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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
LEARNED HELPLESSNESS ON MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION
IN CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENTS

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PAUL D. NORMAN

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ABSTRACT

In this study the psychological phenomenon of learned helplessness is investigated to determine its significance as a characteristic of members of progressive co-operatives within the South African context. Most of the members of these co-operatives are black South Africans. It is argued that because of the country's racial policy, many of the members have become accustomed to a passive response to events in their lives and this gives rise to their failure to utilise the freedom and opportunities of the co-operative structure. The researcher hypothesises that this passive response could be explained in terms of a high level of learned helplessness among co-operative members. Two hypotheses are investigated in this study:

Hypothesis 1: Passive co-operative members will have higher levels of learned helplessness than active members.

Hypothesis 2: The level of learned helplessness decreases as the length of co-operative members involvement increases.

Data collection for this study was carried out by combining a personal interview and a standardised questionnaire (the Attributional Style Questionnaire). To distinguish between the passive and active members, a Participation Index was constructed. The ASQ was translated into Xhosa, adapted for the sample and two translators were employed to conduct the interviews in Xhosa.

The sample consisted of 50 black South Africans, many with limited education and was drawn from six co-operatives in the

Eastern Cape.

No significant differences were found between the active and passive groups in terms of their levels of learned helplessness. Furthermore, the length of involvement in the co-operative had no effect on the level of learned helplessness. No support was found therefore for Hypothesis 1 and 2. A significant difference, however, was found between active and passive members and the number of months of involvement. This suggests that the length of involvement has an effect on how active members will be in the co-operative.

The results of this study indicate that generally the sample does not suffer from learned helplessness. It is argued that Hypothesis 2 is not supported due to confounding variables. The study raises many doubts as to the reliability of the ASQ and the Participation Index used in the study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the apparent relevance of the progressive co-operative enterprise within contemporary South Africa, many progressive co-operatives do not reach their full potential (Bakuramutsa, 1982; Cloete, 1987; & Jaffee, 1989). One possible reason for this, stems from the failure of members to actively participate in the decision making opportunities offered by co-operatives. The researcher proposes that most of these members enter the co-operative because of their lack of skills and as a result their unemployment. It is argued that these members form part of the oppressed in South Africa and are accustomed to a passive response which could possibly give rise to their failure to utilise the freedom and opportunity of the co-operative structure adequately. This passive behaviour, could be linked to the psychological phenomenon of learned helplessness. Human helplessness has become a burgeoning field and it has captured the attention of many researchers as a useful concept (e.g. Gordon, 1985; Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Klein & Seligman, 1976; Price, Tyron & Raps, 1978). In this thesis this psychological phenomenon will be investigated to determine its significance as a characteristic of members of progressive co-operatives within the South African context.

While the idea of mutual assistance between people is inextricably linked with the past, the co-operative as a formal organisation, however, only dates back to the establishment of the first successful co-operative in

Rochdale, England, in 1844 (Van Niekerk, 1988; Wright, 1979). Since the Rochdale Pioneers, the co-operative movement has spread to both capitalist and communist countries all over the world (Louis, 1983). Furthermore, a recent resurgence of interest in co-operative schemes has emerged within the context of industrial closures, amalgamations, and redundancies in various parts of the world (Fletcher, 1976).

South Africans are looking for new alternatives for their future and the essential nature of co-operatives offers a unique opportunity for people to work together. The researcher proposes that co-operative ventures provide a valuable alternative social organisation and their potential needs to be explored. For this reason, research in this area is proposed.

In this study a co-operative is defined as an organisation that exists for the benefit of its members. Central to this definition is the idea that employees own the organisation, that the worker's job is redefined by including him/her in the policy-making and work co-ordination tasks of management, as well as the productive processes. The key principle concerning the co-operative, is that labour should hire capital (Greenberg, 1986; Wright, 1979).

While there is a growing interest in co-operatives within the South African context (Jaffee, 1989), many of the co-operatives fail to reach their full potential as members

frequently fail to fully participate in co-operative action. The researcher believes that South Africa's racial history and policy has given rise to a particularly high level of learned helplessness amongst the oppressed in the country. Since most of the co-operative members are drawn from the oppressed groups, failure to become fully active in co-operatives may be linked to a high level of learned helplessness.

The phrase learned helplessness was first invoked to explain debilitating escape-avoidance responses shown by dogs exposed to inescapable shock in the laboratory (Overmeir & Seligman, 1967). This was subsequently extended to humans. Seligman (1975) has shown that placed in situations where people have little control over the events that happen in their lives individuals internalise a feeling of helplessness. They become fatalistic and dependent and are unable to respond actively to new opportunities that may have positive outcomes for them.

Initial inadequacies in applying the model of learned helplessness to humans has resulted in the introduction of cognitive elements into the theory of learned helplessness. Abramson, Seligman and Teasedale (1978) assert that mere exposure to situations where outcomes are outside one's control is insufficient for the development of learned helplessness. They argue that expectations of individuals regarding future outcomes that are outside their control must be included. Central to contemporary views of learned

helplessness is an understanding of a unified attributional analysis that utilises three primary attributional dimensions:

- (1) internal/external - individuals can make either internal or external attributions for their helplessness;
- (2) stable/unstable - individuals can make either stable attributions about their helplessness which are long-lived and recurrent or unstable attributions which are short-lived and intermittent;
- (3) global/specific - this concerns attributions made by individuals which refer to the generality of helplessness across situations (Garber and Seligman, 1980).

The reformulated model of learned helplessness has led to the development of the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) by Seligman, Semmel, and Von Baeyer (1978). Using the ASQ it is possible to differentiate between those who suffer from learned helplessness and those who do not. This questionnaire is a measure of attributions/explanations and attributional styles.

The ASQ is a useful instrument in that people are asked to identify personal situations and to reflect on these in terms of attributional styles. This minimises the use of culturally biased events. Furthermore the ASQ measures attributional styles for both good and bad events in the lives of individuals (Peterson & Semmel, 1982).

This study investigates the nature of learned helplessness among six co-operatives in the Eastern Cape which have

reported problems regarding participation of members in co-operative action.

The following hypotheses will be investigated in relation to co-operative members:

Hypothesis 1 : Passive co-operative members will have higher levels of learned helplessness than active members.

Hypothesis 2 : The level of learned helplessness will decrease as the length of co-operative members involvement increases.

In addition the study enables an examination of the validity of the construct learned helplessness in the South African context.

To achieve these objectives the following steps will be taken in the thesis:

A general literature review focussing on the broad field concerning co-operatives and learned helplessness will be conducted in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 will review literature especially relating to the defining characteristics of co-operatives, particularly co-operation, participation and membership, and finally the historical development of co-operatives in South Africa.

Chapter 3 will describe and define the construct learned helplessness and its conceptualisation. Overviews are given of the original and

reformulated models of learned helplessness, followed by critiques and summaries of previous studies in this area.

Chapter 4 will outline how the study was conducted. This Chapter includes the objectives of the study, the method and measuring instruments used in the study, and the procedure.

In Chapter 5 the results are presented in tabular form. Explanations of how the scoring was done are also given in this Chapter.

Chapter 6 concerns the discussion of the results. A critique and assessment of the study is included in this Chapter.

The study is concluded in Chapter 7 where the conclusions and recommendations for future research are presented.

2. CO-OPERATIVES AND SOME CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1. Defining a Co-operative

The word co-operative is derived from the words opris operis, meaning work (Oxford English Dictionary, 1987). The co is a Latin prefix in the flexional form of the word cum meaning with or together. From this the term can be translated to mean working together. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1976) defines the word co-operate as working together with a person in a work; to an end; concur (agreeing) in producing an effect.

The principles, rules and practices of co-operation as an organisational form is often referenced in books. Van Niekerk (1988) claims that in its technical connotation co-operation takes place when people work together for the satisfaction of their economic needs in accordance with certain principles, rules and practices.

Mbeki (1944) describes members of co-operatives as doing things together, for the good of all. Wright (1979) said a bona fide co-operative existed primarily for the benefit of its members. In the South African Metal Worker (1986), the co-operative is described as a name for an organisation which comes from the verb to co-operate. In other words, the main idea behind the organisation of co-operatives is that the members organise to work together in a way which would avoid conflict. This means that the co-operative would eliminate exploitation and oppression among those organised

in the co-operative.

Other definitions of a co-operative are :

A co-operative is an association of an indeterminate number of persons who, having recognised the similarity of some of their economic needs, come together with a view to meeting these needs by means of a joint organisation (Swiss Federal Council, 1919,p).

In a co-operative institution a distinction must be made between two related elements, one of them social and the other economic: first, an association of persons who have recognised and continue to recognise ... the similarity of some of their needs and ... the possibility of better satisfying these needs through individual means; secondly, a commerce undertaking of the particular purpose which is to meet the needs to be satisfied (Fauquet,19 ,p).

Cloete (1987) opined that almost all definitions of co-operatives stressed their role as organisations in which a group of people came together to achieve a particular economic goal for all members of the group, and this is apparent when perusing the above definitions. Cloete (1987) maintained that co-operatives set out to do this through a democratic organisation in which all members had an equal say. This suggests, a political dimension to co-operatives which involves equal participation and sets them apart from conventional business enterprises.

Some of the notable contributors to the theory of co-operatives are Emelianoff, Robotka, Phillips, Lambert and Steenkamp.

Emelianoff's (1942) point of view concurs with the American School of thought, namely, that the existing economic order of competition should be accepted as given. He believed:

- (1) the share capital of the co-operative represents the advances of funds required to finance proposed transactions of the individual members of the association;
- (2) member-shareholders are not identical with shareholders of private undertakings;
- (3) surpluses and deficits do not represent entrepreneurial residues but should be interpreted as amounts receivable and payable by participating members on their current transactions;
- (4) the fund of bonus payments does not represent the profit of the association but is constituted of amounts overpaid and/or underpaid by members on transactions deriving from the association.

Robotka's (1957) theory is similar to that of Emelianioff's theory. He clearly identified with the idea that the act of co-operation undertaken by the autonomous economic unit, does not give rise to a separate entrepreneurial unit likened to an ordinary private business enterprise. According to Robotka, a co-operative should not be compared with an incorporated firm but with other organisations brought about by means of economic integration such as mergers, trusts and syndicates which are characterised by the fact that the association units retain both their judicial and economic identity.

Phillips (1952) on the other hand, explained a co-operative as an association of firms or households directed at economic and business gain. He applied the economic motive

as the fundamental starting-point for his reasoning about the nature of co-operatives. He divorced the economic nature of co-operatives from those traditional guidelines which formed an essential part of the general co-operative model as evolved and put into practice with good effect by the Rochdale pioneers.

Lambert's (1961) definition of a co-operative moved away from Emelianioff's and Robotka's American School approach. He defined a co-operative as,

an enterprise formed and directed by an association of users, applying within itself the rules of democracy and directly intended to serve both its own members and the community as a whole (Lambert, 1961, p. 206).

The standpoint of the Steenkamp Commission of Inquiry is summed up in its definition of a co-operative, the co-operative is that type of firm which aims at earning a profit, distributed on a patronage basis, for the firms of members of a given economic group (Steenkamp Commission Report, 1967, p. 352).

Common to all these theories and definitions are three central concepts - co-operation, participation and membership. As a result of their significance to the research, these issues will be focussed on seperately. These issues are of special significance to this research since it deals with members of co-operatives and their failure to participate and co-operate in co-operative action. The researcher is of the opinion that the importance of these

issues necessitates the detail given to each issue separately. To distinguish between co-operatives and to reach a clearer insight into the dynamic life of a co-operative, these concepts will therefore be examined in the following sub-section.

2.2. Key Conceptual Issues

2.2.1. The principles of co-operation

The originality of the Rochdale Pioneers is a combination of how they used certain principles and the immense success they achieved by putting them into practice. The Rochdale Principles have earned a central place in the formation of a co-operative and gives the structure to the co-operative which allows its members to work in a co-operative way. These principles are usually expressed as follows:

- Democratic control;
- Freedom for new members to join;
- Payment of limited interest on capital;
- Distribution of the surplus among the members in proportion to their purchases;
- Cash purchase and sale;
- Purity and quality of goods;
- Education of the members; and
- Political and religious neutrality (Wright, 1979).

These principles are applied to co-operatives of various types including producer, worker, retail, consumer, housing, community and marketing co-operatives. It is the application of these principles which give the co-operative its distinct

structure.

2.2.2. Concepts of participation

Participation is of interest to many people because it is an aid to getting things done and it is also about power and control, which affects everyone. Moreover, it is argued that involvement in decision-making leads to a greater motivation to carry out the decision (Wright, 1979).

For this reason it is contended that centralisation of authority is believed to have a negative influence in relation to participation. Conversely, decentralisation of decision-making authority is believed to be positively related to participation only if it is not simply administrative decentralisation and if members have a genuine opportunity to affect decision-making. Brown (1985) stated that it seemed that management processes encouraging workers to assume responsibility and make judgements about their work - encouraging use of their own discretion - will be positively related to participation.

Brown's findings show that all the co-operatives reported widespread influence over decision-making even where the final decision was centralised. His research indicated that co-operatives offer a structure which is positively related to participation.

Robert Blauner (cited in Wright, 1979) argued for more participation and described four conditions of alienation which resulted from an inability to participate: powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. He went on to state four non-alienated conditions which corresponded to these to conditions:

- (1) ability to control ones immediate work processes;
- (2) development of a sense of purpose and function which connects individual jobs to the overall organisation;
- (3) belonging to integrated work communities; and
- (4) involvement in work as a mode of personal self expression. The researcher argues that the co-operative structure facilitates the realisation of these non-alienated conditions within its members.

2.2.3. Co-operative membership

Barrett (1989) defined co-operative membership as follows:

The body of people who have fulfilled the entrance requirements of a co-operative constitute its members. These requirements are decided upon by the founding committee and must not, in accordance with the first principle of co-operation, entail any discriminatory membership qualifications. They may also entail the payment of certain membership fees and the purchase of at least one share in the co-operative. Membership is usually terminated for any of the following reasons: the member dies; the member requests that membership be terminated; the member is expelled by the board of the co-operative; and the co-operative is disbanded or liquidated (Barrett, 1989, p 21).

The first principle stated that membership of a co-operative should be voluntary and available without artificial restriction or any social, political, racial or religious discrimination, to all people who can make use of its services and are willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

In short then, co-operative membership is open in that while there are certain prescriptions as to who may qualify to be a member of the co-operative, these prescriptions may never be artificial discriminations. Furthermore, a co-operative member may only be dismissed as a result of his/her inability or unwillingness to participate in or uphold the goals and principles of the co-operative. This means, therefore, that while there might be entrance requirements for membership of the co-operative, the members of the co-operative may not exclude from membership any person who fulfills the stipulated conditions.

There are, however, some reality-based restrictions. Of paramount importance is the fact that the co-operative does have a certain membership capacity. This is exemplified best in the case of the producer co-operative. While it might be an ideal to employ all those who come to the co-operative in search of employment, obviously this will not be possible if the number of workers presenting themselves exceeds the number necessary for ensuring that the co-operative is financially viable.

Previous reference was made to the frequently cited creed - it is labour that hires capital, rather than capital hiring labour. Any non-participant shareholders in the venture, who earn money from their capital invested rather than from their labour, would therefore receive very low interest, ranging typically between savings bank rates and zero percent (Barrett, 1989).

Having given a description of the universal understanding of co-operatives, a specific description of the development and origin of co-operatives in South Africa, will be given.

2.3. History and development of Co-operatives in South Africa

It is evident that co-operatives as business ventures, as defined earlier in the chapter, existed, prior to the Rochdale Pioneers, in some rudimentary forms. In the Egyptian Empire (3100-1150 BC) for example, manual labourers and artisans had a highly developed trade system which led to the foundation of societies charged with the regulation of the whole trade system. According to Van Niekerk (1988) it was believed that these organisations were quasi-co-operatives. The Greek period (300-325 BC) as well as the Christian period (1-313 AD) showed signs of co-operative funeral benefit associations. Other signs of co-operative ventures are evident in various periods up until the Renaissance period (1400-1750 AD) during which companies with co-operative characteristics, for purposes such as

cheesemaking were found.

Given these sporadic signs, however, tradition only acknowledges the foundation of the Rochdale Equitable Society in 1844 as the starting point of the history of co-operatives (Lambert, 1963). It was from this society, that co-operatives spread throughout England and later to Finland, USA, Netherlands, Russia, Israel, and South Africa.

It was during 1900 to 1925 that co-operatives, more particularly the agricultural kind, really established themselves in South Africa. The approach, during this period, was that the bargaining power of farmers should be improved with the help of co-operatives. At this time, the co-operative philosophy was widely accepted and favourable legislation and measures were approved by authorities. Furthermore, co-operative specialists were recruited overseas to promote co-operatives and the general opinion was that co-operatives should be encouraged as much as possible in the national interest.

The period 1925 to 1963 was marked by the realisation and acceptance that co-operatives in South Africa would not on their own be able to rationalise the marketing of agricultural products. During the 1940's the co-operative development was stimulated by the industrial development and economic growth. The termination of this period was marked by the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry into

Co-operative Affairs in 1963 (Steenkamp Commission, 1963).

The period 1963 to 1986 brought co-operatives into public debate for about ten years as a result of the publication of the Steenkamp Commission. The report highlighted the strongpoints of the South African co-operative as follows:

- it is a distinctive form of undertaking;
- it is dependent on its members for its survival, and that they are also its customers;
- it has however reached such a measure of maturity that it no longer requires encouragement from the authorities at the expense of competitors;
- it should not be taxable as long as it conforms to the character and substance of co-operatives (Steenkamp Commission Report, 1967).

This period closed with the enforcement of the Co-operative Act No. 91 of 1981.

2.3.1. Contemporary thought on co-operatives in South Africa

In South Africa, at present, co-operatives range from the vast commercial organisations supplying inputs and marketing facilities to the capitalistic agricultural sector, on which the historical description of the previous section has focussed, to small groups who see co-operatives as the key to worker control (Cloete, 1987). This research, focuses particularly on these smaller, progressive co-operatives.

This growing interest in progressive co-operative initiatives needs to be understood within the current economic and political context. In South Africa workers are

beginning to realise that the present economic system is inadequate to provide the number of jobs, food, houses and clothing required to meet their basic needs (South African Metal Worker, 1986). One response to this exploitative and oppressive system has been the growing support for progressive co-operatives.

It is appropriate at this stage to explore what progressive co-operatives are and why they have been formed. While these progressive co-operatives do not have a long history in South Africa, they have become important in the workers' struggle for a better economic, and in some cases, political system.

The main idea behind a progressive co-operative is that members of these co-operatives organise to work together in a way which avoids conflict and in so doing aim to eliminate exploitation and oppression. Furthermore, these co-operatives allow everyone to be involved in decision-making regarding production, distribution of goods, profit sharing and everyone is entitled to a vote. The struggle for these progressive co-operatives, has often gone beyond this and its members have demanded that the whole society be organised around a system of co-operatives.

The recent interest in progressive co-operatives has largely been due to the massive and growing unemployment in South Africa. Keenan and Sarakinsky (1986) have shown an estimated 150 percent increase in unemployment among black South Afri-

cans since 1977. They estimate overall black unemployment in South Africa at between 4.15 to 5.79 million people. Jaffee (1989) believed that increased levels of unemployment and social dislocation caused by repression have led many organisations to look for ways of providing employment and involving people in activities, as a result many are turning to these progressive co-operatives.

More recently, major trade unions such as the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Metal Workers (NAMSA), have aided the development of co-operatives for dismissed and retrenched workers. They represent a defensive strategy aimed at maintaining the organisation of unionised workers, meeting minimal welfare needs and perhaps providing examples of worker control. Those progressive co-operatives not linked to unions (of which some are included in this study) have developed as part of organisational campaigns to transform or eradicate apartheid.

Progressive co-operatives are also being considered by black business groups, community organisations and a variety of institutions concerned with job-creation programmes and economic development. These co-operatives also have a variety of sponsoring bodies, ranging from large corporations, local banks to foreign donor agencies.

Progressive co-operative organisation and production, however, is not exclusively about income generation. These co-operatives are based on principles of open membership,

democratic control, limited interest on share capital, fair distribution of profits, education and co-operation with other co-operatives. In addition, these co-operatives provide an opportunity for members to develop independence, responsibility and confidence. Moreover these co-operatives seem to develop out of a particular form of consciousness and group identity, which evolves through a process of common work and domestic life experience.

The progressive co-operative movement also has its roots in an ideological preference. It is seen as a way of experimenting in a capitalist economy with forms of socialism. These progressive co-operatives therefore also have the potential to mobilise and empower their members for the radical restructuring of society. Furthermore, they provide an opportunity for members to develop independence, responsibility, confidence as well as allowing members to gain knowledge about production and distribution.

A viable co-operative not only increases the overall empowerment of members, it also leads to personal growth in ways such as:

- gaining an understanding of their position in relation to the wider society thus defining their position in it;
- discovering that they can act to change the oppressive conditions under which they live;
- it also shows them that by co-operating with others they can strengthen their position to change conditions affecting them;

- gaining new confidence indicated by ability to solve organisational problems and participate in the decision-making process;
- gaining new political and interpersonal skills; provide for themselves and their families new material security in the income they receive from their work and finally they have the opportunity to earn a fair wage for a days labour (Collins & Collins, 1984).

For those who are effectively alienated from the standard methods of earning a living, these progressive co-operatives present a realistic means of economic empowerment in harsh economic and social times. Moreover, for those whose position in society has reduced their role in the determination of their own futures to one of passive acceptance, the opportunity to have a hand in the shaping of their future is undeniably attractive (Barrett, 1989). It is, therefore, understandable that there should be this renewed interest in progressive co-operatives in South Africa.

This resurgence of interest in these co-operatives does not come without its own problems. Cherritt cited in Jaffee (1989) raises the issue of welfarism, or the concrete expression of paternalism which is the belief that the less well off in society are like children, unable to look after themselves as a major problem facing local progressive co-operatives. These co-operatives are also burdened with unrealistic and idealistic expectations of what their role should be.

For example, some believe that socialism could be built through multiplying the number of co-operatives in society. Furthermore some of these co-operatives are built on the assumption that it could provide a complete solution to the unemployment problem. Another problem is related to the different expectations of the members. Some members think co-operatives are unable to improve life for those involved while others feel they are an effective tool for raising the living standards, provided they are properly understood and used. Finally, many co-operatives also struggle because for many people co-operatives mean the misappropriation of funds, confidence tricks, swindling and manipulation (Bakuramutsa, 1982).

Apart from the exploitation of members of these co-operatives, the situation is exacerbated by the illiteracy of members. Related to this is the type of co-operative activity which can be undertaken. In the case of producer co-operatives, for example, the principle question is whether the skills that are available to the co-operative members can be successfully and economically combined to produce an item or service needed by the consumer community (Barrett, 1989).

Another problem is gaining access to the money which is necessary to fund the starting up and expansion of these co-operative ventures. Due to an absence of standard guarantees for loans, these co-operatives are often engaged in low capital-risk projects such as clothing, toys and

other handcraft industries, and are, therefore, unable to become financially independent.

Given the degree and nature of skills possessed by prospective co-operative members, and the degree of training in marketing and other areas progressive co-operatives have not been completely successful. Despite these difficulties, these co-operatives are still popular.

While there is this resurgence of interest in progressive co-operatives, as already mentioned, many co-operatives have failed in Africa and South Africa. In fact Africa has been described as a cemetery of co-operatives (Bakuramutsa, 1982), and yet this region would seem to provide an ideal ground for the co-operative. However, very few have succeeded in making any marked improvement in the lives of their members (Bakuramutsa, 1982).

The failure of co-operatives in Africa have been addressed by many researchers (e.g. Bakuramutsa, 1982; Barrett, 1989; Cloete, 1987; Gupta, 1987; Widstrand, 1970), and was the motivation which generated this particular research.

Fundamental reasons for the failure of these progressive co-operatives in South Africa have been put forward as relating to the way in which they have come into being and weaknesses in the management of their finances. Other problems related to this failure have already been mentioned earlier.

Despite these difficulties however, it would seem that the benefits which accrue to the members of co-operative enterprises go beyond the merely economic and extend to individual and community physical and mental health (Barrett, 1989; Collins & Collins, 1984).

A particular problem with co-operatives in Africa and South Africa particularly, is that co-operatives fail to reach their full potential as members frequently fail to fully participate in co-operative action (see Bakuramutsa, 1982). It is this failure to participate by members of co-operatives, which, the researcher believed raised a need for psychological research. The researcher is of the opinion that a possible reason for members failure to participate has arisen out of South Africa's racial history and policy. Since most of these progressive co-operatives are comprised of black South Africans, whose position in society has reduced their role in the determination of their own futures to one of passive acceptance (see Barrett, 1989), failure to participate in these co-operatives is not surprising.

Given this context, the researcher believed that this failure to participate may be psychologically related, therefore providing an opportunity for psychological research to be undertaken. Seligman's theory of learned helplessness is put forward as a possible way of understanding the reason for this failure of members to participate in co-operative activity. As already stated,

these progressive co-operative are comprised of blacks, who form part of the oppressed in this country, and have a lifetime experience of being forced into passive, subservient roles. It is argued that this experience may give rise to a high level of learned helplessness among this group of people which could offer a possible explanation for members failure to participate in co-operatives.

3. FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN THE THEORY AND RESEARCH OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

In this section a brief overview of fundamental issues and research related to learned helplessness and how these issues have developed over time, will be given.

The phrase learned helplessness was first invoked to explain the debilitating escape-avoidance response shown by dogs exposed to inescapable shock in the laboratory (Overmier & Seligman, 1967). Before this interpretation was arrived at, however, experiments proved that a variety of organisms exposed to uncontrollable events often exhibit subsequent disruption of behaviour. Studies were conducted on dogs (Overmier & Seligman, 1967), cats (Masserman, 1971), fish (Padilla, 1973), and rats (Seligman & Beagely, 1975). Learned helplessness was finally extended to account for the debilitated task performance of humans exposed to experimenter-induced failure (Hiroto, 1974; Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Miller & Seligman, 1975).

Work on learned helplessness proliferated under the leadership of Seligman and he broadened the scope of learned helplessness to include child development and human behaviours such as reactive depression, stomach ulcers and voodoo deaths (Seligman, 1975). Inadequacies in the application of the learned helplessness model to humans, however, led to a number of reformulations (see Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Miller & Norman, 1979), each of which introduced attributional concepts as mediators between the perception of non-contingency and the expectation

regarding future contingencies.

More recent work with humans and learned helplessness have revealed that loss of self-control seems to represent the core of the helplessness experience (Mikulincer & Caspy, 1986). Other researchers who have confirmed that learned helplessness occurs in humans include Hiroto and Seligman (1975), Klein, Fencil-Morse and Seligman (1976) and Miller and Seligman (1975).

Before attention is turned to the reformulated model of learned helplessness, on which this research is based, a brief overview of the original model will be given, including the limitations which led to its revision.

3.1. The Original Model

While various hypotheses have been proposed (see Maier & Seligman, 1976, for a review) to explain the debilitating effects of experience with uncontrollability, only the learned helplessness hypothesis (Maier & Seligman, 1976; Maier, Seligman & Solomon, 1969; Seligman, 1975; Seligman et al., 1971) provided a unified theoretical framework integrating the animal and human data.

The cornerstone of this theory rests on the observation that when an animal or person is faced with an outcome that is independent of his/her responses s/he learns that the outcome is independent of his/her responses. Behaviourally,

this exposure tends to diminish the initiation of responses to control the outcome; cognitively, it produces a belief in the inefficacy of responding, and when the outcome is traumatic, it produces great anxiety, followed by depression. This theory therefore, accounts for a motivational deficit, cognitive distortion and for an emotional disturbance.

It is, therefore, apparent that a motivational deficit occurs when a person has learned that relief is independent of responding; the expectation that responding will produce relief is negated, and response initiation wanes. Cognitive disturbance occurs when a person learns that an outcome is independent of a response and results in the person having, subsequently, greater difficulty in learning that responses produce that outcome. Response-outcome independence is believed to be learned actively and, like any other active form of learning, interferes with learning about contingencies that contradict it. For this reason it is particularly difficult to overcome this deficit. With regard to an emotional disturbance, when a traumatic event first occurs, it causes an increased state of emotionality that can loosely be called fear. This state continues until one of two things happen: if the subject believes that the trauma can be controlled, fear is reduced and may disappear altogether; or if the subject believes the trauma cannot be controlled, fear will be decreased and be replaced with depression (Seligman, 1975).

These deficits and the model of learned helplessness were derived from studies using a basic triadic design. In a typical study, subjects received a training phase followed by a test phase. In the training phase, subjects were exposed to a training task, in which they received one of the following: (a) contingent reinforcement, (b) non-contingent reinforcement, or (c) no treatment. After the training phase the performance of the three groups were compared on a test task, in which reinforcement is contingent for all groups. Learned helplessness occurred when the subjects receiving non-contingent reinforcement in the training phase showed deficits in the test phase relative to the contingent and control groups. Thus, learned helplessness refers to behavioural deficits produced by exposure to non-contingent outcomes.

This basic triadic design used in these experiments showed that humans and animals learn about the independence of outcomes and responses, and form expectations concerning this. This can best be illustrated by way of an example. In the study by Seligman and Maier (1967), only yoked dogs became helpless, while the dogs who could escape by panel pressing and the dogs who were not shocked did not become helpless. It is clear that something happened to the dogs who received shock independently of their responses, and they learned that responding was futile and therefore expected future responding to shock to be futile.

This original theory has three basic components: (1) information about the contingency, (2) cognitive representation of the contingency (learning, expectation, perception, belief), (3) behaviour.

According to the theory, people must begin with information about the contingency of the outcome upon response. The information about the contingency must be processed and transformed into a cognitive representation of the contingency relationship, which is called the expectation that responding and an outcome are independent. The expectation is the causal condition for the motivational, cognitive, and emotional debilitation that accompanies helplessness. Mere exposure to the information is insufficient, a person can be exposed to situations in which an outcome and response are independent, yet they need not form such an expectation. An example of this is immunisation where a person learns in one setting, in the office, he has control, and becomes helpless in another place, a train; he will discriminate between the different controllability of the two contexts (see Seligman, 1975). Conversely, a person can become helpless without being exposed to the contingency as such; they can merely be told that they are helpless (Seligman, 1975).

Historically, the learned helplessness hypothesis was formulated before helplessness experiments were performed with human subjects. This resulted in a number of

limitations with the theory when it was applied to humans.

The two main limitations with the original model, as applied to humans, were that, firstly, it could not account for boundary conditions, that is what determines chronicity and the generality of helplessness. Secondly, the model also did not explain the loss of self-esteem frequently observed among depressives, that is , why do individuals blame themselves for events over which they perceive they have no control? (Peterson & Seligman, 1984).

Furthermore, Miller and Norman (1979) found this original model no longer offered a viable explanation for the results of research at the time. They found that various aspects of learned helplessness could not be explained by this model. Firstly, no clarity existed about the necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of learned helplessness. Secondly, the theory seemed inadequate in relation to other factors that affect learned helplessness such as how, why and when variables such as instructions, task importance and subjects' attributions effect learned helplessness. Thirdly, with respect to generalisation, the theory failed to define the processes and circumstances under which learned helplessness transfers to other situations.

Moreover, criticisms have also been levelled at the research conducted on this basis of theory. The theory seemed to be plagued by a narrowness of approach, in the sense that, the

main emphasis of the theory had been considerably neglected. Seligman hypothesised that the cognitive expectancy of response-outcome independence, not the actual experience of exposure to those conditions, produced learned helplessness. Further criticisms argued that Seligman's theory contributed to the neglect because it failed to elaborate on the cognitive processes and variables relevant to learned helplessness. A possible reason for this inadequacy may lie in the origins of the learned helplessness paradigms in animal research. Finally learned helplessness has been conceptualised mainly as a situational paradigm, and it is contended that the situational view of human behaviour does not adequately explain learned helplessness (Munton, 1985).

As a result of increasing dissatisfaction with the adequacy of theoretical constructs originating in learned helplessness among animals for understanding helplessness in humans, researchers began to offer revisions of the original model. Abramson et al. (1978) and Miller and Norman (1979) both offered an attributional framework to eliminate the shortcomings of the original model. While the research by these two sets of authors was conducted independently of each other, very similar conclusions were drawn. Abramson et al.'s (1978) revision, however, is considered the reformulated model and for this reason, while Miller and Norman's contributions will be noted, the discussion will centre around Abramson et al.'s (1978) revisions of the original model.

3.2. The Reformulated Model

In an attempt to address the two main shortcomings of the original learned helplessness model, Abramson et al. (1978) revised the theory to include the individuals causal explanations of the original bad events. In terms of this revision, when people face uncontrollable bad events, they ask why. Their answer affects how they react to the events.

Abramson et al. (1978) argued that three explanatory dimensions are relevant. First, the cause may be something about the person (internal explanation), or it may be something about the situation (external explanation). Second, the cause may be a factor that persists across time (stable factor), or it may be transient (unstable factor). Third, the cause may affect a variety of outcomes (global explanation), or it may be limited just to the event of concern (specific explanation). Peterson and Seligman (1984) present a Table of examples of these types of explanations as they might be made about a bad event such as "My checking account is overdrawn." (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 Examples of Causal Explanations for an Event
My checking account is overdrawn.

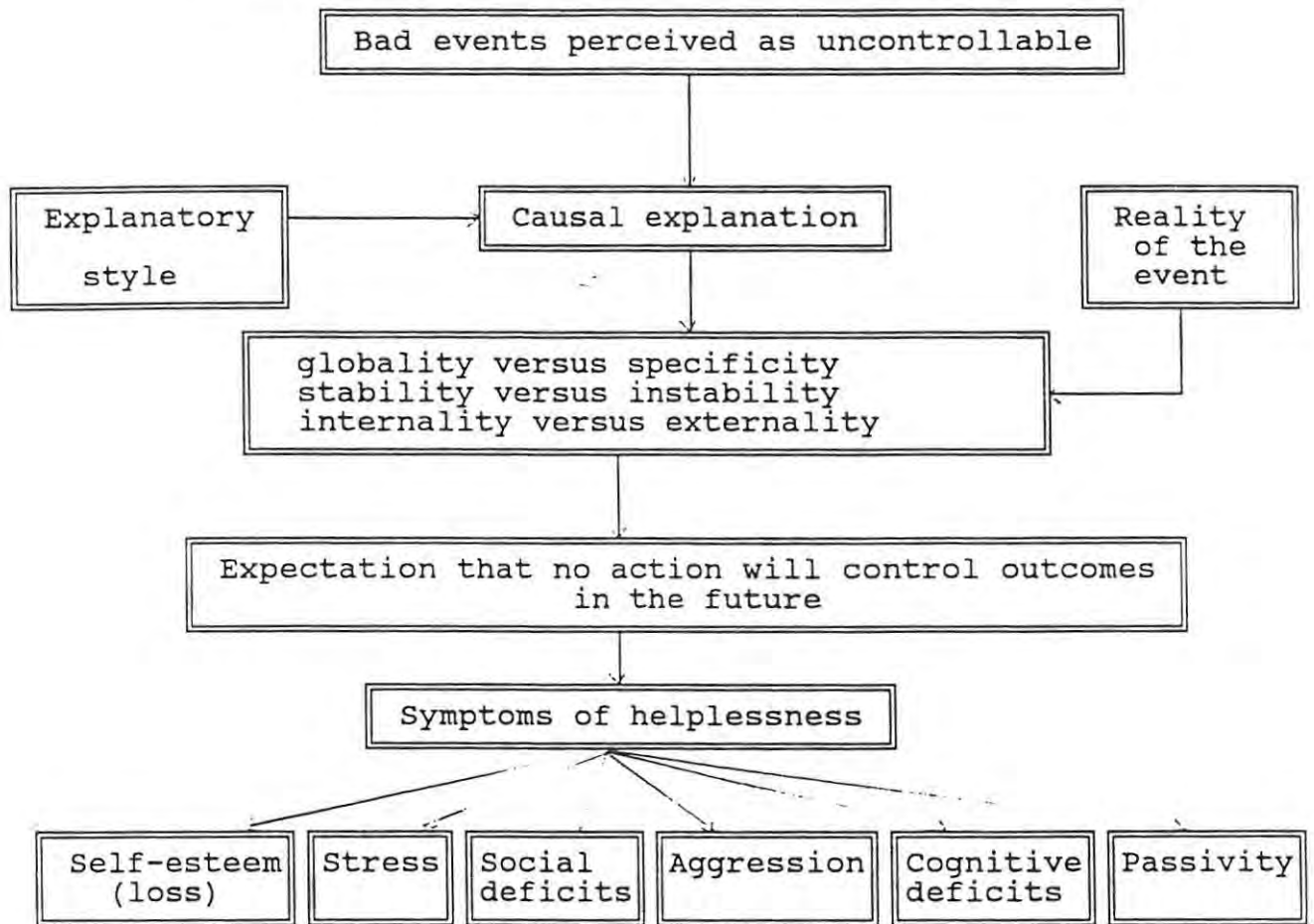
		Explanation	
Style		Internal	External
Stable	Global	"I'm incapable of doing anything right".	"All institutions chronically make mistakes".
	Specific	"I always have trouble figuring my balance".	"This bank has always used antiquated techniques".
Unstable	Global	"I've had the flu for a few weeks, and I've let everything slide".	"Holiday shopping demands that one throw oneself into it".
	Specific	"The one time I didn't enter a cheque is the one time my account gets overdrawn".	"I'm surprised - my bank has never made an error before".

The reformulation assigns particular roles to each of these three dimensions. Internality of causal beliefs effects self-esteem loss following bad events. If the person explained a bad event by an internal factor, then self-esteem loss is more likely to occur. If the person explains the event by an external factor, then self-esteem loss is less likely to occur. Stability of causal beliefs affects the chronicity of helplessness following bad events. If a bad event is explained by a cause that persists, depressive reactions to that event tend to persist. If the event is explained by a transient factor, then helplessness reactions tend to be short-lived. Finally, globality of causal beliefs influences the pervasiveness of deficits

following bad events. If one believes that a global factor has caused a bad event, then helplessness deficits tend to occur in a variety of different situations. If one believes that a more specific factor is the cause, the deficits tend to be circumscribed (Peterson and Seligman, 1984).

At this stage it is important to point out that in terms of the reformulation, an internal explanation for a bad event is said to make self-esteem loss more likely, but not to cause self-esteem loss. It is important to understand that explanations and explanatory styles, are not sufficient to produce depressive or helpless deficits but rather are risk factors for such deficits (Abramson et al., 1978).

In the reformulated model of learned helplessness and depression it is, therefore, the kinds of causal attributions made by individuals for their lack of control over events and outcomes that determines whether or not their self-esteem will be lowered, and the extent to which their symptoms of helplessness and depression will generalise across situations and time (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Process of Learned Helplessness

In Figure 1, the relationship among variables in the theory is diagrammed. The general process by which the symptoms of helplessness are produced are explained in this Figure. These symptoms are passivity, cognitive deficits, aggression, social deficits and stress. Furthermore, the symptom of self-esteem loss is sometimes one of the symptoms of helplessness.

In both the original and the reformulated learned helplessness theory, the expectation that no action will

control outcomes in the future is a sufficient condition for the production of all these symptoms of helplessness except self-esteem loss. This expectation is represented in the center of Figure 1. These symptoms will develop wherever and whenever this expectation occurs. Therefore, of paramount importance is how other processes and events conspire to bring about this expectation, resulting in the symptoms of helplessness. This expectation is usually initiated when bad events are perceived as uncontrollable. The content of the expectation is influenced by the reality of the bad uncontrollable event.

Explanation and explanatory style also influence the expectation that no action will control outcomes in the future (see Figure 1). Explanations involving global causes tend to produce the expectation that action will not control many outcomes, which in turn produce the symptoms of helplessness in exactly that large range of situations. In the same way if the cause is explained by stable factors, the expectation tends to occur for a long time in the future, and therefore, the symptoms of helplessness are long-lasting. If the explanation for a bad event is internal, then the symptom of lowered self-esteem tends to be evident. Therefore, the particular explanation the individual makes for a bad event will determine the generality and time course of the helplessness symptoms, as well as the loss of self-esteem.

The model describes two influences on the chosen explanation. Firstly, the reality of the bad events themselves. If the bad event that results in the expectation of helplessness is the death of a significant other, this is a stable and global loss. Secondly, an explanation may be influenced by the habitual tendency to choose certain kinds of explanations for bad versus good events. Peterson and Seligman (1984) have identified individual patterns in the selection of causes over a variety of events, which they have termed the explanatory style. A helpless and depressive explanatory style is seen as one which tends to give internal, stable and global explanations for bad events.

Having explained the variables portrayed in the diagram, the writer hoped that it would be apparent why a particular explanation or explanatory style is insufficient for the symptoms of helplessness to appear. These variables influence the expectation, but it is the expectation which is sufficient.

The reformulated theory is built around attribution theory. Succinctly stated, attribution theory described the set of theoretical principles proposed to explain the way in which individuals drew causal inferences about one another's behaviour. While these principles have only recently been drawn together to form a cohesive theoretical framework, attribution theory has its origins in the work of Heider (1944, 1958) on phenomenal causality. The term attribution has been used in many ways. For some people, attributions

are regarded as the stated beliefs that compose an individual's naïve psychology (Heider, 1958), while for others, attributions have tacit components (Wortman & Dintzer, 1978). In this study, Peterson and Seligman's (1984) definition of attribution is employed. That is, attribution is regarded as a hypothetical construct, a way of explaining observable behaviours.

By using the attributional framework in the revised model, the problems of chronicity and generality were overcome. This was done by specifically measuring stable and global attributions. The reformulation attempted to identify helpless persons who view skill tasks as skill tasks, and not as chance. This identification allowed for a distinction between those who are personally helpless and those who are universally helpless. The relation of uncontrollability to failure was also clarified with this new model.

3.3. A Review of an Attributional Analysis of Learned Helplessness and of Research into Learned Helplessness

Munton (1985) claims that irrespective of which area of research one refers to, it is impossible to find unequivocal support for the reformulated model. Reviewing all the research done in this area, he states that the results are less supportive of the reformulated model than has been claimed. In particular, the data concerning the central and most crucial dimension of the learned helplessness model, the internal-external dichotomy, have been demonstrated to be the least robust. While the researcher will review some criticisms of the reformulated theory, it must be noted that

in the researcher's review of research findings strong support was found for the reformulated model (see section 3.4.), and while the criticisms will be noted the researcher believes, based on the research reviewed, that the attributional analysis is a viable framework within which to measure learned helplessness.

In terms of an attributional analysis of learned helplessness Wortman and Dintzer (1978) examined issues relating to the attributions people make. While Abramson et al.(1978) have maintained that "when a person finds that he is helpless, he asks why he is helpless" (p50), other investigators have noted (Bem, 1972) that the assumption that people make attributions cannot be accepted at face value.

Furthermore, Abramson et al. (1978) argued that when individuals are confronted with an uncontrollable outcome, they make an attribution about its cause and show certain predictable deficits in subsequent behaviour. Wortman and Dintzer (1978) argued that there were many more kinds of levels of attributions than are reflected in the authors' taxonomy.

Reviews of attribution theory (see Kelly & Michele, 1980 cited in Munton, 1985) suggested that the reformulation ignored important variables. Munton (1985) suggested that causal beliefs not only affect attributions made for specific events, but they also affect the intake and use of

causally relevant information. The principle here is that the relationship between prior beliefs and new experiences involves a sequential process in which the prior structures both affect and are themselves affected by them.

In Abramson et al's. (1978) formal statement of the reformulated model (see their Figure 1. and pp 52 and 53), a relationship between the nature of a person's attribution for the inability to influence an outcome (internal-external, stable-unstable, or global-specific), expectations of future control over that outcome, and subsequent deficits have been hypothesised.

According to Wortman and Dintzer (1978) the dimensions of attribution that were selected by the researchers as the most important ones in predicting the nature and magnitude of future deficits might not be as important as whether such attributions are controllable or not. Secondly, they believe there are certain characteristics of the outcome, such as whether it was expected or unexpected and whether subjects were able to find meaning in the outcome, that can affect the magnitude of deficits. Finally, the researchers believe Abramson et al's. (1978) analysis has failed to answer questions such as how the various cognitive, affective and motivational decrements are related to one another.

At this point the researcher would like to review research using this theory, to demonstrate that it provided a valid measure of learned helplessness, particularly concerning

learned helplessness in humans.

The existence of learned helplessness in humans, as previously mentioned, has been shown to exist. Research on humans has highlighted individual differences with regard to susceptibility of learned helplessness (Dweck & Goetz, 1978; Dweck & Licht, 1980; Dweck & Wortman, 1982; Fincham & Cain, 1986; Finkelstein & Ramsey, 1977; and Metalsky & Abramson, 1981).

From these studies several hypotheses can be formulated regarding the process whereby individual differences in learned helplessness emerge. The first hypothesis relates to those people with a history of failure. Research indicates that these people are continuously exposed to events in which they have no control over the outcome (Canino, 1981). A second hypothesis is that different performance feedback is responsible for individual differences in learned helplessness. In other words, the feedback people receive from others around them, has an effect on how learned helpless they will be (Dweck, Davidson, Nelson & Enna, 1978). A third hypothesis is that children acquire the attributional style of a significant other through modelling. According to this hypothesis there should be a positive correlation between the attributions typically made by the significant other and by the child. Seligman et al. (1984) provided some data consistent with this hypothesis. A fourth hypothesis is that children's attributional styles stem from the attribution which significant others typically

make for the child's behaviour. In other words, children are taught, implicitly or explicitly, to make the same attributions for their behaviour as those made by significant others for the child's behaviour (Fincham & Cain, 1985).

All these studies provide unambiguous support for the fact that parents directly teach children the attribution by which to explain their own behaviour. While these conclusions cannot be drawn with confidence, at this stage, they provide support for this particular study.

Later research in this area has also extended the learned helplessness paradigm to groups. In principle not only can all the voluntary actions of one individual be futile, but so can the concerted actions of two or more individuals. The question then is, can a group learn to become helpless? Up until Simkin, Lederer and Seligman (1983), the entire helplessness experimental literature involved single subjects, be they human or animal. Yet speculation of this phenomenon did extend to interpersonal relations, families, races and even nations (see Garber & Seligman, 1980).

Simkin et al. (1983) set out to determine if the standard helplessness procedure used with individuals could be applied with similar results to two or more people acting in concert. They discovered learned helplessness could be produced in groups as well. When two persons acting together learned that their joint efforts were to no avail in

turning off noise (group pre-treatment), they later escaped poorly in concert when noise was actually escapable. The difference in this instance from individual training experiments however, was that while impairing performance, it did not make the individuals feel more depressed as is the case when individuals are made helpless with inescapable noise (Miller & Norman, 1979). At this point, Simkin et al. (1983) tentatively suggested that group helplessness is mediated by the same mechanism as individual helplessness.

A further point of concern examined by Simkin et al. (1983) was whether helplessness was transferred from groups to individuals and from individuals to groups. Their interpretation of this question was done in attributional terms (Abramson et al., 1978). During typical individual helplessness training, an individual often attributes failure to a relatively internal cause such as his/her own incompetence. While more external attributions can be made, they are usually less frequent (Abramson et al., 1978). During group helplessness training, the presence of a co-worker explicitly allows more room for a more external attribution. The researchers therefore speculated that group helplessness training produced more external attributions than does individual helplessness training.

Simkin et al. (1983) also suggested that people form expectations about the ineffectiveness of their joint responses, as well as about their individual responses. They further suggest that an expectation that joint action will

be ineffective lowers the probability that joint action will be initiated, and makes it more difficult for these people to learn that their actions have succeeded.

Up until this point, the researcher has focused on the process of learned helplessness and the conditions under which such a phenomenon manifests itself in humans. It is perhaps appropriate at this point to move onto conditions under which this phenomenon could be prevented or reduced.

Hoy (1986) suggested practical ways whereby learned helplessness could be prevented or reduced. These include the following: sharing responsibilities; sharing information on the strengths and weaknesses; learning self-advocacy; learning decision-making (this is vital since research demonstrates that the mere illusion of choice and control can enhance performance, Perlmutter & Monty, 1977, 1979); setting goals and solving problems (which fosters growth of independence); modelling responses (some people may need specific training in how to reinforce themselves for effort and self-control); and changing attitudes (introduce opportunities for changing counter-productive attitudes).

3.5 Learned Helplessness and Co-operative Participation in South Africa

Having stated the conditions under which learned helplessness occurs and can be prevented, the researcher would like to propose why it is expected that high levels of learned helplessness would be present in co-operative members and why the co-operative structure is expected to

reduce the high level of learned helplessness.

Researchers have indicated that the learned helplessness experience is centred around loss of self-control. It is argued that oppressed groups in South Africa respond passively to most circumstances within which they find themselves, and this response has been interpreted in terms of the learned helplessness theory (Gordon, 1985). Furthermore, action on the oppressed groups' part in the past was able to bring about little, if any, markable change in their circumstances (van der Spuy & Shamley, 1978). It is, therefore, proposed that they hold the belief that nothing they can do will have an effect on the outcome. Having given this description of co-operative members past experience, it is apparent, with respect to issues raised in this chapter, that it encapsulates the cornerstone of what comprises the learned helplessness theory, namely, that when a person is faced with an outcome that is independent of his/her responses, s/he learns that the outcome is independent of his/her responses. This will result in a lower initiation of responding to control the outcome. Given the joint experience of the South African oppressed groups, and having reviewed the basic tenants of the learned helplessness theory, the researcher believes that it is reasonable to expect a high level of learned helplessness within these individuals. Moreover, because of South Africa's racial policy, the researcher believes that as a group, the oppressed groups have learned to become helpless. This could be a possible reason why the failure to

participate actively in the co-operative is such a general response in progressive co-operatives in South Africa. It is, therefore, argued that people enter the co-operative with a general life experience which tends toward an existence of a high level of learned helplessness. If the co-operative, however, provides opportunities for control it is expected that their degree of learned helplessness will change.

Juxtaposing Hoy's (1986) views on how learned helplessness could be prevented with the goals and ideals of the co-operative movement as outlined in Chapter 2, leads one to expect that the co-operative structure creates opportunities for its members to take greater control over events in their lives. For this reason it is believed that active involvement in the co-operative would lead to a decrease in the levels of learned helplessness.

Against this background, a study to investigate the levels of learned helplessness within active and passive members of progressive co-operatives would be valuable. The inclusion of an analysis of whether levels of learned helplessness will decrease if members are increasingly allowed to take control of their lives would also generate insights.

It is proposed that these objectives could be fulfilled by using the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ). This measuring instrument was developed on the basis of the reformulated model of learned helplessness. The ASQ was

developed by Seligman et al. (1979) to measure explanations/attributions and attributional styles in terms of the reformulated model. This self-report instrument measures individual attributions of the causes of good and bad events in terms of internal versus external, stable versus unstable, and global versus specific causes. The decision to employ the ASQ as the measuring instrument in this study is a logical choice since it enables the identification of degrees of internality, stability and globality yielding attributional styles which are central to the reformulated model. For a more detailed description of the ASQ, refer to Chapter 4.

4. THE STUDY

4.1. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- To examine the validity of the construct "learned helplessness" in the South African context.
- To investigate whether a difference exists in the extent of learned helplessness between active and passive members within progressive co-operatives.
- To articulate the effect that extended co-operative membership has on learned helplessness.
- By carrying out research of this nature, to create awareness at broader societal levels with the aim of generating greater interest in co-operatives which the researcher believes to be relevant alternative structures for work, unemployment and personal growth.

These objectives the researcher will hope to realise by examining the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses 1: Passive co-operative members will have higher levels of learned helplessness than active members.

Hypotheses 2: The level of learned helplessness will decrease as the length of co-operative members involvement increases.

4.2. The Sample

4.2.1. Pilot study

The measuring techniques were tested on 15 respondents. These respondents had similar backgrounds and characteristics to the sample used in the main study. They were drawn from the same socio-economic, language and ethnic group and had a similar educational level and experienced living in the same geographical region. The only difference between this sample and the one used in the main study was that these subjects were not drawn from a co-operative but were

working in the formal sector.

4.2.2. Main study

The sample for the main study was drawn from six progressive co-operatives drawn from the Eastern Cape. All these co-operatives reported problems regarding participation of members in co-operation.

Three of the six co-operatives - co-operatives A, B and C - form part of one large co-operative organisation under the management of a board made up of members from each co-operative. This board also has a sales division which is responsible for selling the goods produced by these co-operatives. These 3 co-operatives are involved in the production of ceramics, pottery, jewellery, toys and screenpainting. Of all the co-operatives used in this study, these three co-operatives are the largest and also the oldest. They have been functioning for over four years and could be said to be the most successful of all the co-operatives included in this study, even though these co-operatives have not overcome issues such as the failure of members to actively participate. While it has been said that these co-operatives are the most successful, it must be borne in mind that this is relative to the other co-operatives included in the study. Generally, this group still relies on funding from an outside body. The difference between these co-operatives and the other co-operatives is, however, that the members have realised a

need to train themselves and have regular meetings dealing with internal problems including a weekly session with a psychologist. These members also report marked changes in their personal growth, in terms of taking responsibility for their actions and their work. They believe that this is directly related to their active involvement in the co-operative. From these co-operatives thirty members formed part of the total sample used in this study.

The fourth co-operative - co-operative D - is mainly concerned with the production of clothing and jerseys which are sold locally. It also has a section where electrical equipment is repaired, where shoes are made and repaired as well as a section for herbal remedies. This co-operative is also funded by an external body and cannot be regarded as financially self-supportive. Furthermore, virtually none of its members have realised a need for any training. It has been in operation for more than 18 months. The educational level of this co-operative, is very similar to that of co-operatives A, B and C described in the previous paragraph. From this co-operative 13 members formed part of the sample utilised in this study.

The fifth co-operative - co-operative E - is very small in comparison to co-operatives A, B, C and D. This co-operative only has one form of production, and that is the making and erecting of wire fences. The initiative to set up this co-operative came from a local welfare society and which provided the source of initial funding for the

project. Whereas co-operatives A ,B , C and D have both sexes working for them, co-operative E comprises only of middle-aged males. This co-operative was only one month old, and all its members have only primary education. From this co-operative, five members were included in the sample.

The final co-operative - co-operative F - included in this study was also the smallest. The characteristics of this co-operative are very similar to co-operative E in that it only has one form of production, namely the making of leather shoes. The establishment of this co-operative is also an initiative of the same welfare organisation which set up co-operative E. This is also the only co-operative which did not have its own work premises - production was done at home. This co-operative was 6 months old and the members have a similar educational level to co-operative E in the previous paragraph. Both the members of this co-operative were included in this sample.

As already mentioned, the sample of this study comprises of 50 members drawn from six co-operatives in the same geographical region. All the members of the six co-operatives who indicated a willingness to participate were utilised. They are all black South Africans. The only criterion for inclusion was that they had to be full-time members and willing to participate in the study.

TABLE 2. Sample Characteristics

VARIABLE	MEAN	RANGE
Age	31.8	20-67
Education (Std.)	5	0-10
Length of co-operative involvement (in months)	18.7	1-48

4.3. Method and Measuring Instruments

4.3.1. Methodological considerations

Since the sample utilised in this study was largely non-literate special methodological considerations were incorporated into the design.

The researcher used a standardised questionnaire, the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), and an interview. Nachmias and Nachmias (1981) have done a comparison between the personal interview and the mail questionnaire, highlighting both the advantages and the disadvantages. Taking their comparison into account the researcher has looked for a method which could adequately fulfil the following requirements:

- access a large stratified sample;
- include the least amount of biasing error possible;
- result in a high response rate;
- and provide an opportunity to ensure a complete understanding of the questionnaire by the subjects.

Based on this, it was proposed that an amalgamation of the two methods be employed. A standardised questionnaire (ASQ) was used and administered in the form of a personal interview.

4.3.2. The Participation Index

To distinguish between active and passive members, an index was constructed. Since no appropriate index was available, the researcher had to develop an index of the degree of participation in co-operative activities in consultation with co-operative management.

The researcher approached the various co-operative managements and requested that they identify several activities which were indicative of membership participation. A number of activities were identified and management was asked to rate them in order of importance. The final index comprised those ten activities considered to be the most important by the six co-operative managements (see Appendix A.1).

4.3.3. The Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ)

The ASQ was used in this study because it measures attributional style and its use makes it possible to differentiate between those that suffer from learned helplessness and those that do not. It yields scores for individual differences in the tendencies to attribute the causes of bad and good events to internal-external,

stable-unstable and global-specific factors. It was considered inadequate to provide subjects with possible causes that would correspond to the dimensions of concern because such an operationalisation has been problematical. Firstly since there is no guarantee that an attribution regarded by an attributional theorist as unstable is so regarded by all subjects. Secondly, Abramson et al. (1978) argued that ability, effort, luck and task difficulty are theoretically orthogonal to the global-specific distinction. As a result of these difficulties, the researchers decided to ask the subjects to generate their own cause for each of the events. By doing this, the format does not constrain or create the causal attributions made by the subject.

The ASQ is constructed at 4 different levels (see Table 3). At the first level, there are 12 events. The second level concerns the good and bad outcomes. Both the good and bad outcomes are comprised of six events each, giving a total of 12 events. At the third level, both the good and bad outcomes have achievement and affiliative goal areas. There are three events of each in the good outcomes, and three events of each in the bad outcomes. In other words, there are both achievement and affiliative goal areas in both good and bad outcomes. At the fourth level, each subject has to generate a cause for the event. This cause is scored in terms of the three dimensions, internal-external, stable-unstable, global-specific, along a seven-point scale. Below is a breakdown of the ASQ in terms of good/bad outcomes and achievement/affiliative goal areas

(see Appendix A.2. for the version of the ASQ used in this study).

TABLE 3. A Breakdown of Events on the ASQ(Peterson et al., 1982, p291)

Outcome	Goal Area	Events ¹
Good	Achievement	You become rich. (3) You apply for a position that you want badly (e.g., important job) and you get it.(10) You get a raise.(12)
Good	Affiliation	You meet a friend who compliments you on your appearance.(1) You do a project that is highly praised.(6) Your spouse (boyfriend/ girlfriend) has been treating you more lovingly.(9)
Bad	Achievement	You have been looking for a job unsuccessfully for some time.(2) You give an important talk in front of a group and the audience reacts negatively.(5) You can't get all the work done that others expect of you.(8)
Bad	Affiliation	A friend comes to you with a problem and you don't try to help.(4) You meet a friend who acts hostilely toward you.(7) You go out on a date and it goes badly.(11)

¹ numbers in parentheses refer to the order of events on the ASQ

The ASQ was translated into Xhosa to make it more accessible to the sample (see section 4.3.4. for more detail).

4.3.4. The Translation of the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ)

Given the nature of the sample used in this study, that is a sample that is mostly non-literate, with low educational levels, drawn from a cultural background which is different to the culture for which the ASQ was intended and whose mother tongue is not English, the researcher decided to translate the ASQ into the sample's own language, Xhosa. The back-translation method (Brislin, 1970) was used and terms had to be made more appropriate to the Black South African context to improve the validity of the ASQ within this context.

Brislin (1970) indicates that context and redundancy in the original language version have major effects on the quality of the translated version. Back-translation is described as a researcher preparing material in one language and asking a bilingual to translate it into another language (target language). A second individual independently translates the material back into the original language. The researcher then has two original language forms to examine, and without knowledge of the target language, is able to make a sound judgement about the quality of the translation.

Brislin (1970) suggests that back-translation can give successful results in many languages. He refers to a study where all languages under study, gave a total of 16 errors

or less. For this reason, the researcher is confident that the steps suggested by Brislin (1970) would yield a more than satisfactory translation.

The following steps were taken when the ASQ was translated:

- 1) Some words in the original English version of the ASQ were changed. For example, compliments in the first situation was changed to praised; position in situation 10 was changed to post and similar changes were made to other situations. This was done to facilitate the translation process.
- 2) A Xhosa-speaking second year psychology student was employed to translate the ASQ into Xhosa. She was competent in both English and Xhosa (studied both languages at university).
- 3) A second translator was employed to translate from the target language (Xhosa), to the source (English). This translator proved to be equally well equipped - Xhosa was her mother-tongue, and she was studying at an English university. At this point the researcher was able to judge the translation. A number of changes were made to the English version to accomodate the Xhosa version (there was not always an appropriate Xhosa word for the English word). Some of the changes include:

- Instead of asking the respondent to "write down the major cause", it was changed to "write down the main reason for this".
 - "You have been looking for a job unsuccessfully for some time", was changed to "you have been looking for a job for some time with no success".
 - "You do a project which is highly praised" was changed to "you are doing something that you are highly praised for".
- 4) A third translator with a similar background to the other two translators, was asked to translate the original ASQ to the target language.
 - 5) A fourth translator was then asked to translate the ASQ from the target language back to the source. As a result, several changes were brought about.
 - 6) Once these changes were made, the translated ASQ was pretested on target language-speaking people (pilot study) who had similar characteristics to the actual research sample (i.e. education, age e.t.c.). This produced further changes and resulted in the version of the ASQ presented in Appendix A.2.

It was discovered that some of the words in the source language were too complex and while there were appropriate words in Xhosa, they were not commonly used and therefore most of the sample (not highly educated) did not understand it. Some examples include the situation, "your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) has been treating you more lovingly".

The word "spouse" had to be changed to a more common word such as "lover". Another example is found in the situation "you meet a friend who acts hostilely towards you". The sample had difficulty understanding the Xhosa translation, so the interviewers had to paraphrase the situation - "your friend is nasty to you".

4.3.5. Reliability

The discussion in this section concerns reliability related to the ASQ, used in studies other than the present study.

Peterson et al. (1982) report respectable alpha coefficients of 0.75 and 0.72 for the composite attributional style scales for good events and bad events, respectively. The six-item sub-scales reflecting separate attributional dimensions had a alpha coefficient of 0.54. At the finest level of analysis the affiliative and achievement goal areas did not attain sufficient reliability to make them useful in future research (mean alpha was 0.38; range 0.21 to 0.53). Ratings for internality, stability and globality for achievement events were significantly correlated with the respective ratings for affiliation events. The correlations had a mean of 0.37 and a range from 0.23 to 0.59 (all p 's < 0.05). The correlations match the reliabilities of the respective sub-scales and therefore, no evidence exists for a discrimination of achievement from affiliation goal areas. Peterson et al. (1982) encourage other researchers to avoid such a distinction, unless there is a specific interest in comparing correlations of achievement and affiliation goal

areas to external criterion that distinctly pertain to each of these goal areas. Furthermore, researchers are counselled that the predictive quality of the ASQ is improved by using composites collapsed across goal areas rather than separate sub-scales, if only one type of external criterion is used.

Peterson et al. (1982) discovered that good and bad attributional style composites were unrelated but cautioned the researcher not to underscore the importance of dividing the data along these lines. The individual attribution dimensions for good events were intercorrelated at a level near that of their reliabilities. It therefore appears that this questionnaire failed to distinguish between the attribution dimensions. The three dimensions for bad events were more distinctive. A possible reason for this result is that people make fewer distinctions among good events since they may not spend as much time thinking over them as they do over bad events.

Peterson and Seligman (1984) suggest a calculation of composite scores for good and bad events should improve reliability. They record improved reliabilities of 0.75 and 0.72.

While an acceptable level of reliability can be achieved, it is clear that the reliability of the ASQ as a measure cannot be taken for granted, especially when it involves the use of small samples.

In this study, the sub-scales of achievement and affiliation have been collapsed into one scale following the advice of Peterson et al. (1982). To improve the predictive quality of the ASQ composites collapsed across goal areas have been utilised.

4.3.6. Validity

Peterson and Seligman (1984) refer to two unpublished reports, concerning criterion validity. In the first study (Peterson, Belles and Seligman, 1982) respondents were asked to write about the two worst events involving themselves. These respondents were then asked to complete the ASQ. The written material was then read by a researcher and statements considered to be attributions were extracted. This study produced correlations between the extracted attributions and ASQ scores from 0.41 ($p < 0.001$) for the internal subscale, 0.19 for the stable subscale, and 0.23 for the global subscale.

The same experimental technique was employed in a second (unpublished) study (Cassellon, Ollove and Seligman, 1982). From this study, the composite scores for bad events obtained by this method correlated with the ASQ scores for bad events as predicted ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.02$).

Although results from these two studies support the notion of spontaneous explanation with ASQ scores, because only two spontaneous explanations per respondent were elicited, firm

conclusions regarding the criterion validity of the ASQ cannot be made with confidence.

While evidence discussed indicates that it would be unjustified to dismiss the ASQ as a measure of attributions altogether, the specific areas where the validity and reliability are weakest must be noted. The dimension of internality consistently yields the weakest coefficients for the subscale of bad events, suggesting that Seligman et. al's (1978) definition of that dimension is the least robust.

Arntz, Gerlsma and Abersnagel (1985) raise various assumptions underlying the ASQ which are largely implicit. They question whether (a) people do in general have the ability to imagine all kinds of situations, even if they never experienced them, and whether they can reliably and validly describe how they would react in reality, (b) people make explicit causal inferences of their own accord and not because of experimental demands? (c) people usually attribute an outcome to only one cause? (d) the selected situations are sufficiently relevant to generate reliable and valid scores for a wide range of subjects? Moreover, to complete the ASQ, they argue, seems to require quite some imagination, introspective abilities and intelligence.

While Arntz et al. (1985) raise doubts about core issues concerning the ASQ, the researcher believes, based on studies reviewed by Peterson and Seligman (1984), Peterson et

al.(1982) and others, that the ASQ has been an accurate measure in many studies and is therefore confident in its ability to measure learned helplessness in humans.

4.4. Administration Procedure

As already mentioned, the population of this study was drawn from six co-operatives in the same geographical region. Originally seven co-operatives were approached and informed about the aim of this research after which they were given approximately three months to discuss the idea with members of the various co-operatives and reach a decision. Six of the co-operatives responded in the affirmative and were subsequently used in this research. The services of two black translators, from the same ethnic group as those in the co-operatrive, were used in this study. They were not part of any co-operative and were equally fluent in both English and Xhosa. This study was conducted during the first half of 1989.

4.4.1. Pilot study

This study comprised 15 subjects with similar backgrounds and characteristics as the main sample. The ASQ was administered in the form of an interview in Xhosa. There were two interviewers, both were non co-operative members. Each interview was conducted individually and took approximately 60 minutes to complete.

Some changes were made to the questionnaire because this sample experienced difficulties with some of the words (see section 4.8). A major problem discovered was that the sample could not easily understand the scaling method (refer to section 4.8).

4.4.2. Biographical Data

All subjects were expected to give the following biographical information. The sex, age, education and length of their involvement in the co-operative was recorded. The collection of biographical data was obtained simultaneously with responses to the ASQ.

4.4.3. Administration of ASQ

Before administering the questionnaire subjects were told that the aim of this research was to discover whether they do things because they wanted to or because of the circumstances in which they found themselves. They were also assured of confidentiality.

They were then given the following instructions. They were asked to vividly imagine themselves in the situations that would be mentioned. If such a situation happened to them, what would they feel caused it? While events may have many causes, they were asked to pick one - the major cause if this event happened to them. Next they were asked to answer some questions about the cause. To summarise, they were asked to:

- Listen to each event and vividly imagine it happening to them;
- Decide what they feel would be the major cause of the situation if it happened to them;
- Answer three questions about the cause;
- Go onto the next situation.

If the interviewer was convinced that the subject understood the instructions, they were given an example to test their understanding of the scaling technique. In the example they were presented with a paper with a scale of seven blocks (Appendix A.3.) and asked to imagine that one end represents hot weather while the other end cold. They were then requested to point at the block that symbolised how they felt about the weather (this technique was developed by Dubb, Melamed, and Majodina, 1973). In this way the interviewer was given some idea as to the extent of the subjects' understanding of how the seven point scale operated.

Once they understood the scaling technique the ASQ was administered. The subjects responses on the ASQ were then recorded by the interviewer and translated into English. These responses were recorded on a seperate sheet which was written in English. The only translation required after data collection was for the actual major causes to be translated into English.

5. RESULTS

The results are reported in terms of the various levels of analysis. Alpha coefficients obtained through item analysis are reported. The Irelbin computer programme was used to conduct the item analysis. Simple data description, t tests and chi squared tests were performed on the scores obtained from the questionnaires utilised in this study. Sections of the BMDP computer programme was used to perform these statistical tests.

The total sample was used in all the analyses conducted on the data obtained from the Participation Index. With regard to the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), the total sample was divided into two sub-samples to enable an analysis of the active and passive groups. To allow for an analysis of the length of involvement in co-operatives, the total sample was again divided into two sub-samples (different from the first two sub-samples).

Finally a Mann-Whitney test was performed on the common causes given on the ASQ, by the active and passive groups.

5.1. The Participation Index

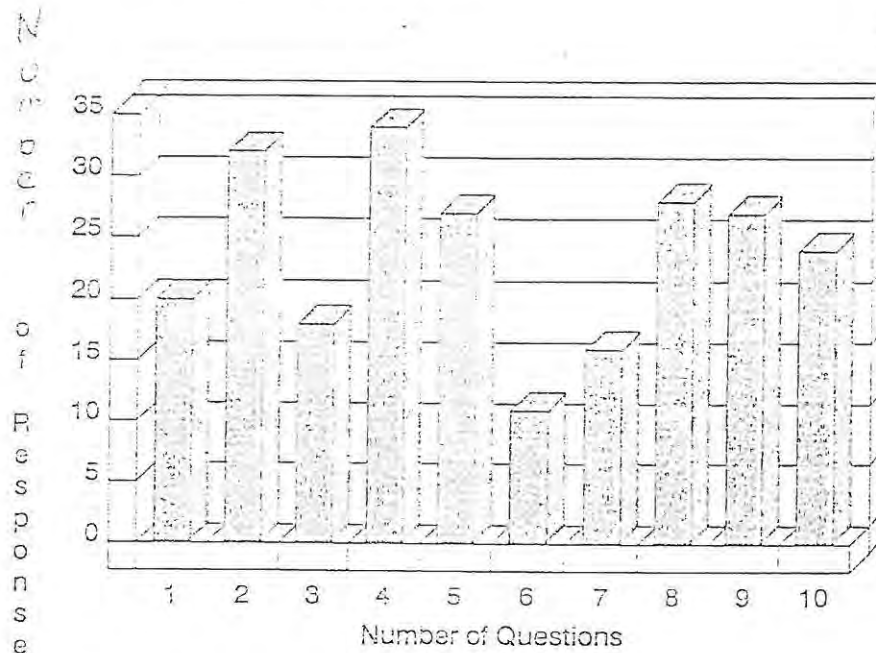
The Participation Index was scored in terms of the number of responses given by a participant that showed a positive participation. There were ten items and, therefore, scores on this Index could range from 0-10. A copy of the Participation Index and responses are found in Appendix

A.1. Figure 2 summarises the scores on the Index in the form of a histogram.

The histogram shows that the scores are relatively evenly spread.

Figure 2.

Histogram of Response Frequencies on Participation Index



An item analysis was conducted on this index, using the Irelbin programme. When all the items were included an alpha value of 0.8457 was achieved. All the items had high correlations (above 0.4) such as 0.7065 and 0.6653, except item 2 and 10 which had 0.3317 and 0.2918 respectively (see Table 3). The item analysis was rerun for all the items,

excluding item 2 and 10. This analysis yielded an alpha value of 0.8570. As the alpha value, was only marginally improved the researcher decided to include all ten items.

The rationale for this decision was based on the fact that irrespective of which item analysis was accepted, the structure of the the two groups, active and passive, remained the same (using the mean as the cutpoint for the two groups).

TABLE 4. Item analysis on Participation Index

ITEM NUMBER	ADJUSTED CORRELATION
1	0.6309
2	0.3317
3	0.4967
4	0.4375
5	0.6489
6	0.6152
7	0.6472
8	0.6653
9	0.7065
10	0.2918

Using all ten items the mean of the Participation Index was 4.78. It was decided to use the mean as the cutpoint to create passive and active groups. As a result, all those who scored 5 or above were considered active, and those who scored 4 or below were seen as passive. Breaking the sample into 2 groups at this point, resulted in 27 people forming part of the passive group, and 23 comprising the active group.

An analysis of the sex, age, education and number of months of involvement in the co-operative was conducted on both the passive and active groups. A significant difference was only found on the number of months members have been involved in the co-operative ($df = 48$, $t = 2.34$, $p < 0.05$). There were no sex, age or educational differences (see Table 5.).

TABLE 5. An Analysis of Sex, Age, Education and Level of Involvement with regard to Active and Passive Members

	Passive	Active
Sex		
number of males	12	7
number of females	15	16
Mean Age (years)	33.34	30.04
Mean Education	Std.5	Std.7
Mean Number of Months of Involvement	13.37 ¹	22.67 ¹

¹ $df=49$, $t=2.34$, $p < 0.05$

5.2. The Attributional Style Questionnaire

At this point the researcher would like to define the various sub-scales and give each a title. This is done so as to make it easier to follow the analysis of the results and how the various levels were scored.

For the sake of parsimony, the first description will be called level 1: Events. This level has 12 events. The second description, level 2: Outcomes, is comprised of good and

bad outcomes. The 12 events from level 1 are sub-divided into six events each to give six good and six bad outcomes in level 2. Level 3: Goal Areas, is the third description, and is comprised of affiliative and achievement goal areas. Each of the six good and six bad outcomes in level 2 are sub-divided into three affiliative and three achievement goal areas. In other words both the good and bad outcomes have three affiliative and three achievement goal areas each, giving the total of six good and six bad outcomes described in level 2. The fourth level, level 4: Sub-scales, concerns three sub-scales. These are internalexternal, stable-unstable and global-specific. Each of the 12 events in level 1 are scored in terms of these three sub-scales.

TABLE 6. A breakdown of the various levels of the ASQ

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
EVENTS	OUTCOMES	GOAL AREAS	SUB-SCALES
1 2 3 4 5 6	→ GOOD	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12	→ BAD	7 8 9 10 11 12	7 8 9 10 11 12
		ACHIEVEMENT	INTERNAL-EXTERNAL
		AFFILIATIVE	STABLE-UNSTABLE
		ACHIEVEMENT	GLOBAL-SPECIFIC
		AFFILIATIVE	

5.2.1. Scoring

In the ASQ three attributional dimension rating scales associated with each event description are scored in the directions of increasing internality, stability and globality (level 4). The scores were seperately computed for the good and bad outcomes (level 2) by summing the appropriate items and dividing by that number (composite scores were created simply by summing the appropriate item and dividing the sum by the number of items in the composite, Peterson et al., 1982).

The scores were computed by working out the mean scores of each event in level 1 used in the ASQ. These include:

- Internality for good events (versus externality)
- Stability for good events (versus instability)
- Globality for good events (versus specificity) (level 4)

The same three sub-scales were applied to bad events, giving a total of three sub-scales (level 4).

To work out internality for good events for the sample, the individual scores in the passive group that fell under this sub-scale were taken and its total mean was calculated. The same process was applied to the active group, resulting in two mean scores to be compared, under the sub-scale internality (see Table 7). The same process was applied to the other two sub-scales yielding more scores to be compared

(see Tables 8 and 9).

5.2.2. Description of the total sample

In Table 7 the means, composite means, standard deviations and t values for the subjects across the six sub-scales for the total sample is presented. As can be seen, the scores on the internal, stable and global sub-scales for good events are more comparable with each other than the scores on the same sub-scales for bad events. Furthermore, good events tended to be explained more internally, stably and globally than bad events ($p's < 0.001$).

Table 7 contains the significant differences obtained when the internal sub-scale for good and bad events were compared. The same comparison was done for the other two sub-scales, yielding two further scores marked by the superscript 2 and 3. A fourth score, marked by 4 in superscript, was obtained by comparing the composite scores for good and bad events. From Table 7, it is apparent that significant differences occurred across the three sub-scales (internal, stable and global) for the two primary scales of good and bad outcomes. The highest significant difference was obtained for the composite means for good and bad events ($df=49$, $t=13.73$, $p < 0.001$).

TABLE 7. ASQ Scores Across the Six Sub-scales (N=50)

GOOD EVENTS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Internal	5.46 ¹	1.17
Stable	5.33 ²	1.17
Global	5.85 ³	1.08
Composite score	5.54 ⁴	
BAD EVENTS		
Internal	3.64 ¹	1.41
Stable	2.65 ²	1.24
Global	4.38 ³	1.31
Composite score	3.56 ⁴	
superscript shows scores of significance ($p < 0.05$)		
¹ df = 49, t = 8.82, $p < 0.001$		
² df = 49, t = 11.78, $p < 0.001$		
³ df = 49, t = 6.64, $p < 0.001$		
⁴ df = 49, t = 13.73, $p < 0.001$		

5.3. Differences in terms of Levels of Participation

In this section the difference in the extent of learned helplessness between active and passive co-operative members is investigated. This serves as a test of Hypothesis 1.

Tables 8, 9, and 10 present the item and scale means and the standard deviations for the active and passive groups.

TABLE 8. ASQ scores on the Internal Sub-scale

	TYPE OF MEMBER		
	PASSIVE	ACTIVE	t VALUE
GOOD			
Praise	5.51	3.73	2.68 p<0.02)
Rich	4.66	4.82	
Compliment	5.25	4.13	
Loving	6.74	5.91	
Position	6.66	6.26	
Raise	5.81	5.39	
Composite score for internal events	5.77	5.04	
BAD			
Unsuccessful	3.18	3.13	
Friend's problem	2.85	3.60	
Negative talk	4.25	4.95	
Hostility	3.37	3.95	
Can't finish work	4.44	3.39	
Bad date	3.51	3.08	
Composite score for internal events	3.60	3.68	

TABLE 9. ASQ scores on the stable sub-scale

	TYPE OF MEMBER	
	PASSIVE	ACTIVE
GOOD		
Praise	5.25	4.91
Rich	4.40	4.78
Compliment	4.96	5.65
Loving	6.11	5.47
Position	5.44	5.00
Raise	6.22	5.82
Composite score for stable events	5.39	5.27
BAD		
Unsuccessful	3.07	3.26
Friend's problem	2.00	2.65
Negative talk	2.29	2.65
Hostility	3.14	3.13
Can't finish work	2.81	2.82
Bad date	1.92	2.04
Composite score for stable events	2.53	2.76

TABLE 10. ASQ scores on the global sub-scale

	TYPE OF MEMBER		
	PASSIVE	ACTIVE	t VALUE
GOOD			
Praise	4.66	5.30	2.12 ($p < 0.001$)
Rich	5.07	5.65	
Compliment	6.14	6.17	
Loving	6.63	5.56	
Position	6.48	6.52	
Raise	6.07	6.00	
Composite score for global events	5.84	5.87	
BAD			
Unsuccessful	5.74	5.26	
Friend's problem	3.81	2.47	
Negative talk	3.51	3.47	
Hostility	4.22	4.56	
Can't finish work	5.11	5.04	
Bad date	4.48	4.52	
Composite score for global events	4.47	4.22	

Tables 8, 9 and 10 show the scores on the ASQ. Significant differences between the active and passive groups were only obtained on two of the events, one on the internal sub-scale and the other on the global sub-scale.

5.4. Differences in terms of Number of Months of Involvement

In this section the length of involvement of members in the co-operatives and its effect on learned helplessness is investigated. This serves as a test for hypothesis 2. For this analysis, the total sample of 50 subjects was divided into two groups. The division occurred at the mean number of months that subjects were members of co-operatives - 18 months (see Tables 12, 13 and 14). Table 11 contains the

descriptive statistics of these two groups.

TABLE 11. An Analysis of Sex, Age and Education with regard to the Level of Involvement

	New (0-18 months)	Old (19-48 months)
Sex		
Number of males	10	7
Number of females	19	14
Mean Age (years)	32.69	30.52
Mean Education	Std. 5	Std. 6

TABLE 12. ASQ scores on the internal sub-scale for length of involvement

	LENGTH OF INVOLVEMENT		
	0 - 18 MONTHS	19 - 48 MONTHS	t VALUE
GOOD			
Praise	4.73	4.66	
Rich	3.88	5.66	2.39 (p<0.05)
Compliment	4.88	4.58	
Loving	6.07	6.66	
Position	6.23	6.75	
Raise			
Composite score for internal events	4.29	4.72	
BAD			
Unsuccessful	2.50	3.87	
Friend's problem	2.76	3.67	
Negative talk	4.34	4.83	
Hostility	3.23	4.08	
Can't finish work	3.11	4.87	2.37 (p<0.05)
Bad date	3.19	3.45	
Composite score for internal events	3.18	4.12	

TABLE 13. ASQ scores on the stable sub-scale for length of involvement

	LENGTH OF INVOLVEMENT		
	0 - 18 MONTHS	19 - 48 MONTHS	t VALUE
GOOD			
Praise	5.76	4.37	2.26 ($p < 0.05$)
Rich	4.61	4.54	
Compliment	5.07	5.50	
Loving	6.11	5.50	
Position	5.38	5.08	
Raise	6.07	6.00	
Composite score for stable events	5.33	5.17	
BAD			
Unsuccessful	3.23	3.08	2.39 ($p < 0.05$)
Friend's problem	2.23	2.37	
Negative talk	2.30	2.62	
Hostility	2.38	3.95	
Can't finish work	2.38	3.29	
Bad date	1.73	2.25	
Composite score for stable events	2.37	2.92	

TABLE 14. ASQ scores on the global sub-scale for length of involvement

	LENGTH OF INVOLVEMENT		
	0 - 18 MONTHS	19 - 48 MONTHS	t VALUE
GOOD			
Praise	5.03	4.87	
Rich	5.03	5.66	
Compliment	5.96	6.37	
Loving	6.23	6.04	
Position	6.42	6.58	
Raise	6.69	5.33	2.66 ($p < 0.05$)
Composite score for global scale	5.89	5.81	
BAD			
Unsuccessful	5.30	5.75	
Friend's problem	3.19	3.20	
Negative talk	3.61	3.37	
Hostility	4.26	4.50	
Can't finish work	4.88	5.29	
Bad date	4.19	4.83	
Composite score for global events	4.23	4.49	

Tables 12, 13 and 14 show the scores with significant differences between the new - below 18 month group and the old - above 18 month group in terms of their involvement. There are five events with significant differences between the scores for the two groups. All these events are work related.

5.5. Causes Given for Good and Bad outcomes on the ASQ

Given the structure of the ASQ (see Appendix A.2) subjects are required to generate a cause for each of the 12 situations. In this section (Table 15), the researcher articulates the common causes given for the 12 situations and the popularity of each cause. To test for significant

differences between the active and passive groups the Mann Whitney test was used. No significant differences between the causes given by the passive and active groups were obtained.

TABLE 15. Common causes given for good and bad outcomes on the ASQ (frequency of response)

	TYPE OF GROUP	
	PASSIVE N = 27	ACTIVE N = 23
(Numbers in parenthesis indicate order of importance)		
BAD EVENTS		
Lack of experience/education	2	7
Interpersonal conflict	8	14(1)
Personal behaviour	21(1)	14(1)
Laziness	1	8
Lack of trust in others	5	11
Own problems	21(1)	13(2)
Overworked	7	12
Own appearance	0	2
Pessimistic attitudes	12	12
Lack of motivation	4	4
Bad communication	16	12
High unemployment	19(3)	10
Unable to solve problems	20(2)	13(2)
Circumstances	13	7
GOOD EVENTS		
Appearance	12	16
Good financial planning	4	6
Appreciation by others	22(1)	24(2)
Positive attitudes	4	7
Hardwork/experience	21(2)	26(1)
Personal ingenuity	16	10
Good communication	7	11
Handling responsibility	21(2)	20(3)
Circumstances	14	9
Due to involvement with or actions of others	7	4
Due to luck/chance	7	6

(Numbers in parenthesis indicate the most popular causes).

6. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study, do not reveal an absolute attributional style in passive and active co-operative members and therefore do not provide unquestionable support for the reformulation of the learned helplessness theory. Both the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 1 were refuted.

While the research findings do not support the hypotheses proposed at the outset of this study, an attributional style as predicted by the reformulated learned helplessness model was revealed when the responses of the total sample (N=50) was analysed. As predicted by the reformulated learned helplessness model, relative to non learned helplessness people, learned helplessness people will attribute bad outcomes to internal, stable and global factors. They will also attribute good outcomes to external, unstable and specific factors. In terms of the results given in Table 6 respondents attributed good outcomes to internal, stable and global factors and bad outcomes to external, unstable and specific factors. In accordance with the reformulated theory of learned helplessness, these attributional styles suggest that overall, the sample is comprised of non learned helpless individuals.

Peterson et al. (1982) used the ASQ on a sample of psychology students in America and produced a result very similar to that illustrated in Table 5 (cf. Peterson et al., p 293). They found the results more comparable within the bad items and within the good items than they were between

the bad and good items, with the cause of good events being perceived as internal, stable and global than bad events. Peterson et. al's (1982) study produced composite means for good and bad events of 5.25 and 4.12 respectively. This result is comparable to the results presented in Table 6. In the present study, composite means for good and bad events of 5.54 and 3.56 respectively were reported. Furthermore, these results were significantly different for good and bad events on all three subscales. The significant difference between the composite means for good and bad events were the biggest ($df = 49$, $t = 13.73$, $p < 0.001$).

According to Peterson et al. (1982), for good events, the individual attributional dimensions were intercorrelated at a level near that of their reliabilities, suggesting that the questionnaire they used (which is the same used in the present study) did not succeed in distinguishing them. The distinctiveness of the three dimensions was more adequate for bad events. Again this result was replicated in this particular study, which raises the question, why there seems to be less discrimination among internal, stable and global subscales for good outcomes? Munton (1985) and Peterson et al. (1982) suggest that people make fewer distinctions among good events since they may not spend as much time thinking over them as they do over bad events, and may attend more to the causes of bad events.

6.1. Hypothesis 1

In an attempt to test the first hypothesis, that passive co-operative members will have higher levels of learned helplessness than active co-operative members, the scores of the two groups on the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) were compared. No significant differences were obtained between the two groups as far as sex, age and education were concerned (see Table 4). Tables 7, 8 and 9 contain the means and t values for both the active and passive groups.

Peterson et al. (1982) suggested that researchers focus on the composite scores of the various sub-scales because they believed it yielded a more accurate measure of the extent of learned helplessness. When attention was focussed on the composite dimensional score, however, for each subscale (internal, stable and global) no significant differences were obtained between the two groups being compared. This result was also evident in studies conducted by Arntz, Gerlsma and Abersnagel (1985) where individual items showed significant differences but overall there was no significant difference.

A superficial analysis of the composite dimensional scores in Tables 6, 7 and 8 indicate that the active group scored more on the internal and stable sub-scales for good outcomes than the active group. Furthermore, the scores within the good and bad outcomes were more comparable than those

between the good and bad outcomes. This again suggests that it is possible that people spend more time thinking about bad events than good events.

While the composite dimensional scores were in the predicted direction for the active group for good events, it was also expected that the global subscale would have a higher score for the active group than the passive group. Despite this result, no significant differences were obtained on any of these sub-scales at the composite dimensional level.

While no significant differences were obtained at the composite dimensional level, significant differences did occur on some of the individual items. On the internal sub-scale a significant difference was obtained on the praise item for good outcomes ($t = 2.68, p < 0.02$). This result suggests that active members attribute this good outcome to something within themselves, while the passive group will interpret the good outcome to something due to other people or circumstances. According to the learned helplessness theory, learned helpless people will attribute a good outcome to something external. In terms of this theory, the passive group therefore portrays learned helpless characteristics. A significant difference also occurred on the loving item on the global sub-scale (2.12, $p < 0.05$). On this item the passive group also interpreted a good outcome to something more external and due to others than the active group.

While significant differences only occurred on the two items discussed in the previous paragraph, the researcher believes that since the co-operative is essentially a place of work, of particular interest should be the scores obtained by the two groups on work related issues. Issues with bad outcomes, such as the unsuccessful job search, a talk given by the respondent that went badly and being unable to finish work must be examined. On the internal sub-scale, a talk given with negative consequences is seen more internally by the passive group than the active group. For events with good outcomes on the internal sub-scale, the passive group saw getting a raise in salary and applying for a position and getting it, as something more external than did the active group.

On the stable sub-scale, for bad outcomes the work related issues were all seen as more internal by the passive group than the active group. For good outcomes, the passive group saw the two work related issues mentioned in the previous paragraph, as more external and due to others than did the active group.

On the global sub-scale, for bad outcomes the work related issues were all seen as more internal by the active group. For good outcomes, the passive group saw the two work related issues as more external than the active group.

While these work related issues did not obtain significant differences between the active and passive group, it does

appear as though the passive group attributes work related issues with bad outcomes to something within themselves and which is always present.

When examining the reasons why no significant difference was found between the passive and active group, the validity and reliability of the ASQ is immediately questioned. From the overview given in Chapter 4, it is apparent that these are controversial issues that cannot be regarded as settled. The results of this research add to the doubt that while the ASQ may be able to elicit certain attributions, its reliability is not beyond question (see Munton, 1985 and Arntz, Gerlsma and Abersnagel, 1985). In addition, the problem might be linked to the use of the Participation Index. It is possible that it was not an efficient measure to differentiate between the passive and active group, therefore explaining the failure to produce significant results. Other possible reasons, related to the use of the ASQ, will be discussed later in this Chapter.

6.2. Hypothesis 2

To test the second hypothesis, the longer members are involved in the co-operative the less learned helpless they become, Tables 10, 11 and 12 were compared.

No significant differences were obtained on the composite dimensional scores between the new and old member groups on the ASQ for the three sub-scales (internal, stable and

global). There was a significant difference between the passive and active group in terms of the months of involvement in the co-operative (see Table 4). Those members who formed part of the passive group seems to have been involved in the co-operative for a short while, while those who have been in the co-operative for a long time form part of the active group. This result is in line with the second hypothesis, which proposes that the co-operative structure results in passive members becoming more active.

While there was no significant differences on the composite dimensional scores between the new and old groups, significant differences were obtained for individual items on the three sub-scales.

On the internal sub-scale for good events, there was a significant difference between the new and old groups on the item concerning becoming rich ($t = 2.39, p < 0.05$). The old group believed this outcome to be due to their own behaviour, while the new group saw this outcome as being due to other people and circumstances. For bad events on the internal sub-scale, a significant difference between the two groups was obtained on the item concerning not being able to finish prescribed work ($t = 2.37, p < 0.05$). For the old group the perceived cause of the outcome was seen as something internal.

On the stable sub-scale for good events, a significant difference occurred on the praise item ($t = 2.26, p < 0.05$).

For bad events a significant difference was obtained for the hostility item ($t = 2.39$, $p < 0.05$). While there were these significant differences, the old group scored in the opposite direction in terms of the reformulated model.

A significant difference was also obtained on the praise item ($t = 2.66$, $p < 0.05$) for the global sub-scale for good events. Again the score of the old group was contrary to expectations.

While there was a significant difference between the two groups concerning the number of months of involvement in co-operative action, the ASQ did not yield composite scores with significant differences. Moreover, the items which obtained significant differences were predominantly in a contrary direction to expectation. A possible reason for this inconsistency could be related to fact that many members who had recently joined the co-operative had been fairly well educated (Std. 8 to 10) and had no trouble in actively participating in co-operative action. This phenomenon could have, therefore, confounded the results.

6.3. The Relative Importance of the Good and Bad Causes

Moving back to the reformulated model, good and bad outcomes are not solely important, attention must also be given to situational factors and the reality of the causes that bring about expectations of uncontrollability.

According to the theory, learned helpless people show a particular attributional style for good and bad events. These attributions, however, are also influenced by the causes to which they refer. As a result, importance should not just be given to the attributions but also to the causes and the realities of the causes as they influence the attributions.

Working within this framework, what becomes a concern is whether the results yielded are due to an attributional style where passive co-operative members attribute bad outcomes to internal and stable factors, or if it is that the consequences of a bad outcome which influences ratings on the internal and stable sub-scales, irrespective of any attributional style.

In an attempt to answer these types of questions, the researcher suggests that attention be given to the causes given for bad and good outcomes by active and passive co-operative members on the ASQ . A Mann Whitney test was conducted on the causes given for good and bad outcomes between the passive and active groups. This test yielded no significant differences between the causes given by the two groups.

6.4. Possible Reasons For Failure To Find Support For Hypotheses

The researcher would like to forward reasons at 3 levels for the failure to find support for the hypotheses. These will include methodological, theoretical and conceptual shortcomings.

6.4.1. Methodological Shortcomings

Assessing the discussion presented up to this point, it is apparent that the ASQ, while it did reveal certain patterns which are consistent with the learned helplessness theory, has not been an effective instrument in eliciting and establishing attributional styles in passive and active co-operative members as predicted by the reformulated learned helplessness theory.

While at one level the ASQ has the ability to isolate and identify specific causes for bad and good events, at another level, one prevalent cause can have a direct effect on all other causal attributions and bias the results obtained on the ASQ. Arntz et al. (1985) and Hammen and Krantz (1981) opine that the ASQ does not consider the various conditions under which particular attributions are made. In addition, the ASQ fails to provide for underlying structures which might be responsible for all the attributional causes given and expectations of uncontrollability.

The sample used in this study is drawn from the oppressed in South Africa. Given their status in this society, the sample is characterised by a low level of education, lack of training and harsh living conditions. When the most popular cause, own problems, for bad events identified by the passive group is considered, much of the sample's daily experience is reflected in it. The researcher therefore believes that it is vital, when analysing the results on the ASQ, to bear in mind the interconnectedness of the various causes. It is proposed that the ASQ does not account for this interconnectedness. Furthermore, the questions on the ASQ are related and this allows underlying factors to have an effect on the causes and attributions given. This results in the scores being biased in favour of a particular attributional style.

The point being made here, is that the ASQ attempts to account for an attributional style which exists in learned helpless people, however it is important to consider that the attributional style may be the result of only one or two popular causes. The ASQ, as an instrument of the reformulated model, seems to only measure attributional symptoms and not causes which result in expectations of uncontrollability.

Two possible reasons may be forwarded for this lack of interconnectedness. Firstly, the ASQ has been criticised for being too limiting, resulting in a range of scores not wide enough to be catergorised. Secondly, as previously stated,

people spend more time thinking about bad outcomes than good outcomes and their associated causes (Munton, 1985; Peterson et al., 1982).

The active group's most popular cause is hardwork/experience (26 responses). This result supports the learned helpless position which states that less learned helpless people attribute good outcomes to more internal causes. This also raises another important criticism of the ASQ, namely the robustness of the internal sub-scale (Munton, 1985; Peterson et al., 1984; and Peterson and Semmel, 1984). While the most popular cause given for good outcomes is mainly internal and the cause given by the passive group is mainly external, the scores on the ASQ only reveal this pattern in a marginal way. This result therefore questions the reliability of the internal sub-scale.

Furthermore, the circumstances under which attributions are made are not accommodated for by the ASQ and the reformulated theory. This theory also fails to account for how cognitive structures process the actual attributions and causes given for the expectations of uncontrollable events.

Since the results do not completely support the predictions made by the reformulated model, it is perhaps appropriate to question the reliability and validity of both the reformulated theory and the ASQ.

Arntz et al. (1985) found that of the relationships hypothesised by the learned helplessness model, too many did not attain significance in the expected direction. Furthermore, ASQ scales were often related to variables to which they were theoretically expected not to be related, therefore questioning the discriminant validity or the specific functions ascribed to these scales by the reformulated model. These researchers conclude that the lack of predictive and discriminant validity of the ASQ suggests that learned helplessness may be caused by other processes.

Moreover, this theory assumes that people make attributions, which may not be the case (see Bern, 1972). Again this study contributes to the uncertainty that this assumption is necessarily the case. The sub-scales and the 12 events on the ASQ, it is argued, is not able to predict the nature and extent of behavioural and emotional deficits in co-operative members. Important causes were not recorded by the ASQ as well as a lack of provision for alternative attributional dimensions, such as attributions for the consequences of a bad event, as opposed to the attributions for an uncontrollable event without consideration for consequences. Furthermore, more specified attributions like internal attributions for self-esteem loss versus internal attributions for self-blame are not accounted for.

These shortcomings are also identified by Munton (1985) and Wortman and Dintzer (1978). They question whether the dimensions chosen by the ASQ are relevant in predicting the

nature and magnitude of future deficits. They also raise the element of consequences by proposing that something which is controllable may be more important in determining subsequent deficits than the theory allows. The researcher raises this as a possible reason why the global score for bad events by the passive group was not as expected, since many of these events (see causes given) could have been controlled by the person. It appears therefore, that characteristics of outcomes, such as whether it is expected, controllable and whether respondents are able to find meaning in the outcome, can affect the magnitude of deficits and this is not accounted for by the ASQ.

In addition, the ASQ's emphasis on hypothetical events could possibly yield different responses than those for unsolicited spontaneous bad and good real-life events which may in turn effect attributional styles. Hammen (1981) shows that most of the contradictory evidence for the reformulated model and its attributional styles, come from past studies based on real life events, and not hypothetical events. This may be the case for some of the events on the ASQ, such as, looking for a job unsuccessfully, since many of the respondents experienced this because of the high unemployment rate in the Eastern Cape. This situation is therefore a real-life for many of the respondents in this study. This could have affected the attributions made and have given rise to some of the contradictory results yielded in this study.

Another reason why the ASQ did not yield significant results is perhaps related to more recent studies conducted (Fincham and Cain, 1986; Metalsky and Abramson, 1981), which suggest that individual differences in attributional style have become a key determinant of behaviour responses to failure and are not adequately covered by the ASQ.

While the proposed hypotheses were not confirmed, the researcher believes that this result was largely due to the measuring instruments used in the study. Given the nature of the sample used in this study, the ASQ, despite the changes made, was not comprehensible to many of the respondents. The reliability of the Participation Index used to distinguish the active and passive groups, is also questionable.

Related to the research conducted, the first problem encountered was related to respondents imagining situations. Many respondents had difficulty with this request, and had to be prompted. Other respondents, however, identified with the situations because it was a reality for them. They therefore responded in a realistic way (e.g. situation 5). Other problems concerning imagining situations were linked to situations expressed in items 5, 13 and 17 on the ASQ. These problems were supported by Arntz et al. (1985). In addition, respondents imagined causes that they hoped would change their situation and it is debatable whether that is how they would handle it in reality. Imagining the situation was particularly a problem with older women (no old men were included in this sample), they found it tiresome to think

and imagine situations. This validates the point made by Arntz et al. (1985), that people in general have difficulty imaging all kinds of situations, especially when they have not experienced them. Their description of how they would react in reality, therefore has to be questioned in terms of reliability and validity.

Although the back translation method was employed, some questions on the ASQ still proved to be problematic. Situations such as those to which question 25 relates, had to be paraphrased and examples quoted to make them more comprehensible. It appeared that the sample struggled to understand the Xhosa version since it was not always written in colloquial language.

Furthermore, the respondents' lack of education proved problematic because respondents, especially the older people in the sample, felt the research to be linked to education. They felt threatened by this and were therefore reluctant to become involved in the study.

This study's findings also raise questions regarding whether people make explicit causal inferences of their own accord independently of experimental demands. In this study, respondents did not respond willingly and had to be encouraged through the use of examples and role plays. This was particularly evident in the situation explored in item 33 concerning a person being treated more lovingly by his/her lover. The respondents found it difficult to answer

questions to this situation because of the nature of the question and the age difference between the respondents and the interviewer. This problem raised a cultural aspect which was not fully compensated for in this study. It appears that the respondents' culture prohibits discussion between young and old of love affairs and sex.

In an attempt to overcome other problems of this nature such as the situation explored in item 41 on the ASQ, the interviewer used an example of a story on the radio. This story was concerned with two women and their love affairs. Given the popularity of this radio serial, many of the co-operative members were loyal listeners and could therefore identify with the situation. In this way cultural problems regarding these issues on the ASQ were overcome.

Problems were also experienced when respondents were forced to give one cause for each situation. It took much persuasion on the part of the interviewer before the respondent could arrive at the one cause which s/he felt was most important. This suggests that perhaps people do not usually attribute an outcome to only one cause.

Finally, it is believed that even though an attempt was made to make the ASQ more understandable and accessible to the sample, the selected situations were not sufficiently relevant to generate reliable and valid scores for a wide range of respondents.

All these problems suggest that the ASQ is possibly not a very suitable measuring instrument when a reasonably uneducated sample is employed, and when the ASQ is used cross-culturally.

6.4.2. Theoretical Shortcomings

The scores on the ASQ for good outcomes, again raise the idea that while it may show a certain attributional trend for the passive group, it fails to identify any relationship between the causes given and the actual attributions.

Examining the possibility that the co-operative may be producing what Simkin et al. (1983) have called group helplessness does not yield unequivocal results. It is suggested that firstly, group helplessness produces more external attributions since there are other people who can be blamed, and secondly, the expectation that joint action will be initiated. With regard to the first statement, external attributions are not characteristic of the scores on the ASQ for the passive group. The second statement however, seems to be characteristic of the action of the co-operative members. There is therefore evidence both for and against the possibility that group helplessness is present among co-operative members.

6.4.3. Conceptual Shortcomings

The 2 most important causes (own problems and personal behaviour) elicited by this study are supported as an

important determinant in learned helplessness behaviour, by Mikulincer and Caspy (1986). These researchers conducted a phenomenological study on the conceptualisation of helplessness and found the desire to surrender and the belief in personal inability to be associated with the experience of uncontrollable aversive outcomes and behavioural passivity. This finding of Mikulincer and Caspy (1986) further supports the present study when attention is given to the next most popular cause for bad outcomes - unable to solve problems (20 responses) - which Mikulincer and Caspy (1986) state is central to behavioural passivity and learned helplessness.

These causes, are numbered as the most important for this passive group and all contain elements of loss of self-control. Mikulincer and Caspy (1986) state that the category representing feelings of loss of self-control was placed in the centre of the entire structure of helplessness cognitions and overt responses. Moreover they contend that loss of self-control seems to represent the core of the helplessness experience. Considering that loss of self-control has been isolated as a major cause, although listed in various ways, there is a possibility that the passive group could possibly represent people who are helpless. However, this was not proven by this study.

Of course, after consideration is given to all the methodological problems with the ASQ, the failure to obtain results in line with the theory could be because the theory

is wrong or that the researcher's intuitions about the presence of learned helplessness among black South Africans were incorrect. This possibility cannot be ignored since the study yielded results indicating that the sample did not suffer from learned helplessness.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The path followed throughout this research has attempted to remain faithful to three guiding principles which the researcher believes are inherent in all valid research:

- Fact finding that educates one;
- Insight that educates one's respondents;
- A contribution towards social improvement.

This research has in the light of these principles, attempted to test the hypotheses proposed at the outset of this study.

This study did not prove that passive co-operative members are more learned helpless than active co-operative members. Nor did it conclusively prove that the length of involvement in the co-operative has an effect on the level of learned helplessness.

The conclusion can be drawn that both passive and active co-operative members in this study do not have high levels of learned helplessness. An analysis of the total sample (N=50) shows that the sample is comprised of mostly non learned helpless people. No significant differences in the levels of learned helplessness were found between the two groups. A significant difference, however, was found on the length of involvement between passive and active co-operative members, which suggests that the co-operative structure, in time, enables its members to become actively

involved. While a significant difference was obtained on the length of involvement between the active and passive groups, when the length of involvement in the co-operative was used as a criterion no differences in the level of learned helplessness was found.

In terms of the reformulated theory of learned helplessness, it was hypothesised that the sample used in this study would be mostly non learned helpless. Since this study did not identify learned helpless respondents, the construct learned helplessness in the South African context could not be fully examined.

Furthermore, the results also cast doubt on the validity of the reformulated theory.

This research has indicated, however, that the longer members are part of the co-operative, the more active they become in the co-operative processes.

Despite this research not being able to distinguish different levels of learned helplessness between the active and passive groups, the researcher supports the idea of co-operatives. It is maintained that these progressive co-operatives have much to offer in terms of psychological and emotional fulfillment. The researcher hopes that the aim of communicating the viability of such structures within the South African society will in some way be fulfilled.

In the words of one respondent:

I think the things at the co-operative can help because some of those people haven't worked for a long time, staying at home. First they get a little job at the co-operative then they can change their future because they can learn more and more every day. They are seeing more different jobs there, maybe a person can find a way to have their own factory in the future, because they learn a lot of different things from each other. Starting with a small thing, getting bigger. I think it starts in a small way to make a change in the community.

The researcher offers several recommendations for future research:

- If the research is to be conducted on co-operatives serious attention must be paid to the measuring instruments utilised. While an attempt was made to make the ASQ more accessible to the sample, the questionnaire was still not suitable for the study. It is suggested that a different measuring instrument be found to measure learned helplessness, which will be more appropriate in the black South African context.
- The seven-point scaling method used in the ASQ was also problematic. While the researcher used the weather analogy and the seven blocks to explain the scale, many of the co-operative members could not completely understand it. Perhaps future researchers should employ a much simpler scaling method, especially if the sample has similar characteristics as the sample in the present

study.

- Moreover, a more reliable instrument should be found to distinguish between the active and passive co-operative members in future research.
- As already mentioned, not all the cultural aspects were accounted for, and while the researcher was able to deal with some of the cultural problems, some cultural aspects were not dealt with. Future researchers employing interpreters should ensure that, if the sample is comprised of older respondents, the interpreters are not too young. This is specifically for studies where issues such as love will be covered.
- Finally, future research should employ a much bigger sample to allow for a greater cross section of active and passive members, as well as allowing the researcher to make general statements about learned helplessness in co-operatives.

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Appendix A.1.The Participation Index and Response Frequencies

	NO	YES
1. Do you speak up at meetings?	60	40
2. Do you know the financial state of the co-operative?	36	64
3. Do you feel free to criticise co-operative management?	64	36
4. Do you feel that the co-operative belongs to you?	32	68
5. Are you willing to take responsibility?	44	56
6. Do you answer the telephone?	78	22
7. Are you willing to talk to visitors?	68	32
8. Are you aware of the need to meet production targets?	44	56
9. Do you realise the need to meet production targets?	46	54
10. Do you recognise a need for training?	52	48

Appendix A.2.Attributional Style Questionnaire

Directions

1. Listen to each situation and vividly imagine it happening to you.
2. Decide what you feel would be the major cause of the situation if it happened to you.
3. Answer three questions about the cause.
4. Go on to the next situation.

Situations

YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO PRAISED YOU ON YOUR APPEARANCE

1. Write down the main reason.
2. Is the cause of your friend's compliment due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
--	---------------	----------------------

3. In the future when you are with your friend, will this cause again be present?

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---------------	---------------------------

4. Is the cause something that just affects interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of you life?

Influence just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---------------	--

YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A JOB WITH NO SUCCESS FOR SOME TIME

5. Write down the main reason.
6. Is the cause of your unsuccessful job search due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
--	---------------	----------------------

7. In the future when looking for a job, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

8. Is the cause something that just influences looking for a job or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all situations
in my life

YOU BECOME RICH

9. Write down the main reason.

10. Is the cause of your becoming rich due to something about other you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due
to other people
or circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due
to me

11. In your financial future, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

12. Is the cause something that just affects obtaining money or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all situations
in my life

A FRIEND COMES COMES TO YOU WITH A PROBLEM AND YOU DON'T TRY TO HELP THEM

13. Write down the main reason.

14. Is the cause of your not helping your friend due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due
to other people
or circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due
to me

15. In the future when a friend comes to you with a problem, will this cause again be present?

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present
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16. Is the cause something that just affects what happens when a friend comes to you with a problem or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all all situations in my life
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YOU GIVE AN IMPORTANT TALK TO A GROUP OF PEOPLE AND THEY LOOK DISSATISFIED

17. Write down the main reason.

18. Is the cause of the audience reacting negatively due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
--	---------------	----------------------

19. In the future when giving talks, will this cause again be present?

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---------------	---------------------------

20. Is the cause something that just influences giving talks or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life
---	---------------	--

YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE HIGHLY COMMENDED FOR

21. Write down the main reason.

22. Is the cause of being praised due to something about you or something about people or circumstances?

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
--	---------------	----------------------

23. In the future when doing a project, will this cause again be present?

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present
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24. Is the cause something that just affects doing projects or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life
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YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO ACTS HOSTILELY TOWARDS YOU

25. Write down the main reason.

26. Is the cause of your friend acting hostile due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
--	---------------	----------------------

27. In the future when interacting with friends, will this cause again be present?

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present
--------------------------------	---------------	---------------------------

28. Is the cause something that just influences interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of life?

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life
---	---------------	--

YOU CAN'T GET ALL THE WORK DONE THAT OTHERS EXPECT OF YOU

29. Write down the main reason.

30. Is the cause of your not getting your work done due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me
--	---------------	----------------------

31. In the future when doing the work that others expect, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

32. Is the cause something that just affects doing work that others expect of you or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all situations
in my life

YOUR LOVER TREATS YOU VERY LOVINGLY

33. Write down the main reason.

34. Is the cause of your lover treating you more lovingly due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due
to other people
or circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due
to me

35. In the future interaction with your lover, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

36. Is the cause something that just affects how your lover treats you or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences all
all situations
in my life

YOU APPLY FOR A JOB THAT YOU SEEK FOR A LONG TIME AND YOU GET IT

37. Write down the main reason.

38. Is the cause of your getting the job due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due
to other people
or circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due
to me

39. In the future when applying for a job, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

40. Is the cause something that just influences applying for a job or does it influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all situations
in my life

YOU WERE TAKEN OUT ON A DATE BUT IT WAS NOT NICE

41. Write down the main reason.

42. Is the cause of the date not being nice due to something about you or something about you or other people or circumstances?

Totally due
to other people
or circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due
to me

43. In the future when dating, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

44. Is the cause something that just affects dating or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all situations
in my life

YOU GOT A RAISE IN SALARY

45. Write down the main reason.

46. Is the cause of you getting a raise in salary due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?

Totally due
to other people
or circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally due
to me

47. In the future on your job, will this cause again be present?

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will always
be present

48. Is the cause something that just affects your getting a raise or does it also influence other areas of your life?

Influences just
this particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all situations
in my life

Appendix A.3.An analogy of the seven-point scale

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