



**A case study on developing self-managing teams in an Omani  
company**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for  
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### Abstract

Thesis Title: A case study on developing self-managing teams in an Omani company.

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The subject of this study was to understand how the development of self-managing teams (SMT) impacted the group process and national employees in a company located in Sultanate of Oman (Middle East). The study also aimed to detail the management interventions that facilitated change from existing hierarchical organisation to SMT structure. Change intended to develop team autonomy in adaptively managing the strategic and operational aspects of the divisions to address workplace problem of scaling up operations and achieving competitiveness, sustainability. Achievement of this objective frees top management from involving in divisional strategic, non-routine and resource management issues, thereby enabling diversification into other market segments. Research questions were framed to focus the study based on these organisational aims. This case study used scholarly practitioner approach by an insider to find answers to the research questions. Findings of the study about the research questions provide a rich description of the change process, thereby alleviating the lack of qualitative studies to develop self-managing teams in the workplace from an insider perspective. The discussions and suggestions to actionable knowledge provide practitioners insights to design change process for enhancing self-management capability and critical stages to be managed to avoid pitfalls due to emergence. Study findings and discussion addresses the paucity of studies for cost-effective strategies to achieve localisation objectives in the context of social forces emanating from the “Arab Spring” - either in Oman or GCC region by developing national employees aligned to workplace values. The constructivist and interpretive nature of the knowledge generated enhances its pragmatic potential. The study findings can assist researchers and practitioners when understanding or developing self-managing teams that compliment organisation strategy to scale business growth, improve responsiveness to clients and increase the commitment of local workforce to enhance localisation.





## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the background, significance and context of the study starting from an outline of the identified workplace problem. The purpose and rationale section detail the aims and motivation for the study. Enumeration of national and organisational contextual factors impinging on the workplace problem enable the practitioner and researcher community to comprehend underlying issues and the impetus for the study. The final section of the chapter outlines the overall thesis structure.

### 1.1 Introduction of core constructs

The core constructs of this study is introduced and defined as below:-

- Self-managing team* : A team capable of directing and managing its objective achievement without external help (also see 3.1).
- National employee* : An employee with Sultanate of Oman nationality. This study was conducted in Sultanate of Oman which depends on both national and expatriate employees for skilled and managerial jobs.
- Localisation* : Efforts by both Government and Private sector to increase the percentage of national employees in the workforce.
- Scholarly practitioner* : An inquiry approach to problem-driven research that connects the contextual and theoretical worlds through cycling between ideas from published literature and data gathered during the study. This method tries to increase the validity of knowledge generated by involving more stakeholders and the data collected through lived in experience of individuals.
- Decision making* : Selection of a course of action from different alternatives.
- Team communication* : Interpersonal and social communications that are required to execute work at individual and group level.
- Team behaviour* : Behaviour and activities involved by team members



to work together as a team, both during forming and performing stage

*Management intervention* : Planned change program or actions designed and executed to increase effectiveness or overcome resistance to change process. These interventions can be done by parties internal or external to the organisation

### **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The goal of this study was to understand and describe how team processes are affected by attempts to introduce and establish self-managed teams in a company based in the Sultanate of Oman (Middle East). Change program to develop self-managed team was planned through a change model (see 2.1.1) proposed by Kotter (1995). The study has three aims:

- 1) To explore how decision-making, team communication and team behaviour are affected by the change program to introduce and establish self-management capability in a team.
- 2) To understand what management interventions help increase self-management in teams.
- 3) To analyse how national employees in Oman context respond to management attempts to introduce self-managed teams.

The understanding generated on these study objectives enable to explore the feasibility of using self-managed team development as an adaptive strategy to manage the localisation (see 1.1) pressure in Oman context by developing national employees aligned to workplace values.

### **1.3 Rationale of the research**

The company where the study took place was established in 2007 by engineering professionals who have long years of experience in Oman oil and gas industry. On inception, it focused on maintenance using technical expertise from international partners. Due to competitive pressures and lack of innovation, the business stagnated and





began to decline. I joined as CEO in 2011 to reverse the decline and diversify the revenue streams by introducing new client offerings. Immediately on joining, I converted the existing maintenance business into a division and started four other divisions to offer niche services to oil and gas as well as industrial and infrastructure markets of Oman. I was able to entice experienced and qualified people (all Indian expatriates working in Oman for long periods) who were closely known to me to head the four new divisions. I gave the division heads full freedom to grow and run the business to harness their entrepreneurial spirit. Due to this strategy, the business started to turn around and grow leading to profit generation, as most new clients and key personnel came through networks and personal relations of these division heads. The company grew into five divisions, three operational offices and 269 staff in 2013 from a single division, single office and 24 personnel entity in 2011. The strength of national employees grew from 3 to 42 in 2013.

However, this also resulted in an organisation that was directive and hierarchical under the individual leadership of the divisional heads, causing problems for further expansion. The division heads were fully engaged in running the operations thereby hampering scalability. Micromanaging of operations prevented them from increasing the client base and sparing time to deliberate on division's strategic directions. Also as the number of jobs increased, it became apparent that the resulting increased client touch points could not be handled solely by division heads and with a top-down management model. Around this time the "Arab Spring" (Swales, Said and Fahdi, 2012) happened, putting pressure on the existing social contract with governments and impairing the attitude of locals towards the foreign workforce. These populist movements encouraged local people to raise issues of dignity, fairness and identity innovatively without formal leadership (Stevenson, 2012), forcing stipulation of increased localisation targets and tighter immigration regulations by the Government. The above situation led to a dilemma of diffusing the power and responsibility to the lower levels of the organisation characterised by reduced availability of skilled foreign workers and inexperienced national employees having rentier mentality (Kuru, 2014, Swales, Said and Fahdi, 2012). Rentier mentality of people develops in states whose revenue is largely dependent on rents from usually immovable resources and not the tax on commercial activities. Hence people in rentier states are dependent on government distribution of these rent revenue leading to a patronising relationship of state with people. A rentier state is characterised



by a lack of independence in politics and civil society. These social and economic background provide little incentive for national employees to develop a committed and productive work ethic. It may be noted that I am not an Omani being an expatriate from India.

It is in this context that I thought of developing self-managing teams as a strategy to scale organisation growth, improve the responsiveness to clients, develop skills and increase the commitment of the local workforce based on indications from existing literature. Self-managing team (SMT) values and processes have the ability to increase the participation and commitment of the group members (Kirkman and Shapiro, 1997; Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). SMT shifts focus of the employee from the accomplishment of their individual task towards primary task of the group, thereby increasing group productivity and quality (Manz and Sims Jr, 1987; De Leede, Nijhof and Fisscher, 1999). Application of SMT concept downsizes the organisation structure (Appelbaum, Bethune, Tannenbaum, 1999; Hanson, 1998), leading to improved resource allocation as decisions are made closer to action. This trimming also leads to a quicker response to workplace demands as decisions are made faster due to fewer management layers and increased clarity in bottom-up and top-down communications (Molleman, 2000; Yang and Guy, 2011). The empowerment aspect of SMT provides employees with more authority and freedom leading to improvement in their quality of life (Cohen, 1993; Randolph, 2000; Pateman, 2002).

A review of the existing literature on self-managing team development with a scholarly perspective to gain knowledge on the focus areas of the study did not yield the desired understanding due to lack of qualitative studies to develop workplace self-managing teams from an insider perspective. Existing research for developing self-managing teams has focused on the leadership aspects relating to power and control (Skidmore, 2004; Stewart, Courtright and Barrick, 2012) or leadership behaviours (Manz and Sims Jr, 1987; Regine and Lewin, 2000) that facilitate the creation of self-managed teams. Another stream of studies has concentrated on actions that develop self-managing teams such as influencing boundary conditions (Dooley and Geisler, 1999), incorporating values (Powell, 2006; Kirkman and Shapiro, 2001) and improving communications (Stevenson, 2012). I noticed that studies also focused on organisational factors that generate self-managing teams (Wageman, 1997; Spreitzer, Cohen and Ledford Jr., 1999; Millward, Banks and Riga, 2010). Existing literature on the subject is predominantly



positivistic in nature and based on studies using survey methods for data collection (Kuipers and Stoker, 2009). The character of these studies is mostly prescriptive (Carroll, 1999). Qualitative studies offering rich description from a process perspective incorporating the social, political, power factors impacting team relationships and interactions that render change process messy and complicated (Calton and Payne, 2003) are rare. Studies on self-management and self-management teams are seen presently associated mostly with the medical field. Published empirical studies on the subject are mostly carried out by academics using academic settings and student participants (Tasa, Simon and Gerard, 2007), which impact the relevance of resulting research conclusions.

There is also a paucity of studies that offer understanding about the implementation of localisation objectives in the context of social forces emanating from the "Arab Spring" (Stevenson, 2012) either in Oman or Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Existing knowledge on Omanisation and localisation elucidates implication for practices (Al-Lamki, 1998), managing performance (Khan, 2010), understanding localisation from the perspective of human resource management (Al-Hamadi, Budhwar, Shipton, 2007), and the effect of Government policies (Swales, Said and Fahdi, 2012). Awareness and consequent studies about development of self-managing teams as a strategy towards localisation and sustainability for the GCC region are yet to be found in the existing knowledge landscape. The change program undertaken in this study endeavours to resolve the identified workplace problem using insights from existing literature through scholarly practitioner (see 1.1) approach and also aims to bridge the gaps in current knowledge for developing self-managing teams. This method provides practitioners with a better understanding of the dynamics of self-managing team development process, thereby enabling them to develop relevant change programs and proactively handle problems that may arise in implementation. The study findings influenced by the contextual factors unique to Oman will help practitioners to devise strategies that are adaptive and responsive to the pressures in Oman business environment. Academics will be able to obtain a rich picture from an insider perspective on the implementation process and enable identification of variables and factors in the development of self-managing teams.

#### **1.4 Context – national and industrial**

This study is undertaken in a company within the Sultanate of Oman, which is in the Middle East region and is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Most



Omanis are Muslims and three-quarters of them follow the Ibadi School of Islam - which is distinct from the Sunni and Shia denominations. The country is an absolute monarchy and all legislative, executive, and judiciary power ultimately rests with the hereditary Sultan. Laws are framed by royal decree. There are no political parties as they are banned. Legislature is present in the form of bicameral representative bodies, consisting of an upper chamber, the Council of State (Majlis ad-Dawlah) and a lower chamber, the Consultative Council (Majlis ash-Shura). The legislative councils have only advisory powers. Oman's economy has a GDP of US\$ 70.522 billion (IMF, 2015). The country depends heavily on oil, being a major source of foreign revenue and contributing to 77% of government revenue (CIA, n.d). The government is actively pursuing diversification of income and is targeting a reduced percentage contribution to GDP by the oil sector from its current 46% to 9% by 2020 (CIA, n.d). In 2013, the country had a population of 3.632 million (World Bank, n.d), of which immigrants constituted 30%. The country has a youthful composition with 49% of the population under the age of 25. This demographic, coupled with having the fastest growing post-secondary education system in the world, results in the number of graduates far exceeding the jobs available through economic expansion and natural labour turnover (Al Barwani et al., 2009 cited in Swailes, Said and Fahdi, 2012).

Oman's private sector, like neighbouring UAE, is characterised by Western management practices of customer-oriented culture and performance-based rewards, resulting in a lack of fit in employment for locals (Al Ali, 2008). This is due to attitudinal expectations and skill factors that currently define the psychological contract between Omani employees and private employer. Young Omanis view contract with the employer as a relational type custodial form of contract with unequal power and status characterised by paternalistic and dependent relationship (Swailes, Said and Fahdi, 2012). Oman society is highly influenced by tribal and patriarchal values as elders are respected and tribal relations have a strong influence on interpersonal relations (Robertson, Al-Khatib, Al-Habib and Lanoue, 2001). Working habits of locals are also affected by the distinct social contract existing in the GCC states, where political obedience is traded for low taxation, free social services and jobs with public sector characteristics (Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010). This social situation implies that individuals may be socially conditioned for exchanging loyalty and reliable performance to steady progress in a secure job (Swailes, Said and Fahdi, 2012) when viewed through national culture theory



framework (Thomas, et. al, 2010). These features are absent in private sector jobs (Al-Lamki, 1998) and hence prevent the development of a transactional type psychological contract (Hiltrop, 1995) in Omani employees, which is essential for a performance oriented participation.

Lack of local manpower has made foreign labour essential for private sector skilled and managerial jobs. However the increasing size of unemployed youth and pay differential between public and private sector jobs is putting the current social contract under pressure (Salih, 2010). Oil reserves are also dwindling, which is putting pressure on private companies to absorb more local people for employment, as public finances are constrained to do this. The country has an excellent health care system, with a life expectancy at birth of 76.1 years in 2010. This longevity has an impact on the age-dependency ratio, which influences the demographic productivity and higher income possibility (Assaad and Roudi-Fahimi, 2007). The government is keenly aware of the political and economic impetus for localisation and is pursuing efforts to align the skills and commitment of the Omanis to the needs of private employers through training and legislation.

### **1.5 Summary**

The above discussion provides perspective about the work-based problem I attempted to address through the change program to introduce self-managed teams. The aims framed and the contextual forces that are identified serve as defining inputs for designing the change approach intended and the research design for its study, which is detailed in the following section - Methodology (chapter 2). This chapter is followed by a literature review (chapter 3) to incorporate insights from existing knowledge. The logic of literature review section succeeding methodology section is detailed in chapter 2 (see 2.1.1). Chapter 4 details the study findings. The final chapter (chapter 5) concludes the study by discussing the implications of the study, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for future research.





## **2.0 Methodology**

This section outlines the philosophical, epistemological and quality aspects of the study. Detailing starts with the description of the change program and inquiry approach, the research questions framed to inform the study aims (see 1.2), theoretical perspective of the approach of investigation and care taken to ensure study rigour. The enquiry method section provides details about participants in the study, data collection, analysis, presentation and thoughts on possible ethical concerns.

## **2.1 Research design**

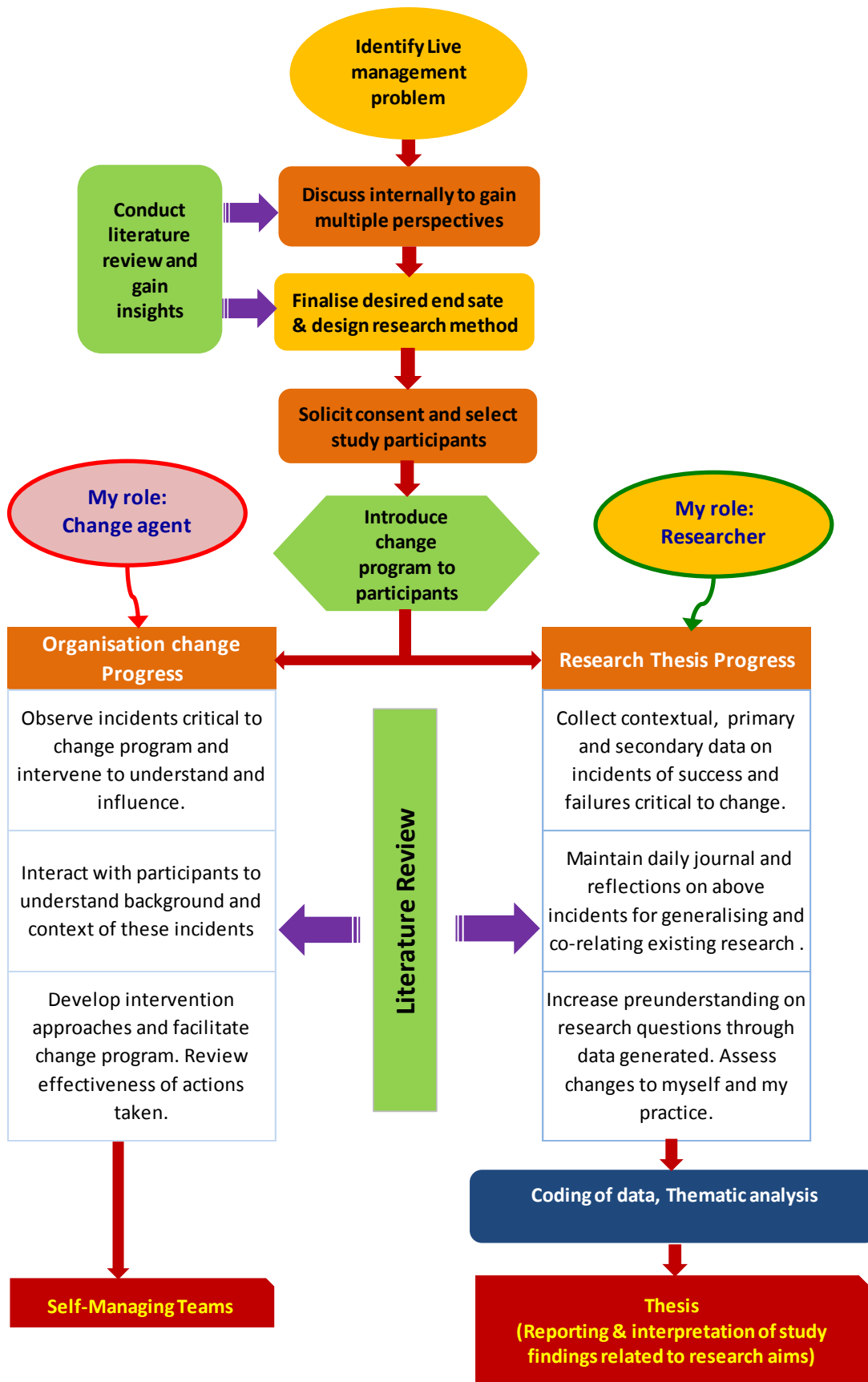
### **2.1.1 Description of the change program and inquiry approach**

The study started off with the identification of a live management problem in alignment with the concepts of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), where the aim is to develop professional practice and professional practitioners through research. DBA is targeting Senior Managers, unlike PhD where the intention is to create lecturers for higher education and career researchers. This emphasis on relevance by DBA advocate starting the workplace research with a live business or management problem and subsequently collating available relevant literature to provide rigour in framing and solving the problem, unlike PhD which focuses on identifying a gap in the available literature (Bourner, Ruggeri-Stevens and Bareham, 2000). Based on this epistemological position, a live management problem to develop self-managed teams in the organisation for continued organisational growth and sustainability, and managing the localisation pressures caused by Oman context was selected. The self-managing capability may be classified at various levels such as local level (workgroup), medium level (department) or distant level (division or organisation) as per Hespe and Wall (1976) cited in Wilkinson, Townsend and Burgess (2013). My company comprises of six divisions that are running as profit centres, each aggregate of departments staffed with functional workgroups. The aim is to develop knowledge about self-managing team development process at the division (distant) level. Preliminary identification of this workplace problem is influenced by my observations and judgement on organisation needs for growth and sustainability in the role of CEO.

A flowchart of the change program and research design is provided below as Diagram 2.1 to facilitate understanding. The steps in this diagram are subsequently elaborated.



Diagram 2.1 - Change program and Research Design







Once the workplace problem was identified, it was decided to study and attempt to resolve this issue using a scholarly practitioner approach. Scholarly practitioner produces actionable scientific knowledge that meets the needs of a business organisation (Aram and Salipante, 2003). Scholarly practitioner approach distinctively uses theory based knowledge elements in conjunction with personal experience and industry knowledge to convert broad change goals into specific actions, with the aim of increasing participation or improving effective leadership (Tenkasi and Hay, 2004). The theory based knowledge elements are used for framing the direction of change, giving legitimacy to the concepts/actions in the change, making sense of the patterns observed in the change and demonstrating impact. This approach employs reflexive critique (Antonacopoulou, 2004) to explore relations between participants and practices in a social context. As per Aram and Salipante (2003), in a scholarly practitioner approach, any issue or problem of interest needs to be described in detail taking into account perspectives of all stakeholders.

Based on this view, the workplace problem was presented by me to the division heads, shareholders and key staff of each division to solicit their viewpoints. The introduction was initially through divisional meetings and followed up with individual and small group meetings. Discussion of the problem in light of previous issues faced by the participants yielded multiple perspectives on problem resolution and information on the critical inputs and significant outcomes or consequence expected. It also provided preliminary concepts to develop a literature search strategy based on a combination of "building blocks" and "citation pearl growing" (Rowley and Slack, 2004) approaches. Preview of resulting literature documents from the search helped to identify key concepts on self-managed teams and its development. Initially, the literature review was structured around these concepts as well as the questions that arose related to design and implementation of the change program. Literature filtered and selected using this concept-centric approach were further examined to identify the key themes and messages emanating from them which included theoretical models, empirical findings, researcher position and concepts. The themes identified based on review of existing literature is presented below as Table 2.1. Thematic papers were developed based on this knowledge that allowed organising the concepts and structuring the literature review.





**Table -2.1: Themes provided by existing literature on self-managing teams**

Sl. No	Theme
1	Process of self-managed team development
2	Decision making in self-managed teams
3	Control in self-managed teams
4	Leadership in self-managed teams
5	Organisational elements influencing self-managed team development
6	Nature of interactions in self-managed team
7	Dysfunctional effects of self-managed teams

After discussions with division heads, key staff and preliminary literature review, the purpose of the change was identified by me as freeing the top management from divisional level strategic and operational responsibilities. Devolving authority and responsibility to lower levels enhances the adaptability of organisation and improves responsiveness (Kirgokman and Shapiro, 1997), thereby increasing competitiveness by improving employee involvement and job satisfaction. The achievement of this aim required identifying division related tasks done by the top management using input from division heads to develop the decision-making capability within the team. Another intention was to delegate decision making to lower levels of the division, thereby enabling knowledge, experience and resulting insight of the main team members to be utilised. To improve execution time, adsorbing possible tasks currently done by supporting divisions (finance, human resource, procurement) to division teams was planned. Recruiting and developing of locals for reliable performance in crucial divisional positions to overcome the challenges posed by localisation requirements was also identified as a key focus.

After finalising the aims, actions required to initiate and progress change program were prepared by me. This involved establishing a sense of urgency, forming a powerful coalition of individuals, creating a change vision and communicating it, empowering others to act on the vision, planning and creating short-term wins, consolidating improvements, and attempting to institutionalise new approaches in line with the change model proposed by Kotter (1995). Initiating actions taken by me consisted of getting the



consent of potential participants for participation in the study, introducing the change program intent and explaining the change approach and its benefits to the participants. The content of the consent involved an inter-alia agreement to be part of meetings and discussions related to study and to have their actions and behaviours interpreted by me. Based on the consent obtained and the importance of division performance for business success, I chose two specific divisions for the study. After finalising the participants (see 2.2.1), two months were spent by me to deliberate and finalise empowerment details with the participants. These efforts were impelled by my understanding of the importance of top-down communication to foster change (Palmer and Dunford, 2008) and management as the main agency of the change (Caldwell, 2003).

During this process, I communicated through group meetings and individual interactions the rationale for inclusion of each of the aims in the change program. Nature of these communications was framed to achieve buy-in process to the change in an ethical manner (Caldwell, 2005). I presented the underlying intent of the change program as part of a strategy to enhance organisation growth and profit by harnessing the power of local interactions and small changes to bring in lasting changes to the overall organisation using the concepts of emergence and self-organisation (Stacey, 2011). My expectation that this approach would confer the team adaptive abilities and capacities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation was communicated to the participants. Focus on the quality of employee participation (related to commitment and involvement) in the change program was also stressed to the participants due to its significance on organisation performance. This emphasis was based on my understanding from Cotton et. al, (1988) that participation in decision making and increased employee ownership of work process will increase productivity. The need for equal attention on process deployed for accomplishing results and improving performance to achieve this, rather than an assessment based only on the performance of an individual or group was also explained to participants. I explained that the approach to achieving this would be to ensure democratic involvement of the employee in major business decisions and direction in line with the proposal of Wilkinson, Townsend and Burgess (2013). Delegating bid/no-bid on client enquiries to the team served as an example. Before the change program, a decision on whether to submit a proposal or send regret letter on client enquiries was decided by me as CEO due to its sensitivity to client relationship.



Participants were also alerted to the radical changes required to leadership for implementing participatory and inclusive leadership style, which is close to the leaderful approach proposed by Raelin (2003) in content. Also, I explained the transformation required to the current communication system based on top-down instruction culture to an atmosphere where bottom-up communication and associated feedback are encouraged to facilitate decision making. I communicated that this new culture will necessitate changes to organisation structure which will generate power and political problems as noted by Vince and Broussine (1996). This caution was made to prepare the participants about the potential challenges they may face during program implementation. Participants were assured of facilitation and mentoring support from the top management team and me as the change agent. I explained that this would involve taking a moral stand for resolving concerns involving values and trade-offs as noted by Holt (2006). This position requires recognition of common interests of various stakeholders in the situation and selecting values that enable reaching a compromise and bring about results intended by the change program. I presumed that this rhetoric was trusted by the participants due to lack of questions on this aspect. This acceptance may be attributable to their faith in me to accord importance to their growth needs based on previous experience. Based on the deliberations and discussions, a desired end state of the change program was developed by me (see table- 2.2) and communicated to the change participants (see 2.2.2).

**Table -2.2: Desired end states of change program**

Sl. No	Strategic	Operational
1	Continuously assess the marketing segments to establish and compete	Take bid/no-bid decision on the Client enquiries
2	Advise top management on capabilities to be developed and approximate capital requirements	Manage decisions about vendor/administrative payments which impact cash flow
3	Develop annual performance targets and budgets	Fully responsible for Client financial evaluation and payment collection
4	Provide requirement of annual resource levels	Evaluate workers performance and recommend actions
5		Obtain client feedback about division performance and take corrective / preventive actions

Viewpoints on these goals were solicited from participants on an individual level including the opinion on approach towards change program for developing the self-



managing capability. This assessment was achieved by me through meetings which facilitated open discussion on these desired end states.

Based on aims of the change program and feedback received from participants, a responsibility matrix (see Appendix 6) for decision making was prepared and finalised after discussion with team members. This process enabled allocation of unique responsibilities and single point responsibility at worker and team levels, helping to contain pluralism within the team as noted by Mark and Simon cited in Kilduff and Dougherty (2000). This clarity was crucial as the change was intended to absorb some responsibility of supporting departments (see para 4 of section 2.1.1) that could lead to duplication of responsibilities. This responsibility matrix was disseminated to the participants in the change program, which entailed revised roles and responsibilities for them and corresponded expectation of the organisation. Job responsibilities were revised instantaneously and full responsibility needed as per final desired states was demanded from beginning, as gradual increasing of responsibility based on capability development was not favoured. However, my expectations of team performance were tempered by the concept of enactive mastery (Bandura, 1986 cited in Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999) due to consideration that participants will not be able to fulfil all responsibilities initially as they would take some time to reach the required proficiency and may make mistakes in the process.

The change program to introduce self-management was initiated by implementing the action planned and supporting it with management interventions (see 3.6.4) by me in the role of change agent. The focus of activities during the change process was not about individuals or tasks, but on group development and decision making, as research shows this approach to be more efficient for development of teams (Markey and Townsend, 2013). Based on the observations and reflections on the results of these actions, subsequent management interventions were planned (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2007). The progress of change was achieved through an action learning approach, where learning starts by taking action and progresses through group interactions enabling critical reflection by the participants (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). Action learning creates discussion among participants where knowledge of an experience is challenged through review rather than allowing unconscious absorption (Mumford, 1996). Argyris (1995) posits that such discussions enable reframing the problem and personal constructs of the participants, thereby making transformations of participants' espoused theories to



theories-in-use possible through new skill set and values, which I hoped would happen in this change program also. Thus, the learning was constructivist (Easterby, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008), which recognises the context-bound nature of knowledge and stresses on sense-making of experiences through personal reflection. Individual perceptions of the situation and alternatives for action were reviewed from both first person (researcher) and second person (relevant participant) perspective (Chandler and Torbert, 2003) thus generating new insights (see chapter 4) that create change. To produce this learning, I facilitated discussion with concerned individuals or groups that enable them to interpret their actions and behaviour in a situation from different perspectives to surface assumptions and advocating new perspectives and action approaches. As an example, participants were encouraged to view the situation from the viewpoint of another colleague or another department person which enabled participants to see their assumptions about the situation. An unbalanced approach to action learning is counterproductive, as action without learning compromises results and learning without action fails to facilitate change (Cho and Egan, 2009). Hence, these learning discussions were initiated by me when dysfunctions were noticed. My role was to assist (see 4.2.5) this learning process by encouraging reflection, creating awareness, handling discomforts about self-image as advocated by Holmes (2008) and providing scholarly knowledge. Discussions to facilitate change process were conducted with a focus on enhancing individual critical reflection and moderated to decrease defensiveness and create learning. My sense-making and resolution of the issues that arose during the study was aided by constant literature review involving cycling between ideas and data gathering.

The section above outlines the interventions I made as a manager, to try and encourage self-management. Parallel to this activity, as a researcher, I was engaged in activities of surfacing and validating assumptions, testing the effectiveness and developing new knowledge similar to the research model conceptualised by Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007). This research model by Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007) clearly distinguishes the field actions and the thesis actions undertaken by the researcher regarding planning, acting, observing and reflecting. These activities were undertaken to generate data on the following research questions which derived from the purpose of the study (see 1.2).

- 1) How decision-making, team communication and team behaviour is affected by attempts to introduce and establish self-management in a team?
- 2) What management interventions help increase self-management in teams?



- 3) How do national employees in an Omani context respond to management attempts to introduce self-managed teams?

I hoped and expected that undertaking the revised roles and responsibilities would bring in desired changes under the change program to develop self-managing capabilities within the team. The dynamics of this process was understood by observing and documenting the problems encountered during implementation, the tactics applied by team members and interventions devised by me as a change agent for managing these problems. The effectiveness of the approaches by participants and myself regarding success and failures were also observed and documented to generate an understanding of approaches to managing self-development capability development in teams. Successes of the team in developing self-management were detailed along with its context to establish conditions that favour self-management development. Views from the participants (see 2.2.1) were obtained through one to one interactions and recorded in a journal. I asked participants to provide written feedback when problems were observed in verbalising the same. This request was based on the insight that a written response has the advantage of overcoming anxieties caused by managing phatic signs (looks and facial expressions) in the face to face communications (Feenberg, 1989). In a face to face communication, respondent has to ensure appropriate tone and attitude that compliments the message delivered to ensure that the communication gets through as intended. Written response also enables to organise thought and produce a retrievable record, unlike speech. I continuously tested participant understanding about change through questioning and discussions, as I observed that each participant's understanding is tempered by their job profile, experience and knowledge. Details about access to the site, data collection, analysis and representation of study results are provided in subsequent sections of this chapter.

### **2.1.2 Research inquiry approach**

A qualitative inquiry approach was selected to inquire into the research questions. The aim was to explore how group process and national employees, in particular, are affected by the impact of management interventions made to bring about increased self-management team-working. This understanding was developed through observing and recording the details of workplace collaboration and interaction with the study participants (see 2.2.1). It also involved trying to understand the thoughts and behaviour



that governed their responses and influence of context through communicating my sense making of the situation and soliciting feedback and opinions. Qualitative approaches are best suited to investigate and incorporate feelings, deliberations and sensitivities of participants (Yin, 2011). To bring out the complex nature of the interactions of interest to this study untainted by power and social differentials, participants engagement in both reviews of the data collected and my interpretations was used (see 2.1.5), which is permitted in a qualitative approach (James and Vinnicombe 2002).

Unique contextual economic and social factors as detailed in Chapter 1 significantly influenced the study. Hence delving into the phenomena in their natural setting and studying group behaviour in their social context was required, for which a qualitative approach is suited (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). I as a researcher was the primary instrument and active participant in the collection of data and its interpretation, which is a key characteristic of a qualitative study (Meriam, 2002). The change which I was studying progressed through interventions and action learning initiated and facilitated by me as a change agent. A qualitative approach provides freedom for the researcher to be involved and influence research situation (Evered and Louis, 1981) while simultaneously using the collective knowledge of participants. The study results are presented using a rich description of words and pictures rather than numbers as it will be more palatable to the practitioner users and improve trustworthiness (Meriam, 2002), which is supported by qualitative approach.

### **2.1.3 Underlying philosophy and worldview**

Ontologically, the study posits that reality is relative (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) as multiple realities are entertained by participants in the study, which contributes to the success and failures observed in the change program. Participants may have different understanding and interpretations of the common desired end-states (see table 2.1) of the change program. Understanding these successes and failures through sense-making, i.e., how incidents and actions are connected to their beliefs and knowledge, of related participants and me as researcher generated an understanding of the phenomenon under study. An epistemological approach which reduces the distance between researcher and researcher enables to understand the participant perspective more accurately (Tharenou, Donohueis and Cooper, 2007)). Hence insider research with a collaborative approach was selected as it increased the reciprocity (Lincoln, 1995) of my relation with participants





and enabled contribution of participant inputs. This study professes a nonfoundationalist (Amis and Silk, 2007) stand which posits that a study's quality is linked to its intention based on moral ethics and no knowledge is value free as it is influenced by underlying power and political dynamics of the study process. The axiological assumption of surfacing my values which influence research study was implemented by reporting the biases and values associated with the information gathered for the study (see chapter 4).

Constructivism is the worldview or epistemology framing this study as it focuses on how participants try to understand and cope with the workplace changes for developing the self-management capability. The focus of the study was to understand the subjective meanings constructed by participants about the group process and acceptance of change program in their historical and social context. These understandings were gained from my interactions containing open-ended questions about the situation of interest that allow collection of meaning constructed by participants (Blatter, 2008). However, there was recognition that these understandings are influenced by my experience and background as the data is generated and interpreted by me as a researcher. Interpretation of these data by me was for the purpose of generation of understanding and hence comes under the interpretive theoretical perspective (Bhattacharya, 2008). These interpretations are structured based on the constructivist-interpretive paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008), wherein there is constant interaction between the researcher and the participants to develop the meaning of the experiences. These meanings are inductively interpreted by me using my experience, background along with existing literature to provide a rich description (see chapter 4) about the aspects investigated (Merriam, 2002), which is the end goal of the study. These descriptions aim to provide information on how change program impacted the group processes and behaviour of nationals as well as describe management interventions that facilitated the change.

#### **2.1.4 Research methodology**

I choose a case study approach as this enabled exploration of the real-life workplace problem in my practice. A case study research approach is used when in-depth, multi-dimensional understanding of a complex real life issue in its natural context is required (Crowe et al., 2011). A single instrumental case study (Yin, 2011) approach was used for this study. In this qualitative approach, I as researcher explored a case over a period for collection of data from multiple sources to generate a case description and case based





themes. A case study is suitable when identifiable cases with clear boundaries are present, and there is a need to develop in-depth understanding (Stake, 2010). The case study allows purposeful sampling (Flyvbjerg, 2011) and embedded analysis (Stake, 2010) of specific aspects of the case. These characteristics make case study ideal for this study as it examines change to develop self-managed teams at divisional level in a company and focus on understanding the impact on group process, the response of national employees and management interventions that facilitate self-managed team development. A case study is characterised by the unit of analysis and not the subject of investigation (Meriam, 2002). Thus the unit of analysis in this case study for the study of self-managing capability phenomenon is the 2 divisions in which change the program to develop self-managed teams are implemented.

Case study as a methodology is held in low esteem due to the five misunderstandings as identified by Flyvbjerg (2011). He counters each misunderstanding with the following arguments. Intimate knowledge of multiple cases dealing with empirical data is central to the development of expertise and serve as a method of learning. This contradicts the notion that theoretical knowledge is better than case knowledge. It is possible to transfer knowledge and generalise based on a single case, which contravenes the view that generalisation based on a single case is not possible and cannot contribute to scientific knowledge. Case studies can be used for studying process to know the outcome and causes, which is relevant to this study. It can also be used for exploration, developing explanations and sensitivity to context about phenomena. This usefulness debunks the third misunderstanding that case studies can be used for generating hypothesis only and not for hypothesis testing and theory building. The proximity to reality and resultant learning in the case study approach mostly results in casting off the researcher's pre-understanding and knowledge. This learning lays false the accusation that a case study is biased towards verifications of the researcher's preconceived notions. It is true that case studies are difficult to generalise. However, this can be attributed to the properties of the phenomenon and the context that is being studied rather than the limitation of case study method. This is a single case study about how my attempt to introduce self-managing teams impacts group process and particularly affects national employees (see 1.2) in the context of country Sultanate of Oman. Hence the case narrative is itself the result of this study as the reader can become sensitive to the contextualised issues and findings in the study, as these cannot be obtained from available theory.



### 2.1.5 Quality in the research

A trustworthy qualitative study addresses issues of credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity, generalizability), confirmability (objectivity), dependability (reliability), as per Guba (1981). Constructs of credibility, transferability and confirmability acquire importance in a case study based on constructivist-interpretive epistemology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Provisions adopted in the study to ensure these quality aspects are detailed below.

Credibility criteria stress ensuring truthfulness, which requires the researcher to explain why an observed instance occurred (Lewis, 2009). The following approaches were employed to ensure credibility. The period (11 months) spent in the field for the study along with previous work time enabled me to be part of the team. This span allowed me to observe the situations and participants in their natural settings without disturbing them in my role as a researcher. It also provided an understanding of the workplace social norms, behaviour of participants and my preconceptions which enabled in better interpretation of workplace situations. Data collected and my interpretations were constantly subjected to participant checking by mean of confrontive and diagnostic inquiry, which involved public reflection of my understanding of the situation and soliciting feedback. This collaborative approach allowed participant knowledge and feedback to be incorporated into the study findings. Themes emerging from the study was triangulated using existing literature, participant checking on interpretations and conclusion to ensure its validity (Lewis, 2009). Study approach and findings were subjected to peer feedback to identify problems during the study and clarify research issues. Peers were fellow practitioners working in other organisations. They reviewed the various documents developed in the change program and commented on the management interventions adopted by me for different situations.

Transferability denotes the ability of study findings to be applied in other contexts. This characteristic is facilitated by providing a rich description of the research findings and permitting research users to draw their conclusions (Lewis, 2009). Description of the inquiry methods in the subsequent section of this chapter (see 2.2) provides the boundary conditions of the study, which is also important for considering transference (Shenton, 2004). Description of the inquiry methods also enables a future researcher to repeat the data collection, interpretation and analysis approach in the study though similar results



may not be obtained due to other intervening factors such as differing context. It also provides the user of this study details to assess methodological coherence (proper collection of data, analysis). Both of the above potentials offered by the description of the inquiry methods enhance the dependability of the study, which is described as the reliability of study findings through time and researchers (Hays, Wood, Dahl and Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). The study also proposes a change model for developing a self-managing team to improve its dependability.

Confirmability in qualitative research is defined as the ability of study user to confirm the study data and the degree of neutrality in the study findings (Shenton, 2004). For this, the study needs to reflect the perspectives of participants without the interference of the researcher views (Guba, 1981). Confirmability depends on the transparency of research procedures employed (Jensen, 2008). The inquiry methods are detailed in the study (see 2.2), and examples of coding process are provided (see Appendix 9) to enable this. The constructivist epistemology and interpretive framework imply that the lived-in experience of the participants are recorded by me as a researcher and interpreted within my belief system. This basis puts pressure on the study finding regarding legitimacy and representation, i.e., whether experiences are captured adequately in an unbiased manner (House, 2005). Reflexivity of the researcher overcomes the above obstacle - whereby beliefs, values and biases which impact the inquiry are incorporated in the study - as it helps readers to recognise the same and discount them (Creswell and Miller, 2000). All the causes related to an incident under observation are endeavoured to be obtained to increase descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992). Open-ended questions which are relevant to the phenomenon under study are used which allows the user to provide elaborate answers. This approach reduced the chances of imposing my reasoning framework and increases interpretive validity. All incidents which were contributing to the success or failure of the change program are recorded without any filtering. Analysis and sense-making of the observation were done by correlating to existing knowledge thereby reducing the influence of my personal experience and biases. I tried to be aware of my role as a researcher and be observant which decreased effect on the situation due to my reactivity.

The scholarly practitioner approach of constant review and incorporation of related insights from literature ensured that the study is anchored in existing knowledge, thereby



ensuring rigour of methodology i.e., internal validity. Knowledge generated by research is credible if data analysis for drawing conclusions is transparent and scientific (Greenwood and Levin, 2007). Thematic analysis was used to achieve this. Potential participants were made aware of the nature of study participation (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). Participants were not considered as co-researchers for analysis of data, forgoing the advantage of multiple perspectives, due to participants' lack of scholarly knowledge.

### **2.1.6 Positionality of myself as researcher**

I am the primary instrument for collection and analysis of data in this study. Hence my positionality regarding world views and position concerning the study is important to understand their influence on the study as noted by Foote and Bartell (2011). I am a male Indian national of 44 years and have the role of CEO in the organisation. I have experience in engineering and management roles for 22 years out of which 15 years is in the middle east. This work experience helped me to understand better the problems faced by the participants in this study, which is conducted in the middle east. However, this background also has conditioned me to rely on a rational system based on bureaucratic control. Also, I am an action and a result oriented person who is intolerant towards low performers and slow learners. Due to the above background and values, the change program in this study requiring more reliance on others' agency created tensions for me. Journaling helped me to become aware of these tensions and to reflect on them when such situations arose.

Location of the researcher about the subject, participants, research context and process determines researcher position related to study (Holmes, 2014). While I practise bureaucratic control, I have little regard for hierarchy based social status. Also, I am an optimist when believing in the potential of people. The change program to develop self-managing teamwork required trusting participants to develop decision-making skills. I had the dual role of researcher and change agent in this study program. How the actions initiated in the change program were relevant to the participants was explained (see 2.1.1) to reduce possible passiveness among participants due to the feeling of being excluded from problem definition (Cassell and Johnson,2006). My identity in the company is that of an expat manager and representative of the shareholders for the protection of their investment. Hence full buy-in into the change project also cannot be guaranteed from all



study participants, as some participants may believe that the change program primarily serves shareholder interest. I believe that honesty is the best policy, and this practice helped me to gain trust and co-operation of my colleagues. Change process can alter the power relations between members that may have caused communication issues and conflicts (Macphee, Wardrop, Campell, 2010), thereby creating dysfunctions in the change process. Though a serious minded person, I used humour and irony in discussions related to these dysfunctions to elicit tacit knowledge of others, as proposed by Luscher and Lewis (2008). As to research context and process, this study is interpretive in nature due to my role as a researcher who created information through observation, self-reflection and interprets the same for further action and generating knowledge. These interpretations are shaped by my values, experiences, biases and background with the intention to understand how change participants make sense of the change process as noted by Creswell, 2007). Hence, the quality of these interpretations is dependent on the reciprocity (Lincoln, 1995) of my relations as a researcher with participants, in the sense of trust, care and mutual benefit. Care of participants was ensured through adherence to ethical conduct (see 2.2.6). Benefit to participant involved learning and increased responsibility with attendant remuneration. My role during the progress of change moved from that of an executive to a consultant providing internal consultation for management action and action learning. This role progression helped in reducing confusions and conflicts due to role duality as I noted that participants were more frequently approaching me for suggestions and advice. My pre-understanding (Roth, Shani and Leary, 2007) of organisation dynamics may have affected inquiry process by being insensitive to issues that are apparent to an outsider. For example, peer review highlighted the concern about the lack of resources and systems which affected the change progress at various stages, though I reasoned it as adequate in the capacity of CEO.

## **2.2 Enquiry methods**

### **2.2.1 Participants**

Ultimately 27 employees of the organisation participated in the change program and study out of which 5 were women. There were 5 Omani nationals, of which 3 were women and 22 male expatriates of Indian nationality. The study started off with 24 participants with 6 participants joining during the study. 3 employees left during the course of the study – 1 female Omani and 2 male expatriates. Responsibility profile of the



participants included 2 division heads and 3 support department heads. I as an insider researcher had a dual role of change agent and researcher.

### **2.2.2 Entry into field**

Participants were recruited only from the company where I am working and the change process implemented. Two divisions were selected for the study as they were critical for the business sustainability, together contributing to around 70% of the business turnover. Overall, the 27 participants comprised 15% of the company workforce. These participants were involved in decision making as per responsibility structure (see 2.1.1 and Appendix 6) devised for this change program. The study intention was to develop the expertise of the participant. Hence, lack of skills, functional responsibilities or affiliation to a particular group was not a criterion for selection to the study. There were no open advertisements to recruit participants, and all communication was made directly to potential participants. I organised face-to-face meetings with potential participants to clarify the terms of their participation - with details on terms of their involvement, benefits and risks, contact points presented in the form of an information sheet (see Appendix 1). Agreement to participate was formalised by a signing of a completed "Informed Consent Sheet" developed by the University of Liverpool, UK (see Appendix 3). A written assurance was provided to all staff approached for participation in the study that decision about participation or withdrawal in between study will in no way impact their on-going relationship with me, the researcher. Participants were informed that research analysis would not reveal participant details. Also, assurance was provided that data and information from participants would not be shared, and results anonymised. The medium of communication during the change program was English for all the participants, despite the Middle Eastern context.

### **2.2.3 Data sources and collection**

A case study strategy relies on interviewing, observation and document analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). I collected data about incidents which contributed to the success or failure of the change program. Primary data about these events was generated through a daily log kept by me on the details of these incidences including discussions with relevant participants and my reflections on the same. This log was modelled as per the Schein's ORJI (Observation, Reaction, Judgement, Intervention) journal model (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010) which helps to understand situations where judgments and decisions fail



and thereby develop meta-learning (see Appendix 4). This data was generated through ethnographic approaches of participant observation, journaling and reflection in my first person voice (Reason and Torbert, 2001). This information was supplemented with data from second person research using diagnostic and confrontive inquiry (Coghlan and Shani, 2005) by discussion and asking open-ended questions to the study participants (see 2.2.1).

These data were collected and recorded throughout the study by me as insider researcher. Being CEO, primary and secondary access of the formal information and networks at all levels was available. However, my status in the organisation excluded me from informal networks and grapevines as middle management would filter and block such information flow (Mishra, 1990). Secondary sources of data for the study included divisional performance reports, internal e-mails and minutes of meeting relevant to the study and appraisal details of the persons in the study. A monthly reflection on the daily logs based on the experiential learning cycle framework by Kolb (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010) was generated to develop scholarly practice by enabling development of generalisations supported by existing literature. This detail contained generalisation of the monthly observations, reflections on these observations and intervention actions planned for the subsequent months (see Appendix 5). These reflections increased the level of understanding and enabled to gain more access to the phenomenon under study (Stenbacka, 2001).

#### **2.2.4 Data Analysis**

Initially, a thematic analysis was conducted on the data which enabled to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis included the steps of reading and rereading the data, assigning codes and categories to bring out trends, themes in the data (Guest, MacQueen, Namey, 2012). Codes (see Appendix 7) were initially generated from the thematic papers developed during literature review in a top-down deductive manner- that is moving initially with themes and framing the codes. Any word or short phrase in the thematic papers which conveys and essence, property or attribute was considered as a code. These codes were categorised and then segregated into themes. This process helped to develop an initial codebook. It may be noted that the thematic papers were already categorised into themes that emerged while reviewing the literature.





Once the initial codebook was developed, the codes were interpretively applied to the monthly reflective reports. These interpretations were inductive in nature as there was no attempt by me to fit the data into the codes identified, leading to the development of new codes. My coding also had an exploratory orientation as the codes were developed from the key words, patterns and concepts generated from the data itself. However, it may be noted that the coding was affected by my preconceptions and dispositions. I read the data multiple times to identify patterns due to similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, causation (Saldana, 2009) in the coded data set. In some cases, simultaneous coding (Saldana, 2009) which involved applying more than one code to a data, was helpful to identify a recurring pattern. Categorization was done using logical reasoning, tacit knowledge and intuition as noted by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 cited in Saldhana, 2009). Based on these, rules (see Appendix 8) were developed for the inclusion of coded data into various categories. I noticed that rereading of data resulted in me modifying the initial coding multiple times due to the inductive manner of analysis. Allocation of codes to the data set also changed. A table showing the content and definition of the codes used, rules for applying codes into various categories was developed to demonstrate the rigour of thematic analysis (see Appendix 8). The dataset is coded based on my interpretation and hence follows a constructionist paradigm.

### **2.2.5 Presentation of results**

A research report must be engaging and contain sufficient evidence to support the findings (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998). The results of the study are presented in two chapters, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 to achieve this. The first of these contains the findings of the study related to the research questions, presented in a qualitative narrative format illustrated with participant quotes and episodes from field observations (Meriam, 2002). This illustration has been done to increase validity, richness and provide interpretations by participants about the situations by bringing in an “emic” (Yin, 2011) perspective. This emic perspective endeavours to showcase meaning making of workplace situations in the study by the participants. This narrative is organised around the research questions in the study (Yin, 1981). This style enables readers of this study to easily co-relate the study findings with the research questions (see 2.1.1) and assess how research aims (see 1.2) are addressed.





The second chapter presenting results from the study contains the interpretation along with the recommendation for action and suggestions for future research. This rendering is in line with interpretive case study research which proposes the contribution of rich insight as one form of generalisation (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998). The development of explanations derived from empirical data in the study enable future practitioners to interpret similar situations in another setting, but these explanations will be inadequate to predict future situations. Existing literature is referred where needed, which served as a warrant (Gold, Holman and Thorpe, 2002) to support the claims in the generalisation. In this chapter, a section, “Improvement to researcher” will enable the reader to see changes in my attitude, thinking and approach to practice. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants are ensured by avoiding direct attribution of quotes to the participant.

### **2.2.6 Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted in compliance with the information and guidelines for management of ethical risks as per section “C” and “E” contained in the application for approval of research ethics to University of Liverpool –UK (see Appendix 2) for this study. The organisational change program implemented required radical transformation of the organisation process, including power relations. Hence change involved political aspects making its management and this study very challenging. Continuous checking with the participants was done by me to ensure that they were not overwhelmed by the change process or under pressure from participants. I did this probing as part of the discussions during the inquiry process. Any coercions or distress to participants brought to my attention were resolved immediately through dialogue or removal of contributing causes.

### **2.3 Summary**

The above details have outlined how rigour was attempted in the study by detailing the theoretical basis, epistemological consideration, the methodology adopted and how it informs the design and data interpretation to inform the research questions. It also provides information on the inquiry approach and strategy for the use of existing literature (see 2.1.1 para 2). Based on this strategy a literature review was carried out, the details of which are presented in the next chapter.





### **3.0 Literature review**

Existing knowledge about self-managing teams on the questions raised in the study is mapped in this section. Initially, the definition of self-managing teams as per various literature is reviewed, and its meaning as intended in this study is established. This clarity was found to be important as the reading of literature revealed multiple definitions of self-managing teams based on its nature and scope. Various models and theoretical framework available for self-managed team development are then reviewed to examine their suitability for implementation and relevance to the context of the study. Literature related to decision making, communication, team behaviour in self-managed teams is explored next. This scrutiny enabled to understand the various aspects and issues documented about the development of self-managing teams related to research question about group processes in this study. It also helped in designing the change and prepare for potential problems during implementation. The review ends with an exploration of management interventions from other contexts during developing self-management capability in teams. This review enabled to develop understanding related to the research question on the nature of management interventions required, their consequences and critically consider its relevance to the change underlying the study.

### **3.1 Definition of self-managing teams**

Existing literature offers many definitions of self-managing teams based on scope and nature of the work performed. Terminologies such as “empowered”, “autonomous”, “self-directed” (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004), “self-regulating work groups” (Cummings, 1978), “Self-managing work teams- SMWT” (Kuipers and Stoker, 2009) are also used for these teams. Definitions range from simplistic terms such as “teams basically left to run for themselves with some guidance from external leader” (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004) to complex statements considering responsibilities undertaken and various theoretical frameworks. Cummings (1978) defines self-regulating groups from a socio-technical perspective as technically having required co-operation and ability to control variance though the design of task differentiation, task control and boundary management.

Most definitions of self-managing teams arise from an operational task accomplishment perspective and improving production efficiency. They have the goal of removing



supervisory control as evidenced in the definition of SMWTs by Hollander & Offermann (1990) as "responsible for their own work and for monitoring and managing their own performance. Instead of having a supervisor tell them what to do, members regulate their own behaviour, gather and synthesise information, make important decisions, and take collective responsibility for meeting team goals". Though seemingly empowering teams in general management, definition of self-managing team by Pasmore and Mlot (1994 P16) as "stable, multiskilled, multifunctional group with responsibility for the completion of a relatively whole piece of work and the control of all input, output, and supporting variables and conditions that influence team performance" mainly seeks elimination of supervisory control. Spreitzer, Cohen and Ledford (1999) defined SMWT as groups of interdependent individuals that can self-regulate their behaviour concerning relatively complete tasks. These definitions assume that team members have the necessary commitment to meet team goals. Also, the focus on task accomplishment excludes the general management aspects of the team.

Definitions also expose the tensions in empowerment and extent of participation in strategy and resource allocation. Wageman (2001) defines a self-managing team as "having authority and accountability for the first two functions—executing and managing the work— but within a structure and toward purposes set by others". Millikin, Hom and Manz (2010) by proposing "a radical departure in how work is organised and done by assuming responsibility for doing whole tasks and decision-making authority traditionally reserved for management" seems to favour empowerment in all aspects. Nijholt and Benders (2010 P382) takes a middle path approach by defining self-managing teams as "a group of employees working together to perform a task that amounts to a rounded-off part of the on-going production process of the product or service; consisting of eight to 20 members; with the right to decide without reference to higher management about at least four of the following seven aspects of work: allocation of work; scheduling of work; quality of work; timekeeping; attendance and absence control; coordination of work with other internal groups; and improving work processes."

Self-managing teams are also defined by their characteristics. Molleman (2000) defines self-managing team through its autonomous decision-making capability. Manz and Sims (1987) characterised self-managing teams as having decision-making autonomy and behavioural control at work group level. This disposition means that team is empowered



to take decisions and has right to direct how members perform the work. Millward, Banks and Riga (2010) defines self-managing teams as having the ability to modify their work process to adapt to constant change proactively. Barker (1993) identifies self-managing team as having organisation construct that requires a higher level of norm-based identification. This attribute enables teams to shape their behaviour based on values derived from negotiated consensus rather than a system of formal rules.

The above definitions provide insight that the nature of empowerment and control in a self-managed team to be oriented to increase worker commitment and encourage undertaking broader responsibilities. This transformation requires moving away from a tightly controlled management structure to an environment where workers with increased authority contribute creatively, in line with the transition from control to commitment approach for management of work enumerated by Walton (1985). Hence the change program intended in this study aims to transfer organisation management strategy from control to commitment based approaches for achieving organisation goals. The change process wants to empower the team not only on decision-making for the accomplishment of tasks but also take responsibility for divisional level strategic decisions. It is observed that the concept of “self-leading teams” defined by Manz (1992) fits the scope, character and nature of the “self-managing teams” in the study. Self-leading teams as proposed by Manz (1992) are characterised by more involvement with the strategic organisational process, i.e., analysis and decision making. Hence self-managing team in this study is defined as a group that has authority to set standards and goals, make strategic decisions, have internal leadership for team process, continuously develop through training, develop the adaptive capability to manage disruptive/non-routine events and take ownership of interactions with external stakeholders.

The next section presents existing knowledge on the process and problems faced in developing self-managed teams.

### **3.2 The process of developing self-managing teams**

The above discussion has shown that self-managed teams to have self-regulating, adaptive decision-making characteristics and needs to be committed and involved team members who show initiative. But how a group of employees become a team with such



characteristics? What is the process of developing such capability? Studies on self-management and team development have achieved little consensus on the development process of teams (Kuipers and Stoker, 2009). Empirical data describing the team development process and its impact on performance are absent (Salas, Cooke, and Gorman, 2010). There is little published empirical research on the self-managed team development process (O'Connell, Doverspike and Cober, 2002). However, research direction is moving towards understanding teams with greater autonomy and empowerment (Tannenbaum et al., 2012). As of 2007, there were close to 150 frameworks, models and theories to explain team performance dynamics and guide empirical research (Salas, Cooke, and Gorman, 2010). While this has increased understanding, it has provided little clarity and even team definition remains contested (West and Lyubovnikova, 2012). Understanding of team development process has lagged theoretical knowledge as most studies used quantitative approaches and controlled settings (Perry Jr, Karney and Spencer, 2013). These empirical studies capture the static structure and do not examine processes which occur over a period in real life settings. Even qualitative studies have focussed on already developed teams thereby missing the rich dynamics of the course of becoming a functioning team (Bosch-Sijtsema, et al., 2011).

Kuipers and Stoker (2009) categorises team development literature into three types, i.e., phase models, recurring phase models and process models provides concepts to recognise team development stages and process. Phase models based on group dynamics literature offer the idea that team development is influenced by the development of personal relations among team members. Phase model based on group development theory by Tuckman (1965) (cited in Tuckman and Jensen,1977) identifies five stages (forming, storming, norming, performing adjourning) to categorise these developments. Though there is criticism that these phases are not clearly distinguishable in real life settings, it provides a guide to understanding the stages through which the team is passing. Phase models based on consultancy practice literature provide an understanding how team development can be evaluated based on team performance due to increased empowerment, i.e., authority and responsibility. Phase models based on sociotechnical literature incorporate sociotechnical concepts to identify phases of team development and focus on achieving managerial autonomy in decision making and social maturity (Kuipers and Stoker, 2009) using reflection and double loop learning. Recurring phase



models overcome the criticism of phase models being linear and sequential. These models categorise development phases of transition and action. It also recognises the interpersonal process present throughout consisting of conflict management, motivation and confidence building and affect management sub-process (Marks, Mathieu, Zaccaro, 2001). Process models provide concepts to understand team development based on intra-group and boundary management processes which are occurring in parallel (Gladstein, 1984). Attention on intra-group process highlight attention needed to develop open communication, conflict management and support to team members. The concept of boundary management underscores the importance of minimising misunderstandings with external groups. Three major processes, i.e., task management, internal relations, external relations and performance improvement are observed in the literature on team development (Kuipers and Stoker, 2009). Having looked into the team development literature, existing literature on models to develop self-managing teams is reviewed.

Theoretical models on the self-management team are based on commitment based HRM as its predominant focus is on providing greater team autonomy (Lundy, 1994). In this context, Pais (2010) suggested the need to encourage job enrichment, adsorption of planning and control, flatter organisation, common goals, focus on team achievements, result-oriented compensation, develop problem-solving capability, internalise grievance handling. Cohen (1993) proposes a model based on organisational behaviour theories and empirical research involving four dimensions to be managed for developing self-managing work teams (SMWT) and three dimensions for measuring effectiveness. The four dimensions critical for self-managing team development as per Cohen (1993) is organisation context encouraging employee involvement, supervisory behaviour, group task design and group characteristics. Though the paper only proposes a hypothesis for empirical testing, it provides knowledge about various elements to be considered under each performance dimensions during change design and implementation. Pasmore and Mlot (1994) list 14 dimensions to be attended when designing SMWT and provide boundary conditions for these dimensions as preferred and undesirable. These dimensions are related to team size, skills type, skill proficiency, information, feedback, technology, client, function, the tenure of association, focus on process, task, resource, leadership and performance evaluation. This model details the technical, social and team support systems required to design a self-managed team successfully but fail to detail about introducing a self-management team. This model details the team development process



through identification of various milestones and fails to provide insight into the mechanism of achieving these milestones.

Carroll (1999) provides a model which recognises four phases (functional training, direct involvement, team advisor, stepping back) in the development of self-managing teams. Though this model is for work related tasks and proposes a linear sequence, insights for developing decision-making capability on team management is useful. Model details about the involvement of external leader in developing autonomy for decision making in four phases. The initial phase consists of briefing by the external leader on working of self-managed teams and conducting improvement meetings. Next is the direct involvement phase which comprises of assisting the team in developing skills for collectively managing their activities. Team advisor phase follows where external leader facilitates the team to take decisions, even though decision quality is compromised or result in mistakes so that learning is achieved. Stepping back is the final phase where external leader withdraws to an observer role and allow the team to manage their activities. Clifford and Sohal (1998) also identifies four stage for the development of self-directed work teams containing awareness creation stage, restructuring group formation stage, the formation of an autonomous team for internal working, self-sufficiency stage to deal with suppliers and clients. This study also lists the milestones on self-management team development and fails to provide a rich description of the development process and challenges faced.

Yeatts and Barnes (1996) provide an overall framework of the design elements, organisation factors and processes involved in the success of self-management team development, i.e., the teaming process, work process and decision-making process. Key elements of the teaming process are coordination, communication and trust whereas knowledge, skill and resources impact the work process. The decision process is influenced by the availability of diverse inputs and decision-making method (consensus or majority). Kahn (2002) informs about the managers' responsibility of manage relational aspects - categorised into three, i.e., related to the boundary, process and anxiety - when developing self-managed teams. Kahn (2002) provides empirical support for the proposition that managing relational aspects in these three dimensions helps to develop self-management capabilities in teams. Common perceptions of procedural justice are a significant predictor of performance and absenteeism in self-managing teams





(Colquitt, Noe, and Jackson, 2002). Peer-based control is a motivational state of self-managing teams arising from interactions and context that influences team control and focusing on collective efforts (Stewart, Courtright, Barrick, 2012). Research and theory support the proposal that individual characteristics of the team members such as personality traits and attitudes towards self-management will play a significant part in the adaptation to team process to create self-managing teams (Thoms, Pinto, Parente and Druskat, 2002).

Literature was reviewed to understand problems faced in the course of developing self-managing teams. Sims and Manz (1995) highlight problems and challenges that can be encountered during the implementation phase of self-managing teams. One challenge is unrealistic expectations as people expect results too soon say like three months, whereas results can start happening after 8-9 months. During the initial learning curve period, productivity can go down and may take 9 to 18 months to re-appear. Management also severely underestimate the efforts required by participants to adapt to the self-managing structure. This misjudgement occurs because most participants will be new to self-management strategies and need to learn new behaviours, responsibilities and gain experience in these. The team will initially test top management's commitment to self-managing teams by taking decisions that are contrary to top management preferences. Such decisions can threaten the feeling of control and reduce the effectiveness of top management, thereby reinforce pessimism about the efficacy of a self-managed team.

Studies have observed that after the initial phase, self-managing teams' move towards increased responsibility and trust. The middle-level team personnel can experience the situation of redundancy and consequent psychological loss of control and present a significant potential threat to team development through reversing team decisions, hampering team meetings or highlighting team mistakes in an unfavourable light. There is potential for loss of rank to privileged people due to their technological skills or experience. Not all people will be equally enthusiastic about the change due to pressure to learn new technical/behavioural skills and group/team skills. One common fallacy as indicated by Sims and Manz (1995) is that implementation of self-managing team development process is also entrusted to the team. Pasmore and Mlot (1994) give knowledge about potential pitfalls that can hamper the development of a self-managed team. These include premature withdrawal of supervisory support during formation of the





team, not planning for the transition of authority, nonalignment of reward, measurement and information system with self-management goals. Participants can face difficulties to adapt from the traditional workplace values of individual achievement and recognition to the team based goals and requirements needed for a self-managing team.

Having reviewed the overall concepts in self-management development, specific elements and attributes of the self-management development process related to the study aim, specifically decision-making, the nature and quality of communications in teams, team behaviours, is explored in next section.

### **3.3 Decision making in self-managing teams**

This study attempts to address how decision making in a team is impacted by the introduction of change to develop the self-management capability. The self-management capability envisaged in this change is a team's ability for strategic and operational decisions (see 3.1). For the design of the change intervention to incorporate this, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of decision making in a participative team setting. Also, for participation in decision making to result in improved performance, understanding of the motivational and cognitive mechanisms is required (Locke, Schweiger and Latham, 1986). The motivational mechanism consists of factors such as trust, increased control on work, enhanced involvement, greater identity with team and acceptance of higher goals. The cognitive mechanism includes more communication to higher levels, effective utilisation of information and understanding rationale of decisions. The review below commences with an understanding of existing theoretical models in decision making and proceeds to various factors affecting team decision making. Subsequently understanding the influence of member emotions and learning in the decision process and vexing issue of accountability for team decision is explored.

#### **3.3.1 Theoretical models to understand team decision-making process**

Models provide the analytical framework to analyse organisation decision-making process (Kenichi, 2014). Lynn (1982) cited in Kenichi (2014) argues that decision making of the organisation can be different depending on the situation. Bērziņš, (2012) offers a six-step decision model for adoption as a standard procedure to improve decision making and save costs. Model by Vroom & Yetton (1973) cited in Vroom and Jago



(2007) describes five decision processes – autocratic to consultative to highly participative (i.e., consensus). Rosen and Jerdee (1978) notes that managers are more willing to allow for participative decisions when it is implemented on trial basis rather than permanent basis, possibly due to doubt about subordinates capability and commitment.

MMCW (must, may, can will) model by Molleman (2000) provides an idea of designing organisation structures and teams that can take local decisions though lacking in empirical evidence. MMCW model categorises self-managing team decisions into three based on the content of the decision, i.e., choosing own working method (how), planning of the task (when, who) and formulate objectives of the work (what, why). It is interesting to note that Manz (1992) considered only the first two dimensions as part of self-managing teams and labelled third dimension (why) as self-leadership, indicating the bias for task management and reluctance to delegate top management roles involving problem-solving, innovation and strategic decisions. Decision-making capabilities are related to the type of learning required, as the why and when/who dimensions of decision making require double loop learning (Argyris and Schon, 1996 cited in Molleman, 2000).

### **3.3.2 Factors affecting team decision-making process**

Review of literature endeavoured to understand the various factors that influence the team decision-making process. This inquiry provided knowledge that aspects such as personal traits, organisational factors, team communication, team confidence, control capacity, control mechanism and learning capability have an influence on decision making in teams. The details on these influence is enumerated below:-

**Personal traits:** Research has shown that personality traits matter most when discretion is required in decision making (Hambrick and Finkelstein, 1987 cited Muehlfeld, Doorn and Witteloostuijn, 2011). Intuitive and analytic dimensions of cognitive style influences group behaviour and decision-making style (Armstrong and Priola, 2001). Studies show that cognitive styles are spontaneously applied and cannot be transformed through training (Curry, 1983) due to biological reasons, i.e., differences in the predominance of left/right hemispheres of the brain. People with high emotional intelligence (EI) aided by empathy may understand the pattern of problems by being able to gather information on



all issues surrounding it and guide action to meet goals by prioritising and organising such information (Wolff, Pescosolido and Druskat, 2002). This increase chance of them being an informal team leader and reduce participatory decision-making, especially in a self-managing team as it has no formal reward and punishment for such undertakings. People with high EI will understand the unsaid negative issues in the team leading to lower participation (Rozell and Scroggins, 2010).

**Organisational factors:** Participatory decision making is based on dimensions of rationale (democratic, pragmatic), organisation structure (formal, informal), forums (direct, indirect), decision issues (task design, working conditions, strategy, capital investment), degree of involvement (opinion seeking to complete autonomy), decision process (Black and Gregersen, 1997). Participatory decision-making effectiveness depends on the extent of areas handled, relevance and importance of the decisions and difficulty of the issues settled by the decisions (Lowin, 1968 cited in Ritchie and Miles, 1970). The diversity of cultural beliefs and values positively influence participatory decision making (Van Der Westhuizen, Pacheco and Webber, 2012). Cultural attributes of individualism and collectivism influence participatory decision-making effectiveness (Lam, Chen and Schaubroeck, 2002). Participation in decision making is affected by employee belief in status hierarchy and socio-cultural values (Hines, 1974), influence sharing, skill utilisation and power status (Drenth, et al., 1979). Providing employees relevant information, clarifying expectations, providing training, aligning rewards with responsibility will enhance participation in decision-making by employees (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1992).

**Team communication:** Interaction process of team members affect the group decision quality (Alper, Tjosvold and Law, 1998). Trust, shared values and open communication is also identified by Thibodeaux and Faden (1994) as an important factor in the design of self-management teams. The social nature of team communication influences informal participatory decision making (Harrison, 1985). Theory of cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1949) posits that the interaction between team members are affected by their interpretation of goal congruence, which can be either of cooperation, competition or independence. Interactions enabled by cooperative goals can be complemented through constructive controversy (Tjosvold, 1985) which involves open-minded discussion of opposing positions (Alper, Tjosvold and Law, 1998).



**Team confidence:** Team confidence defined as team members' collective belief to interact effectively and share resources is useful for problem-solving to self-managing team members (Alper, Tjosvold and Law, 1998). Team confidence is different from efficacy and group potency, which is about confidence in execution capability and collective belief about effectiveness respectively. Efficacy and group potency deals with consequences, while understanding constructive controversy in a co-operative context leading to team confidence throws light on enabling conditions needed to ensure effective decision making. A team operating in ambiguous environment take a better decision when team confidence is low, but perform well in a predictable environment when team confidence is high (De Dreu and Beersma, 2010).

**Control capacity:** The level of routine in the task and the distribution of control tasks within the group affects decision making (Chems, 1987). Molleman (2000) suggests that control tasks related to "what" "how" and "why" is to be decided by members who are intimately affected by the decision and proposes rotating the responsibility of control tasks related to "when" and "who" among members to avoid passivity. Concepts relating to control, training, delegation and innovation of the "adhocracy" organisation structure formulated by Warren Bennis (Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985) enable organic structure development that enhance consensus decision making.

**Control mechanisms:** The nature of control mechanism in an organisation also influence team decision making. An agency oriented organisation structure promotes risk aversion in the management due to the need for steady employment, whereas a collaborative approach transforms decision-making based on intrinsic motivation and collective concerns (Wiseman and Gomez-Mejia, 1998). A self-managed team transforms the external control of teams from ensuring discipline in agency structure to providing services in strategy formulation and enhancing social ties (Westphal, 1999). Excessive use of external controls based on rationale leads to lack of trust in the team decision making and consequently decrease participation (Ghoshal and Moran, 1996). Sundaramurthy and Lewis (2003) hypothesise that the paradoxical requirement of control and collaboration in team working can be achieved by encouraging diversity and promoting shared mental models.



**Learning capability:** Identification and rectification of error produce learning and as problems on which decision to be taken increases in ambiguity and complexity, the need for learning increases to reduce the probability of mistakes (Argyris, 1976). Single loop and double learning (Argyris, 1976) influences problem definition and decision outcomes. Errors are corrected in single loop learning, but underlying values and assumptions are not challenged, whereas in double loop learning strategies and objectives of problem resolution will change (Argyris & Schön, 1996 cited in Fam, et al., 2013). Group norms affect team learning process and can inhibit capability development related to problem-solving, innovation and strategic decisions (Molleman, 2000).

### 3.3.3 Emotions and conflicts in decision-making

Tran, Páez, Sánchez (2012) studies how emotions at team level affect group decision making in teams such as generating and evaluating alternatives. Tran, Páez, Sánchez (2012) rely on four grouping classes of modal emotions for assessing how group emotions affect team decision-making process. These groups are positive emotions of achievement, positive emotions of approach, negative emotions of resignation and negative emotions of antagonism. One advantage of this study is the focus on emotions related to the decision-making process for strategic issues – characterised by ambiguity, uncertainty, time constraints and multiple interests – which is congruent with the focus of decision-making areas in this study.

Rozell and Scroggins (2010) propose that ability-based emotional intelligence (EI) in self-managed teams is predictive of group satisfaction, which has three aspects of group cohesion, consensus and satisfaction with group communication. This attribute is important for decision making as team satisfaction is related to consensus and leads to better outcomes than the majority rule or compromise and consequently leading to enhanced cohesion and commitment. Providing enough time to discuss problem-solving strategies and solutions leading to consensus is important to increase satisfaction with group solution (Anderson and Martin, 1999). Strategic emotional intelligence (i.e., understanding emotions and managing emotions) has a significant inverse impact on group satisfaction factors of group cohesion, group member relations, and group decision (Rozell and Scroggins, 2010). Hence, members with high EI can experience lower group satisfactions and adversely affect group decision making. However, the study is positivistic in nature and based on a homogenous group of university students, unlike



participants with diverse educational/skill background in this study. Also, the study is one dimensional as it does not mention factors other than EI which can affect group satisfaction.

Simons and Peterson (2000) provides an idea of conflicts associated with task and relationships in a group which affect decision making. Task conflict, also known as cognitive conflict, refers to the perception of non-consensus among group members about the decision content while relationship conflict or emotional conflict is about the perception of interpersonal incompatibility (Jehn, 1995). Task conflict at both individual and group level is beneficial as it improves decision quality due to a greater understanding of the issue and increases acceptance leading to increased satisfaction with group decision and desire to continue in the group. Self-managing teams redesign themselves as a response to conflict (Langfred, 2007). However, relationship conflicts negatively affect the group decisions as members focus on other members rather than the issue. This focus limits members information processing ability, reduces thought activities due to increased stress and anxiety from strained relationships, encourages attributing sinister intention for other members' behaviour leading to hostility and escalation of the conflict. With this insight, it would be easy to prescribe management efforts to increase of task conflict and decrease relationship conflict had it not been proven by studies that task and relationship conflict is positively correlated (Simons and Peterson, 2000).

#### **3.3.4 Accountability of management decisions by team**

Terms of accountability specify consequences for achieving and falling short of goals and emphasise that it matter to the organisation whether goals are reached (Forrester and Drexler, 1999). Self-management transforms organisation from a dominant hierarchy to a competency-based hierarchy (Purser and Cabana, 1999). This reconstruction removes supervisory control positions and increases accountability for positions accompanied with increased autonomy and self-regulation. A self-managing team can be held accountable for its decisions only when a collective mind has developed along with supporting organisation norms and aligned organisation factors such as training, reward system, authority allocation and resource availability (de Leede, Nijhof and Fisscher, 1999). It is important for a self-management team to make decisions by consensus; otherwise, person/group taking the decision in the team will be seen accountable (Gilstrap, 2013).



Literature review now proceeds to explore the nature and quality of communications in a self-managing, which addresses another element of this study.

### **3.4 Nature and quality of communications in teams**

Team interaction is a key element that influences a team process (see 3.2). Interaction means all observable interpersonal behaviour that occurs within a given period (Hackman and Morris, 1974). Interaction process is defined as interpersonal activities that occur within the group and influence the group outcome (DuBrin, 2000 cited in Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002). One of the objectives of this study is to understand how team interactions are influenced by efforts to develop the team as self-managing. Existing knowledge about the nature and quality of collaborative team interactions is required to inform the development of self-management capability. This section first examines existing knowledge about organisational factors and practices affecting group communication. This review is followed by understanding how team communications influence the self-regulating capability development and performance of the team.

#### **3.4.1 Organisational factors and practices influencing group interactions**

Literature was reviewed to understand the organisational factors and practices which influence team communications in a self-managed team. The purpose was to consider these aspects during change design and monitor them during implementation. It was noticed that literature was scarce on these aspects for self-managing teams. Hence group interaction literature was reviewed to understand what organisation practices and problems affect collaborative group interactions. It is noticed that interpersonal problems caused by emotional and interpersonal issues among team members prevent the team from focussing on the actual task at hand. This handicap also affects group cohesiveness of a team and consequently diminishes its ability to convert the input to effective outcomes (Hackman and Morris, 1974). Time available between input receipt and output request has an influence on interaction process. Hence procedures employed in communicating critical information to utilise resources is more important than problem knowledge for effective performance (Lanzetta and Roby, 1960). Backup behaviour by team members has initial and subsequent costs to team performance, as it reduces backup recipient motivation and increases neglected work of backup provider (Barnes, et al., 2008). This finding is in disagreement with earlier results of research that backup





behaviour has initial benefit of developing the aid recipient (Porter et al., 2003). The organisation in which this study is conducted has demographic diversity due to the contextual factors (see 1.4). Hence there is potential for the presence of group faultlines based on demographic composition. Faultlines are present in a team when there are sub-groups based on one or more attributes (Lau and Murnighan, 1998), and demographic faultlines are present when members identify socially with their demographic group. The presence of faultiness may lead to deleterious effects on group process (Lau and Murnighan, 2005). Cultural composition (Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002) and cultural distance among members influence group interactions and consequently group effectiveness (Thomas, 1999). It is observed that increased interactions in self-managing teams enhance self-leadership and innovativeness in self-managing teams (Muthusamy, Wheeler and Simmons, 2005). One approach to increasing such interactions is through humour. Humour, which is a social phenomenon and comes forth in human interactions (Romero and Pescosolido, 2008), can promote group cohesion (Gervais and Wilson, 2005), which consequently increases the efficiency of group interaction (Hackman and Morris, 1974). Humour patterns in team interactions influence performance, acts as a trigger for functional and socio-emotional behaviours and generate creative ideas (Lehmann-Willenbrock and Allen, 2014).

### **3.4.2 Nature of group interactions in self-managing teams**

Having reviewed the organisational aspects influencing group interactions, literature is examined to understand the nature of communication regarding quality and structure. Hierarchical control characterises a mechanistic organisational whereas an organic organisation like the self-managed team is characterised by dispersed control (Burns and Stalker, 1961). Communication in these self-managed team organisational structures differs concerning quantity, connections, initiation, type and pattern. In a mechanistic system, the communication flow is top down and characterised by high level of conflict. In an organic structure, communication is problem-specific with ad-hoc communication flow for task accomplishment and consultative decision making (Courtright, Fairhurst, and Rogers, 1989). Meetings are an essential element of the group interaction process which are episodic in nature and related to problem-solving, idea exchange, decision making, policy development, agreement negotiation (Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009).



The role and structure of interactions with top management have to change dramatically to support democratic principles in a self-managing organisation. This transformation requires top management organisation based on professional competence to support team at strategic, growth and operational levels (Purser and Cabana, 1999). Both strategic level and growth level can become embedded in self-management teams, and top management can become reviewers and approvers of growth/innovation proposals put forward by such self-management team. Top management involvement will still be required in strategic initiatives containing change programmes that cut across divisional levels, diagnosing ambiguous strategic challenges and assessing performance gap and inviting relevant stakeholders to dialogue. The interaction between the self-managing team and top management on strategy formation can focus on detecting discontinuities in the environment and managing forces for stability and change (Raes, et al., 2011). Druskat and Wheeler (2004) opine that even though a team is self-managing regarding autonomy in decision making, it must continuously take directions from the top management team and propose placing accountability on an external leader. However, Argyris (1973) suggest that if employees are considered significant by recognising their needs and given more freedom, they will behave responsibly and be committed to business objectives. Lack of clear hierarchical structure in a self-managed team will limit the open information flow to the top, thereby forcing top managers to elicit information by asking rather than commanding (Manz and Sims, 1987).

### **3.4.3 Influence of group interaction on team performance**

The literature review provided scant knowledge about how interactions in self-managed teams, both during development as well as established phase, promote self-regulating capability and performance. Hence review focused on group interaction literature to understand the influence of interactions on team performance. Group interaction process influences how team input factors are transformed to performance outcomes (Hackman and Morris, 1974). Some researchers negatively view group interaction process propositioning that it prevents the group from attaining optimum effectiveness (Steiner, 1972 cited in Hackman and Morris, 1974). In another perspective, even though time-consuming, a group interaction process problem presents an opportunity to correct errors and improve remedies to enhance output quality, (Taylor and Faust, 1952). Group interactions process can lead to dysfunctional groupthink in teams (Manz and Neck, 1997). An optimistic view of group process is provided by Collins and Guetzkow (1964)



cited in Hackman and Morris (1974) where group interactions yield outcome better than any single member, which is termed “assembly effect bonuses”. Fear of criticism by fellow team members can inhibit creative thinking in group process activities like brainstorming (Taylor, Berry and Block, 1958). Group interaction process influences the evaluation of potential alternatives, due to the supporting or critical observations made in group discussions (Hoffman, 1961 cited in Hackman and Morris, 1974).

Literature review now proceeds to understand the behaviour at various levels in a self-managed team, which encompasses another aspect of this study.

### **3.5 Team behaviour in self-managed teams**

How team behaviour is influenced by the change program to develop team self-management capability is one of the dimensions of this study. A competency-based organisation increases employee participation and establish relations on equal status and reciprocal basis, thereby easing the status difference between various levels. Team effectiveness is determined by team member behaviour in a self-managed team rather than the external leader as is the case for a traditional team (Cohen, Ledford & Spreitzer, 1996). Existing knowledge on various factors which influence team behaviour in a self-managed team is examined in this section. The quality of leadership is essential for the team to make right decisions that will determine the effectiveness of the team. The review starts with existing literature on leadership and follower behaviour that enhance self-management development. Control in an organisation is seen as important (Barnard, 1962; Kanter, 1982; Barker, 1993) as it implies the sacrifice of some of the desires of the participants to the collective benefit and goals of the organisation. Hence, control implies tension to the individual as it results in the compromise to participant autonomy (Barker, 1993). Existing knowledge about how control mechanisms influence the team participation is reviewed next. It is of interest to see if tensions to team members are less pronounced in a self-managing team structure which provides empowerment, than in a directive and bureaucratic organisation. Current knowledge on the impact of empowerment to the self-managed team is reviewed. This search is followed by a review of knowledge on the impact of cultural diversity on self-management team behaviour. The review concludes with an effort to understand the detrimental outputs (burnout and



dysfunctional changes) exhibited due to the development of self-managing teams, which will help to prevent its occurrence.

### **3.5.1 Leadership and follower behaviour in a self-managed team**

Leadership involves elements of persuading people, facilitating relations, taking decisions and information exchange (Yukl, 1989). Even though a self-managed team is functionally an autonomous unit, its success is dependent on the quality of its links to other parts of the organisation and external environment (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004). Druskat and Wheeler (2004) have identified eleven leadership behaviours to develop team empowerment that will make autonomy in decision making effective. These behaviours can be categorised into four leadership functions of relating, scouting, persuading and empowering. In a self-managing team, leadership influence comes more from the ability to persuade members to accept one's advice than from power associated with team member's position (Courtright et al., 1989). Asking questions enhance chances of team success and encouragement in the background of caring relationships can be a coaching method to develop skill and confidence (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). Decision-making consisting behaviours of problem-solving, planning and delegating responsibility (Yukl, 1989) is part of leadership. Hence, team leadership has to set up conditions for success in decision making (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003).

The effectiveness of leadership is greatly influenced by the quality of leader-follower relationship (Fleishman, 1953). Respect and care for followers are crucial for developing co-operative relations in self-managing teams (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). Good leader-follower relations provide access and information about team process and enhance team effectiveness. Conscientiousness in leadership influence followers and promotes commitment (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). When a self-managed team is working effectively, team members tend to openly or subtly reject subordination (Manz and Sims, 1987). Nature of follower leadership behaviour can be understood from the framework of relationship perspective or leadership character perspective (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Team member behaviour is influenced by team identity (Millward et al., 2010) that consequently affect team performance, as it affects team co-operation, communication and information sharing (Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000). Team members will give importance to team interests over individual or other identity needs when there is collaborative rather than competitive team norms (Millward et al., 2010). The team goals



framed by the leadership also needs to be attractive and meaningful (Hogg and Terry, 2000) and provide respect in the organisation (Turner, 1975).

### **3.5.2 Influence of control and empowerment on team participation & behaviour**

Participation is assumed to be present in an organisation when everybody practices it and control mechanism influences participation quality (Kanter, 1982). Participation and productivity improve when the review of goal achievement is entrusted to the employee (Raia, 1966). When leadership prefers control over productivity, participation suffers (Wheatley, 1997). Sauser (2009) proposed the concept of employee-owned companies to have an ideal mix of employee participation and control. Participation quality is dependent on the organisation communication system and its control (Barnard, 1962). When management tries to control the information on performance and process it will lead to dysfunctional behaviour (Choi, Dixon and Jung, 2004). The transition to self-managing teams removes the manager from immediate decision-making process necessitating team members to open up communication channels with external entities (Douglas and Gardner, 2004). Providing management information to team members is important for empowerment to succeed (Yukl, and Becker, 2006). This support includes providing information about financial performance, intelligence on competitors, business objectives and targets, new technologies available (Lawler, Mohrman & Ledford, 1998 cited in Yukl, and Becker, 2006). A productive and practical information system detailing action plan to improve business performance and allocation of attendant benefits will lead to increased participation and commitment (Smith, 1975).

Extend of employee empowerment significantly affects the transition of team control from hierarchical to self-regulating mode. Randolph (2000) defines real empowerment as ways to realise power within people by exploiting their knowledge, experience and motivation to create astonishing results. Empowerment increases the complexity in the interplay between organisational and human systems. Employees normally understand the freedom aspect of empowerment and miss out on increased accountability along with the requirement to share more risks and responsibility. Randolph (2000) cautions against a sequential change process with a big introduction for instituting empowerment process as it is non-linear and counterintuitive in reality. However, he identifies three stages of concerns - information and personal concerns, implementation and impact concerns, collaboration and refinement concerns - that a culture of empowerment can produce,



which can be handled by managing the information flow and adjusting organisation structure. Successful empowerment can be achieved through more of internal commitment resting on the three dimensions of ownership, responsibility and involvement than by the external commitment as per Randolph (2000).

Self-management team process transfers the expertise to the working level, and hence supervisor will be at a disadvantage to monitor the process. This disadvantage is enhanced in the self-management process by the complex interactions than the linear and task based work in a Taylorised environment. Hanson (1998) postulates that this de-layered organisation structure by self-managing teams will be more responsive to human needs and inclusive and creates the possibility of rewarding and promoting participants based on meritocracy, unrestrained by educational qualifications, organisational rank and social standing. Improved level of teamwork and self-management capability increases the ability of the team to acquire resources from the environment (Yang and Guy, 2011). Self-management structure gives more control to the participant enhancing the personal sense of ability and worth that leads to the development of personality with more internal loci of control and less need for external social approval. Consequently, such emancipated participants will be less passive towards managerial, professional and political authority (Pateman, 2002).

### **3.5.3 Cultural diversity and its effects on team behaviour**

Culture plays a dominant role in how an individual prefer to organise work for optimum results (Hambrick et al., 1998). Cultural diversity in the team influences the interactions between the team members and consequently group potency, performance (Tröster, Mehra and van Knippenberg, 2014). Nationality based cultural diversity can be a powerful influence in team dynamics as individuals from different countries have different beliefs about best ways of organising tasks (Stahl et al., 2010). Cultural diversity can lead to increased conflict and ambiguity in teams due to categorization (Tajfel,1982), beliefs about the organisation of work (Stahl et al., 2010) and attraction to similar others (Byrne, 1997). Based on Kirkman and Shapiro (2001), the process of self-management development can be designed to exploit the team cultural values. For a team low in collectivism, the strategy can be about emphasising individual accountability and visibility. Employees displaying high doing orientation can be empowered to the maximum as they will welcome increased control over the environment. Right and



dynamic mix of the cultural composition of the team can compensate for the absence of formal leadership and shared norms in self-managing teams (Cheng et al., 2012). Kirkman and Shapiro (2001a) also stress that consideration of cultural values is important for the success of the self-management development.

### **3.5.4 Detrimental team behaviours during self-management development**

The literature identifies possible behaviours at both team and individual levels that are harmful to team performance in self-managed teams. These are related to the dysfunctional behaviour exhibited at the team level and burnout of team members at the individual level, which is explored in subsequent sections.

**Dysfunctional changes:** Improper team design and poor coaching during early stages of change to develop self-management ability can create dysfunctional behaviour in a self-managed team (Wageman, 1997). Johnson et al. (2013) examine changes to team aspects of personnel, process and structure that can be made to overcome performance problems and cautions that emphasis on one of these aspects without proper analysis will lead to team dysfunctions. The team may replace personnel who are seen responsible for team's poor performance, which usually is the lowest performing member of the team due to peer influence (Jackson & LePine, 2003). Pressure to conform to internal team norms is termed groupthink (Manz and Neck, 1997), which can come about due to the pressure of shared beliefs, self-censorship and illusion of unanimity. Groupthink can result in dysfunctional decisions as it inhibits the rational and diverse thinking in the group leading to an absence of alternative approaches and its analysis (Moorhead and Montanari, 1986). There is little knowledge about how self-managing teams develop and adapt themselves, and how these adaptive actions affect performance (Langfred, 2007). The self-managed team may respond in a dysfunctional manner to task and relationship conflicts.

**Burnout of team members:** Self-managing teams are designed to increase involvement and participation, which if overdone can lead to stress and burnout. Burnout is characterised by emotional fatigue, depersonalization and perception of low personal achievement (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001) caused due to the inability of the team member to deal with excessive burdens on their drive, time, and means (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Increased responsibility for goal achievement and discretion for





decision making in self-managing teams require management of multiple interpersonal relations conflict and communication channels. These intense and recurring interactions can cause burnout (Leiter and Maslach, 1988; Demerouti, et al., 2001). Work-related factors are more strongly correlated to burnout than demographic and personality factors (Burke and Deszca, 1986). Four work factor variables have a significant influence on the severity of burnout - feedback, control and lucidity, social support and personal expectations about work (Maslach and Jackson, 1986 cited in Elloy, Terpening, Kohls, 2001). Burnout is accentuated if the demands on the member's time and energy are continuous rather than sporadic (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993) and when peer relationships are conflict-ridden or not supportive. , It may be noted that burnout is also affected by the nature of industry, cases of role conflict, role ambiguity, the inadequacy of time to accomplish tasks and little worker support. Burnout due to challenging work can be reduced by providing adequate time to accomplish it (Elloy et al., 2001). Concertive control can develop in self-managed teams, and team members may face burnout while trying to cope up with team's values, goals, peer expectations (Barker, 1993).

Existing literature provides various models for understanding burnout. “The conservation of resources (COR) model” and “Job demands – resources (JD-R) model” are the two dominant burnout models (Halbesleben and Buckley, 2004). COR is based on resource-based theories of stress and posits that the alignment of jobs demands with resources in social, economic, personal and ambient dimensions determine the nature of stress and resulting outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001). JD-R model proposes that burnout occurs due to additive effects of two aspects of work, i.e., job demands and job resources (Demerouti, et al., 2001). Job demands tend to result in exhaustion while a loss of resources will lead to depersonalisation and disengagement.

Literature review now proceeds to explore the feasibility and nature of the external intervention and facilitation for the development of self-managed teams.

### **3.6 External facilitation for developing self-management capability**

The amount of external control and monitoring to be applied to self-managing teams can pose a dilemma as too much external involvement can hamper, self-management



capability development and lax monitoring can result in an information black hole (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004). One of the objectives of this study is to understand how management interventions can assist in the self-management development of the team. Review of existing literature is done to understand the development of self-regulative capacity in teams for effective performance from a system perspective to enable this. The review then proceeds to understand the role and effectiveness of external interventions for the development of this regulating capability in self-managing teams. The review concludes with insights from literature about approaches available for facilitating the development of team self-regulating capability.

### **3.6.1 Systems perspective on self-managing team performance**

A systems perspective on the development of self-management development capability helps to understand the generation of self-regulating team capability. Prevailing management thinking based on systems approach views team working from an input-process-output (I-P-O) framework. In I-P-O framework thinking, output quality is seen mainly dependent on the integrity of the processes, and much attention is focused on controlling the same (Marks, Mathieu and Zaccaro, 2001). However, team performance (i.e. output) is not entirely explained by the I-P-O framework as it is found that a process based intervention has no dependable impact on team success (Millward, Banks and Riga, 2010). One explanation is that relation between process and team success is much more complex than the linear relationship implied by the I-P-O framework and is influenced by the team development phase, project phase, task diversity and contexts also (Millward, Banks and Riga, 2010). Team level psychological mediators (Marks et al., 2001), also referred as emergent states (Mathieu, Gilson and Ruddy, 2006) formed through group interaction process also influence the output. Another explanation for the ambiguity in the relation between process and team success is provided by Ilgen et al. (2005), who notes that feedback into the system also influence output as it affects team process. Also, factors like task complexity, team size and team composition can play a moderating role in the team process (Millward, Banks and Rigga, 2010).

I-P-O systemic framework along with knowledge of psychological mediators may enable a better understanding of the team process, but fail to explain how effective teamwork is achieved. This deficiency has prompted Hackman (2012) to propose that teams can only



be provided with essential and enabling conditions to evolve naturally into a performing unit. These conditions include elements within the team (i.e. mutual goals, clarity on targets, team structure, knowledge) and outside the team (e.g. rewards mechanism, resources allocated, autonomy provided, team coaching, context). Teams become effective only when they self-regulate their internal process to adapt to constant change (Mathieu Gilson and Ruddy, 2006; Vera and Crossan, 2005). This reasoning places emphasis on the self-regulating capability of the team to deliver planned outputs and ability to modify group process to meet changing input conditions and output requirements.

### **3.6.2 Case for external facilitation**

The above reasoning leads to the understanding that the internal process of a team evolves and this evolution cannot be designed or controlled to bring about an effective output. Only conditions that are necessary to generate an effective process can be ensured, even though there is no guarantee that effective output will be obtained. However, Morgeson (2005) makes a case for external support in self-managing teams citing reasons of the rare delegation of full decision-making authority in practice, facilitation activities which are ideally suited to external parties and positive influence that an external leader can generate in self-managing teams. Empirical studies also prove that actions of external leaders can make or break a self-managing team (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999). Teams need to be well informed to succeed in their decision making (Tushman and Katz, 1980). A self-managed team also requires a significant number of internal interactions as it is linked to performance (Cohen, Ledford and Spreitzer, 1996). However, when self-managing team members focus their attention on scouting information from the external environment, their internal team communication process suffer (Ancona and Caldwell, 1992). Hence, an external leader may be ideally suited to collect external information and disseminate to the team (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). For effective team functioning shared mental models of external events are important (Marks, Mathieu and Zaccaro, 2000) which can be achieved through effective sense-making by the team (Weick, Sutcliffe, Obstfeld, 2005). Though in a self-managed team, this is done by the team, in the case of disruptive events there may be a need for external leadership support due to ambiguity, time constraints and stress among team members (Morgeson, 2005).



### 3.6.3 Nature of external facilitation

External facilitation can contribute to self-management team performance by providing performance feedback, assisting team communication, coaching the team and contributing to enhancing self-management (Morgeson, 2005). Change process of self-management pushes the organisation from mechanistic and to organic organisation forms where information flow moves laterally among and within teams rather than vertically and information quality changes from decisions and instructions to advice and intelligence (Burns and Stalker, 1959 cited in Manz and Sims, 1987). Based on this understanding, Manz and Sims (1987) has suggested leadership behaviours of encouraging self-reinforcement, self-observation/evaluation, self-expectation, self-goal setting, rehearsal and self-criticism for enabling development of self-management capability in teams. These behaviours encourage external leaders to focus on ensuring that group maintenance and task completion are achieved within the group. This intervention avoids the need for external leader prescribing specific actions about employee self-management goals Hackman (1986) cited in Manz and Sims, (1987). However, Manz and Sims, (1987) notes that knowledge of leadership tools to develop self-management teams with considerable autonomy is scarce. Meadows (1980) cited in Manz and Sims (1987), using his “organicity” concept proposes actions of fusing responsibility boundaries of team members, enhancing supportive internal communication and encouraging participatory decision making by external leadership to guide teams towards self-management.

### 3.6.4 Potential areas for external facilitation in self-managed teams

Review of literature revealed areas where external intervention and facilitation may be warranted. They are related to performance monitoring, coaching team members, improve team decision-making, enhancing collaborative interactions, facilitating reflection and learning. Knowledge on these areas as obtained from literature is provided in subsequent paragraphs.

**Performance monitoring:** Self-managed teams needs to deploy incentive systems that can increase cooperation and coordination of the team. Existing knowledge on incentive systems that promote cooperation among employees is broadly in two review streams. One is based on group level rewards based on organisational behaviour (OB) and social



psychology, drawing on the theory of social interdependence (Deutsch, 1949). Empirical evidence is lacking for the influence of groups level incentives on cooperation and assisting behaviours (Wageman, 1995). Another stream is based on individual rewards using the principal-agent (P-A) approach that involves a trade-off between risk and reward for the agent (Laffont and Martimort, 2009). Merriman (2009) highlights the danger of rewarding employees through team incentive pay based on the logic that compensation based on collective effort creates unity among team members as such pay strategy is counterproductive due to perceived inequities. Research participants in the above study indicated a strong preference for rewards based on individual performance (just team member rewards) in the team rather than team performance at a collective level. Group incentives fail to motivate team members if it cannot establish how individual efforts contribute to team performance (DeMatteo, Eby and Sundstrom, 1998). Incentives can increase coordination and cooperation within workgroups by improving three distinct type of employee linkages, i.e., outcome linkages, help linkages, knowledge linkages (Siemsen, Balasubramanian and Roth, 2007). Such linkages will assist the workgroup in performing in a synchronised manner and create balanced output. When employees are help linked, group performance may be rewarded. In an outcome linked setup, rewarding individual performance and penalising group performance can lead to optimal results. When employees are knowledge linked, both personal and group incentives are needed, which is contrary to the perspective put forward by Deming (1993, p. 29) cited in Siemsen, Balasubramanian and Roth (2007) to avoid incentive pay and performance-based pay in a group setting as it will promote selfish behaviour.

**Coaching team members:** Self-management capability development in teams is influenced by coaching behaviours for improving problem-solving skills, dealing with interpersonal problems, training individuals for skills, monitoring performance with external users and identifying problems, administration of informal rewards (Wageman, 2001). Humour helps team leadership to build better relations and coach members in a friendly way (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). Coaching by team leader increases psychological safety and consequently increases learning (Edmondson, 1999). Effective coaching enables team members to lead themselves (Manz and Sims, 1987) and acquire a sense of competence and independence (Cohen, Chang and Ledford, 1997). Supportive coaching is positively related to the perception of leadership effectiveness (Morgeson,



2005). External coaching is a major factor when team's internal cohesion is less, as in the beginning stages of team formation (Hackman and Wageman, 2005).

**Improving team decision-making:** Intrinsic interest increases decision-making involvement in areas where participants have no interest or experience. Movement from proxy control to direct control increases accountability for performance and enables facing hazards of control. By creating appropriate learning experiences and using extrinsic rewards that focus on cultivating personal efficacy rather than functional performance, intrinsic interests can be developed (Bandura, 1982). Extrinsic rewards need to place significance on the competence required for performance rather than be seen as a proxy for control (Cerasoli, Nicklin and Ford, 2014) and spell out information on personal competence as noted by (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 1999). It is important to change the social environment to align with self-efficacy and outcome beliefs, failing which can lead to apathy, despondency, protest (Bandura, 1982).

Muehlfeld, Doorn and Witteloostuijn (2011) studied how personality traits of loci of control and Type A/B behaviour influences decision making related to change preferences. The propensity for change diminished after initial success for teams dominated with internal loci of control personalities. Suitable control structures are needed for teams dominated by Type-A personalities, thereby having a propensity for radical changes. Muehlfeld et.al (2011) highlights the dangers inherent in team decisions due to biases associated with information capture and processing by the team. This risk requires devising means to identify information sources and assess their reliability. The study by Muehlfeld et.al (2011) is done on students and hence forms a homogenous group, unlike real life team with diverse personalities. Also, the change decisions were taken in an artificially simulated setting and not on real life decisions. MMCW model (Molleman, 2000) provides concepts to improve the decision-making autonomy and thereby create self-managing teams. Minimising directions to perform tasks while ensuring maximum contribution by participants along the lines of “minimum critical specification” (Morgan, 1986) cited in Nonaka, 1994) may compliment this. Decision quality can be improved through alternative generation and evaluation by promoting structured and constructive debate and disagreement (Dean & Sharfman, 1996). Developing trust between team members and providing new information can mitigate the effect of the political process in such decision making (Gruenfeld, et al., 1996).



**Enhancing collaborative interactions:** Well-structured metaphorical models can be helpful in the intuitive understanding of personal behaviour, for improving performance and relations (Shelley, 2012). Appropriate humour styles can be used by the team to achieve desired business outcome (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). Intra-team communication structured along small world network concept by Joham, Metcalfe and Talukder (2010) can avoid network fatigue and centralisation, but promote access to specialised knowledge to all members. Formal diversity training can reduce variations in group interaction process (Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002). External facilitation to improve the team's interpersonal process enhances the effectiveness of interventions during team development stage (Hall, 2007). In a long-term view, it is better to allow the group members to develop the skills and experience to manage their group process and be an effective unit (Hackman and Morris, 1974).

**Facilitate reflection and learning:** Millward, Banks and Riga (2010) advances the self-regulating principles relating to team task reflection and providing an organisational climate of the learning environment of debate to propose how teams can oversee and administer own processes. Team task reflection requires teams to develop the capability to manage its internal process by reflecting on the tasks using process proposed by (Scho'n, 1983 cited in Millward, Banks and Riga, 2010). This active reflection process needs to be systematically instigated and managed to become part of team culture and mitigate the effects of negative team processes. Learning environment and constructive debate can also be fostered by encouraging team task reflection. This practice will require nourishing a psychologically safe atmosphere that promotes learning by making mistakes (Millward et al., 2010) and openness to identify root causes. Team reflection also needs to focus on strategy by identifying the core assumptions and improving them, as an emphasis on production over strategy reduces performance (Icmeli-Tukel and Rom, 1997). There is empirical evidence supporting a positive relationship between team reflexivity and performance (Schippers, et al., 2003). Reflexivity is seen to be more effective in the initial stages of the team formation (Gevers, van Eerde and Rutte, 2001). Reflexivity in teams consumes time and resources and hence may lead to inefficiencies during the change process and hence needs to be used after careful consideration (Hoegl and Parboteeah, 2006).





### 3.7 Conclusion of literature review

The literature review has helped to firm up the definition of self-managed team concept as intended in this study and underlying change program. It has provided insights into the various theoretical frameworks and models for developing self-managed teams that will enhance rigour to the design of the change programme and aid analysis during implementation. The literature review has thrown light on existing knowledge about aspects of self-managed team development which is the subject of this study (see 1.2, 2.1.1). The literature review on team decision making provides knowledge that organisational factors/controls influence team decision-making and hence require consideration during change design. Team communication, emotions of team members also influence decision making and hence needs to be monitored during change implementation. It also provides an idea to use the decision-making process to increase commitment and participation. Nature of detrimental effects that can occur due to greater decision-making responsibility on team members is also known. Insights about the influence of leadership to enhance commitment and participatory decision making are obtained. The review has highlighted the importance of balancing control and collaboration in self-managing teams, as it affects participation and self-management of individuals, that consequently affects the self-regulating capability of a team. The above discussion has provided an idea of the impact of cultural constructs on the behaviour of a self-managed team. The literature review has provided overall perspective about self-managing term performance and issues in comprehending causality, which helped in diagnosing team behaviour during the study. Insights from literature enabled reflection and sense making of the incidents in the change process and design action plans that could realistically influence the team process for success. Review provided insight on potential areas where external facilitation could be attempted to enhance self-management capability development.

Literature review highlighted scarcity of studies to delegate decision process involving innovation and strategic decisions from top management to self-managed team. As a corollary, studies to correlate knowledge in strategy and top management teams to self-management team development process is rare. Very few studies were observed about achieving control in self-managing teams and assessing detrimental effects arising due to the implementation of self-management teams. Empirical studies related to self-managed teams was found to be done in academic settings and simulated conditions using



homogenous groups, which may not reflect real workplace conditions. The literature on how Omani employees respond to self-management team development is rare (see 1.3). This gap in literature to address self-managed team development as a strategy for localisation is a motivating factor for this study. The next chapter 4 describes the findings of the study. Subsequently, chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study, provide suggestions to actionable knowledge and suggests areas for future research.





#### **4.0 Study findings**

The aim of this study was to determine the impact of introducing self-managing teams on group process and national employees in a company based in Sultanate of Oman (Middle East). Study research questions are detailed in section 2.1.1. Once the change program was implemented, many issues were observed which affected progress towards desired goals like problems, puzzles and curiosities (Marshall, 1999) which attracted my attention as relevant. Data generation was carried out using enquiry methods as detailed in section 2.2.3 on the above issues and management interventions made by me to facilitate the change program. The presentation of study findings in this chapter is structured around the research questions of the study (see 2.2.5). The findings reported on the research questions are based on the relevant categories that evolved from data analysis (see 2.2.4, Appendix 8). Evidence used to support the study findings is *italicised* for easier identification.

#### **4.1 Changes to group process due to introduction of self-managing teams**

One of the research questions was how the group processes of decision-making, team communication and team behaviour are impacted by attempts to introduce and establish self-management in a team. This section discusses the findings related to this question in three parts, around the core constructs (see 1.1) of decision-making, team communication and team behaviour.

##### **4.1.1 Decision-making**

This section details the impact on decision-making process due to the introduction of the self-managing team and is based on the data category of "decision-making process" (see Appendix 8). Analysis of data under this category yielded three areas impacted by the change i.e. alternative generation and evaluation, decision-making responsibility and accountability, aligning decisions to market and commercial necessities. Findings in each of these areas are described in the subsequent paragraphs.

###### **4.1.1.1 Alternative generation and evaluation**

Decisions can be improved by generation and evaluation of alternatives (see 3.6.4) and collaborative interaction process between the team members (see 3.3.2). In the initial stages of the change, I observed that team members were trying to resolve problems



using existing organisational processes, systems and their thinking. Hence their decisions had reactive quality as they were based on previous experience and common sense. Also, I noticed a general tendency to avoid problems that arose due to revised responsibilities (see 2.1.1) by refusing to recognise them or submit them to public discussion. These led to problems being handled either through short term fixes or asking other team members to help by banking on personnel relations. I observed that decisions were taken from a purely operational task perspective, and hence the quality of decisions by the team could be improved by understanding the what/why dimensions of decision making (see 3.3.1). The quality of the decision taking during the initial stage of the change program was also undermined due to lack of alternative generation and evaluation. A minor attempt was seen to generate alternatives and analyse them, which indicated a lack of collaborative approach (see 3.3.4). Also, the team members lacked knowledge about assessing risks associated with decisions and capability to analyse and mitigate them. Below is a typical incident of this situation, recorded in my research diary:-

*"Today there was a discussion with MEP project manager (MEPM) on the way forward for executing fire protection for a 410 KVA transformer. This is a critical project and fire protection of transformer with such a rating is attempted for the first time not only by us but in Oman also. I asked MEPM about a crucial design and asked who will be doing this for us. He replied that this would be done by a sub-contractor. On enquiring has he identified any other company or freelancer should this company fail to do the work, he replied in the negative. He responded to me that "such thoughts never crossed my mind that this company will fail in their job". "*

I observed that before change program, thinking about failures and developing alternative plan was done by me and senior members. Since implementing change, the team needed support to initiate this planning and prepare for contingencies. The inability of members to consider failure scenarios may be due to untested or optimistic belief that the action plan devised will work smoothly without any failure. I judged that inexperience of team members in handling uncertain situations and managing failures contributed to the deficiency in contingency planning. Thus I observed that introduction of the self-managed team did not result in the team taking initiative or developing the capability for management decisions involving anticipating and planning for failures. This inability made me realise that intervention that disrupts existing habits of team members and



improving their capability for devising alternative plans or envisioning scenarios of failure is required to enable development of self-management capacity. Change as it progressed achieved successes in this aspect *such as one project engineer proposing three solutions for a site safety problem.*

#### **4.1.1.2 Decision-making responsibility and accountability**

Progress into the change program highlighted difficulties in assigning responsibility for team decisions and performance lapses. I observed that initial progress in change with the help of responsibility matrix (see 2.1.1 and Appendix 6) was not bringing clarity on accountability for decisions as planned, as team members were not clear about who will initiate and lead the decision-making process. I also noticed that these confusions on responsibility were causing work slippages and cost overruns due to delayed decision making. I conducted discussions with various team members to ascertain the nature and cause for these ambiguities related to responsibility in decision making. During interactions with team members, I observed that they were more worried about changes to their roles and responsibilities and how to fulfil them. Below is a typical situation I recorded in my diary where one team member came to me when unable to take a decision on an issue where significant budget overrun was present:-

*Today Project division head (PDH), called me and informed me about the need to place an order for procurement of cables related to the project with ORPIC. As per change program, the decision on procurement is PDH's responsibility as he handles the budget as project leader. However, he has consulted me because there is close to 100% overrun in this item from the budget and he is unable to take a decision.*

From interactions, I inferred members fear about not having necessary skills to carry out the revised job profile and its impact on the public image, thus leading to ambivalence (Piderit, 2000). This anxiety was frequently raised during the discussions that led me to provide clarity on the management support/effort available for developing their skills and tolerance for non-performance in their new roles and responsibilities. At the time of responsibility matrix preparation i.e. during change design, most tasks in the matrix were being done by top management with input from division heads resulting in non-utilisation of knowledge, experience and resulting insight of the main team members in the divisions. Though the tasks in the matrix can be argued as a traditional delegation



regarding the intent, the approach was different due to change values of participation, development of team member and decision freedom accorded to the team. From the interaction with participants, I assessed that failure to assimilate these values might be partly responsible for participants inability to adequately undertake the revised responsibility.

My observations about the lack of clarity on the group decision process highlighted the need for modifying the responsibility matrix. It may be noted that tasks in the responsibility matrix were broadly modelled along the operational and strategic objectives identified in Table-2.2 with decisions taken at the personal level, sub-group level and unit level (Molleman, 2000). Responsibility matrix contained decisions related to transactions affecting external parties such as suppliers, competitors and clients as well as internal entities such as group members, inter-unit dealings and interactions with top management. This initial responsibility matrix was modified to resolve the ambiguity in roles by specifying the decision process i.e. consensus, designated leader or majority ( see Appendix 6). Responsibility for performance of the task was assigned directly to the individual or the immediate group taking decisions. Monitoring of personal and group performance as well as taking strategic decisions was allotted to the team as a whole. I observed that the modified matrix incorporating these changes (see Appendix 6) shifted organisation towards a result based structure and diffused decision making from top management to the team, as evident from a below record of my discussion with a division head:-.

*We had quoted for a major project job to Jindal Steels for which a competitive price was provided followed by series of discussions. Projects division head (PDH) was not favouring increasing the price from previous job levels. Usually, PDH leaves it to me to take such strategic decisions. I enquired with PDH whether this was his personal decision or he has discussed with his team. He replied that it was a team decision after analysing the cost. I was happy to see success in the change program as divisions are now confident to take strategic decisions. This accomplishment gave me confidence in the success of the change program.*

The success of such nature also improved the optimism of other stakeholders (board members, support staff) in the change program.



#### 4.1.1.3 Aligning decisions to market and commercial necessities

I noticed that decisions taken initially by the team were focussed on achieving short-term results and did not incorporate broad organisational objectives or market realities. On inquiry, I noticed that low awareness of corporate values and a lack of consensus on the priority to be accorded to these values over task accomplishment was a contributing factor. This outlook consequently created tensions between stakeholders. The following incidence observed by me describes these tensions:-

*I had taken the initiative to start supplies of consumables from a company based in India (IBC) to increase our pricing competitiveness and ensuring better quality. I requested the team to initiate procurement and establish a business relationship by placing orders for key items in small quantities. This approach will reduce our risk if the quality is not good. I noticed that order to IBC was not getting placed. On inquiry, procurement engineer (PE) informed me that IBC did not agree to small quantities as they negotiated for lower unit rate with manufacturers by assuring large volumes. I promptly informed PE that for the first order, we could place the order at a higher unit rate to compensate for reduced volume. Once the quality is established, we can order significant quantity to take advantage of lower rates. However, PE was forcing IBC to cut rates to match other quotes. Though PE's approach was affecting long-term cost competitiveness, I did not interfere in that decision making.*

Actions or lapses seen as critical at the corporate level were not viewed similarly by the divisional team, thereby creating frustration in the top management team and shareholders. Similar conflicts arose when the concern of the clients was not aligned with that of the division. The following incident recorded in my journal provides evidence to these tensions:-

*Today one of our client, M/s Vanderlande, Denmark who is executing the Muscat airport job called and informed of the delay in delivery of structural steel sections. Prompt completion of this job with good quality is crucial for us to gain good image in front of Client as a reliable vendor. This is because based on this performance; the client is considering giving big value jobs to us. This importance was also communicated to projects division head (PDH). On inquiry with PDH, I understood that he is not giving priority to this job as the*





*value is small. This incident highlighted the tensions in reconciling client expectations to priorities of the division.*

Despite these tensions to top management, I as change agent allowed division teams to follow their priorities to show commitment to the change program. On reflection, I observed that this was more because I had trust on the division heads due to the long association with them and confidence about their capabilities rather than the evolving team decision process. This assessment provided the insight that trust between top management and the team is an important enabling factor for self-managing team development and to function without interference from top management.

Team members were seen focussing on client satisfaction and task completion only, being unaware of the financial implications of their actions. Commercial concerns of the organisation were accorded low priority. I observed one evidence of this attitude *from the delay in preparing variation requests. In any job, there will be changes sought by the client. Raising and approving this variation request from the client is important to realise the related payment. If these are not done promptly, payment will not be obtained or delayed, since it is not covered under the initial purchase order. This lapse will affect cash flow.* My inquiry revealed that knowledge of cash flow management and costing might help participants to factor commercial considerations in decision making and give priority to actions that maximise financial contribution. Management interventions to provide this knowledge were required to entrench commercial focus in the decision-making process. My inquiry surfaced a hidden team assumption by the participants that top management would always align with the concerns of the client. It was seen that participants were sometimes placing more importance on internal relationships rather than customer satisfaction during decision-making, *as observed in delay of job delivery to an important client due to reluctance to put pressure on purchase department for paint delivery.* Decisions made by the teams were also seen lacking in the absence of impact from the external environment and probability of success – as seen in this instance noted by me. *Project proposal engineer (PPE) was estimating cost for installation of a big signage for an industrial client. However, PPE was not aware that said client was in financial trouble. Hence based on market information available, there was a low probability that this job would be implemented. Also if implemented, the winning bidder*



*will have problems in realising payment from the client. PPE did not factor this analysis in his decision to bid.*

#### **4.1.1.4 Summary**

It was observed that as the change progressed, team members became proactive and independent in decision making. This accomplishment was evident from reduced management support for problem-solving and improvement in decision-making quality through the development of alternative solutions. Thinking through alternative solutions helped team members to become more acquainted with the facts of the problem and hence increase the confidence of team members for solving it. Study findings highlight the need for making team members aware of commercial and management aspects of decision making.

#### **4.1.2 Team communication**

Team self-management affected several aspects of organisational communication, notably the four areas of communication with external entities, internal communication for coordination, inter-division interactions and interface with top management. Findings in each of these aspects are described in the subsequent paragraphs. Study results in these areas are from the data category of "interactions".

##### **4.1.2.1 Communication with external entities**

I noticed that team members faced problems when interacting with external entities such as clients and vendors as well as recognising opportunities in the market. One of my observations was the participants' lack of awareness about the background information for networking with important external stakeholders such as clients. The following incidence observed by me serves as an example:

*One objective of the change process was to internalise obtaining client approval of engineering drawing for jobs by the project division team. I noticed a delay in drawing approval for a particular job and took up the issue with workshop manager (WM). On discussion, I understood that WM had approached client formally through letters and e-mail. WM lacked understanding of the complete approval process by the client and related parties. I explained to WM that client provided approval only after review and acceptance by their engineering*



*consultant. Once the client receives our drawings, it will be forwarded to this consultant who may not provide the same urgency to the process as required by us or even that of the client, as they are located in another office and have their scheduling system. Also, WM did not know anybody from the consultant office, as previously this approval was handled outside the team.*

This learning created awareness in me on the need to provide information about the networking required to get the job done. This involved providing team members with contact details, the nature of the relationship and context of the existing relationship with the stakeholder by top management. It is my learning through experience that most of the jobs result through repeat orders from existing clients. Hence maintaining good relations with existing clients are crucial for business continuity. When delegating these client relationships to the team, it is crucial that the new team take ownership to meet the customer's expectations and invest time/ interest to maintain it or at least not degrade it. This insight and the corresponding sensitivity to retaining existing customers was communicated to the team by me through constant discussion and follow-up. I noticed in some cases that team members did not have the confidence to interact with the top management of important clients *as evidenced by request to me from Project Division head (PDH) to attend a meeting with GM of an important client. Before the change, such top level meetings were attended by me. PDH was worried whether he could satisfactorily answer client without damaging image and relationship.* Request for top management presence in crucial client meetings may be due to the absence of the experience of these team members for such meetings. This inference made me realise that team members need training and experience to make them self-managing in maintaining client relations. I also avoided the pressures from the clients as well as top management to attend such meetings to develop team capability. However, refraining from attending such important client meetings created tensions for me from top management. This request for top management presence gradually reduced as the team the developed ability to handle top level client interactions.

I judged the need for team members to increase their interactions with the client and improve the quality of interactions for developing deeper trust and greater dependence (see 3.3.2). I observed that team members were relying only on formal methods for client communication, which was preventing them from understanding client urgency or



alternatives available to them. On enquiry, I found that participants had not considered having informal discussions with clients, making them unable to provide offers that meet client expectations, which had consequences for maximising revenue contribution, as the following instance illustrates:-

*MEP division was supporting our group company in Abu Dhabi for an offer to Drake and Scull. The client was considering engaging us as an erection contractor and evaluating us for suitability as they are having engineering problems related to installation. MEP Manager (MEPM) was interacting with Client and trying to offer solutions in the hope of getting qualified to do the erection work. In this critical situation, manager of the group company in Abu Dhabi tried to postpone a crucial meeting with client citing his unavailability. On enquiring whether he had checked with the client and asked their opinion before asking for a postponement, he replied in the negative. When I enquired, the client informed that meeting cannot be postponed as their equipment supplier representative was coming from Germany.*

I advocated and encouraged informal communications with clients to team members, as it can help to improve client relations based on my experience. Another approach advocated by me to improve client interaction quality was by encouraging communication using clients' language and phrases. Information on this could be obtained through client websites, written communication as well as during verbal interaction with client employees.

I noticed that team members were failing to communicate with external entities in the standard that is expected of their new roles and responsibilities. Poor quality of these important external communications due to lack of standard affected the image of the organisation and relationships with external stakeholders as noted from below incident:-.

*I received an agitated call from the senior person of a consortium partner in one of our projects. We had an on-going issue with this consortium partner regarding guarantees for payment related to the project. Our finance person (FP) had written a letter to consortium partner following up on the matter. However, the language structure used by FP created misunderstanding about our intention to pay. Previously such communication was vetted by top management.*



I also observed that participants were not aware of the impact of various modes of communication. *For example, some participants were assuming that an e-mail communication is as effective as a face to face meeting.* Such observations invalidated my initial assumption that all team members would be effective communicators and highlighted the need for training. I also noticed that participants were considering only the existing capability, resource constraints while presenting company capabilities to potential clients. They were unaware of the potential capabilities possible from collaborations and market knowledge of the top management. This innocence was adversely impacting the interface with external parties and exploiting opportunities in the market. Training and briefings were imparted to overcome these communication lapses with external entities, which improved team capability as evident from existing good client relations and lack of distress calls from them to me.

#### **4.1.2.2 Internal communication for coordination**

I noticed that in the initial stages of the change, communication and co-ordination required for fulfilling the new responsibilities as per responsibility matrix was not happening between various departments. The revised responsibility matrix and decision-making authority created issues in communication and data dissemination as change program disrupted the existing communication channels. The incident below is typical of such problems faced:-

*Today project manager (PM) of Asian Paints project called to complain about issues affecting site progress. This grievance created a delicate situation for me. Previously PM used to report directly to me. Now due to re-organisation for self-management, he is reporting to project division head (PDH). Now the question was whether to involve me or not? If I intervene and take up this issue with PDH, I would be diluting his authority and putting to doubt my commitment to self-managing teams in front of him. If I do not bring this to the attention to PDH, progress will suffer. Here I asked PM to communicate directly to PDH.*

Lack of clarity in communication channels as highlighted above brought out the need to specify clear communication channels based on authority to prevent conflicts. This lack of clarity in communication channels was decreasing efficiency and increasing the cost of operations was evident during the performance review of on-going jobs. This phenomenon is consistent with the prediction of reduction in productivity in the initial stages of a change introduction by existing literature (see 3.2). Team interactions were



also seen to be affected by participant perception of ignorance in others to execute their job or ability to understand the issues. This acumen made me realise that team members need to be made aware of this assumption and encourage them to test the same to enhance open communication, which is essential for the development of self-managed teams (see 3.2, 3.3.2). This awareness was provided by me through feedback when instances of such presumptions about ignorance in others were observed.

I noticed that as the change was underway, responsibilities was getting shifted to lower levels leading to increased local interactions. However, this did not always result in the emergence of intelligent information exchange as interactions did not persistently contain relevant data. As a result, team performance was seen becoming vulnerable to the quality of internal communications. One example of this communication lapse was that team members were not communicating comprehensive information to relevant stakeholders at all levels, including the context of the situation. *For instance, when project engineer (PE) was giving instructions to despatch the materials from workshop to work site, priority and importance of various items were not provided to the material controller, leading to low priority materials reaching first.* Another reason assessed by me for the communication gap and resulting performance lapses was that the priorities were not framed by the team based on proper planning and then communicated to functional groups so that production and financial turnover targets were met. I found through discussion with participants that such communication gaps in team interactions resulted from the lack of experience or ignorance of the team members. This learning made me realise that team members need assistance for developing capabilities in prioritising the works based on techno-commercial requirements and communicating the same to relevant stakeholders promptly. I had assumed that understanding of responsibility matrix would automatically make team members aware of the communication requirements. I augmented the ability of the team to frame priorities based on cash flow and profitability concerns by providing related knowledge.

I observed that personal qualities of participants affected interpersonal relations and thereby communication between team members. I noticed that some members were emotionally immature in their interactions- maybe due to judgements without assessing the validity of their assumptions by asking clarifying questions. This miscommunication resulted in misinterpretation of other person intentions and interactions leading to





unproductive and demotivating atmosphere. I did not foresee such incidences. An incident narrated below will help to understand the situation:-

*"Today in the office I overheard project proposal manager (PPM) having heated conversation. He became extremely agitated and started shouting at the person on the other end of the line. He concluded the conversation with "I do not want ever to talk to you again. It is beneath my dignity to interact with you". By this, it was evident that the talk was inconclusive. Though my tendency was to intervene immediately, I decided to postpone talking to PPM after some time so that his emotions were settled. Later when this issue was encountered, PPM informed that he was talking to a draughtsman. He got agitated because the draughtsman did not report to the new client location despite being giving instruction. PPM came under tension as the client was following up on him, and he took out this pressure subsequently on the draughtsman. I asked PPM why the draughtsman refused to report for the new assignment, for which he had no answer or even had given a thought to this issue. He assumed that draughtsman's intention was not in line with the interest of the company, and he needs to be disciplined. I asked him to challenge this and find out from the draughtsman why he did not report as instructed. On enquiry, it was revealed that the draughtsman was not confident in doing structural drawings, as his specialisation was in piping and electrical. He thus did not want to leave the current work, which is earning good revenue for the company. He had found a freelancer who could do this for us, thereby preventing disruption of his existing work. I told PPM that our prejudices prevent us from seeing reality and make hasty conclusions. I also asked PPM what he meant by "it is beneath my dignity" to interact with draughtsman. He apologised and said that it was expressed in the heat of the moment. I told PPM that he is a senior person in the company, and such outburst will hurt his image and future effectiveness."*

Such interactions without emotional maturity among participants led to problems, as subordinates were not accustomed to or accepting of such interactions. Individuals having self-centred personality were also seen adversely affecting the team bonding and team atmosphere. *For example, workshop manager (WM) was not trusting any of the subordinates and micromanaged the work. Due to this lack of trusting nature, he was reluctant to delegate responsibilities. Communication with his subordinates was affected*





by his behaviour. I noticed that such people were reluctant in getting trained for social skills. Some team interactions were noticed by me to be tainted with the objective of sensationalising issues as from below incident recorded by me:-

*"Today MEP division head (MDH) approached me for a payment issue with a supplier related to UEP job. I remembered that this payment arrangement was made through the bank and called purchasing department for clarification. It turned out that payment was progressing as planned and there was a communication gap. This incident shows that communication channels are still lacking clarity. Sensationalising this issue without checking the facts also indicates that intra-team communication was not fully in the spirit of cooperation".*

I noticed that personal characteristics were having a significant influence on how a team member can cope with increased quantity and quality of interactions needed to execute the work. *For example, during a workshop conducted by me to develop mutual trust and enable open team communication, I observed that workshop manager (WM) and document controller (DC) were not getting involved in the exercises, in contrast to others who were excited by the new knowledge. It was clear that WM and DC were uncomfortable to communicate in team settings. If this inability to cope with team interactions cannot be rectified through training and group exercises, such individual's continued membership would become problematic. Such instances present an ethical dilemma as the change program aimed at improvement and not redundancy. If such members have significant functional expertise that makes them valuable, then balancing their membership with self-management development became a puzzle. I noticed that some of the key members were trying to control communication, which may be viewed as protecting the turf and looking good in front of others. For example, I noticed that one division head (DH) put in an emergency request for procurement of cables for a refinery project. On my enquiry about the non-budgeted and emergency purchase, DH informed that his team did not inform him of this revised requirement, as it was originally not planned. Team engineer (TE) did not want to comprise his image in front of DH, and ultimately knowledge of this requirement was known to DH during the client meeting. Also, these team members seemed to be unaware of the power of open communication and power of local interactions as espoused by complexity theory (Stacey, 2011). This understanding brought out the importance of generating trust in team relationships so that*



people can learn to be vulnerable to their ignorance and consequently creating a learning atmosphere. I noticed that as the change progressed, information exchange was getting decentralised resulting in decisions made by consensus *as seen from collective decisions about supplier payments.*

#### 4.1.2.3 Inter-division interactions

I observed that issues in inter-division communications contributed to performance slippages of the self-managed team. Among these issues, I judged that inter-division interactions relating to resource utilisation were a major contributing factor. An incident narrated below shows the conflicts that arise in resource sharing due to differences in thinking of related participants:-

*"Today one MEP project manager (MPM) was complaining about workshop manager (WM) not providing some resources for his work in Asian paint project. From my perspective, WM could have provided the resources as workshop is not fully occupied. On enquiring with WM, he does not want to disturb his team from the workshop. Providing them to MPM means his workers will travel to a nearby project site and be part of another team. This can influence their thinking and attitude which WM wants to avoid."*

The presence of these conflicts highlighted the need for developing a co-operative culture that may prevent or handle frictions that can arise when allocating resources without the intervention of top management. This advancement required establishing protocol and etiquette for sharing information on resources and need to respond to requests by other divisions truthfully. Another contentious issue was related to the nature of resources which could be shared (personnel, facility, equipment), as divisions were seen reluctant to share key staff and dominant equipment. I also noticed teams were not sharing resources citing that it will affect the performance of their division. This reluctance was overcome by establishing inter-division rent rate for resources supplied, which enabled both divisions to calculate the economic benefit. Another aspect observed by me was the non-commitment shown by the respective division leadership during inter-division conflicts. General tendency seen is to withdraw completely from such conflicts and handover related interactions to human resource or top management. *For example, there was an altercation between project engineers of two divisions. Both the concerned division heads absolved from investigating and disciplining the team members, as it*



*involved team member from other division also and requested HR to handle the issue.* Hence resource allocation and conflict resolution between divisions were observed as an issue affecting relations and interactions between divisions.

#### **4.1.2.4 Interface with top management.**

Due to the reassignment of responsibilities, I noticed that there was a lack of information with top management about operational problems unless the divisional team flagged it or provided as a complaint by clients. Team members were seen reluctant to pass on performance issues to the higher level due to fear of upsetting team member relationships as well as jeopardising job security of fellow team member resulting in complaints from clients reaching top management first. This information lapse created embarrassing situations for top management as they could not adequately reply to the client due to lack of background information. When there is a dysfunction in the team, I noticed that team members were reluctant to approach higher management for guidance to resolve critical issues that have an impact on customer satisfaction. I learned that this was due to the apprehension of how their actions will be perceived by the team as well as by top management. I noticed that when planning workload, more importance was accorded to maintaining relations between team members than achieving client satisfaction. My discussion with team members revealed their thinking that client relation was the responsibility of senior managers and any issues arising at division level would be mitigated by top management. This assumption was brought to the awareness of the team members through discussions. Team members' lack of awareness of corporate objectives and values (see 4.1.1.3) could be partially blamed on me for inadequate communication. I, in my role as CEO, may be part of the problem as my secretiveness about the strategic intents of the company due to the fear of competition could have hindered this communication. This concern for secrecy needs to be balanced when the strategic intention is shared with division team members. There is a contradiction in this concern, as change program envisages strategic intentions to be decided more by team members as they become capable.

#### **4.1.2.5 Summary**

I noticed towards the end of the study that while functional groups within divisions developed independence for task execution as per revised responsibilities, there is scope for improvement in the interface between them. The presence of this lack of seamless



interactions between various groups – both internal and external to the team - is hampering the integration of the team. The communications to make decisions and evaluating results as per the revised responsibility matrix (see Appendix 6) was seen resulting in the improved relation between team members, as it allowed them to appreciate the strength and weakness of each member. This evaluation was also enabling identification of team members' deficiencies and recognition of capable and willing team members.

#### **4.1.3 Team behaviour**

My observations and understanding related to the behaviour i.e. manners and actions by the team members to work together as a team are detailed in this section. This knowledge contains elements related to data categories of "teaming process", "task accomplishment" "performance" and "self-management" that evolved from the data analysis. Data analysis provided themes related to the impact of team behaviour on the dealings i.e. relations and transactions within and without the team boundary. Based on this, description of these study findings is structured as behaviours impacting dealings that transcend team boundary and behaviours influencing dealings within team boundary.

##### **4.1.3.1 Behaviours impacting dealings that transcend team boundary**

I observed that in the initial stages most team members collectively aimed at sequential steps for actions, instead of concurrent working required to fulfil their responsibilities, leading to slippages *as evident from the case of tender pricing preparation where they waited for all inputs before starting pricing estimation. This behaviour delayed the assessment of the tender pricing for competitiveness and taking the required bid bonds. This delay could have been avoided by preparation of an initial pricing estimate with guestimates.* I recognised the need for making available thumb rules to lower level team members from observing various instances *such as team members not able to assess the commercial offerings to the client quickly.* I noticed that the culture of constant follow-up with relevant stakeholders that is required to obtain result needed to be instilled in the team members. Below incident attested to this fact:-

*"Today another embarrassing incident occurred due to lack of communication and follow-up. While discussing bank issues with MD, finance manager informed that some payment was not made to suppliers by the bank, as the*



*facilities enhancement were not approved. Though the responsibility of negotiating bank facilities is still with the finance department, monitoring of cash flow was delegated to the divisional teams. If the divisional team had followed up on their cash flow and supplier payment related issues, such situation could have avoided."*

My discussions with participants revealed that they had a simplistic way of looking at their revised work content *as evident in a major client bid prepared by a proposal engineer without considering the client profile and competition concerns*. On enquiry, I understood that team members were not preparing collectively for client meetings. Team members were also not able to anticipate the motivation of various external stakeholders and how it affected plans devised by the team *as evident from the lack of response to related questions during preparations for client meetings*. I found that team members were found lacking the capability to make effective use of management reports and identify points of concerns, possibly due to lack of experience. Ability to select relevant information from a flood of information was found lacking *as is evident from MEP division recommending recruitment strategy based on rumours about Government policy*.

Team members were not aware of how their actions could support or undermine the long-term efforts of the organisation to develop and sustain motivation and loyalty of the workforce. Team members were also seen to be hesitant to bring out organisational issues external to their division affecting their performance for fear of damaging relations with relevant stakeholders. *This reluctance was noted by me because they were less critical of the lapses by external parties when publically assessing performance slippages while they tend to be very strict about lapses within the team*. However, paradoxically, I noticed that team members in internal meetings were defensive about the root causes of performance lapses and tried to attribute causation to external members of the team. *An example is when the discussion was initiated with projects division to assess the performance slippages; division head tried to make corporate finance and procurement responsible*. I observed that in the initial stages of change, team members were focusing on formal aspects of the process for task accomplishment, which impacted engagement with outside entities. I assessed that they were unaware of the informal aspects required for getting the job done and hence were not able to take actions in this line. I inferred that this might be due to ignorance about the tacit knowledge involved. This disregard was



seen to significantly affect their effectiveness in their new roles, *for example in getting timely approvals from clients*. Team members were also seen to be basing their actions and decisions on immediate operational needs and short terms results, with little regard for overall corporate or divisional goals. *For example, the proposal engineer did not quote for a job to an important client citing lack of time. This oversight can damage the relationship with the client and prevent repeat orders from them.*

I observed that personal qualities of team members affected the team co-ordination with external entities. Objective thinking of team members required for effective working seemed to be hampered by influences of emotions and personal relations of the team members. *One such instance was seen in the discussion relating to transferring supplier expediting responsibility to teams. Workshop manager was defensive about taking this responsibility on his team due to a bad relationship with a procurement engineer. This attitude was seen inhibiting the development of team level identity (see 3.3). However, I could observe advancement in the development of team identity as change progressed. For example, toward the end of the study, I noticed project division team independently interacting with our consortium partner for a critical project. Previously they expected the leadership of top management for these interactions as they felt it a company project. From my discussions, I could see that they now consider this as a job of the project division.* Another aspect I observed was that some team members with the major responsibilities were trying to control other member's interaction with outside agencies, as they were not confident about team's ability for professional interactions. As change progressed, I observed this effect getting reduced, as values and culture of self-managing team enhanced participation and cooperation of team members. *For example, an Omani lady project engineer (PE) made a presentation of our capabilities to a major company, who was a potential client. She took the initiative for the presentation and conducted the presentation successfully, which helped us to demonstrate company's commitment to localisation. She was actively encouraged and assisted by proposal engineer and project engineer for presentation preparations.*

#### **4.1.3.2 Behaviours influencing dealings within team boundary**

In the initial stages of the change, I observed that team members tended to cover up issues that arose from changes in the work process, due to the fear of damaging relations with fellow team members. This attitude was preventing surfacing of problems for public





review and development of the system. Below is a typical example of such situations recorded in my journal:-

*"Today project division head (PDH) visited the office for a discussion on on-going projects. He was mentioning that material prices considered during bidding were not adequate, and there was a cost overrun due to this. I asked whether he had taken up with the proposal team regarding this, which was replied in the negative. On enquiring the reasons for this, he informed me that he did not want to upset proposal team. I advised him that if feedback is not provided, proposal team will repeat the same mistake in a future proposal. If proposal department could defend logically, then operations need to correct their approach. The organisation stands to gain either way. PDH was still reluctant to take up the issue."*

Even towards the end of the study, some team members were unwilling to discuss publically the non-performance of fellow team members, which is necessary for maturation by reducing ignorance, confusion and uncertainty (Willmott, 1994). In the initial stages of change implementation, I observed some team members seeking clarifications on their work scope as per responsibility matrix with the aim of limiting responsibilities. *A typical example was about preparing cash flow by divisional teams. As the complexity of the effort and knowledge became known, teams tried limiting their liability for providing information to finance department.*

Team members are backing up tasks (see 3.4.1) not related to their areas of responsibility based on personnel requests from other team members. This behaviour was widely prevalent as I observed this on numerous occasions. I diagnosed through discussions that team members are indulging in backup behaviour, for the sake of maintaining personal relations *like undertaking vendor certification by document controller, which is the job of the project engineer.* This conduct highlighted the need for team members to be more assertive in handling backup requests and direct it to the right person as per responsibility matrix. Backup behaviour was also observed if team member's performance was affecting team relation with critical stakeholders. In such instances backup was provided with an intention to make member independent in task accomplishment as noticed in below incident: -

*I had a discussion with project proposal engineer (PPE), about the various shortfalls in performance related to fabrication jobs. He mentioned that one*





*project engineer (PE), is not good at corresponding with the client due to his deficiency in writing skills. He said that all letters drafted by PE are reviewed by him before being sent to the client. He said that he had started this with structural fabrication work in the airport job for M/s Vanderlande. I noticed that PPE is trying to develop the skills of PE, rather than taking over his work.*

I observed that change program initially compromised the efficiency of functional departments as dispersed team members coordinated their functions. *For example, timely renewal of fuel cards was not occurring and frequent cash purchase of fuel was noticed. Before change implementation, fuel card renewal was done by accounts department. After the change implementation, this was handled by divisions, which required coordination between project engineers, site team and purchase engineer. Team members did not handle this coordination for timely renewal, which precipitated my intervention.* I noticed that team members lacked the habit of making a persistent effort for changing process aspects that are not effective, as they got easily discouraged. *For example, I noticed that one accountant was reluctant to approach bank officials to make them accept the scanned copy of documents rather than originals so that transaction time could be reduced. He was unwilling to approach the bank officials as they had declined his request before. I told him to approach the official citing our reasons for the request and providing assurance that original documents would be submitted within committed time.* Team members collectively lacked systems thinking and the understanding regarding how their actions affected overall company objectives. *For instance, it was decided that jobs related to fabrication would be segregated from projects. This bifurcation was needed as turnover under fabrication had grown and needed separate focus, though it would still be under projects division. However, reluctance was noticed in project division head to document fabrication jobs separately as it involved additional documentation.*

Participants were seen to be expecting immediate perfection in the new roles and responsibilities of other members. I noticed a lack of understanding and appreciation of the fact that people take their time to grow into new roles/responsibilities and mistakes, slip-ups are inevitable. Further enquiry into this brought to my attention that team members lacked empathy as advocated by (Shotter, 2006) to develop trusting and co-operative interactions that are needed to develop autonomy in task execution. *For*



example, workshop manager was finding it difficult to take subordinate feedback as he is used to directive leadership. However, I observed that emphasis on performance and independence for developing self-management capability was improving relations between team members by removing misunderstandings and prejudices as noted below in my diary towards the middle of the study:-

*"Today one project engineer (PE), came to head office. I asked him about the progress of the work and improvement in capabilities of the company. Previously he was reporting to me. However, due to change program restructuring, he is now reporting to project division head (PDH). Previously PDH was critical of PE due to the feedback. I had tried to change this perception, but PDH was very reluctance to accept my opinion on PE. Also, some of the supervisors perceived as close to PE created problems for PDH in the initial stages compounding misunderstanding. I asked PE about the current status of his relationship with PDH and to my surprise he informed me that PDH is appreciating him better and taking note of his efforts for delivery team results. From the conversation, I could see that PDH is more aware of PE's capability and hence entrusting him with more responsibilities. Thus, I could see that change objectives are providing scope for team members to understand each other better and form trusting relationships".*

Continuous improvement requires identification of gaps in performance and its analysis. For this purpose when team members were challenged individually about non-performance by me, they were reluctant to accept mistakes and ignorance. I observed attempts to attribute the reason for non-performance to others, as can be seen from below example:-

*"Today I was following up with workshop manager (WM) on the delays in approval of drawings for Oxy, Oman job. Engineering drawing register for each job was also not prepared. Though document controller (DC) prepares the register, WM is not overseeing and controlling its updating properly. When questioned about his apparent lack of ability to produce results he replied that "I am putting all efforts to chase these people. It is not my fault that client or DC is not understanding the situation and co-operating". I asked WM to view the situation in an impersonal manner by going into the details of why timely drawing approvals and tracking is not happening and remove the roadblocks. I*



*could observe that there is reluctance in WM to accept mistakes and shortcomings as he is bothered more about maintaining his image of competence and control than about resolving the workplace problems and being effective. To achieve this, he is attributing the reasons for non-performance on others. This attitude can be due to lack of critical self-assessment of his capabilities and effort to improve these shortcomings. WM may also have difficulty in understanding the work process of others (such as drawing register preparation) to guide DC actively. It may be noted that these responsibilities are new to WM as part of the self-managed team development."*

I noticed that change program brought to light the non-performance of team members, related mainly to client interaction and satisfaction, to public knowledge faster. Self-management development was seen leading to a more realistic assessment of a team member's capability by others, removing any influence of personal relations and sole focus on results produced by team members. Change program resulted in the delegation of responsibilities to lower levels. As a consequence of this, I noticed that some team members became stressed with the new responsibilities and exhibited emotional reactions. One of the reasons that I observed leading to stress was the inability of some team members to delegate responsibility. This shortcoming led members to bypass the organisation levels and undertaking additional workload. *For example, I noticed that workshop manager (WM) did not delegate responsibility as planned in the responsibility matrix. This inability resulted in WM bypassing the supervisory level and directly controlling the workforce. Due to this WM got overloaded with supervisory functions and his performance lagged.* I also noticed that change towards self-managed team was bringing friction to relationships between some team members *as evidenced in the scuffle between two project engineers while discussing a workplace issue.* After discussion with concerned members in these incidents, I judged that some team members did not have the emotional maturity to engage with others in a professional manner while maintaining respect and dignity in relationships. I did not anticipate this shortcoming during change design. This learning made me realise that while delegating responsibilities to members of a self-managed team, their emotional maturity needs to be assessed. These team members needed help in the initial stages to manage these stressful situations and learn from them instead of shutting off (Rigg and Trehan, 2004). The exit of a team member created doubts and uncertainties in team members about the effectiveness of the team



process as noted in the concerns surrounding workshop manager's exit. This vacillation highlighted the need for managing perceptions due to employee turnover and its consequence including sensing the need for clarification, developing a narrative about the member's departure that prevents disruptive counter-narratives.

#### **4.1.3.3 Summary**

The initial team behaviour during the change was influenced by the lack of social skills, knowledge and experience of the participants. This inexperience resulted in unfamiliar emotions and insecurities among the participants, which some of them could not manage. The team members also lacked the ability to understand the complete process which prevented them from understanding the interrelations in the workflow process for enabling control. These aspects contributed to production slippages, unpleasant behaviour in the initial stages and even resulted in the turnover of some participants. However as change progressed, collaborative activities could be observed taking place indicating improved relations and entrenchment of delegated responsibilities. This provided confidence the change progress was progressing towards desired end states (see 2.1.1).

#### **4.2 Management interventions that facilitate self-management in teams**

Management interventions that enhance self-management in teams and manage problems that arise during change implementation was another research question in this study. The issues observed during change progress prompted my efforts in the capacity as a change agent to moderate and facilitate them through management interventions to enhance team self-management. These interventions were informed by the existing literature (see 3.6), my experience and knowledge from discussion with team members. A summary of these interventions is provided in Table 4.1. Details of these interventions, observations and accompanying reflections for the study period provided data to analyse and understand the type and nature of management interventions necessitated while developing a self-managed team, which addressed the research question in the study. Details on the management interventions and findings on the key management interventions are elaborated subsequently in this section, which enables the reader to understand potential management interventions needed and its possible impact. The study findings are structured around the themes of performance monitoring, coaching, improving team decision-making, enhancing collaborative interactions, facilitating reflection and learning which are in alignment with existing knowledge (see 3.6.4).

**Table 4.1: Summary of management interventions deployed**

Sl. No	Details of management interventions
1	<b>Performance monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Assess participants ability to cope with uncertainties due to their new job responsibilities</li><li>b. Monitor team decisions for incorporation of commercial concerns, alignment with corporate goals</li><li>c. Monitoring performance slippages to deploy interventions.</li><li>d. Assessing team identity of team members through inquiry</li><li>e. Assess rewards for alignment with change values</li></ul>
2	<b>Coaching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Training to achieve competency in developing and maintaining the network with external entities</li><li>b. Training team members in brainstorming, role rehearsal for handling situations</li><li>c. Facilitating understanding of overall operations and process linkages</li><li>d. Develop capability of the team to manage ambiguous and critical situations</li><li>e. Coaching team members on delegation</li><li>f. Training on interpreting management reports</li></ul>
3	<b>Improve team decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Provide team members information on network and relationships</li><li>b. Develop team capability for alternative generation in decision-making</li><li>c. Educate team members for understanding cash flow and break-even costs</li><li>d. Support team to tackle performance slippages in routine operations</li><li>e. Guidance and support for handling critical situations and strategy decisions</li></ul>
4	<b>Enhancing collaborative interactions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Establish a process to ensure timely availability of information to participants</li><li>b. Educate team members about need and importance of informal communication</li><li>c. Develop capability to effectively interact with external entities</li><li>d. Inform external stakeholders about capacity and authority developed by team</li><li>e. Feedback on team interaction quality and inform management expectations</li></ul>
5	<b>Facilitate reflection and learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Facilitate open communication in team meetings to enable reflection</li></ul>



Sl. No	Details of management interventions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Generate discussion on critical events to develop double loop learning</li> <li>c. Point out prejudices and stereotyping in team member behaviour when noticed</li> <li>d. Improve capability of the team to assess environment by analysing and discussing past issues</li> <li>e. Support team member to critically assess personal beliefs that hinder learning</li> <li>f. Devise activities that generate learning and acquire tacit knowledge</li> <li>g. Develop and disseminate success narratives to reinforce change values, culture</li> </ul>

**4.2.1 Performance monitoring**

I noticed that revised responsibilities due to change program created confusions and performance slippages in participants (see 4.1.1.2). Based on insight from literature (see 3.5.2), participants ability to cope with uncertainties due to their new job responsibilities was assessed by me through direct discussions. Through these deliberations, I tried to understand their apprehension and confusions related to disposing their responsibility and taking decisions based on inadequate information. I noticed that slippages occurred when the time was a constraint or tacit knowledge due to experience was lacking. Some team members were also not able to critically evaluate their performance. *For example, while I was discussing performance failures with workshop manager (WM) he attributed the lack of cooperation from team members as a reason for slippages. WM was not willing to accept his inability to delegate and follow-up, despite me providing evidence.* Performance slippages due to team decisions were monitored by me to use it as a trigger for considering interventions and recognising that underlying issues provided a rich source of learning as noted by Brydon, Greenwood and Maguire (2003). I also monitored whether the collaborative decision-making was done as envisaged by the responsibility matrix i.e. consensus, majority, designated leader (see 3.2, 3.3.2). *For example, a team had provided an abnormally high price for a job to an important client due to a clerical error. The client was very upset on this, and I used this as a reason to intervene and evaluate the failure. The team could have avoided the mistake if the estimate was compared with available pricing norms and vetted by division head as per responsibility matrix.* Incidents in the change program highlighted need to monitor team decisions for alignment to corporate goals and incorporation of commercial concerns (see 4.1.1.3). This examination was achieved by periodically reviewing the decisions made by the divisional team and taking feedback from departments supporting the divisions. The





monitoring consisted of checking whether team decision had considered all market information and based on reliable data. It was noticed that team members were not proactive to gather market intelligence required for taking decisions in the initial stages. *For example, it was noticed during my review that one division head (DH) was planning to downsize business based on rumours about government restrictions on expatriate worker visa. Enquiry with our shareholders who are close to government sources revealed that this was not true.*

Recognition and correction of error produce learning (see 3.3.2). Hence I monitored dysfunctional developments and initiated moderating actions in consonance with team leadership. One of the dysfunctions noticed was the polarisation of workers around individual members of the team. *For example, during a visit to the workshop I had an informal discussion with the workforce. This interaction was to assess the impact of the change program in the workforce. During the communication, I noticed that workforce was splitting into groups affiliated to new individuals of power in the team for their needs. Some of these requirements were in direct contradiction to the team and organisation goals. For example, I noticed that some workers were trying to implement their incentive procedures through these new leaders, having failed previously in their tactics to pressurise divisional heads.* The polarisation of the workforce around individual leaders leading to dysfunctional results may be precipitated by a tendency to arrogate power by members without a value and ethical framework as per Kelly (1987). Interventions were initiated by me and implemented by the team for identifying workers who were using the leaders for their ends or subverting organisation goals and taking disciplinary action or formal control (Pieper, Klein and Jaskiewicz, 2008).

Another dysfunction noticed was indiscriminate use of formal power by some team members for taking decisions that are seen encroaching on the personal rights of workers to obtain work-related results. Following incident serves as evidence to this.

*One day there was a call from one of our foreman (FRM), who was handling the 32" and 24" pipeline for Galfar. He complained that he was not allowed to take food from the staff mess, which shocked me to the core. On asking, he informed that planning engineer (PPE) and project engineer (PE) had issued this instruction. I immediately reversed this decision and called project division head (PDH) to enquire about this situation. I learned that this decision*





*was taken by PPE & PE as a punishment for FRM not attending work. PDH also informed that this immature and inhuman decision was not taken with his knowledge and would take action to avoid the repeat of this in future.*

Such incidents show that some team members are not aware of the limits of their power. The goodwill generated through human resource efforts such as generous personal benefits, and flexible working was compromised by such callous and insensitive decisions by the team members. This damage was countermanded by me initiating development of policies in discussion with human resource department and divisional teams which clearly stated the limits of designated power and educating the concerned team members about the legal and moral consequences of their action.

Team identity is a major factor for developing team confidence (3.5.1), which in turn enhances the self-managing capability. Hence periodical inquiries were conducted by me on participants to assess their identity to the team. This was done by asking individual team members whether they primarily identified with their division or the company and the reasons for the same. I noticed that successes of the team, however small, reinforced team identity. *For example, I noticed that after change implementation, senior surveyor (SS) in MEP department was taking the lead to recruit surveyors to expand the survey team. Before the change, recruitment was considered corporate responsibility and done by human resource department. SS was encouraged by safety engineer who took the lead and successfully recruited safety officer in MEP department.* I noticed that voluntary turnover of team members created doubts about the team process in the participants (4.1.3.2) and hence threatened team identity. I formed a core group at the top management level to manage issues arising due to key personnel departure as proposed by Golden-Biddle and Rao (1997). This team monitored the narratives that surfaced during the departure of key persons and developed content for counter-narratives for dissemination by management. Team members were constantly followed up for preparing management reports so that it became a habit, based on the understanding that before accepting change and showing visible indication people relapse into old ways three to four times due to contemplation (Weick and Quinn, 1999). These follow-ups provided the learning that simple format and language increased the acceptance of the reports by team members.



#### 4.2.2 Coaching

Coaching endeavours to increase task skills and psychological development of individuals to improve work performance (Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie, 2008). This growth is achieved through actions involving training, mentoring and providing feedback (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004). Nature of coaching interventions undertaken by me and its impact are detailed in this section. I observed that training was required for participants to achieve competency in developing and maintaining relationship networks with external entities. Workshops and individual discussions were conducted by me to make team members aware of the importance of establishing a network with clients and suppliers as well as the informal nature of this process. Facilitation of role rehearsal (see 3.6.3) and brainstorming by me helped team members to prepare for potential discussion points in meeting and thereby enabled them to interact effectively with relevant external stakeholders collectively on future job issues. This capacity also reduced the requirement of top management attendance in such meetings. *For example, there was a tender from a prominent client - for the treatment of water produced in oil fields to agricultural standards. Project with such output requirement was attempted first time in Oman and required collaborating with multiple technology partners to submit our bid to the client. This opportunity presented a non-routine work requiring coordination with global vendors to finalise the configuration of the plant and selecting right technology partners. The novelty of the bid also required tapping into the networks of close associates. Before the change, such bids were handled by top management and hence team members could not develop a way forward to submit a bid. I briefed the team about possible difficulties for compiling the bid due to pioneering nature of the requirement and lack of members' previous experience. With my facilitation, team members were able to develop a bid by interacting with technology partners, which significantly reduced the involvement of top management.* I noticed that role rehearsals of situations was enabling team members to handle real-life situations in an emotionally mature manner thereby confirming the knowledge in literature (see 3.6.3).

Team performance slippages made me realise that member knowledge of how the operations are linked is important. I facilitated a presentation by each team member about their work process and interface with overall operations, which developed team awareness of the process linkages. *For example, the coordination between marketing and project engineers for planning business intake improved as marketing engineers*



*understood how overbooking could impact client satisfaction. Previously overbooking was leading to delivery delays. I also educated participants about the benefit of developing a method of practice – technique – (Hughes, 2007) that includes a way of working to accomplish the results and outputs expected out of their roles and responsibilities, to streamline team operations. Team members were briefed about the importance of adopting a particular approach and discipline when carrying out a task or solving a problem. Action templates formed based on this philosophy provided the framework on which actions are taken, spirit with which interactions are conducted and discipline with which actions are initiated. One example was the bidding technique developed in change program. When preparing a major bid to a client, team members reviewed the scope and identified the entire cost items within two days. This strategy ensured that concerned project engineers became aware of the complete work scope, initiated procurement actions to get the vendor costs and was better prepared for client arranged site inspection visits. It also enabled team members to identify the various services to be outsourced and collaborations required. This approach resulted in streamlining the bidding process and improving bid competitiveness and quality. The lead time to prepare major bids reduced and our success to lost ratio for client bids improved.*

Incidents in the change program and resulting observations highlighted the need to discuss past ambiguous and critical situations to develop capability in managing future similar situations (see 3.6.2). I arranged periodic meetings of participants with senior management members when handling non-routine or ambiguous situations. These meetings surfaced and captured the tacit knowledge of the experienced and senior members. Also after resolution of a non-routine situation, a closing-out meeting was conducted to capture learning points and proposed improvements. Knowledge about uncertain nature of the external world and its chaotic working with multiple stakeholders vying to establish their interest was provided with examples from previous experience by me to enable the critique of identity (Antonacopoulou, 2004) by the team. This process encouraged team members to think from other person's perspective and develop awareness about how their emotions are influencing their understanding of other stakeholders, leading to improved relations and effectiveness. *For example, I noticed in one important project, coordination between Italian technology vendor and project division was deteriorating leading to delivery delays. I intervened in this issue and*



*offered project team viewpoints from the perspective of the supplier and proposed alternative approaches. This briefing increased their understanding and control of the situation, leading to better relations with the vendor and reduced delays.*

I observed that senior members of the team were either unable or did not have the time for developing junior team members. This observation made me realise that intervention from top management is required to identify such situations and take the initiative to develop junior team members. This involved training and backup support to face situations for which they lack skills, experience or network to handle (see 3.5.2). *For example, I observed that despite my repeated requests, one workshop engineer was not provided training on production monitoring. The workshop was overloaded, and workshop manager (WM) could not spare time for this training. I also noticed that WM did not have the necessary experience in mentoring people. I intervened in this situation and provided knowledge to workshop engineer on production norms and reporting formats.* Such incidents also highlighted the need to train senior people for coaching abilities and need to consider formal training through external vendors.

#### **4.2.3 Improve team decision-making**

Decisions made initially by team members were not sensitive to the demands of the external business environment. To enable this, I intervened by providing information that helped them to understand critical aspects of the external environment that affect team operation and decision. Team members were periodically briefed about key events in the external business environment by the top management team and me. This information included not only description of the event, but also how the organisation was impacted. Classification of an event as "lagging" and "leading" was made to help in explaining the nature of the event. *For example, it is important not only to inform team members about the low crude oil prices and expected prices in next six months but also about its impact on each division for next one year.* Hence data about the external environment was coupled with analysis of its possible impact on the divisions and company as a whole. I also conducted periodic discussions for making team members jointly capable of understanding motives of various external stakeholders and how these differences bring uncertainty into the immediate business environment, *like the changes in manpower policies of the government, its underlying reasons and how it contributed to the unexpected difficulty in sourcing manpower.* I noticed that external support was required



to enable team members to maintain relationships with external entities and obtain information to improve decision quality. I offered support by providing details on network information sources and relationships to team members, which developed this competency.

I conducted workshops to provide knowledge about alternative generation required for improving decisions (see 3.6.4). The activities in these forums included asking critical questions, surfacing assumptions and reflecting on their premises, encouraging participants to view an issue from another person's perspective. These workshop discussions encouraged team members to be independent and proactive for devising alternative solutions to a problem. These deliberations also involved facilitation of root-cause analysis of a problem affecting the team. *For example, purchase department was complaining about a shortage of personnel to meet workload. I requested purchase department to analyse procurement request details regarding urgency and time allowed to execute the purchase. This analysis highlighted that overload of purchase department was due to numerous last minute requests for purchase. Further inquiry by me revealed that such requests were the result of improper planning by project engineers. The team was alerted to improve planning.* I also supported the team by providing knowledge and frameworks (probability of occurrence, assigning economic cost) to develop capability in making trade-offs while evaluating alternatives to pursue. *For example, I observed that workshop was planning workload solely on the delivery requirement by clients. Considerations such as achieving monthly breakeven turnover and delay in certification for payment which affects cash-flow was not factored. I conducted discussions with workshop team on the importance of considering these factors while committing resources. I observed from subsequent performance reviews that workshop planning incorporated these considerations and revenue realisation improved.* This intervention provided insight that imparting knowledge in commercial aspects of the business such as cash flow management, breakeven point analysis and the overhead calculation has potential to enhance decision-making quality and consequently business performance.

I noticed that interventions are required to eradicate recurring minor problems through preventive actions, as team members did not consider the same as significant. I continuously put efforts to educate the team for developing an appreciation of the fact that ignoring small performance issues would lead them to snowball into bigger issues,



using examples and history. Also whenever a minor issue was detected, the potential to initiate preventive action measures was placed in front of the team. *For example, I noticed that project engineers were not planning and monitoring the dispatch of smaller items to the site. Due to this, the site work was delayed for want of minor items, leading to the idling of resources and damaging client relations. My discussion with project engineers revealed their assumption that follow-up for such minor items would irritate procurement department. This assumption was brought immediately to the attention of team members through public discussions, which removed the misconception.* Talks with team members revealed that they lack understanding about the extended period required for developing systems.

I noticed that top management team were required to become involved in team decision making due to following reasons. Our intervention was frequently requested to solve workplace emergencies due to reorganisation (*e.g., last minute major purchases*). Such situations normally arose due to improper interactions between team members. Possible reasons could be the failure to develop a healthy relationship or due to lack of skills or leadership for the new job role. There was also temptation by top management to intervene and set right a situation, which can potentially derail change process. A situation encountered is detailed below as an example:-

*"Today Managing Director (MD) has arrived for a visit of two days. There is pressure on short-term profitability. MD was not happy with the progress of jobs in the workshop and is of the opinion to find an alternative to workshop manager (WM). This situation is creating problems for me. WM is nominated by project division head (PDH) as the workshop manager against my wishes for another person. If I convey this message of MD to PDH, he will suspect that I am using MD to dislodge WM and my commitment to self-management will be in question. Also, attention needs to be given to the fact that it takes time for development of a person to reach required competence. PDH is training and developing WM and would like to continue with WM. Hence, I am caught between MD and PDH. Presently I have decided to be on the side of PDH, but inform him of MD's reservations".*

Client demands may also force involvement of top management, which is tough to resist. *For example, one major client asked for top management to intervene in project*





*execution decisions as soon as some schedule slippages were noticed. Client assumed that project manager and project division heads did not have complete decision-making power, leading to the slippages. Such instances also highlighted the need to inform external stakeholders of the authority levels and capability developed by the team for decision-making. To prevent the arbitrary involvement of top management, guidelines were devised by me that detailed the conditions justifying intervention by top management. Involvement by top management in such situations was carried out without hampering decision autonomy of teams. Support in such cases involved providing information, offering alternative viewpoints and approaches, resolving resource sharing issues and imparting thumb rules. This experience made me realise the need for senior management guidance for actions and areas critical to sustainability, till team members demonstrate competence.*

#### **4.2.4 Enhancing collaborative interactions**

I noticed that team interactions, decisions and performance were affected due to lack of timely information to participants. This observation prompted me to establish a reporting system for passing on market intelligence on the economy, clients and competition to the team members. I noticed that informal methods (personal discussion, meetings) were better than formal approaches (reports, e-mails) for this dissemination, as my enquiry revealed that members did not recollect information disseminated formally. I noticed the need for training to the team members to ensure that interactions discussing contentious issues remain productive, especially inter-division communications. I initiated the establishment of protocols for ensuring such interactions remain productive. I noticed that team members require education about the need and importance of informal communication. *For example, I noticed that some team members respond to client communications only by email. If a required response was not received, they did not follow-up with a phone call or direct meeting.* Team members were encouraged to increase both formal and informal interactions with clients as well as competitors and vendors. Team members were constantly kept aware by me on the importance of informal interactions with client and how to improve its quality through periodic briefings and during the review of major proposals to clients (see 3.6.3).

Knowledge of expected behaviours and commitment of the organisation to create open communication was imparted to team members. These sessions reiterated the emphasis





on priority for organisation objectives over the need to maintain hierarchical respect using the logic of efficient choice perspective by Abrahamson (1991). *I stressed this aspect as it was noticed that team members were reluctant to approach senior team members as required for resolving workplace issues. Such reluctance to interact was hampering team performance, as change resulted in the delegation of responsibilities to junior members. My discussions with junior members surfaced their assumption that frequent interactions would be a disturbance for senior members.* Lack of quality in team communications and my reflections surfaced my original ineffective assumption that team members are automatically aware and capable of communicating to their new role requirement. Group exercises were conducted with team members by me to analyse critically an issue that requires external resources and develop the logic and data to make a compelling case. *A case in point was during bid preparation for a project to treat water produced in oil fields to agricultural standards to a client partly owned by the government. This endeavour required collaboration with international technology providers. I assisted the team in developing reasoning that highlighted the advantages of associating with our firm. Success in forming associations with leading vendors to bid for the project instilled confidence in the team and reinforced the effectiveness of this approach.* Observations by me highlighted the inability of members to recognise the inadequateness of their communication, whether it was about tone or language and how it is preventing them from relating to other team members. *One such instance occurred when MEP division head (MDH) booked a job with tight delivery conditions to maintain existing business relations. Work manager (WM) was very brusque in his communication to MDH while accepting the order and stated that the delivery schedule accepted is not feasible. This objection led MDH to get a quote from outside vendor. I had to intervene to de-escalate the situation for executing the job in our workshop.* I provided feedback on these aspects in discussion with relevant team members to improve communication (see 3.6.1) and monitored the impact of this. My observations revealed limited improvements through such interventions.

#### **4.2.5 Facilitate reflection and learning**

Reflection and learning enable a team to develop the self-regulating capacity to manage and control its work process (see 3.2). I facilitated open communication in team meetings to surface and challenge assumptions about problems encountered with a focus to find permanent solutions (see 3.6.4). These meetings challenged data on which



assumptions were based and encouraged their critical public reflection (Raelin, 2001) to improve performance. These discussions generalised the learning about the new situations resulting from the reorganisation and thereby creating double loop learning (see 3.3.2). *For example, discussions were initiated by me to make team members aware of their behaviour in a critical situation and areas they sought external help. These deliberations helped them to recognise weakness and assumptions which made the team look for outside help. These discussions included efforts to surface emotions faced by the team members and challenging contextual factors using doubt as a tool for reflection (Johnson and Duberley, 2000).* Examining success and failure in handling critical issues through periodic meetings was found to increase the capability to objectively assesses situations. Alternative worldviews and logic were adduced by other experienced persons or me, thereby providing a different perspective of problem definition and solving to the team members (see 3.6.4).

It is observed that enabling team members to design and generate management information report can act as a powerful tool for transfer of knowledge, develop learning and enable the team member to acquire power, thus generating commitment. Based on discussions, I judged that one reason why team members were not able to make sense of the management reports was the absence of their financial knowledge such as breakeven levels, overhead costs. This lack of financial knowledge was preventing them from providing any meaningful contribution to the reports by way of criticism or improvements. Hence knowledge of the financial model of the division and breakeven volumes was provided through workshops. These subject domains are specialised knowledge and normally imparted by focused institutes. It was challenging to impart this knowledge to the team members who may or may not have the aptitude. This handicap necessitated convincing them of the utility of such knowledge for achieving self-management capability through a simple and easy style of language.

I noticed the presence of narratives that are based on false data and detrimental to the values of the change program. *An example was a rumour about people targeted for retrenchment when there was a voluntary turnover of a key person.* I found it difficult to detect such narratives as it demanded the ability to tap into the informal network (see 3.4.2). This impediment made ascertaining the impact of the narrative difficult. I speculated that people framed these narratives based on their apprehensions or to



bring the underlying issues to public knowledge. I developed and disseminated counter-narratives to mitigate these influences as indicated by Crawford and Smith (2014). Dissemination of the counter-narratives was a problem as it had to be achieved without being seen as manipulative and suppressing the truth. Development and dissemination of narratives about successes achieved in the change process helped to reinforce values and culture required for self-management development. Narratives of the success achieved contained details about its nature and its context. Efforts by other participants to emulate these successes were noted and encouraged by me.

#### **4.2.6 Summary**

Implementation of change program has provided me with insight into the nature of issues that require intervention by top management. Top management interventions can be a source of learning and also serve as role model for future performance by team members. It was observed that support from senior management might be required until such time the concerned persons develop the necessary skills and attitudes. Constant supervision was seen to be required when a team was undertaking work in areas which are vital for the company. Pressures to intervene are mostly related to workplace situations that can result in serious damages involving reputation and financial damages if not remedied immediately. I was greatly tempted to intrude in decision-making for resolving such circumstances owing to intense shareholder pressure. However, intervention in such situations would put top management commitment to developing self-managed teams under suspicion. This predicament highlighted the importance of developing an approach for intervening in such cases without compromising the change program but simultaneously satisfying all stakeholder needs

#### **4.3 Response of national employees (Omani) to self-managed teams**

This section details study findings on the research question of how national employees in Oman context respond to management attempts to introduce self-managed teams. The intention of this aspect of the study was to explore the possibility of using the self-managed team concept to develop nationals so that the organisation can economically adapt to the localisation pressure (see 1.2). It is a challenge to recruit nationals who have interest and aptitude to be part of a self-managing team, considering the difficulty in



sourcing nationals who has attitudinal and skill fit to do even routine tasks (see 1.3). Due to this, there were limited national participants in the study (see 2.2.1). It was expected that study findings related to this question would reveal the challenges faced by nationals in being part of self-managed teams in Oman context. Analysis of the study data revealed change program to introduce self-management impacting areas of commitment and participation, social and cultural influence and task accomplishment. The findings of this study are organised along these themes and detailed below.

#### **4.3.1 Commitment and participation**

I noticed that independence and pro-activeness of Omani team members in the change program improved as can be seen from below incident, recorded in my diary:-

*“I entrusted Omani lady project engineer (LPE) to follow up “In Country Value (ICV)” officer of ORPIC, to get information on the various opportunities available with ORPIC this. She visited ORPIC and briefed about our capabilities and experience. ORPIC ICV officer directed her to visit M/s Petrofac, who is major EPC contractor and execution a major refinery expansion for them. She made her arrangement for the visits and also took new Omani recruits for the meeting. Her efforts are in wide deviance from what is expected of a typical Omani project engineer. This proactiveness may be attributed to the values and culture of the change program toward the development of self-management capability”.*

The increased pro-activeness and independence enabled entrusting of decision making in their job areas as per responsibility matrix to national employees. This delegation increased their commitment and participation to the work as could be seen from increased working hours and reduced absenteeism to the norm.

However, it was also seen that social pressure from members external to the team aligned with socially prevailing work values and expectations were always present to significantly and seriously undermine the transformation of team member's values and attitudes towards independence and pro-activeness. *For example, I noticed that one of the lady Omani project engineers was discouraged by national worker colleagues from putting in dedicated efforts. From my investigation, I understood that they were telling her that no matter how much sincere efforts she puts in, it will not lead to the advancement of her situation. As there was no senior Omani project engineer in the*



*company, it was difficult for management to counter this narrative by pointing out a role model. Change leadership needs to be vigilant to determine the presence of these influences and intervene decisively and subtly. It is my experience in this study that developing narratives that counter these influences and disseminating selectively to members can mitigate the effects (Story Arts, n.d).*

The change towards self-managed team was also seen having the power to override social and cultural influences to increase participation as can be seen from below incident.

*The new Omani lady project engineer (OPE) was entrusted to execute the MEP job for printing machinery installation recently received. She was keen to undertake the responsibilities of a project engineer and execute the job. She was also fired up by the anticipated incentive if she could generate more than budgeted profit. She wrote a letter to client accepting the purchase order and actively interacted and sought help from other team members. Also, she took actions for drawing preparation and made arrangement for ascertaining the material take-off. Her approach and actions were far above the sense of responsibility and motivation which I had seen previously in an Omani employee. It seems that the values of change program combined with her personal traits are successful in steering her away from the typical Omani workforce attitudes.*

#### **4.3.2 Social and cultural influence**

Religious values of the team members stood in the way of learning and acquisition of the work related skills as noticed in below situation recorded by me:-

*"Today I was explaining the price estimation of a major project, which included financing charges. Omani project engineer (OPE) could not accept these financing charges as interest concept is against her religious values. This perspective prevented her from understanding the pricing model. I tried explaining her about the need for interest and its origin, but I soon realised that this was becoming a tricky affair. I may be blamed for trying to influence her religious beliefs if I persist in my efforts to make her understand the financing cost."*

Skill development in such situations was facilitated through interventions which were sensitive to local customs and values. *For example, related to incident cited above, the*



term “interest” was renamed as “profit” while explaining the financing charges to the Omani project engineer (OPE), which reduced resistance to the “interest” concept. I observed that Omani nationals were having problems in interactions with clients, as clients get loud and aggressive in meetings where performance lapses were discussed. These interactions caused distress to Omani national employees as such situations do not conform to the local social and cultural values which frown upon aggressive and loud verbal exchanges.

Performance and development of Omani national employees were found to be affected by the social expectation of the society and expatriate colleagues. Omani society does not expect women to contribute towards family maintenance and requires women to give more importance to family concerns/values than their career. The following instance evidence this:-

*One of the Omani lady project engineer (OPE) became in the family way soon after recruitment. Due to this, she was not able to cope with her workload and fast learning requirements for being an effective member of the team. On inquiry with her, I learned that her husband did not give importance to her career aspirations or problems of starting a family and career at the same time. This aspect highlighted the predicament faced by female nationals due to the social values and expectations. Even though they are highly educated, it seems society or family does not expect them to grow into responsible or senior positions.*

I observed that development of nationals could be hindered by the stereotypical and gender-based perceptions and limitations. I assessed through discussions that this resulted because the team members were not sensitive to the cultural diversity and corresponding differences in work values, as can be seen from below incident noted in my journal:-

*"Today I enquired about the progress of new Omani recruits to proposal managers of Projects (PPM) and MEP division (MPM) respectively, who are Indian expatriates. They were complaining about attitudes of new recruits and difficulties faced while training. It was the first time they were entrusted to train the nationals, which has come about due to the self-management program as well as localisation pressures. From the conversation, I observed that they were not aware of local cultural values and were treating Omani staff exactly*





*like other subordinates from India. Also, they were stereotyping the Omani recruits as persons not interested in working and being a committed team member, which were not helping to understand them and make meaningful relationships. PPM and MPM were not aware that nationals responded well to appreciating and humorous approach rather than formal and authoritative style."*

My experience shows that it is a challenge to transform decisions influenced by these subjective perceptions to objective evaluation that will help the growth of the nationals and serve the interest of the organisation. Constant awareness about the influence of prejudices on decisions was provided by me through discussions to develop objective decision-making responsibility. Team members were made aware of their judgements based on stereotyping whenever I noticed it.

#### **4.3.3 Task accomplishment**

I noticed that unrealistic or unfounded work based values were affecting the productivity of national employees. As an example, I noticed that *Omani project engineers were not willing to file papers or photocopy documents. On inquiry, I learned that they believed it was not dignified to do such jobs and entrusted it to some unskilled personnel.* I noticed that though Omani nationals are fluent in speaking English, they needed improvement to their writing skills for effective communication. Language skills are vital for the effectiveness of a team member as it influences capability for interaction and expression. Such members were enrolled in training courses conducted by British Council to develop proficiency in English. I observed that national employees were prematurely judging external stakeholders based on the tone of conversations, partly due to the influence of their social and cultural values. *For example, I observed that one of the national lady project engineer (PE) was not comfortable with the animated talk and arguments during business meetings with clients. In Omani culture, people are trained to be soft spoken and mild. Also, the staff she interacts with from other companies includes people from the lower level, who are not sophisticated in their language. This setting led her to prematurely judge people, which is preventing the development of working relationships.* I provided feedback for developing awareness on this aspect to develop objective judgement and improved relations.





#### 4.3.4 Summary

The development of the self-managed team is seen capable of changing the stereotypical behaviours expected from Omani national employees by moving them towards proactivity and independence. Such improved personnel can form the nucleus of skilled and capable people to whom further nationals may be entrusted for training and mentoring. This progress ensures that a pool of nationals would be developed in the organisation, which is aligned with the Omanisation goals. Thus, it can be seen that change program towards self-management is aiding the localisation efforts. Another aspect observed was that these nationals were getting an overall picture of the business by being part of the collaborative decision-making process. This exposure is ensuring that these members are getting trained to be decision makers and thereby become a key member of the management. This is in alignment with the stated objective of the Oman Government for engaging nationals in management functions rather than low paying semi-skilled workmen jobs. From my study experience, the development of self-managed teams in Oman is influenced by gender equality and how society values business success.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The presentation of study findings in this chapter has provided knowledge on the areas impacted by the change through problems observed in relation to the research questions framed in this study. It was noted that there is saturation on the nature of the problems from the change process, as during the end of study period only persisting problems were noticed and problems of new nature did not occur. Findings highlighted that development of self-managed team necessitates commercial and management knowledge in team members, as it impacts decision-making capability and communication. Management interventions necessary to moderate the impact of these problems highlighted the need to facilitate mature and collaborative behaviour, as it is influencing team performance and communications. The findings help to understand the challenge faced by nationals due to stereotyping and pressure from peers to develop into responsible members of the team. Chapter 5 provides interpretation of these study findings along with a recommendation for action and suggestions for future research.





## **5.0 Discussion, contributions and conclusion**

The findings of the study (chapter 4) are discussed in this section to extend knowledge on the aims of the study (see 5.1; 2.2.5). This chapter starts with a summary of the change intention, management interventions necessitated and outputs generated to furnish the reader with a better context for appraising this concluding chapter. A discussion of the insights and generalisations from the study findings related to the research questions in the study is provided next. This learning is followed by suggestions for actionable knowledge, based on the context of my practice, which may enhance practitioners ability to interpret similar situations in another setting. The limitations of the study and recommendations for extending the knowledge generated is highlighted next. The chapter further explores the impact of the study and change event to my professional practice and concludes with a wrap-up of the achievements by this study.

### **5.1 Summary of the study**

This study aimed to understand how efforts to introduce and establish self-managed teams affected the group processes and national employees in Sultanate of Oman (Middle East) context. The study also endeavoured to comprehend the type of management interventions that enhanced formation of self-managed teams. The change program underlying this study was aimed to resolve the business problem of achieving competitiveness and sustainability of my company based in Oman (GCC region) using a strategy of developing self-managed teams (SMT) at the divisional levels. The study proposed that delegating the strategic and operational decisions related to the divisions will enable better response to clients, scalability of operations and free top management to pursue capability development in other market segments. The study assumed that process of SMT development would increase commitment and participation of the Omani workers by transforming the stereotypical attitudes and expectations (see 1.4) towards work. This option may be highly attractive to managers in the region vexed with the problem of developing local workforce commitment. It was propositioned that such development will align Omani workers to workplace needs, thereby enabling a cost effective approach for adapting to pressures from localisation regulation by Oman government. Study intent was the advancement of the workforce through the development of executive and management abilities that will lead to increased job satisfaction, commitment and work-life balance.



Research questions were framed based on the aims of the study to provide focus and guide inquiry methods and presentation. A qualitative approach was adopted as the study intended to generate a rich description of the change process related to the research questions. A single instrumental case study (see 2.1.4) approach with insider perspective was selected as the research was conducted in my area of practice. Data for the study was generated through observations and workplace discussions, details of which were maintained in daily journals. Monthly reflective journals were also developed by categorization, enabling secondary reflection. The study was expected to fulfil the need for qualitative studies on dynamics of the team development process as existing qualitative studies predominantly focused on static states. Contribution to knowledge about the management interventions required to influence the change effectively was another objective. Study findings were expected to contribute to the general trend of understanding team process with greater autonomy and empowerment. This study aimed to understand the feasibility of delegating top management decision to lower levels in a context like Oman, for which studies are rare, as existing studies on self-managed teams focus mainly on removing supervisory control in task accomplishment. Based on insight from literature, teleological approach to change motor was adopted to ensure that change produced results that were aligned with the desired end states (see Table 2.2). In teleology change, organisation work towards a goal through collective efforts to produce second order change and operate on constructive modality (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995) This objective was achieved by deploying a responsibility matrix (see 2.1.1), which enabled to incorporate strategic and operational change goals in the team performance. Management interventions were triggered only after dysfunctions were noticed and based on protocols. This approach ensured that team received the opportunity to develop adaptive skills by managing and learning from emergent outcomes of the change process without restrictive external interferences.

## **5.2 Discussion on study findings**

The following research questions were framed in the study (see 2.1.1):-

- 1) How are decision-making, team communication and team behaviour affected by attempts to introduce and establish self-management in a team?
- 2) What management interventions help increase self-management in teams?
- 3) How do national employees in an Omani context respond to management attempts to introduce self-managed teams?



The findings of the study related to the above research questions are detailed in chapter 4. When reviewing the findings of the study for analysis and discussion, I observed that the change process to develop self-managing capability was operating simultaneously at various organisational levels and stages. This multidimensional processes involving multiple variables rendered the change program complex with emergent qualities, thus making its presentation difficult for others to understand. I also realised that the study findings independently did not provide an idea about systemic aspects of the change process. The absence of a systems perspective hindered understanding of different factors and conditions influencing the change process and outputs at various level. To overcome this limitation, I used DSM (design structure matrix) concept to portray the change process for developing self-managing teams, as this concept allows representation of complex processes in a concise and visual manner (Browning, 2002). DSM analysis enabled me to link the categories and codes developed from thematic analysis to the theoretical framework of Input-Process-output (I-P-O) process (Millward, Banks and Riga, 2010). A component based static DSM (Browning, 2001) was constructed as a 3 x 3 square matrix, in which rows show the various organisation levels (corporate, team, individual) and columns contain the I-P-O (input, process and output) components of the change program (see Appendix 10). Components that populate each cell of the matrix were the relevant categories and codes that evolved from the thematic analysis. The language used in the process columns was dynamic and active in nature to portray the continuous interaction between context and action (Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron, 2001). For example “Critically reviewing work process” is used instead of “Critically review work process”. The configuration of the design structure matrix (DSM) is provided in Table 5.1 to provide clarity. Development of the DSM allowed generating explanation on the salience of its components to self-managed team development and performance. The understanding generated from this exploration about the research questions are provided in following sections.

**Table 5.1 Configuration of design structure matrix (DSM)**

Organisation Levels	Input (to be attended)	Process (influencing SMT development)	Output (to be monitored)
Corporate level			
Team level			
Individual level			



### 5.2.1 Influence of self-managed team development on group process

Based on the study findings and I-P-O framework, this section discusses the impact on group processes related to decision decision-making, team communication and team behaviour during the development of a self-managed team. The discussion also elaborates the inputs which are deemed crucial to develop self-managed teams and the related change outcomes.

**Decision making:** Study findings show that quality of decisions in the self-managed team was affected when team members did not have the relevant skill or experience. These situations occurred when team members doubted their capability, were ignorant of the interconnections in the work process, did not have the relational skills or experience to handle uncertain situations. This lacuna can be expected as participatory decision making is affected by influence sharing and skill utilisation (Drenth, et al., 1979) and difficulty of issues settled by the decisions (Ritchie and Miles, 1970). Developing team capability for generation and evaluation of alternatives, systems thinking and preparing for contingencies is seen to foster autonomy in decision making. To acquire this ability team members needed to focus on the why and when/who dimensions of decision making, thereby promoting double loop learning (Molleman, 2000). The study shows that team members need to break their habit to conform to existing norms and challenge boundaries to acquire this learning. Hence critical thinking to surface and challenge assumptions that enable generation of alternatives was seen as the first capability to be developed for internalising and improving decision making in the team. Critical thinking also surfaced biases associated with information capture and processing by the team as noted by Muehlfeld et.al (2011). Study findings show that evaluation of alternatives for decision making was enhanced when team members incorporated commercial considerations in the decision-making process, which requires knowledge of cash flow management and breakeven cost calculation (see 4.1.1.3). It was perceived that Company vision, corporate norms and external regulations influenced the team decision process. I observe that corporate standards and company vision are negotiable influences, whereas external categorization is not and hence create more pressure for adaptation. The localisation policy (see 1.3) of the Oman government is one example of such external rules.

Providing the reasoning of top management for adopting various corporate goals to team members was seen as essential to incorporate them in decision making. These



explanations can change team members thinking about organisation and increase alignment with corporate goals, as employee beliefs about the organisation have an impact on decision-making (Hines, 1974). The study highlighted the need for external monitoring and training till team gained the capability to align its decisions to commercial concerns and corporate initiatives designed to enhance commitment and loyalty (see 4.1.1). Acquiring tacit knowledge of seasoned personnel is observed to be crucial for the team to internalise execution of new management roles. This know-how provided different world views and thinking process to team members, which enables open discussion on opposing positions (Alper, Tjosvold and Law, 1998), leading to multiple solutions and better decisions. Responsibility matrix was also seen playing a vital role in decision-making, as it provided clarity on the accountability and functions. This definition is essential for the development of the self-managing team as clarifying expectations will enhance participation in decision-making by employees (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1992). I notice that assigning decisions for task performance to the related individual/ immediate group and making the team responsible for strategic decision making/ group monitoring can resolve the conundrums arising about accountability for team decisions (see 4.1.1.2). This approach aligns with the suggestion of Molleman (2000) that control tasks related to "what" "how" and "why" is to be decided by members who are intimately affected by the decision. Such assignment ensures that team is accountable for any continuous failure of an individual or direct group to accomplish task and non-performance of division due to faulty strategic decisions. This tactic encourages decision-making by consensus and prevents assignment of accountability to person/group who is taking the decision in the team (Gilstrap, 2013), leading to increased satisfaction with group solution (Anderson and Martin, 1999).

**Team communication:** It was noticed that when the team moves from a directive to a self-managed organisation, the team will be required to maintain networks and relations previously managed by top management (4.1.2.1). This responsibility necessitates both formal and informal interactions with external entities which require acquiring knowledge about the informal working of the external world, understanding expectations of external shareholders and assimilating tacit knowledge of senior members. The team may need a steep learning curve to acquire this expertise as maintaining good relations with external stakeholders is extremely crucial. Management interventions which facilitate learning that develops team member confidence (Bandura, 1982) and



information sharing to manage the political aspects (Gruenfeld, et al, 1996) are observed to help in developing good relation with clients. Based on my observation, self-managed team development improves external stakeholder relations, as it results in more responsive and timely interactions. This correlation may be attributed to movement of control from proxy to direct in a self-managing team (Bandura, 1982), which increases the commitment and ownership of the team (Tjosvold, 1985). Communication issues on conflicts and resource sharing with external entities contributed to performance slippages in the self-managed team (4.1.2.3). Hackman and Morris (1974) notes that interpersonal problems caused by emotional and interpersonal issues among team members prevent the team from focussing on the actual task. Top management facilitation through mediation and guidelines enabled the team to take leadership of the interactions to resolve these conflicts. These interventions focused on redirecting attention from strained relations between members and provided more information about the problem. This approach was effective to increase trust and open communications, which reduced conflicts as noted by Simons and Peterson (2000). Policies and communication protocols that enhance the quality of information on resource availability and procedural justice for resource allotment are seen improving interactions with external entities on resource sharing. This correspondence may be attributed to increasing consensus among members on the decisions and resulting decreases in relationship conflicts as noted by Jehn (1995). This study finding confirms that of Lanzetta and Roby (1960) that the procedures a team employs for communicating critical information to utilise resources are more important than knowledge of the problem for effective performance.

I noticed that team members needed clarity on communication channels and authority to interact for disposing of their roles as per the responsibility matrix, avoid conflicts and performance slippages. The study invalidated my assumption that this clarity will automatically come to team members based on responsibility matrix. Lack of comprehensive information including contextual knowledge in the interactions also results in performance slippages (see 4.1.2.2). Alper, Tjosvold and Law (1998) observes that the processes by which members interact can affect the group performance. The teaming process is observed most influenced by the willingness of members to communicate with each other for task accomplishment, testing assumptions and learning. It is noticed that personal relations between team members influence upward communications, mainly hampering feedback related to performance. This deficiency





may be attributed to dysfunctional groupthink in teams (Manz and Neck, 1997) and fear of criticism by fellow team members in group process activities (Taylor, Berry and Block, 1958). Open communication between team members is identified as critical for developing self-managed teams (Thibodeaux and Faden, 1994). In light of the above, social skills are observed as the most valuable individual ability required, as developing a shared understanding in teams is crucial for the success of the self-managed team (Weick, et al., 2005). Ability to be assertive without being considered as aggressive and adeptness to control emotions are seen crucial to achieving this. I note that member of a self-managed team also requires the capability to observe discussions, emotions, body language and reflections of self and others along with networks operated during their interactions to learn about the situation. This ability is needed because self-managing teams increase the complexity of operations requiring members to handle multiple responsibilities concurrently. Proficiency to learn correctly about the situation and assess its viability by team members is seen essential to managing this complexity, which is called enactive management (Cerda and Ulloa, 2014).

**Team behaviour:** When viewed from I-P-O theoretical perspective, individual processes are seen to influence the team processes, which in turn produces the change outcomes. From study findings, I observe that ability for concurrent working, joint planning, and regular follow-up to obtain results are necessary for the performance of a self-managed team. The above abilities are seen to develop distributed leadership, where leadership influence is shared among the team members (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007), which positively affect self-managed team development. Team members need learning about the complexity and interconnectedness of the operations, as the study shows that members possess a simplistic understanding of processes and focus on short terms results. This learning was achieved through management interventions that provided cross functional training as noted by Kiffin-Petersen and Cordery (2003). The team may be reluctant to publically accept mistakes and ignorance required for improvement due to fear of damaging team relations (see 4.1.3.2). This hesitation can be expected as employees in self-managed teams commonly understand the freedom aspect of empowerment and miss out on increased accountability along with the requirement to share more risks and responsibility (Randolph, 2000).



I observe that the development of trust among team members is essential for initiation of collaborative working. This aspect is important as a cohesive group will have a better ability to convert the input to useful outcomes (Hackman and Morris, 1974). However, it is seen that confidence to relate and collaborate is budding after team members have developed skills for accomplishing their new roles. In initial stages team was more pre-occupied with clarifying roles and establishing new communication channels (see 4.1.1.2, 4.1.2.2), which provided less time for collaborative interactions and reflection. This observation does not support the findings by Gevers, van Eerde and Rutte (2001) that reflexivity is possible and more potent in the initial stages of team formation. I notice that team level successes developed the team identity, which subsumed the corporate identity of the members. This shift made the relation between divisions more formal and reduced backup behaviour. Change program resulted in dysfunctional results such as reduction in division outputs and polarisation of the workforce (see 4.2.1). Perception of team members about other members, clouded by their emotions and prejudices, lack of empathy and absence of confidence precipitated these malfunctions. These ineffective performances can create tensions for top management as company image suffers in front of key clients. These performance slippages can also create pressure for change agent as it results in loss of credibility with both customers and shareholders. It was observed that change program aligned team processes to the change objectives and led to collective team performance. This outcome may be attributed to the ability of responsibility matrix to assimilate change goals into the roles of team members, as working towards common goals develops self-managed teams by promoting interdependence (Millward et al., 2010) and generating commitment, motivation (Locke, and Latham, 2002). The study findings show that responsibility matrix also streamlined interactions and reduced conflicts between team members. This improved robustness of team process, as improved relations (Jehn. et al, 2008) and interactions (Bittner and Leimeister, 2014) increase efficiency of the team process. This development enhanced business continuity as the departure of key personnel was not found affecting business performance.

Social values and personal traits are judged as the significant inputs that affect the individual processes. The personal characteristics and attitudes of the team members play an important part in the adaptation to team process to create self-managing teams (Thoms, Pinto, Parente and Druskat, 2002). For an individual to foster team processes conducive to self-managed team development, the transformation of values to tolerate



mistakes of others and to think of problems as opportunities are noticed as important. I also noticed that sensitivity of team member to others' needs and cultural norms in the workplace influences positive and open team communication. This factor is important as a nationally diverse team composition can have a powerful influence on team dynamics as individuals from different countries have different beliefs about best ways of organising tasks (Stahl et al., 2010). Some members may not have the emotional maturity to handle their increased responsibility in a professional manner which may result in vicious member verbal exchanges and extreme disciplining of workers (see 4.1.3.2, 4.2.1). On inquiry and reflection, I learned that such occurrences involved team members who possess high commitment but did not have knowledge and maturity to handle the variances to change targets. These behaviours may be due to team members' concerns about implementation and impact due to empowerment as noted by Randolph (2000). This insight reveals that though self-managing team development has the capability to increase the commitment levels and participation of the team members, their emotional maturity needs to be assessed before entrusting authority. Progress in change program was seen either to develop the member or to lead to a voluntary turnover. This consequence is because responsibility matrix enables team members to evaluate their performance objectively and reduce the cognition gap between their actual and perceived capabilities. It is observed that a person's public image is a dominant factor which can motivate a team member to perform and in the case of repeated failure to leave the team and organisation itself. It is perceived that qualities of assertiveness, persistence, ability to face uncertainty, pro-activeness and result oriented thinking are helping team members to adapt to the team processes successfully.

### **5.2.2 Role of management interventions in self-managed team development**

Study findings reveal that management interventions were mainly required for enhancing open communication, developing trust among team members, imparting tacit knowledge, enabling public discussion and critical thinking. Development of trust and open communication helps members to manage the political process associated with change (Gruenfeld, et al, 1996) and is essential for the generation of self-management capability (Dirks, 1999; Thibodeaux and Faden, 1994). The study shows that the nature of issues requiring management intervention change as the team develops the self-managing capability. Issues related to clarity of organisational roles and communication within and without the team surfaced in the initial stages. This confirms the proposition by Hall



(2007) that external facilitation to improve a team's interpersonal process is needed during team development stage. As change advanced, the nature of concerns moved towards skill development and managing expectations of team members. During this process, imparting of management knowledge and making team members aware of their interconnectedness in the work process helped to enhance collaboration. This finding does not confirm the view of Hackman and Morris (1974) that it is better to allow the group members to develop the skills and experience on their own to manage their group process and be an autonomous unit. Further progress of change shifted focus from individual skills to division wise efforts and how it is impacting policies of the organisation. Facilitation to develop new work and reporting procedures are seen to be required in this period. This development endorses the observation by Douglas and Gardner (2004) that transition from a directive to a self-managing team necessitates changes to communication structure due to the removal of supervisory control and revised decision-making process. Once these issues subsided, attention was needed on the impact of social and cultural values on team and team member performance. Influence of cultural value orientations of team members on team performance varies over various stages of team development (Cheng et al., 2012). During this phase, operational issues receded from attention as they did not arise in strength that hindered team performance. It is interesting to note that more effort in this regard was required for Omanis, due to their inexperience and influence of social conditions. Issues related to power and personal issues of team members arose during this period. Thus cultural values can create performance and relational issues (Tröster, Mehra and van Knippenberg, 2014; Hambrick et al., 1998). Thus the nature of interventions for influencing the change program progressed from clarifying process and systems to developing interpersonal skills to managing perceptions of the team members through narration and discussions.

The performance of the team decreased in the initial stages, aligning with the observation of Sims and Manz (1995), but recovered with the progress of competence development for task accomplishment and social interactions. Based on my experience in the study, the relation of the change agent with the change owners can be affected by this deterioration and improvement in performances. Study findings reveal the pressures on top management to interfere in team process when there is dissatisfaction of external stakeholders due to team performance lapses or decreased the quality of interactions (see 4.2.3). Top management intervention may be warranted when the team is developing



management skills to handle critical and disruptive (non-routine) situations. This assistance was needed maybe due to the absence of shared understanding of the event (Marks, et al., 2000) or due to ambiguity, time constraints and stress among team members (Morgeson, 2005). I noticed that capability to handle critical and disruptive events developed only with the help of management interventions and required time to develop. External intervention may be needed for the specific knowledge to reduce the task ambiguity (Colquitt, Janz and Noe, 1997) or centralised leadership demanded by such situations (Isenberg, 1981 cited in Morgeson, 2005). This learning highlights the need for top management to develop a working policy on the conditions for initiating interventions. This protocol needs to provide enough freedom to the team for developing adaptive skills using chaos from emergence (Stacey, 2011) but acts as damping mechanisms -i.e., weakening the forces leading to dysfunction - (McKelvey, 2002). This obligation requires allowing team members to gain experience and learning from the non-routine situation by handling it, but interventions may need to be triggered when emergent outcomes of the disruption threaten the organisation with peril.

Narratives observed in the study informally explain the events in the organisation and result in misinforming or misleading the team members. The presence of such narratives within the team are detrimental to the development of team self-managing capability and highlight the need for top management vigilance to detect such narratives and develop counter-narratives to mitigate its effects. Top management also needs to be proactive for detecting achievements in the change program to develop a story for propagating in the organisation. Framing narratives of successes as stories enhance the instructional process (Crawford and Smith, 2014) and shifts knowledge learned from short term to long term (Andrews, Hull and Donahue, 2009), thus bringing in cognitive transformation. The study indicates that external interventions are needed and are useful in facilitating self-management capability, thereby not aligning with Hackman's (2012) proposition of natural evolution to a performing unit guided by enabling conditions (see 3.6.1). The observation by Millward, Banks and Riga ( 2010) that interventions focused on the process have no decisive impact on team success (see 3.6.1) is also not confirmed by this study. Peterson, Owens and Martorana (1999) notes that it is difficult to track how group process develops over time and hence ascertain casualty of group dynamics to performance outcomes. This shortcoming makes attending to the input factors, conditions and providing feedback more efficient to achieve desired results rather than focusing on



group processes. However, study shows that intervention in the group processes of team decision-making, communication and behaviour is also capable of influencing team output.

### **5.2.3 Impact on national employees due to introduction of self-managed teams**

It is observed that there was a host of factors which inhibited involvement of the national employees in the change program. Bandura (1982) notes that when work environment does not align with team members self-efficacy and outcome beliefs, it can lead to apathy, despondency, protest. Social values (e.g. rentier mentality) of national employees (see 1.3) are seen to affect the participation of many Omani employees as well as their taking responsibility for non-performance. Study findings show that social expectations on career and family have potential to hinder the female nationals from actively progressing in their career. Behavioural expectations of national employees conditioned by social values are seen creating demoralising effects when real world experience does not conform to such expectations. Hence values about gender (Kirkman and Shapiro, 2001a) and beliefs about the organisation of work (Stahl et al., 2010) created ambiguity among national employees in the study context. Religious beliefs are noted as hindering learning experiences, as some business concepts (e.g. interest on loans) may not align with them, thereby creating mental blocks to know its relevance and utility (see 4.3.2). National employees educated in the vernacular medium were found to be less effective at written communication skills, which is affecting their formal communication and interaction skills. Peer pressure to conform to existing stereotypical work customs and engagement was seen creating tensions in the national employee who wanted to advance in work. The team was also not culturally homogenous due to the presence of expatriate workforce, who occupied management and technical positions. These expatriates are seen harbouring stereotypical attitudes about national employees which prevent close working relations with national employees. Hence study shows that cultural diversity in a self-managing team can lead to categorization (Tajfel,1982) and attraction to similar others (Byrne, 1997), which develops conflicts in the team. This is another factor which prevented engagement and development of national employees.

The above factors put pressure on national employees to disengage from work and revert to socially expected performance and roles. Study findings have revealed that change process and values to develop self-managed teams can overcome these inhibiting factors thereby increasing commitment and participation (see 4.3.1). Deskilling of the workforce



through capital intensive automation is one adaptive strategy adopted currently by industry to enhance the localisation content. Study show that development of self-managed teams increases the quality and quantity of localisation through the employment of nationals at management levels of the organisation – one of the core objectives of the Oman Government policy for localisation. Thus the development of self-managed teams could enable a company to increase the percentage of national employees in Oman context. This approach enables company management to adapt to localisation regulations of the Oman government in a cost-effective manner.

### **5.3 Suggestions to actionable knowledge**

This section details my insights from the study findings and discussions. Though these are based on a single case study in my company, these insights may assist others in their efforts to develop self-managed teams or interpret and analyse the development of self-managed teams in comparable settings. These perceptions contribute to the rich description of the study and therefore enhance the dependability of the study (see 2.1.5).

#### **5.3.1 Approaches that may enhance self-management in teams.**

The study shows that enhancing the informal communication among the team members and external entities contributes to the development of the self-managed team. Enhanced social ties (Westphal, 1999) and increased internal interactions (Cohen, Ledford and Spreitzer, 1996) are crucial for the performance of self-managed teams. The success of a self-managed team is dependent on the quality of its links to other parts of organisation and external environment (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004). External support may be needed to overcome apprehensions of team members when interacting with entities outside the organisation. Assistance to assess the motivation of others and providing background information can help in this regard. I consider designing and clarifying the responsibility matrix (see 2.1.1) regarding decision-making process and duties as the most crucial aspect in self-managed team development. This matrix helps to specify the extent of empowerment, as empowerment of employees is a key requirement for developing self-managing teams (Prussia, Anderson and Manz, 1998). Responsibility matrix allows defining the degree of self-management delegated to the team by top management. This tool allows for designing the change process to develop team process for executing a simple task to "self-leadership" team as proposed by Manz (1992). Responsibility matrix also enables to measure the causality of the change process to self-managing capability





development, based on the success and dysfunctions (performance slippages) observed in the program. This evaluation is possible as responsibility matrix helps to build a performance related output criteria into the change design. Monitoring the implementation of change progress by observing the success and dysfunctions (performance slippages) of the team on expected performance as per responsibility matrix has multiple advantages. One advantage is that change agent needs to monitor only for lapses or success to initiate management intervention and not the routine group process. This proposition aligns with the principle of "management by exception" (Dekker and Woods, 1999), which may lead to better acceptance by practitioners. This approach also enables change agent to monitor change program with geographically diverse locations, as management communication and variance reports can capture the presence of issues. However, the logic of initiating interventions only after dysfunctions are noticed can invite criticism of making the organisation reactive and crisis-prone as observed by Pauchant and Mitroff (1988).

I observe that team self-management capability is linked to team members' knowledge of management techniques and finance. This learning by team members is imperative because self-managed team development requires internalising the management control and decision making (Walton, 1985; Pais, 2010) which is usually the prerogative of professional managers in a directive and bureaucratic organisation. This insight brought about the realisation that team members who do not have any formal management education need to be educated and become confident in applying management knowledge for the success of change program. Educating about basic management principles, finance management and effectiveness enhancing tools is seen helping them to achieve this. Management information consisting of financial performance, intelligence on competitors, business objectives and targets, new technologies available are noted as important for empowerment to succeed by Yukl, and Becker (2006).

Enabling transfer of tacit knowledge from experienced persons in the organisation also improves team autonomy. To enable this learning, based on my observations, conditioning of team members due to education and prejudices such as "managers know best" and "profit & loss statement can be understood only by accountants" has to be overcome. This transformation can be achieved by asking clarifying questions as it is an effective coaching method to develop skill and confidence (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003)



of team members. Change program exposes the development needs of the individuals. Top management or change agent may not have time or capability to provide training and coaching for all these requirements effectively. This constraint raises the issue about nature of development training that needs to be outsourced and what needs to be retained by top management. Development needs relating to skill development, learning management knowledge and training for collaborative working may be outsourced. Coaching to handle the critical and disruptive situations, assistance in making sense of the external environment, and imparting tacit knowledge may be reserved for top management. The study shows that increased responsibility and judgement required in self-managed teams lead to stress in team members (Leiter and Maslach, 1988; Demerouti, et al., 2001). Study experience shows that external intervention behaviours such as listening and appreciation as advocated by Kahn (2002) are helpful to manage this anxiety developed by team members.

### **5.3.2 Enhancing engagement of nationals in self-managed teams**

Discussions highlighted various factors inhibiting the engagement of Oman national employees in self-managed teams (see 5.1.3). This insight reveals the need for approaches that target both the national employees and their expatriate managers to mitigate the effect of these factors. Providing awareness about work related values of national employees and how it is incompatible with business objectives helped to modify these values and improve participation (see 4.3.3). This observation supports the proposition that frequent feedback provides support to the team in handling ambiguous and evolving goals (Colquitt, Janz and Noe, 1997). Pointing out judgements about people and situations based on society norms is seen by me to help national employees develop capabilities to evaluate and adjust to real life situations objectively. Appreciation of the successes in the change program may develop confidence and increase commitment. It is observed that Omani national employees respond poorly to disciplinary action. Humorous interactions (Gervais and Wilson, 2005) and appreciative inquiry (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010) may be used for modifying their behaviour influencing interactions and decision-making, as these approaches are found to have a positive effect.

Study findings show that stereotypical image harboured by both national and expatriate employees is hampering involvement of national employees in the self-managed team.



The presence of these attributions may be influenced by the cultural composition (Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002) and consequent cultural distance among members (Thomas, 1999). Feedback may be provided to mitigate the effect of this stereotyping based on the understanding that the team output is influenced by feedback into the system (Ilgen et al., 2005). The study findings show that this approach helps to increase awareness of the stereotypical attitudes but takes time for enabling objective evaluation of Omani nationals (see 4.3.2). Information about the social norms and cultural practices of the land helped expatriate managers to develop an understanding of the national behaviour and consequently improve interactions and relations with national employees. Imparting knowledge to the expat managers about enactive mastery (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999) and using doubt as a tool for reflection (Johnson and Duberley, 2000) helps in developing the tolerance for the mistakes made by national employees and their possible slow learning curve.

### **5.3.3 Precautions to reduce stakeholder conflicts during change implementation**

The change towards self-managing teams requires delegating management agency to the team and trusting them to perform. Study findings show that this letting-go may generate tension for change agent and owners (Sims and Manz, 1995; Manz and Sims, 1987). Incidents in the study indicate that intentions of the shareholders and risk-taking values are critical for the success of the development of self-managed teams. If the shareholders demand the maximisation of immediate returns above long-term sustainability using stakeholder management (Fassin, 2009) approach, then change program towards self-managing teams may not be successful. This conflict is because self-managing team development relies on participatory management based on commitment (see 3.2), which is focused on principles of stakeholder management. Hence there is a need for change owners to assess the acceptance of self-managed team development by shareholders before considering implementation.

The change towards self-management development can bring tensions to the change agent and top management. If the change is not producing any positive financial results, then the effectiveness of selecting self-managed team strategy may be questioned. Hence assessing the capability of the organisation concerning intention and resources to commit to the change is important. Providing a projection about the loss of performance expected with attendant consequences and timeframe for realising the benefits may increase



acceptability of the change proposal. The introduction of a self-managed team can alter the team communication structure, leading to communication lapses with top management, especially relating to team performance. These failings can create credibility and relation problem for top management with shareholders and clients. Hence, attention needs to be paid to any absence of connections in the communication structure due to lack of monitoring (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004) resulting from change program.

Study findings show that informal narratives hinder the development of self-managed team by increasing misunderstanding and conflict in the team. Developing counter-narratives was observed as an effective intervention to avoid stakeholder conflicts due to such discourses. However, it was difficult to detect such narratives, as they were in the informal interactions domain and posed challenges as noted by Mishra(1990). The study shows that counter-narratives were present whenever there was an exit of a member of the self-managed team. A self-managed team is structured around result achievement and requires decision-making through consultation (Courtright, Fairhurst, and Rogers, 1989), intrinsic motivation and collective concerns (Wiseman and Gomez-Mejia, 1998). A team member needs to adapt to this approach, and personality traits and attitudes of a team member play a significant part to effectively participate in the team process that creates self-managing teams (Thoms, Pinto, Parente and Druskat, 2002). When there was a turnover of a team member, it generated narratives that doubted the effectiveness of the change program to integrate the members into an autonomous unit. The effect was accentuated when such personnel were considered good performers before the implementation of the change program. Such situation can create sufficient motivation for top management to intervene in team process and thereby derailing change process. Discipline by top management to resist this temptation and developing intervention protocols through formal principles and policies can avoid this.

#### **5.3.4 Mitigating ethical impacts during the development of self-managed teams.**

Initiation of change and ownership of the change process in the initial stages can present a dilemma. Since self-managed team development requires committed collaborative participation, it will be ideal if the agency for initiation and ownership is shared between management and participants. In this study, the agency for initiation and building



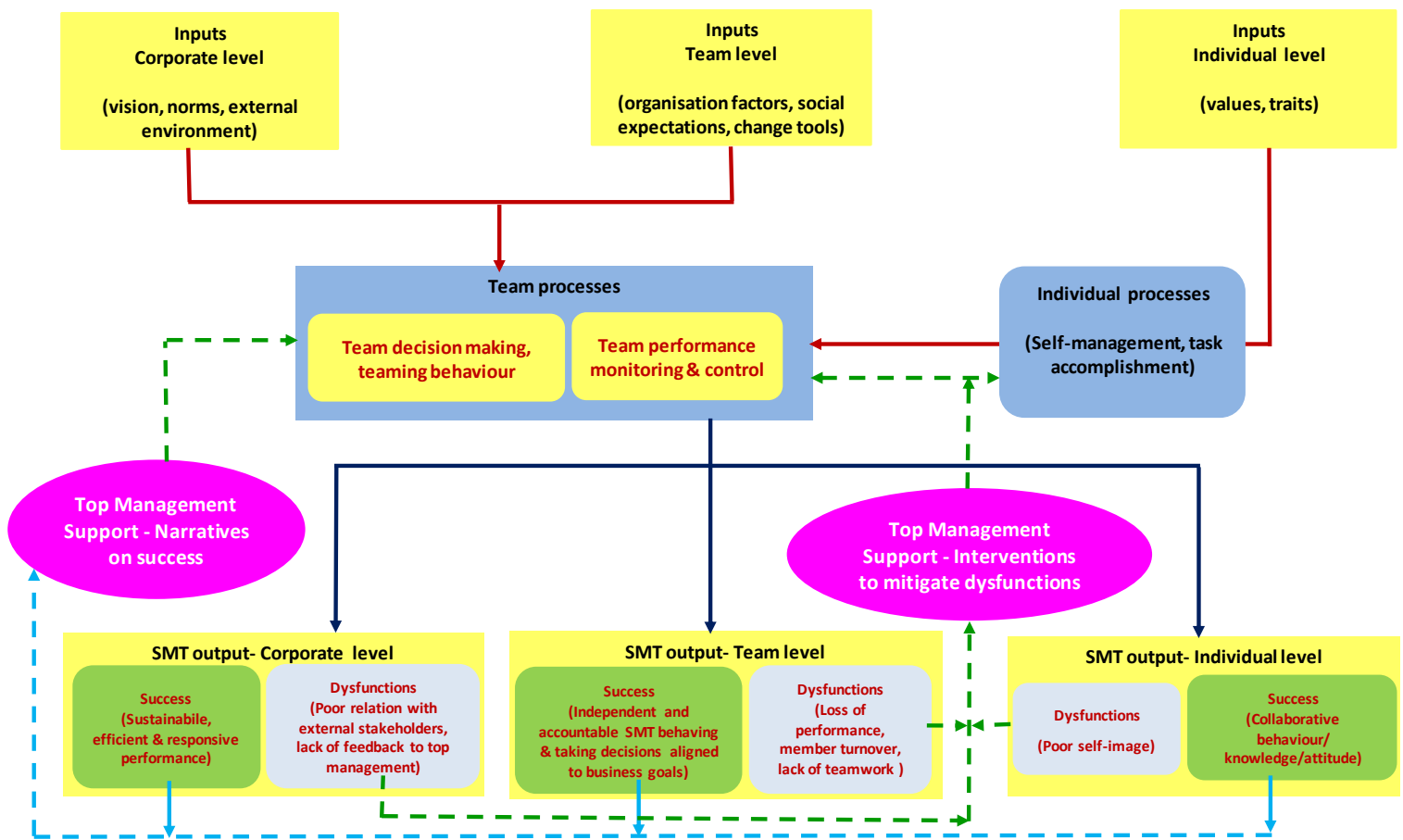
supporting coalition (see 2.1.1) was by top management, based on evolutionary concerns related to competitive survival and sustainability. Such concerns were not visible in the participants targeted in this study, as these were not part of their responsibility and they held a belief that management is the main agency of change (Caldwell, 2003). This vacuum can present a dilemma, as interests of upper echelon can dominate the change objectives in such cases (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991), thereby impacting sustainability due to improper stakeholder management. One possible approach for the change objective to reflect common interest (Holt, 2006) of all participants is to have the responsibility matrix evolved during the change progress to reflect concerns of the participants. The second approach can be the endeavour to have the change agency transferred to the team process at the earliest. This goal will require the development of team identity and attitudes that enable development of self-regulating capacity (Millward et al., 2010). I noted that the evolution of these thinking and beliefs are related to the team learning and collaborative interactions. Hence developing trust between the team members using team building exercises that incorporate local cultural and social values may contribute to change success.

### **5.3.5 Model for implementation of change to develop self-managed teams**

Study findings, discussions and development of the DSM allowed me to advance a logic for the change process and develop a model which visually represents the change process flow. Any process is described in the literature either as logic to explain relations in a variance theory or categories of concepts referring to organisation/individuals or a sequence of events describing the change (Van de Ven, 1992). The model I propose (see Diagram 5.1) is based on the Input-Process-Output (I-P-O) systems framework and the categories/ themes stemming from the thematic analysis. The change motor proposed is through a teleology approach (see 5.1) where the organisation works towards a goal and produces second-order change (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995). My reflection provided insight that processes at team level created the change outcomes. I noted that the processes at the corporate level of the DSM were also undertaken by the team as top management responsibility of strategic decision and monitoring processes were delegated to the team as per change objectives. The process flow model developed for self-managed team development is provided in Diagram 5.1. I expect this model can guide other people's practice in a similar context.



**Diagram 5.1 : Process flow (in I-P-O framework) for self-managed team (SMT) development**



The model depicts the group inputs, processes, outputs and interplay between these factors that are observed as significant in the study for the development of self-managing teams in an organisation. The model categorises the details of the inputs, process and outputs based on three levels of the organisation, i.e., corporate, team and individual. In this model, the team processes create outputs towards the development of self-managing teams based on the inputs from corporate, team and individual levels. Team processes create tensions and progress related to self-managed team development, which is manifested as dysfunctions and successes. Successes are utilised by the change leadership for developing narratives that can be disseminated by top management to entrench further the change process. Dysfunctions are triggers for change interventions in the form of top management support including development of employees through in-house or outsourced programs. This logic for deployment of the change interventions results in a recurring loop of team process- dysfunctional outputs- change interventions, till the team process cease producing any dysfunctional outputs. The intensity of the intervention efforts for a particular dysfunctional output is expected to taper off in successive occurrences, assuming the team will achieve enactive mastery (Bandura, 1986 cited in



Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999) to control the causes of the subject dysfunction. The logic of recursive intervention cycles in the process model resolves the issue of duration and extent of intervention, as the requirement is proposed till dysfunctions are removed. Model logic partly resembles the approach suggested by Van de Ven and Sun (2011) for assessing the breakdowns in a change to achieve planned outcomes. However, my model proposes achievement of the change by modifying the collective behaviour of the team whereas model by Van de Van and Sun (2011) proposes realigning the mental model of each participant to achieve the change.

#### **5.4 Study contributions to theory and practice**

Qualitative nature of the study findings from an insider perspective has generated a rich description of the change process and management interventions that may be needed. This knowledge coupled with the SMT (self-managing team) development model (see 5.3.5) enable practitioners to design and implement a pragmatic change program to develop self-managed teams. Study findings also contribute to the need for qualitative studies on dynamics of SMT development process in real life settings, as existing qualitative studies predominantly focus on static states (see 3.2). Study findings provide insight on how national employees in Oman context respond to the development of SMT. This understanding may be highly interesting to managers in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) region vexed with the problem of increasing localisation of the workforce. The study also contributes to the knowledge about SMT development in GCC context, as existing literature on this subject is rare.

Findings and discussions of the study enable practitioners and researchers to understand the process dynamics and problems faced during development of self-managing team in real life settings, rather than relying on theoretical frameworks such as continuous, episodic (Weick and Quinn, 1999). Study findings are expected to contribute to the general trend for understanding team process with greater autonomy and empowerment entrusted to achieve sustainable outcomes, as existing studies focus mainly on removing supervisory control in task accomplishment (see 3.1). Suggestions for action and insights from the discussions in the study provide practitioners with knowledge about care to be taken and actions to be implemented to facilitate the change program towards the desired ends. The model for developing SMT presented in the study provides a conceptual map that enables comprehending the nature of change and extent of management intervention.





DSM (Design Structure Matrix) provided in the study will allow practitioners and researchers to understand the various organisation factors and processes that influence the development of SMT and the output generated at different organisational levels.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

Study findings are drawn from a single study in a contracting organisation, constraining generalizability to other companies and industry sectors. The study does not assess the effect of significant changes in the team composition as turnover of team participants as a percentage of numerical membership was low. It is possible that development of self-managed teams can change the social and cultural values of the organisation, whose dynamics is not focused in this study. The quality of data generated in this study is affected by my pre-understanding (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010) due to my lived experience in the organisation before the start of research and lack of access to informal information by my position as CEO. My position is a handicap to know what is genuinely thought and felt by people, as communication with everybody was not open and trusting. Existing relationship with the team helped to bypass the stage of establishing a relationship and enabled faster implementation. Complimenting my ability to influence, control and facilitate the change process was the power associated with my position and excellent relationship with shareholders who provided complete autonomy. This flexibility and freedom may not be available to an insider at lower levels or an outsider trying to facilitate the change, which may affect the dynamics of the change process and even put their tenure in jeopardy.

Due to diverse physical locations of company operations, my presence as a researcher was not possible in every situation of interest to the study. Hence, data collection of successes and dysfunction came to my attention initially from secondary sources such as e-mails, client complaints and reports on budget overruns, failures of decisions, conflicts resolution efforts. Thus study does not throw light on dynamics related to the initial generation of the dysfunctions. The study has enabled me to identify the inputs, outputs and processes at various levels in the change process for the self-managing team (SMT) development as components in the DSM. However, hypothesising about particular relations between these elements to bring about self-regulation is not done in this study, due to the sparse literature on the subject (see 3.2; 3.6.1).



### **5.6 Suggestions for future research**

Findings of the study can be extended using qualitative and quantitative studies to explore relations between the components in DSM, which will help to understand their salience for developing self-regulating capability in teams and improve focus and effectiveness of intervention efforts. Generation of a conditional matrix (Creswell, 2007) based on these studies may provide further light on the relations between various components in the DSM and its consequences. This analysis may also generate novel theoretical questions and testable propositions that can contribute to understanding the link between change process and team performance, as such studies are rare (Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron, 2001). Conducting such studies with multiple insider researchers having scholarly background can help to capture dynamics of the change process better. Studies on SMT to incorporate strategic decision making and dynamics of top management teams are rare, as the focus is mainly on removing supervisory controls on task groups (see 3.1). Studies framing and testing propositions to diffuse knowledge from these topics to SMT development may also be conducted. Longitudinal studies may be done to understand communications in self-managed teams, as the literature in this area is sparse (see 3.4.3). Studies investigating the effectiveness of basing the narratives by management for intervention as stories rather than intellectual explanations may be conducted and its impacts assessed on change process for developing self-management. Storytelling as a learning tool is useful in guiding people toward constructive personal values by highlighting repercussions of actions taken (Story Arts, n.d). The effectiveness of using this insight to transform social values inhibiting change may be assessed through longitudinal studies.

### **5.7 Improvement to the researcher**

The study has upended some of the assumptions held by me related to my practice as well as change. For example, change experience has shown that there are areas where zero tolerance for failure are required and hence active senior management support is essential till team develops independence. This experience contradicts my starting assumption that team will lead all aspects of division working including performance slippages from beginning of change. I had assumed while proposing the change that collective decision making will result in a flat organisation structure and minimum hierarchical levels. Another assumption was that most decisions by the team would be through discussion and consensus. I noticed that decisions on task-related issues are mostly at the individual



level or group level and rarely at the team (division) level. Also, self-management capability in decision making does not make top management team redundant, as their intervention for protecting long-term initiatives in human resource management and defining corporate values is still needed.

Progress into the change program made me realise that a trusting relationship of change agent with change owners and key personnel is essential for the feasibility and success of developing a self-managing team. Trust due to the long association gave me the courage to believe the division heads and also provided confidence to shareholders in giving me freedom to run the change program. Without these trusting relationships, there would have been more conflicts and less tolerance for failures which would have made this change program more challenging and time-consuming. This turmoil would have created a perception of lack of management control with shareholders and invited board intervention (Ravasi and Zattoni, 2006). I was not conscious of the importance of this trust aspect while evaluating or designing change program.

Initiating and facilitating the change program and carrying out the study using scholarly practitioner approach (see 1.1) brought modifications to my professional practice. Undertaking the change program has created distance on my active involvement in workplace participation. Before this project, as an executive, I was totally engaged and eager to bring all issues to a conclusion by gathering data, taking decisions and following up for deviations. Now I have moved to the role of an observer and reviewing the situations to see whether work process is proceeding as planned or warrants intervention. Thus, change has transformed me from a hands-on-action oriented person to a reflective disposition, enabling me to delegate better. As change progressed, my time was spent more on discussion with team members and conducting meetings to transfer knowledge, akin to more like an external consultant. Change program enabled transforming my role in the company from critical and directive to supportive and appreciating mode. This change in role has afforded me with more free time at work, which I am focusing on adding new divisions by identifying new opportunities, developing new capabilities and affiliations that will grow the company. It has also enabled me to concentrate on institutionalising practices for improving effectiveness and conducting an audit of market solutions.



Change program created tensions for me and compromised my image in front of shareholders and clients. Managing these conflicts by balancing the interest of stakeholders without compromising the self-managed team development has developed my maturity to handle conflicting demands. During change I had to manage shareholder pressures to ensure short-term results, trust judgement and capability of divisional teams to manage the situation, acknowledge the feeling of loss of control and lack of intimate knowledge of the situation. Sometimes I was not aware of the problem situations, which created credibility and relational problems for me at a personal level. There was a great temptation to interfere and take decisions to "set right" the situations "my way". However, I managed these situations through self-discipline, developing intervention protocols and communicating change dynamics to stakeholders. Though there are tensions due to conflicting demands, the outcome of this project has decreased the hectic work schedule and helped me to relax and lower stress levels. This change is having a positive effect on my health and relationships outside my job areas. Thus, change program has enabled me to achieve greater work-life balance.

### **5.8 Conclusion**

Study findings and discussion has enabled me to develop knowledge related to the research questions of the study and fulfil the aims of the study. This learning has enabled me to advance suggestions for action, which will benefit practitioners to anticipate and reduce detrimental effects during development of self-managing teams, especially in Sultanate of Oman context or similar. The study achieved relevant practical results as envisaged to develop autonomous functioning of divisions and free top management for capability and business development in other segments. The study has transformed me from a hands-on executive to a reflective and consultative practitioner, thereby enabling me to delegate better and achieve work-life balance.





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## **7.0 Appendices**





## Attachments

### **Appendix - 1**

#### **Participant information sheet on study**

**Dear Colleague,**

You are being invited to participate in a research study undertaken by me for pursuing DBA program conducted by University of Liverpool. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the Project Thesis information in following paragraphs carefully and feel free to ask if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives if you wish. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this.

Manoj Thottiparambil Ravindran  
DBA Student ID H00018334

### **Project Thesis Information**

#### **1. Title of Study**

A case study on developing self-managing teams in an Omani company.

#### **2. Purpose of the study**

Purpose of this research is to understand how the development of self-managing teams (SMT) impact the group process and national employees in an organisation and create theory through analysis that can be used by management practitioners. The study also aims to detail the management interventions that facilitates change when organisation moves from hierarchical organisation to SMT structure. Change intends to develop team autonomy in adaptively managing the strategic and operational aspects of the divisions which is expected to address the workplace problem of achieving competitiveness, localisation of workforce and scaling up operations.

#### **3. Why are you approached?**

Potential participants in the study are selected by virtue of their involvement in the change program initiated to develop self-managed teams in the organisation. For this research, two divisions are selected for studying the process of self-management teams development in the organisation. You are being approached since you belong to one of the divisions selected for this study.

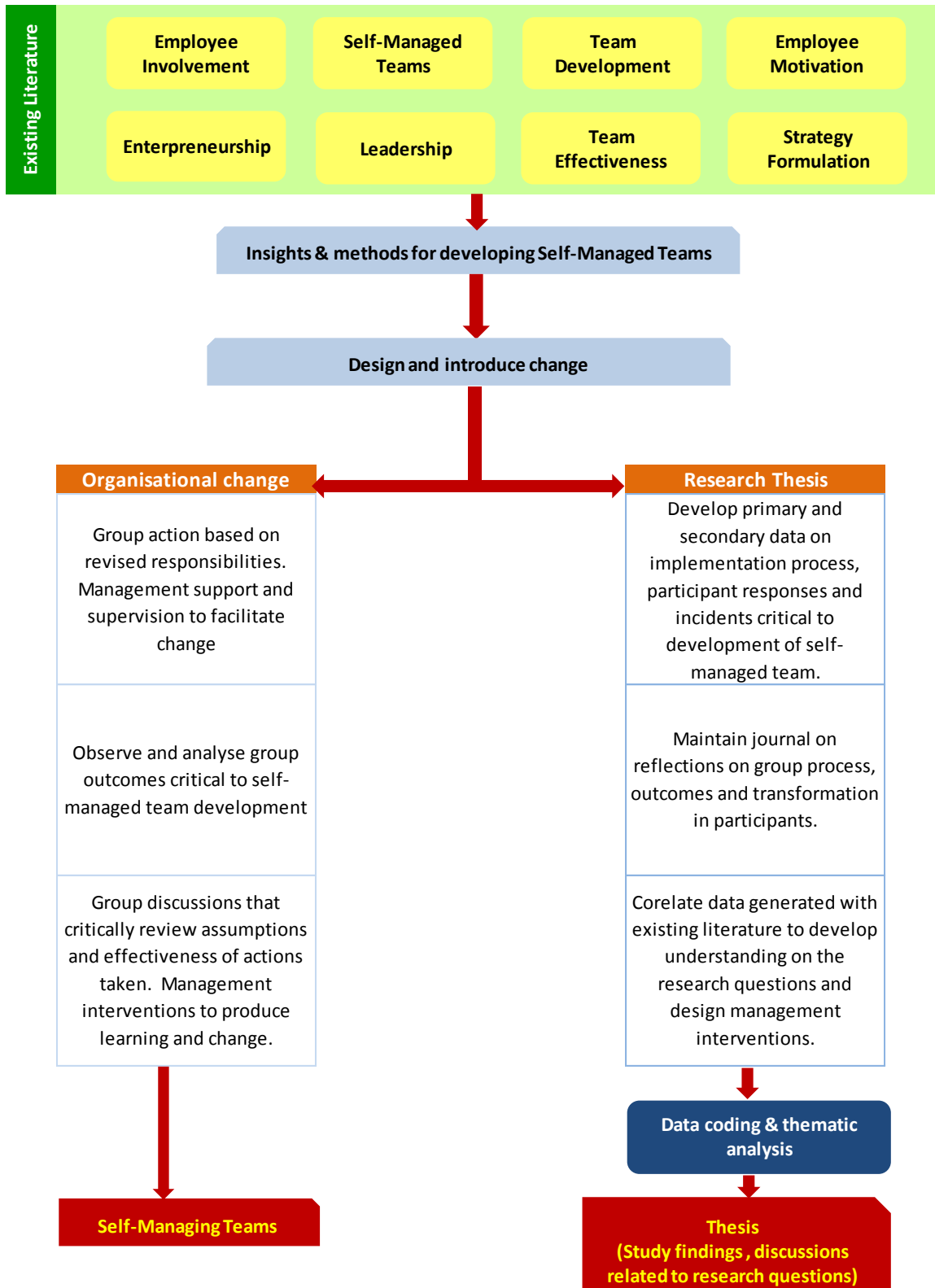
#### **4. Do you have to take part?**

Kindly note that participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at anytime without explanation and without incurring a disadvantage.

#### **5. What will happen if you participate in the study?**

Study uses case study method by an insider to find answers to the research questions framed in the study. As an insider, I will be working in dual role as a researcher and organisational change agent. Change to develop self-management team will modify your roles and responsibilities. You will be encouraged to take actions in line with the revised responsibilities that will help to develop group process and form a self-managed team. You will be part of learning discussions which will involve critical reflection to surface and validate assumptions that will create learning. Discussions will also analyse the outcomes of the group actions and encourage to consider alternatives. Details of these reflective meetings will be recorded and will form data for this study. This will be supplemented by records of my own conversations with you as participant as well as my observations/ reflections as a researcher.

A conceptual map of the process is provided below for your better understanding.



## 6. Expenses and / or payments

You will not be eligible for reimbursement of any expenses other than refreshments for participation in the study.

#### **7. Risks in taking part**

Study is conducted in an office atmosphere and hence there is no minimal risk of physical harm. If you experience any discomfort or disadvantage during participation in research, the same should be made known to me as researcher immediately.

#### **8. Are there any benefits in taking part?**

Participation in the study process will help to develop reflection skills. Reflection in a group setting helps to develop open relationship with group members based on trust. This is expected to improve your workplace atmosphere. It is expected that your interpersonal skills will also improve. Both the above will lead to you acquiring knowledge and developing confidence and being independent.

#### **9. What if you are unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting [manoj@iossoman.com](mailto:manoj@iossoman.com) or (00968) 95203900 and I will try to help. You may also directly contact my Supervisor Dr. Clare Rigg at [clare.rigg@my.ohcampus.com](mailto:clare.rigg@my.ohcampus.com). Even after this if you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to me or my supervisor, then you should contact the Research Governance Officer at [ethics@liv.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

#### **10. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Data will be collected from interviews and observations. All data storage and transmission will be protected using passwords and encryption. No data will be shared with other organisations. All personal data will be stored on the researchers own computer. These data will only be accessible by password and will not be shared by the researcher with any other person. Study report or dissemination will not disclose the names of the participants. All sources will be kept anonymous. Data from the research will be stored for 5 years from completion of this study.

#### **11. Results of the study**

Study will result in the development of thesis which will be submitted to University of Liverpool. This will be stored in the University archives. If you wish to have a copy of the thesis, please inform. Thesis will be presented in such a manner that participants will not be identifiable from the results..

#### **12. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You can withdraw at any time from the study, without explanation. Results up to the period of withdrawal may be used, if you provide consent for the same. Otherwise on your request such information will be destroyed and no further use is made of them. Since study anonymise study findings, request for withdrawal to be provided prior to anonymisation.

#### **13. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

Should you have further queries , please contact :-

Manoj Thottiparambil Ravindran

E-mail : [manoj@iossoman.com](mailto:manoj@iossoman.com) , Phone : (00968) 95203900





## Attachments

### **Appendix - 2**

### **Ethics application form**

## COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH ETHICS

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A PROJECT INVOLVING  
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS, HUMAN DATA, OR HUMAN MATERIAL

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**NOTES**

- 1) This application form is to be used by researchers seeking research ethics approval from the University, as per the University's Policy on Research Ethics involving Human Participation. If an application qualifies for expedited review (Section C) it may be reviewed at Level 2, by your School or Institute's research ethics process.
- 2) Applications to the University Research Ethics Committees must normally include an **application form, participant information sheet and consent form** (all templates available online), along with any other relevant information, and should be submitted by email to the relevant contact listed at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/researchethics/apply,for,research,ethics/>.
- 3) Applications from Student investigators: the Committee will require proof that your Supervisor has approved the application to be submitted. Please attach this to your email. Your supervisor must be copied in on all correspondence relating to your application.
- 4) This form must be completed by following the guidance notes, accessible at [www.liv.ac.uk/researchethics](http://www.liv.ac.uk/researchethics). Please complete every section, using N/A if appropriate. Incomplete forms will be returned to the applicant.
- 5) For studies involving overseas sites, please ensure you have researched any local approvals that might be required. Wherever possible this should include local research ethics approval. In the absence of a research ethics approval body, other relevant local approvals should be obtained, e.g. authorisation from a site, letter from a local organisation or group etc.
- 6) This form does not constitute insurance approval which must be sought separately. Please contact the **University's Insurance and Risk Manager** if your project involves overseas sites, vulnerable groups or is a clinical trial.
- 7) Staff investigators: You are encouraged to discuss your proposal with your Head of Department prior to submitting for research ethics approval.

**RESEARCH MUST NOT BEGIN UNTIL ETHICAL APPROVAL HAS BEEN OBTAINED**

**FAILURE TO SEEK RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL IS TAKEN EXTREMELY SERIOUSLY BY THE INSTITUTION.**



**SECTION C - EXPEDITED REVIEW**

C1)

<p><b>a) Will the study involve recruitment of participants outside the UK?</b>  <i>For studies involving overseas sites, please ensure you have researched any local approvals that might be required. Wherever possible this should include local research ethics approval. In the absence of a research ethics approval body, other relevant local approvals should be obtained, e.g. authorisation from a site, letter from a local organisation or group etc.</i></p>	<p>YES</p>
<p><b>b) Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent?</b> (e.g. children, people with learning or communication disabilities, people in custody, people engaged in illegal activities such as drug-taking, your own students in an educational capacity) (Note: this does not include secondary data authorised for release by the data collector for research purposes.)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>c) Will the study require obtaining consent from a “research participant advocate” (for definition see guidance notes) in lieu of participants who are unable to give informed consent?</b> (e.g. for research involving children or, people with learning or communication disabilities)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>d) Will it be necessary for participants, whose consent to participate in the study will be required, to take part without their knowledge at the time?</b> (e.g. covert observation using photography or video recording)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>e) Does the study involve deliberately misleading the participants?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>f) Will the study require discussion of sensitive topics that may cause distress or embarrassment to the participant or potential risk of disclosure to the researcher of criminal activity or child protection issues?</b> (e.g. sexual activity, criminal activity)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>g) Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>h) Will samples (e.g. blood, DNA, tissue) be obtained from participants?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>i) Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>j) Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>k) Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>l) Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?</b></p>	<p>No</p>

**C2)**

<b>a) Will the study seek written, informed consent?</b>	Yes
<b>b) Will participants be informed that their participation is voluntary?</b>	Yes
<b>c) Will participants be informed that they are free to withdraw at any time?</b>	Yes
<b>d) Will participants be informed of aspects relevant to their continued participation in the study?</b>	Yes
<b>e) Will participants' data remain confidential?</b>	Yes
<b>f) Will participants be debriefed?</b>	Yes

If you have answered 'no' to all items in SECTION C1 and 'yes' to all questions in SECTION C2 the application will be processed through expedited review.

If you have answered "Yes" to one or more questions in Section C1, or "No" to one or more questions in Section C2, but wish to apply for expedited review, please make the case below.

**C3) Case for Expedited Review – To be used if asking for expedited review despite answering YES to questions in C1 or NO to answers in C2.**

I am resident in the Sultanate of Oman. The study is conducted in a workplace setting located in Sultanate of Oman. A permission letter from the company consenting to the proposed research is attached for information.

## SECTION E - RISKS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

**NOTE:** *Completing section E fulfils the requirement for risk assessment, provided that this section is reviewed if circumstances change, or new information makes it necessary.*

*A copy of this form should be given to your departmental safety coordinator to enable monitoring of risk assessments. The findings of the risk assessment, especially the precautions required, must be communicated in a user-friendly way to all those doing this work.*

**E1) Describe in detail the potential physical or psychological adverse effects, risks or hazards (minimal, moderate, high or severe) of involvement in the research for research participants.**

Minimal because the study is conducted in an office atmosphere with intention of developing the participants.

**E2) Explain how the potential benefits of the research outweigh any risks to the participants.**

No risks because the objectives of this research compliment the needs of employees to advance in career and life with the organisation objective of being more competitive and responsive to clients.

**E3) Describe in detail the potential adverse effects, risks or hazards (minimal, moderate, high or severe) arising from this research to the researchers or anyone else.**

Minimal, as any participant feeling uncomfortable to co-operate with study can voluntarily withdraw from study.

The change program to develop self-managing teams is a necessity for organisation. This is because as the organisation grows, it needs capable personnel to handle client requirements promptly and free top management to pursue growth in other areas. Employees undergoing this change process will be requested for being part of this study also.

Employees participating in the study will undergo the following as part of the study:-

- 1) Take part in research discussions and meetings
- 2) Take part in interviews and discussions with me as a researcher.
- 3) Consent to have their actions and behaviours interpreted by me as a researcher

Employees who have not consented to be part of the study will not undergo the above process.

Staff will be given written assurance that their decision about participation will in no way impact their ongoing relationship with me, the researcher

**E4) What precautions will be in place to minimise the risks identified in E1 and E3?**

Not applicable, as study settings and participants' freedom to participate make such precaution not necessary. My observations as a researcher and conclusions of the analysis will be validated through review by participants.

**E5) Will individual or group interviews/questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study (e.g. during interviews/group discussions, or use of screening tests for drugs)?**

YES / NO (PLEASE DELETE AS APPLICABLE)

➤ *If Yes, give details of procedures in place to deal with these issues.*

**E6) Describe the measures in place in the event of any unexpected outcomes or adverse events to participants arising from their involvement in the project**

Not applicable. A decision of the staff about participation or withdrawal in between the study will in no way impact their on-going relationship with me, the researcher. A written assurance will be provided to this effect. Research analysis does not absolutely require participant details, as objective is to generalize findings. Data and information from participants will not be shared and results will be anonymised. Study has minimal physical or relational hazards as it is conducted in an office atmosphere and with intention to develop participants.

**E7) Explain how the conduct of the project will be monitored to ensure that it conforms with the study plan and relevant University policies and guidance.**

There will be regular meetings with my supervisor to monitor progress and the conduct of the project.



## Attachments

### **Appendix - 3**

### **Participant consent form**

**Committee on Research Ethics**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research Project:** A case study on developing self-managing teams in an Omani company

**Researcher(s):** Manoj Thottiparambil Ravindran  
DBA Student ID H00018334

**Please  
initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [24-Feb-14] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. The information you have submitted will be published as a report; please indicate whether you would like to receive a copy
5. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded /video recorded and I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings for preparing the thesis report
6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Manoj Thottiparambil Ravindran		
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature
Manoj Thottiparambil Ravindran		
Researcher	Date	Signature

**Principal Investigator:**

Name  
Work Address  
Work Telephone  
Work Email

**Student Researcher:**

Name : Manoj Thottiparambil Ravindran  
Work Address : iOSS LLC, Oman  
Work Telephone : (00968) 95203900  
Work Email : manoj@iossoman.com

**[Version : R1 dated 24-Feb-2014]**



## Attachments

### **Appendix - 4**

### **Sample of daily journal**



**01 September 2014**

Today I was following up with Aji , workshop manager on the delays in approval of drawings for Oxy, Oman job. Also engineering drawing register for each job is not being prepared. Also this is prepared by document controller (Sajeev), Aji is not overseeing and controlling development and updating of this document properly. When questioned about his apparent lack of ability to produce results he replied that “I am putting all efforts to chase these people. It is not my fault that Client or Sajeev is not understanding the situation and co-operating”. I asked Aji not to view the situation in an impersonal manner. I asked him to go into the details of why things are not happening and clear the roadblocks preventing these.

I could observe that there is reluctance in Aji to accept mistakes and shortcomings. He is bothered more about maintaining his image of competence and control than about resolving the workplace problem situations and being effective. To achieve this he is attributing the reasons for non-performance on others. This attitude can be due to lack of critical self-assessment of his capabilities and trying to improving these shortcomings. Also he may be having difficulty in understanding the work process of others (such as drawing register preparation) in order to actively guide Sajeev. It may be noted that these responsibility are new to him as part of the self-management team development.

Following changes need to be effected with respect to Aji:-

- Aji needs to critically reflect on his ability and attitudes
- Competency to be developed in the drawing register and client drawing approval process.
- Defence approach to problem solving aimed at image (control, authority) preservation needs to be replaced with open mined rational approach focused at solving problems.

The above clearly points to need for functional and behavioural coaching to Aji. It is observed that Aji has a strong ego and competitive nature. Getting him to be humble and openly admit mistakes will be a challenge.

**02 September 2014**

Today in the office I overheard Ravi – project proposal manager – having heated conversation. He became extremely agitated and started shouting at the person on the other end of the line. He concluded the conversation with “I do not want to ever talk to you again. It is beneath my dignity to interact with you”. By this it was evident that the talk was inconclusive. Though my tendency was to intervene immediately, I decided to postpone talking to Ravi after sometime, so that his emotions were settled. I also decided to call Sureshan, MEP division manager who was handling the job related to the conversation.

On enquiring, Ravi informed that he was talking to a draughtsman. He got agitated because the draughtsman did not report to the new Client location despite giving instruction. Ravi came under tension as Client was following up on him, and he took out this pressure subsequently on the draughtsman. I asked him why he is following up these matters, because as per self-management change plan, this task was to be handled by the MEP project engineer. Ravi said he co-ordinated this deployment on personal request of Sureshan. I asked both the persons why the draughtsman refused to report for the new assignment, for which they had no answer or given a thought. They both assumed that draughtsman’s intention was not in the interest of the company and need to be disciplined. I asked them to challenge this and find out from the draughtsman why he did not report as instructed. They

immediately called the draughtsman and found out that draughtsman was not confident in doing structural drawings, as his specialisation was in piping and electrical. He thus did not want to leave the current work, which is earning good revenue for the company. He had found a freelancer who could do this for us, thereby preventing disruption of his existing work. I told Ravi and Sureshan that our prejudices prevent us from seeing reality and make hasty conclusions. I also asked Ravi what he meant by “it is beneath my dignity” to interact with draughtsman. He apologised and said that it was said in the heat of the moment. I told Ravi that he is a senior person in the company and such outburst will hurt his image and future effectiveness.

Following are the observations from this incident:-

- Role responsibilities need to be more clear
- Discipline needs to be developed to adhere to the role
- Interactions based on personal relations is more prevalent and powerful to subdue formal systems
- People are judging situations and intentions of others automatically.
- Coaching is required to challenge assumptions of people and behave with awareness.
- There is unconsciousness class segregation based on functional and educational qualifications. How this is affecting interactions needs to be brought out in the open.
- People need training in confronting and taming their emotions to have effective workplace interactions.

### **03 September 2014**

Today Ravi – project proposal manager – came to review on project proposal to Jindal. He was informing that Client is asking us to reduce cost by comparing previous unrelated jobs. On enquiring what is the problem with this, he responded by stating that this is “silly approach” by client “which has no logic”. I asked him not to underestimate Client’s intention or approach. They are having the overall picture and more experience in installation of steel plants. We are having only partial picture and limited to one aspect of the job i.e fabrication and erection. Client may also be having other quotes as well as pressures of internal audit. by comparing prices with previous unrelated jobs maybe tactic to justify our removal from bidding race to their top management.

This incident highlighted the following:-

- Ravi’s thinking is based on his knowledge and experience
- He is not able to put himself in client’s shoes and think. This aspect is lost on him.
- Also he also not able to estimate the effects of competition on us or client behaviour.
- Coaching is required to be aware of possible thinking trains of competition and client.

### **04 September 2014**

Today again there is an incidence of logistics not co-ordinating properly with purchase. There are two trips in a day for delivering goods from capital Muscat to Sohar workshop, which is 200 kms away. This shows that the co-ordination is not happening properly between operations and purchase which is the objective of the self-management program. Previously this despatch was handled by the Purchase itself. It can be seen that the new communication channel and co-ordination is not happening as planned and efficiency is suffering.

Thinking for developing this function to operation was to have more control. However it is notices that this is affecting efficiency and economy. This can be due to poor planning by



## Attachments

### **Appendix - 5**

#### **Sample of monthly reflection reports**

**1. Observations:**

Review of the daily log of observations for the month of November has enabled to categorise relevant issues & progress along the following lines:-

Observations	Log dates
a. Change program has disrupted previous communication structure as responsibilities have changed and number of communication channels increased. There is also shifting of power to lower levels which is leading to faster responses to client and better supplier relations.	02-Nov-14 17-Nov-14
b. Although change program is making people more committed in their area of responsibility, they are concerned only with their immediate goals. Due to this communication gaps are occurring due to lack of awareness in overall objectives of the division and the organisation.	02-Nov-14 05-Nov-14
c. As the decision making is moving towards teams, information exchange is getting decentralised information and decisions are being made on consensus.	02-Nov-14
d. Personality and traits are seen to be impacting local interaction quality more than the team identity and goals. These aspects are seen to be influencing the socialising aspects of the individual. Individuals having self-centred personality are adversely affecting the team bonding and team atmosphere. Such people are seen to be reluctant in getting trained for social skills.	03-Nov-14
e. During change for developing self-managing teams, a team member has to interact more with other people to get own work done. This means the number of interactions has to increase for the member to be effective. These interactions have to be based in a spirit of co-operation and give-and-take. Some members may not be able to cope with this due to personality traits and may quit.	12-Nov-14 13-Nov-14 17-Nov-14
f. Change program is requiring team members to guide and train fellow team members who are dependent on them. However in most cases team members are not experienced to handle these responsibilities..	04-Nov-14
g. Another aspect is that team members are not sensitive to the cultural diversity and corresponding differences in work values. There is presence of stereotyping based on nationality and gender. This is impacting the relationship within the team and effectiveness to develop team members to fulfil their responsibility. Dysfunctions can occur due to unrealistic or unfounded work based values.	04-Nov-14 09-Nov-14
h. Purposes and users of the management report are not understood by the team members. Team members also do not have the habit of constantly updating the reports as they are unaware of its importance and lack of experience in using them for decision making.	05-Nov-14

Observations	Log dates
i. With simpler report formats and language team members are able to prepare management reports such as cash flow. Success in preparation of these reports is increasing the confidence of team members and making them independent.	24-Nov-14
j. Team members are not able not anticipate the motivation of various externals stakeholders and how it affects plans devised by the team.	10-Nov-14
k. Most team members have an attitude conforming to procedures and avoid challenging boundaries set by them. This can be due to force of habit adopt or lack of experience, but this conformist mind-set is hampering development of self-managed team. Also team members do not make persistent effort for changing the system which is not to their liking. They get easily discouraged.	11-Nov-14
l. Focal point to be allotted for handling turnover in a self-managed team and managing its consequent effects. This includes sensing the need for clarification, presenting the context and facts about the member's departure and soliciting their opinions. Also narratives needs to be developed that will prevent disruptive counter narratives.	16-Nov-14 19-Nov-14 23-Nov-14
m. A core group at top management level consisting of expertise in various functions is required for managing the transition phase. Ensuring continuity in this team is important to ensure morale of the teams as well as develop knowledge required by team members for self-managed teams. Also effort must be made to ensure continuity in the core team formed in the divisional teams.	19-Nov-14
n. One of the important components of self-management team development is to make them capable in commercial aspects of the business such as cash flow management, breakeven point analysis and overhead calculation.	17-Nov-14
o. Team members are still not aware or concerned about how their actions affect the cash flow.	17-Nov-14
p. During transition period of team from mechanistic to self-managed team, the leader facilitating the transfer becomes more important as a focal point and mediator to manage the team result.	18-Nov-14
q. Team members have understood self-management concept as total independence and hence not taking help from outside members. Actions based on this understanding are leading to dysfunctions.	20-Nov-14
r. Team members still lack ability to critically review the work process and detect inefficient utilisation of resources and dysfunctions.	25-Nov-14
s. Teams need to encourage departments to develop their own team	30-Nov-14

Observations	Log dates
without much interference from top management or personal department.	

**2. Reflections:**

- a. Devolvement of power is happening due to the change program and people are feeling more powerful as a result of this. Responsiveness to external parties has increased as well as reduction in prices leading to increased competitiveness. So it can be seen that the change program is bringing benefits. It is important to see if all team members are comfortable with this empowerment and is able to handle the new responsibilities comfortably.
- b. Change program by transferring higher level responsibilities to lower level has increased the number of local interactions for smooth running of the organisation. However local interaction are not leading to emergence of intelligent information exchange This makes the organisation more vulnerable to the quality of communications between the team members. There is now a need to monitor what factors are affecting the interpersonal relations and communication between team members.
- c. Interactions and consequent information exchange needs to improve in quality as well as effectiveness. As all the channels of communication is shifting to lower level team members among multiple departments, this has also increased the complexity of the communications. Facilitation and training is required for this till the team develops this capability. There is also danger that too much decentralisation can lead to overload of the team members leading to disengagement. Decision making by team members also need to consider not only the immediate task but also the overall objectives of the division and organisation. Hence there is a need to monitor the decision quality in terms of process (consensus, majority, designated leader) as well as end output i.e whether overall constraints are considered in the decision. Interventions that are to be conducted to improve these decisions towards desired ends are to be thought of as well as who will be responsible for it.
- d. Lack of overall division and organisation work process can lead to dysfunction such as duplication of efforts and changes to individual work process that can cause delay and communication lapses. This is because self-management concept provides considerable freedom to the team and reduces oversight on process.
- e. It is seen that personality and traits are having significant influence on team interactions and consequently development. It is observed that change program has put pressure on team members to increase the levels of communication and number of interactions needed to execute the work. Personality of the team member is playing a crucial part in determining how they are able to cope with this. If they are unable to be transformed through training and group exercises, what to do with them is a question. Prima-facia such people are suited for mechanistic organisations with directive decision making. They seem to unable to empathise as well engage in consensus decision making. It is my observation that these people can be a serious roadblock to self-managed team development and effectiveness. At least in the forming stages, team efforts are unable to

overcome effect of member's personality traits. However such members are having significant functional expertise which makes them valuable also. How to balance these two aspects is a puzzle.

- f. Team members need to acquire mentoring and training capability to develop people depending upon them. These capabilities need to be grounded in the cultural values of the team members and sensitive to the cultural diversity in the workplace. This means a uniform approach to development and training cannot be adopted. Also fault lines in the team membership is to be evaluated in terms of demography, nationality etc.
- g. Team members are unaware of the deeper impact that various management reports can make and the importance of local interactions. How these reports serve as tool for information dissemination and hence need to be free of technical jargons is not understood by team members. Reports function as aid to increase understanding of situation by team members and consequently increase meaningful conversations. Hence there is need for training people on the impact of various management reports.
- h. Effort is to be made for making team members jointly capable in understanding motives of various external stakeholders and how these differences brings uncertainty into the immediate business environment. This will help the team in better sense making of external world and enable them to understand reality better and thereby make effective decisions.
- i. Team members need to be encouraged to challenge existing procedures. Value of persistent efforts need to be inculcated into them for which team members also need to develop the skill of persuasion. This is important if they have to replace the management leadership and supervision. For this team members need to develop the habit of going into details and developing compelling logic and reasoning for other to adopt this line of argument and action.
- j. Team needs to move from a pure operational task perspective to understand pressure of managing commercial aspects also.

**3. Conceptualisation:**

To be developed.

**4. Plans for active experimentation:**

- a. A mechanism need to be developed and focal point identified for monitoring quality of decisions made by the team. This monitoring to be capable for identifying dysfunctions in the team.
- b. Prejudices and stereotyping due to demographics and culture needs to be countered by making people aware of their presence and influence. This can be done by me or using an outsider who is experienced in detecting and handling these issues.



- c. Team members need to be constantly reminded of preparing management reports so that this can become a habit. Also how management reports are to be interpreted for decision making is to be explained to them.
- d. In order to improve sense making abilities of the teams, periodic meeting can be held with them to examine a previous issue. In these meeting sense making of the team members that promoted the decision can be explored. Alternative sense making worldviews and logic can be produced by me or other experiences persons thereby providing different perspective of problem definition and solving to the team members.
- e. Group exercise to be conducted within team members to critically analyse an issue which requires external resources and developing logic and data to make compelling case for its need. It is expected that this approach will make team members to improve their persuasiveness.
- f. Meeting of divisional teams to be called and explained how cash flow report combined with operational forecast and proposal outlook can be used for predicting funding requirements and job in-take targets for next 6 months.

### **5. Reflections on DBA Study:**

Study has created successes in terms of moving into consensus decision making and shifting of power to lower levels. In previous months we could only see confusion on the objectives of the change program, lack of clarity on individual responsibility and resulting failure in communications. Now the quality of problems being tackled has changed. It is more towards developing new procedures to suit revised work process, enabling interactions or clarifying work content. Participant decision making has enabled team members to become more aware and engaged. The success in handling their new responsibility has made them confident and visibly excited. It can be observed that success in handling new responsibility is creating more confidence rather than new found authority in participatory decision making. One of the realisations is that this change program is leading to democratisation of management knowledge. This means team members who are not having any formal management education need to be educated and become confident in applying management knowledge. Without this I feel any self-management team development will not be successful. Team members need to be educated about basic management knowledge in finance management and effectiveness enhancing tools. To achieve this we have to overcome obstacles in team member conditioning due to education and prejudices such as managers knows best and finance can be understood only by accounts.

Communication lapses are still happening, but the reasons for this are now becoming different. Communication within the team is functioning well to become an independent unit, but decision quality is suffering due to non-incorporation of overall objectives and goals of the company. Interactions by the team are not seen from a corporate or intra-team level which is leading to lapses of communication on issues which is not important to the team. This will require the attention of the top management. Communication is moving to the lower levels of the team which has implications for the language used in the communication as well as the quantum of local interactions. This is shifting the emphasis to positive and open communication between team members for which they may be emotionally ill-prepared. This is because most of them are pre-occupied with completion of their task for demonstrating

their competence. Observing the effects of these poor interrelations and improving interaction quality will be the task in coming months.

Definite themes are emerging in the study that is influencing the formation of self-managing themes. They include the concept of core teams, effect of personality issues, effect of culture and social values in learning and interactions, fault lines in the team, dysfunctional changes, need for management education in a democratic concept, balance between de-centralisation and top management support. These phenomenon along with developments during the course of the study are also forcing structural changes to the process of achieving change from the initial study design. For example, study design envisaged a completely independent team. Study progress has provided realisation that this is not completely possible and some form of top management support is required. The areas where these supports are needed is identified and further may be identified as study progress. I am unable to still see a distinct phase in the study as mentioned in existing knowledge. There is success in some areas and want of intervention in other areas.

#### **6. Reflections on myself:**

Progress achieved in the study has changed my role in the organisation. Rather than solving problems by taking decisions, I am more detached from decisions and the dynamics of the organisation. My time is spent more on discussion with team members and conducting meetings to transfer knowledge. It is like more being an external consultant which is good for my research role. This was one of the objectives of the change program. This detachment has helped me to see many trends and forces shaping the change program. In the beginning I was not able to relate the existing knowledge to the current change program as I could not see any connection. Now I am able to correlate the existing knowledge to the events and trends in change program and identify knowledge gaps due to practice and context.

My relations with Shareholders and Clients are however in problem. Shareholders understand that my handoff approach is for developing the team, but when dysfunctions reach high, they want me to interfere by overriding the division head judgements. So far I have resisted this. But continued dysfunction in some areas (like Sohar workshop) and my non-interference can make me look impotent in front of shareholders. Already some hints are there, which is making me personally uncomfortable. This is because shareholders know that my sense making and proposed solution is better than what the team is currently doing. However my endeavour is to pass my sense making to the team for voluntary acceptance. In some cases my solutions are being overridden due to local dynamics of the team. This is acceptable for me due to my commitment for self-management teams, but shareholders are not able to accept this. I feel that I am in a betting situation where if the horse fails, I will be out of the job. In this case I am the horse trainer also! Similarly Client also wants me to attend the major project meetings which I am strongly resisting. Also in case of emergencies they call me and I let division heads revert to them with action taken. This is affecting the relations, but I am now limiting my interactions during the business development stage only and avoiding operational meetings. Hence there is a danger that this change program can make me unpopular and seem non-committed in front of clients.

#### **References:**

Nil





## Attachments

### **Appendix - 6**

### **Responsibility matrix**

Sl.No	Activity	Decision Responsibility		
		Individual	Group	Team
<b>A Strategic responsibilities</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>Business development</b>			
	a Identify project in market for next 24 months	Marketing Engr		
	b Identify division specific opportunities for current year		Marketing Engr, Proposal Engr	
	c Evaluate success potential for identified opportunities			Division head & key team members
	d Shortlist potential projects & opportunities		Division head & Proposal Engr	
	e Identify collaboration partners		Division head & Proposal Engr	
<b>2</b>	<b>Annual Performance Plans</b>			
	a Prepare monthly projected job in take for current year		Marketing Engr, Proposal Engr, Division head	
	b Project monthly turnover for current year for existing/new			Division head & key team members
	c Prepare projected profit & loss for current year		Proposal Engr, Finance manager	
<b>3</b>	<b>Annual Resource forecast</b>			
	a Prepare manpower requirement forecast for current year			Division head & key team members
	b Prepare plant and equipment forecast for current year			Division head & key team members
<b>4</b>	<b>Capital investment</b>			
	a Identify strategy for resource mobilisation (outsource/own)			Division head & key team members
	b Get quotes for new plant & equipment	Procurement Engr		
	c Evaluate procurement feasibility			Division head & key team members
	d Present capital investment proposal to top management	Division head		
<b>B Operational responsibilities</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>Bidding (Proposal) management</b>			
	a Bid/No-bid decision		Division head, Proposal Engr	
	b Costing of proposal	Proposal Engr		
	c Pricing of proposal		Division head, Proposal Engr	
	d Negotiation with client and offering discount		Division head, Proposal Engr	
<b>2</b>	<b>Purchase management</b>			
	a Identifying new vendors	Purchase Engr		

Sl.No	Activity	Decision Responsibility		
		Individual	Group	Team
	b Performance evaluation of vendors		Purchase Engr, Project Engineers	
	c Expediting vendor deliveries	Expeditor		
	d Blacklisting of vendors			Division head & key team members
<b>3</b>	<b>Client management</b>			
	a Manage variation request from clients		Project Engrs, Division heads	
	b Meeting with client's top management		Project Engrs, Division heads	
	c Evaluate client's finances & intention for prompt payment			Division head & key team members
<b>4</b>	<b>Resource management</b>			
	a Performance evaluation of team member		Member & Division head	
	b Performance evaluation of team			All team members
	c Team rewards administration philosophy			All team members
	d Disciplining workers & team members			Division head & key team members
	e Interact with other teams for resources	Division Head		
<b>5</b>	<b>Financial management</b>			
	a Cashflow projection for next 6 months			Division head & key team members
	b Scheduling payment to vendors			Division head & key team members
	c Invoicing and followup for payment	Project Engr		
	d Performance and advance guarantees to client		Project Engr, Finance Mngr	

Sl.No	Activity	Decision Responsibility			Decision process preferred
		Individual	Group	Team	
<b>A Strategic responsibilities</b>					
<b>1</b>	<b>Business development</b>				
	a Identify project in market for next 24 months	Marketing Engr			Designated leader
	b Identify division specific opportunities for current year		Marketing Engr, Proposal Engr		Consensus
	c Evaluate success potential for identified opportunities			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	d Shortlist potential projects & opportunities		Division head & Proposal Engr		Designated leader
	e Identify collaboration partners		Division head & Proposal Engr		Designated leader
	f Review job intake performance on monthly basis			Division head & key team members	
<b>2</b>	<b>Annual Performance Plans</b>				
	a Prepare monthly projected job in take for current year		Marketing Engr, Proposal Engr, Division head		Consensus
	b Project monthly turnover for current year for existing/new			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	c Prepare projected profit & loss for current year		Proposal Engr, Finance manager		Designated leader
	d Variance analysis of profit & loss on monthly basis			Division head & key team members	
<b>3</b>	<b>Annual Resource forecast</b>				
	a Prepare manpower requirement forecast for current year			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	b Prepare plant and equipment forecast for current year			Division head & key team members	Consensus
<b>4</b>	<b>Capital investment</b>				
	a Identify strategy for resource mobilisation (outsource/own)			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	b Get quotes for new plant & equipment	Procurement Engr			Designated leader
	c Evaluate procurement feasibility			Division head & key team members	Designated leader
	d Present capital investment proposal to top management	Division head			Designated leader
<b>B Operational responsibilities</b>					
<b>1</b>	<b>Bidding (Proposal) management</b>				
	a Bid/No-bid decision		Division head, Proposal Engr		Consensus
	b Costing of proposal	Proposal Engr			Designated leader
	c Pricing of proposal		Division head, Proposal Engr		Consensus
	d Negotiation with client and offering discount		Division head, Proposal Engr		Consensus
	e Strike ratio analysis			Division head & key team members	
<b>2</b>	<b>Purchase management</b>				
	a Identifying new vendors	Purchase Engr			Designated leader
	b Performance evaluation of vendors		Purchase Engr, Project Engineers		Consensus
	c Expediting vendor deliveries	Expeditor			Designated leader

Sl.No	Activity	Decision Responsibility			Decision process preferred
		Individual	Group	Team	
	d Blacklisting of vendors			Division head & key team members	Consensus
<b>3</b>	<b>Client management</b>				
	a Manage variation request from clients		Project Engrs, Division heads		Consensus
	b Meeting with client's top management		Project Engrs, Division heads		Consensus
	c Evaluate client's finances & intention for prompt payment			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	d Customer satisfaction survey and analysis			Division head & key team members	
<b>4</b>	<b>Resource management</b>				
	a Performance evaluation of team member		Member & Division head		Consensus
	b Performance evaluation of team			All team members	Consensus
	c Team rewards administration philosophy			All team members	Majority
	d Disciplining workers & team members			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	e Interact with other teams for resources	Division Head			Designated leader
	f Managing fallout of team member turnover			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	g Analysis of team member turnover			Division head & key team members	
<b>5</b>	<b>Financial management</b>				
	a Cashflow projection for next 6 months			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	b Scheduling payment to vendors			Division head & key team members	Consensus
	c Invoicing and followup for payment	Project Engr			Designated leader
	d Performance and advance guarantees to client		Project Engr, Finance Mngr		Designated leader



## Attachments

### **Appendix - 7**

#### **Definition of data codes**



## Codes definition

Sl. No	Codes	Definition
1	Accountability	Terms of accountability specifies consequences for achieving and falling short of goals and emphasizes that it matters to the organisation whether goals are reached (Forrester and Drexler, 1999).
2	Commercial focus	Incorporate considerations of profit and loss in the trade-off calculations while taking decisions.
3	Market information	Information which is relevant to a company's market. Collected for the purpose of effective decision-making in strategic areas. Contain information on market opportunity and threats, competition, client intentions.
4	Quality	User based definition of quality is considered, which is based on fulfillment of user needs (Seawright and Young, 1996). From the view point of user, the offering has quality if it is fit for use and meets the expectations. User will be both internal and external.
5	Decision process	The process of making a decision involving selection of a belief or a course of action from several possible alternatives. By this process a choice is selected for decision.
6	Sense making	Provide meaning to our experience and information by generating a sense of what is going on and why it is so (Proulx and Inzlicht, 2012). This attribution of sense generates understanding which enables to predict and control self and environment.
7	Goals	Goals are targets which are specific and quantifiable to which an organisation is committed in order to attain its mission. Thus goals translate mission and objectives into quantified terms enabling measurement of result achieved. They are strategic in nature and outline expected outcomes which will help to guide employees' efforts. It also helps to communicate expectations and thereby assist in decision making.
8	Values (corporate)	Values are guiding principles that assists to define how the corporation would behave. They guide internal conduct as well as relationship with all stakeholders. Core values of a company remain constant. Values are different from strategies deployed and working procedures. They form the basic elements and inform the practices used in every day working.
9	Task skills	Skills that are important to successfully complete the tasks

Sl. No	Codes	Definition
		entrusted in a responsibility position. They can be general skills as well as occupation specific skills requiring specialist training. These skills relate to proficiency and knowledge in working process or technique for accomplishing task.
10	Management skills	Human and conceptual skills required to perform management functions required of a job role. This includes the ability to take decision and lead sub-ordinates.
11	Experience	Work experience that a person has gained from his/her previous job positions in a specific field or occupation.
12	Personal traits	Traits or dispositions are habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion. Personality trait refers to consistent behavioural responses in a variety of situations.
13	Emotions	They are natural state of mind resulting from the circumstance, mood, or relationships with others which a person finds themselves in. Emotions are instinctive or intuitive in nature and in separated from reasoning or logic. They arise spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and are often accompanied by physiological changes.
14	Mental models	Mental models are schemata developed by individuals to process information that will help them to explain the world and develop basis for interaction with it (Johnson-Laird, 1995 cited in Scott, Cavana and Cameron, 2013).
15	Awareness	Refers to the knowledge or understanding of a situation or fact. Also indicated keen interest and concern about a particular situation or development.
16	Collaboration	Working with another person or group to produce or create something. It enables the team to achieve its common goals and objectives.
17	Empowerment	Randolph (2000) defines real empowerment as ways to realise power within people by exploiting their knowledge, experience and motivation to create astonishing results. Empowerment increases freedom of employees, but also results in increased accountability.
18	Leadership	Leadership involves elements of persuading people, facilitating relations, taking decisions and information exchange (Yukl, 1989).
19	Trust	Trust is belief in the dependability, veracity, capability, or strength of someone or something. Trust is both an

Sl. No	Codes	Definition
		emotional and logical act. Trust provides ability to predict behaviour of people and what situations will arise. Trust can enable exchanges with others without possessing full knowledge about them, their intentions and their offerings. Trust means providing something now with expectation of repayment in future. Trust means exposing your vulnerabilities to others - but expecting that they will not take advantage.
20	Team identity	Team identity is a form of social self-categorisation of an individual due to internalisation of team aspects into their self-definition (Haslam, 2004 cited in Millward, Banks, and Riga, 2010). Team identity is influenced by perceived inclusion which develops positive feelings about the team and perceived value which determines willingness to invest in the team (Ellemers, Sleebos, Stam and Gilder, 2013). Team identity is possible when team members have a common world view (Breakwell, 1993).
21	Team norms	Behavioural standards that are developed through team process and expected of group members, the compliance of which is ensured through the reinforcement of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (Carron & Eys, 2012 cited in Bruner, et al, 2014).
22	Backing-up behaviour	Backing up behaviour is discretionary advancement of resources and task-related effort to another team member intended to assist that team member for achieving goals defined by his or her role, when it comes to knowledge that said team member is failing to reach those goals. Backing up behaviours can be in response to specific requests for back up or voluntary in nature resulting from a recognition by potential back up providers that there is a workload distribution problem in their team (Porter, et al, 2003).
23	Performance assessment	Process of measuring how well a person or group is achieving its desired objectives against targets.
24	Client expectations	Expectations of Clients with regard to job delivery or organisation behaviour.
25	Reward	Compensate a person or group for achievement above targeted norms or results.
26	Employee turnover	Measurement of how long employees stay with company, and how often they are replaced.
27	Control of performance	Control of the team process from the viewpoint of reducing variance to goal attainment (Cummings (1978).

Sl. No	Codes	Definition
28	External interactions	Communication with stakeholders external to the organisation.
29	Internal interactions	Communication within a team.
30	Inter- team interactions	Communication between teams
31	Top management interaction	Communication with top management.
32	Quality of interaction	Quality of communication including lack of skills, effectiveness, non-conformance to standard, absence of corporate values/goals, influence of personality traits.
33	Social expectations	General behavioural standards that society members are expected to uphold. Examples of universal social expectations are good manners and common sense. Specific social behaviours differ with culture.
34	Religious belief	Beliefs which are adhered to by persons due to practice of a certain religion and thus determining the values which influence their conduct in the world.
35	Coaching	Coaching endeavours to increase task skills and psychological development of individuals to improve work performance (Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie, 2008). This is achieved through ensuring learning, training, better relations, proper communications and empowerment. Involves mentoring, being a role model, providing feedback (Druskat and Wheeler, 2004).
36	Learning	Changes in the behaviour of an organism that are the result of regularities in the environment of that organism (de Houwer, Moors, Barnes-Holmes, 2013).
37	Management support	Assisting the team in decision making, resource allocation, performance evaluation till the team reaches internal capability to manage these on its own.
38	Change tools	A simple standalone application involving frameworks, concepts, implementation process and exercises which is deployed to bring about desired change results (Hughes, 2007).
39	Self-image	Concept an individual has about their capability, qualities and skills.
40	Participation	Team members collaborate and assist each other by communicating, impacting, sharing ideas and information

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Definition</b>
		for effective and innovative ways of working (Anderson and West, 1998).
41	Competitiveness	Ability of a company to sell its market offerings in relation to the capability and capacity of other firms in the same market.
42	Continuity	Ability of a company to perform during and after unforeseen circumstances and incidents.





## Attachments

### **Appendix - 8**

## **Categories and conditions for data coding**

## Categorization criteria for Codes:

Category name	Definition	Rules for inclusion in the category
Decision making process	Selection of a course of action from different alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions which generates alternatives</li> <li>• Actions related to evaluation of alternatives</li> <li>• Quality of alternatives</li> <li>• Inputs for decision making</li> <li>• Resources which increase quality of alternative generation</li> <li>• Responsibility for decision making</li> <li>• Tools &amp; techniques for decision making</li> </ul>
Task accomplishment	Work to be done as part of a role responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills required to accomplish the task</li> <li>• Management capability &amp; experience required</li> <li>• Influence of personal factors</li> <li>• Individual performance evaluation</li> </ul>
Teaming process	Activities involved by team members to work together as a team, both during forming and performing stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes activities relating to the coordination, communication, and trust (Yeatts and Barnes, 1996)</li> <li>• Influence of personal factors</li> <li>• Power related issues</li> <li>• Emergent states of teams</li> <li>• Team norms developed</li> <li>• Managing stakeholder expectations</li> </ul>
Performance	Outputs generated by the team process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance evaluation and rewards</li> <li>• Employee turnover</li> <li>• Accountability for team performance</li> </ul>
Interactions	Interpersonal and social communications that are required to execute work at individual and team level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactions at individual level</li> <li>• Interactions at team level</li> <li>• Interactions at stakeholder level</li> <li>• Issues and problems affecting quality of communication at all levels.</li> </ul>
Information System	Resources and policies that shape the flow of information through the organisation and have an impact on the decisions taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure of communication channels</li> <li>• Market intelligence</li> </ul>
Cultural & Social	Customs, values and beliefs of a society which influences the workplace behaviour of an individual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beliefs</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Social expectations</li> <li>• Awareness of social and cultural values</li> </ul>
Development	Increasing the effectiveness of the team through developing individual skills and interpersonal transactions. This can be outsourced or undertaken by persons within the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Learning</li> </ul>

Category name	Definition	Rules for inclusion in the category
Top Management	Executive team who are stewards of corporate vision, responsible for strategic decisions, broad resource allocation and conflict resolution (Purser and Cabana, 1999).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to team in management skills</li> <li>• Coach team members</li> <li>• Use change tools to guide change program to desired states</li> </ul>
Individual	Related to individual team member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dysfunctions observed in an individual as a result of change process</li> </ul>
Self -management	Ability of a team to direct and manage its objective achievement without external help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successes observed related to independence, quality of output, work process</li> </ul>
Sustainability	Ability of organisation to manage social, environmental and financial demands from a long term perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in business continuity efforts</li> <li>• Improvement in financial prospects</li> </ul>







## Attachments

### **Appendix - 9**

### **Sample of data coding**

## Coding of data

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Student ID H00018334  
(Previous 15811037)

Observations	Log dates	Sl. No	Codes	Category
a. Responsibility for team decisions and performance is still a contentious issue. If there are lapses who will be made responsible is still to be clarified. Basic issue is whether the individual, direct group or division head is to be made responsible. Also there is issue of who will absorb the cost of ineffective working of the team during development stage and for how long.	02-Dec-14	38	accountability, performance assessment	Decision making
a. Team members are focussing on client satisfaction and task completion. They are unaware of the financial implications of their actions and give priority to action which will increase financial contribution.	12-Oct-14	6	commercial focus	Decision making
b. Team members need to have knowledge of cash flow management in order to development team self-management capability. However team members are not aware of this and hence do not factor this for decision making in operations.	01-Dec-14	35	commercial focus	Decision making
c. Team members need to move from short term results to long terms goals and objectives.	23-Dec-14	53	goals	Decision making
b. Team members are not having awareness of company corporate objectives and values. They are unable to incorporate these into their thinking and reasoning for decisions.	02-Oct-14	4	goals, values	Decision making
c. Most team members fail to develop alternative plans or envision scenarios of failure and prepare for them.	05-Oct-14 13-Oct-14	5	quality	Decision making
a. During change for developing self-managing teams, a team member has to interact more with other people to get own work done. This means the number of interactions has to increase for the member to be effective. These interactions have to be based in a spirit of co-operation and give-and-take. Some members may not be able to cope with this due to personality traits and may quit.	12-Nov-14 13-Nov-14 17-Nov-14	20	collaboration	Teaming process



## Attachments

### **Appendix - 10**

### **Design structure matrix (DSM)**



Organisation Levels	Input (to be attended)	Process (influencing SMT development)	Output (to be monitored)
<b>Corporate level</b>	<p><b>Vision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Shareholder intentions</li> </ul> <p><b>Norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values related to power, risk</li> <li>• Centralisation of decisions</li> <li>• Formalisation of organisation structure</li> <li>• Human Resource policies</li> </ul> <p><b>External environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations</li> <li>• Client/stakeholder expectations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client interactions</li> <li>• Outsourcing /supplier interactions</li> <li>• Collaboration between teams</li> <li>• Disseminating market intelligence to team members</li> </ul> <p><b>Top Management Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management interventions</li> <li>• Narratives on success in SMT development</li> <li>• Employee development programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freeing time of top management from operational issues</li> <li>• Better cash flow prediction and management</li> <li>• Efficient utilisation of resources</li> <li>• Better relations with external stakeholders</li> <li>• Better response time to external stakeholders</li> <li>• Improved business continuity</li> </ul> <p><b>Dysfunctions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information to top management on performance lapses</li> <li>• Stakeholder misunderstanding due to imperfect communication</li> <li>• Informal narratives about personal &amp; team performance</li> </ul>
<b>Team level</b>	<p><b>Organisational factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Social expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rentier mentality</li> <li>• Victimhood mentality</li> <li>• Stereotype attitudes</li> <li>• Behavioural expectations</li> </ul> <p><b>Change tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility matrix for members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teaming process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team learning through reflection</li> <li>• Formalising tacit knowledge of senior members and dissemination</li> <li>• Team internal communication - channels &amp; frequency</li> <li>• Down to top communication process</li> <li>• Public discussion of non-performance</li> <li>• Readiness to distribute power to lower levels</li> <li>• Critically reviewing work process and identifying inefficiencies</li> <li>• Rewarding team performance</li> <li>• Cash flow management</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handling disruptive events</li> <li>• Rating and selecting relevant information for decision making</li> <li>• Improving decisions through alternative generation</li> <li>• Incorporating commercial factors in decisions</li> <li>• Decision making process through consensus</li> <li>• Recognising and sense making of market developments &amp; opportunities</li> <li>• Incorporating corporate values and goals in decision making</li> <li>• Strategy formulation for the division</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success</b></p> <p>Team performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making independent of top management</li> <li>• Decisions aligned to needs of external stakeholders</li> <li>• Accountability for division results</li> <li>• Core team continuity</li> <li>• Manage disruptive, non-routine situations</li> </ul> <p>Team attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action oriented approach and positive mind-set</li> <li>• Practical and sensitive workplace values ensuring effectiveness</li> <li>• Team identity with collective efficacy oriented to adaptation</li> <li>• Awareness of uncertain &amp; temporal nature of business situations</li> </ul> <p><b>Dysfunctions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss due to learning curve &amp; inefficiency</li> <li>• Personal relations affecting team output</li> <li>• Workforce segregation around individual leaders</li> <li>• Disciplining workers using extreme measures</li> <li>• Team member turnover</li> </ul>
<b>Individual level</b>	<p><b>Social values</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual beliefs that affect work</li> <li>• Social, cultural values</li> <li>• Religious beliefs</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal traits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Comfort with multiple concurrent working</li> <li>• Emotional nature</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation of values &amp; beliefs</li> <li>• Managing emotional demands from others</li> <li>• Empathy for objectively understanding other members</li> <li>• Sensitive to cultural and social values in workplace</li> <li>• Readiness to tolerate mistakes in others and accept own mistakes</li> <li>• Thinking to identify opportunities and see problems as opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Task accomplishment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking and social relation skills</li> <li>• Awareness of informal actions required for results</li> <li>• Language skills in written communication</li> <li>• Ability to train/mentor sub-ordinates</li> <li>• Skill up-gradation of members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success</b></p> <p>Behavioural performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to face complexity and uncertainty</li> <li>• Assertive to manage peer demands</li> <li>• Persistent in following up for results</li> <li>• Sacrifice self-interest for team goals</li> </ul> <p>Attitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving from follower mind set to proactive and collaborative mind set</li> <li>• Result oriented thinking</li> </ul> <p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost &amp; cash flow management</li> <li>• Developing relations with others</li> <li>• Techniques for work process management</li> </ul> <p><b>Dysfunctions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of self-image</li> </ul>