves a process of direct or vicarious experiences of successes and failures (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). These categorisations direct or motivate perceptions, feelings and behaviour. Prototypical thinking seeks in-group similarities and out-group differences in order to confirm distinctions. Viewing others from a prototypical perspective de-personalises them and results in stereotyping of out-group members and in-group affirmation, trust and belonging. This process is believed to be driven by individual needs to reduce uncertainty and to confirm the self (Hogg, 2004b).

Social identity theory has become the foundation for much of the research conducted in the field of intergroup relations. It is believed that, in part, the reason for this is its combination of cognitive and motivational processes into one theoretical explanation and its attempt to resolve the relationship between the individual and the group (Capozza & Brown, 2000). Analyses of the group, the role, and the person could assist theorists to enhance understanding of motivational processes of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and authenticity. People are likely to feel *good* about themselves when they associate with particular groups. They feel *confident* about themselves when enacting particular roles, and in a similar vein, generally feel that they are more "real" or *authentic* when their person identities are verified (Stets & Burke, 2000). In exploring the role of identities and social identities in the stress process, Burke (1996) is of the opinion that a person's identities are likely to be basic sources of stress. When aspects of an individual's identities are not affirmed or are impugned, he/she is likely to feel dissatisfied or devalued.

When social identity theory is applied to leadership, perceptions of leadership and approval of leadership behaviour is an outcome of the perceptions of congruence between the prototype of schematic specifications of situation and task specific categorisations of types of leaders. Individuals are judged in terms of how well they match the group prototype. This process grants the leader the appearance of influence facilitated by social attraction, higher status, and via an attributional process constructs a charismatic leadership personality for the leader that emphasises the distinctive status of the leader within the group (Hogg, 2001). Although there are differences of emphasis, social identity theory shows conceptual similarities with implicit leadership theory, charismatic/transformational, and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Hogg, 2004b).

Current leadership theories, namely transformational and charismatic; servant; spiritual and authentic, are considered to be positive forms of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and can be conceptually located in the domain of positive psychology that emphasises the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Positive psychology in organisations regards employees as more than a vehicle to the attainment of productivity and profit goals, but believe that leadership actions should include the pursuit of employee happiness and general well-being (Wright, 2003).

It is in the context of this emerging focus on positive organisational behaviour and positive leadership studies that the transformational and authentic leadership theories (with brief mentions of servant- and spiritual-leadership perspectives) are discussed. These theories focus on encouraging subordinates to contribute beyond the transactional, to embrace change and creativity, find expression of the inner self, and seek spiritual fulfilment in their daily tasks and relationships at work (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). In many ways these theories can be regarded as aspirations of ideal leadership.

2.2.2.2.4   Transformational and Charismatic Leadership

Transactional leadership involves managers engaging in a transaction with employees, for example, explaining what is required of them and what compensation will be received if these requirements are fulfilled. This is an integral part of getting the job done and maintenance management. However, this management style could also lead to a tendency to "settle" at the level of merely complying with formal job expectations. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, tends to broaden and elevate the interests of employees. This form of leadership generates awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the group and stirs employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. This is achieved by being perceived as charismatic by followers and thus inspiring and meeting the emotional needs of followers, as well as intellectually stimulating followers.

Transformational leaders pay close attention to differences among employees (Bass, 1990). Of interest in this regard are findings by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) based on data collected from 988 exempt employees of a petrochemical company, with divisions throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. The findings from this study suggested that individual intellectual stimulation might have positive effects on followers in the long run, rather than short term positive effects. These researchers found that intellectual stimulation had a negative impact on trust and satisfaction, at least in the short

run. The reason given for this surprising finding was that continuous urging of followers could, perhaps, create ambiguity, conflict, or other forms of stress for followers.

Even though the effect of continuous encouragement by transformational leaders may create individual strain in the short term, in general, research findings suggest that transformational managers are more likely to be seen as satisfying and effective leaders by colleagues, supervisors and employees (Podsakoff et al., 1990). The more transformational behaviour and mentoring activities are received from a mentor, the less job-related stress protégés experience (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

Charismatic leaders are, however, not always pro-social in their activities and some may be inclined to fulfil grandiose dreams at the expense of their followers (Bass, 1990). Often the conceptions of charismatic and transformational leadership are loaded with social desirability and do not take into account that the enactment of these attributions may vary across cultures and not be universally endorsed. See Javidan, Dorfman, Sully de Luque, and House's (2006) hypothetical case study of an American leader in four different countries (Brazil, France, Egypt and China) taking into consideration nine cultural attributes (assertiveness, future orientation, humane orientation, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance) demonstrating that cultural specifics cannot be ignored by leaders. The contextual characteristics, such as the emergence of a charismatic response to contextual crises and the implicit normative basis in the belief system of followers, which give legitimacy to the power of charismatic leaders, are not always sufficiently acknowledged (Beyer, 1999).

The possibility that charisma may be turned on for public performance, and that this image may not always match the behaviour of these leaders as seen and experienced by close subordinates, who are positioned to see both the positive and dark sides of charisma, need to be considered. The ego and powerful aura of charismatic leaders may blind subordinates and some followers to the possible downside, manipulation and coercion of these leaders and make followers vulnerable (Beyer, 1999). In reference to the opinion of Burke (1996) that there might be a relation between social identities and psychosocial stress, followers who sanction and emotionally commit to the vision and inspiration of a charismatic leader might be likely to experience psychological strain and emotional conflict when disillusion sets in.

Nevertheless, despite these concerns about the duality of the effect of transformational leadership, and more specifically, its charismatic component, over the previous two decades there has been an accumulation of evidence indicating that transformational leadership and/or charismatic leadership affects followers' performance significantly, both quantitatively and

qualitatively, compared to other leadership styles (Jung & Avolio, 2000). Of specific interest to this study are research findings that suggest that the impact of both transactional and transformational leadership styles on performance is mediated by followers' value congruence with the values of the leader (Jung & Avolio, 2000; Podsakoff et al., 1990).

2.2.2.2.5   Servant Leadership and Spiritual Leadership

Although there is no consensus amongst scholars about a precise definition and theoretical framework of *Servant Leadership*, the core characteristics of this view of the leader as being in service of others seem to entail the concepts of egalitarianism, moral integrity, empowering and developing others, empathy, humility and creating value for community. It is anchored in the human drive to bond with others and contributes to the betterment of society (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). The benefits following the influence of a servant leader would include influencing other leaders to become servant leaders; the result may be an employee oriented culture that attracts talented, committed employees. However, such a leadership focus may result in the welfare of followers being more important than the leader's career and short term organisational performance (Yukl, 2010). In essence, servant leadership is differentiated from other leadership frameworks by its emphasis on service motivation, as demonstrated by empowering others and developing people with empathy and humility (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012).

Spiritual Leadership had been defined as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community. As such, spirituality at work is seen as having three components: the inner life, meaningful work and community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Each of the three parts of this definition can be understood in the context of similar, yet not the same, established constructs in the organisational literature: self-concept, job enrichment and organisational climate. The conceptual relationship between the three components of spirituality and the more established constructs in the organisational literature is an indication of how these dimensions of spirituality at work have conceptual roots in similar ideas of organisational behaviour (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). It is important to emphasise that spirituality at work is not about religion, and religiosity can potentially be a divisive factor in the work context. As such, "spirituality is necessary for religion but religion is not necessary for spirituality" (Fry, 2003, p. 706). Limitations of spiritual leadership theory include vagueness in terms of the processes by which leaders influence followers. It is unclear whether some values are more important

than others or how these values are related to leader behaviour, nor is it clear why some leaders are more spiritual than others (Yukl, 2010).

2.2.2.2.6   Authentic Leadership

Within the conceptual domain of positive approaches to leadership, authentic leadership is viewed as a root construct that underlies all forms of positive leadership approaches. A central theme in the study of authentic leadership is an authentic leader's self-awareness. With increased self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modelling authentic leadership nurtures and grows authentic followers. An individual is authentic or inauthentic to a degree and it is not an either/or condition (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Ilies, Morgeson, and Nahrgang (2005) examined the concept of authentic leadership from the vantage point of the influence of authenticity and authentic leadership on leader and follower eudaemonic well-being. The authors also examined the processes through which these influences are realised. The following components for authentic leadership were proposed: self-awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behaviour/acting, and an authentic relational orientation. Leaders foster positive follower well-being through personal and organisational identification, emotional contagion, positive behavioural modelling, supporting self-determination, and positive social exchanges.

Avolio and Gardner (2005), in an attempt to map the theoretical boundaries for authentic leadership research, reviewed perspectives on authentic leadership and proposed the following general components: positive psychological capital, positive moral perspective, leader self-awareness, leader self-regulation, leadership processes/behaviour, follower self-awareness/regulation, follower development, organisational context, and veritable and sustained performance beyond expectations. Walumbwa et al. (2011) suggest that group member psychological capital and trust levels are enhanced by authentic leadership and that this may facilitate citizenship behaviours and performance. These authors based their proposition on findings from 146 intact groups at a large financial institution in the United States of America.

An empirical investigation by Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, and Frey (2011) of the concept of authentic leadership, studied the antecedents and individual, as well as group-level outcomes of authentic leadership in business, as well as research organisations. Findings showed leader self-knowledge and self-consistency as antecedents of authentic leadership and of followers' satisfaction with their supervisor, followers' organisational commitment, and extra effort; as well as perceived team effectiveness outcomes. The results of the study also

indicated that the relations between authentic leaders and the work-related attitudes of followers, as well as perceived team effectiveness, were mediated by perceived predictability of the leader, which can be regarded as an aspect of trust. The authors concluded that when leaders become aware of their values, communicate these values clearly to followers, and act in accordance with their values, authentic leaders become predictable to their followers; and followers are likely to reciprocate with positive work attitudes and increased team effectiveness. The findings by Peus et al. (2011) also confirmed trust in the leader as one of the key components that determines the success of authentic leaders.

Leaders are seen as authentic to the extent that they act and find justification for their actions based on the meaning systems generated by their life-stories. Leaders develop their self-concepts and themselves through constructing their life stories. Through leading and related activities, leaders express themselves without conforming to what is expected of them or imitating others. Authentic leaders lead because, for them, leading is a calling. They show a high level of integrity because their actions stem from their values and beliefs; their talk and actions are consistent and show high transparency (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Nevertheless, leaders sometimes behave immorally, because they are blinded by their own values of greed, power-seeking and righteousness. Further, it does not necessarily follow that being true to self and others will generate actions that are congruent with the values of followers or reflect the interests of followers (Price, 2003). In this regard, both leaders' and followers' personal histories trigger events in their lives, levels of self-awareness, values, identity beliefs, emotions, goals and motives, and relational transparency. Self-regulation in pursuit of their internalised goals and values are processes that are likely to influence the degree of trust and relational authenticity that exist between leader and follower (Gardner et al., 2005).

These leadership approaches across the frameworks of transformational/charismatic-, servant-, spiritual-, and authentic leadership present positive leadership as focused on positive psychological conditions and human resource strengths that aim to improve the well-being of employees and enhance performance outcomes (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Theories of positive organisational behaviour have some conceptual similarities although different terms may be used. In an attempt to distinguish the positive leadership styles from one another, Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggest that authentic leaders are not necessarily transformational, as such they may not actively and deliberately focus on developing followers into leaders; nevertheless, they may have a positive influence on followers via role modelling. Charismatic leaders are likely to use rhetoric to influence and persuade follower,

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where as authentic leaders are more likely to energise followers by creating meaning and positively social constructed realities for self and followers. Authentic leadership and servant and spiritual leadership share explicit or implicit recognition of the leader's self-awareness and self-regulation, however, the discussions in servant leadership are viewed as having been mostly a-theoretical and not grounded by empirical study. Less attention is given by servant leadership theorists to the mediating role of follower self-awareness and follower self-regulation, psychological capital and the organisational context. Much the same criticism stands for spiritual leadership. However, both authentic leadership and spiritual leadership focus on integrity, trust, courage, hope and perseverance or resilience (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Suggestions are that more research exploring these constructs, antecedent conditions, as well as effects of these leadership approaches are needed in order to clarify boundaries (Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005).

The selected leadership perspectives discussed in this chapter provide a conceptual foundation for exploring followers' implicit beliefs about leaders and destructive leadership, and the resultant effects attributions of destructiveness could have on the coping behaviour of followers. Past and present leadership perspectives guided the researcher towards potential conceptual lenses through which to investigate destructive leadership and coping with destructive leadership. It is important to note that the theories described in this chapter are by no means an exhaustive list and neither is this discussion of leadership regarded as the final word about leadership perspectives and theories that could contribute to the conceptualisation of the premises of this study.

In the next chapter, destructive leadership is discussed with the aim of exploring what constitutes the construct and the ways in which destructive leadership separates and differentiates itself from positive leadership constructs.

CHAPTER THREE

DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP AND COPING WITH DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a brief overview of leadership and, in particular, focused on those past and contemporary theories that are thought to not only contribute to our understanding of leadership in general, but could also potentially contribute to our understanding of destructive leader behaviour and coping with destructive leader behaviour in particular. This chapter discusses the main foci of the study, namely, destructive leadership and coping with destructive leadership.

Increasingly, researchers are focusing on forms of leadership that can be described as "destructive" (Krasikova et al., 2013). In a review of the literature pertaining to destructive leadership, Padilla et al. (2007) found that the term "destructive leadership" shows little clarity or consensus and that various concepts are used to describe this form of behaviour towards followers. Although similarities are found across conceptualisations of this phenomenon, researchers have not achieved agreement on a common definition or conceptual framework (Einarsen et al., 2007). "Destructive leadership", "abusive supervision" and "petty tyranny" are examples of synonymous terminologies that attempt to describe this leadership phenomenon (Krasikova et al., 2013). In 2013, Krasikova et al. concluded that, despite the growth in research with regard to destructive forms of leadership, the concept is still beset with three problems, namely: the lack of a unified definition that would make clear boundaries and distinctions from related behaviour, the variety of constructs used to describe the behaviour, and the absence of a unified framework.

This chapter explores the phenomenon of destructive leadership and coping with destructive leadership, and presents the conceptual position adopted by this study, that is, to explore the reasons for the variance in experiences of, and coping with, destructive leadership behaviour. In this regard, the chapter examines the concept of "relational authenticity" as adopted from authentic leadership theory and explores whether followers' implicit beliefs about leadership influence their experience of destructive leadership; how these beliefs influence followers' experience of relational authenticity with the leader, and thus, their perceptions of destructive leadership. In this regard, relational authenticity describes the extent to which a follower can identify with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and

similar social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age). Do incongruent relational representations influence and facilitate the casting of leadership as destructive (Eagly, 2005)? Harvey et al. (2007) purport that research on destructive supervision indicates that individual reactions vary in type and severity. Hence, this research was also interested in exploring the role of psychological capital in the coping responses of the participants.

3.2 Destructive Leadership: Exploring the Phenomenon
3.2.1 Perspectives on Destructive Leadership: What Constitutes the Phenomenon?

Researchers working in the domain of destructive leadership have defined, conceptualised and termed the phenomenon in various ways, largely reflecting the focus areas of their respective studies. Using the term "abusive supervision" as referring to subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in "the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178), abusive supervision was construed as a subjective assessment. Tepper (2000) was of the opinion that the same individual could view a supervisor's or leader's behaviour as abusive in one context, while evaluating the same behaviour as non-abusive in a different context. Further, two subordinates could have different views of the same supervisor's behaviour.

Tepper's (2007) review of the literature on abusive supervision suggested an emergent integrative framework in which abusive supervision plays a mediating role in explaining relationships between the antecedents and consequences identified in previous research studies. This framework suggests a "'trickle-down' model" in which the injustices supervisors experience trickle down through supervisory abusive behaviours to produce injustice and anger reactions among subordinate targets. This chain of mistreatment may follow on, with some subordinate victims displacing their aggression onto their family members. Tepper (2007), however, cautioned that more research regarding the antecedents of abusive supervision was necessary before premature conclusions could be drawn about the apparent role of the organisation in abusive supervisory behaviour.

Einarsen et al. (2007, p. 208) viewed destructive leadership as "the systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates". In this regard the following conceptual model of leadership behaviour, as proposed by Einarsen et al. (2007), is presented in Figure 3.2:

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                      Pro-subordinate
                         Behaviour
                             │
    Supportive-Disloyal      │      Constructive
        Leadership           │        Leadership
                             │
Anti-organisation ───────────┼─────────── Pro-organisation
    behaviour                │              behaviour
                             │
       Derailed              │       Tyrannical
       Leadership            │       Leadership
                             │
                      Anti-subordinate
                         behaviour
```
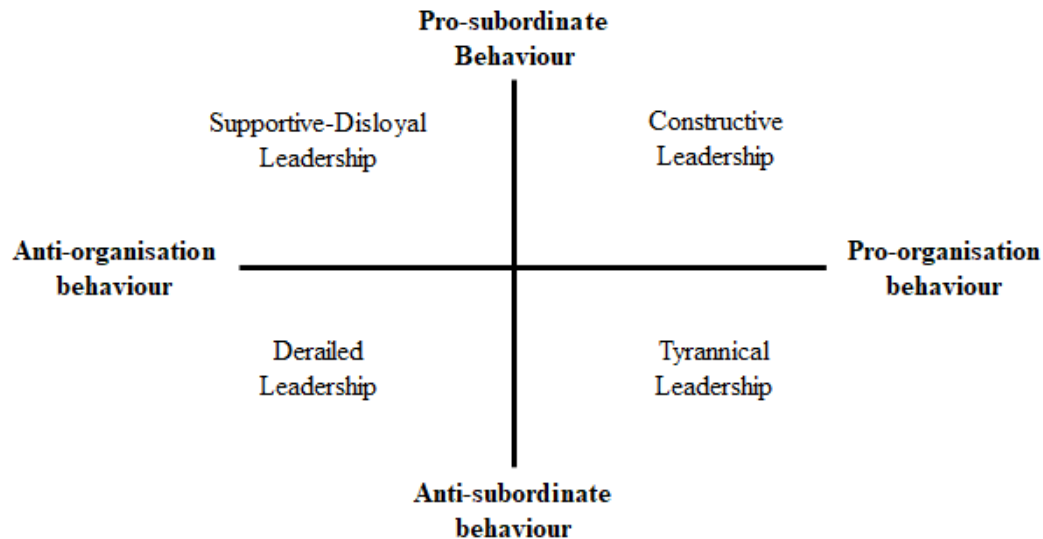
Figure 3.1. A Model of Destructive and Constructive Leadership Behaviour. (Source: Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 211)

The model in Figure 3.2 presents two basic dimensions, namely, subordinates/followers and behaviour orientations towards the organisation. Subordinate/follower oriented behaviour was presented as ranging from anti-subordinate behaviours (behaviours that "violate the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining or sabotaging the motivation, well-being, or job satisfaction of subordinates, and may involve behaviours such as bullying, harassment, or other kinds of incivility and mistreatment of subordinates" (Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 211)) and pro-subordinate behaviours (behaviours that "foster the motivation, well-being, and job satisfaction of subordinates, including taking care of and supporting subordinates" (Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 211)). The second dimension presents organisation-oriented behaviours, ranging from anti-organisation (for example, stealing from the organisation materially, its money or its time) to pro-organisation behaviours (Einarsen et al., 2007), which is not the focus area of this study.

The model, in Figure 3.2, also describes leader behaviour as more or less constructive and more or less destructive on each of the two dimensions. Further, by cross-cutting the two dimensions the authors described four categories of leader behaviours, of which three are destructive, namely: tyrannical leadership behaviour, regarded as pro-organisational behaviour coupled with anti-subordinate behaviour; derailed leadership behaviour, which is regarded as anti-organisational behaviour as well as anti-subordinate behaviour; and supportive-disloyal leadership behaviour, which is regarded as pro-subordinate behaviour in conjunction with anti-organisational behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2007).

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As reported by Einarsen et al. (2007), researchers cited by them viewed tyrannical leaders as leaders who act aggressively towards followers. These aggressive acts towards followers could be motivated by a belief that in doing so followers would work harder and put in more effort. Subordinates and superiors may evaluate the leader's behaviour quite differently in that subordinates may view the leader as a bully, whereas upper management may view the tyrannical leader quite favourably, as in the short term these leaders may achieve constructive results for the organisation. However, these results are achieved at the cost of the subordinate.

In this regard, earlier findings by Ashforth (in Tepper, 2000) reported that tyrannical leadership behaviour included belittling of followers, showing little consideration and utilising non-contingent punishment. Derailed leaders are viewed as leaders who display anti-subordinate behaviours like bullying, humiliation, manipulation, deception or harassment. These leaders are viewed as simultaneously engaging in anti-organisational behaviours such as absenteeism, shirking of duties, fraud or theft (Einarsen et al., 2007). Supportive-disloyal leaders are described as inclined to bestow more benefits on their followers than are required by them and this largesse is viewed to be at the cost of the organisation. In this regard, follower loafing or misconduct may be encouraged by the leader (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Having reviewed the literature on abusive supervision, Martinko, Harvey, Brees, and Mackey (2013) suggested a revised model of abusive supervision based on Tepper's (2007) review that distinguished between abusive supervisory behaviour and abusive supervisory perceptions. Their model acknowledges the possibility of reverse causation and emphasises taking into account the individual differences of subordinates. These individual subordinate differences could include attribution style, negative affectivity, and implicit work theories. These differences could potentially explain differences in perceptions of abusive behaviour.

The following model of abusive supervision by Martinko et al. (2013) is presented in Figure 3.1:
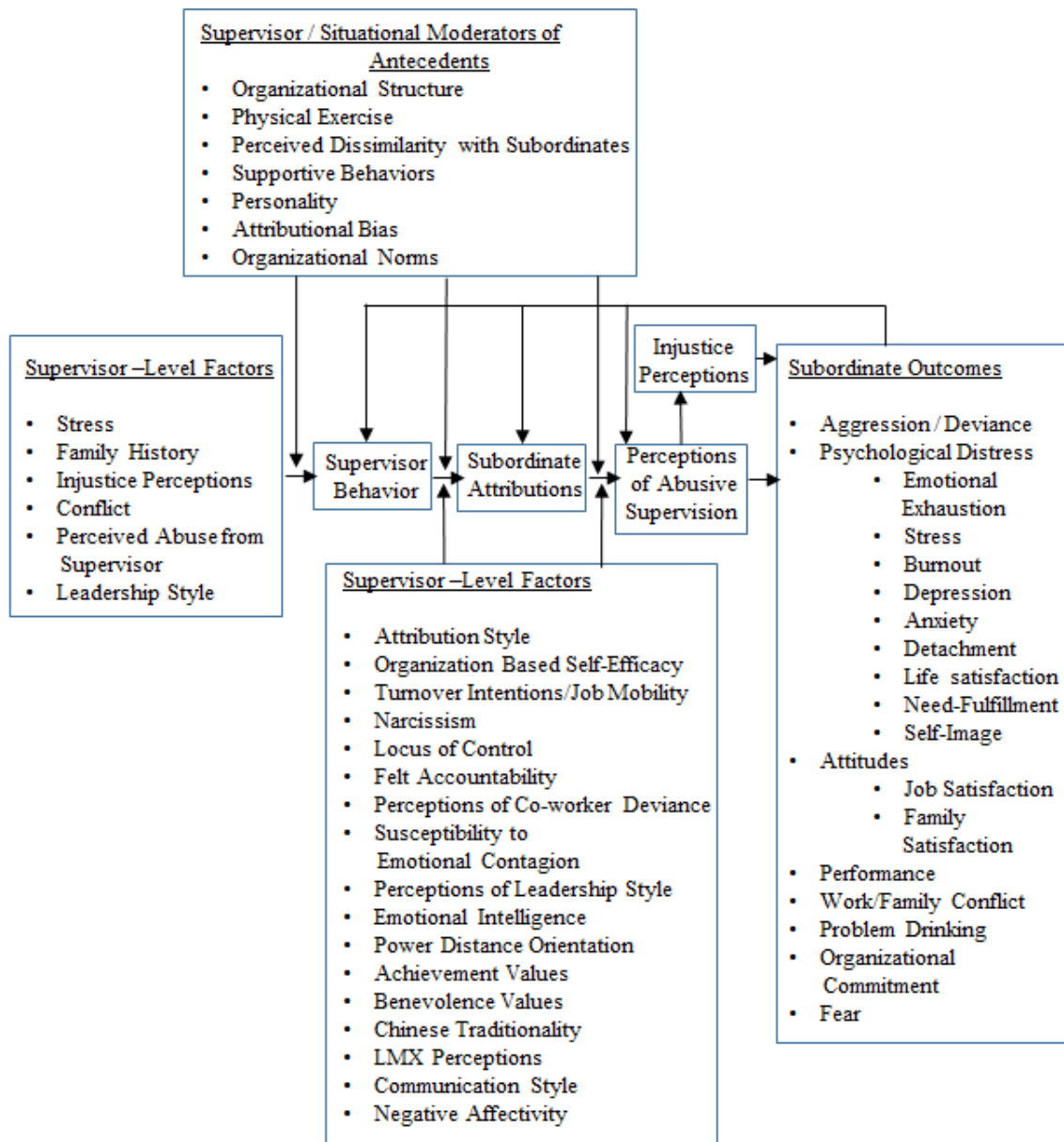
Figure 3.2. A constructive revision of the Tepper (2007) Model (Source: Martinko et al., 2013, p. 132).

Emphasising the importance of personality in understanding what they called failed or derailed managers, Hogan and Hogan (2001) were of the opinion that managerial failure was more related to the presence of undesirable qualities in the manager than to a lack of desirable qualities. The authors reported that research into managerial incompetence has been summarised according to four themes: (a) problems with interpersonal relationships (being insensitive, arrogant, cold, aloof, overly ambitious); (b) failure to meet business objectives (betraying trust, not following through, overly ambitious, "poor performance"); (c) inability to build a team (poor staffing, unable to build a team); and (d) inability to adapt to a transition

(not strategic, conflict with upper management) (Leslie & Van Velsor as cited in Hogan & Hogan, 2001, p. 41). Data from the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), developed to assess the dysfunctional dispositions of employed managers and executives as reflected by the observer's view, with the aim of improving interpersonal relations in everyday work contexts, concluded that there seems to be substantial agreement regarding the dysfunctional dispositions associated with managerial incompetence and that all of the dimensions could be captured in terms of 11 dimensions (Hogan & Hogan, 2001).

The 11 dimensions of managerial dysfunction were identified as being excitable, sceptical, cautious, reserved, leisurely, arrogant, mischievous, colourful, imaginative, diligent and dutiful. These dimensions were further summarised in terms of three large factors, which concerned the tendency to blow up, show off, or conform when under pressure. According to the authors, these themes were regarded as tending to co-exist with strong social skills, which imply that these personality tendencies may be largely invisible during job interviews and conventional assessment centres. It was reported that these tendencies were typically first noticed by followers because bad managers tended to let down their guard in the presence of staff. Of interest is that findings suggested that a person who scored highly on each of the 11 dimensions on the HDS tended to be highly self-centred and might be inclined to serve themselves before they serve others (Hogan & Hogan, 2001).

In two USA based action research qualitative case studies conducted by Goldman (2006) in a consultant and executive coach capacity, applying the DSM IV-TR, the focus of research was on personality disorders in leadership. It was found that it may not be prudent to underestimate personality pathologies in leaders by merely perceiving them as normal disturbances in the workplace. There may be instances where it is necessary to move beyond the realm of the "milder" (p. 408) or "lighter" (p. 408) managerial toxicity and incorporate the study of psychopathology into managerial research and consultation. It was found that "the nexus of dysfunctional organisational systems may be located in 'pre-existing' leadership pathologies" (p. 392).

The studies by Goldman (2006) found that narcissistic personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorders were pre-existing toxic behaviour centred in an individual leader that permeated throughout the respective organisations. In this vein the following personality and other psychological disorders in leaders were identified: narcissistic personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, passive-aggressive personality disorder, obsessive compulsive personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, separation anxiety

disorder, depression, adult attention deficit disorder, intermittent explosive disorder and body dysmorphic disorder. Suggestions are that the assessment of individual disorders in leaders is ultimately inseparable from the toxic behaviour and dysfunction experienced by the organisation-at-large, implying that one ends up not only looking at an individual with antisocial personality disorder, but also at a larger system that is likely to have been affected and may now resemble an organisation with antisocial personality disorder (Goldman, 2009).

The development of a definition in terms of a toxic triangle, which is described as a confluence of leader, follower and environmental factors that make destructive leadership possible, is of interest (Padilla et al., 2007). In this regard, having reviewed previous research discussions on destructive leadership, the following conceptual model of leadership behaviour, as proposed by Padilla et al. (2007), is depicted in Figure 3.3:
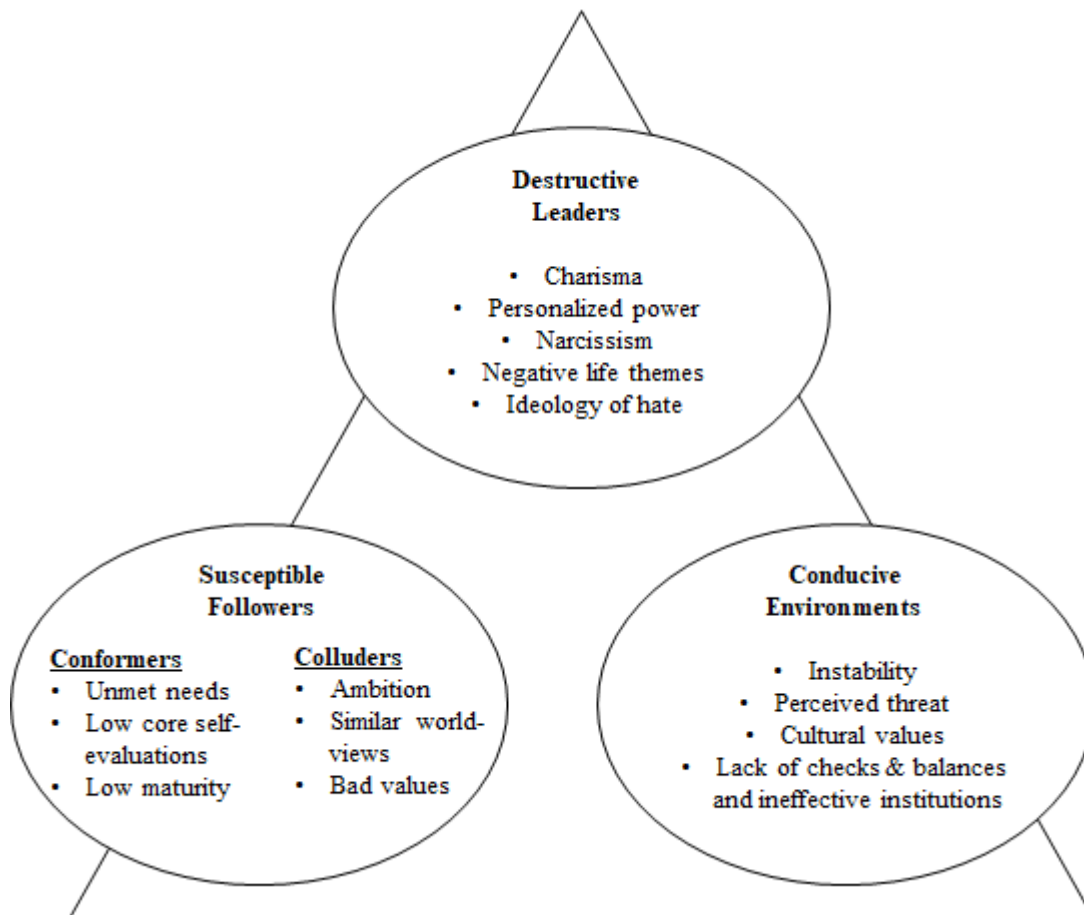
Figure 3.3. The toxic triangle: Elements in three domains related to destructive leadership. (Source: Padilla et al., 2007, p. 180)

The "triangle" of elements that influences the occurrence of destructive leadership is viewed as being consistent with a systems perspective in that it focuses on the coming

together of leaders, followers, and circumstances, instead of focusing only on the characteristics of individual leaders. The authors identify five features of destructive leadership: 1) destructive leadership is regarded as seldom absolutely or entirely destructive, as there are both good and bad results in most leadership situations; 2) rather than influence, persuasion, and commitment, the process of destructive leadership engages dominance, coercion, and manipulation in order to achieve goals; 3) instead of focusing on the needs of the larger social group, destructive leadership was found to be more focused on the leader's own selfish needs; 4) the resultant effects of destructive leadership undermine the quality of life for followers and detract from the organisation's main purposes; and 5) destructive leadership outcomes cannot be exclusively attributed to the behaviour of leaders, as this behaviour is enabled by susceptible followers and conducive environments (Padilla et al., 2007).

The notion of susceptible followers and conducive environments seems to find support in the research community. That destructive individuals would not necessarily make decisions that harmed others, unless such actions were sanctioned by superiors, is believed to be worthy of consideration (Mumford et al., 1993). Work behaviour could be viewed as a reflection of organisational culture (Fleishman, 1953). Further, Kellerman (2004) cautioned against overemphasising the influence of trait on a leader's behaviour and underemphasising other important variables, such as the situation, the nature of the tasks at hand and the followers. In this vein, the author avers that aspects of leadership, follower and context become tangled and difficult to separate the one from the other (Kellerman, 2004).

In a theoretical review of the literature on destructive leadership and also drawing on organisational leadership theory, as well as the more general research on deviant organisational behaviour, Krasikova et al. (2013) identified the underlying features and mechanisms that define destructive leadership. The authors aimed to provide a systematic treatment of destructive leadership as it unfolds within an organisation and proposed the following definition for destructive leadership: the "volitional behaviour by a leader that can harm or intends to harm a leader's organisation and/or followers by (a) encouraging followers to pursue goals that contravene the legitimate interests of the organisation/and or (b) employing *a leadership style* [emphasis added] that involves the use of harmful methods of influence with followers, regardless of justifications for such behaviour" (Krasikova et al., 2013, p. 1310).

With this definition, Krasikova et al. (2013) built on the framework of Einarsen et al. (2007) (discussed earlier in this chapter) and Aasland et al. (2010), who found that passive

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forms of destructive leadership prevailed over active ones and that laissez-faire leadership behaviour was the most prevalent form thereof, followed by supportive-disloyal and derailed leadership, with tyrannical leadership occurring less often. The authors concluded that many leaders show both constructive, as well as destructive, leadership behaviour.

While concurring that destructive leadership violates the legitimate interests of the organisation, Krasikova et al. (2013) were of the opinion that their definition extended the definitions of Einarsen et al. (2007) and Aasland et al. (2010) in three significant ways: (a) whereas the authors acknowledged that the destructive leadership construct overlapped with other constructs describing harmful behaviour, for example, counterproductive workplace behaviour (CWB) and workplace aggression, it was argued that destructive leadership also represented a distinct form of leadership. As such, destructive leadership behaviour was to be viewed as harmful behaviour *that is embedded in the process of leading*. Such a view of destructive leadership would remove CWB behaviour, such as stealing organisational property and gossiping among co-workers. In this definition, Krasikova et al. (2013) departed from Einarsen and colleagues' view of destructive leadership in that CWB behaviours were included as manifestations of destructive leadership; (b) although the authors agree with Einarsen et al. (2007) that destructive leadership harms organisations and/or leaders' followers, they consider it to be more accurate and of greater theoretical value to differentiate between two manifestations of destructive leadership, namely encouraging followers to pursue destructive goals, and using destructive methods of influence with followers. According to the authors, these two occurrences of destructive leadership are reflections of different processes. These processes are setting goals for followers and acting to influence followers to achieve those goals, with these different processes having different predictors and consequences; and (c) the authors define destructive behaviour as volitional with the potential or intention to harm the organisation or the leader's followers, and thus separating destructive leadership behaviour from incompetence, which is descriptive of a leader's inability to achieve important organisational goals or encouraging followers to achieve those goals.

Krasikova et al. (2013) clarified boundary conditions for their research in that the authors focused on analysing leaders' explicit acts of influencing followers to achieve goals (and not on implicit modelling influences). Further, the authors were of the opinion that any act by a member of a given organisation could be viewed as constructive or destructive by using different standards, for example, the actor's self-interest, the needs of other individuals within the organisation, organisational goals, societal norms, or broader moral principles.

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Thus, views and judgments of the same behaviour obtained from multiple perspectives would not necessarily agree. Therefore, when assessing whether leadership is destructive, the authors adopted the organisation and organisational members as key points of reference. In their study of destructive leadership, the authors focused on understanding destructive leadership as it shows itself within an organisation.

However, if destructive leadership is viewed as volitional behaviour, what would be the motivators, drivers, processes and conditions underlying harmful leader behaviour? How and why does an individual choose to behave destructively when in a position of leadership?

3.2.2 Perspectives on Antecedents of Destructive Leadership

Political philosophers have generally agreed that people by nature cannot be relied on to behave well and virtually all men, women and children are likely to sometimes display bad behaviour (Kellerman, 2004). Political theory explains that leaders lead and followers follow, because individuals need to engage to protect themselves against the anxiety of disorder and the fear of death; and this need for leadership applies to every area of human endeavour. However, the type of leadership that is to emerge from this engagement between leaders and followers may depend not only on the group members but also on the context (Kellerman, 2004).

3.2.2.1 Poor Psychosocial Conditions

Extremely poor organised production and/or working methods and an almost helpless or uninterested management are believed to create the conditions that sprout harmful leader behaviour. Poor psychosocial conditions at the workplace may result in biological stress reactions, measured by adrenaline production in the body that in turn can stimulate feelings of frustration. Through psychological processes, frustrated persons can (especially if employees lack knowledge of how to analyse social stressors at work), instead, blame each other, and thus become each other's social stressors and trigger a destructive situation (Leymann, 1996).

3.2.2.2 Multi-level Causes

A multi-level assessment of destructive leaders' harmful behaviour, is necessary. At an individual level, the individual characteristics and personality of the leader is the foundation for the critical assessment of bullying in an organisation. However, both the target and the

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observer(s) of the harmful activities play an important part in the frequency, infiltration, influence, and outcomes associated with such negative behaviour (Harvey et al., 2007).

In a theoretical contribution that elevates the role of followers in triggering or curbing destructive leadership behaviour, May, Wesche, Heinitz, and Kerschreiter (2014) considered how the coping responses of followers impact on leaders' perceptions of the followers and the leaders' behaviour responses. The authors discuss an interaction model where the manner in which followers' willingness to adopt a confrontative response to the leaders' destructive behaviour, could become both a consequence and antecedent of the destructive leader behaviour. The proposed model by May et al. (2014) postulates that when leaders perceive followers' responses as submissive or aggressive, destructive leaders are likely to perpetuate the negative behaviour towards followers. However, when destructive leaders perceive followers' responses as moderately confrontational problem-solving, the negative cycle of destructive leader behaviour can be disrupted.

The dynamics of groups in the organisation can become barriers to destructive leadership behaviour by collectively counteracting these behavioural acts, or stimulants when the group and its leaders are too weak, or do not address the threat emanating from the bullying activities. Without an effective mechanism to address bullying in an organisation, the entire culture of an organisation can become dysfunctional and have a negative impact on many positive outcomes such as cooperation, retention, assistance to others, and the ability to hire new employees (Harvey et al., 2007).

3.2.2.3 Organisational Justice

The concept of organisational justice suggests that individuals evaluate and assess fairness by drawing on perceptions of *distributive justice* (fairness of outcome allocation), *procedural justice* (fairness of the procedures used to make allocation decisions), and *interactional justice* (fairness of the interpersonal treatment individuals receive during the enactment procedures) (Tepper, 2000). Procedural justice and depression were found to be factors that could make supervisors more prone to engage in abusive behaviour (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). It was found that depression in supervisors mediated the relationship between supervisors' procedural justice and subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' abusiveness. The mediation effect is stronger when subordinates are higher in negative affectivity. Supervisors exposed to procedural injustices experienced depression, which resulted in greater incidences of abusive behaviour against subordinates, who were perceived to be vulnerable or provocative. (It is unclear if the tendency to "lash out" at others may be

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more prevalent for male supervisors, whereas depressed female supervisors may tend to blame themselves and withdraw) (Tepper et al., 2006). The authors suggested that other mediating variables that may need to be explored were resentment, powerlessness or low control. Implications from the results were that organisations who would seek to reduce destructive leadership behaviour in the workplace may need to begin with the fair treatment of supervisors. Subordinates who experienced long term abuse may conclude that their organisation does an inadequate job in developing or enforcing procedures that discipline or protect targets of abuse (Tepper et al., 2006).

With regards to interactional justice data collected from subordinate-supervisor dyads in a telecommunications company located in south eastern China found that although supervisors' perceptions of interactional (in)justice are viewed by the supervisors as an act of provocation, this engenders abusive supervision only among supervisors who are high in authoritarian leadership style; it is thus seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition to provoke abusive supervision. The underlying need for control on the part of individuals high in authoritarian leadership style and their inability to manage their emotions predisposed such individuals to engage in abusive supervision. In a trickledown effect it was found that supervisor and subordinate interactions shaped organisational commitment and interpersonal behaviour at all organisational levels (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007).

Of interest with regards to understanding a supervisor's scope of justice, a causal framework was suggested in which perceived deep-level dissimilarity would elicit perceived relationship conflict that could result in lower evaluations of follower performance, which then could lead to higher levels of abusive supervision (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011). It was suggested that relationship conflict mediated the effect of perceived deep level dissimilarity, however, only when leaders perceived followers as having low performance. These links were found to be consistent with moral exclusion theory, in that perceived relationship conflict and low follower performance placed such followers beyond the leader's scope of justice and lead to exclusion that translated into abusive supervision. The authors further suggested that interpersonal conflict literature indicated that individuals developed negative affect toward adversaries that translated into hostility. Findings from path-analytical tests based on data collected from supervisor-subordinate dyads at two time points indicated that even after having accounted for the effects of leader perceptions of relationship conflict and follower performance – and its interaction – leader perceptions of deep-level dissimilarity was a significant predictor of abusive supervision and perceptions of deep-level dissimilarity had direct and indirect effects on abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2011).

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3.2.2.4 Underlying Processes: Disposition and Context

A framework for understanding destructive leadership that examined the antecedents of destructive leadership and the processes that are likely to underlie leaders' choice to engage in destructive leadership, presented destructive leadership as the product of dispositional and contextual factors (Krasikova et al., 2013).

The theoretical model as proposed by Krasikova et al. (2013) is illustrated in Figure 3.4:
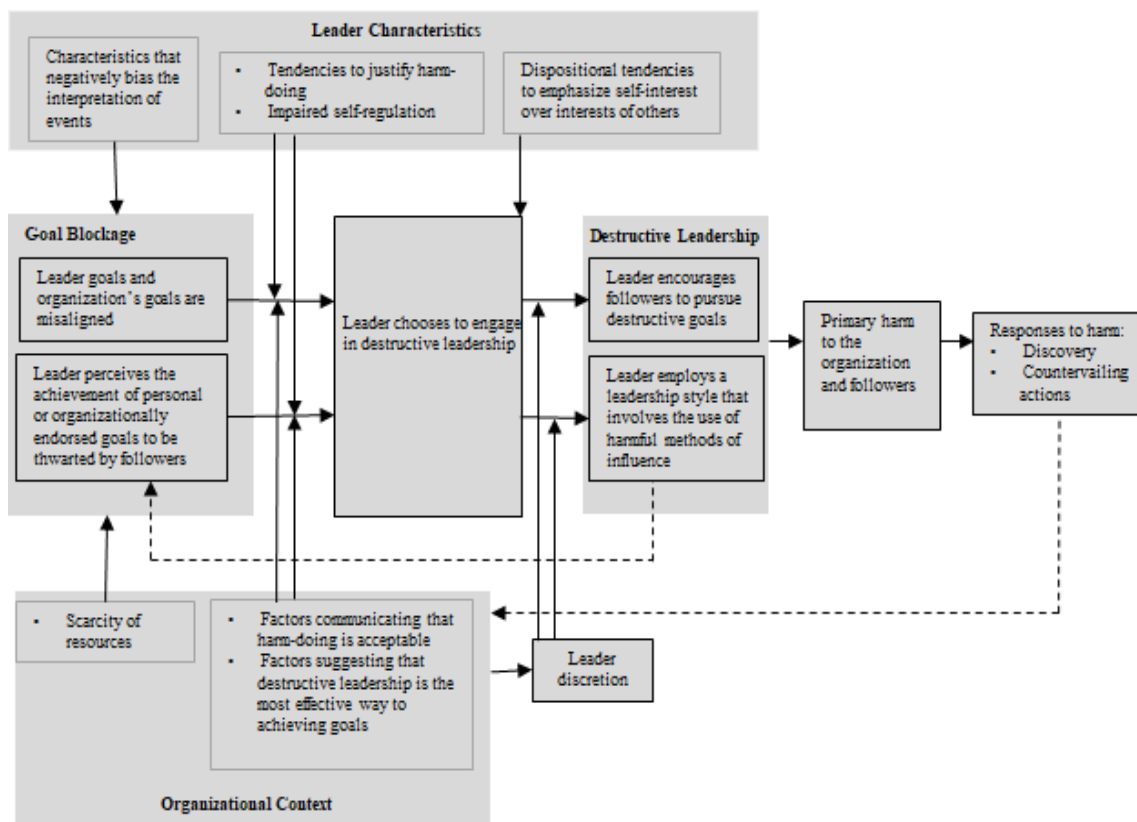
Figure 3.4. The proposed theoretical model by Krasikova et al. (2013). (Source: Krasikova et al., 2013, p. 1316)

The authors were of the opinion that (a) leaders are likely to engage in destructive leader behaviour when they experience obstacles in achieving their goals (goal blockage) or, when goal blockage is absent, when leaders are pre-disposed to harm others; (b) not all leaders are equally likely to experience situations of goal blockage, in that some leader characteristics, such as the psychological capital of the leader and contextual factors make some leaders more likely to find themselves in destructive leader situations. Further, when

goal blockage does occur, not all leaders will react to it with destructive leader behaviour, as some characteristics and contextual factors will make leaders more likely to favour destructive responses over constructive alternatives; and (c) certain contextual factors are likely to determine whether a leader's choice to pursue destructive goals or use destructive actions translate into destructive leadership (Krasikova et al., 2013).

3.2.2.5 Inauthentic Leader Behaviour

Referring to the destructive leadership model proposed by Krasikova et al. (2013), this study posits that leader dispositional factors, the psychological capital of the leader, and contextual factors, all of which could enhance perceptions of goal blockage on the part of the leader, are likely to facilitate choosing to act in a harmful and destructive manner. However, based on the literature on leadership, as discussed in Chapter Two and this chapter, I suggest that it might add value to the existing body of knowledge on destructive leadership and coping with destructive leadership to explore from a relational authenticity perspective the extent to which the life stories of leaders and followers create implicit beliefs about what constitutes a leader and what constitutes good or bad leader behaviour. Do these implicit beliefs about leadership, as shaped by the respective life stories of both leaders and followers, transpire in trait behaviour, values, and affiliation to a community in terms of socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort? Do implicit beliefs about leadership encourage views and responses about leadership for both leaders and followers? While being mindful of the narratives of leaders, it is important to state that the present study located its focus and investigation only on the narratives of *followers*.

This study aims to extend the existing conceptualising about destructive leadership by exploring the idea that a leader's life stories or biographies find expression in their identities, traits, values and beliefs, as well as being a source of justification for their leadership of a particular group and their right to represent a specific group and the values of that group. This justification to take on a leadership role goes beyond a leader's social positioning, but includes psychological characteristics such as self-confidence, self-efficacy and the ability to give direction. However, followers' observations and impressions of the manifestations of leaders' life stories in the process of leading are probably influenced by followers' own expectations and implicit beliefs about leadership. Particularly, initial impressions could be positively or negatively biased based on prior knowledge of the leader's biography (Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, & Adler, 2005).

The legitimacy of the leader requires a process of authentication of the leader by followers (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). In this regard, followers' own life stories, in terms of similar background, values and other central characteristics, are likely to influence the identification process with the leader and thus the authentication of the leader by followers. As such, followers play an active role in choosing to acknowledge an individual as a leader and deciding to follow that individual; this decision is based on the similarities in leader and follower values and identities (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993).

Avolio and Gardner (2005) note that authentic vs inauthentic leadership is not an either/or state, and that most leaders fall somewhere on a continuum of authentic behaviour. If authenticity is bestowed on leaders by followers depending on implicit beliefs about leadership that stem from followers' own life stories, it is likely that *"truly" authentic leaders* are more likely to transcend differences between leader and follower life stories by virtue of a process of positive influence and role modelling. Leaders' positive influence and role modelling may result in enhancing positive attitudes and positive emotions in followers that create trust in the leader (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). However, these ideals of leadership are more likely to fail when leaders are inauthentic in their behaviour. *Inauthentic leaders* are characterised as deceptive and manipulative. Self-aggrandising, idolisation and control are what these leaders seek and they focus on conspiracy, illusory risk, excuses and anxieties to gain followership. They are egotistical, domineering and concerned about creating an inflated positive public image, while only serving themselves. They motivate followers only to serve their own needs. They lead by promoting ambiguity and inconsistency, use false logic and exploit authority to convince others of their arguments. Debate is fuelled by emotion instead of reason. Power is used to keep followers dependent, and personal distance, blind obedience, favouritism, and negative competition are encouraged. The feelings of followers are exploited to maintain respect (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013).

From a psychological perspective, inauthenticity as opposed to authenticity would entail a leader who shows less self-awareness and self-determination in terms of behavioural and relational choices; who is less inclined to take responsibility for decisions, and less able to self-regulate emotions and behavioural responses (Novicevic, Harvey, Ronald, & Brown-Radford, 2006). If self-knowledge and self-consistency are viewed as antecedents of authenticity (Peus et al., 2011), then it potentially follows that the absence of these characteristics could be viewed as antecedents of inauthentic behaviour. In a study linking authenticity to greater psychological functioning and subjective well-being, it was found that

high scores on an authenticity inventory were positively related to more favourable psychological functioning and subjective well-being. It was found that authenticity is related to self-worth (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Referring to the above findings (Avolio et al., 2004; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Nichols & Erakovich, 2013; Peus et al., 2011; Shamir et al., 1993; Shamir & Eilam, 2005), it seems fair to deduce that the life stories of leaders, as well as followers, are likely to play an important role in developing the traits and psychological capital required to be an authentic leader or not and in gaining authentication to lead from followers; and as such becomes an important variable to consider when discussing antecedents of destructive leadership behaviour. Considering inauthenticity in leader behaviour and perceptions of relational inauthenticity in leader-follower relationships could be important in the understanding of perceptions of destructive leadership.

The next section describes the extent to which destructive leadership behaviour is experienced by followers in various countries. It may be important to note that the data reported below are based on notions of destructive leadership that includes various interpretations of what is included in the conceptualisation of the phenomenon as discussed earlier.

3.2.3 The Prevalence of Destructive Leadership Behaviour

Although the mistreatment of employees in the workplace is not a new phenomenon and has always existed, the concept of bullying at work has found a resonance within large sections of the European working population as well as in the academic community (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). Suggestions from existing data are that it is reasonable to believe that a sizable number of employees, at some time during their career, will be exposed to systematic bullying or abusive behaviour, either directly or indirectly as observers or witnesses of such negative conduct, and that a significant proportion of stress related illness may be attributed to destructive behaviour from supervisors towards their subordinates (Einarsen et al., 2003).

As a result of recent economic and social change, in order to survive, industry is faced with continuous pressure to downsize and restructure to sustain their competitive edge in a global economy, thus fewer people are left with more work, with temporary contracts and voluntary redundancy packages increasingly becoming an option. These factors generate a climate of insecurity and escalate the challenges involved in reaching goals, which elevate the pressure on both the leader and follower and is conducive to interpersonal conflict, bullying, harassment and emotional abuse (Einarsen et al., 2003).

In a study investigating the prevalence of the four types of destructive leadership behaviour in the destructive and constructive model, as depicted in Figure 3.2, in a representative sample of the Norwegian workforce, the total prevalence of destructive leadership varied from 33.5% (employing the operational cluster method of analysis) to 61% (employing the latent class cluster method of analysis); indicating that destructive leadership is not an anomaly (Aasland et al., 2010).

Prevalence rates in the United Kingdom, United States and Scandinavian countries range up to 98% of particular employee populations experiencing bullying at some point in their working lives, with up to 38% of different employee groups experiencing bullying over the previous 6 to 12 months (McCarthy, Sheehan, Barker, & Henderson, 2003). Most people can recall at least one instance where they have been the targets of non-physical abuse at work (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994). In a poll of nearly 800 employees in the USA, 10% reported witnessing incivility daily within their workplace and 20% said that they, personally, were the direct targets of incivility at work at least once per week. In a study with 126 Canadian white-collar employees, one-fourth reported witnessing incivility daily and one half said that they were the direct targets of incivility at least once a week. It was found that power played a central role in that the target of incivility is much more likely to be of lower status, whether in a direct reporting line or not (Pearson & Porath, 2005).

Despite my best efforts to locate published sources, there is scant data on the prevalence of destructive leadership in South African organisations. Given the country's historical past, life stories of inequality and disparity (Terreblanche, 2002) are likely to impact on perceptions of relational authenticity between leaders and followers and find expression in an intricate web of power relationships. In a South African study of 13 911 participants gathered over a spectrum of nine provinces and five sectors, it was found that bullying by superiors was more prevalent than bullying by colleagues, and that a positive relationship exists between workplace bullying and turnover intentions. Further findings suggested that role clarity, participation in decision-making and supervisory relationship moderated the relationship between bullying by superiors and turnover intention (Van Schalkwyk, Els, & Rothmann, 2011).

Despite an emerging awareness of negative harmful leader behaviour, often there seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge the existence of destructive leadership. There seems to exist a collusion regarding the focus on good leadership while ignoring the "elephant in the room" of bad leadership in the organisation (Kellerman, 2004). It is perhaps emotionally easier to be seduced by the more romantic notions of leadership. However, it has been

suggested that this tendency to romanticise leadership can be regarded as "tantamount to a medical school that would claim to teach health while ignoring disease" (Kellerman, 2004, p. 11). What then would be the consequences of ignoring destructive leadership behaviour for leaders and more specifically, for followers?

3.2.4 The Consequences of Non-physical Destructive Leadership Behaviour

The principle that bad is stronger than good appears to be consistently supported across a broad range of psychological phenomena. The effect of bad being stronger than good and the greater power of bad events over good ones is found in everyday events, major life events, close relationship outcomes, social network patterns, interpersonal interactions, and learning processes. Bad emotions, bad parents and bad feedback have more impact than good ones, and bad information is processed more thoroughly than good. Further, the self is more motivated to avoid bad self-definitions than to pursue good ones (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). It thus follows that the effect of bad leadership behaviour is likely to be more damaging to both the leader and the subordinate than good leadership behaviour is likely to result in positive effects.

The consequences of a leader's bullying behaviour on self can be described in terms of the impact on reputation and power. The undesirable things that such leaders bring on themselves mostly result in reprimands, criminal records, tarnished reputations and further harmful consequences to self, of which the most common is derailment, by being fired, demoted or otherwise failing to progress in the career (McCall & Lombardo as cited in Padilla et al., 2007).

Research with one hundred and fifty business students in the southeast United States on the interactive effects of abusive supervision, ingratiation, and positive affect on strain and turnover intentions indicates that individual reactions to abusive supervision vary in type and severity (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007). It is conceivable that the immediate effects of threatening and intimidating behaviour associated with bullying could produce short-lived positive effects on job performance levels as a function of employee compliance; nevertheless, for subordinates the self-centred behaviour of this type of leader erodes trust (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, 2007; Hogan & Hogan, 2001). The effects of abusive supervision on followers can have an impact on job performance, job stress and job attitudes (Ferris et al., 2007). Research indicates that the class of behaviours that constitute abusive supervision is linked to a number of negative psychological outcomes such as helplessness, decreased self-efficacy and psychological distress. Other consequences include

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heightened levels of emotional exhaustion, perceived work-family conflict, turnover intentions and decreased levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Employees may feel that they are unfairly treated and this can cause them to question their self-worth and abilities (Harvey et al., 2007).

In a Danish study investigating the relationships between bullying and other psychosocial work and environment factors within a particular organisation setting, as well whethether bullied employees reported higher stress levels than non-bullied employees, Agervold and Mikkelson (2004) found that in the worst cases the effects of destructive leadership behaviour could develop symptoms analogous of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder with the most commonly reported health effects being symptoms of anxiety, irritability and depression.Results from a study of bullying among union members in Québec support the findings of Agervold and Mikkelson's (2004) study and concluded that bullying in a work context can have destructive effects on the mental health of workers (Soares, 2002). Some victims express self-hatred and may suffer from suicidal thoughts (Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen, & Hellesøy as cited in Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003). Bullying may have negative consequences, not just for the target of the bullying, but also for those who witness the bullying in that they tend to experience a higher degree of psychological stress, although they do not develop the more pronounced symptoms of depression or related post-traumatic stress (Soares, 2002).

One Canadian study that interviewed 30 young workers who proclaimed to have a boss who behaved badly (Starratt & Grandy, 2010), found that the impact of abusive supervision on younger workers may be more pronounced because of a lower level of emotional regulation. There also exists a generational tendency of high expectations of self and their managers (Armour, 2007; Starratt & Grandy, 2010). Referring to self-concept theory, younger employees whose inner lives and self-concepts may still be in formation, may experience more lasting damage from destructive leadership behaviour in that this negative experience may play a role in shaping the self-concept (Shamir, 1991).

Abusive supervisory behaviour is associated with greater conflict between work and family. Followers who perceive their supervisors as more abusive were more likely to quit their jobs. However, for those who remain in their jobs, for whatever reason, the abusive supervision was associated with lower job and life satisfaction, lower normative (obligation to the people in the organisation) and affective commitment (feeling that the organisation's problems are their own), higher continuance commitment (finding it hard to leave the organisation at the time, even if they would want to), conflict between work and family, and

psychological distress (Tepper, 2000). A possible association between abusive supervision and subordinate problem drinking should also be considered (Bamberger & Bacjarach, 2006). As suggested by the research cited above, it is reasonable to suspect that the various effects of destructive leadership behaviour, including symptomatic effects such as increased alcoholic consumption, are likely to impact on the quality of family life as well as family relationships.

At an organisational level the quality of leadership has a pervasive effect on stress and well-being in the workplace (Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling, 2005). The pursuit of destructive goals is likely to harm the organisation (Krasikova et al., 2013). The spill over effect of destructive leadership behaviour can result in the entire culture and psychosocial environment of an organisation becoming dysfunctional and have a negative effect on co-operation, retention, assistance to others, and the ability to hire new employees (Harvey et al., 2007; Leymann, 1996). The costs of turnover can constitute as much as 5% of an organisation's operating budget (Harvey et al., 2007). At a societal level the cost of leave as a result of maltreatment and stress reactions and early retirement may need to be considered (Toohey as cited in Kendall, Murphy, O'Neill, & Bursnall, 2000; Leymann, 1996).

The studies referred to above support that being on the receiving end of destructive leadership behaviour has negative effects for many followers Although the type and intensity of destructive leadership effects could be experienced differently by individuals, studies agree that the overall consequences of destructive leadership is harmful to followers. The following section explores how followers endeavour to cope with destructive leader behaviour.

3.3 Coping with Destructive Leadership: Exploring the Role of Relational Authenticity and Psychological Capital

The literature on leadership as discussed in the previous chapter informed and guided the researcher conceptually towards the importance of the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers. In this regard, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory (Hogg, 2004a) proposed that the quality of the dyadic relationship influences follower commitment and the extent to which followers are likely to make the goals of their leaders their own. Implicit leadership Theory (ILT) postulates that followers' implicit beliefs about what makes a leader, impacts on the quality of the dyadic relationship between leader and follower (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004).

Identity Theory (Stets & Burke, 2000) describes an individual's beliefs about his/her identity and Social Identity Theory (Hogg, 2004b) describes an individual's self-views and self-evaluations of him/herself in terms of belonging to a group. A person's self-evaluations

entail seeking congruence with social categorisations and can result in feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group; which can results in experiences of success or failure (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Authentic leadership theory emphasises the positive leadership contributions derived from leading with self-awareness, in an unbiased manner, acting authentically, and having an authentic relational orientation (Ilies et al., 2005). However, in Authentic leadership theory, the concepts of authenticity and having an authentic relational awareness are mainly described in one-sided terms of what the leader does and the effects of the leader's actions. The concept of relational authenticity as described by Eagly (2005) elevates the importance of the follower's perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader. In this regard the author is of the opinion that a leader's authenticity has to be confirmed by followers and that this process of relational authentication entails perceptions of congruence in terms of identity, self-beliefs and values.

Referring to the literature on destructive leadership, Tepper (2000) indicated that not all followers will experience a particular leader's behaviour as abusive. Martinko et al. (2013) referred to the role of follower differences in terms of attribution style, negative affect and implicit work theories on experiences of destructive leadership behaviour. In the discussion of relational authenticity, Eagly (2005) refers to the challenges women and other outsider groups have of achieving relational authenticity with their leaders, especially when outsider groups have not had traditional access to leadership roles. Thus, with South Africa's history of discordant social relationships and workplace disparity, this study is of the opinion that exploring the role of relational authenticity in followers' coping with destructive leadership could potentially enhance understanding of the phenomenon's particular presentation in the South African context.

The literature on positive and destructive leadership behaviour refers to the role of psychological capital (PsyCap) in leader behaviour (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Krasikova et al., 2013; Walumba et al., 2011). With followers being on the receiving end of leadership behaviour, this study, with its focus on followers, deemed it conceptually prudent to also explore the role of followers' psychological capital in coping with destructive leadership behaviour.

3.3.1 Coping Conceptualised

The *cognitive appraisal model* emphasises the contextual nature of coping and positions itself as a transactional approach. As such, coping is viewed as influenced by the individual's appraisal of the actual demands in the transaction or encounter and the individual's resources to manage the difficulties of the transaction or encounter. Coping responses can be viewed as the regulation of continuous changes in cognitive and behavioural attempts to manage particular external and/or internal encounters that are viewed or appraised as tough and more than the available resources of an individual. Coping attempts are aimed at normalising painful emotions (emotion-focused coping) and taking positive action to change the problems that cause the distress (problem-focused coping) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The operationalisation of coping for the purposes of this inquiry understood coping as including the follower's history and process of engaging with and adjusting to the destructive leader's behaviour in order for the follower to "survive" and "carry on". Follower coping is likely to vary in effectiveness between individuals and also intra-individually over time and context and thus this study's operationalisation of coping includes failure to cope, as in struggling to "survive" and finding it hard to "carry on". In this regard, referring to the variance in follower coping with destructive leader behaviour, as noted by Tepper (2000) and Krasikova et al. (2013), this study in particular explores the effect follower's *perceptions of relational authenticity* with the leader (Eagly, 2005) has on the coping process; and the role of followers' *psychological capital* as discussed by Walumbwa et al. (2011) in the coping process.

3.3.1.1 Relational Authenticity

A relational definition of authenticity that is derived from two components described by Avolio et al. (2004) was proposed by Eagly (2005). The first component defines authenticity as leaders giving support to the interests of the larger community which they serve and convey those values to followers in a transparent manner. The second component, which follows from the first component, emphasises "that followers personally identify with these values and accept them as appropriate for the community in which they are joined to the leader – be that a nation, an organisation, or a group" (Eagly, 2005, p. 461). This two-sided concept was named *relational authenticity* in order to distinguish the concept from definitions that only give consideration to the behaviour of leaders. It is in the persuasion and negotiation process interface between leaders and followers where the legitimacy of the leader as a representative of the group, organisation, or society is vital for success. Thus, it could be that

a leader expresses and acts out his or her values in a transparent manner, yet the leader is not successful in engaging followers in a positive manner because followers (or a particular follower) do not identify with the leader's social representation and/or values. In this regard, for example, incongruent identification in terms of gender and membership of outsider social groups could affect legitimising leader behaviour (Eagly, 2005).

Following from Eagly's (2005) description of relational authenticity, this study aims to explore how followers' experiences and perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader might impact their coping with the leader's behaviour. The following quote, cited in Chapter One, suggests that, for example, if the follower can identify with the values expressed in leader goals, they might be willing to tolerate the means by which these are achieved: "… many others realised that despite his temperamental failings, Jobs had the charisma and corporate clout that would lead them to 'make a dent in the universe'" (Isaacson, 2011, p. 112). On the other hand, *the less a follower experiences perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader, the more likely the leader's behaviour is to be experienced as destructive and the poorer the follower is likely to cope with the leader's behaviour.*

The following quotes, cited in Chapter One, illustrate the differences in follower experience of a single leader: "Some on the team found Jobs impossible to work with. 'Jobs seems to introduce tension, politics, and hassles rather than enjoying a buffer from these distractions,' one engineer wrote …" (Isaacson, 2011, p. 112). He continued: "I thoroughly enjoy talking with him, and I admire his ideas, practical perspective and energy. But I just don't feel that he provides the trusting, supportive, relaxed environment that I need" (Isaacson, 2011, p. 112).

3.3.1.2 Psychological Capital

Referring to the literature on coping, the following established classifications of coping describe coping responses as involving the contextual nature of coping and as influenced by the person's appraisal of the actual demands in the encounter and resources for managing the demands. Coping responses are regarded as either problem-focused or emotion focused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Suls and Fletcher (1985), as well as Roth and Cohen (1986), describe coping responses in terms of approach or avoidance orientations, with an approach orientation involving cognitive and emotional activity oriented towards or away from the stressor/threat. A more recent framework of coping responses (that could be viewed as a conceptual integration of the problem- versus emotion-focused coping; and the approach

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versus avoidance coping classifications), describe subordinate responses to supervisor injustice, and proposed four coping strategies, namely: functional-active, functional-passive, dysfunctional-active, and dysfunctional-passive (Klaussner, 2014).

Whereas the traditional conceptualisation of coping responses focus on problem- versus emotion-focused coping and approach- versus avoidance-focused coping, the emerging concept of positive psychological capital, if applied to the Authentic Leadership Process, is about "investing in the actual self, to reap the return of becoming the possible self" (Avolio & Luthans, 2006, p. 147). Psychological capital can be defined as an "individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths and goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success" (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007, p. 3). These four psychological capital resources are regarded as state-like and open to development and also as having performance impact (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

3.3.1.2.1 Efficacy/Confidence

The concept of Efficacy as described by psychological capital theorists (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007) is about having confidence. These theorists drew from the work of Bandura (1986, 1997) and Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) who described an individual with high efficacy as someone who believes in and is convinced of his or her abilities to succeed, is self-motivated, draws on their own cognitive resources and produces action plans to successfully complete tasks or challenges in a specific context. Individuals high in Efficacy set high goals and select for themselves complicated tasks. Challenge is welcomed, and they thrive on it. As they are high in self-motivation, they put energy and effort into achieving self-set goals. When plans are blocked and when they are confronted by hurdles and obstacles, they endure and persevere. Psychological Capital Efficacy is domain specific, based on practice and mastery, can improve and always has scope for improvement, is influenced by others and varies. Outside factors, as well as physical and psychological health, can impact on efficacy levels (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007). Followers who are confident respond positively to difficult situations such as relationships or tasks and put in energy and effort to successfully cope with challenges (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

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3.3.1.2.2   Optimism

Followers who are optimistic have positive expectations about their capacity to be successful in the present and in the future (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Optimism is regarded as an explanatory style that attributes positive events to personal, permanent and pervasive causes. A pessimistic explanatory style is regarded as interpreting positive events with external, temporary, and situation-specific attributes. A negative style of explaining would interpret events in terms of personal, permanent and pervasive causes (Seligman as cited in Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007). Followers with an optimistic world view acknowledge their own contribution to positive events occurring in their lives and they believe that they will experience positive events in the future and utilise previous and current positive experiences across life areas and in different situations (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007). Optimism is believed to have both trait-like and state-like characteristics and is therefore considered to be open to development (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008). Optimistic followers have the ability to buffer and protect themselves from depression, feelings of guilt, despair and blaming themselves for negative events (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

3.3.1.2.3   Hope

Hope was defined as "a positive motivational state based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson as cited in Snyder, 1995, p. 355). Hope is viewed as a cognitive state (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson as cited in Luthans, Avey et al., 2008) that directs perseverance toward goals and, when required, redirects paths or ways to goals (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Several studies demonstrated the developmental nature of hope (Snyder, 2000; Snyder et al., 1996 as cited in Luthans, Avey et al., 2008). Research in work settings indicated support for findings from clinical, educational and athletic environments that hopeful individuals have a positive impact on their environment (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). In the South African context, it was found that leaders high in hope display competencies that set them apart from others; these leaders tend to balance hard and soft leadership skills. With regard to the relationship that high-hope leaders have with followers, indications are that these leaders are credible and competent, they trust and empower their followers, develop others and make themselves available, and believe in and keep followers informed. In reciprocation, followers are inspired and are willing to provide effort and hard work. Interestingly, few of the original sample of followers in this South African study indicated that they work for high-hope managers (Richardson, Cook, & Hofmeyer, 2011).

3.3.1.2.4   Resilience

Resilience "refers to a class of phenomena characterised by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk" (Master & Reed as cited in Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010), that facilitate followers to bounce back quite easily, quickly and successfully from negative or stressful events (Luthans et al., 2010). Resilient followers, in dealing with risks and adversity, would tend to accept reality and hold on to meaningful and stable values and beliefs with determination. Followers high in resilience demonstrate the flexibility to improvise when unexpected situations occur. Resilient followers would tend to make meaning from current setbacks or hardships and build bridges to more positive futures, that are better constructed (Coutu, 2002). Resilient followers would steadfastly accept reality, show strong values that translates into a belief that life is meaningful, and can make a plan (improvise) and adapt to change (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

The four psychological capital resources discussed above are considered to have some overlap and share a common core, confidence, which is present at a higher level of abstraction (Stajkovic, 2006; Stajkovic, Lee, Greenwald, & Raffiee, 2015). Evidence from studies with student samples from the USA and Korea, as well as field data from an auto group, have found that the role of trait core confidence as a higher-order construct show that hope, general-efficacy, optimism and resilience are highly correlated. Three of the studies indicated convergent validity and predictive validity of confidence as a higher order trait construct was found in two of the studies (Stajkovic et al., 2015). It was found that these four resources together form a higher order construct, namely psychological capital (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007).

In a study that examined, at the group level of analysis, the role that psychological capital and trust might play in the relationship between authentic leadership and the desired outcomes of work groups, findings from 146 intact groups from a large financial institution in the southwest United States indicated a significant relationship between both collective psychological capital and trust with the group level performance and citizenship behaviour. In addition, these two variables were found to mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and the desired group outcomes, even when the study controlled for transformational leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Support was found for the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between supportive climate and employee performance (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008).

A South African study investigated the relationship between educators' psychological capital (PsyCap), subjective well-being, burnout and job satisfaction; and explored if PsyCap plays a mediating role in the relationship between subjective well-being and burnout. The findings indicated statistically significant relationships between PsyCap, subjective well-being, burnout, and job satisfaction. It was found that PsyCap mediated the relationship between subjective well-being and burnout (Hansen, Buitendach, & Kanengoni, 2015). Authentic leadership, followership and psychological capital as antecedents of work engagement were the focus areas of a study of 901 South African employees in the health care- and mining industries. The results indicated that work engagement is related to the psychological capital of the employees, rather than by authentic leadership qualities (Du Plessis & Boshoff, 2018).

3.3.1.3 A Model for Destructive Leadership, Relational Authenticity, and Psychological Capital

Reflecting on the literature on destructive leadership, researchers working within the domain are of the opinion that the experience of destructive leadership could be a matter of perception and that views of the same behaviour could be different for different followers and across different contexts, depending on an individual's attribution style, a tendency towards negative affectivity and implicit beliefs about work (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2000). Depending on the potential gain from destructive leader behaviour, it is possible that the behaviour is condoned, encouraged and approved by senior management, the organisational context and even by some followers (Einarsen et al., 2007; Goldman, 2009; Isaacson, 2011; Kellerman, 2004; Krasikova et al., 2013; Padilla et al., 2007). Leader perceptions of deeply embedded differences between the leader and follower were found to have directly and indirectly destructive outcomes on leader behaviour (Tepper et al., 2011).

The previous chapter cites a selection of perspectives that define leadership. These perspectives on leadership could broadly be regarded as genetic, trait, situational, relational, and attributional. Recent positive conceptualisations of leadership explore the authenticity of leaders and followers; and more specifically the concept of relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005). Cross-cultural leadership studies indicate that cultural difference has an influence on the behaviour of leaders. Management philosophies tend to evolve complementarily with the cultures in which these management philosophies are deployed. Corporate South Africa presents with a complicated blend of cultures, with White South African managers showing a management style that could be regarded as largely Western/Eurocentric, whereas Black

South African managers show cultural influences that could be regarded as more Afrocentric (Booysen, 2001).

The potential impact of the extent to which the life stories of leaders and followers coincide or are dissimilar on followers' perceptions of destructive leader behaviour is of interest. In terms of trait (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005), values and community (Eagly, 2005), within the South African context with its history of inequality, injustice, dissimilarity and polarisation (Terreblanche, 2002), would the overt and covert differences in socio-economic, political, racial and age cohort life stories influence follower casting of leader behaviour as destructive?

An analysis of the defence statement made by Nelson Mandela at the Rivonia Trial at the Supreme Court on 20 April 1964, indicated what the author described as Mandela's "authentic psychological capital leadership under difficult political and personal circumstances" (Van Wyk, 2014, p. 51). In dealing with the perceived destructive leadership of the time, Mandela, according to the content analysis of the trial defence document, presented the psychological capital states of efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. Mandela's confidence, "spirit and drive" (Van Wyk, 2014, p. 53) sustained him to persevere in the attainment of his goals, despite life stories of stark incongruity with the perceived oppressive and destructive leadership of the day. Of interest to this study is the role of psychological capital in dealing with perceived destructive leader behaviour in the organisational context. According to the cognitive appraisal model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), coping involves regulating distressing emotions to focusing on the problem and attempting to take positive action to change the problem.

I was specifically interested in exploring in this study how followers may vary in their perceptions of destructive leadership and implicit beliefs of what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour. In this regard, I explored the role of followers' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader in casting leader behaviour as destructive. Further, do this variance in perceptions and beliefs about leader behaviour influence the coping behaviour of followers in response to said leadership. To what extent would followers' ability to harness psychological resources such as efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience enable them to transform a potentially emotionally negative experience into a realistic appraisal of a problem that can be dealt with? Therefore, this study explored the following model of destructive leadership, relational authenticity, and psychological capital:

The theoretical model as proposed by this study is presented in Figure 3.5:
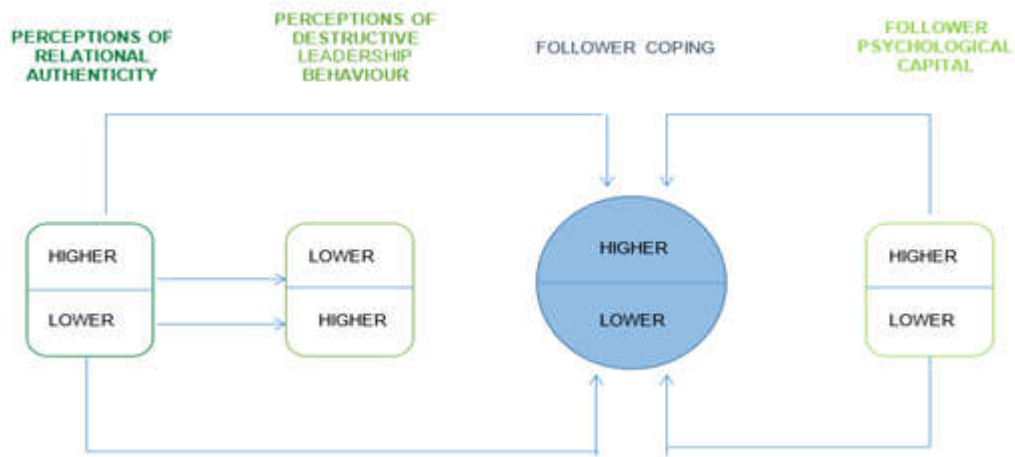
Figure 3.5. The proposed model of destructive leadership, relational authenticity, and psychological capital.

This chapter sought to provide a review of the literature on destructive leadership. A further aim was to establish a research foundation for exploring the potential role of perceptions of relational authenticity and social and value similarity in the casting of leadership as destructive, and the potential role of the concept of psychological capital in the leader-follower relationship. The ensuing chapter describes the research methods used to explore these objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the researcher, describes the kind of research design that was used in this study, the participants, how participants were selected, data collection procedures, the interview schedule and the questionnaire, as well as the data analysis. Hereafter, the ethical considerations of the study are described, and I conclude with a description of my reflexivity as researcher in this research process.

To introduce myself, the researcher, I am a psychologist who works as a consultant to business. My work includes using quantitative and qualitative assessment data in a complementary way to facilitate decision-making with regards to individual selection, appointments and career development; as well as for team development. My previous academic study also focused on coping, though the emphasis was on working women and coping with work–family interaction strain (Brink, 1999). My interest in the topic of coping with destructive leadership behaviour was informed by having had, during my career, experience of the effects of destructive leadership behaviour in a personal capacity and vicariously through the shared experiences of clients.

The aims of the study were to explore the effects of perceived destructive leadership behaviour on the follower recipient of the negative behaviour and examine how this follower coped with the perceived destructive leadership behaviour. The study also explores how perceptions of relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005) with the leader may influence followers' perceptions of leader behaviour as destructive and follower coping responses. In this regard, I was keen to explore whether a follower's identification with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort) influence the coping process. Further, the study also investigated the role of followers' psychological capital in the coping process (Walumba et al., 2011). In exploring what constitutes the destructive leadership phenomenon as perceived by followers, the study explored the role of followers' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader in casting leader behaviour as destructive.

4.2 Research Design

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Given the above objectives of the study, examining the experiences of the affected followers, and how they coped with the perceived destructive leadership behaviour of their managers, was crucial to the research process. Thus, this study employed a qualitative approach informed by aspects of constructivist grounded theory to explore the research aims.

Qualitative research concerns itself primarily with words (instead of numbers as in quantitative research) and positions itself epistemologically as interpretivist. Thus, instead of using a natural science quantitative approach, a qualitative inquiry focuses on understanding the social world, by means of investigating that world as interpreted by the participants in that world. The position qualitative research takes can be regarded from the ontological position of constructivism, that is, social qualities can be regarded as the results of the interactions between individuals, and therefore regarded as constructionist (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research is occupied with viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the participants that are studied. As such, the social world is interpreted from the perspective of the participants who are studied, and the researcher seeks to take the views of the participants as the point of departure for the study (Bryman, 2012). In qualitative research, a picture is drawn from, reassembled, and rendered for the participants' lives (Charmaz, 2003), or more particularly in the case of this inquiry, for a "slice" of that person's work life. This process tends to involve the researcher in experiences and expressions of empathy; and viewing the experience through the eyes of the participant (Bryman, 2012).

Grounded theory is a systematic qualitative research methodology that emphasises the generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research, usually using verbal accounts of people's experiences. Rather than beginning by researching and developing hypotheses, the first step is data collection, which contradicts the traditional model of research in which a theoretical framework is chosen which is then applied to the studied phenomenon (Giles, 2002). Classical grounded theorists argue that researchers should not engage in a detailed literature review before proceeding with data collection (The Grounded Theory Institute as cited in Starratt & Grandy, 2010). Classical grounded theory proposes that systematic qualitative analysis has its own logic and can generate theory. The intention of classical grounded theorists was to construct abstract theoretical explanations of social processes. The defining components of grounded theory in practice included a simultaneous process of data collection and analysis; constructing analytical codes and categories from data directly and not from pre-conceived deduced hypotheses; using comparative methods during each stage of the analysis; and advancing the development of theory during each step of the data collection and the analysis of data. Memo-writing entails the writing down of analytical

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or conceptual notes to remind and assist the researcher to specify and elaborate categories, as well as to identify possible gaps in the data. In a grounded theory approach the aim of sampling is theory construction, not population representativeness, and the literature review is conducted after the development of an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

Whereas the methodological focus of this study is qualitative, contemporary developments in grounded theory suggest that it is a methodology that has the potential to inform the research process across epistemologies (Oliver, 2012). Recent views of the premises of grounded theory describe the overarching nature of the methodology and embrace its use in a variety of ways, levels of emphases, and directions on how to think about data (Charmaz as cited in Oliver, 2012). In a study of a group of rural labourers in Tunisia, Hoddy (2019) drew on grounded theory's repertoire of methodological practices in their decisions about data collection, coding and analysis. In this regard the authors employed grounded theory techniques in conjunction with critical realism (CR), for example, conducting a literature review before commencing with data collection, using theoretical sampling, axial coding, and comparative methods.

This study was also informed by the research methodology applied by Starratt and Grandy (2010), who adopted a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach. The authors were of the opinion that it was their initial literature review that led them to the conclusion that a contribution could be made if they developed a model that was grounded in the experience of their sample group, rather than assuming that the experiences of their sample simply reflected the existing literature. If "all is data" according to Grounded Theory (Glaser, 2002, p. 1), then the argument can be made that existing theory is data and it may no longer be considered essential to delay the literature review (Charmaz, 2006). A strong theoretical perspective can guide questions and a preliminary literature review can, at a functional level, identify gaps in previous research (Charmaz, 1990; Neal, 2009). Based on these recent developments in the application of Grounded Theory (Hoddy, 2019; Oliver, 2011; Starratt & Grandy, 2010), this research drew on the premises and ideals of grounded theory methodology to guide and elevate the qualitative research practices and the thematic analysis of the data.

Located within qualitative data gathering techniques, this study followed a semi-structured person-to-person interview approach. Though informed by constructivist grounded theory methodology, the gathering of data was not overly prescriptive and restricted (Charmaz, 2003) to a grounded theory approach. In the main, the data gathering focused on the "slice" of the participants' work life that entailed a challenging experience with a particular manager and the meaning of that experience for the participants. However, during

the data gathering process it was found that two of the participants had experienced challenging relationships with more than one manager, though to differing degrees. These participants found it difficult to select a "most challenging" relationship from these experiences with different managers. Guided by and in the spirit of the grounded theory process, I followed the data and remained adaptive by inviting into the research design paradigm the possibility of an individual participant having had more than one important challenging experience with more than one manager, though to differing degrees.

Referring to the grounded theory position of considering everything as data (Glaser, 2002, p. 1), the expressed and unexpressed emotions, verbal habits, tone, observations by the researcher and pre-existing contextual information were all considered to be data and informed the interpretive process. However, given the challenges in accessing the participants, as they had to take private time out of their business schedules for the interviews, and the emotional challenges that re-visiting the experience brought participants, the researcher was reluctant to gather data in an iterative manner as advised by grounded theory practices by going back and re-interviewing participants. Thus, the once-off interview in a private setting, which was selected for its logistical feasibility to the participant, was the dominant meeting point for data gathering.

The data collection strategy included simultaneous collection (through semi-structured person-to-person interviews) and analysis of data by identifying emerging themes, using comparative methods, writing memos aimed at conceptual analysis towards integration of the theoretical framework. Theoretical categories were developed from analysis of the collected data and these categories had to explain the data they subsumed. Pre-existing concepts were resisted until they proved themselves to belong (Bryman, 2012; Charmaz, 2003).

Regarding the constructivist nature of qualitative inquiry, Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe the hermeneutic circle of data collection and analysis. The current study, being respectful of the mostly full-time employed, professional participants' time and the complexities of logistics, could not fully adhere to this hermeneutic interplay between purposive data collection and analysis by returning to the participants for additional data gathering or clarification. According to Rubin and Rubin (2011), the interviewer imposes on the time, emotion and energy of the participant, and should be mindful and respectful of that. Guba and Lincoln (1989) postulate that findings are then grounded in the respondent's own constructions, followed by the emergence of joint constructions, and this agreement is grounded in the constructions of the researcher and each participant. To establish the

credibility of the grounded construction, it is evaluated for "fit" in terms of its accountability to the data/findings/information provided. Further, does it "work" in providing a level of understanding that could be regarded as acceptable and sincere to the participants and to the researcher? The "relevance" of the joint constructions should be established by its ability to respond to the constructs, central issues, and processes that emerged during the inquiry situation, rather than responding primarily to an established theory. Guba and Lincoln (1989) emphasise the "modifiability" of the construction to change, and openness to include new information and enhanced interpretation. Instead of being overly specific, the research design is approached as emergent, because the researcher does not know what he or she does not know. The inquiry is a process of continuous refinement, directedness and definitiveness that entails re-tracing steps and leaping over stages in a methodology of cycles and recycles towards consensus. This process is followed by the case report describing the joint construction that developed from the hermeneutical dialectic circle of sense-making. The authors describe the collaborative, yin-yang, interactivity of design, developing theory, and the findings, as represented in a distinctive combination of researcher and participant values and judgments (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

With the qualitative research approach informed by grounded theory methodology, I aimed to be constructivist in that it was assumed that objective knowledge and truth is based upon perspective (Charmaz, 2003). The strategy I followed could be described as aiming for the ideal of objectivity, while acknowledging that I became part of the research process and thus could not remain wholly separate of and objective in this process. I recognised that "the world consists of multiple individual realities influenced by context" (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 26). As such, the process of categorisations were dialectical and active and the research reported was also viewed as a construction. The interaction between me and the interviewee involved a conversation and the interaction between me and the data led to creating (discovering) categories (Charmaz, 1990).

Constructivist grounded theory promulgates reconstructing theory or theory building (Charmaz, 2006. This investigation identifies with the theory-building aims of constructivist grounded theory by exploring the potential for theory or concept development with regards to the relationship between perceptions of relational authenticity and the casting of leadership behaviour as destructive. In addition, by exploring the potential mediating role of psychological capital in coping with destructive leadership behaviour, this study investigates the prospect to extend existing theory on destructive leadership and psychological capital. The approach in this inquiry can be regarded as postmodernist in that I affiliate with the

postmodernist scepticism that there exists an absolute, definitive, final version of reality; instead I seek in this inquiry to develop credibility for the version presented in the findings and my interpretation thereof, rather than implying that these findings and the interpretation of them is unequivocally right or wrong (Bryman, 2012).

4.3 Description of Participants

The following is a summary description of the participants as the sample group. In Chapter Five each participant is introduced as part of the reporting of the findings.

The participants were working people in the manufacturing-, retail-, financial services-, community services- and public sectors, who at the time of the study, reported to managers and who have either previously or at the time of the study experienced challenges with a manager's leadership style. More specifically, the majority of the participants were Black and White women, with one White male participant. The participants had in common that all had previously or at the time of study experienced a self-perceived *non-physical* destructive leadership relationship that included verbal, subtle, passive and less overt forms of abusive behaviour. This, however, *excluded* physical bullying and sexual harassment in all its forms. In order to explore the effect of length of time out of the challenging relationship with the manager on participants' sense-making, perceptions and coping, the sample also included workers who had been out of the destructive relationship for less than 24 months. Participant selection continued until the study deemed that, given the small sample size, sufficient theoretical saturation was reached; that is when the main themes were recurring and participants' responses demonstrated adequate similarities in their experiences with destructive leadership.

The participants completed a demographic questionnaire, which was used to ascertain social attributes, such as gender, race, age; socio-economic status indicators, such as highest qualification, employment status, and self-perception of social-economic class (Appendix C). Eight participants were women and one participant was male. Three participants identified themselves as Black on the demographic questionnaire and six participants identified as White. Of the Black participants, one participant preferred to self-identify as non-White, and another participant referred to herself as Indian.

The sample included two younger participants in the age category 18 to 29 (the so-called Generation Y, see Armour (2007), born roughly between 1978 and 1989) and an "older" group of 30 years plus, comprising six women and one male. Research indicates that

younger workers may relate differently to the relationship challenges with a manager (Armour, 2007; Starratt & Grandy, 2010).

Participant qualifications included one participant with grade 12/matric, one participant with a diploma, one participant with a bachelor's degree, two participants with an honours degree, three participants with a master's degree and one participant with a PhD. All participants were employed at the time of the study. Participants were employed at specialist and middle management job levels. Based on the class structure of South Africa 2008 (calculated from NIDS data) in Seekings (2010), social class was categorised as working-class, middle-class, upper-class or lower-class, and participants classified themselves within these designated class categories. One participant viewed herself as upper-class, seven participants considered themselves to be middle-class and one participant regarded himself as lower-class.

4.4 Recruitment of Participants

A purposive sampling procedure (Bryman, 2012) was used to recruit participants. Practitioners consulting to organisations were contacted and were asked to inform potential participants of the study. Potential participants who met the criteria were given information about the study by the consultant practitioners and were asked to contact me if they were interested in participating in the study. When I was contacted, I invited the interested individuals to take part in the study in their private capacity so as not to risk victimisation and to ensure confidentiality. Once contact was established, arrangements were made via their mobile telephones or their private e-mail addresses. In addition, through my work and interactions as a consultant, participants volunteered to make themselves available for interviewing when they, during casual conversation, became aware of the topic of my research. Snowball sampling occurred when two of the participants at the end of their respective interviews referred me to potential participants. One of the "chain-referred" potential participants decided to take part in the study. The interviews and surveys were conducted at my office or, when preferred by the participants, at their private premises or at a venue deemed suitable, private and within easy reach for the participants.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

As participants were invited to share a potentially unsettling experience with me, an interactive, conversational approach were adopted to facilitate rapport. **Semi-structured person-to-person interviews** (Appendix C), also using open-ended questions, were used to

gather data. Informed and guided by the literature, research questions were developed and formulated (White, 2009).

Prior to the interview, I communicated with the participants via e-mail and I spoke to all participants telephonically to arrange a time and place for the conversation. This pre-interview telephonic conversation also played an important role in "breaking the ice" and establishing rapport. Arriving for the actual interview, I spent some time initially "chatting" to participants so that we could "get a feel" for each other and to respond to any lingering questions or concerns the participants may have about taking part in the process. This pre-interview conversation included explaining to the participant the process that was about to follow, that involved reading and signing the official consent form and giving consent to audio-record the session (Appendix B); completing a short demographic questionnaire, reading a scenario between a follower and manager, engaging in an interview with me about their own experience, and at the end to complete a short five-minute questionnaire (Appendix C). Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw, or terminate the interview at any stage, and to have the audio-recording deleted.

Many participants were interested in knowing why I was investigating the topic of destructive leadership and I was open about my personal reasons and the shared experiences of clients, without going into the details thereof. These telephone conversations and pre-interview conversations seemed to be conducive to putting participants at ease. When participants realised that I have had a personal experience of a challenging experience with a manager, this visibly relaxed them (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

The interviews were originally planned to be approximately 60 to 90 minutes long, however, in reality, the length of interviews ranged from just over one hour to the longest lasting interview taking over two hours. Although some attempt was made to be considerate of the participants' time, interviews were largely allowed to run their course.

The interviews consisted of semi-structured questions that explored the objectives of the study as stated, as well as demographic information. After the consent form was completed and signed and the demographic questionnaire was completed, the interview process was initiated. The participants were presented with a hypothetical follower-manager relationship scenario to contextualise the interview questions and their engagement with their particular manager (Appendix C). Interviews were conducted in English and for three of the participants in Afrikaans. My mother-tongue is Afrikaans and I have a Bachelors' degree with Afrikaans-Nederlands and English at third year level. I had taught English as a second language at Secondary School level. The transcriptions of the interviews conducted in

Afrikaans were translated into English during the data management phase of the research process.

To complement and help elucidate and support the interview data, participants completed the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) at the end of the interview. Permission was obtained from Mind Garden Inc. to use the instrument for research purposes (Appendix D).

This questionnaire consists of 24 items and takes approximately five minutes to complete. The PCQ is comprised of four dimensions, namely Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism. Hope describes the respondent's agency or will power and pathways or way to power and is relevant to self-motivation, autonomy, and contingency actions. Efficacy describes an individual's confidence about his or her abilities to enable motivation, harness cognitive resources and undertake the courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific contextualised task. High efficacy individuals tend to set high goals for themselves and self-select into difficult tasks. They welcome and thrive on challenge, invest effort to accomplish goals, are self-motivated and persevering. Resilience is regarded as a dimension conducive to development. Resilient individuals have the inner resources to rebound from negative conditions, make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out. They have a generally positive view of self, have communication and problem-solving skills, and the ability to manage and control strong emotions and impulses. High scores on Optimism are suggestive of an attribution style that makes sense of positive events in terms of personal, permanent and enduring causes; and negative events as external temporary and situation-specific (Manual PCQ, Luthans et al., 2014, p. 10).

Each of the four PCQ scale scores is calculated by taking the mean (average) of all items in the scale. This generates an overall psychological capital score (PsyCap score), calculated by taking the mean of all the items in the PCQ. Some items are reverse scored (i.e., for these items "1" is scored as 6 and a "6" is scored as a "1"; a 2 is a 5 and a 5 is a 2 and a 3 is a 4 and a 4 is a 3). Reverse items are marked with "R". Efficacy items are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Hope items are 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Resilience items are 13R, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. Optimism items are 19, 20R, 21, 22, 23R, and 24 (Manual PCQ, Luthans et al., 2014).

Reliability estimates for the total psychological capital and each adapted measure from four sample populations found that the optimism scale in the second sample (.69) and the resilience scale in the third sample (.66) did not reach generally acceptable levels of internal consistency. However, the reliability of the overall psychological capital measure in all samples was consistently above conventional standards. The Cronbach alphas were: hope

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(.72, .75, .80, .76); efficacy (.75, .84, .85, .75); resilience (.71, .71, .66, .72); and overall psychological capital (.88, .89, .89, .89) (Manual PCQ, Luthans et al., 2014). Avey and colleagues, in the PCQ Manual (Luthans et al., 2014), found that self-ratings of individual performance showed about the same relationship with psychological capital as did ratings from supervisors/managers. The authors thus inferred that same source bias may be less of an issue for psychological capital compared to other constructs. It was also found that the impact of psychological capital is greater in some demographic samples than others. In this regard the psychological capital impact was found to be greater for United States of America based studies compared to outside the United States of America based studies (Avey and colleagues as cited in Luthans et al., 2014).

With regards to validity, previous studies (Luthans et al., 2014) and studies cited by Luthans and colleagues (Luthans et al., 2014) (see Bryant & Cvengros, 2004; Carifio & Rhodes, 2002; Magaletta & Oliver, 1999; Youssef & Luthans as cited in Luthans et al., 2014) showed empirically discriminant/convergent validity for each of the four constructs and that psychological capital was not related to age or education demographics, or the personality dimensions of Agreeableness or Openness. Psychological capital was found to have a strong positive relationship with core self-evaluations (.60) and a moderate relationship with Extraversion (.36) and Conscientiousness (.39). Various authors cited in the PsyCap Manual (Luthans et al., 2014), namely Chen and Lim (2012); Dawkins, Martin, Scott, and Sanderson (2013); Rego, Sousa, Marques, and Cunha (2012); and Woolley, Caza, and Levy (2011), demonstrated discriminant validity between psychological capital and perceived employability; creativity and authentic leadership; and authentic leadership and positive work climate. In terms of criterion validity, research results indicated that psychological capital had a slightly stronger relationship to job satisfaction, yet not significant ($p > .10$), than core self-evaluations, but that psychological capital was significantly stronger ($p < .001$) than core self-evaluations, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007).

A South African study by Du Plessis and Barkhuizen (2012) investigated whether Human Resource managers, who could be considered as the drivers and enablers of positive organisational behaviour and as facilitators of change, exhibit psychological capital. The authors examined the extent to which the concept of psychological capital as measured by the PCQ-24 is applicable to Human Resources (HR) practitioners in the South African context, as well as the level of psychological capital among HR practitioners in South Africa. Further, the authors investigated if there were any significant differences in self-perceived psychological capital between the four-factor scales of the PCQ-24 based on the demographic

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profiles of the HR practitioners. The authors reported that findings from this study did not compare fully with the four structure of the PCQ-24 as designed by Luthans, Avolio, and Avey (2007). Although the study by Du Plessis and Barkuizen (2012) does not question the discriminant validity of the original PCQ constructs, in the South African context, findings suggested that a three-factor analysis was more valuable. These factors were then renamed as Hopeful-Confidence (HC), Resilience (R), and Optimism (O) and the authors refer to their three-factor version of the four factor PCQ-24 as PSA-PsyCap. Findings indicated that HR managers self-perceived as high in Hopeful-Confidence, Resilience and Optimism. Results indicated that the three scales showed significant differences in terms of demographic variables. Participants at higher organisational levels showed higher levels of psychological capital than those participants at the lower levels of organisations. The results indicated that higher educated HR practitioners showed more optimism; participants older than 45 years scored higher in Hopeful-Confidence; and White respondents scored higher on Hopeful-Confidence than Black participants. The home language of the participants also differentiated with regards to the three factors. HR practitioners with traditional African home languages reported higher scores on Resilience compared to respondents with Afrikaans as a home language.

A study by Görgens-Ekermans and Herbert (2013) investigated the transferability of the PsyCap questionnaire (PCQ-24) to a South African context and reported on the instrument's internal validity, reliability and external validity with the theoretical variables stress, burnout and work engagement using a cross sectional survey design. The sample consisted of employees at managerial and non-managerial levels from a medium sized construction company in the Western Cape, South Africa. The main findings of the study indicated that preliminary evidence of construct validity, reliability and significant relations with external theoretically relevant variables were found. Although the authors found that the two sub-scales Resilience and Optimism obtained lower reliability values (below .70), the authors stated that researchers may use the PCQ-24 with confidence to measure the construct of psychological capital and investigate the relations with workplace outcomes in the South African environment and to inform human relations practices (Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013).

Research on the psychological well-being of call centre workers in South Africa found that through the development of psychological capital, call centre operators can be empowered with the resources to harness their psychological well-being at work, and to improve coping with major call centre stressors. This study in a South African context

concurred with the findings of Görgens-Ekermans and Herbert (2013) that the sub-scales Resilience and Optimism tend to obtain lower reliability values, however, it concluded that the PCQ-24 in its totality provided evidence of strong psychometric integrity (Van Wyk, 2016).

To maintain participant confidentiality, I subsequently captured participant responses from the hard copy reproduction of the questionnaire completed after the interview, onto the Mind Garden Inc. "online paid for channel" questionnaire using the participant pseudonyms generated for the purpose of keeping the participants' data anonymous. A psychological capital profile report for each participant was subsequently received with scores indicated for the psychological capital components of Hope, Efficacy, Resiliency, and Optimism as well as the total psychological capital score for each participant. From these individual psychological capital scores, I subsequently calculated an aggregated result on each of the psychological capital components, as well as the total psychological capital score, for the participants as a group.

Participants responded to the Psychological Capital Questionnaire statements "as to how they thought about themselves right at that moment" on a Likert scale of one to six, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to indicate the participant's perception of state at time of interview. The following are three examples of statements from the Psychological Capital Questionnaire:

> *I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area.*
> *At the present time I am energetically pursuing my work goals.*
> *If something can go wrong for me workwise, it will.*

The brief psychological capital survey formed part of the collected qualitative data and was used to augment qualitative interview findings and to facilitate exploration of the potential mediating role of psychological capital in coping with destructive leadership behaviour. As such, the study remains methodologically in its focus and positioning a qualitative study, while admitting into the inquiry available research methods considered conducive and complementary to exploring the research questions (Hanson et al., 2005).

4.6 Data Management and Analysis

The initial stage of data management involved the transcription of the interviews. I decided to transcribe all the interviews personally as the process of transcription brought me closer to the data. During the process of transcription, I was transported right back into the "moment" of the interview, enabling me to again experience every sigh, giggle, emotive response and

change in tone. By listening to the recordings and transcribing the interviews, I became familiar with the data (Rowley, 2012) and realised that it was important to be mindful of both the verbal and non-verbal data (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The act of transcribing the interviews also gave me the opportunity to experience my own role in the process of engagement and assisted in reflecting on the implications thereof (Berger, 2015; Bourke, 2014). During the transcription of the interviews I could also evaluate the interview process in that I became aware of my own interview style and realised that, for example, there were opportunities to probe further that I did not follow up on, instances where maybe I should have "let it go" instead of probing. This evaluation of the interview process, and my own interview style, is likely to improve my interview skills in the future (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Keeping paper and pencil at hand, a thematic analysis of the qualitative data was deployed by initially coding key points as extracted from the text while transcribing (a rough coding draft, so to speak), which was then repeated in a focused and more detailed manner on the printed transcriptions. These themes were then grouped into similar concepts, then formed into categories, which were then used as a basis to identify main discourses and unique variations.

Thematic analysis provides the researcher with a systematic method to identify, organise, and offer insights into patterns of meaning or themes across the data set. Thus, the researcher can make sense of shared meanings and experiences that are considered to be pertinent to the topic and the particular research question that is being explored. The method also allows the researcher to study a single aspect of a phenomenon in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The following six phase approach to thematic analysis is proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012): (1) Familiarise yourself with the data; (2) Generate initial codes; (3) Search for themes; (4) Review potential themes; (5) Define and name themes; and (6) Produce the report. Familiarising yourself with the data requires that the researcher get close to the data by actively reading and re-reading the transcripts of the interviews and listening to the audio recordings while making notes on the data as you listen and read. In the second phase, the systematic analysis of the data occurs through coding. Coding provides concise labels to data features that could be potentially relevant to the research question, and coding can be interpretive. During the searching for themes phase the analysis moves from coding to themes that identify patterns of responses or meaning that relate to the research question. The reviewing of themes is a type of quality check that ensures that relationships between the themes and the coded data and the data set are identified in their entirety. When a theme is

named it is important to denote what is unique, singular and essential about that theme. The final phase of reporting on the findings is integrated into the analysis process via the coding of the data, the making of notes, and the identification of themes; this does not only occur at the end of the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Guided by the literature on qualitative analysis and constructivist grounded theory, the initial analysis entailed reading through the transcripts a few times, while making notes in the margin in order to start identifying descriptive themes. Portions of data were transformed into descriptive codes. These descriptive codes summarised the content of the text. This line-by-line coding method encouraged me to stay close to the data. Focused coding was a second step that attempted to integrate these codes into broader, conceptual categories. Memo writing to hone and concentrate thinking took place throughout, from the initial raw coding phase through the various stages of analysis. Memo writing took place at the point of raw data, immediately during the interview and on the raw interview transcriptions, so as to maintain connections and facilitate direct examination. Interpretative categories linking initial codes together in terms of key ideas were visually presented on flip chart paper. In vivo categories were suggested by repeated phrases or metaphors used by participants. When each fragment started to become a duplicate of a fragment already documented, saturation was reached; as such there were no new variations on the theme (Charmaz, 1990, 2003, 2006; Giles, 2002; Saldaña, 2012).

The next stage of analysis occurred when most of the data had been sorted into basic categories. Via inductive and deductive thinking processes, axial coding took place, developing higher-order categories to illustrate links between initial categories. Finally, I considered the conceptual thread that tied all the higher-order categories together, the core category (Charmaz, 1990, 2003, 2006; Giles, 2002). The conceptual methodology of grounded theory (Glaser, 2002) informed the above process and guided me towards the ideal of sound conceptualising and theory making.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The sensitivity of the research topic, which investigates how followers cope with the perceived destructive behaviour of a direct manager towards them, required that the research process, the well-being of the participants, and confidentiality throughout the process be handled with great care. Referring to the ethics of care (Tronto, 1987), I had a moral responsibility to engage with the research process and the participants with empathy, mindfulness and care, while also being aware of the socio-political dynamic of the

engagement. The participants were at various stages of coping with the negative experience they had with a manager and were thus vulnerable in a situation where they were asked to re-visit the destructive experience. Therefore, I had to balance my personal need to investigate participants' attempts to cope and the needs of the research process, with the well-being of the participants. In doing this I was aware that I had to be mindful of the need for boundaries (Tronto, 1987). During the process of the investigation I also realised that participants differed in their personal needs for boundaries, with some participants being more guarded and others more forthcoming, and I tried to be respectful of those individual differences.

Mindful of the elevated risks in the research process, care was taken to provide privacy and confidentiality; protection of the participants and the data; as well as aftercare post-interview. Care was taken to acknowledge and respect the rights of the participants. I was mindful of the vulnerability of participants and that I had a duty of care to protect participants and to honour the safe-keeping of identities and interview conversations (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I communicated with the participants via their private e-mail addresses and/or personal mobile phone numbers, as opposed to using their business contact details. I anonymised the identities and particulars of the participants during the transcription process. Transcribing all the interviews myself added another layer of confidentiality protection for the participants. As such participants were informed about the aims of the research, as well as implications to themselves in taking part in the project; their participation was voluntary; and confidentiality about their identity would be preserved by: (a) not using their identities but rather assigning pseudonyms; (b) not divulging any organisational names or identifiers; and (c) ensuring that the data would be kept on a password encoded memory stick, in a locked filing cabinet, in my work office. The data will be deleted three years after submission of the dissertation.

Participants signed written consent to take part and were informed of their rights to withdraw at any stage of the process (Appendix B). The consent form signed by the participants, and of which each participant was given a copy to keep, provided the names and contact details of clinical and counselling psychologists who had made themselves available in case a participant should require follow up treatment as a result of participation in the research. As a psychologist, I was alert to do some debriefing and winding down with the participants towards the end of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I engaged with the participants to ensure that they were "ok" and, although I gave the participants the contact details of counselling psychologists "on standby", I personally followed up post-interview

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with participants who appeared to me to be unsettled. No requests for further referral were made by any participant.

I used WhatsApp and SMS because these forms of communication are both private and intimate; yet do not put the participant "on the spot" as a phone call would do. Not one of the participants, as far as I am aware, sought post-interview follow up. In line with my own observations, participants indicated that the process of engaging in discourse about the bad experience they had with a manager, although unsettling, also provided them with the opportunity to reflect on the experience in a more realistic manner and assisted them on the journey towards sense-making.

4.8 Reflexivity

Reflecting on my positionality during the interviews, I could be considered as both an insider and an outsider (Bourke, 2014). My social position in terms of gender, age, race, socio-economic grouping, and professional position, in obvious and subtle ways, are likely to impact on the relationship dynamic between the participants and me (Berger, 2015). Being aware of who I am, who I could be perceived to be and how "being me", influenced the engagement between the participants and me, and is an integral part of the research dynamic (Bourke, 2014). Because of a researcher's active role in the interview process by asking questions and probing, it is important that they are aware of their own attitudes and how a researcher's own positioning influences the questions they ask, how they ask them, and how they respond to answers. Researchers need to be aware of their own feelings and the feelings of participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Reflexivity encourages the researcher to be aware of their own history, their own issues (which in the South African context include the complex issue of racial positioning); and how I, the researcher, am positioned or situated in this dynamic. Therefore, qualitative research findings can best not be considered to be independent or objective; and are therefore essentially constructivist, with the research subjectively forming meaning from the participants' subjective narratives. The position of the researcher can influence the research process in terms of access to potential participants, as participants might be more willing to engage with a researcher who is in their social sphere. They may find it easier to share experiences with a researcher they perceive to be "like them" and thus more likely to be understanding of them. Further, the researcher's own history and worldview influences the way the information is gathered and interpreted (Berger, 2015).

I was likely to be viewed by the participants as a White, middle aged, middle-class woman, who is a psychologist and owner of a consulting business. Some of the participants could view me as an "insider" because of those demographics. I could be viewed as an "insider" because I also work professionally in the "people professions" as do many of the participants. For others, I may be considered an insider because I had a similar self-perceived destructive experience with a leader similar to that as the participants. My shared destructive leadership experience could, however, also render me an "outsider" to some participants, as they could feel that they need to compare and compete with what they may perceive my coping to be, and they may thus be reticent to share self-perceived notions of failing to cope. My personal needs for boundaries and self-protection with regards to my own coping could also encourage "outsider" status (Berger, 2015). Considering the diversity of the participants in terms of race, age and gender, the positionality of my social attributes could play a key role in impeding or facilitating engagement between the participants and me (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

During the interview I sensed that some participants were to an extent holding back and were understandably cautious. This could be due to various reasons, such as the challenges of creating trust and rapport in a once-off interview, the personality of the participants or having distanced themselves from the challenging experience they had with a manager as a way of coping with the experience. I was also mindful that some of the issues explored during the interview probed socio-political sensitivities and could perhaps be considered taboo in the South African context. I was therefore reluctant to probe too hard, being mindful that this was not a therapy session and that whatever distancing the participants employed, I had to be careful not to disturb that. Responsive interviewing is done in a gentle, non-confrontational and supportive manner and the interviewer imposes on the time, emotion and energy of the participant, for which the researcher should respond by giving the participant loyalty and protection (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Although I was from the outset mindful and cautious about the impact that re-visiting an experience, that for many would best be forgotten, could have on the participants, I was taken by surprise by how unsettling the experience was for me. Therefore, although my caution to probe too hard was informed by care and concern for the participants and an awareness of their socio-political sensitivities, I should not ignore that traces of my personal need for emotional self-preservation and personal socio-political sensitivities may have infiltrated into this complex dynamic between the participant and me (Berger, 2015).

While analysing the data I was self-aware about my phenomenological positioning. I, thus, attempted to bracket my interpretative lens, to refrain from premature positing and open myself to the data (Finlay, 2011). However, it may not be possible to completely isolate biased interpretation. Therefore, as complete impartiality may not be possible, bridling or holding back the researcher's own views to allow the phenomenon to present itself could be a more realistic way of dealing with the data. Thus, I was mindful not to reach conclusions and understand too quickly, but to interact with the data in a disciplined manner (Dahlberg, 2011).

I was careful to counter my own bias by journaling my reactions during the interview and during analysis. In order to increase trustworthiness and credibility in the interpretation of findings, I brought my own reactions during interviews, the raw participant interviews and the emerging themes to supervision; and the initial construction of themes and categories formed part of a consultative supervisory process. Thus, the supervisor took on the role of an external monitor to ensure sound constructions (Guba as cited in Krefting, 1991). By transcribing the interviews myself, I ensured that I stayed close to the raw data and this in-depth engagement with the interviews strengthened the truth value of interpretive constructions. Krefting (1991) advised that in order to increase the worth of the research findings, the distance between researcher and participant should be reduced. Although for logistical, ethical and confidentiality reasons, it was deemed that re-interviewing participants were not feasible, I mitigated this limitation by the steps taken above and by allowing interviews to run their course. Extensive extracts from my conversations with participants gave voice to the participants' experiences and also served to authenticate findings. In the next chapter, I present the findings of this study according to the themes and categories that emerged from my interviews with the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The main focus of this research was to explore followers' direct experiences with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisational contexts and coping strategies that were employed to engage with this behaviour. Further, the study was interested in follower perceptions of the characteristics of the phenomenon of destructive leadership behaviour. In this regard I particularly explored participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader (Eagly, 2005). To what extent does a follower's identification with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort) influence their coping processes? Furthermore, the study explored whether participants' psychological capital played a role in their coping process (Walumba et al., 2011).

Findings of the study are presented first at the individual level, presenting a profile description of each participant.

The findings presented here describe a "slice" of the participants' lives and, in particular, a "slice" of their work lives, that is, the participants' experience of coping with a challenging manager in a work context. Although the participants live full lives consisting of many facets, areas other than the participants' work lives were not the focus of this inquiry.

5.2 Summary Profile of each of the Participants

The following section provides a summary description of each participant and my interview impressions, as well as her/his description of the manager with whom s/he had a challenging relationship. To complement and support interview data, participants completed the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans et al., 2007). The descriptions below include the psychological capital findings for each participant.

In the reporting of findings, the participants are referred to by their pseudonyms and I refer to myself as "Bea". Managers and others mentioned in conversations are referred to by their pseudonyms. Potential other identifiers of participants and managers were disguised or removed.

5.2.1 Nadia

Nadia is a Black female in her late twenties. Her highest qualification is an Honour's degree. She views herself as middle-class. Her experience with this manager lasted approximately three years. She resigned from her position, and at the time of her conversation with me, she was employed at another organisation within her professional field.

5.2.1.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Nadia's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 4.8, Efficacy 5.7, Resiliency 4.7, and Optimism 4.8. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 5.[1]

> Nadia expressed her self-perceived confidence in her own sense of identity.
>
> *The manager's way of doing things, which, just leave me to _, I don't wanna be like you! I'm not gonna be, I want to stand up and do my own thing, just leave me to _. Ja. Ja.* (Nadia)

5.2.1.1.1   My Impressions during our Conversation

During the conversation Nadia came across as dynamic, energetic and ambitious. She emphasised the importance she assigns to high standards and integrity. Nevertheless, revisiting the challenging relationship she had with the manager described below was visibly distressing for Nadia and at times her voice became thin and plaintive. The impact of the experience was exacerbated by the fact that this was her first entry into the world of work and by her high need to make her parents proud of her and be deserving of all the opportunities her parents had given her. At the time of the conversation, describing how she had grown since the experience, she was focused on the positives she took from her relationship with this manager, and gives credit to the experience for making her more assertive and that it "toughened her up" in her dealings with others in a corporate environment.

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[1] Scoring and interpretation of component and total Psychological Capital scores: Each of the four PCQ scale scores is calculated by taking the mean (average) of all items in the scale. The overall Psychological Capital score is calculated by taking the mean of all the items in the PCQ. Each of the four dimensions of psychological capital has an interpretation on the construct measured. For example, the higher the score on Hope, the more hope an individual uses (Manual PCQ, Luthans et al., 2014, p. 11, 12).

5.2.1.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Nadia had the challenging relationship was female, White, in her mid-thirties, and at the time had an Honours degree. At the time of her experience, this person was manager of the department and Nadia reported directly to her. This manager left the organisation after Nadia had resigned. The manager was perceived to be middle- to upper-class and of higher income than Nadia.

5.2.2 Nina

Nina is a White female in her late-twenties. Her highest qualification is a Master's degree. She views herself as upper-class. Her experience with this manager lasted approximately two years. She resigned from her position to move away from the destructive relationship, and at the time of her conversation with me, she was employed within her professional field at another organisation.

5.2.2.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Nina's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 4.8, Efficacy 4.3, Resiliency 4.7, and Optimism 5. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 4.7.

Nina expressed her self-perceived tendency to reflect on experiences and manage her responses.

> *I think I would, I'm typically just kind of take a step back to kind of look at everything, to reflect on, to just wrap my head around what's happened now. So, then I'd try like map out want went wrong. So, I kinda like to break it down, and from then on to kinda just see if there was something I could have done and can still do to kind of rectify that. And if I can't, to just, ideally, I just really try to learn from my mistake, and then in the next kind of situation, to kind of, ja, learn from that.* (Nina)

5.2.2.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

Nina appeared somewhat reserved and self-contained, with a positive, matter of fact approach. For Nina, the challenging relationship with a manager took place at her first entry into the world of work. Though outwardly appearing quietly confident, interview impressions were that she might tend to "hold back" and she showed signs of fatigue. She believed that

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she was able to "let go" of the experience by focusing on the positive experiences the position brought her, such as enabling her to fund her studies towards her Master's degree and the long-lasting friendships she had made in her team.

5.2.2.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Nina had the challenging relationship was female, White, in her mid-thirties, and at the time had a Bachelor's degree. At the time of her experience, this manager was head of the organisation and Nina reported directly to her. At the time of our conversation, this manager was still with the organisation in the same capacity.

5.2.3 June

June is a White female in her early-forties. Her highest qualification is an Honour's degree. She views herself as middle-class. She resigned from her position. Impressions are that she experienced her resignation as having been coerced by the organisation. Her experience with this manager lasted approximately four years. At the time of her conversation with me, she was employed within her professional field at another organisation.

5.2.3.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, June's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 5.5, Efficacy 5, Resiliency 5, and Optimism 4.7. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 5.

June expressed her self-perceived tendency to stay hopeful of finding a solution to problems.

> *... see if there is a way for me. It's very important to try and find alternative solutions. There is always an answer.* (June)

5.2.3.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

June initially came across as somewhat reserved and formal in her engagement with me, as if she needed to be careful not to "let go" too much. As the conversation progressed, she became visibly distressed and emotional while "re-visiting" her experiences with the manager. Although at the time of the interview she still experienced ambiguity about what had happened between her and the manager, and struggled to make sense of the antecedents

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that lead to the experience, she was on the cusp of entering a new phase in her career and expressed confidence and hope for the future.

5.2.3.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom June had the challenging relationship was female, Black, similar in age to June, and at the time had a diploma. At the time of her experience, this manager was manager of the department and June reported directly to her. This manager is still with the organisation, although in a reduced role. The manager was perceived to be middle-class, though viewed as perceiving herself as upper-class, and of higher income than June.

5.2.4 Linda

Linda is a White female in her early-forties. She was at the time of our conversation reporting to this manager and had been reporting to him for a period of four years. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor's degree. She views herself as middle-class.

5.2.4.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Linda's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 4.3, Efficacy 5.3, Resiliency 4.8, and Optimism 4. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 4.6.

Linda's self-perceived "in general" good efficacy according to her results on the psychological capital measurement, was not reflected in her expressed confidence at work in her relationship with her manager. However, she expressed more confidence and felt more enabled when she was with her clients.

> *I have more confidence with my clients than in my workplace or at the office. The reason is because they do not really care about what I have to say anyway. My opinion does not get asked. They do not recognise that I add value. So, no, I have no self-confidence. I speak when spoken to kind of thing. Um, yes, So, no, I have no self-confidence at work to start something. Yes […] So, if he does not want to change and do something deliberately about the situation, it will never change, and I cannot do anything about it. So, no, I, no.* (Linda)

5.2.4.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

At the time of our conversation, Linda appeared confident, though somewhat tired from the combined effects of work, family responsibilities and a bad cold. She seemed to have quite a good understanding of the contextual interfaces between the manager with whom she was having a challenging relationship, the organisational demands, and her own position in the midst of all of this. Nevertheless, she struggled with the decision whether to leave the organisation or to stay, and she was ambiguous about her current situation and the future of her career. She gave the impression of being "in limbo".

5.2.4.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Linda was having a challenging relationship was male, White, early fifties, and at the time of our conversation had a Bachelor's degree. At the time of her experience, this manager was manager of the department and Linda reported directly to him. The manager was perceived to be either middle-class or upper middle-class and of higher income than Linda.

5.2.5 Anna

Anna is a Black female in her late-thirties. At the time of her conversation with me, although she was in employment at the same organisation in her professional capacity, she no longer reported to the manager with whom she had a challenging relationship. Her highest qualification is a PhD. She viewed herself as middle-class. Her experience with this manager lasted approximately five months.

5.2.5.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Anna's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 4.8, Efficacy 5.5, Resiliency 4.8, and Optimism 4.5. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 4.9.

> Anna expressed her self-perceived strong sense of self and belief in her abilities.
> *You are used to performing very well. So, you are naturally a high performer, so that always has similar results. Because you perform very well, so you [laughs] don't really have problems with your teacher [laughs], because you perform very well. But then you get into the workplace and that changes, because it's no longer the teacher*

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and you. So, you, still consistently perform. You outperform. You perform very well. You've got very high standards in your performance. And then that becomes a problem, if that almost challenges the person that you're reporting to. (Anna)

5.2.5.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

Anna exuded maturity, warmth and goodwill in the way she related to me. She engaged with the conversation themes in a thoughtful, knowledgeable, analytical and sincere manner. She seemed to be able to re-group after having experienced set-backs and her responses suggest a tendency to navigate her work environment so as to seek pathways to achieve her career aspirations. In this regard she was willing to put in the time and effort that is required to accomplish positive outcomes for herself in the future.

5.2.5.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Anna had the challenging relationship was female, Black, in her mid-forties, and at the time had a diploma. At the time of her experience, this manager was acting manager of the section and Anna reported directly to her. This manager is still with the organisation, although in a reduced role. The manager was perceived to be middle-class and of higher income than Anna.

5.2.6 Gail

Gail is a Black female in her late-thirties. Her highest qualification is a Master's degree. She views herself as middle-class. Gail's experience with the manager that she initially reported to, and the relationship that she regarded as having been the most impactful, lasted approximately one year. She reported to the manager that followed for close to five years. At the time of our conversation, although employed in her professional capacity at the same organisation, she was no longer reporting to these managers.

5.2.6.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Gail's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 5, Efficacy 5, Resiliency 4.7, and Optimism 5. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 4.9.

Gail's self-perceived hopefulness, efficacy and optimism are reflected in her words below.

> *I try, and I almost have the capability to, almost, take the emotions out of it and park it one side, for a second, and look at things from an objective perspective and say to myself, ok, what has just happened here now from[an] objective perspective. Um, is there merit in terms of how this person is behaving? Um. What can I do about it? Is there something I can do about it? Do I wanna do something about it? Is it gonna really make a difference? Um, and what's gonna be the impact? And kinda try and deal with that from an objective perspective and afterwards, bring the emotions, after I've taken action in an objective way. Then to bring the emotions in and then I kind of _, I might beat myself up or feel the impact in terms of the setback, but then eventually move on from it.* (Gail)

5.2.6.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

Gail came across as "bubbly", spontaneous, talkative, open and sincere. At the time of my conversation with her, she was on leave pending the commencement of a promotion position at a new organisation. She was thus excited and positive about what the future held for her. My impression was that for Gail the conversation was an opportunity to, at one level, add value to the body of academic knowledge, and at another level, was to an extent a catharsis for her – a way of leaving the bad experience with a manager or managers behind in anticipation of a new career beginning.

5.2.6.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Gail had the most challenging relationship was male, Black (identified by Gail as brown), late thirties, and at the time had a matric. At the time of her experience, this manager was manager of the department and Gail reported directly to him. This manager has left the organisation. The manager that followed was female, Black, late thirties, and at the time had a diploma. This manager is still with the organisation, though in a reduced role capacity. Both managers were perceived to be high middle- to upper-class (or aspiring to upper class) and of higher income than Gail.

5.2.7 Susan

Susan is a White female in her mid-forties. Her highest qualification is a diploma. She viewed herself as middle-class. Her experience with the manager with whom she had a challenging

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relationship lasted approximately two years, until he left the organisation. At the time of her conversation with me, Susan was employed in her professional field at the same organisation.

5.2.7.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Susan's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 4.3, Efficacy 4.3, Resiliency 4.5, and Optimism 3.3. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 4.1.

Susan, describing her self-perceived energy levels, illustrated her tendency to carry on, despite experiencing days where she feels emotionally low.

> *Yesterday it was very low … because it was one of those days that I did not want to go to work. […] And then one just continues. [Laughing.]* (Susan)

5.2.7.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

At the start of our conversation, Susan seemed apprehensive, though she soon opened up to share her experience in a raw, direct and emotional telling. At the time of the conversation Susan still struggled with making sense of the experience. She came across as emotionally vulnerable and appeared unsettled after our conversation. At the time of our conversation she was on medication for depression. She declined professional assistance from the psychologists available as part of this study, as she had access to a psychologist she was already seeing. In follow up with Susan after the conversation, she indicated that she was fine and that she regarded it as a "pleasure" to have taken part in the study.

5.2.7.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Susan had a challenging relationship was male, White, in his early sixties, and had a professional qualification. At the time of her experience, this manager was initially in a general manager position at the organisation, though he was demoted to a lower position during that period. He was subsequently dismissed from the organisation. The manager was perceived to be upper class, and of higher income than Susan.

5.2.8 Mary

Mary is a White female in her late-fifties. Her highest qualification is a Master's degree. She views herself as middle-class. She experienced challenging relationships with two managers.

Her experience with the "first" manager lasted approximately five years, until he left the organisation. Although she experienced the relationship with the manager who replaced him as also challenging, the relationship with the "first" manager is experienced by her as having had a greater and longer lasting impact. She resigned from her position at the organisation, and at the time of her conversation with me, she was self-employed within her professional field.

5.2.8.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of her conversation with me, Mary's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that her perception of her personal attributes, with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 3.5, Efficacy 5.7, Resiliency 5.3, and Optimism 2.5. Her total score with regards to PsyCap was 4.3.

> Mary explained her tendency to keep "pushing on" in the face of adversity.
> *I just push harder. […] [laughs] Like a maniac. I used to say to myself at Organisation E, used to remind myself repeatedly that it is like Einstein used to say, it is the first sign of madness that if you keep doing something and getting the same result, but you keep on carrying on doing it …* (Mary)

5.2.8.1.1   My Impressions during our Conversation

Mary came across as sincere, altruistic, emotionally sensitive and intellectually oriented. For Mary, having a meaningful existence and meaningful work life that contributed to the "greater good" seemed to be essential to her well-being and central to her identity. When she found herself in a situation where these personal needs collided with the reality of the values, restrictions and bureaucracy of the organisational context, she found herself at a loss for how to respond. Mary, in her own words and in my observations, was, at the time of our conversation, still struggling emotionally to cope with the aftermath of her experience with the manager or managers. Even so, she declared at the end of the conversation, that re-visiting the experience or experiences, though unsettling, also gave her a degree of perspective.

5.2.8.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Mary had the most challenging relationship was male, Black, in his fifties, and may have had a Master's degree, although she was not sure. At the time of her

experience, this manager was head of the department and Mary reported directly to him. He eventually left the organisation after an extended period on sick leave. The manager was perceived to be upper middle-class and of higher income than Mary. The "second" manager Mary had a difficult relationship with was female and Black, and although she did describe the actions of this manager, she did not elaborate on this manager's social attributes.

5.2.9 Fritz

Fritz is a White male in his late-thirties. His highest qualification is matric. He viewed himself as working-class. Fritz's experience with the manager with whom he had a challenging relationship lasted approximately one year. At the time of our conversation, he was no longer reporting to this manager, though he was employed in his professional capacity at the same organisation.

5.2.9.1 Psychological Capital

At the time of his conversation with me, Fritz's Psychological Capital self-rated results on the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007) indicated that his perception of his personal attributes with regards to the Psychological Capital components, were Hope 5.3, Efficacy 5.8, Resiliency 5.2, and Optimism 5. His total score with regards to PsyCap was 5.3.

> Fritz expressed his self-perceived confident, "can do" attitude towards life in general. *Look, every day something new happens. So, and yes, as they say history always repeats itself. So, I think it would be stupid not to learn from your mistakes or from the mistakes of others. So, in general, and in my work, it is a question of learning from mistakes. Take the punch on the chin and learn from it. It becomes a problem when you are about to make the same mistake as before, because you did not learn from it the first time. Then it would be to be like a donkey that bumps its head more than once. They say a smart donkey will bump his head only once.* (Fritz)

5.2.9.1.1 My Impressions during our Conversation

Fritz came across as having a no-nonsense approach to things, approaching challenges in an energetic and realistic manner. He engaged in a sincere and committed manner with the conversation themes. At the time of my conversation with him, he was enjoying the sport challenges he took part in. He was re-focused on his personal, work, and family goals. At the

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end of our conversation he declared that the opportunity to talk about the experience helped him to gain perspective.

5.2.9.1.1.1 Manager Profile

The manager with whom Fritz had a challenging relationship was male, White, late thirties, and at the time had a diploma. At the time of his experience, this manager was a team manager and Fritz reported directly to him. The manager was perceived to be middle-class and of higher income than Fritz.

The following table summarises the participants' individual profiles, psychological capital (PsyCap) findings and pertinent duration indicators.

Table 5.1

Summary of Participants' Individual Profiles, Individual Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Findings and Pertinent Duration Indicators

Participant	Age	Race	Highest Qualification	Approximate Duration of Follower/Manager Relationship	Approximate Length of time "out of" since Follower/Manager Relationship	Lowest PsyCap Score*	Highest PsyCap Score*	Total PsyCap Score Ranked
Fritz	30s	White	Gr 12	1 year	1 year	5.2 R	5.8 E	5.3
Nadia	20s	Black	Hons Degree	3 years	1 year	4.7 R	5.7 E	5
June	40s	White	Hons Degree	4 years	2 years	4.7 O	5.5 H	5
Anna	30s	Black	PhD	5 months	1 year	4.5 O	5.5 E	4.9
Gail	30s	Black	M Degree	1st manager 1 year 2nd manager 5 years	2 years	4.7 R	5 HEO	4.9
Nina	20s	White	M Degree	2 years	1 year	4.3 E	5 O	4.7

Linda	40s	White	B. Degree	4 years	Current at time of conversation	4 O	5.3 E	4.6
Mary	50s	White	M Degree	1st manager 5 years 2nd manager	6 months	2.5 O 3.5 H	5.7 E	4.3
Susan	40s	White	Diploma	2 years	1 year	3.3 O	4.5 R	4.1

*Key: H = Hope / E = Efficacy / R = Resiliency / O = Optimism

5.3 Thematic and Categorical Overview of Findings

The following section presents the findings with regards to the emerging themes and categories from the interview data. Although the findings are presented in a linear, sequential manner, for the purposes of sense-making in Table 5.2, themes and categories overlap and are integrated in various ways. The integration of themes and categories will be discussed in Chapter Six.

At the second level, the interview data provided by the nine participants will be analysed globally to extract the dominant themes emerging from their experiences with destructive leadership in their organisation context: participants' implicit beliefs about leadership; participants' values; participants' perceptions about what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour; the effects of destructive leadership behaviour on participants, manager and work unit; participants' coping strategies with destructive leadership – exploring the role of participant psychological capital; and participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader.

Table 5.2

Overview of the Thematic and Categorical Findings

Implicit Beliefs about Leadership 'in general'	Participants' Values	Perceptions about what Constitutes DL Behaviour	Effects of DL Behaviour on Participants	Coping strategies with DL - Exploring the role of PsyCap	Perceptions of Relational Authenticity with the Leader
Positional Competency	Purpose	Dispositional Aspects	Participant	Differential Coping	Positional Competence
• Knowledge • Clarity of Purpose	Integrity	Relational Aspects	Destructive Manager Self	• Control Attempts • Distancing Attempts • Seeking Self-Affirmation • Positive/Negative Self-Nurturing • Religion/Spirituality • Social and Family Support • Re-Directing Cognitions	Values
Dispositional or Trait Aspects	Religion/ Spirituality		Work Unit		Social Attributes
• Self-Aware • Self-Regulation • Self-Confidence • Integrity	Social and Family Connectedness		• Tasks/Goals • Other team Members	Participant's PsyCap	Personality/Trait
Humanistic / Democratic Interpersonal Style	Finding Joy				

Key: DL = Destructive Leadership

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5.3.1 Participants' Implicit Beliefs about Leadership "in general"

Participants' implicit beliefs about leaders are presented under the following categories: positional competency; dispositional or trait aspects; and humanistic and democratic interpersonal style.

5.3.1.1 Positional Competency

5.3.1.1.1   Knowledge

Participants believed that leadership in general entailed having appropriate knowledge, skills or competencies and experience for the leadership positions.

> *Um, the person would be able to lead [Bea: ehum], be knowledgeable and professional, but also someone with whom I can engage [Bea: ehum]. He must be prepared to acknowledge my age and experience that I have and who could out argue me, disagree with me, overrule me … fine … that person is my manager, but would like it if it could have someone with whom I could talk, present ideas, an, an, an, an, [stutters] and then leave the final decision to, to that manager.* (Mary)

> *Then also that there _, you should also be competent [Bea: ehum] in your area. Competent, not always hands on competent, but know your area that you are managing.* (Anna)

> *He is not competent to do so. He is not a bad person, but he is not a leader. He is not a manager. He always has excuses. He is supposed to take a decision based on his knowledge. When his MD or Financial Director query him, he can explain his decision. Either right or wrong. When you are in that position you must be willing to make wrong decisions as well, and to live with it, and to learn from it. But he does not take any decisions.* (Linda)

> *… who had quickly walked up the ranks, but that wasn't enough for him to cope with his own insecurities. Um. So, in terms of a qualification perspective, even though I was the junior member in the team, my qualifications were higher than his qualifications and other persons in the team _, their qualifications were more than his qualifications. So, we were all from a qualifications perspective, we were all higher educated reporting into him; who was still working on obtaining an education that would put him on par with some of us in the team. So, you almost picked up on that he*

was insecure about those kinds of things; and when we did challenge him at an intellectual level, you could see that he wasn't 'ok' with that. (Gail)

5.3.1.1.2 Clarity of Purpose

Gail and June associated leadership with particular expectations in terms of clarity of tasks and purpose.

So, for me it's more a partnership. It's more, we working together towards a common goal. Instead of being told, this is what you need to do. Um, without being given context, without checking if I'm ok with it, understand what is required or understand what success is supposed to look like. (Gail)

That gives me a good idea of what they [are] expecting. (June)

5.3.1.2 Dispositional or Trait Aspects

The following examples illustrate participants' expectations about the characteristics of a leader in terms of personality, disposition or trait aspects. Participants valued leaders who are perceived to be *self-aware*, *self-regulate* their behaviour and behave with *integrity*. One of the participants referred to the *self-confidence* or "guts to" lead as one of the characteristics of an ideal leader.

Anna compared her ideal leader to a teacher in the classroom. For her, emotional intelligence was an important asset for a leader to have. Anna believed that a leader should be able to have emotional self-awareness and good social-awareness, with the ability to "read" others and regulate their own behaviour.

Yes. The teacher in the classroom, even though you've got these learners that have different personalities, aggressive personalities, etcetera, the teacher in the classroom is the manager in the classroom, so the teacher in that position should almost like know better, manage it a little better if there is confrontation etcetera. So, to me EQ plays a very very ... (Anna)

Um, so that person would you know have self-confidence within themselves. They are grounded very well. They are very well centred just as a person. Um, because in that as well, if they have a very, fairly high EQ, they are then able to also um, I would assume make good decisions, more often than less. Um, because they are grounded and they are able to be objective regardless of the situation at hand. (Anna)

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Um you should also have a lot of patience I think, because you can be tested often and pending on the level of management that you find yourself in, then you should be able to you know work very well under pressure, because that can happen all day, every day [laughs]. And then so your temper you must manage as well. (Anna)

A leader is expected to behave with integrity. Participants expected honesty and trustworthiness from leaders and associated those behaviours closely with respectfulness and consistency. Although participants did not expect a leader to share their particular religion, they expressed the expectation that leaders behave in ways that reflects religious values.

To be open and direct. When I have made a mistake, I want to be told openly. And be given the chance to rectify my mistake. I don't like things to happen behind my back. (Susan)

Susan continued in this vein:

I believe in openness and honesty. I believe … um … there are principles. One must treat people fairly. Um, mutual respect. I mean, I believe in God, but I do not want to enforce it on you, although I know myself and that I believe in God and live accordingly. I just don't tell everybody. The way I am at work and the way I treat people reflects how I believe in God and in what He does for me. (Susan)

Um. Reliability. Um. To be able to rely on someone. Almost the same as being trustworthy. Um, and then also definitely to be religious. I would not enforce my religion on someone else, and I expect the same from the other person, but when someone shows me … um … integrity and reliability and can be friendly, then it already makes it easier for me. It counts a lot. It would be a person with whom I could go a long way. (Fritz)

Ahh supportive, respectful hmm trying to think of the right word … what they say, their actions should match what they say. You know, it's consistent. It's not two faced. (Nina)

Mary referred to having the self-confidence or "guts" to lead and make decisions.

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And not be threatened and not be, uh, ja, I don't want to sound arrogant, but … um … ja, be democratic, if that makes sense. Be, be democratic and also lead as well. Be, have the guts to lead or this not gonna work or for this reason or this is my decision, so I do not expect to, to do well with the hierarchy, but I do think, um, engagement is important. (Mary)

5.3.1.3 Humanistic and Democratic Interpersonal Style

Participants described their ideal leader to be a person who *recognises their individuality*, and *lead in democratic ways* that allow participants to execute tasks independently. The ideal relationship dynamic is one in which leaders *support*, *develop* and *mentor* participants in a partnership based on *mutual respect*.

Um. So for me I think it's someone who attempts to understand the unique contribution that I am giving to the workplace and utilise me in such a way that I am able to contribute in a meaningful way um to the overall objectives of the organisation and work with me as someone who can contribute and add value and be supportive and seek to understand and help me to achieve um the best that I can possibly reach in the organisation. Develop, ja to be supportive from a development perspective but also encourage and work in a collaborative manner. (Gail)

Gail continued:

So, for me it's more a partnership. It's more, we working together towards a common goal. Instead of being told, this is what you need to do. Um, without being given context, without checking if I'm ok with it, understand what is required or understand what success is supposed to look like … um … and, ja, really just work with me, a partnership as opposed to dictating what I am supposed to do, and making me feel I'm a child in this relationship. It's more an adult relationship as opposed to adult-child relationship. (Gail)

To me the ideal manager would be someone that can manage me. Someone that always … um … that can always support me or can help me through difficult times or in need. Um, but not only during those times. Also, when I experience a problem or when I have made a mistake. Someone that can help me to learn from it. That can take my hand and tell me … um … about the consequences. And how to handle it. Um, to show me how it should have been handled instead. Um, and to me it is about a

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manager that has my best interest at heart and does not have a superior attitude. Good, you as subordinate will always be aware of who your manager is. Um, and you would show due respect towards your manager. As soon as a manager forces down that respect, then you would lose respect. So, for me pers_ [cuts off word], in my case … um … I am fortunate that the manager I have at present – I would go to all lengths to make sure that she is satisfied with what is to be done. When she would ask me to do something I would leave everything else to make sure she is happy, because that is the kind of person I would want to be for her, because she totally earns that loyalty. (Fritz)

… but that would leave the implementation to my own ideas. Ahm has an open-door policy or just knowing that if I do get stuck, I can go and ask a question. But definitely not somebody that is constantly, you know, micromanaging and, and looking at the small things. (June)

Participants preferred to engage with managers in an open and face-to-face manner in a partnership, if not of equal rank, of respect.

So, in that sense I would ideally like … mm … to have an open communication with my manager, and to, and it does not necessarily have to speak to my manager every day, but I feel that I have to need to have that communication channel. Honest and kind of constructive and not have a negative light. So, in terms of that –. And ideally, I would like to learn from a manager as well I would like to have that sort of mentorship … hm … and relationship with him as well. So, to learn from them as much as I can on a daily basis until I get to that kinda plateau, I can't learn from them anymore. Aaand [sighs] Ja I think that kinda comes to mind as to how I would like to have that relationship with my manager. (Nina)

Definitely … um … mutual respect once you speak to each other. I think that's important, mutual respect. Um. Just speaking about things in a job setting, so that there are no other people. So, if he or she wants to tell you something or give feedback, it should be in a setting that you two alone [inaudible]. (Nadia)

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Well, literally body language. The way he or she approaches you. Um. Giving feedback, ja, the way they approach you when they want to discuss something. Ja [very softly]. (Nadia)

I prefer to work with a participative leader. And obviously it must be someone that knows what it is that he asks of me, and when I reply he must believe and trust me. He must not doubt me. I will not lie. (Susan)

I think that I, to me because I like to talk, then a conversation around the matter would be ideal [Bea: mm], instead of, like you find some managers that ⌣, they, they enjoy managing through emails. So, but, emails for example, you can miss the boat completely. It becomes totally misinterpreted, because you're not ⌣, what you receive, you interpret and maybe that was not the intention. So, I think when you are able to actually have a conversation, where we understand that both of us, we are adults and, not just adults, but we are professionals as well. Because if we are professionals, we would automatically know how to treat each other as professionals in the first place. So, if you are professional and you are able to have a conversation around a matter that you need to address, then I would prefer that kind of setup [Bea: mm] where you can, you know [Bea: mm] not embarrass me in front of other people [Bea: mm], or whatever … (Anna)

Fritz referred to the need for kindness in the interaction between a leader and follower.

The human nature of it. The fact that nobody wants to be ordered about. Nobody wants this mico-management forced upon you. You want to feel, um, you do not want to be treated like a five-year old that gets told to clean his room immediately. You want to feel that you also count in a conversation, as if you count in the business. And where that human kindness comes in is where you need to be told that you have made a mistake, or you need to be told what to do. How to get to a certain point, instead of becoming demotivated all the time. (Fritz)

Participants' implicit beliefs about leadership in general described a need to be able to trust that their leader has the knowledge; competencies and disposition to provide clarity and purpose in work goals. Participants conveyed their beliefs that

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ideally for them the manner and style in which the ideal leader direct work activities are characterised by a leader-follower relationship that denotes respect and follower affirmation.

5.3.2 Participants' Values

During their conversations with me, participants referred to personal values that included having a sense of *purpose*, living with *integrity* and r*espectfulness. Religion or spirituality* and *social connectedness* were mentioned as values that sustained some participants.

5.3.2.1 Purpose

Nina, Mary and Gail reflected on how they value having to respond to challenge, working towards an achievement, and living a life and doing work that adds value and have meaning.

> *… hmm for me if _, ok, so, I've always been very interested in learning. So, for me, whether it's school or profession or doing some random course … ahm that's very important for me.* (Nina)

Nina added:

> *I would almost want to say chall_ [challenge], continuously thriving in your professional development. I don't know how to kinda put that in one, but to continuously develop yourself in your profession …* (Nina)

> *Achieving. Um, and doing my job really well, to the best of my ability, and if I fail thereafter, I don't mind. As I say so often to my kids and even my husband, not trying is unacceptable, failing is fine. It is fine if you can't do it, but not, giving up or not trying it's_, is just not in my soul. I can't do that, which is a bit OCD I know [laughs]. So that's quite important. And also … um, this may sound inappropriate or a bit off the wall, but it is important to me politically to know that my work is in some way related to building a democracy. It has always been_ and I wouldn't be happy working in a_, in another environment. I don't think I would like to, for say, the private sector. I wouldn't feel satisfied.* (Mary)

> *So, it is important for me to feel that I'm adding value. I never want to be in a situation where I spend a whole day at work or whole week [laughs] and haven't contributed in a meaningful way. So, I want to walk at the end of the month with my*

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salary and feel I <u>worked</u> for this. I meaningfully contributed. I made a difference. So, in terms of the work environment I see myself as I'm delivering a service. Um, so I want to see that I delivered a service in such a way that I made a difference. So, making that difference, delivering a service has got a positive impact on the overall outcomes of the individuals I work with. That's important. And also having that 'ok' from my line manager to say, um, well done or this is the parts you really done well. Maybe here is what you need to do to improve on the following. So, also, ja, getting that confirmations of where I'm at but in a supportive manner. (Gail)

5.3.2.2 Integrity

Living lives of integrity in terms of how they do their work, their relationships with others and being true to themselves in their work life, was an important value for participants.

Referring to integrity June said the following:

It means honest, reliable, dependable, ahm … that people never doubt that you are doing anything that you are not meant to do. Ahm … that they can trust, ja, trust you implicitly with anything and know that it would remain confidential and will be dealt with in a correct manner and that you are not using it to harm them. (June)

Well, respect is important to me. Honesty, integrity, all those. Um. Ja. Mutual respect. (Nadia)

Um, in my work environment, diligence, reliability, friendliness, um … etiquette, integrity – those things make my work easier. Um, as soon as my clients start …, as soon as I gained my clients' trust, then my job gets much easier. (Fritz)

Fritz continued:

You must be ethical in your work. When you know that there are two ways to do something – the one is the easier way, but it could be wrong, and the other the longer way, but the right way – when you have to choose and you realise that through the one you could lose your job and through the other not, then you choose the right way without any harm to anything. (Fritz)

I would say it is be true to yourself. Be authentic in terms of who you are. I really struggle with situations where people want me to be mini versions of them. But I try

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and understand who I am, um, and work with me as opposed to make me who you are. Um. Trusting me is also important. So I like to work autonomously, so if you don't trust me, ja, then that's a bit of a challenge. Integrity is another one. So, ja, just in terms of when you say something, then stick to that and if you can't then upfront that with me. I don't like surprises. Um. Um, and <u>hard work</u>, um, is important for me. And I am playing a positive role in others' lives. Those are important values for me. And, ja, planting a positive seed in someone else. Ja. (Gail)

Gail added:

Because then I'm failing myself. Because not so much about the next person, but I'd feel that I can't really add value. So, ja. I think that for me is worst, when I feel I can't be true to myself, that I can't deliver <u>my</u> best. I feel then that I'm letting someone else down in that way. Ja. (Gail)

5.3.2.3 Religion/Spirituality

Participants valued the comfort they receive from having a spiritual life and perceive their daily lives to be guided by their religious beliefs.

I believe in openness and honesty. I believe … um … there are principles. One must treat people fairly. Um, mutual respect. I mean, I believe in God, but I do not want to enforce it on you, although I know myself and that I believe in God and live accordingly. I just don't tell everybody. The way I am at work and the way I treat people reflects how I believe in God and in what He does for me. (Susan)

Susan continued:

You know, when someone comes to my office with a personal problem, I cannot judge that person. I have to listen, as I need it too, because God listens to me every day. That is why I have to listen to the other person's problem. Not only problems as such. Sometimes people only want to talk. To allow people. People want to be listened to. (Susan)

Generally, values like family, ethical standards, um, God. Godly things that motivates me to be a better person. So that is the drivers that is behind me. Knowing my family has my back and God has my back and um, yes, ehum [very softly]. (Nadia)

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Um, to me my spirituality is also important as well, so that are all areas that I draw my strength from. So, ja. (Anna)

5.3.2.4 Social and Family Connectedness

The following examples illustrate the value participants place on being connected to their families and friends.

Ok. Obviously, my child is now important. It is most important, as well as my family. But then balance in my life is now important for me. We talked earlier … and my work is my priority, but my child and my family are also priorities. So, it is important to <u>me</u> to find that balance. Um, and to me as person that is difficult, because I was always one hundred percent committed to my work. One hundred and ten percent committed. And I do not say that I am not committed one hundred and ten percent any more, but I have something else that requires one hundred and ten percent from me too. And obviously my family demands a bit more. Um, that is how it is. So, it is important to me to find that balance where I feel that I give my best to both. Um, and both must feel that they get the best from me. Whether it is good enough, I don't know. My best might perhaps not be good enough, but Jarred and I discussed it, and reached the conclusion that I had to make peace with it. If the company does not think that my best is good enough, we then would have to move on. Then we would have to try something else. But one can only do so much. [Bea: H'm.] At this stage, however, that juggle is of importance. That is what is important to me. Yes. (Linda)

… and I would say my relationships, family and friends, family obviously more so, are very important to me. And when they are dysfunctional or troubled or not working so well, which they periodically do, it is very painful. (Mary)

And just having my friends, my family, very social. Aand … ja, so in terms of that for me … that's what's important, is a support system. (Nina)

5.3.2.5 Finding Joy

Enjoying life, having fun and being happy are values that sustain, in particular, Anna and Nina.

To me, first of all, happiness is very important, because it is not something you can buy. So, if you can appreciate _, you know, just every day. Count your blessings on a

daily basis. You know you can appreciate those little things that matter in life. Then to me, that, that is _, those are the things that can make you happy. So, for me happiness is very important, but also understanding that I'm also responsible for my own happiness. So, having to work on that as well where you, you need to on a daily basis, almost remind yourself, that, you know what, um, you are in charge of your own happiness. So, um, that to me is important, happiness. Umm. (Anna)

Aaand just having fun [laughs] [Bea: cross laughter]. Just enjoying myself, try to enjoy, trying to enjoy something every day. (Nina)

Living lives that provided the opportunity to live authentic expressions of themselves were important to the participants. They described how they valued the opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways that added value. The participants attested to spirituality and relationships as valued contributors to living lives of integrity. Anna and Nina described the importance of finding joy; being present in the moment and to experience happiness. Anna emphasised that a person has the responsibility to be open to and seek moments of happiness.

5.3.3 Participants' Perceptions about what Constitutes Destructive Leadership Behaviour

The study explored the phenomenon of destructive leadership behaviour through the eyes of the participants. The following section presents participants' perceptions of what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour and are presented in terms of its dispositional and relational aspects.

5.3.3.1 Dispositional Aspects of Destructive Leadership Behaviour

Describing the characteristics of the destructive manager, participants referred to dispositional aspects such as *lack of integrity*, *self-centredness*, *emotionality* and *moodiness (acting out)*, *inconsistency*, *aggression*, *anxiety*, *low self-awareness* and suspected or perceived *pathological qualities*. Participants tended to refer to these trait aspects as "the type of person" the manager is.

Fritz referred to the manager's unscrupulous hunger for positional power.

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The more I interacted with him and witnessed his behaviour, the more things made sense to me. And then I figured it out. That it was actually the type of person he was. He was not that nice person that … um … wanted only the best for you and wanted to bring the best of you out. He was a person who would trample on you to get to the top himself. Although you would not expect it, he was the person who would use you to get to the top. (Fritz)

In the following extract Susan explains the manager's self-centredness and lack of integrity.

Susan: *H'm, no, it was a wolf in sheep's clothing. For me.*

Bea: *Can you describe what you mean by that?*

Susan: *In <u>front</u> of you he is the friendliest, most soft, most caring individual. And I think he does have a kind heart, make no mistake, I really do … as long as it is on his terms. And when you …, he tells you to your face. He won't allow anybody to mess with him.*

Fritz described the inconsistency of the manager to whom he reported.

I never knew where I stood with him. Um, the one day he would tell me that I had to be at the office by eight o'clock and that I could leave for home by half past three in the afternoon, because I lived [a distance away]. Should I then want to leave at half past three, not that I could, because my work was never done, then he would want to know where I was. Should I tell him that I was on my way home, he would tell me that nobody gave me permission to do that. On the occasions that he did give me permission to leave earlier, it was though he did me a favour by doing so. I never knew where I stood with him and whether I could believe him. I found it totally demotivating. I struggled to, um, really get a grip, or, um, to draw a straight line with him. In terms of what he would say the one day and that something completely different would happen the next day. (Fritz)

Gail described her manager's lack of empathy.

And this person's response is like, but what time can I expect you today? There's like <u>no</u> empathy. There is no concern for you as a person and what you'd just gone through. And it's just there is work that needs to be done. (Gail)

Linda described the highly-strung, impatient, insecure and self-centredness of the destructive manager.

> *Yes, he is a very high-strung person. [Bea: Ahem]. Um, yes, I always say that he could suffer a heart attack because he is highly strung, very impatient. Um, um, not organised. I will tell him something one day or tell him that I will be visiting you the next day [coughs], then he would phone the next day and ask where I am. Um, I would then remind him about me telling about the visit.* (Linda)

Linda elaborates further:

> *O.K., yes, he is highly strung and very impatient and forgetful. One would tell him about something three times and he would forget. Then one gets annoyed and he would get annoyed back [clears her throat] because one got annoyed for telling him the same thing three times already. [Coughs.] Or about his impatience. He would ask you to do something and if you do not do it immediately then he would do it himself. I would have done it, but he did not allow me the time to do it. Um, yes, so he is, [sighs] he is not easy. So, for example, when one differs from him [coughs], his whole body demeanour changes. Then one feels like keeping quiet. With his body language he tries to tell you not to challenge him. Um, some more characteristics [clears throat], [sighs] he [sighs] sometimes asks your advice [clears throat], but he would not want to hear what you have to say. He doesn't hear what you've got to say or what your opinion is. Um. So later you just keep quiet, you just agree … [inaudible], so you just keep quiet. […] But he is also very uncertain of himself. He often says that he doesn't know whether he would have a job the next day. Um, which is wrong to me. Your manager must convey self-confidence and confidence in the company in front of employees. He would, however, mention that we could lose our jobs if we continue to lose business opportunities. If he as boss displays uncertainty, it makes me feel worse. So, he cannot protect his subordinates, or he does not know how to do it. Um. Yes. The main thing is his impatience. Um, and then being highly strung and agitated. He becomes difficult when one speaks too loudly on the phone. It irritates him. He gets irritated just like that [snaps her fingers.]. Hy's (sic) very highly strung. Yes.* (Linda)

Mary described that she suspected one of the managers she reported to as having dispositional qualities bordering on the pathological.

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… she was quite insane, quite insane, but crazy. She would yell and scream and behave like a maniac. I don't even think if it is worth taking into account _, her into account, but she was deeply unpleasant. I think if anybody made me cry, it would be <u>her</u>. I had never come across such a nasty person. Another person who took over my job in an acting capacity, I can see he's like <u>drained</u> by her. She's awful, but that's just because she's a very horrible person, to the point where I think there is something a bit _, and I did even actually _, I don't know if it is presumptuous of me or not, but I did even go to the HR department, the people in charge of wellness, and said you know I really think she needs someone, she needs help. I do not know if it was presumptuous of me or what, but I really felt she was in an awful position and that there was something wrong. There was definitely something wrong with her. She was not well [laughs]. Emotionally she was not well. (Mary)

So, it was almost an insecurity that had an impact, and that erratic behaviour. Some people would refer to him as being bi-polar. (Gail)

5.3.3.2 Relational Aspects of Destructive Leadership Behaviour

The more relational aspects of destructive behaviour, as perceived by the participants, included the tendency of the destructive manager to *belittle* and break-down participants, *blaming* and *bullying* behaviour, introducing *negative competition* into the work unit, being *unsupportive* of participants, and *sabotaging* the ability of the participant to perform by lack of action-taking.

Gail, Nadia, and Anna described the autocratic leadership styles they witnessed that translated into the belittling and breaking down of followers.

Ja. Um. I think it's that belittling you and breaking you down. […] It's breaking down your confidence [Bea: ja]. So, it's from you coming in and believe that you can conquer your world. You can own your space. You can contribute, to belittling you and breaking down your confidence. I think it's in that. (Gail)

… the way they would speak to you in a derogatory manner. Like I'm the manager you do what I tell you. You do not ask questions. Stuff like that. You could never speak your mind and the thing is, yes, I know you are a manager, but maybe I have something. You can learn, we can learn from each other … um … ja. (Nadia)

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And she then starts, then she had this bullying approach. She was very, she is very big built, so she uses the big built structure and like basically like abusing her authority. Then this one day, she calls me, and she is just like dissing me left, right and centre. (Anna)

Fritz and Nina explained how nothing they did was ever "good enough".

Look, um, he made me out to be completely useless. He would be frank about it, um, no, he would not tell it straight to your face; you would hear it from someone else that you were not good enough for the job or that you should resign should you continue in the way you did. He acted as if he was the only person that actually belonged there. And when a client that he did not want to communicate with contacted him, he would enter my office and tell me straight ... um ... that the client said that I did not contact the client and then he would demand a reason. It did not matter what I answered. It was never good enough. I was blamed for everything. He would handle it in such a way that made me feel that I was not worthy of the business. I was run down. (Fritz)

Ehum. So, we would every morning and afternoon have daily meetings. Ahm. So that was where we would directly kind of _, so we basically update her on what we have to do for the day and the afternoon to kind of what we actually got done. So that in itself was extremely difficult, because you go in the morning _, so the mornings was fine, but it was more the afternoon _, we then have to go say what exactly we did. And that was very passive aggressive. If you said you were going to do something, but eventually did not have enough time to do it, so you'd say you would do it the next day. So, it was a very passive-aggressive. She'd say, did you actually get anything done today or ... hm ... [sighs]. I think also just her tone. It's hard to describe obviously, but you'd walk out of there every afternoon feeling it still was not good enough. Even though so many other things were, there was one day where ... ahm ... the power's off for three hours. And we had the afternoon meeting and I told her well, I didn't get this done, and she _, well, I wouldn't say upset, she was just like, well, are you going home now? As if I need to catch up on work. So, I think that in terms of work, reporting to her in that sense, was always difficult. Ahm. (Nina)

Both Nina and Nadia, who were first-time employees, expressed their frustration at the lack of recognition received for jobs well done.

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... and I don't need her to pat me on the back, saying good job, but at least just recognise it. You don't have to physically or verbally kind of ... hm ... reward me, but just kind of _, ok, so that was you got that done [inaudible]. She literally didn't even acknowledge the new positions I got. (Nina)

So, I stood in for her in her position and ... um ... I think I did a blêddie good job. I'd done a good job and she came back, you know, no credit, not thank you and wow, you've actually grown! I am so proud of you! Can't I, can't I help you with better _, send you away for development purposes? None of that and it was never recognised what you are doing, and always talk down to you like you are not good enough, and then you knew you _, you were good enough [plaintive], and you put in your best [plaintive], and just recognise me for what I am doing, and that, that never happened. Mm. (Nadia)

Mary referred to the lack of support she received from her manager.
So, when I came with suggestions, he would find every reason to dodge them. And when I needed assistance, like if I would go to him and say, um, I really need this resource, he would do nothing to help. And if I went to him and I'd say things like, actually I am working with my hands tied, he would do nothing. And if other _, if I did not feel he had my back ... (Mary)

Nina expressed her frustration at her manager's disinterest in Nina's growth and development.
... and the professional development was _, I was constantly asking for anything more. Because, at this stage, I would say three/six months into me working there, I really felt that my job was so mundane, so repetitive. So, I asked her could I go and see more clients? Can I just try and do something a bit different and more challenging? And it would always fall on deaf ears, to the point where I'd _, I would actually just say, I am taking this on. I would actually tell her, and ... hm ... then that would cause conflict. Again, not overt conflict in the sense that we would have an argument, but then there was tension. (Nina)

Gail described how the manager introduced negative competitive behaviour into the work unit.

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Even though she puts up this front or appears that she is highly confident, she's actually quite insecure and she's actually quite fragile. And because of that, she also goes onto these power trips and belittling other people to almost get them to her level. And, she almost enrols you into competition. Everything was a competition in which she obviously wants to win this competition. So, from who's wearing the best outfits to whose, um, losing the most weight, um, to whose going on the best vacation, um wearing the best jewellery. Um. Everything was always a competition and she would enrol you without your consent. That, that's kinda the feeling that we felt. […] So, she was always on this trip all the time that she's competing with us. (Gail)

For Mary, Anna and June, their managers engaged in behaviour that deliberately sabotaged their ability to perform their tasks effectively.

There was, I am thinking of one project for, example where … um … I had an idea and he liked the idea, but he would, every time I put a proposal to him, he would find something else. What do I mean by this term? And I wonder when, when a new manager arrived … um … somehow that project came up again, somehow it was, let's record the [redacted], and I said to my new manager, just started_, and I said to him, what about doing a [redacted], and he loved the idea. And he said, write me a proposal and I looked at my computer, and I had eleven versions of that proposal that I had already done for the previous manager, and he just could never bring himself to say, go for it. He would bring up [redacted] issues all the time. (Mary)

… I mean a simple thing that she did was not authorise anything, it does not matter what it was. [Bea: which meant you couldn't move forward.] I couldn't move forward. [Bea: ja] Unless because _. Unfortunately, that is just the red tape in any [Bea: ja] [public sector] context though, where if there is no authorisation, because there is money attached to it, even if there is no money attached to it, you cannot go and implement something without it being authorised. [Bea: that is the link in the step] The signature _, so the thing, the memo was there, my name is there, she hasn't authorised it and that was basically how it was a struggle for me to. So, she blocked everything, to the extent of where she literally easily could have sabotaged a programme for the institution. I don't think she looked at it like that. She just saw, she's blocking, she's gonna fight me now on this one. She's gonna block me. (Anna)

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She would … ahm … would give you a project. She would give you a time-line that it was maybe going to be three months. Month into it, she would tell you that now it needs to be delivered within two weeks now, instead of _, you still thought you had two months to do it. Then she will bring your deadline forward. If you try and talk about what's going on, a why, why … hm … she would then say, if you can't do it I will get in outside consultants, take the work away from you. (June)

Participants perceived destructive leadership as stemming from the leader's dispositional and relational characteristics. Leader dispositional aspects sometimes seemed to border on the pathological. My impressions were that participants seemed to experience dispositional aspects as very challenging to deal with. There seemed to be a realisation that, as Fritz said, the manager was just that type of person and that the manager would not be capable of changing. In terms of relational style, the leader was perceived as destructive when his/her behaviour disaffirmed the participants and did not provide or deliberately disabled opportunities for the participants to actualise themselves.

5.3.4 The Effects of Destructive Leadership Behaviour on Participants, Destructive Leader and Work Unit

The following section presents the participants' views on the effects the destructive leader behaviour had on the participant, the destructive leader and the work unit.

5.3.4.1 Effects on Participants

For the participants the negative relationship experience with a manager impacted on their well-being in various ways. For many it took them by surprised, as often the change in behaviour towards the participant involved an unexpected suddenness. Attempting to make sense of what "triggered" this change in the quality of the relationship lingered unresolved for many of them. Put "on the back foot" by this targeting, it left them feeling overwhelmed and bewildered.

Participants experienced *self-doubt*, questioning skills and abilities they previously held in high regard. They became *fearful* and *demotivated*, experiencing emotions ranging from *feeling stupid*, *tearful* to *anger.* Some attempted various ways of *distancing* themselves from the experience. These distancing attempts included physical distancing from the manager, cognitive and emotional distancing behaviour. They became *pre-occupied* with the

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experience and struggled to concentrate. Participants disengaged not only from their environment, but also to an extent from themselves, in that they struggled to maintain being authentically themselves in their daily lives. They *stopped doing the things that gave them joy*, such as exercising, socialising and taking care of themselves physically. For some, it had the effect of *mirroring the negative behaviour* of the destructive leader in their relationships with their family.

Susan and Anna describe the sudden change in the quality of their relationships with their manager.

> *However, in the beginning we really got on very well. It is lately that I do not understand what I did wrong. Perhaps it is because I stood up against him. He told me that it was not my job to investigate when a manager wanted to lay complaints against an employee. I was only to lay charges. I then told him that it was my job to make sure that a disciplinary hearing was not out of victimisation against an employee. If someone did not like somebody, it could lead to the laying of a complaint. That did not mean that it was right, and I had to make sure it was not the case. And then we had a shouting match [voice breaks slightly]. It was so bad that I asked him to let me out of my office, as he stood between me and the door. I think that is where things changed.* (Susan)

> *Then it was fine for a couple of months where we worked sort of together. So, I don't know what happened along the way? Something happened along the way, like when suddenly, like she started changing towards me. Um, and she like just literally started to just find fault with me, with everything. Then there was this thing of … um … she wanted to oust me out of the acting role, but she couldn't do that because that was already in writing. Then it started like where _, fortunately I was then co-opted on projects, but it didn't come from her, it came from _, because it was before her time, I was already on the one project. So, I was already on the project. [redacted], the high-level panel project. So, she had a problem with that and she wasn't on it. But that was mos now besides the point, because I was already part of the project, but then it started like that, you know. Ja.* (Anna)

Anna expressed her surprise at the bullying treatment from this manager.
I couldn't believe it because I have never really experienced such confrontation from a manager. I've always been the _, you do your work and you _, so this was like this

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new thing to me and it was so bad, where I was very overwhelmed by this thing that transpired. That you couldn't believe that this has happened to you [laughs]. You know that feeling. (Anna)

Anna continued:

How I was used to being treated was more um, because I know that I work ‿, I do my work, and I go beyond what is expected, and I know my work ethic that I have, and now it's almost that somebody comes and that's irrelevant now type of thing. So, it made me, like it made me actually feel stupid. [Bea, very softly: mm] As to I don't know what I am doing. (Anna)

Nadia described her fear of losing her job, her first job, becoming negative and without hope and energy.

Because I was negative in my mind. I didn't want to do anything. I did not want to come up with new ideas. Because you are constantly putting me down. You are so rude to me! Um. I cannot speak my mind. I am so scared of losing my job. Um. It just sets you ‿, it sets you back so much. You don't want to grow, because they do not give you the opportunity to grow. They wanna keep you there and that's where you will stay. So that for me, it set be back, because afterwards I was like, ok fine, this is my lot. It's what I'll do. I'll come into work and I do my tasks and I'll leave. And because I am not a person like that, I am always willing, I want to learn, that had a huge effect. Just going to work, do what you suppose to do and going back home. I never learnt anything new. I didn't value my [inaudible], I never achieved my goals, because that was my lot. I had to go to work, do what supposed to, and come back. [Nadia becomes quite agitated. Her voice gets high and thin]. (Nadia)

Fritz relates how he started to be fearful of making mistakes and hiding the mistakes he made.

Yes, because nobody wants to make mistakes. If nobody made mistakes, it would have been a perfect world. It is only that, that type of relationship rubbed off on me to such an extent that I thought I could not make a mistake. And when I made mistakes, I thought I had to try and hide it, and try to focus on something else in order to pretend not to have made that mistake. But meanwhile at the end of the day one would miss the point. (Fritz)

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June conveyed experiencing feeling powerless and angry.

I suppose powerless and angry and uhm, just a sense of, what's going on? How does a three-month project just ..., if, if you knew ... I suppose I was thinking, did you know <u>always</u> *(her emphasis) that was going to be the date, and you just told me that I had three months. Were you trying to set me up for failure? I suppose is a question. Ahm ... if I then not deliver on that project, is that then a way of going back to business and saying, look, she's not so great, she couldn't meet her deadlines. Ah, ja, those were the kinds of things I was wondering about.* (June)

Fritz and June explained how they started to neglect themselves and avoided taking part in activities that gave them joy.

Yes, oh, at a stage, the thing that contributed is that ... um ... I used to be very active before and after office hours. In the mornings I would cycle or go for a run. In the afternoons after work I would also go cycling or jogging. And that started to get ... um ... neglected. And I started to realise, obviously when you do not exercise, and you experience that kind of stress, one of two things would happen. Either you stop eating or you eat much more. And I started to eat more and more, and to gain weight, and I realised that my clothes fitted tighter. I felt uncomfortable in my own clothes. In that setup I became difficult with myself for allowing it to happen. (Fritz)

I think it was just, it was stress. T'was just, it was probably not ... probably trying to tell me something. Ahm ... I wasn't taking care of myself. I wasn't exercising. Ahm, I was not eating well. I was actually drinking a little bit less [laughs]. Sounds bad, but what I mean by that, I was maybe drink a glass of wine during the week, but now I wouldn't drink over weekends. I saw my friends less ... ahm. Ja, so almost became more of a just going home to recover almost from the day. Not having energy to do the things that you do enjoy. Ahm ... never used to go out anymore. Didn't want to go to wine farms, didn't attend any cultural events. It just became so, everything was just about work and this person, and almost in a sense not trying to please her, but just not trying to let her find a reason to not yell, but like to pick, to find fault. Ahm. (June)

June and Fritz continued explaining how pre-occupied they became with this experience.

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I think I probably did become a little bit less effective towards the end because you constantly so wondering about things that I think you spend so much time thinking about things trying to be prepared for whatever is going to happen that you probably do not focus on the job at hand. Just get it done, you know, you not distracted, but you busy with other things. Health definitely, I in that <u>last</u> (her emphasis) *year that I worked with her constantly, and I, I tracked it back when I left there, it is almost every six weeks to the day that I was at the doctor and it was always something not major, but enough to not be able to go to work. [very softly Bea: mm] It would either be sinus infection, or it would be a stomach, upset stomach or it would be different things but constantly enough to just to, and that made me think that I I'm not a sick person. I don't like going to the doctor every six weeks and getting a note to say I can't come to work. And at one point she actually asked me to go to a different doctor, because she thought my doctor was hmmf [soft laugh] not telling the truth. Hm that was ja interesting.* (June)

I could not concentrate on my work. The moment I have had a … um … difficult discussion with my manager I was not able to continue with my work immediately after I have returned to my office. I did not comprehend what I was doing. My thoughts were not focused on my work. My body was there, but my thoughts were occupied by other things, by our conversation. Um, and I thought about it all the time, and I argued with myself, on these type of conversations, I had with my manager, and on what I could do to avoid such a conversation in future. I felt as if I had to watch myself all the time and that I had to improve myself and change myself to adapt to him. And later I did not know which way to turn. And that started to influence the quality of my work. (Fritz)

Below is an extract from Nadia's poignant description of how the negative relationship with her manager affected her mental and emotional well-being.

It did affect my mental health. My personal space and at home um, [Bea: at work?] I think _. At work, well, sometimes you feel so bad that you just want to sit in your office and not speak to any _, and so the employees would come into my office and I would always speak to them and be nice to them. I mean you want to block yourself off because you can't, you can't …

Bea: *Um, instead of participating?*

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Nadia: *Participating. Being there in the now (her emphasis). I was like in my head, ja, and normally I would interact and be present, present in the situation and then it's, I wasn't, wasn't …*

Bea: *Talk about how it affected your mental health?*

Nadia: *I can't say that I was depressed. I did not see a psychologist. I'd keep to myself. I worked, went to my room, put on my pj's, put on my laptop and then watch series, and then go work again the next day [her voice becomes softer and weaker]. Didn't, and I was living with my parents at the time, didn't interact with them. That's when you realise something is wrong. You can't do that. Like you … like you … your brother's still there, your mommy and daddy are still there, you come into the house, going to your room, get food, and then don't interact with your parents. That, that, that …*

Fritz and Nadia related how they started to "act out" towards their family members, in a "mirroring" of the behaviour of the manager.

Rigid. Yes. Especially in my personal _, or in the environment of my home, I was much more rigid. It was if the characteristics of that manager started to flow over to me. To bulldoze matters when things did not go as planned. It was not a question of finding another way or waiting a bit, but to bulldoze things to get your way. And that had a very negative effect between me and my wife and me and my son, as well as in the triangle of the family. Um, it worked though in the environment of my work, because I would know what would happen when my manager was there, and I could ignore everything regardless. I carried on. Ignored things and carried on. And … (Fritz)

I have a very good relationship with my mother and my father. My family … um … and …um … during that time I would take my anger sometimes out on my parents and they'd done everything for me [paces words for emphasis]. How dare I do this to them? [paces words for emphasis] And then I was like, I am taking it out on people that love me and that is ju_, just [stumbles over her words] not good, that's not working at all. I am not facing the issue with the person. I am taking it out on people I love. And I think I had a fight with my parents one day, and I felt so bad afterwards [paces words for emphasis], because it was never them, but they were still there, they are still behind me through thick and thin and everything. And that day I realised that

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this can't go on [voice becomes thin and high] and I'm becoming a <u>bad</u>, a very bad person. I didn't think I was that bad. I was never _, I am never that bad, and then I decided to change because, ja, that is not the person you were brought up to be. Um. You have respect for your parents and I lost _, that night I lost my respect for my parents and, and children sometimes lose _, but for me that's a lot hey, because I have so much respect for my parents. I did not speak back. They are right and whatever they say they are right [laughs]. And then that ja … (Nadia)

5.3.4.2 Effects on the Destructive Leader

The destructive leader's behaviour did not only negatively affect their followers, but also had adverse effects for themselves at a personal and career level. Participants described how these managers' own *careers were derailed* by their roles being eroded, being demoted, "let go" from employment or experiencing psychological and emotional consequences, resulting in time off work, rumoured to be from depression and nervous breakdown. These adverse effects resulted in reputational damage for the destructive leader.

… because sadly in this one case now, she left and she was off sick for _. Still off sick. Depressed. Depression, this manager. But ironically her secretary is still off for depression. So, you know what, so it's like boef. They are depressed, and her secretary is also depressed. (Anna)

She's still working there. They left her with one administrator. So only one person is reporting into her, but because that person is not a threat for her, um, in terms of skills set, in terms of qualifications or whatever else, um, and because she <u>knows</u> that there is obviously now an awareness as well, she's playing it safe and she's only got one person. Um, but you can see, the organisation is not trusting her beyond that one person. Um, I don't think they will ever give her a big team to manage again, because there is a realisation that _, because she's been assigned a coach. So, part of the intervention that they had, um, when our relationship ended with her, they assigned her a coach. And the feedback I received afterwards from some of our HR people is that they don't think that even the coach is helpful for this person. (Gail)

And then he went off on sick leave for three months. I think he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. The man above me I talked about. And when he came back from sick leave [crosstalk] [Bea: that was your direct manager?]. The one, you know _.

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That's why I sympathised with him a bit. I don't think he was as much of a shit as the ones who came after him. When he came back _, the day he came back, I've found that he's approved all of my proposals. [Inaudible] Signed. <u>What the hell</u>!! What's happened to him? (Mary)

5.3.4.3 Effects on Work Unit

5.3.4.3.1 Effects on Task and Goals

Leader disruptive, passive, avoidant and obstructionist behaviour prevented the authorisation of tasks and decision-making, which *impeded the swift and effective execution of tasks and the attainment of goals.*

She tried to sabotage the programme. It's all emotion, the [eradicated] was set up, we met with the department. She does not want to give you transport and authorise transport. We had to go and visit [redacted]. This is like Monday the workshops starts. Tue_, Thursday, Friday she refuses to sign. She gives all the reasons why not. She even tried to get a senior manager to cancel the programme. (Anna)

Should you not arrange for a meeting immediately with Organisation D, because you think that you might have more success with say Organisation E first. Then you find out that he went to Organisation D in the meantime before you could get there. There are no specific aims and direction. Our targets get messed up. He would also interfere with the arrangement to set up a meeting and find someone to blame for not setting up a meeting. Anybody is entitled to refuse a meeting! [Indignant.] When he phones someone's boss to complain about a meeting not arranged it causes animosity. Understand. I would then ask why he interfered. [Sounds despairing]. But he would insist on a meeting. So, there is no direction, purpose or planning. Our planning is not what a strategic session should be like. I mean, we run a strategic session in ten minutes and everybody presents a list of clients to be targeted during the year. At the end of the year we do not revisit our decisions and goals. Then the next year we do exactly the same. Yes, there are no goals. (Linda)

5.3.4.3.2 Effects on Other Team Members

"Playing team members off one another" (a type of attempt at a divide and rule strategy), favouritism, and the uncertainty of whose turn it may be next, were described as some of the

impacts on other team members. Participants acknowledged feeling relief when it was not "their turn" to be targeted, even though they knew that the relief was only temporarily.

> *I would also discuss it with Janet at work, but I discovered that she is favoured above me by William. She is still young, and she wants to please him. That is understandable. She does everything he asks. And behind his back she complains about it. William knows that he and I do not get along that well. We tolerate each other and we both know it. In her case I think she makes him think that he is wonderful and all. Um, because she sees it as getting ahead, if she does that. It could be true. If there was to be chosen between Janet and me I, would be the one to go first. Um, so sometimes I will have a discussion with her, but I am cautious, because I know that they have a good relationship.* (Linda)

> *Even her, the staff _ [Bea: so, her, the staff of this manager we've been talking about is off because of depression?] She says she's depressed. Yes. [Bea, very softly: mm] Because of now how things have turned differently in the organisation, for other reasons. But the staff that directly reported to her in that, that section where, where she comes from, those people have been through a lot of emotional stuff, because it's almost like this relief they are no longer reporting to her. They were under a lot of oppression and they've been abused a lot, emotionally. Really, that's what they've been _, fortunately they are off site, so it's not as bad as when you are sitting with her every day. Like the one _, she was telling me one day, this one day, she literally chased her out of the office, out of the of _, get out of my office, like really, that kind of behaviour man.* (Anna)

> *But what affected me was that we were very close, our team was very close and worked very well in a team and it was affecting me because I felt our performance was going downhill because of her influence on the other team members. So, it's almost indirectly affecting me quite a lot. And every now and then it would affect me directly. I would say it was more on a team capacity.* (Nina)

> *And, um, the admin people, they never _, they did not experience this. Obviously were professional in any discussions with them. We never brought them into our world and this is the <u>hell</u> we're going through. But we kinda _, we each take our turn. We kinda*

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knew when this is over, it will go to someone else of the four ladies that we were in the team. (Gail)

In in the team and you almost never knew when it is your turn. She would take turns. One week it would be my colleague and then another day it would be my turn n you never knew what day [laughs] gonna be your day that happens to you or how long it's gonna take. So, it was almost constantly undermining your reputation, your, your knowledge, your, almost like the essence of who I am at work in front of other people. It would never be alone. Alone she was very different, but as soon as we were in a group, the things would start. (June)

June continued:
And I suppose there was shock and there was bewilderment and trying to make sense of it. Ahm, then I would speak to my colleague. Luckily, the colleagues that worked together, we remained, it was almost as if she was trying to divide us and the more she was trying to divide us, the stronger we actually, the team, became. We could support and speak to each other … (June)

As a result of the perceived destructive behaviour of their direct leader, participants engaged in negative self-evaluations, were fearful, experienced anger and distanced themselves emotionally and socially. By doing less of the things they enjoyed and, in some instances, mirroring the behaviour of the destructive manager in their personal lives, the way in which participants lived their lives were becoming less authentic to their self-described values.

5.3.5 Participants' Coping Strategies with Destructive Leadership

5.3.5.1 Participants' Differential Coping
The following section presents participants' attempts to cope with the effects of the challenges they experienced in their relationship with a manager or managers. These coping attempts vary in degree of effectiveness and range from healthy coping with positive outcomes to unhealthy coping with negative outcomes, and should be viewed as coping to a degree, rather than coping or not coping.

5.3.5.1.1 Control Attempts

Participants with various degrees of success, attempted to find control in the situation, to stop the downward spiral of feeling overwhelmed and powerless. They did this by asserting themselves and seeking pathways to circumvent the effects of the manager's destructive behaviour. They also tried to equip themselves with knowledge by seeking information on coping with destructive leader behaviour.

> *Um. Asserting myself [laughs] in that moment, that second _. [Bea: that second incident scenario] Ja. [Bea: with the memo taking] With the 'I'm no longer tolerating the bullying'. I confronted the issue that you are bullying me, and I'm no longer going to allow the bullying [her voice becomes very soft here].* (Anna)

Anna actively sought pathways to circumvent the situation.

> *The work must go on [Bea: mm]. That's when I realised, heyyy, I can deal with you through the project [elevates her voice]. Which is more _, in this project, the project manager now dictates to the branch _, the secretary to the branch manager. You know what I'm saying [Bea, soflty: ja, ja] So for example like [Bea: so kinda bypassing]. Yes, because the division manager was supporting me because she knew she had to deliver [Bea: mm]. So, for example, the project _, I will report on the risks as diplomatically as possible. Because you also can't go and complain and all of that {Bea: mm] Then the project manager would sometimes say, but this is unacceptable. I'm going to speak to Allen about this, which is not_, it's her boss, she's, the other one's boss, but then the project manager's gonna speak to her boss, which then puts her in an awkward situation, that's she placed her now in, you know. So, it becomes _, this whole thing but that was how best [Bea: you could deal with it]. [...] And then it made me actually think that I, I should actually be doing that more in the sense of navigating my way in the institution. Where there are opportunities, you just have to find it. And then, ja, and so you can actually navigate your own way, almost. You should almost take charge of your destiny to that extent.* (Anna)

Gail sought guidance in reading self-help material.

> *I've read an interesting article in terms of introspection and they were saying that, when you do introspection, when you focus on the 'why', it's not helpful. Focus on the 'what'. [Bea: mm] And I actually realised, there's so much value in that, cos if focus on the 'why', I am not necessarily going to get a response on the 'why'. If you behave*

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in a certain way to me, unless I ask you, and you've got self-insight as to why you behave that way, I would not be able to move forward, but if I say what's the opportunity for me, it is about preparing for those possibilities if I have the opportunity again in the near future. It's all I can do. I only really have the opportunity to change myself, and to influence myself in terms of how I am doing things. (Gail)

For Mary, feeling safe and in control of events was very important, and she, at the time of our conversation, still struggled to find that sense of control over her life.

… but um, I am an anxious person. I suffer from an anxiety disorder. So it is very important to me generally to feel as safe as possible or if there is any prospect of feeling safe and that requires that you are in some sort of control of your life. Ahm, I don't like the unexpected and the um unplanned. But life is full of_, (laughs) unfortunately it does not go according to what my diary says in the morning. (Mary)

5.3.5.1.2 Distancing Attempts

Distancing attempts included physical distancing by avoiding being in the presence of the manager while at work or by resigning. Emotional distancing took the form of pretending that everything is fine to "shutting off" emotionally.

I have decided to walk out of my office then should he enter, and then I would go to my clients. Um, when he would start a conversation with me, I would not talk back much. I have returned remarks occasionally, and then I would continue with my work. After he was transferred to another area and he would then afterwards visit us at the centre, I would not even get up to greet him. I really made … um … no effort to greet him. I totally lost my respect for him, totally. And I, yes, to me it became a question to ignore it, carry on, do my best at work and ignore the person. He was typical of someone on a power trip. Somebody empowered him, and he did not know how to use it. I have just started to ignore it. (Fritz)

Yes. I think I cope by shrugging it off like water off a duck's back. I choose to have a low-key attitude and I have to do it to survive. I would have cut my wrists by now if I would get upset every time. Um. I still get upset sometimes, but much less. Um, and I tell myself to just get out, just move on. […] Certainly. I think one becomes mediocre. One accepts average as good enough. Um. Yes, because nothing inspires you to be

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more, Um, so, yes. Certainly, it influences you, because you keep on doing as expected from. Nobody could point a finger at you. Um, so, yes, as I said, mediocre becomes good enough. Yes. You become like the other employees. You do not … um … stay at work till seven o'clock at night to finish work like in the past. Um. You now give a hundred percent instead of a hundred and twenty percent like before. (Linda)

Because [laughs], because of the society. They come home and say I have the crappiest job and I did not want to be that person. Remember your job, your profession, you are taking it with you for the next twenty to thirty years and I did not want to start off like that. I'm going [claps her hands], I'm doing what I love. My job is everything towards me, to … to me and I just _, remember you spend most of _, a lot of time at work. Why do you want to speak negative about it. You gonna make yourself negative. I didn't, ja, I never, I was always keeping a good front [laughs]. (Nadia)

Both Nina and Nadia resigned and used their exit interviews to clearly state their reasons for leaving. For Mary and June, the act of leaving was characterised by lingering unresolved doubts and ambivalence.

It was, it <u>was</u> that kind of environment. It was <u>very</u> toxic. It's important to me to remind myself. Because then I, you know, regret leaving, and I feel sad that I've left _, remember how <u>awful</u> it was! It was <u>awful</u>. [Laughs/giggles] (Mary)

June's impressions, although she did not state this directly, were that she seemed to feel that she was made the scapegoat for the manager's failures.

It's maybe just. It's the anger that somebody in power, that knew what was going on, did nothing about it and ja. […] And that was part of my non-disclosure. I couldn't go to the CCMA 'cos there was already something against her. So, it was knowing all of these things and now having it had from an individual, escalating it to a <u>team</u>, you still didn't act on it. (June)

5.3.5.1.3   Attempts at Seeking Self-Affirmation

Participants tried to re-establish their self-perceived authentic selves, "claiming back" their identities as they have known themselves to be, before the challenging experience with the manager.

Ahm, and they then needed me to kind of look after the two new people. To take up a management role now and to lead a team from that perspective. So, I felt that I've been _, regardless of that situation I've been trusted by senior management to say that we actually believe you. We trust that you can now take on a similar role and you can lead a team and do that successfully because of your own experience that you've had with other people that you won't treat them in the same manner that you've been treated. (Gail)

I started, you know what, I decided at one stage in my life, you know what I'm gonna stop making excuses for my achievements and accomplishments. [Bea: mm [Why must I make excuses? [Bea: mm] Why must I feel ashamed that I worked so hard to get a _, obtained a PhD. Why must I feel ashamed for that? [Bea: mm] Because I actually worked very hard. It did not just fall out of the sky. [Bea: mm] So people actually afterwards, almost like _, then you start to feel that you must like sit back a little. No, I changed my mind. (Anna)

Ja, So, um, and, but, it _ also what I have done is, I've volunteered my services outside of what the norm is, 'cos you also have to make yourself _, the other day I actually presented at _, they call it a [workshop]. The [department] drives it and you can go and present on a topic and there [Bea: mm] is questions and answers _, and then um so I had my session on Friday and it was actually very motivating, because then um _, my boss, she recorded part of it, so she shared the clip, shared it with some people who weren't there; and then this one colleague was saying to me: 'Oh my word! You looked so in your element!', [Bea and Anna: laughs together] and then when she said that, I acknowledged, and I said: 'You know what, actually, I was in my element [Bea: mm] and that is who I am' [Bea: mm]. You know it's, um, I'm on that path at the moment. So, I'm just still being optimistic and persevere, looking ahead. (Anna)

Mary struggled to re-affirm herself, and at the time of our conversation, she had not yet found a sense of the self she believed herself to have been before these experiences with the managers.

Um. I feel that I've lost um [short pause] mff [pause] an optimism or eh a belief in myself and in my world. I feel, I feel really, actually, disempowered and impoverished

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rather by this experience. I don't think I grew. At all. I think it, it knocked me down. I really, really think it's dragged me down a bit and one of the reasons I left was that if I stayed a bit longer I won't, I will start believing then that I can't do it. […] Let me get out before I have no faith left in myself. […] Let me get out before I have no faith left in myself. (Mary)

Mary continued:

After years of therapy, no, I mean I think there is damage that's been done, and I need to repair it, and I am not going back to therapy. I've been in too much therapy. And I would like to be able to repair it and come to terms with what happened and my decision, and what I've chosen to do, and be more ok with that. I just can't get to that point. I need, I really need to [laughs]. I really need to. It just makes me very tired. Um, and there is nothing <u>you</u> could really do or anybody. My husband has heard so much of this, he is had enough, gatvol, I'm sure. Um, no, no, I've just got to be able to, excuse my language, this is what I've said to my children, once you know you've tried your best, you must just say fuck it. [Laughs] Just fuck it, you've done what you can. And I can't do that, I just can't let go. [Inaudible] … something I have to work with. […] Um, ja, it's just, it was a very painful experience and a very sad one, because I lost so much that I believed in, in that process. (Mary)

5.3.5.1.4 Positive and Negative Self-Nurturing Attempts

Comfort-seeking behaviour included eating comfort food and exercising. These attempts at coping provided temporary mood enhancement and self-nurturing.

I think, um, from a health perspective, definitely. I've got a very bad coping mechanism at work, but it's not very helpful. So, when I stress, then I eat, and I eat all the wrong stuff [laughs]. So, in the process, um, you are not necessarily taking care of yourself. You are dropping the ball in terms of yourself from a health perspective. But you are coping. [Bea, very softly: mm] You coping in that you are able to bounce back. You are able to deal with situations without bursting out at your desk in an open plan office. Um. And you find comforts in chocolates and all sorts of things. And I mean I'm not an exercise person so eating all this stuff that's unhealthy for you, obviously got its own implications. And I think from that perspective [sighs] it wasn't great. (Gail)

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I started to exercise again. In the mornings I got up at a quarter past four to go running. I ran for an hour; an hour and a half. When I returned I was energised for the rest of the day. At the office I worked. When I got home, or when I was tired after a long day, I would relax, watch a little TV or either go cycling or running. Um, it came to the point where I forced myself to get relieved of that stress or to avoid that manager and to exercise. Exercise, work, exercise, family time. So, I was relieved of much of my stress. It is still like that in my work, when I have plenty of stressful work, I would go exercising. After I have exercised, [stutters], I would work, push through, return home, go and relax. Stress relieved. (Fritz)

5.3.5.1.5 Religion/Spirituality

A prevalent theme was the participants' belief in the power of God to nurture them and as a haven of safety and comfort.

… 'cos I believe in this divine power which is God in my _, that is what I believe, and I believe that God ultimately is in control of everything. As much as we have control over our destinies, God ultimately is in control of it and God will, if it's God's will for you to be where you must be, then so be it. Sometimes God allows you to face difficult circum_, situations for you to actually look at what is the lessons learnt now [Bea, very softly: mm] But it's not gonna be, you know even if somebody tries, people try to block you as much as they can, which I've gone through, you can block me as much as you can, but my divine destiny, nothing and no one can keep me from that. (Anna)

Bea, because when one thinks back, one reflects on the question of what you did to get to where you are at present. It is really with people's insight in my life and the help of God. I would not be able to do it otherwise. I wanted to drive into a wall. (Susan)

5.3.5.1.6 Social and Family Support

Participants engaged in various forms of social support seeking behaviour that included confiding to friends, family, professional services, such as seeing a psychologist and asking assistance from their organisations' Human Resources mentoring and wellness services.

And [sighs] that particular morning was _, I kinda drew the line. I actually just sent an email to our HR support team to say, um, um, I'm unhappy at work (inaudible). I actually can't any more. If you don't do something about this, I'll take my bag and get

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out of here. Because that for me was the last straw of all the other things that was happening. Um. Ja. [laughs]. (Gail)

Ja. I think I did cope. I see myself or put myself in the category of I coped with them. But it was because of the support of other people. It is definitely having colleagues at work who trusted me [Bea, very softly: mm] and when I had engagements with them and said this is what I am going through, they did not question, but maybe it's you. People actually believed me. (Gail)

So, ja, I think the team got along a lot stronger because of this dynamic, so relied on the work team to just keep the spirits high. We would joke and just try to even fake it till you make it at work, just pretend we are not stressed. Just to try and actually enjoy this day and little comments around the office, little jokes or share a funny song and evenings would just be that social interaction try and vent with my friends and family. (Nina)

I had to consult a psychologist. I use anti-depressants. And I cannot stop taking the medication now. Understand, even if things happen now I react like that time. [Short pause.] Understand, as if it is a flash back. Is someone setting me up for failure [short pause] intentionally? And it is not like that at present, but I am human and every time I have a relapse. It is as if I see a red flag again. (Susan)

5.3.5.1.7 Re-directing Cognitions to Positive Reframing

The following quotes from the conversations with Nina and Nadia are examples of participants' attempts to turn a bad situation into good by finding positive outcomes from the experience.

Well I would say I learnt a lot from that experience and that I just come to peace with it. A lot of that had to do with that I kind of _, when I left like a month or two _, I realised what a great support in the team was. There was a lot more benefits that I could remember than just focus on my manager. I decided to just focus on the good things and that is that I have actually made amazing friends at work, and that they actually technically helped me pay for my studies, cos with commission and recruitment to pay for my studies. So, I tried to focus on that. I just put that in my past and just hopefully never have a manager like that again. (Nina)

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… it really improved me and because the company I am working for now is a very huge company with unions and all that, so it _, I think my boss in a way prepared me to deal with my new co_, remember the company I worked for was a very caring, loving environment. Now I am in a corporate type of environment and I think she prepared me [laughs] well. So, I am thankful in a sense also. After this, after everything she prepared me now for a corporate environment. I am not scared of unions. I am not scared of [slight hesitation] other managers [laughs] and now I speak up. (Nadia)

5.3.5.2 Participants' Psychological Capital

I explored the potential role of psychological capital in participants' coping with destructive leadership behaviour. The participant's individual findings were presented earlier in this chapter as part of the section on participant profiles. The findings regarding participants' *group psychological capital (PsyCap)* are summarised in the table below.

Table 5.3

Summary of Participants' Group Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Findings

PsyCap Dimension	Total Group Score Ranked Highest to Lowest	Average Participant Group Score Ranked Highest to Lowest
Efficacy	46.6	5.17
Resiliency	43.7	4.85
Hope	42.3	4.7
Optimism	38.8	4.31

Aggregated on a scale of one to six, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", participants' average group score for PsyCap was 4.75. The highest PsyCap group score was 5.17 for Efficacy, and the lowest 4.31 for Optimism. The higher the score on the components and on the total score, the higher the psychological capital attribute. Previous studies in a South African context (Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013; Van Wyk, 2016), in line with international studies as described in Chapter Four, have found that the sub-scales Resilience and Optimism tend to obtain lower reliability values and that the PCQ-24 total

score can be regarded as a reliable indicator of an individual's psychological capital. Indications are that the PsyCap total score carries more weight than results on the descriptive components (Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013; Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Van Wyk, 2016). Against the group data, based on their self-report results, the participants could therefore be viewed as being quite confident at the time of the interviews and as showing quite good overall psychological capital. The implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Participants sought ways to navigate the challenging relationship with the manager by utilising institutional pathways and by seeking ways towards greater self-insight and insight into the situation. They attempted to protect themselves against the negative emotional impact of the manager's behaviour by putting physical and emotional distance between them and the manager. Participants comforted themselves in destructive ways that further eroded positive self-evaluations, but also in constructive ways that nurtured them towards self-affirmation. Differential coping attempts such as finding comfort and hope in spirituality, social and family support; and engaging in positive cognitions contributed towards self-affirmation.

As a group the participants, qualitatively viewed, presented with quite good overall psychological capital and can be regarded as quite confident. It is unclear from this research if the role of participants' relatively strong psychological capital played a role in their choices of coping strategies and the degrees of effectiveness of their choices of coping strategies. However, based on the findings of this research the role of participants' psychological capital in the participants' coping strategies can also not be discounted.

5.3.6   Participants' Perceptions of Relational Authenticity with the Destructive Leader

I was interested in exploring participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the manager whose behaviour they found challenging, particularly given the diverse South African organisational contexts and the lingering history of past socio-political constructions. Further, organisations globally are increasingly becoming more diverse. The following are participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the manager in terms of *positional competence*, *values*, *social attributes*, and *personality/trait*.

The following examples from my conversation with Anna describe her perceptions of relational authenticity with her manager, which for her centred around dissonance in terms of positional competencies (qualifications and ability), age, and personality.

I think most of those variables. [laughs] You could maybe look at each one. When it comes to age, there was _, even though she was not much older than I am, but I think you know, um, if both of us had gone for, um, ability assessments, you know like your IQ assessments, your EQ assessments, then the age would mean something different [Bea: mm]. But age specifically, I think that there could have been that dynamic, you are younger than what I am, but look what you've achieved, but I'm still stuck here. Then the same scenario linked to race, where you still have that scenario of um, because of my race, I should _, I am entitled to this, but at the same time, I'm still a threat. I can still stand in your way, so this race issue [Bea: in the sense of qualification etcetera?]. Yes, etcetera and so forth. Then because of that as well, then it's like, you have to then compensate for that in some way. So there already your relationship becomes problematic, 'cos how do we see each other even just in terms of race, age and so on. [...] And then also, in terms of our, um, personalities as well I think, because I'm not aggressive, but she's aggressive, I was almost like an easy target [laughs] in this whole thing of [Bea: mm], because bullies _, a lot of bullies are big built also. She used her stature as to you to bully as well. So, this person is an authority, they are bullies, they are aggressive, and they are big as well [laughs]. You come in here, like not as big as they are. You are not confrontational and aggressive, so you become an easy target. And that was problematic, but soon I started to work around that, because I didn't want to continue in the abusive relationship. But I think that those were the key variables, I think, that played a role. [Bea: that played a role in identifying with, with or not with her?] Yes, yes. [Bea: whether the feeling of compatibility, maybe less compatibility?]. Mmm. Yes, because you can't like be ok, then suddenly out of the blue the next day you are like, as if you are totally strange, estranged. (Anna)

Anna's input articulates her astute perceptions of relational authenticity variables that may have had an impact on the quality of the relationship between her and her manager.

For Susan the difference in gender and values played a role in her relationship with her manager.

To him women belong in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant. H'm. I do not think he sees the value of a woman in a managerial position. We belong [inaudible] in HR or in a Finance position, understand. Especially in our work environment. [...] You do not belong in management. But should you be part of management that would be the

only two positions in which women would be allowed. […] Not the operational side. I do not know, but that is really the feeling I got from him. (Susan)

Referring to Christian values, Susan found that the way she lived her Christian values was incompatible with the way her manager lived his self-proclaimed Christian values.

Because that was what he provocated, openly. I mean you sit in a corporate environment; I do not have a problem with prayer, because I pray myself, but to open a meeting with prayer! Why? Do you understand? Not everybody shares your passion of belief, but if you do that then you must live accordingly … and I think the reason why I did not like it, was because I experienced it differently. I experienced it as false [short pause]. And that goes against my values. (Susan)

For Gail and June, the inauthenticity in their relationship with the managers they had difficulties with primarily centred on a dissonance in values, and also refer to the possibility of a difference in life-stories between them and the managers.

Um. [deep sigh] I don't think that those [speaks slowly] demographic aspects necessarily played a role in the relationship. I think it's more um, the world views of these two individuals and their values and their ways of working that was impacting the relationship. And not so much about us being different from a race or gender or income or even qualification background perspective. I think, like I said, if you go in with this believe that this person is here to add value, and can add value, and you try to make it work _, and you don't always succeed. I mean there is people who is also _, what I'm saying is I am not naïve to believe that everyone come necessarily with the same intent, but I think if you start _, if your start out position is this person is here to deliver and want to make a difference then, um, ja, I think you would to some extent bring out the best in people. So, I think it's just because they had underlying issues as well that they hadn't dealt with. Maybe they were not in fortunate positions like I was in. Where I've never been in these relationships. Um, and where I was content with myself in terms of what I had achieved, and I had high hopes, and I was working on what I want to achieve next. And I was not enrolling myself in competition with anyone else. In fact, I think, if I reflect to my childhood, then _, peer pressure was never really something that I struggled with [laughs]. I, um, don't really know what it means in terms of having peer pressure. I think, also because of the way that I grew up … (Gail)

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I really tried to understand her. From my point it was what could make you behave this way? Where is this coming from? And I think, one thing that really gave me insight into her was when she _, we had a career discussion one day, and she said to me, don't you want to be a manager one day? And I said to her, I never wanted to be a manager. I enjoy what I do. I am a specialist and I'll manage specialists, but I don't want to become a general manager and she couldn't understand. She was, but how are you ever gonna get more pay if you don't become a manager? But it was not what it's about for me. She really couldn't understand why what she wants, how come I don't want what she wants. And that it's ok to be different. It really came down to everybody had to be like her. You had to dress like her, you had to look like her. You want to have achieved the same things for her to be able to almost understand you.
(June)

June continued:

… the one day there was a [community project]. And you could decide if you wanted to volunteer for your time. [Bea: ehum] So work would give you the day off and you could go and be part of the project. They were [volunteering] in different locations. And obviously everybody in the team wanted to go, so we had to structure it so that we are not all out of the office same day. And when we asked her for the leave, if we could go, she looked at us and she said, why do you want to help other people build a house? [short pause] And I looked at her and I, ok, how do you explain charity to somebody and I said that, but they [have a particular need] and I've got time, and here is this opportunity I wanna go and do this. And she said they are my people and they must help themselves first. It's I am not gonna go and help them. So that kind of cemented to me that it is all about her, always. […] You are three months behind in rent. So, it just came back to that you are all about, it's just superficial. It is about image. You are never going to understand my values cos you can't relate to it. Ahm and it made me think that how did you grow up that those are the things that are important to you? That status and title, that's the only things that you can power, that you can relate to, and if you are in a position like that where you can help your community with, cause in my head I was thinking that the African culture is all about Ubuntu? How you are going against your culture by saying you are not going to do charity work for somebody? I couldn't reconcile the two. And I think, that gave me

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insight as to who, this is who you are as a person, and I just realised she is never going to understand me … hm. (June)

Fritz found it difficult to identify with his manager's emphasis on position and status. *Look, he always made it clear that he was my senior and that [stutters] he earned more money than me. So, he always treated me definitely as his subordinate. Um, it may have been the case, but I could not make peace with that as I always felt as if I had to strive for it as well, looking at all the gadgets and things he bought and the vehicles he had. I mean I also would like to have that. I also wanted to provide for my family without difficulty. Um, but later I just could not identify with that and it became a question of me not wanting to be like that or to operate at that level. I believe the Creator provides in what you need, and He has created you as you should be. I would not identify myself with a person that runs other people down and talk behind their backs and badmouth them. I often overheard conversations, my office was next to his, that he had with other managers about someone else and it would upset me. I just could not identify myself with that.* (Fritz)

For Nadia her self-perceived values compensated for any difference there may have been between her and her manager in terms of social position.
I don't think it was a racial issue at all. Um, at all. Class issue, I would also say not at all? Um, ja, eh, certain class, high class, but I had that values again that made me again also, I'm not there, but I have <u>values</u>. (Nadia)

Nina described how the similarity in terms of social attributes and interests helped to facilitate the relationship between her and her manager.
Ahm. So, I mean we were similar in, I mean, I don't wanna say, I mean there was a ten-year age difference. But, ja, the White female thing, I could relate to more and I don't know if that really had, of anything it might have had a more of a positive influence. We had some, I know this sounds bad, but, ja, the same interests were kinda there um in terms of we were both kinda social people, so talking about where we might go for dinner, things like that. So, in terms of those dynamics that helped.
(Nina)

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Participants' descriptions of relational authenticity with their direct leader included perceptions of dispositional differences, social attributional differences and differences in values. Differences in values included incongruence between the leader's expressed values and the leader's lived values, as well as incongruence between the participants' values and the lived values of the manager. Participants' references to dissonant values included beliefs about position, status, altruism and past experiences or life stories. For Nina, congruent social attributes contributed to moments of positive engagement with her manager.

5.3.6 Summary Comments on Findings

The thematic and categorical findings described participants' responses to the research questions about their direct experiences with destructive leadership behaviour and their coping strategies with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisational context. Participants described implicit beliefs about leadership 'in general' that centre around positional competency, dispositional or trait aspects and a democratic style of interpersonal engagement. Participants expressed self-beliefs that entailed living lives that had purpose and integrity. They valued spirituality, social and family connectedness and acknowledge the positive contribution of recognising joy in their lives. For the participants destructive leadership behaviour was characterised by dispositional aspects that included self-centredness, low self-awareness, emotionality, aggression and anxiety. Participants also described relational aspects that they perceived as challenging, and these included autocratic behaviour that disaffirmed the participant and inhibited participant self-actualisation.

The challenging relationship with the manager negatively impacted the lived experiences of the participants, the managers themselves and the functional and relational dynamics of the work unit. In order to cope with the negative experience, participants engaged in various attempts to protect and re-affirm themselves. These coping attempts included finding control, distancing, positive and negative self-nurturing, spirituality, social and family support, and re-directing cognitions to find the positive in the situation. Viewed qualitatively, participants presented with quite good psychological capital and as a group can be regarded as self-confident. The extent to which participants' psychological capital played a role in how they coped with the destructive leadership experience is not clear from the findings.

Participants expressed perceptions about relational authenticity with their direct leaders by describing the leader-follower relationship in terms of congruence or incongruence in positional competency, values, social attributes, and dispositional aspects.

Although less apparent in the extracts presented in this chapter, reflecting on the audio evidence, notable throughout the conversations with participants was their use of humour and laughter to alleviate moments in the conversations where the re-living of their challenging experiences with their respective managers were becoming distressing. This can be viewed as a coping mechanism that facilitated a degree of distancing or "buffering" from the intensity of their emotions. The humour also facilitated "rapport" between participants and me. Nevertheless, in the moments of humour the thread of pathos was ever present. Participants' distress was evident in changes in vocal tone and volume, with voices rising or growing softer. Some participants reverted to the present tense while describing the experience with their manager.

This chapter presented the findings retrieved from my conversations with each of the participants, including the psychological capital findings for each participant. The findings were organised into participant profiles, themes and categories to facilitate sense-making and understanding. The presentation of findings in this chapter did not attempt to interpret, integrate or discuss, and the interpretation, integration and discussion of findings will be presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION

6.1 Introduction

This study explored the coping responses of followers, defined in this study as subordinate workers, exposed to the direct experiences of their managers' destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisational contexts. The nine participants purposively selected for individual interviews in this study were drawn from the manufacturing-, retail-, financial services-, community services-, and public sectors, and were employed at specialist and middle management job levels. Of further interest to the study were followers' perceptions of the characteristics of the phenomenon of destructive leadership behaviour. The study was particularly interested in participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the individual designated as being a destructive leader (Eagly, 2005). To what extent did the participants identify with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort); and did perceptions of relational authenticity influence the coping process? Further, I explored how participants' psychological capital played a role in their coping processes (Walumba et al., 2011). This chapter intends to summarise, discuss and integrate the main themes emerging from this study, firstly at the individual level and secondly, at the macro level according to the dominant themes that emerged from participants' experiences with destructive leadership behaviour in their organisational contexts. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, its implications for theory, application and future research

6.2 Summary of Findings

6.2.1 Summary of Findings at the Individual Levels

During the interviews, the participants individually shared their challenging experiences about interacting with their direct manager. The following section provides a brief description of the participants at the individual level.

The participants at the time of my conversations with them reported to managers with whom, either previously or at the time of the study, they experienced challenges with this manager's leadership style. At the time of the interviews they were employed in the manufacturing-, retail-, financial services-, community services-, and public sectors. The

participants were mostly women, with one male participant. The majority of the participants were older than thirty, with the exception of two participants, who were in their twenties at the time of the interviews. They were mostly graduates and all the participants were employed at specialist or managerial job levels. Six participants were White, including the male participant, and three participants were Black. Of the Black participants, one participant preferred to self-identify as non-White, and another participant referred to herself as Indian. Of the nine participants, seven participants (inclusive of the two Black participants who preferred to self-identify as non-White and Indian) interacted with a manager of another race.

The majority of the participants perceived themselves to be middle-class, with one participant, who viewed herself as upper-class, and one participant regarding himself as lower-class. Participants mostly perceived their managers to be either of similar or higher class than they themselves were; and participants thought that their managers belonged to a higher income bracket than they did. Four participants resigned from their employment so that they could exit the destructive leader relationship; three participants moved to other departments within the same organisation to put distance between themselves and the perceived destructive leader; the manager of one of the participants left the organisation; and one participant was at the time of my conversations still engaged in the perceived destructive leader relationship, contemplating whether to leave or stay.

The participants tended to used humour and laughter to alleviate moments in the conversations where the re-living of their challenging experiences with their respective managers was becoming distressing. Humour and laughter appeared to facilitate a degree of distancing or "buffering" from the intensity of their emotions. Humour also served to create "rapport" between the participants and me. In those moments of humour, though, the thread of sadness was ever-present. Participants' distress was also evident in changes in vocal tone and volume, with their voices rising or growing softer while re-living the experience. While describing the experience with their managers, some participants reverted to the present tense; and for Nadia, some transference was observed. There were moments when the participants and I laughed together; and there were moments when I struggled not to cry with them. In those moments of shared emotions, I felt very close to the participants.

6.2.2 Summary of Findings at the Thematic Levels

The core themes that emerged in my exploration of participants' coping with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisations are: implicit beliefs about leadership in

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general; participants' values; participants' perceptions about what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour; the effects of destructive leadership behaviour on participant, destructive leader, and work unit; participants' coping with destructive leadership behaviour – exploring the role of psychological capital; and perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader.

Participants' **implicit beliefs about leaders in general** constituted beliefs about ***positional competency*** that centred on having the required knowledge to execute the managerial role and having and providing clarity of purpose. Dispositional or trait aspects that were deemed as important for a leader to have, entailed personality characteristics such as *self-awareness*, *self-regulation*, *self-confidence*, and *integrity*. Participants believed leaders should have a ***humanistic and democratic interpersonal style***.

Participants described their **personal values** as having *purpose*, living with *integrity*, living lives guided by *religiosity/spirituality*, and being connected to *family* and having *social connectedness*. Participants thought it important to *find joy* in their daily lives.

The participants **perceived their manager's behaviour as destructive** in terms of dispositional qualities and they referred to ***dispositional aspects*** such as *lack of integrity, self-centredness*, *emotionality and moodiness (acting out)*, *inconsistency*, *aggression*, *anxiety*, *low self-awareness* and *suspected or perceived pathological qualities*. Participants tended to refer to these trait aspects as "the type of person" the manager is. Hogan and Hogan (2001) were of the opinion that the personality of the manager was an important aspect in making sense of what the authors described as failed or derailed managers. These authors were of the opinion that managerial failure was more related to the presence of undesirable qualities in the manager than in a lack of desirable qualities. Two qualitative case studies that focused on personality disorders in leadership found that it was important not to dismiss personality pathologies in leaders by casting these behaviours as normal workplace disturbances. The authors advised that psychopathology should be considered and included in the research and consultation of toxic managerial scenarios (Goldman, 2006). Destructive leadership behaviour, as perceived by the participants, also had a ***relational aspect***. The relational aspects of the managers' behaviours included the tendency to *belittle* and break-down participants, *blaming* and *bullying* behaviour, introducing *negative competition* into the work unit, being *unsupportive* of participants, and *sabotaging* the ability of the participant to perform by lack of action-taking.

The literature on inauthentic leader behaviour refers to the inauthentic leader's tendency to encourage ambiguity and inconsistency, twist facts and abuse positions of

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authority to serve themselves. These leaders use emotion to power conversations and debates. Inauthentic leaders use their positions and power to keep followers dependent and they encourage personal distance, uncritical obedience, favouritism, and adverse competition. To maintain respect from followers, inauthentic leaders exploit the feelings of their followers (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013). Krasikova et al. (2013) referred to destructive leadership behaviour as behaviour that is embedded in the process of leading.

The **effects of the destructive leader behaviour** impacted negatively on the participant, the destructive leader self, and the work unit. For the ***participants***, the negative relationship experience with a manager impacted on their well-being in various ways. For many it took them by surprise, as often the change in behaviour towards the participant involved an unexpected suddenness. Attempting to make sense of what "triggered" this change in the quality of the relationship lingered unresolved for many of them. Put "on the back foot" by this targeting, it left them feeling overwhelmed and bewildered. The managers' negative behaviour towards participants resulted in participants experiencing *self-doubt*, questioning skills and abilities they had previously held in high regard. They became *fearful* and *demotivated*, experiencing emotions ranging from *feeling stupid*, *tearful* to *anger.* Some attempted various ways of *distancing* themselves from the experience. These distancing attempts included physical distancing from the manager, and cognitive and emotional distancing behaviour. They became *pre-occupied* with the experience and struggled to concentrate.

Participants disengaged not only from their environment, but also to an extent from themselves, in that they struggled to maintain being authentically themselves in their daily lives. They *stopped doing the things that gave them joy*, such as exercising, socialising and taking care of themselves physically. For some, it had the effect of *mirroring the negative behaviour* of the destructive leader in their relationships with their family. Research findings indicate that abusive supervisory actions are associated with negative psychological outcomes such as helplessness, decreased self-efficacy and psychological distress (Harvey et al., 2007). An abusive supervisory relationship can have an impact on followers' job performance, job stress, and job attitude (Ferris et al., 2007). Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen, & Hellesøy (as cited in Einarsen and Mikkelsen, 2003) found that some victims of destructive leadership behaviour could experience self-hatred and suffer from suicidal thoughts. Susan reported that she, at some stage during her negative relationship with her manager, considered driving into a wall.

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The ***destructive leader***'s behaviour did not only negatively affect their followers, but also had adverse effects for themselves at a personal and career level. Participants described how these managers' own *careers were derailed* by their roles being eroded, being demoted, "let go" from employment or experiencing psychological and emotional consequences, resulting in time off work, rumoured to be from depression and nervous breakdown. These adverse effects resulted in reputational damage for the destructive leader. McCall and Lombardo (as cited in Padilla et al., 2007) describe the impact of the destructive leader's behaviour on the leader's own reputation and power. The harmful behaviour of destructive leaders often results in negative consequence to themselves. It is common for destructive leaders to experience career derailment, as these leaders are often fired, demoted or fail to advance in their careers.

The leader's disruptive, passive, avoidant and obstructionist behaviour had effects on ***the work unit in terms of tasks and goals, as well as on other team members***. In terms of tasks and goals, the authorisation of tasks and decision-making were disrupted or prevented, which *impeded the swift and effective execution of tasks and the attainment of goals*. "Playing team members off one another" (a type of attempt at a divide and rule strategy), favouritism, and the uncertainty of whose turn it may be next, *complicated team dynamics*. Some participants acknowledged feeling relief when it was not "their turn" to be targeted, even though they knew that the relief was only temporarily. In this regard, Soares (2002) concluded that bullying may have negative consequences, not just for the direct target of the bullying, but that other employees who witness the bullying also tend to experience a higher degree of psychological stress, although at less intense levels than the direct recipients of this behaviour. In this vein, Kellerman (2004) refers to the intricate tangle of leadership, follower and context and the difficulty in separating the one from the other.

Participants attempted to cope with the effects of the challenges they experienced in their relationship with their manager or managers. These **coping strategies** vary in degree of effectiveness and range from healthy coping with positive outcomes to unhealthy coping with negative outcomes; and should be viewed as ***coping to a degree***, rather than coping or not coping. Participants tried various strategies in their attempts to cope with their managers that included *control attempts*, *distancing attempts*, *seeking self-affirmation*, *positive and negative self-nurturing* (indulging, for example, in comfort food and/or exercising), *religion/spirituality*, *seeking social and family support*, and attempts to *re-direct their cognitions*.

I explored the potential *role of psychological capital* in participants' coping with destructive leadership behaviour. The participant individual findings with regards to psychological capital were presented in Chapter Five as part of the section on participant profiles; and earlier in this chapter the total PsyCap score for each participant was included at the individual levels of the summary presentation of findings. Aggregated on a scale of one to six, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", participants' average group score for PsyCap was 4.75. The highest PsyCap group score was 5.17 for Efficacy, and the lowest 4.31 for Optimism. The higher the score on the components and on the total score, the higher the psychological capital. Previous studies in a South African context (Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013; Van Wyk, 2016), in line with international studies as described in Chapter Four, have found that though the sub-scales Resilience and Optimism tend to obtain lower reliability values, the PCQ-24 total score can be regarded as a reliable indicator of an individual's psychological capital. Indications are that the PsyCap total score carries more weight than results on the descriptive components (Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013; Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Van Wyk, 2016). Based on their self-report results, the participants could therefore be viewed as being quite confident at the time of the interviews and as showing quite good overall psychological capital. The implications of these findings will be discussed later in this chapter.

With South Africa's diverse organisational contexts and the lingering history of past socio-political constructions, I was interested in exploring participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the manager whose behaviour they found challenging. Further, organisations globally are increasingly becoming more diverse. The participants shared perceptions of relational authenticity with the manager in terms of *positional competence*, *values*, *social attributes*, and *personality/trait*. For Anna, perceptions of relational authenticity with her manager centred around dissonance in terms of positional competencies (qualifications and ability), age, and personality. For Susan the difference in gender and values played a role in her relationship with her manager. Referring to Christian values, Susan found that the way she lived her Christian values was incompatible with the way her manager lived his self-proclaimed Christian values. For Gail and June, the inauthenticity in their relationship with the managers they had difficulties with centred primarily on a dissonance in values, and they also refer to the possibility of a difference in life-stories between them and the managers. Fritz found it difficult to identify with his manager's emphasis on position and status. For Nadia, her self-perceived values compensated for any difference there may have been between her and her manager in terms of social position.

Nina described how the similarity in terms of social attributes and interests helped to facilitate the relationship between her and her manager.

6.3 Discussion of Findings at the Individual Level

The participants as a group can be described as of middle socio-economic class and as mostly working in professional positions. The socio-economic level and professional orientation of the participants and managers may carry certain egalitarian and democratic expectations from participants in terms of relationships at work, despite some variation in degree in socio-economic and seniority levels; more so than one would expect from manager-follower relationships where seniority is defined by greater distances in socio-economic and qualification levels.

In professional work environments participants are likely, to a greater degree, to hold expectations of a more collaborative approach, instead of a directive or prescriptive approach, to problem solving and decision-making. Moderate supervisory control, where followers are given the scope to exert a degree of independence in terms of decision-making, is likely to be descriptive of professional work environments. In this regard, referring to the contingency model, a more follower-oriented leadership style, that emphasises the leader-follower relationship, is likely to be more favourable for work environments where creative, complex problem-solving from followers is encouraged (Chemers, 2004).

According to the path-goal theory of leadership, the nature of the task, the work context and the characteristics of the followers govern the most suitable style for leaders to behave, and direct the selection of a supportive, directive, participative or achievement-oriented management style (Yukl, 2010). Professionally oriented participants may have a greater need to be intellectually and emotionally invested in the overall goals of the work unit and the organisation at large; and thus, as postulated by the theoretical underpinnings of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, have expectations of higher-quality LMX relationships that are characterised by trust, respect and obligation (Hogg, 2004a).

As this research used a qualitative design, the extent to which participants' age, duration of being "in" the experience with the manager, and length of time "out of" the relationship with the manager, influenced the coping process was not clear from the findings. Impressions are that the effects of the relationship on the participant and participants' status of coping had more to do with qualitative aspects of the relationship, rather than age, duration in the relationship or length of time out of the relationship. It was also not clear from the findings if the duration of being "in" the experience with the manager and length of time "out

of" the relationship with the manager influenced the participants' psychological capital at the time of the interview. This may be better determined in future research by adopting a quantitative design.

Although the participants reported experiencing self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy during, and as a result of, the challenging experience with the manager they directly reported to, interpreting psychological capital results qualitatively, findings also suggest that they "generally" may tend to present with "good" psychological capital *efficacy*, implying that this was a group who may have been likely to endure and persevere (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). Even though participants' confidence may have been "impaired" or "damaged" by the encounter with a destructive leader, they tended to actively attempt to cope with the negative relationship and sought ways to affirm themselves (Walumba et al., 2011).

During the interview, changes in vocal tone and volume illustrated participants' anguish while sharing the experience with the manager, and the participants alleviated this distress with the use of humour. This could be regarded as further evidence of the participants' tendency to actively find ways to cope with distressing situations. All the participants indicated that they wanted to continue with the interviews, even though they experienced moments of emotional difficulty. Although these challenging emotional moments varied in degree during the course of individual interviews, as well as across participant interviews, in general participants described their experience in a calm and controlled manner.

Findings suggest that participants' attempts to cope with the destructive leader behaviour ranged from stages of not coping, to attempts at coping by engaging in healthy and unhealthy ways to help them carry on. Coping for this sample of participants could be regarded as coping or not coping to a variable degree.

In terms of psychological capital as assessed by the *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio & Avey, 2007), the participants presented with moderate and variable psychological capital *optimism*, and this may have played a role in the cycles of feeling "low" or depressed, blaming themselves, feeling powerless, distancing themselves emotionally and physically, and negative self-nurturing *or* taking control and decisive action by, for example, exiting the negative situation, seeking self-affirmation, nurturing themselves in positive ways, finding solace in religion/spirituality, seeking social and family support and re-directing cognitions to positive outcomes (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Mary and Susan presented with psychological capital results that could be regarded as more moderate and variable compared with the stronger psychological capital results of the other participants in

the sample. By their own accounts, and from my observations, both Mary and Susan seemed at the time of our conversations, to struggle more than the other participants to cope with the lingering effects of the negative experience with their managers. I am also mindful, when interpreting this sample of participants' results, that the two Psychological Capital sub-scales, Resilience and Optimism, tend to obtain lower reliability values (below .70) (Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013; Van Wyk, 2016) and could thus influence reliability of interpretations on these two components.

As agreeing to take part in the interviews for this study took a certain amount of courage and willingness to re-live or re-engage with the challenging experience with their manager, the participants may have tended to self-select, in that they may have reached a level of coping that enabled them to take part. Although it was upsetting for participants to engage in a conversation about an experience they may prefer to "leave behind", being mostly well-qualified and thus academically astute may have elicited a willingness and sense of responsibility to share their experiences, perhaps "wanting to make good out of bad"; but could also have offered participants a safe space to "out" their particular manager or to disclose (and attain some ventilation) about the negative experience. The anticipated self-disclosure nature of interviews may result in participants volunteering to take part who are more homogeneous in terms of willingness to take part, are more open, patient and interested in the topic. Studies have found that women tended to be more willing to take part in qualitative based studies (Robinson, 2014); my own sample of seven women and one man also confirms that women were more willing to consent to participating in the study than men.

The participants valued integrity and tended to feel guilty when they said "bad things" about the manager; as if to alleviate those feelings of guilt, and perhaps also not wanting to look bad themselves for being negative about the manager (Lindebaum & Jordan, 2014; Hadley, 2014). They also sought to find good things to say about the manager and to attempt to defend the manager or mitigate his/her behaviour (Hadley, 2014). Mary said: *"… um I've wondered if I am blaming them fairly or not, but [short pause] uh or am I just dodging, mm, am I just [short pause] escaping [stutters] taking responsibility."* Attempting to balance the negative descriptions of her manager, Linda said: *"But he is not a <u>bad person</u>. What I mean by that is that he would not steal, he would not … [clears throat], he's got good values, if I can put it that way."*

The next section will discuss the findings at the macro thematic level according to the main themes that emerged from this inquiry.

6.4 Discussion of Findings at the Macro Thematic Level

Referring to the core themes that emerged in my exploration of participants' coping with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisations, the following section discusses participants' implicit beliefs about leadership in general; participants' values; participants' perceptions about what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour; the effects of destructive leadership behaviour on the participant, destructive leader, and work unit; participants' coping with destructive leadership behaviour – exploring the role of psychological capital; and perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader. (For the complete presentation of thematic findings refer to Chapter Five, and for a summary of the thematic findings refer to section 6.2.2 in this chapter.)

6.4.1 Participants' Implicit Beliefs about Leadership in General

Leadership is not a status that can be assigned in an inter-relational void without the "leader" claiming the position of leadership and followers sanctioning the claim to leadership (Norris-Watts & Lord, 2004). Followers have expectations and beliefs about leadership behaviour and leaders are "judged" in terms of their observance to those beliefs. This verdict of an individual's competencies and success in a leadership position could be based on the follower's personal implicit beliefs about what constitutes good leadership (Norris-Watts & Lord, 2004).

The findings suggest that participants held beliefs about leadership that entailed positional competency, in terms of knowledge and clarity of purpose. Some participants believed that managers needed to demonstrate knowledge of the job content, but also knowledge of "how to lead". Assertions by Mary, Anna, Linda, and Gail, for example, implied that leaders should be aware of "what leadership in action" exhibits. Further, participants believed that leaders should be aware of the strategic business goals, and communicate those goals in an open and clear manner. Participants believed that leaders should provide direction.

With regards to the dispositional or trait aspects of leaders, participants believed that, ideally, leaders are individuals who are self-aware, able to self-regulate their emotions and actions and display the confidence to lead. Integrity in a leader was important to participants. Therefore, reliability, trustworthiness, transparency in communication, being supportive, kind and respectful, were key dispositional aspects that participants believed sanctioned an individual to lead. Participants, though not expecting leaders to be religious or share the

participant's religion, did expect leaders to lead in ways that reflect religious values. Here Anna's comments provide a good illustration of expectations about a leader's self-awareness and self-regulation: *"Um, so that person would you know have self-confidence within themselves. They are grounded very well. They are very well centred just as a person. Um, because in that as well, if they have a very, fairly high EQ, they are then able to also um, I would assume make good decisions, more often than less. Um, because they are grounded and they are able to be objective regardless of the situation at hand."*

Although participants believed that leaders should be figures that they can look up to, as Anna said, *"the teacher in the classroom"*, they believed that a good leader leads in ways that recognise participants' individuality and unique contributions and lead in democratic ways that include participants in a relationship of supportive collaboration, rather than in a one-way directive communication style. Fritz communicated his expectation that although he recognises and respects the positional authority of the leader, a manager should communicate authority in supportive and helpful ways.

Participants' beliefs about what makes an ideal leader are in line with the literature on positive leadership, and particularly authentic leadership, indicating primarily that the leaders should be self-aware in order to acknowledge and manage their own short-comings in terms of personal competencies, trait, and interpersonal behaviour style that could impact on their leading effectively (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Peus et al., 2011). Central to the study of authentic leadership is the self-awareness of a leader. Authentic leadership fosters self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modelling and thus provides conducive contexts in which to grow authentic followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Here participants' disclosures implied little self-awareness in their managers or, as Fritz related, if his manager was aware, he *"did not care"* about the effects of his behaviour on others. Nadia, reflecting on her manager's lack of self-awareness, said that her manager's behaviour was not consciously intentional and that she *"just didn't know what she was doing"*. After a spate of resignations, including Nadia's, and the accompanying exit interviews, Nadia's manager resigned. The feedback this manager received during the exit interviews increased her self-awareness and she realised that she needed some "time out".

The behaviour of the participants' managers did not inspire as role models. For Fritz, his manager's hunger for power resulted in his loss of respect for this manager; June could not reconcile her own personal values with the observed and expressed values of her manager. Linda found it difficult to make sense of her manager's inability to make decisions. Referring to her manager's inability to make decisions, Mary said that she found him to be

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"very weak" and *"scared"*. She described a manager who would rather opt to do *"nothing"* than take the risk of doing the wrong thing. Gail referred to her manager's insecurity, which her manager tried to hide by acting confident. Linda commented on her manager's lack of self-regulation by describing high strung behaviours such as irritability, agitations and impatience; and Mary commented on incidents of yelling and screaming, describing her manager as *"quite insane, but crazy"*; and she suspected that her manager had pathological issues.

The importance of consistency in leader behaviour and, by implication then, trustworthiness, was addressed by Peus et al. (2011) in a study that indicated that the relations between authentic leaders and the work-related attitudes of followers, as well as perceived team effectiveness, were mediated by perceived predictability of the leader, which can be regarded as an aspect of trust. Further, the authors opined that when leaders become aware of their values, communicate these values clearly to followers, and act in accordance with their values, authentic leaders become predictable to their followers. Followers are then likely to reciprocate by exhibiting positive work attitudes and increased team effectiveness. The participants in this study shared their experiences of their managers' unpredictability and inconsistency. Fritz related how he never knew where he stood with his manager and whether he could believe him. Gail, June and Nina commented on how they never knew when it would be their turn to be the target of their managers' displeasure. Referring to the unpredictability of her manager, June said: *"… you would just never know what would set her off."* The findings by Peus et al. (2011) also confirmed trust in the leader as one of the key components that determine the success of authentic leaders. Fritz recalled his manager's tendency to say harmful things to others: *"… it made me negative to wonder all the time about what was said behind my back"*, and Susan said: *"Because I didn't trust him. And because he would go back on what he did and said."* For this sample of participants, the behaviour of their direct managers did not meet participants' beliefs and expectations of what constitutes ideal leadership.

Some participants were eager to share with me their experiences of "what makes a good leader". In this regard, they shared current or past experiences of reporting to managers whom they regarded as "good" managers. The "good" manager was described in many terms: supportive, guided and assisted.

The following example from Anna illustrated this:

I think a good leader can identify the strengths in their employees and work with the strengths. Remember previous manager, she had this thing for a strength-based

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approach, [inaudible] but she actually used to do that. […] She would have this kind of conversation, hey, and we would chat about stuff and meanwhile we're looking ‿, she gets to know you, and then she discovers, but you know what, I need the strengths, she's quite ‿, you know she does this quite well. Then she would play to your strengths man [Bea very softly: mm], like when she would assign tasks to people, then she would assign it to ‿, whenever something must come where she needs to do whatever, she would try and um assign you into a space that is your strength, as far as ‿, not all the time, but mostly. So you end up doing a lot of things that you enjoy doing [Bea very softly: mm], and also that you are good at. So everybody gets that opportunity, so it's very minimal where somebody is going to feel like they not worth their while there or there's no purpose for them. Then they enjoy being at work, because [laughs] they are doing something that they are good at and they enjoy it. [Bea: and they can excel at] So, to me she was, she was one of the good leaders that, that I worked with.

Gail, who at the time of the interview was about to move to a different organisation, described her current manager's way of managing in the following way:

This was more, we acknowledge that our ways of working and our views is different [Bea: mm], but how do we come to a workable solution [Bea: mm] to get on. And, um, with this manager, she really tried to make me feel that, you can [Bea: mm]. I believe that you already have the talent and within you what it takes to succeed. [Bea, softly: ok] It's more how can we fine tune some things or where do you need my support. I think because of my journey, I have also learnt to become so independent that it's difficult [laughs] for someone now to almost, you know, pin me down somewhere, because I've become such a free spirit and so independent, if you give me something, I just run with it. If something needs to be sorted out, I sort it out myself. So, it was more challenging for this current line manager to ‿, like, it doesn't look like you need my help? Um. And when I do say some things are not working for me it's like, oh, I didn't know you were not ok with it, because you just carry on. You just run with it, you just make things happen [claps her hands]. Um, so it was good, um. Ja. I found we were definitely in a much better relationship [Bea: mm].

She added:

I think what make a big difference also in terms of my current line manager is that we both come from the same, highly similar academic background. We are both registered practitioners. We have both earned our stripes in different ways and so it's not that we are in competition with one another. But how. It's definitely a more collaborative relationship. So how do we work together for the greater good of the organisation and for those that we provide a service to [Bea: mm] as opposed to there's this competition or I am not being comfortable in terms of you having a certain qualification or whatever. So there was this, definitely more in that, yes, you are my senior, reporting to you but, um, ja, we saw each other as we are both specialists here to make a difference. And so from going in from that position, we were like how do we overcome our differences [Bea: mm] so that we can deliver as opposed to having all this other stuff.

This "good" manager acknowledged individual differences, recognised participants' strengths, and managed participants accordingly. The effective manager raised the participants' self-esteem. They communicated clearly and provided constructive feedback. The effect is that participants enjoy their work, feel satisfied and are willing to put in effort, while the manager's performance also flourishes. Where there are differences, the participant and manager together find workable solutions in a collaborative manner. Fritz's description of his current manager illustrates these characteristics and how a management style that focuses on service, relationship building and decisions that benefit the business, lead to a motivated follower and career success for the manager:

She is the kind of manager that would always back you. She will always, um, she would try to get the best out of someone in order to succeed ... um ... so that ... um ... so that the person could stay positive. She will sort out a problem for you. Um, where you could not dare to take a problem to the previous manager. Should he have sorted out a problem for you, he would expect you to be for ever thankful, as if he did you a favour This new manager would see it as her job to serve you in that way. She is the type of manager anybody would want to work with. That is the type of person she is. She has, um, perfected her inter-personal skills to be a decent good manager. She would rather bring out the best in everybody for the benefit of the business. And through doing that she also flourishes. That is what she is like. That is the type of person that I deem worthy of doing my best for and going to all lengths to do what I can.

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Participants seem to need their leaders to strive to be congruent and live authentically and be aware of areas of their work lives that may not come naturally for them; and deal with those shortcomings in authentic, self-reflective ways. The following examples illustrates Linda's manager's inability to "see" himself and adapt accordingly:

> *I found it incredible how he would panic and how uncertain he could get and how he would go in a direction and after half an hour change direction. He would decide on something and after a while change his mind. It is almost incredible. The rest of the people in the company [stutters] laughs about him operating like that. So, the question is whether he is aware of it? Maybe he knows; the penny hasn't dropped. I don't know. Um, I don't know. I do not know whether he is [stutters] aware of being like that. I do not know. I don't [softly].*

Authentic leaders strive to be more self-aware, fair, true to themselves in their actions, and endeavour to be authentic in their relational orientations (Ilies et al., 2005). However, leaders may behave in ways that are authentic to them (from their own perspective), yet followers may experience dissonance and relational inauthenticity because the leader behaviour is incongruent with the followers' personal values and beliefs.

In the next section I discuss participants' personal values regarding life and work and how these values drive and underpin participants' implicit beliefs and expectations about leadership in general.

6.4.2 Participants' Values

Values are regarded as lasting beliefs which inform a specific way of existing personally or socially, and is preferred to an opposing way of existing; and individuals tend to form preferences for one value over another value. Individuals attempt to live and exhibit behaviour that is in accordance with their preferred values (Shao, Resick, & Hargis, 2011). Participants described the important things in life to them, the values that guided them and that gave them a sense of identity and made them feel comfortable and in sync with their worlds. Having a sense of purpose; living lives characterised by integrity and respectfulness; religiousness or spirituality; being connected socially to friends and family; and finding joyfulness in their everyday lives were values that participants found nourishing and sustaining. In examining the value-behaviour relationship and focus on the motivational properties of values, the self, and value action, Verplanken and Holland (2002) found that

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values gave meaning to, energise, and regulate value-congruent behaviour, but only if those values were cognitively activated and central to the self (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Nina described the centrality of the personal value "respect" for her, and that she continued to express and actively live respectfully, even though she found herself in a context where she perceived herself to be disrespected. She regarded being respectful as an active choice she made.

As values are considered to be an essential component of self-identity and people's concepts of themselves, those values that are particularly central to an individual's self-concept are likely to have important influences on how an individual is likely to interpret a situation, and thus respond to the situation (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Self-verification theory provides a framework from which to understand the relationship between a person's values and their responses or behaviours and investigates the processes that people engage in to ensure the endurance of their self-conceptions (Swann, 1983). In order to maintain their self-concept and identity, to live authentically, individuals seek affirmations in their relationships with others of their particular self-beliefs, and they may therefore be likely to prefer to engage in relationships that are consistent and affirming of their identities (Swann & Hill, 1982). It thus follows that the participants in this study were likely to have beliefs about leadership that were congruent with their own personal values and would likely prefer to engage in leader-follower engagements that adhered at an interpersonal level to those values they regarded as important to their sense of identity.

The following sub-section discusses the participants' perceptions of what constituted destructive leadership behaviour. What were the actions of these particular managers that made the participants' engagement with these particular managers challenging?

6.4.3 Participants' Perceptions about what Constitutes Destructive Leadership Behaviour

In describing their experience of destructive leadership behaviour, participants referred to the "type of person" the manager is as: unscrupulous; hunger for positional power; self-centredness; inconsistency; lacking in integrity (being two-faced, disrespectful, dishonest, untrustworthy; not "have participant's back") and lacking empathy. Personal qualities included being high-strung, impatient, insecure, self-centred; and showing a lack of empathy. Both Mary and Gail referred to their managers as displaying qualities that bordered on the pathological. Participants' relations with the manager were characterised by belittling, blaming, bullying, negative competition, sabotaging and unsupportive behaviour from their

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direct manager. The following example from Gail describes her manager's destructive behaviour: *"Um, so from that perspective in terms of her world views, her values, her also having insecurity problems and enrolling us in these competitions that we haven't signed up for, I would say, that kinda like sums her up. [Bea, very softly: mm] For me. If I have to paint a picture about her."*

In this regard, the literature on authentic leadership describes inauthentic leader behaviour as characterised by the tendency to promote ambiguity and inconsistency, emotion fuelled debates and the utilisation of power to keep followers at a distance. Blind obedience without collaborative discussion is encouraged, as well as favouritism and competition (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013). The impression is of managers that are either not sufficiently self-aware of their behaviour and how those behaviours are perceived and received, or managers who do not care, who are callously comfortable with their behaviour. In an attempt to make sense of the experience, Anna said: *"And I um still maintain that if she rea_, if she managed herself differently, more maturedly and her EQ and all of that, she could have actually used me for her gain. So now eventually she ends up with all for nothing."* Gail referred to her speculations about the manager's self-awareness: *"I think you have to ask yourself, is this person aware that they are making this relationship unpleasant?"* Fritz confirmed this ambiguity in trying to make sense of his unpleasant relationship with his direct manager: *"He could have been aware of it and did not do something about it by being too incompetent, or he could have been aware of it and did not care about it. He could have felt that if people did not like him, they should get over it."*

The participants' views on destructive or challenging behaviours by their direct report manager can be broadly categorised according to dispositional and relational aspects; and finds support within the main themes on destructive leader behaviour from the literature. The literature on destructive leadership behaviour refers to the relational and dispositional aspects of destructive leadership behaviour. Leader behaviours that can be considered as anti-subordinate, that sabotage the followers' motivation, well-being or job satisfaction (Einarsen et al., 2007); are inconsiderate and belittle followers (Ashforth as cited in Tepper, 2000); exhibit undesirable qualities, and could in some instances suggest pre-existing personality pathologies (Goldman, 2006; Hogan & Hogan, 2001), are considered indicators of behaviours that could be considered destructive. These behaviours are considered to be embedded in the process of leading and are harmful to followers (Krasikova et al., 2013). Further, the literature refers to the destructive characteristics of leaders who are prone, for reasons that are not investigated directly in this study, to behave inauthentically, in dissonance with their own

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beliefs and self-concepts. The behaviour of inauthentic leaders includes deception and manipulation, dominance, self-aggrandising, and egoism. Their own and followers' actions are directed towards serving the selfish needs of the inauthentic manager (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013).

Participants' implicit beliefs about the characteristics of what makes a "good" manager included: postulating that those implicitly held beliefs about managers are underpinned by the values participants hold and which are the foundations of their self-beliefs. Shao et al. (2011) aver that competing personal values may motivate opposite forms of discretionary social behaviours in the workplace. Participants' perceptions of what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour in the workplace are likely to be located in the domain of incongruent value and identity expressions. In a study drawing on models of competing values and self-verification theory, the tendency to behave in socially dominant, self-seeking ways was related to abusive supervision, whereas an "other oriented", psychologically collectivist orientation related positively to positive interpersonal behaviours (Shao et al., p. 1072). Participants would therefore be likely to seek association, and positively regard relationships with leaders who affirm their values and self-beliefs; and may find it challenging and attempt to avoid associating with leaders who result in participants experiencing feelings of disconnect and inauthenticity with the leader, and within the participants themselves. In a study that examined how people responded behaviourally when they receive feedback that disconfirmed their conceptions of self, findings suggested that individuals are active agents who continuously attempt to sustain and re-establish their existing self-beliefs (Swann & Hill, 1982). Thus, when direct line managers fail to affirm followers' self-beliefs, as in this study, they actively attempt to re-affirm themselves. The participants in this study sought self-affirmation by "claiming back" their personal identities, and some were willing to resign in order to do that.

Attempting to make sense of the motivations behind the destructive leader's behaviour, authentic leadership theory suggests a degree of disconnect between the leader's authentic self and the expressed actions of the leader (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Alternatively, the leader could be behaving in self-identity congruent and authentic ways, however, those behaviours may be incongruent with the closely held values and self-beliefs of the participants who report directly to these managers (Price, 2003). Either way, the apparent dissonance in values and identity are likely to inform participants' casting of the leader's behaviour as destructive and incongruent with their beliefs about what makes a good leader. Nadia described her disillusionment with her manager's behaviour; and the

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incongruence of this manager's leadership style with Nadia's personal aspirations, values and beliefs about leadership: *"Imagine that is your first manager and you look up to the manager, because you need to be there some time, and that is the role model you see. Is that what I to be like in five to ten years' time? You ask yourself that question, I do not want to be like that! [raises her voice]. There is no way you can be like that and, ja, it was …"*

6.4.4 The Effects of Destructive Leadership Behaviour on Participant, Destructive Leader, and Work Unit

During the interviews, participants shared the consequences the negative behaviour of their direct leaders had for the participants in particular; as well as for the managers themselves; and more widely for the work unit, in terms of work outcomes and the interpersonal dynamics of work unit members.

Several participants experienced surprise to find themselves in such a negative relationship. Anna described how the change in the relationship surprised her: *"Something happened along the way, like when suddenly, like she started changing towards me. Um, and she like just literally started to just find fault with me, with everything. Then there was this thing of um she wanted to oust me out of the acting role, but she couldn't do that because that was already in writing."* Susan described what she, in retrospect, thought may have been the moment that marked the change in her relationship with her manager: *"And then we had a shouting match [voice breaks slightly]. It was so bad that I asked him to let me out of my office as he stood between me and the door. I think that is where things changed."*

Participants experienced self-doubt, became fearful and demotivated, felt stupid, tearful and angry. Gail describes how her manager's belittling of her broke down her confidence: *"So, it's from you coming in and believe that you can conquer your world. You can own your space. You can contribute, to belittling you and breaking down your confidence. I think it's in that. […] It's making you feel that you are a small peanut; and thinking that you are gonna develop into a watermelon; it ain't gonna happen. [Bea: mm] You are not good enough. You'll never be that person and in that breaking down your confidence."* Nina explained how the relationship with her manager made her feel anxious all the time: *"Ja it definitely affected me emotionally. I lost a lot of weight and I was just constantly, ja just constantly stressed and that when I decided to quit. [very softly Bea: mm, mm] It just wasn't worth it for me anymore."* Nadia became agitated, with some evidence of transference here, as she started to speak as if directly to this manager while describing it to me: *"Because I was negative in my mind. I didn't want to do anything. I did not want to come*

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up with new ideas. Because you are constantly putting me down. You are <u>so</u> <u>rude</u> to me! Um. I cannot speak my mind. I am so scared of losing my job. Um. It just sets you, it sets you back so much."

Several participants attempted to distance themselves from the manager, to keep out of the manager's way and attempted to distance themselves from their own thoughts and emotions. Fritz described his fear of making mistakes and how he started to hide his mistakes and then tried not to think about it: *"It is only that that type of relationship rubbed off on me to such an extent that I thought I could not make a mistake. And when I made mistakes I thought I had to try and hide it and try to focus on something else in order to pretend not to have made that mistake."* June welcomed the days that her work took her away from the office: *"I would really dread going to team meetings. I think I was so grateful if my day took me away from my desk and I didn't have to see her [laughs softly] and hmm where I could go to my clients and be in an environment where I could almost be _ I know I am good at what I do."*

The following extract from Nadia's interview poignantly illustrates how she started to distance herself from participating socially at work:

Nadia: *I mean you want to block yourself off because you can't, you can't …*

Bea: *Um, instead of participating?*

Nadia: *Participating. <u>Being</u> <u>there</u> <u>in</u> <u>the</u> <u>now</u>. I was like in my head, ja, and normally I would interact and be present, present in the situation and then it's, I wasn't, wasn't …*

Pre-occupation with the experience left participants struggling to concentrate and invaded their social lives and their family lives. They disengaged from the social and family routines they previously enjoyed. June commented on how she used to enjoy visiting wine farms over weekends, and how she stopped socialising and doing the things she enjoyed. Nina, Linda, June and Mary noted that talking about the negative experience started to dominate their conversations with friends or significant others. Tepper (2007) referred to the "'trickle-down' model" (p. 281), where the chain of mistreatment may follow on with some follower victims displacing their aggression onto their family members. Fritz and Nadia expressed suppressed feelings of aggression towards the manager, by mirroring the behaviour of the manager in their family contexts at home.

Implicit in these tangible and intangible effects of the challenging experience participants had with their managers, is the thread of disconnect participants experienced with

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themselves. Anna described how overwhelmed she was by this experience, in that it was so different from how she was used to be regarded in terms of performance by others and herself: *"I do my work, and I go beyond what is expected, and I know my work ethic that I have, and now it's almost that somebody comes and that's irrelevant now type of thing."* Nadia said: *"And because I am not a person like that, I am always willing, I want to learn, that had a huge effect" […] "… and I am becoming a bad, a very bad person. I didn't think I was that bad. I was never_, I am never that bad …"* Participants became uncomfortable with who they were becoming in reaction to the treatment they received from the manager. Gail said: *"And I do not like coming across as being weak. I pride myself as being a strong, independent woman, cos that is how I have been raised. So, it doesn't gel well with me if I cry for something that in my opinion, shouldn't be worth crying for [laughs]. Ja. It's challenging from that perspective. You feel that you [are] failing yourself in terms of your own standards."* In Fritz's telling words lie the analogy of these feelings of incongruity with themselves which participants were experiencing; and the inner emotional battle they engaged in as a result: *"I felt uncomfortable in my own clothes. In that setup I became difficult with myself for allowing it to happen."*

Participants described the effects that the destructive behaviour of their managers had on the managers themselves. The careers of the managers were impacted by their own behaviour, becoming derailed as their roles eroded; being demoted; or having left the organisation under unpleasant circumstances. Some of these managers experienced psychological and emotional consequences that resulted in them having to take time off work. These negative outcomes resulted in rumours and reputational damage for the managers. Referring to the literature on the consequences of destructive leader behaviour on the leader self, the consequences of a leader's bullying behaviour on self can be described in terms of the impact on the leader's reputation and power. The negative effects of these leaders' behaviour often brings on themselves reprimands, criminal records, tarnished reputations and further harmful consequences to self, of which the most common is derailment, by being fired, demoted or otherwise failing to progress in their career (McCall & Lombardo as cited in Padilla et al., 2007). Anna had these insightful thoughts with regards to the isolation managers who struggle often experience: *"Because I think it's what the institution looks at … how they recruit and also how they empower managers [Bea, very softly, mm]. Because it's also maybe just a matter of, so you appointed this manager, so you leave them just like that. Work with them still [Bea very softly: mm]."*

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The relationship between the participants and their managers did not occur in isolation but affected the work processes and interpersonal dynamics with other members of the work unit. The direct operational and indirect emotional sabotage from the managers impeded swift and effective task delivery at an operational level and obstructed work unit goals. Team dynamics became increasingly complicated in an ambiguous pendulum-type interplay of supportive closeness amongst members, favouritism, sense of relief if another member is the target of the day, and a general sense that team capacity is eroded. Nina described the interface effect of follower-manager relationship, team member relationships, and performance outcomes: *"But what affected me was that we were very close, our team was very close and worked very well in a team and it was affecting me because I felt our performance was going downhill because of her influence on the other team members. So, it's almost indirectly affecting me quite a lot. And every now and then it would affect me directly. I would say it was more on a team capacity."*

With participants likely to seek ways to re-affirm self-believes when they receive feedback that disconfirm their conceptions of self (Swann & Hill, 1982), the next sub-section discusses participants' ways of coping with the destructive leadership experience. Some of these ways of coping can be described as participants trying to claim back aspects of their authentic selves. Further, the following sub-section explores how participants' psychological capital may have influenced these coping strategies.

6.4.5 Participants' Coping with Destructive Leadership Behaviour – Exploring the Role of Psychological Capital

Participants attempted to cope with the effects of the challenging relationship with their managers to a degree that varied in effectiveness. Participants tried to find *control* in the situation, by asserting themselves, seeking pathways to circumvent the manager and equipping themselves with knowledge on how to cope with the destructive manager. Being in the presence of the manager was uncomfortable for participants, and therefore they tended to seek ways to avoid the manager and *distance* themselves from the manager. In its ultimate form, this physical distancing from the manager culminated in the resignation of the participant. This distancing also took the form of emotional distancing by pretending everything was fine and disengaging from previous levels of emotional commitment to work. Participants indulged in positive and negative comfort-seeking behaviours that included eating and exercising that provided temporary mood-enhancement and *self-nurturing*.

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Religious/spiritual beliefs provided participants with feelings of safety, comfort and that God had a destiny for them. Together with the support of family and friends, participants' belief in God seemed to re-affirm their belief in themselves. Anna said: *"… you can block me as much as you can, but my divine destiny, nothing and no one can keep me from that."* Susan referred to the role of others and God: *"It is really with people's insight in my life and the help of God. I would not be able to do it otherwise."* Participants *re-directed cognitions* to find a positive in the negative experience, something that they gained from the experience that assisted them in their future career endeavours. They sought to "claim back" their identities as they had perceived themselves to be before the challenging experience with the manager, by for example, taking comfort in a subsequent promotion and being proud of academic and career accomplishments, thus attempting to *re-affirm their self-beliefs* and attempting to become their authentic selves again. The degree of success that individual participants experienced from these coping attempts varied, with Gail believing that in essence, she coped, whereas Mary believed that the experience "disempowered and impoverished" her.

Referring to the literature on coping, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping involves the contextual nature of coping and is influenced by the person's appraisal of the actual demands in the encounter and resources for managing the demands. Roth and Cohen (1986) describe coping responses in terms of approach or avoidance orientations, with an approach orientation involving cognitive and emotional activity oriented towards or away from the stressor/threat. A more recent framework of coping responses (that could be viewed as a conceptual integration of the problem- versus emotion-focused coping; and the approach versus avoidance coping classifications), describe subordinate responses to supervisor injustice, and proposed four coping strategies, namely: functional-active; functional-passive; dysfunctional-active; and dysfunctional-passive (Klaussner, 2014). In a theoretical contribution May et al. (2014) elevate the role of followers in triggering or curbing destructive leadership behaviour. The authors considered how the coping responses of followers impact on leaders' perceptions of the followers and the leaders' behaviour responses. The authors discuss an interaction model that proposes that when leaders perceive followers' responses as submissive or aggressive, destructive leaders are likely to perpetuate the negative behaviour towards followers. However, when destructive leaders perceive followers' responses as moderately confrontational problem-solving, the negative cycle of destructive leader behaviour can be disrupted.

The concept of positive psychological capital, when applied to the authentic leadership process, considers "investing in the actual self, to reap the return of becoming the possible self" (Avolio & Luthans, 2006, p. 147). In interpreting participants' coping qualitatively through the psychological capital lens, what does the participants' group reservoir of psychological capital suggest? The participants' psychological capital results suggest relatively strong psychological capital, which could explain why most of the participants in the study seemed to have been able to carry on and move forward with their lives, taking on new positions with expectations of success. However, some of the participants, notably Mary and Susan, though carrying on, seemed to experience greater difficulty in leaving the experience behind, with Mary stating that the experience *"disempowered and impoverished"* her and Susan at the time of our conversation could not then yet cope without the help of anti-depressant medication. Did both Mary and Susan's comparatively somewhat lower psychological capital results suggest lower reservoirs of psychological capital in general; and thus, leave them with a greater challenge to cope with the aftermath of the challenging experience with their managers? With these psychological capital resources regarded as state-like and open to development (Walumbwa et al., 2011), would that imply that some participants would to a degree take longer to authenticate and affirm themselves than others? Linda is the only participant that at the time of our conversation was still reporting to the manager with whom she has a challenging relationship. She presented with psychological capital results that could be interpreted as moderate and variable, which could explain why although she displayed sufficient resilience to remain in the relationship with this manager. She, nevertheless, showed signs of fatigue and psychosomatic symptoms.

The design of the study and the findings did not lend themselves to conclusive answers on the role of psychological capital in coping with destructive leadership behaviour, though "hints" at this being a coping resource. It could be that the self-selection of participants to take part in the study resulted in a homogeneous group of participants who presented with higher psychological capital, and thus the study could not clearly discriminate between various levels of individual participant psychological capital.

Based on participants' challenging experience with their direct manager, they suggested that other workers who may find themselves in similar situations should speak up sooner and not protect the manager. They suggested that followers should not accept the situation, but should be true to themselves, stand up for themselves, and not allow the manager to divert them from their personal goals. If the best way to achieve this "reclaiming

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of self" is to resign from their position, it was considered best to persevere while looking for another position; and to utilise the support of friends, family, partners and the organisational support structures during this period. Anna advised others who may find themselves in a similar situation to continue to navigate pathways towards their goals within the organisation. If to "get out" is the best solution, participants' advice was to attempt to do so, while acknowledging the conflicts experienced in terms of income, family financial responsibilities, and identifying with being career oriented versus being a stay-at-home mom. Linda said: *"I am not a stay-at-home person. I like to be challenged. I like the interaction with the clients."* Gail came to the realisation that she should take an active stance to address the situation: *"I can't expect them to have enough self-awareness or enough self-insight or to be present enough or to have good leadership behaviours because they are in that role. Just because they are managers does not mean they can necessarily lead effective. And I realised the responsibility sits with me! To actually say, hallo, do you realise that when you do x y and z, it means the following to me or I interpret it in this way, which affects me in this way, which makes me feel this way".* Anna suggested ways to manage the interim before exiting the situation presents as a viable option: *"But I think, ja, um, if you can _ , if you identify the situation as threatening, find the courage to get information, first, before you act. Read up on it, 'cos that's what I did. I read up on it. Um. Talk about it. Have your couch situation with a friend or whatever. Because sometimes just letting it off steam, off some _ . You don't even have to get an answer or response [laughs], but it helps to process. Um, if you have family, use your family as support structure. If you cannot just resign and go be at home, if it means in the mean-time look for another job, if that is the solution, then do that. But while you can't do that, and you are still forced to come back, use your organisation. Look what they have, structures that they have. And just try and persevere as best you can."*

The role of the organisations' structures and procedures as a coping resource was complicated for the participants; and they utilised the organisation as a coping resource to varying degrees. Some participants preferred not to use the Human Resource structures available to them at all because they feared reputational damage to themselves, and victimisation; and for others this fear was compounded by the fact that they were part of the HR Department and the challenging follower-manager scenario was taking place within the HR context. Others, although using the HR channels available to them, described that the response process was too slow and that the destructive leaders were allowed to stay in their positions for too long; and in some cases, were replaced with managers behaving similarly. Mary and Gail ended up with having consecutive challenging experiences with direct

managers. Further, the destructive managers tended to favourably manipulate their own images to senior management and others not directly reporting to them. Gail reflects on the effects image management by destructive leaders has on the level of support that the "whistle blower" receives from others in the organisation: *"The second manager was very difficult, because he almost played 'goody two shoes' with everyone else so when people heard afterwards that he left because of us blowing the whistle [Bea: the first manager]. It was almost, how could we? How could I? They were almost disappointed in me. In us. Obviously over time it came out if it was you guys, you blew the whistle first, so there was definitely this disapproval from certain people in terms of how could you? 'Cos he was a great man! He was doing a wonderful job! We've never seen, we've never experienced all this stuff that you guys consider to be a challenge. So, it was tough re-establishing myself after the first relationship because of the image he projected to everyone else outside of his immediate team that he managed. Whereas with the second one, she almost didn't realise that to win the game, the organisational game within Organisation F, you need to build relationships and because she hadn't built sufficient or adequate relationships, with enough people and in the process has upset or frustrated other people, it was easier for them to almost be supportive of us, when we got to that kind of end phase of the relationship with her."* June said that it would have been costly for the organisation to discharge her manager because of the seniority of the manager's position. Therefore, often the destructive relationship was allowed to fester by the silence from both the participants and the organisation. Anna and Gail, to a degree, utilised the HR processes available to them, by reporting the situation, and utilising mentoring and counselling support available within the organisation. However, when Gail ended up with a second manager that behaved destructively, she waited much longer to seek assistance from the organisational processes, as she felt uncomfortable acknowledging that she again experienced a difficult situation with a manager. Anna said: *"I think ... what do they call it _, they are silent on it and it's happening. It is happening. It's not _, the institution I don't think necessarily deals with it. Generally, I think the organisation does not, generally, deal well with confrontation [laughs] between employees. Whether they are junior or senior, because that to me, it comes down to that, where, it's almost like they leave those one's alone man. It's like, ok, get over it. Move on."* The work of Padilla et al. (2007) emphasises the systemic enabling that often accompanies destructive leader behaviour and focuses on the coming together of leaders, followers, and circumstances; and describes the notion of susceptible followers and conducive environments.

The study explored whether participants' experience of relational authenticity with the leader influenced participant perceptions in casting leader behaviour as destructive and/or played a role in participants' coping responses. The next sub-section discusses participants' degree of identification with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort).

6.4.6 Perceptions of Relational Authenticity with the Leader

In reference to the diverse South African organisational milieus, cross-cultural leadership studies indicated that cultural difference has an influence on the behaviour of leaders. Management philosophies tend to correspond with the cultures in which these management philosophies are deployed. Corporate South Africa exhibits a blend of cultures, with White South African managers showing a management style that could be regarded as largely Western/Eurocentric, whereas Black South African managers show cultural influences that could be regarded as more Afrocentric (Booysen, 2001). South Africa's historical and political past is complex (Terreblanche, 2002), and organisational members do not only differ in terms of gender, age and experience, but come from vastly different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. However, these diverse organisational social attributes are not unique to South Africa, but are increasingly becoming a world-wide phenomenon. Organisational members may tend to have different values and implicit beliefs about leadership; and I was interested in exploring perceptions of incongruency between participants and their identified managers. The participants expressed beliefs and perceptions about relational authenticity with their direct managers in terms of *positional competence*, *values*, *social attributes*, and *personality/trait;* and responded that these relational authenticity components influenced the quality of the participants' relationships with their managers.

Differences in qualification and experience levels created perceptions of dissonance for some of the participants. When participants had higher qualifications or qualifications more appropriate to the manager's position, they tended to question the authenticity of the manager for the position and participants experienced relational inauthenticity in the manager's unwillingness to utilise and acknowledge the participant's knowledge and abilities.

Diversity indices such as age, race, values and personality were weaved into the incongruent relational dynamic. Anna was younger than her manager, had much higher qualifications than her manager, regarded herself as more emotionally mature than her manager, could not relate to the manager's personality, and questioned what she perceived as

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the manager's entitlement to the position because of race. Gender played a role in Susan's perceptions of inauthenticity with the manager in that she believed her manager did not view women as being capable and suitable for managerial positions on the production side of the organisation, a position she regarded herself as eligible for.

Nina found that relational authenticity with her direct manager, in terms of social attributes and interests, helped to facilitate her relationship with the manager: *"Ahm. So, I mean we were similar in, I mean, I don't wanna say, I mean there was a ten year age difference. But, ja, the White female thing, I could relate to more and I don't know if that really had, of anything it might have had a more of a positive influence. We had some, I know this sounds bad, but, ja, the same interests were kinda there um in terms of we were both kinda social people, so talking about where we might go for dinner, things like that. So, in terms of those dynamics that helped."*

Having greater impact than social attributes, however, were participants' perceptions of managers as behaving in ways that contrasted with participants' personal values and self-beliefs, and participants found it difficult to reconcile themselves with the behaviour and leadership styles of their direct managers. Nadia said: *"I don't think it was a racial issue at all. Um, at all. Class issue, I would also say not at all? Um, ja, eh, certain class, high class, but I had that values again that made me again also, I'm not there, but I have <u>values</u>."* These value discrepancies centred on incongruity in terms of expressed values, such as helpfulness and caring behaviours, values about power, status and position that violated participants' more democratic and humanitarian personal values. June said: *"How you are going against your culture by saying you are not going to do charity work for somebody? I couldn't reconcile the two. And I think, that gave me insight as to who, this is who you are as a person, and I just realised she is never going to understand me … hm."* For Mary, this relational inauthenticity was experienced at an organisational level: *"I was not made for Organisation E and I should, eh, ja. [Inaudible] working for this other Joe three mornings a week, I love it. I love these people. And um, I just had to go and get new clothes. Um. I never had to dress so smart. It's not me. Um. I like to talk _, I <u>love</u> talking politics and something very important, something I'm passionate about. You don't talk politics [inaudible] expose them. Um. The people, they were very hierarchical and very um, those who had gained in authority<u>, asserted</u> their authority and they expected you to in turn to assert <u>your</u> authority to <u>your</u> underlings."*

The findings with regard to relational authenticity, as discussed above, suggest that relational authenticity issues do play a role in participants' casting of leader behaviour as

destructive. Suggestions from the findings are that the realisation of these incongruities could have influenced participants' coping responses; and may have engendered the "tipping point" to give up on and exit the relationship to re-affirm their authentic selves and self-verify their self-concepts. The following examples from Nadia, June and Mary suggest that this is an area that may need to be further explored: *"And I know it was my first professional job at the time, but, um, that changed me. Um. Imagine that is your first manager and you look up to the manager because you need to be there some time and that is the role model you see. Is that what I to be like in five to ten years' time? You ask yourself that question, I do not want to be like that! [raises her voice]. There is no way you can be like that and, ja, it was …"* (Nadia). *"And I think, that gave me insight as to who, this is who you are as a person, and I just realised she is never going to understand me … hm"* (June).

Mary described how she reached a point where she realised that she was not going to be accepted and "fit in": *"I've said to my children, once you know you've tried your best, you must just say fuck it. [Laughs] Just fuck it, you've done what you can."*

Participants in this study held implicit beliefs about what, to them, makes an ideal leader. When the leadership style of their direct managers contrasted with or failed to meet closely held personal values, participants perceived their managers' leadership styles as destructive. The managers' perceived destructive leadership styles had consequences for the participants, the managers' themselves and the work unit, affecting the execution of tasks and the attainment of goals, as well as the well-being of other team members in the work unit. In order to cope with the negative relationship, participants tried to find control in the situation; they attempted to distance themselves from the situation, their own thoughts and emotions; they sought ways to affirm their closely held self-beliefs; indulged in positive and negative self-nurturing; tried to find solace in religion/spirituality; sought social and family support; and attempted to re-direct cognitions. As these coping attempts were accomplished with varying degrees of effectiveness, I prefer to describe the participants' coping attempts as differential coping rather than in terms of coping or not coping. Participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader played a role in perceiving the managers' behaviour as destructive; and in coping with the destructive leader behaviour. This sample of participants presented with what could be regarded as quite high psychological capital. All the participants have found ways to survive and re-build their lives; and all the participants are currently employed in their professional fields of work; which seems to support the high psychological capital total scores for the sample as a whole. However, both Mary and Susan's self-reported, observed, and PsyCap measured coping can be regarded as more moderate and

variable in comparison with the rest of the sample. Therefore, the findings suggest that participants' psychological capital may have played a role in their coping with the managers' destructive leadership style. The role of psychological capital in participants' coping with destructive leadership, however, is vague because of the homogeneity of this sample and the research design, and will need to be further explored with more diversity in the psychological capital of participants, and using quantitative methodology.

The next sub-section describes the limitations of this inquiry and explores suggestions for theory, application and future research.

6.5 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Theory, Application and Future Research

6.5.1 Limitations of the Study

The qualitative nature of this study, and the small purposive sampling despite producing thick and valuable findings, restrict the generalisability of the findings. The limited number of participants, who had in common a negative experience with an identified manager, locates the findings in the experiences of this particular sample and thus limits generalisability. Alternative methodological approaches that could be considered with small samples are clinical case study and phenomenological approaches.

The possibility of self-selection in the purposive sampling has to be considered as agreeing to take part in the interviews for this study may have required a certain amount of courage, confidence and willingness on the part of the consenting participants to recount the challenging experience with their managers. The participants who took part may have tended to self-select in that they may have reached a level of coping that enabled them to take part. Gutiérrez (1994) considers the possibility of how individuals can take action to change their situations and that empowerment theory and research suggest that the outcome of stressful events can be less debilitating when individuals are encouraged to identify with similar others, to develop specific skills, to perceive the societal or institutional components of their problems, and to engage on a collective level.

The socio-economic level and professional orientation of the participants and managers may also carry certain egalitarian and democratic expectations from participants in terms of relationships at work, thus impacting on generalisability. A study that examined the relationship of career mentoring and compensation received by early career managers and professionals working in a variety of organisations, found that these professionals from more upper-class backgrounds received more psychosocial mentoring than employees from lower

socio-economic backgrounds (Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991). Thus workers at lower levels may struggle to assert themselves with destructive leaders and may present with different coping and non-coping behaviours.

The study, because of its qualitative nature, could not conclusively explore the role of psychological capital in participants coping with destructive leadership behaviour. However, findings from this study indicate that, for this sample, psychological capital did play a role in coping with the perceived destructive behaviour of the identified managers, as participants' high psychological capital was reflected in participants' coping sufficiently to be employed in their professional capacities.

The gender imbalance of the sample, with the majority of participants being female and a single male participant, can be viewed as a limitation. Mean differences among employee groups suggest that women's perception of the ideal leader is a person who is more understanding, sincere, and honest; and less domineering, pushy, and manipulative than male perceptions of the ideal leader (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). The single male participant in this study did not confirm this finding, as Fritz expressed similar values and implicit beliefs about what makes a good leader as the women participants in the study.

To maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, I could not utilise focus groups to verify the analysis of data and augment the findings.

The literature on abusive supervision suggests that perceptions of abusive leader behaviour may be perceived differently by individual subordinates (Martinko et al., 2013). The focus of this study was to explore the characteristics of the destructive leader-follower dynamic; and the followers' responses to the destructive relational exchange as a dyadic relationship between the participant and his or her direct manager. Follower differences in responses to destructive leadership and coping with destructive leadership was not directly explored in this study, as the purposive sampling procedure followed by this study invited prospective participants who experienced the relationship with their direct manager as challenging.

Although participants referred to differences in life stories between them and their managers, these differences in life stories were not explored in depth in this inquiry. Susan referred to life stores in this example: *"Although he said that status was not important to him, it was not what I saw and experienced. You can be humble; you can be rich and at the same time you can be humble and then you can be rich and pretend to be humble because you grew up with hardships. We all grew up with hardships, I cannot remember, but we all did. I*

experienced hardships myself. But I am not going to go into that. It is not necessary. [Short pause.] Because I do not think that defines the person who you are."

A study of young workers suggested that the impact of abusive supervision on younger workers may be more pronounced because of a lower level of emotional regulation. There also tend to be a generational tendency of high expectations of self and their managers (Armour, 2007; Starratt & Grandy, 2010). Referring to self-concept theory, younger employees, whose inner life and self-concept may still be in formation, may experience more lasting damage from destructive leadership behaviour in that this negative experience may play a role in shaping their self-concept (Shamir, 1991). Two of the participants in this study were younger and can be regarded as falling within the approximate age category of 18 to 29 of the so-called "Generation Y" (Armour, 2007). Nina and Nadia expressed a greater need for development and mentoring than the other participants. Nina said: *"I would say three/six months into me working there, I really felt that my job was so mundane, so repetitive. So, I asked her could I go and see more clients? Can I just try and do something a bit different and more challenging? And it would always fall on deaf ears to the point where I'd, I would actually just say, I am taking this on. I would actually tell her and ... hm ... then that would cause conflict. Again, not overt conflict in the sense that we would have an argument, but then there was tension."* They also directly expressed expectations in terms of role modelling from their managers, though it was not clear if the expectation of the manager as role model was necessarily greater than more indirect expressions from the other participants. The findings of this study could not confirm that younger workers may have lower levels of emotional regulation or experience more lasting emotional damage from a destructive relationship with their first manager.

I was mindful that the conversation with a participant about the challenging relationship with a direct manager was not a therapy session. Therefore, I was careful not to probe too deeply, and destabilise a facade that a participant may have built as emotional protection, and that served to enable coping for that participant. Rubin and Rubin (2011) advise that responsive interviewing is done in a gentle, non-confrontational and supportive manner and that the interviewer should be mindful that s/he imposes on the time, emotion and energy of the participant. Thus, the researcher should respond by giving the participant loyalty and protection (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I was also mindful that some of the issues explored during the interview probed socio-political sensitivities and could perhaps be considered taboo in the South African context. Therefore, although my caution against probing too hard was informed by care and concern for the participant and an awareness of

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socio-political sensitivities, I also must consider that traces of my personal need for emotional self-preservation and my personal socio-political sensitivities may have infiltrated into the complex dynamic between the participant and me (Berger, 2015). Thus, reflecting on my positionality during the interviews (Bourke, 2014), my social position in terms of gender, age, race, socio-economic grouping, and professional status, in obvious and subtle ways, were likely to impact on the relationship dynamic between the participants and me (Berger, 2015). Considering the diversity of the participants in terms of race, age and gender, the positionality of my social attributes may have played a seminal role in filtering (impeding or facilitating) the engagement between the participants and me (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Protecting the identities of the participants was important and, therefore, direct and indirect identifiers and experiences that could potentially risk confidentiality were removed, even though these attributes and experiences could contribute to the issues explored in this study.

6.5.2 Implications for Theory, Application and Future Research

The main focus of this research was to explore followers' direct experiences with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisational contexts and coping strategies that were employed to engage with this behaviour. Further, the study was interested in follower perceptions of the characteristics of the phenomenon of destructive leadership behaviour. In this regard, I particularly explored participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader (Eagly, 2005). To what extent does a follower's identification with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort) influence the coping process? Further, the study explored whether participants' psychological capital played a role in their coping process (Walumba et al., 2011).

The study contributed by giving voice to the participants' experiences of destructive leadership and their attempts to cope with the experience. The findings revealed a correspondence in the patterns of the destructive leadership behaviour exhibited by the respective managers as described by the participants; the reactions of the affected followers to the destructive leadership behaviour; and the way in which the affected followers attempted to cope with the challenges of the destructive relationship.

Based on the findings of my research, suggestions are that participants' implicit beliefs about what makes an ideal manager, their values, self-beliefs, and experiences of relational authenticity with the manager, influenced their perceptions about what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour; and coping with destructive leadership behaviour.

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Participants were inclined to characterise relationship experiences with difficult managers as destructive when the behaviour of these managers opposed their closely held beliefs about what constitutes good leadership, their values, and self-beliefs. Referring to the proposed "relational model of coping with destructive leadership behaviour" (Figure 3.5), the qualitative findings from this inquiry within South African organisational contexts extend and build on the existing understanding of what constitutes destructive leadership behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2007; Krasikova et al., 2013; Padilla et al., 2007; Price, 2003; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2011) by exploring the concept of followers' relational authenticity with their direct leaders within multi-cultural South African organisational contexts. The findings of this study suggest a relationship between participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with their direct manager and the experience or casting of that behaviour as destructive. Findings also suggest a relationship between participants' perceptions of relational authenticity and participants' perceptions of coping with the destructive leadership behaviour. The concept of relational authenticity with regards to coping, and in particular to coping with destructive leadership behaviour, expands conceptualisations about coping (Klaussner, 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Roth & Cohen, 1986) and coping with destructive leadership (Luthans, Norman, et al., 2008; Walumba et al., 2011).

The findings suggest that participants' psychological capital may play a role in their coping with the managers' destructive leadership style, in that this sample as a whole presented with quite high psychological capital; and the participants seemed to have "survived" the relationships with their destructive leaders sufficiently for all of the participants to, at the time of my conversations with them, be employed in their professional roles. Two of the participants presented with more moderate psychological capital compared with the rest of the sample, and for them "surviving" was, according to their self-reports and my observations, emotionally harder. Thus, in this study, there are some indications of the potential role of psychological capital in participants' coping with destructive leadership, though, the role of psychological capital can be regarded as vague and will need to be further explored with a larger, more diverse sample that should include quantitative methodologies. By exploring the role of psychological capital in coping with destructive leadership, this study contributed to conceptualisations about psychological capital by adding another dimension to previous studies using the concept of psychological capital in South African contexts (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2012; Görgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013; Van Wyk, 2016).

The concept of relational authenticity may assist in addressing manager-follower relationship challenges and inform ways of coping with destructive leadership in complex multi-cultural organisational contexts, as well as in contexts that present diverse socio-economic, gender and age indicators in South Africa, as well as in similar contexts worldwide. From a development perspective, conversations about managers' and followers' implicit beliefs about leadership, their values and self-beliefs, could be the conduit for managers, followers and organisations to greater awareness and understanding. These shared experiences about expectations, values and self-beliefs could assist in creating a language in which to talk about "the elephant in the room". Exploring the life-stories of managers and followers who are in a dyadic relationship, and engaging these managers and followers in mutual conversation, could nurture and enhance positive consideration. Managers, followers and organisations are likely to benefit when organisations create conducive organisational environments where these conversations can take place safely.

Conversations about individual life stories and relational authenticity could enable greater awareness and mindfulness of the nuances in interpersonal relations. A greater awareness of one's own presence and the impact of one's own presence in relational contexts could be important contributors to effective interpersonal engagements, be that at work or in personal contexts (George, 2012). As Susan so tellingly said: "… *people want to be listened to*". Viewing destructive leadership behaviour and coping with destructive leadership behaviour through the conceptual lenses of relational authenticity and psychological capital enable individuals to respond in more mindful, attuned and articulate ways to their own perceptions and responses, and the perceptions and behaviours of others. Thus, containing mindless judging behaviour and, instead, fostering mutual understanding and healthy communication (Dunoon & Langer, 2011).

Recruitment and team-building practices are likely to benefit from a more mindful approach to the role incongruent relationships in terms of racial, socio-economical, gender and age diversity may have on perceptions of destructive leadership, individual well-being and effective work outcomes.

At a socio-political level, the concepts of destructive leadership, relational authenticity and psychological capital could guide understanding of followers colluding, conforming or oppositional responses to dictatorial, oppressive and corrupt leaderships.

The literature on authentic leadership suggests that, through socialisation and past experience with people in leadership positions, followers develop implicit leadership theories, which can be explained as personal constructions of the traits and capabilities required to be a

leader (Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney, & Blascovich as cited in Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). Differences in the life-stories of followers and direct managers engaged in challenging relationships may need to be further explored in future studies. Further, it would be of interest to explore, in a South African context, if there are differences in implicit beliefs about leaders from male and female perspectives.

The role of relational authenticity in casting leadership behaviour as destructive and coping with destructive leadership behaviour could be extended in future research using more diverse samples and methodologies. In this regard, the effect on perceptions of destructive leadership behaviour and coping with destructive leadership behaviour could investigate the role of physical proximity to the leader, favouritism and perceptions of justice and fairness.

The relationship between psychological capital and coping with destructive leadership behaviour in South African organisational contexts may need to be further explored with larger and more diverse groups of participants in both qualitative and quantitative studies. In this regard, the effects and coping responses of younger workers in a South African context may need to be explored further.

I propose that future research investigate the toxic triangle dynamic as proposed by Padilla et al. (2007) to a greater extent within the South African organisational context. Findings from this study suggest that the participants tended to be wary of utilising existing human resource structures and support systems to address challenging relationships with a direct manager. Research can be directed at exploring alternative support strategies for supporting workers in coping with the impact of destructive leadership.

This study presented explorative evidence from a South African sample for the proposed model for destructive leadership, relational authenticity and psychological capital. However, future research could explore expanding this model by investigating the effects of different relational authenticity responses. If a follower perceives his/her relationship with the direct manager as authentic, is the identification in the form of colluding or conforming (Padilla et al., 2007). Further, would colluding or conforming behaviour in the long-term result in the follower also becoming a destructive leader or remain a passive conformer? On the other hand, if the follower's perception of congruence with the leader shifts over the long-term, is this change in perception influenced by questioning or introspective follower behaviour in terms of values, perceptions of leadership and the effects from the leader's behaviour? Further, is a reconstruction in follower perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader, a reflection of changes in follower coping and psychological capital? With the follower-leader relationship perceived as incongruent, and thus destructive, what would be

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the long-term effects in terms of a cycle of victimisation; justice interventions by the organisation; and decisions about leaving?

6.6 Conclusions

The aims of the study were to explore the effects of perceived destructive leadership behaviour on the follower recipient of the negative behaviour and examine how this follower coped with the perceived destructive leadership behaviour. The study also explored how perceptions of relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005) with the leader may have influenced followers' perceptions of leader behaviour as destructive, and follower coping responses. In this regard the study was keen to explore whether the extent to which a follower can identify with the leader in terms of congruent traits, values and social representation (i.e., socio-economic, racial, gender and age cohort), influences the coping process. Further, the study also investigated the role of followers' psychological capital in the coping process (Walumba et al., 2011).

The managers' perceived destructive leadership styles had consequences for the participants, the managers themselves and the work unit, affecting the execution of tasks and the attainment of goals, as well as the well-being of other team members in the work unit. In order to cope with the negative relationship, participants tried to find control in the situation; they attempted to distance themselves from the situation, their own thoughts and emotions; they sought ways to affirm their closely held self-beliefs; indulged in positive and negative self-nurturing; tried to find solace in religion/spirituality; sought social and family support; and attempted to re-direct cognitions. These coping attempts were accomplished with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Participants' perceptions of relational authenticity with the leader played a role in perceiving the managers' behaviour as destructive; and in coping with the destructive leader behaviour. The findings suggest that participants' psychological capital may have played a role in their coping with the managers' destructive leadership style. The role of psychological capital in participants' coping with destructive leadership, however, is vague because of the homogeneity of this sample and will need to be further explored with a more diverse sample using a quantitative design.

The shared experiences of the participants gave voice to their intrinsic needs to be able to live their work lives in ways that were authentic to their values as expressions of their self-concepts. When the ability to live authentic lives congruent with their self-beliefs were challenged by the destructive leadership styles of their direct managers, participants' various

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coping attempts were largely aimed at re-affirming their self-beliefs. This need to re-claim their authentic selves was a thread that weaved through participants' conversations with me.

The study concludes with the following insight from Mary:

Don't put up with it. You don't have to. You honestly don't have to. If there's something you're doing wrong, you've got to be given a fair chance to correct it. If there's lots to learn, we've all got lots to learn, that's fine. We _, people do screw up and make mistakes. That's fine. If someone is <u>bullying</u> you, instead of managing you, don't accept it. You really_, if there is any way out, get out. And that is what I did. I think I was, ja, that is what I told myself, I am being bullied and undermined, and I am not gonna stand for it, 'cos I don't think I deserve it. (Mary)

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
Jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

Approval Notice

Stipulated documents/requirements

13-May-2017

Brink, Beatrix B

Ethics Reference #: SU-HSD-004351

Title: COPING WITH DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES

Dear Ms Beatrix Brink,

Your Stipulated documents/requirements received on 04-May-2017, was reviewed and **accepted.**

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: 30-Mar-2017 - 29-Mar-2018

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter.

If the research deviates significantly from the undertaking that was made in the original application for research ethics clearance to the REC and/or alters the risk/benefit profile of the study, the researcher must undertake to notify the REC of these changes.

Please remember to use your **proposal number (SU-HSD-004351)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

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Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No. 61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC Humanities Progress report form

16 March 2018

Project number: 3060

SU reference number: SU-HSD-004351

Project Title: COPING WITH DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES

Dear Ms Beatrix Brink

Your REC Humanities Progress report form submitted on 14 March 2018 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
16 March 2018	15 March 2019

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (3060) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Informed Consent Form	STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH	30/03/2017	1
Research Protocol/Proposal	Research Proposal March 2018 COPING WITH DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR	09/03/2018	2

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at egraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

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Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

COPING WITH DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF NON-PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by BEATRIX BRINK, MA Research Psychology, from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be used for a Doctoral dissertation and may also be used in a research paper. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you comply with the participant specifications.

1. **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

   The purpose of the proposed study is to explore how employees cope with non-physical destructive leadership behaviour.

2. **PROCEDURES**

   If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

   Take part in *your private capacity* in a one-to-one interview with the researcher.
   And
   Take part in *your private capacity* in completing a questionnaire at the time of the interview.
   Your participation is voluntary and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the procedure. You will have the right to withdraw at any stage of the process.

3. **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

   Talking about the destructive leadership relationship and re-living it could be emotionally unsettling for some participants. Therefore, participants will be followed up and referral for counselling done if required.

   Names and contact details of counsellors:
   Shaun Helders, Clinical Psychologist, 0826583802
   Johann Schreuder, Counselling and Industrial Psychologist, 021 9132658

4. **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

'Working through' the destructive managerial relationship by doing the interview and sharing experiences with the researcher could be a healing experience.

A greater understanding of the ways in which subordinates appraise and cope with abusive managers could inform recommendations towards counselling programmes and other organisational interventions.

5. **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participants will not be paid for their assistance in this study.

6. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of not using your name in the reporting of the research be that in verbal or written format. You may at any stage of the process ask to review or edit the audio tape of the process. The researcher will be the only person having access to the data collected and this data will be stored on a computer that is password protected and kept in a safe place. The data will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Results will be made available to the research promoter and examiner and the research findings will be written up in a dissertation and may also be published in journals. Participants' identities will at all times be kept confidential and private. Participants will also have access to counselling at the end of the interview should this be needed due to the issues discussed.

7. **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. **NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT**

The participants and researcher in this study hereby undertake not to disclose the names of any manager or any company/business organisation that may be named in the research interview.

9. **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator: Beatrix Brink, Department of Psychology, Stellenbosch University

Contact number: 083 658 4827

E-mail: beatrix@capacityinc.co.za / abbrink@mweb.co.za

Professor A. V. Naidoo, Department of Psychology, Stellenbosch University

Contact number: 021 808 3441

E-mail: avnaidoo@sun.ac.za

10. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to [*me/the subject/the participant*] by BEATRIX BRINK in [*Afrikaans/English]* and [*I am/the subject is/the participant is]* in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [*me/him/her*]. [*I/the participant/the subject]* was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to *[my/his/her]* satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant]* and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative]*. *[H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in

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[*Afrikaans/English*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   **Date**

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Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire & Semi-structured Interview

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender [participant ☑]

   Male   ☐

      Female   ☐

2. Race group [participant ☑]

   Black   ☐

      White   ☐

3. What is your date of birth?

   …………………

4. What is your highest qualification?

   …………………………………….

5. If currently in employment, what is your current job title?

   …………………………………….

6. If currently in unemployment, what was your previous job title?

   …………………………………….

7. Which social economic class would you say you belong to? [participant ☑]

   upper class   ☐

   middle class   ☐

   working class   ☐

   lower class   ☐

Please read the following interactions (A & B) between a manager and a follower:

INTERACTION A:

[Manager enters follower/subordinate's office, throws a document on the subordinate's desk]. In a highly irritated manner, with a raised voice, the manager says: "Why can't you ever do anything right? I have to do all the thinking in this place! I am tired of dealing with incompetents like you! I do not want to hear any of your excuses! This UYX report is rubbish!! I am giving the report to Kim to re-write!" [Manager storms out in a temper].

INTERACTION B:

Manager enters follower/subordinate's office, greets follower/subordinate: "Hello, do you have a moment? I want to chat to you about the UYX report?" Subordinate: "Yes, please sit down." Manager: "I read through the report and there are a few things I would like to clarify." [They talk through the report]. Manager: "Good, I suggest a re-write to incorporate the aspects as we discussed and do not hesitate to call on me if you need assistance." Subordinate: "Thank you, I will do that". [Manager leaves office].

IMPLICIT BELIEFS ABOUT MANAGERS

Researcher intro: You have read two interactions between a subordinate and manager. Let's chat about subordinates and managers:

1. What would your ideal manager be like? Describe the characteristics of your ideal manager?

2. How would you prefer to engage with your ideal manager in the work context?

PARTICIPANT'S VALUES

3. Generally speaking, what are the important things in life for you?

4. What would you say are your work values?

5. Given these work values you have spoken about now, do you have a sense that you can live out these values in your current work space? How does that make you feel?

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Generally speaking:

6. How do you respond when you have setbacks at work?

7. How do you respond to stressful situations at work?

8. Do you believe that you are in control of your work life?

9. How would you rate your current energy levels: low, moderate, high?

10. Do you use past experience to help you get through current difficult times at work?

11. Do you believe that you can make a plan to improve an unpleasant situation at work?

12. Do you have specific work goals? If so, what are they?

13. Are you currently meeting the work goals you set for yourself?

14. How confident are you in your ability to contribute at work?

15. Given what you have just shared with me, how was this compromised by the manager that you had difficulty with? What did he/she do to make it difficult to achieve your work goals?

RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS MANAGER & COPING

16. You have had experience of, shall we say, a "challenging" relationship with a manager. Tell me about this manager?

17. Are you currently reporting directly or indirectly to this manager?

18. How long have you been reporting directly or indirectly to this manager?

I want to ask you a few demographic questions about this manager:

a. Gender　　　[researcher ☑]

Male　　　　　☐

Female　　　　☐

b. Race group [researcher ☑]

Black　　　　　☐

White　　　　　☐

c. How old is he/she (approximately)?

…………………

d. What is his/her highest qualification?

………………………………………

e. What was his/her job title at the time of your engagement with this manager?

………………………………………

f. Which social economic class would you say he/she belongs to? [researcher ☑]

upper-class　　　　　☐

middle-class　　　　　☐

working-class　　　　☐

lower-class　　　　　☐

g. Do you think this manager is financially in about the same income bracket as you? Or less? Or more?

19. Tell me about your relationship with this manager? What was it like reporting directly or indirectly to this manager? What was life at work like on a day to day basis? Describe a scenario or incident that you feel depicts your experience with this manager.

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20. Do you feel that you coped with the challenges of this relationship?

    If YES: How? What did you do? What resources did you use?
    If NO: Why do you think you did not cope?

21. Do you think that this relationship had any <u>long-term effect</u> on you're a) <u>job performance</u>; b) <u>work life in generally</u>, and c) <u>mental health in general</u>?

22. What are your views of the organisation's response to the situation.

23. How have you grown as a person since/during this experience. Tell me about the strengths that you discovered, developed during this experience?

RELATIONAL AUTHENTICITY

Researcher intro: Generally we tend to identify with or relate to people who are similar to us.

24. Tell me your relationship compatibility with your manager? How this may have influenced the quality of your relationship with this manager? Tell me how your age, gender, race, socio-economic class may have played a role on this relationship?

25. How did you make sense of this relationship? (probe participant's understanding of manager's motives and also participant's own reaction to the manager's behaviour)

26. What might have helped to improve the relationship?

CLOSING

27. Is there anything you would like to add to our conversation?

28. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

29. As we end this interview, have any difficult or unsettling feelings come up for you?

30. Having/after having had this experience, what advice would you give someone else finding themselves in a challenging relationship with a manager?

PARTICIPANT COMPLETE PsyCap QUESTIONNAIRE

Researcher: "I would like you to take part in a five-minute questionnaire".

Participant complete questionnaire.

Appendix D: Copyright Permission

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To whom it may concern,

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Instrument: Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ)

Authors: Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio & James B. Avey.

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Sincerely,

Robert Most
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