

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN
A SELECTED PRINTING COMPANY - A CASE STUDY OF
UNIPRINT**

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MBA

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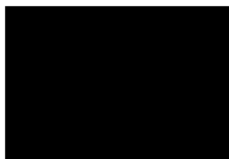
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is in memory of my amazingly fabulous aunt, mentor, and other mother, the late Dr. Dayaneethie Veerasamy, without whom I would not have completed this Master of Business Administration Degree. She was an inspiration and a role model and showed me the power of perseverance and determination both in her life's journey and in her pursuit of academic excellence. Although she has left this world, I still continue to feel her love and encouragement. While her loss this year was a severe blow, it has forced me to experience and embrace change, and, has motivated me even more in completing this dissertation. I am truly grateful for the blessing of love, support, and guidance from my forever beloved aunt.

ABSTRACT

The research investigated employee reactions to change management in a selected printing company, Uniprint. Firstly, the study determined the key contributing factors to managing change and whether the selected printing company ensured that these factors were present through the change management process. Thereafter, the employee reactions to change management was investigated. Further to this, the extent of employee involvement in change management was ascertained. Finally, the role of leadership and the human resources (HR) department in change management was established.

The research methodology consisted of mixed methods: namely, both quantitative and qualitative approaches. There were structured interviews with open-ended questions as well as questionnaires containing closed-ended questions. The researcher interviewed 5 employees within both managerial and operational positions and distributed 126 questionnaires amongst the other employees. The interviews provided the detail that the researcher required and the questionnaires broadened the research because they provided more views since it was completed by a broader range of respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used as the research methodology was both quantitative and qualitative, and the researcher relied on her judgement in selecting the respondents for the research.

The research findings revealed that the key contributing factors to managing change were communication, planning, teamwork, and a budget. In investigating the employee reactions, the research identified gaps wherein there were negative employee reactions when there was no transparency and open communication from leadership and HR, and, when employees were not involved in the change management process. When employees were involved in change management there were positive employee reactions because employees felt valued which ultimately impacted their jobs and work environment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the 21st century, organisations are finding it more challenging to operate because of the complexities and uncertainties in the environment. The most recent years specifically have brought many uncertainties that organisations have had to manage. Some organisations are still trying to determine how to deal with the many changes that COVID-19 has created. Many organisations now have come to the realisation that to attain business survival there is a need for an effective and quick response time. According to Boikhutso (2013), the organisation must respond quickly and effectively to the changes in the environment to survive. This research analysed employee reactions to change management in a KZN-based company namely, Uniprint. This printing company is facing numerous changes due to technological innovations, the changing nature of the workforce, and a shift in client and stakeholder expectations. Digitising is transforming paper-based information into digital information (Wells, 2019). According to Chi Li (2016), many printing companies are aware that digitalisation initiatives are key, and print-to-paper is starting to decline. Veitch (2016) further states that the companies in the South African printing industry aim to keep up with the technological trends through digitising and upskilling employees. Managing change is now a core competency for organisations to sustain their competitive advantage (Brauns, 2015).

Furthermore, change management is important to overcome the challenges of the environment. By environment, the researcher means matters such as the place in which the business operates, and the business needs to understand this environment for it to survive in the market. According to Brauns (2015), the business must analyse its internal processes and performance strategies to survive the changes in today's competitive environment. However, organisations face problems when engaging in change management such as determining what the key factors are in effectively managing change, how to overcome the negative reactions and resistance from employees, determining the involvement of employees in change management, and ensuring that leadership and human resources are the pioneers of change (Brauns, 2015). According to Setyanto, Ikhwan, Amin, Muhammed Shabir, Suharto (2019), the change pioneers must help employees overcome their challenges with change.

The selected printing company is going through a transformation process because it has just been purchased by a new holding company. There are changes in leadership and operations and most of the employees in the selected company are long-standing and choose to maintain the traditional operations, processes, and systems. The role of HR and leadership is key in ensuring a smooth process of change management. The research methodology used was mixed methods using questionnaires and interviews amongst employees of Uniprint that provided insights that assisted in answering the research questions.

1.2 Background

The printing industry in South Africa is being threatened by technological innovations worldwide. The printing companies have realised that there is a need for change to maintain a competitive advantage in the market (Jain, 2020). Africa Print (2014) stated that 92% of respondents believe that professional printing is important for business in the country, 87% of respondents were positive that printing would increase, 68% of respondents believed that printing would remain important in business in five years, and 20% stated the role of print would grow in five years. Seven years later, the business of printing is still important in South Africa but to survive and maintain the competitive advantage there is a need for digitisation and meeting the changing needs of the client and stakeholders. According to Plantinga (2016), South Africa is a developing country hence in comparison to its counterparts worldwide there is a need for printing; however, there is also an increase in broadband penetration as consumers move to digital alternatives.

Subsequently, Uniprint like many printing companies finds itself needing to engage in change management for business survival and to maintain a competitive advantage in the market. The purchase of the company and merging with the new holding group has given Uniprint opportunities in the market. However, with these welcomed changes is the need for an effective change management process specifically in regards to dealing with the employees, most of whom have been with the company for 15 to 30 years. According to Nkuraru (2016), the purpose of change management is for management to be aware of what motivates employees, to support the organisation and the people, and deal with the change in a positive manner.

Leadership and HR professionals in the organisation are the pioneers of change management (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020). Zafar, Ishaq, Shoukat, Rizwan

(2014) describes change management as the transitioning of individuals, teams, and the organisation to a desired future state. It is the leadership and HR professional who manage this transition by listening to employee concerns and answering their questions and ensuring open and transparent communication. The role of leadership and HR is to influence employees on the need for change, so that they work towards the common goal in an effective, positive manner (Al Jaradar *et al.* 2013). According to El – Dirani (2019), leadership is influencing employees to achieve organisational objectives and move towards a common goal. Leaders are crucial to change management in the 21st century because they must have the ability to delegate, plan, organise, communicate effectively, motivate employees, adapt to constant change, and be innovative. The HR professional plays many roles; one of which is the change agent. According to El - Dirani (2019), the change agent is the individual who initiates and manages change in the organisation. Raghavi and Gopinathan (2013) state that the HR professional as a change agent must have communication abilities, business knowledge, business perspective in terms of the vision and mission and manager abilities, planning and project management skills, tolerance for ambiguity, manage resistance, take risks and manage conflict.

The role of leadership and the HR professional becomes increasingly important when dealing with employee reactions to change management. The human capital in the organisation is a key asset that can either impact the organisation positively or negatively (Nkuraru, 2016). There is a need for leadership and HR to engage with employees to understand their qualifications and capabilities to provide them with challenging work thus ensuring employees feel valued and accept the change management process. Employees who have autonomy can make decisions and communicate openly which makes for a better work environment (Ferreira, de Araujo, Echeveske 2020).

1.3 Statement of the problem

According to Daniel (2019), organisational change means organisational transformation. When employees reach a state of calm, they start to explore, and in that way the leader can lead by involving the employees in the change management process. According to Muia (2015), through the change management process the individual's transition and move towards the change as they complete each stage; denial, resistance, exploration, commitment, and preparedness. In exploring change management, one can understand the need for change and the positive effects it has thus more organisations can adopt the change management process. The role and assistance of HR and the leader are crucial to the change management process

being successful. According to Turner (2017), the employees who resist change create a toxic work environment. Positive change will have a phenomenal effect on the employees and the organisations of the 21st century who are dealing with constant change as they are happier lives at work. Thus, the statement of the problem is to investigate how Uniprint handles change management.

1.4 Research objectives

1. To determine the key factors in effectively managing change.
2. To investigate employee reactions to change management.
3. To investigate the extent of employee involvement in change management.
4. To determine the role, and assistance provided by HR and leadership in change management.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the key factors in effectively managing change?
2. How has change management affected employee reactions?
3. How was the employee involved in change management?
4. What is the role and assistance provided by HR and the leadership in change management?

1.6 Literature review

The purpose of this research is to determine the employee reactions to change management in the selected printing company. In doing this, the research discusses other printing companies in South Africa, and worldwide, and speaks to change management in general. Furthermore, the research critically analyses and discusses the aspects, clarification of change management, types of change, change management models, challenges of change management, factors contributing to change management, employee reactions to change management, the role and

assistance of leadership and HR in change management and the impact of COVID-19 on change management.

1.6.1 Clarification of Change Management

Todnem (2014) provides a critical review of change management in that it is the process of continuous renewal of the organisation's mission, vision, and strategy in meeting the ever-changing needs of the micro and macro environments which has an impact on both the strategic and operational levels of the organisation. Therefore, it is evident that change management is becoming increasingly critical in the organisation today and there is a need for effective leadership skills and strategy to succeed at managing the change. According to Thomas (2014), change can be managed in the following ways; proper leadership to provide the vision for change, being appropriate and timely through the process of change, development in the organisation to encourage change and improve the organisation in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, open communication and transparency and involving employees in the change management process. Passenheim (2010) states that change management is understanding the organisation that wants and needs to be changed, the people who are willing or forced to change, the realisation for change, and the dynamics of change. Laurentiu (2016) argues that there are issues when change is forced, therefore, change must be realistic, achievable, and measurable and there must be careful consideration and planning in the change management process ensuring the involvement of employees for improvement in leadership and productivity of the organisation. According to Gunjote, Pudale, Sarojini, Aswale (2015), the 21st-century organisation must expect change because it is fast paced and continual and everyone in the organisation needs change management skills hence, everyone is a change agent, and the resistance to change must not be seen as a risk but as an opportunity to deal with the issues at hand.

1.6.2 Types of change

The first type of change is planned change. Aravopoulou (2018) describes organisational change as planned because the process of analysis and implementation is pre-defined. Aravopoulou (2018) further states that there are weaknesses in change that is planned, namely; it assumes the environment in which the organisation operates is constant, it does not accommodate for rapid and transformational changes, and it ignores crises, conflict, and politics.

The second type of change that the research analyses are radical changes. According to Thomas (2014), radical change impacts the entire organisation, its vision, mission, strategy, core values, processes, and people and is usually utilised when there is a sudden change, and, transitional change takes place when current change is replaced with new change such as new product lines or automated systems.

The final type of change observed in the research is reactive change. Reactive change is in response to a serious problem and proactive change is working in advance while there are no current issues to effectively deal with change (Thomas, 2014). Dehnad (2017) believes the faces of reactance which are inertia, resistance, scepticism, and aggression must be combatted through the use of the proactive model which involves open conversations of brainstorming. In the 21st century, organisations are now aware that change is the one constant, however, the difference is today change is fast and people and organisations are forced to deal with the permanence of transformation and must react promptly to survive (Todericiu *et al.*, 2013).

1.6.3 Change Management models

1.6.3.1 McKinsey 7-S Change Management model

This model provides a holistic approach to the organisation in its change management process because it plays the role of the change agent by providing shared values, strategy, structure, systems, style, staff, and skills and includes benefits like understanding the business, giving mentorship through the change management process, meeting the business needs and employees needs and addresses the process in an integrated way. However, this model has led to numerous failures (Muia, 2015). Ariodion (2021) agrees that there are sometimes failures in using the model for change management because it is tedious in that checking every aspect of the model is time-consuming. According to Demir and Kocaoglu (2019), the model works because it makes the organisation's structure consistent and the structure is what is used to evaluate performance and increase productivity.

1.6.3.2 Lewin's three-step model

Lewin created this model in 1940 and it is continued to be used in many 21st-century organisations today. This model is all about being aware that there are key areas in the change management process, and focusing on these areas will result in organisational success. The

three stages are; unfreezing, which is identifying the need for change in employee mindsets and dealing with possible resistance; changing, which is influencing employees to move towards a common goal and implementing innovation and refreezing which is monitoring the change management process to ensure it is maintained as well as ensuring the positive attitudes are reinforced (Kimhi *et al.*, 2019). According to Stouten *et al.* (2018), unfreezing prepares the organisation for the change by putting the systems, processes, and structures in place, and refreezing entails merging the change with what is currently working in the organisation thereby embedding the change as opposed to creating separation.

1.6.4 Change Management Challenges

Recklies (2001) states that change influences what the organisation does, how it operates, and how it communicates and shares information, and this reflects the complexity of change management and the challenges that it brings. According to Thomas (2014), the challenges in the change management process are leadership, focus, commitment, and resistance - understanding and commitment of leaders are required, and decisions made in the organisation must be aligned to the vision, mission, and strategy of the business; there must be a focus in the environment so that employees are not subjected to their interpretation and every member of the organisation needs to be committed to the process, and the organisation must use its resources to influence employees to change positively and ensure there is no resistance experienced. Daniel (2019) agrees that when there is resistance to change the effectiveness of the organisation is reduced and so is its survival rate. According to Laurentiu (2016), the key levels of resistance are: the rational level which is a lack of information due to poor communication; the emotional level which is no or minimal involvement of staff in the change process, and the relational level which is every individual understanding their accountabilities and commitment in the change management process. Jain (2020) states that coaching is a requirement to manage resistance to change. Jain (2020) also refers specifically to the printing industry where managing change can be particularly difficult when dealing with employees on the production floor whose day-to-day operations change and who belong to unions that push back; these employees fear job losses and management have to face the challenge of upskilling older workers who are not tech-savvy.

The effect of COVID-19 on change management is not the focus of the research, however, this pandemic has served as a unique driver of change in organisations. The current COVID-19 pandemic poses its challenges to change management but, while being disastrous, it has taught people

that change is inevitable and there is now a new normal which has in some ways assisted in the change management process. The COVID-19 global pandemic has illustrated that change management is crucial for some organisations to grow and for other organisations to survive (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). The printing company just like so many other companies were forced to engage in best practices of change management because the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already aggressive and rapidly changing corporate landscape. However, there is still room for improvement as the company determines how to remain engaged and connected to meet organisational objectives and goals. According to Deloitte (2020), organisations and leaders must mentor employees to ensure they are lifted from despair and are managing to work through COVID-19 as it impacts the morale and productivity of the organisation. COVID-19 is affecting how organisations deal with strategic people issues (KPMG, 2020). The selected printing company has a current change management process in place which comes with employee reactions that are both positive and somewhat negative and with COVID-19 there are further changes that affect the employees and the company must deal with these strategic people issues. According to Kashif, Asif, Ali, Asad, Chethiyar, Vedamanikam (2020), when change is compulsory as it is with the impact of COVID-19 then the employees require support from the leaders and HR in the organisation to remain motivated, eradicate fear and learn new ways of doing business.

1.6.5 Factors Contributing to Managing Change

According to Karnouskos (2015), companies focus on the process of change management when they need to reflect on the factors behind the process which ensure the efficient management of change and these key factors are the employees, leadership, training, and development, and reward and recognition. Furthermore, strategies for managing change are the techniques used to effectively manage change and move in a positive direction towards the common goals of the organisation and for this, the organisation must conduct a SWOT analysis (Thomas, 2014). Zondi and Mutambara (2016) describe the rationale empirical strategy, power coercive strategy, and normative educative strategy – the first strategy assumes that employees are rational and when the change is communicated to them as beneficial they will automatically accept it, the second strategy believes individuals in leadership have power and they can use their power to force changes on employees, and the final strategy is the school of thought that the organisation's shared values and beliefs will direct the behaviour of its employees. According to Jain (2020), the printing companies must focus on five areas for managing change

in challenging times; effective sponsorship through leveraging off influential shareholders, unified communication which is open and transparent across the entire organisation, and coaching wherein the change is communicated in workshops to reduce the fear and anxiety, training to upskill and prepare the new generation workforce for the automation, and change sustenance which is ensuring the change is sustained through continuous feedback.

1.6.6 Employee Reaction's to Change Management

According to Osei – Bonsu (2014), for change management to be successful the employees' psychological transition must be managed because poor management leads to feelings of threat, frustration, and anxiety. Turner (2017) discusses the journey of emotions the employee goes through in the change management process; the comfort zone where the employee is comfortable and there is no change yet and they have full control of their environments, the no-zone is the employee experiencing shock, denial, and anger initially and refusing to accept the change, the chasm where the employee attempts to determine how to make the change work for them, and the go zone where agreement is reached and the employee accepts and commits to the change. Wittig (2012) states that organisations must realise that employees' reactions to change management are influenced by several factors such as employee emotions and cognitions, communication, and participation in decision making. Recklies (2001) states that once a mistake like failing to communicate the change to employees is made in the change management process it is difficult to rectify because it results in employees losing trust in the organisation and regaining this trust will prove to be challenging.

1.6.7 Role of leadership and HR in Change Management

Organisational change occurs when there is technological change, downsizing, and restructuring, and involves leadership and HR that is flexible and can change the mindset of employees who are resisting the change, and, commit to aligning the organisational plan and objectives (Kimhi, Oliel, Okeke, Oboreh, Nebolisa, Esione, Ojukwu 2019). According to Muia (2015), change is a big responsibility of leadership and HR who must be change agents that encourage an environment to support the change management process, and, be the facilitator and communicator because without the commitment of employees the process will be challenging.

According to Ferreira *et al.* (2020), for the change management process to succeed employees must be involved and this is possible with participative leadership. Employees need to be aware of and understand the changes in their work and the reasons for the change if they are to commit to ensuring the change management process is a success. Leaders must always show they are committed to the change because they have a key role to play in supporting and implementing the change management process, and most importantly communicating to employees about the process. According to Ionescu, Merut, Dragomirouiu (2014), the role of the leader is to ensure active participation and transparency throughout the change management process, form an alliance with other key stakeholders, especially in a large organisation, and communicate directly with employees on the change, reasons for the change and how the change will be beneficial to the employees and the organisation. Jain (2020) agrees with the formation of alliances because he states that leaders must engage and involve the unions to establish confidence after all their commitment will affirm employee support in the change management process.

Todericiu *et al.* (2013) state that regardless of whether the change is reactive, proactive, planned, participative, negotiated, radical, incremental, strategic, technological, structural, or only at the employee level, the role of human resources is vital to the process of change management. Change involves people, identifying the need for change, developing objectives and solutions, and implementing those solutions; therefore, the HR professional plays a key role in the change management process (Recklies, 2001). El – Dirani *et al.* (2019) argue that the main areas for HR to add value in the change management process are; to communicate the plans and goals clearly and on time, recruit leaders who engage in participative leadership, design and develop transparent reward systems, involve all employees hence giving them the autonomy to make decisions, and, ensure all employee engagement is a positive experience.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Organisational change occurs when there is technological change, downsizing, and restructuring and involves HR and leadership that is flexible and can change the mindset of employees who are resisting the change, and commit to aligning the organisational plan and objectives (Kimhi *et al.*, 2019). The conceptual framework of this research is to discuss change management and determine the employee reactions to change management in a specific printing company. The first concept to be reviewed in the literature is the many factors required to ensure change is effectively managed. Thereafter the various concepts like employee

resistance, employee attitudes and emotions, organisational resistance, and assistance from the organisation is discussed which relate to either positive or negative employee reactions. Employee involvement in change management is a significant concept of the study. According to Muia (2015), change is a big responsibility of HR and leadership who must be change agents that encourage an environment to support the change management process, and, be the facilitator and communicator because without the commitment of employees the process will be challenging. The final concept is the change agents, leadership, and HR, and their role and assistance in change management.

1.8 Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted is mixed methods that uses both quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher conducted structured interviews with open-ended questions and distributed questionnaires containing closed-ended questions. There were 5 interviews in total consisting of employees in senior and junior level positions and the rest of the Uniprint staff, specifically 126 people who completed the questionnaires. The interviews ensured the research was detailed and the questionnaires provided more views on the research because it included a broader range of respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used as the research methodology is both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and the researcher relied on her judgement in selecting the respondents.

1.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher is an employee of the company and is in the position of HR and Payroll Officer. Therefore, the researcher does know the employees of the company and has some knowledge to pursue the research. The researcher proceeded by ensuring the research adhered to the relevant ethical standards. The gatekeeper letter was obtained from the selected printing company and the UKZN office had oversight of the research to ensure ethical clearance was obtained. The researcher received consent from management before conducting the interviews and administering the questionnaires. Respondents were requested to provide written consent and were informed that they could decline. The researcher provided the respondents with the justifications for the study and affirmed that the information provided was anonymous and will remain confidential. The researcher ensured questions were answered to the study expectations whilst maintaining the respondent's anonymity.

1.10 Limitations to the Study

The foremost limitation of this research was using a single printing company because there is the possibility of same-source bias. Future research could improve upon this research by including more printing companies. Furthermore, the sample size of 135 could be increased to improve the generalisability of the research findings. These limitations could have negative consequences for change management, especially in terms of the involvement of employees in the entire process. Finally, the research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic thus there may be limitations in terms of the research methodology due to social distancing, and since interviews and questionnaires were conducted with the use of technology there were some technical issues encountered.

1.11 Conclusion

The research critically analyses and discusses change management and all the aspects that it encompasses. The research reviews change management through time and highlight the prevailing thoughts in the 21st-century organisation. There is a key focus on employee reactions to change management but also how it is impacted by the way the organisation manages change and the role of leadership and HR as pioneers of change. The research is a case study of a KZN-based printing company, Uniprint, but it does briefly discuss printing companies in South Africa and worldwide. The literature shows evidence of positive employee reactions when there is involvement in the change management process through transparency and open communication. However, there are challenges of change management that exist, one of many is the employee resistance to change due to fear and anxiety but this can be overcome when leadership and HR take the responsibility to manage the change and involve the employees thus ensuring a smooth transition and positive transformation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There is continuous pressure on organisations to adapt to change in terms of new technologies, maintain a competitive advantage in the market, and revive business strategies to survive. In current times, organisations are faced with constant disruptive changes because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an expectation to think out of the box, maintain business relationships outside the office and ensure effective collaboration with teams while working from home. Organisations must continuously align to their environments by reacting to externalities and proactively modelling the business. Despite organisations being well aware of this, change initiatives still fail to achieve their goals. Furthermore, the employees are key role players in the change in the organisation so their involvement is critical to the success of change management. The role of leadership and HR in the organisation is to be the change agent who prepares the employees for change and assists them through particularly difficult occurrences in the change process. Below is a review of the literature discussing change, the process of change management, and the factors which need to be managed effectively to ensure the organisation meets the objectives of its change initiatives.

2.2 Clarification of Change Management

Research has yet to define change management in one way, but rather there is a range of definitions that attempt to clarify change management. Andrew (2017), and Goncalves and Campos (2016) provide the traditional definition of change management which is the individual, group, or organisation moving from a current situation to the desired future situation. According to Errida *et al.* (2018), change management is the process of managing people in the organisational change to achieve the desired future state. Goncalves and Campos (2016) provide another definition of change management, as the movement from the current state through a transition stage referred to as the valley of despair, to a desired future state, and when there is a change in the organisation the stakeholders must be aware of what the change is, develop new skills, new ways of working, solutions and tools.

Bahadin (2020) has a similar view that change management lessens productivity reduction whilst encouraging strategies and actions which result in higher productivity. According to de

Biasi (2018), change management must be planned, steered, controlled, and evaluated. Teczke, Bespayeva, Bugubayeya (2017) agree that change management is to plan, initiate, realise, control, and stabilize change processes. When the change management practices and interventions are executed properly and consistently with stakeholders, then there are successful change processes in the organisation (Vlados, 2019). Change management includes involving all the stakeholders to gear themselves to accept the change and the results of the change management process, and, manage the resistance to change effectively.

According to Fusch *et al.* (2020), change management is the process to initiate adjustment, renovation, modification, or a revolution in the way business is done in the organisation and, the people involved in the change management are crucial. According to Gichohi (2007) change management is a process that occurs when there is a planned approach to change. Generally, the goal is to maximise the efforts of a group of employees and reduce the risk of failure in the implementation of change. Metre (2009) states that managers and employees have different perspectives on change. The managers and the employees are aware that vision and leadership are what determine the success of change but not all leaders realise how employees commit to the change impacts and the existence of the change. The management in the organisation who are the leaders will view the change as a way to improve business by aligning the operations with the strategy, taking calculated risks, and advancing careers. However, employees may view the change as disruptive and as a threat (Metre, 2009).

According to Hiatt and Creasy (2003), when there is a change, managers are focused on other issues in combination with change management. Therefore, managers are focused on achieving results in the organisation and are unaware of the importance of change management. The employees, however, do not have insight into the business strategy and performance, thus making it challenging to convince them to accept the change with the rationale of improving organisational performance. The change creates a volatile combination of diverse priorities, knowledge bases, and motivations amongst the people of the organisation. It is at this juncture that change management is required for organisational success (Todnem, 2005).

Change management entails managing employees in the changing environment to ensure changes for the organisation are successful and the desired results are achieved. The concept of change has been researched for many years, including early work by Beckhard and Harris (1977) and Bridges change model of 1980 found in Ford *et al.* (2002). Thus, change leaders

and HR can now adapt their strategies and techniques in change management to the specific period or phase. Change is a process and not a once-off event and leaders must be involved and visible in all stages of the change process.

2.3 Types of change

2.3.1 Planned change

The planned change includes stages of exploration, planning, action, and integration and is relevant to most change situations (Todnem, 2005). However, Todnem (2005) also refers to numerous criticisms of the planned approach to change which is: that it is based on a small scale and incremental change so it does not apply to all change situations, the planned approach assumes that organisations operate in constant conditions, situations which require directive approaches such as rapid change are ignored, and it assumes that all stakeholders of change will reach an agreement. According to Jansen (2011), planned change is intentional and brings the change to the business, and is deliberate, systematic, and purposeful. Jalagat (2016) states that planned change exists when the organisation is aware of the need for a big change and is proactive in creating a plan to ensure the attainment of change, like the efficient implementation of a strategic plan and/or reorganisational plan.

2.3.2 Radical change

According to Boikhutso (2013), radical change is defined as the change that encompasses a new direction and action taken towards it. The technological innovation which is disrupting the printing companies and forcing them to become more digitised to keep up with the competitive market is an example of this. Boikhutso (2013) further states that radical change requires more support from top management, and is needed in organisations, but receives negative responses, which the author assumes is due to this type of change requiring force which is viewed as unfavourable. According to Jalagat (2016), radical change comes from a change in the organisational structure and culture such as the transition from a top-down hierarchical structure to many big self-directing teams.

Radical change is a significant change forced on the organisation wherein an interaction with the environment is required (Todd, 1999). The organisation is forced to change its values, and shift from old behaviours to new behaviours. This process is generally time-sensitive because an opportunity in the market is identified and the organisation has to respond timeously to

improve its performance. Managers are put under pressure because they must lead the change whilst performing their daily duties. The change involves changing employee behaviour which means it is not guaranteed as it involves dealing with people (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020).

Radical change is characterised by the replacement of the status quo, involving the reordering of structures, processes, morale, and knowledge in the organisation (Hartge, Callahan, King 2019). This type of change occurs because of changes in the environment that impact how the organisation operates (Porter and Van der Linde, 1995). According to Price and Chahal (2003), when radical change occurs the competitive market is in a position where resources that the organisation requires becomes unavailable. The factors impacting the organisation become the motivation for radical change (Ford and Ford, 2012).

Wischnevsky and Damonpour (2006) refer to radical strategic change and radical structural change which is differentiated by the control that management has over outcomes and resource requirements. Radical structural change is the extent management can influence employees through control over reward policies. The radical strategic change includes management's influence on customer demand, distribution channels, and supplier relationships. Newman (2000) believes that due to the high costs and risks involved radical changes are avoided.

2.4 Change Management models

2.4.1 Mckinsey 7S Change Management model

According to Jalagat (2016), the McKinsey model is based on seven categories of change, further separated by the soft and hard areas. The soft areas are skills, style, staff, and shared values while the hard areas are the system, strategy, and structure. The soft areas are challenging to manage but are the foundation of the organisation because they are the source of competitive advantage. The strategy of the organisation is long-term and based on the mission, vision, and values; the structure is described in the organisational charts reflecting the departments, roles, and responsibilities; the systems are the processes and procedures in the organisation; the skills are the abilities of the employees; the staff is the people of the organisation; the style describes the management styles of the leaders in the organisation and the shared values are the norms and standards of the organisation which guide how the employees behave and act (Jalagat, 2016).

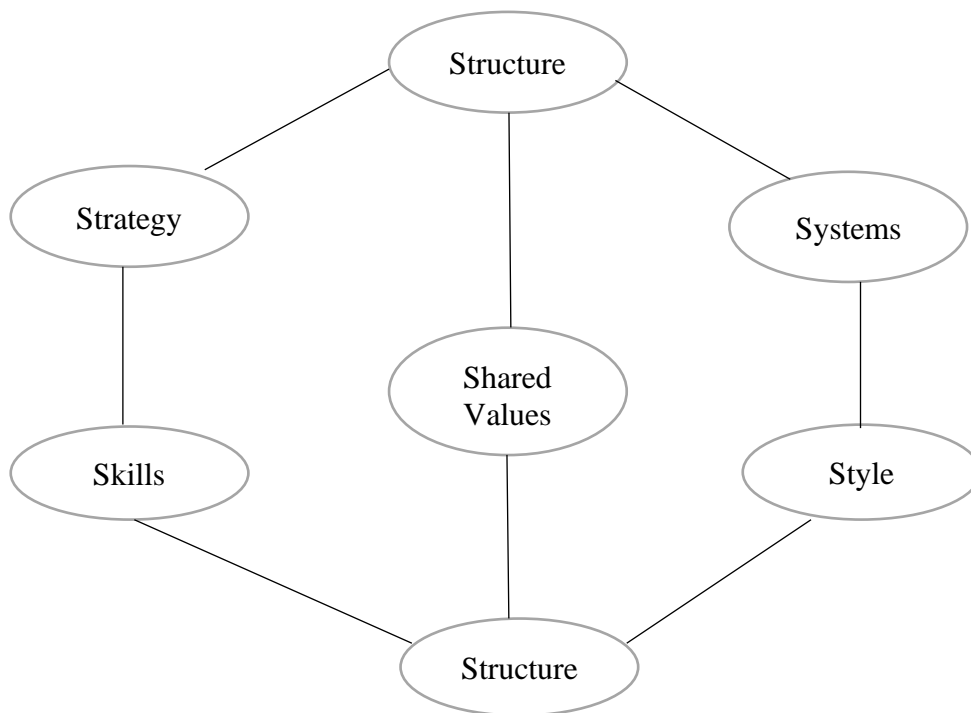
According to Okemba (2018), the seven components of the McKinsey model must have mutual understanding and connection for the organisation to function effectively. This model plays a role in acting out new strategies and provides the path for connection within the organisation. The structure of the organisation refers to the separation of tasks and the integration which occurs at a later stage (Parakhina, Boris, Timoshenko, 2017). The number of employees increases and in turn, the number of interactions increases hence the need for integration for the organisation to function.

The strategy is the system of finding, formulating, and developing a policy that ensures long-term success and is designed with future changes in mind generally resulting due to customers and the external environment (Richter and Littman, 2013). Therefore, the vision, mission, and values must align with the strategy. The strategies that are found to be short-lived are those which do not align with the other six areas of the McKinsey model.

The systems are what make or break the organisation and are, therefore, a critical change element. Therefore, organisations must plan in terms of customers, marketing, and market shares which are all supported by the right systems hence failing to change the systems when required will result in failure for the organisation. According to Peus, Frey, Gerhardt, Fischer, Traut-Mattausch (2009), employees do give attention to what leadership communicates, but more importantly, they pay attention to what action leadership takes. The priorities in the organisation must be determined and leaders must get involved. The organisational culture is often what determines the reputation so important changes to leadership style must be made when required.

Staff refers to the human resource element which is the number of employees needed in the organisation, the processes of recruitment, training, motivation, and rewards. This element also encompasses the development of leaders to empower them to lead the change when it happens. The best organisations are led by those who influence their subordinates by the way they conduct themselves and develop their teams (Adebakin and Bako, 2014). Therefore, organisations must focus on developing the younger employees to attain the style the organisation needs for future success. Skills are needed for the organisation to achieve its goals. In this element of the model the organisation identifies the skills it possesses, and the skills it requires. The organisation will either develop the current skill set or recruit new skill sets.

Shared values are the final element of the Mckinsey model and they are the foundation of the organisation. They guide employee behaviours and organisation actions, and also assist leaders in giving meaning to their employees and teams. The Mckinsey model has been criticised for not having the key competencies required in an organisation (Hanafizadeh and Ravasan, 2011). Okemba (2018) states that this makes it challenging to perceive the competitive advantage that the organisation possesses.



Visual Paradigm Online (2002)

2.4.2 Lewin’s three-step model

Jalagat (2016) describes Lewin’s model which was founded in 1951 as focused on planned change based on group decisions, implementation, and social change, and consists of unfreezing, which is the acknowledging of the current systems and processes as a concern in the organisation; changing, which is moving from the old systems and processes to the new systems and processes; and refreezing, which is incorporating the new systems and processes in the organisation. The first phase of Lewin’s model is creating the stimulus for change, wherein individuals go through the change and experience two forces, firstly, anxiety because they are learning something new which could fail, and secondly, survival anxiety which

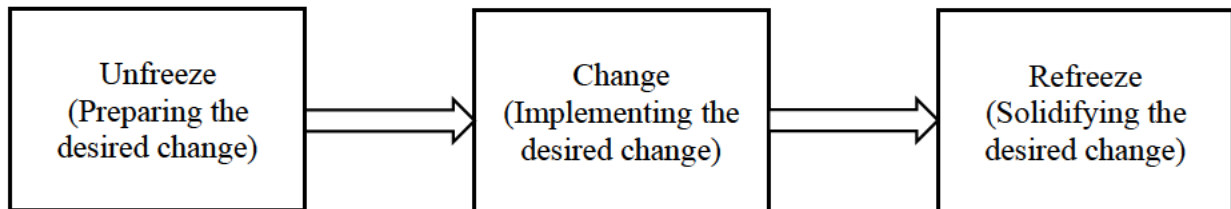
involves resistance to change (Nthutang, 2016). The employee must progress from the anxiety for the change to succeed, therefore, survival anxiety must overwhelm the learning anxiety to motivate the employee towards the change (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020).

The second phase of Lewin's model is to change. In this stage what is critical is cognitive restructuring which is handling new information, semantic redefinition which is ensuring words are interpreted correctly, and scale of evaluation (Nthutang, 2016). During this time, it is key for the organisation to work through trial and error learning to achieve the desired change. Errida and Lotfi (2021) however, state that Lewin's change model does not guide on how to manage the change. Mcshane and Von Gilnow (2000) agree by stating that the model does not include critical aspects such as strategic vision, change agents, and disseminating change. In addition, Nickols (2016) also views the model as unaccommodating for organisations that are already unfrozen.

According to Okemba (2018), Lewin believes that to determine a group's behaviour it is critical to identify the areas where there is changed behaviour. In this way, the behaviours of employees and the motives behind these behaviours will be understood thereby strengthening the change process. Unfreezing is the first stage in Lewin's model and reflects that individual behaviour is based on a status quo and there is resistance to changing it (Okemba, 2018). Therefore, Lewin believes the status quo must be dealt with before attempting to change the behaviours. The individuals must be educated on the need to change the status quo and there is a need for buy-in to reduce resistance. Moving is where there is learning taking place, determining what possible resistance could occur and managing it (Okemba, 2018). In the stage of refreezing, the focus is to maintain the new set of acquired behaviours (Okemba, 2018). Therefore, to avoid employees reverting to old habits, the new behaviours must be realistic and aligned to the other behaviours of the learner. In the organisation, the refreezing would lead to a change in organisational culture, standards, rules, and practices (Okemba, 2018).

There are also some criticisms of Lewin's model, such as that of Quinn (1982), who argues that Lewin's theory focuses on the extent of the change but not the speed and thus does not work when there is a radical change. Lewin's model works for behavioural change in the group, organisational, and societal environments, but transformational changes need structural

changes (Dickens and Watkins, 1999). Another criticism of Lewin's model is that top-down management is needed for change management as opposed to bottom-up (Dawson, 1994).



Lucid Chart Online (2011)

2.5 Challenges in Managing Change

2.5.1 The ineffective leader

One of the challenges of change management is an ineffective leader. Commonwealth (2015) states that a leader who does not manage the change effectively leads to a leadership team that is unsupportive of the change; there is no clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities of key people in the change management process; the leadership team is unaware of employee reactions to change, communication is poor and key leadership is disengaged; employees lack trust in the leadership, and the risks are not assessed and managed. Shulga (2020) states that effective leadership is when employees trust in leadership. According to Popli and Rizvi (2016), effective leaders engage with employees by providing a supportive environment and ensuring organizational success.

2.5.2 The demotivated employee

Employees who lack motivation will not help and get involved in the change management process. Thus, it will fail. Further to this, it is a big challenge to transform employees from their comfort zones (Nthutang, 2016). The organisational vision must be known and supported for all employees to move towards achieving this vision. According to Kotter (2008), when the changed vision is unknown then resources remain and are alienated, and the future vision becomes a blur. Poor communication leads to rumours which magnify the negative factors of change (Elving, 2005). Zondi and Mutambara (2016) state that low morale will negatively affect organisational performance due to demotivated employees and when the organisation

goes through changes the stable environment is disrupted leading to employees feeling insecure.

2.5.3 Leadership and HR

Leadership and HR must be aware of and understand the change challenges; one of which is understanding the behaviour and culture of employees because it is difficult for people to change their habits. Another challenge is applying the knowledge acquired in change management of the past, to a current issue in the organisation. According to Naghibi and Baban (2011), the priority of the organisation in the change management process is to change the perceptions and attitudes of employees to favour the change. The success and failure of change initiatives are connected to the hard factors that influence them (Aljohani, 2016). The four hard factors are the duration of the project and the time between change reviews, the integrity of performance or the capabilities of employees affected by change agents, the commitment of employees and senior executives who will be impacted by the change, and the extra effort needed for employees to make the change (Sirkin, Keenan and Jackson, 2014). Alfes *et al.* (2019) add that HR plays a key role in managing and implementing the change by fostering positive employee reactions and generating employee support through the stages of the change.

2.5.4 Ineffective planning

Rodda (2010) states that change typology classifies change by the degree of planning involved in the change. Planning is another challenge of change management because without the proper planning the organisation might fail during the change process. The plan should detail what will change and how the change will affect the organisation (Quain, 2019). In addition, the new ways of working must be connected to the old ways of working as employees should not be confused during the transition. Employees must be assigned clear roles and responsibilities in the process that leads to successful change management. The plan must also indicate specific timelines for each change milestone reaching completion. According to Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider and Hussain (2018), to implement change there is a need for activities planning and commitment planning. The former is a road map for the change and specifies activities required for the change to be successful, the latter is people whose commitment is required for the change to succeed.

2.5.5 Communication

It is crucial that all employees reach a consensus on the change management and come to a point of acceptance of the change and work in cohesion to overcome the barriers. If this is not achieved the organisation is facing what is referred to as a consensus challenge. This challenge reduces the negative impact when leadership is on board with the change. Also, it is helpful if employees understand how the organisation will be affected by the change and how the change is beneficial. According to Edmonstone (1995), empowering employees through placing the change initiative in their hands and allowing them to act on it fosters consensus.

There is a communication challenge that can exist in change management if the organisation does not have a proper communication channel in place. Sometimes communicating about the change ahead of time can be disruptive as employees speculate and rumours start. Employees want to know their position in the organisation once the change has happened and if they don't this creates uncertainty and fear amongst them. Therefore, the organisation must maintain regular, open, honest communication with employees and ensure new information or change implementation takes place with the involvement of all employees (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020). According to Neill (2018), it is critical to communicate how the change will impact employees and their jobs, the benefits of the change, and the resources and alternatives for employees. According to Awadari and Kanwal (2019), engagement and involvement of employees in the change is key to the success of the change management process. Packery (2014) agrees that employee involvement is key to the success of implementing organisational change.

2.5.6 Employee resistance

One of the biggest challenges faced in change management is employee resistance. Over time employees become comfortable in the workplace and are unwilling to make changes. This is due to changes possibly disrupting their familiarity, and employees become disappointed by the effects of the change. Change forces employees to relearn their basics and adjust their ways of working (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020). The new ways of working could be vastly different thereby upsetting the employees. According to Chikwekwete (2014), employee resistance is a clear challenge for organisations. According to Thomas, Tendai, Zororo and Obert (2019), to avoid employee resistance to change employees who are the ones affected must be involved in the change initiatives. Sverke, Hellgren, Naswall,

Goransson and Ohrming (2008) agree that involving employees in change management reduces the feelings of job insecurity and the experience of a poor work environment.

2.5.7 The relevance of Change Management models

The current challenges of change management in the 21st century is not about the relevance of the various change management models. The problem is that these models are not ideal for the complexity and speed of change today (Pryor, Anderson, Toombs and Humphreys 2008). The change affecting most organisations today is on a large scale. The changes are generally caused by either internal problems that need a solution, or the need for technological advancement and the entering into a new era. Strategic changes, however, occur regularly and are a key to the change management process. The strategic changes have a greater influence over the organisation because they have a top-bottom approach. Strategic change refers to a change in the vision and objectives of the organisation to achieve organisational success. It is evident that there is not just one way to manage change and the process is not always a successful one. Some organisations fail in the implementation of the change whilst others fail in communicating the change (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020).

2.6 Factors Contributing to Managing Change

Boikhutso (2013) describes critical elements which need to be analysed in change management, such as the age of the organisation because over time change management practices evolve, and the size of the organisation because the problems and solutions in the business change as the number of employees and sales volume increases. According to McShane and Von Gilnow (2000), encouraging employee involvement, facing and dealing with employee concerns, engaging with the change agents, commitment to the change management process from leadership, and ensuring leaders are role models in the change are all critical factors in managing the change effectively. Gwavuya (2011) agrees that leadership must be mindful of employees' attitudes, perceptions, actions, and motivation levels in the change management process. McShane and Von Glinow (2000) also believe it is critical to managing the soft aspects of change such as culture and motivation. Morgan and Zeffane (2003) agree that the softer aspects need attention because they can destroy the change effort.

2.6.1 Stages of the Change Management process

Beer and Nohria (2000) speak of five basic stages of an effective change management process; the first stage is to provide a foundation as to why the change is needed; the second stage is communicating the organisational vision that the change will bring; and the third stage is ensuring the resources and information required for the change are plentiful and available; stage four is ensuring the leadership and key players in the change are equipped to manage the change, and the final stage is communication so all employees are informed and involved thereby feeling motivated towards the change. The extent to which these stages are depicted in the process will depend on how they are managed. Prosci (2021) agrees that there are costs to change management such as resource costs, training costs, communication costs, travel costs, time, and material costs, and when change is managed poorly there are more costs involved in the process. According to Powers and Been (2014), in change management, leadership must be attentive to budget constraints and there are costs to assigning resources for change management. Also, it is difficult to identify effective change as the timeframes differ because change is progressive. Furthermore, a change that is initially perceived as beneficial can later become destructive as responsibilities reduce and employees return to old habits (Beer and Nohria, 2000).

According to Beijer and Gruen (2016), organisations perceive and manage change from a technical viewpoint and hence feeling obligated to adopt the latest technology, reduce costs and improve efficiencies. Through the adoption of innovative technology, the organisation is forced to implement a change management process in response. Du Plessis and Mabunda (2016) state that change management results in the development of strategies that embrace the change and assist the organisation in achieving successful performance. Change management is a structured approach that shifts the organisation from its current state to a desired future state (Macpherson, 2018). The process of change management provides the organisation with an opportunity to identify the barriers to change and overcome employee resistance by using change management models.

According to Stouten, Rousseau and De Cremer (2018), some of the reasons organisations choose to engage in change management are due to changing technology, a changing workforce, competitive pressures, and globalisation. Abbas and Asghar (2010) state that when change management is successful in an organisation it increases personal creativity. This is critical in the 21st-century organisation because the more innovative the business is the greater

its competitive edge in the market. However, Maharaj (2021) states that even with a successful change management process there will be employee resistance encountered as it is human nature to resist the norms. This is where the organisation's key players must understand the reason for the resistance and have a proactive approach to implementing the change. Therefore, change is inevitable in any organisation and a level of competence to manage the change is required (South African Board for People Practices, 2016). Galbraith (2018) highlights that the change brings new roles and responsibilities for the employees hence leadership must engage with employees during the process of change because organisational change also involves personal change .

2.6.2 Guiding principles to manage change

According to Plantinga (2021), there are ten guiding principles to manage change; address the human side of change systematically, change starts at the top and begins on the first day, real change happens at the bottom, confront reality, demonstrate vision, craft a vision, create ownership not just buy-in, practice targeted over communication, explicitly address culture, assess the cultural landscape, prepare for the unexpected, and speak to the individual as well as the institution. Whenever there is a change in the organisation there are people involved. There are new leaders with more responsibilities, jobs change, new skill sets are developed, and people will experience uncertainty and resistance. Therefore, speed, morale, and results are at risk. For the change to be successful there must be analysis, planning, and implementation of strategy, systems, or processes. This must be incorporated into the change management program and decision-making in the organisation thereby giving the organisation its strategic direction. Managing change must start with the leadership in the organisation and then engage the other key stakeholders. According to Mineo (2014), trust is the glue that binds the leader to their followers and provides capacity for organisational and leadership success.

Organisational culture is a combination of history, values, beliefs, common attitudes, and behaviours. The organisation's personality is its culture (Yenice, 2018). Gibson and Barsade (2003) state that organisational culture is what holds the organisation together. Change management entails amending, creating, retaining or merging culture to be successful. To redevelop the culture, the organisation must understand what its new desired culture entails, therefore a detailed plan to make the change is required. Leaders must analyse the current culture and identify the gaps that must be closed and the strategies to enhance the development

of the new culture. Leaders must communicate the type of culture and behaviours that are best for promoting the new way of doing business and identify ways of rewarding those behaviours. According to Yenice (2018), it is a complex process to change, maintain and allow the evolution of organisational culture and it requires a clear strategic objective and long-term coordination and availability of resources.

As the change progresses and moves down the organisation, the speed of change increases, and the importance of culture and behaviour is understood more. A common failure is that organisations assess culture too late or not at all in the process of change. Analysing the organisational culture can reflect readiness for change in the organisation, issues can be identified, and the cultural factors that support or inhibit change, and sources of leadership and resistance become known (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020). This cultural analysis is key in identifying core values, beliefs, behaviours, and perceptions that must be considered for successful change. The organisational culture is the force that drives organisational development and decreases stress and improves self-esteem in employees (Onyango, 2014). It is these factors that serve as the foundation for the new corporate vision, infrastructure, and programs required for change.

The organisation needs to be prepared for anything as the change management process is unpredictable. In the process employees will react unexpectedly, resistance anticipated could reduce, and the external environment will shift. To effectively manage change there must be a continuous reassessment of the impact of change and the willingness and ability of the organisation to adopt the next transformation. According to Diamanti *et al.* (2007) organisations are operating in continuously changing environments hence must develop their ability to manage change. The data retrieved from research and the decision-making will lead to issues resolved, and adjustments made to maintain momentum and drive desired results.

The organisation needs to acknowledge that change does not only happen to the organisation but also the individual. Therefore, the organisation must ensure the individual understands how their work will change, what is expected of them during and after the change, how they will be measured, and what success or failure means to that individual. This communication must be open and honest. Employees must be involved in the change process to understand the reason for the change so they can react positively and the change process can succeed (Society for Human Resource Management Foundation, 2020). Rewards are a positive way to reinforce the

embracing of change. According to Kerr and Slocum (1987), the reward system in an organisation is a way for leadership to influence the culture because it is about controlling the behaviours and attitudes of employees and the reward system is a key way of attaining control, and, defining the relationship between the organisation and the employee using the exchange.

2.7 Employee reactions to Change Management

When reviewing the literature on change management, one of the key aspects is the employee reactions to change in the organisation, which can be either positive or negative. For the change management process to be successful in the organisation the employee reactions must be positive and accepting of the change. Leadership and HR, who are the change agents of the organisation also know that employee reactions are key to the change management process, hence must commit to receiving positive employee attitudes and behaviours in the process. Lunenberg (2010) states that the change agent has the skill and power to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate the change effort. Bhola (2010) states that when the change agent does not include the employee in the process, they fail to manage the process adequately, and this mismanagement affects the employee negatively which leads to employee disengagement.

Change means uncertainty in the organisation and this can demoralise employees to the extent of negatively impacting productivity (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). Boikhutso (2013) believes that change is not only about how employees act but how they think, hence, managing change in employees also means managing attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts. According to Austin and Currie (2003) change involves loss which can be either superficial or meaningful such as the loss of jobs, and the organisation needs to acknowledge this to successfully manage employee reactions in the change management process.

2.7.1 Employee resistance to change

Isaacs (2018) states that changes impacting job security often manifest in the form of mergers and acquisitions. Yuh – Shy (2019) says that employees react negatively to change when they fear personal loss such as security i.e., losing their jobs, or loss such as money ie, losing money due to moving business premises farther away from home. According to Stephen (2021), resistance is unanticipated delays, costs, and instabilities in the process of change which is challenging to predict and it is the change to a status quo in times of pressure. Jansen (2011) believes that resistance to change is the lack of support from employees in the process of

change management. Jansen (2011) further states that resistance happens when there is a transition from the known to the unknown and it is seen in the form of cynicism wherein employees intentionally try to delay the change process, or change tiredness wherein employees exhibit a passive resistance to change and continue with their jobs.

According to Eyasu and Endale (2020), the resistance to change falls within three sections, namely; technical resistance, political resistance, and cultural resistance. Technical resistance is following the common procedures and keeping to the status quo, political resistance is when the change threatens powerful stakeholders and often occurs due to scarce resources like capital, budgets, and quality employees, and cultural resistance is the systems and procedures which reinforce the status quo, and encourage employees conforming to the current values, norms, and assumptions of the internal operations (Khan and Rehman, 2008). According to Jalagat (2016), employees will resist change because of fear that the change opposes their interests and will rather encourage the status quo to stay in their comfort zone and avoid the unknown.

Jansen (2011) describes the opposing view which is a positive form of employee reaction to change which is the commitment to change wherein employees' efforts are for the change plan and process to succeed, and an important factor for commitment to change is effective internal communication relating to the change. Jalagat (2016) describes another positive form of employee reaction through dynamism wherein the employees feel free to express their opinions and adapt to challenges because they believe the organisation is dynamic and flexible thereby promoting productivity and increased organisational performance.

According to Wang and Kabede (2020), change succeeds or fails depending on employee reactions, and the reason for the failure in change management is mostly because of employees' resistance to change. The way employees perceive the support of leadership determines the success of the change. Employees who perceive the organisation in a negative light believe they are not supported by the leadership and will possess negative attitudes and behaviours toward the change. However, employees who perceive the organisation as supportive are likely to be supportive of the organisation and will react positively to the change. Wang and Kabede (2020) refer to procedural justice as a factor in determining employee reactions to change because it is associated with increased acceptance, readiness, and commitment to change. Employees are concerned with procedural justice which in turn results in their positive

reactions to change and consists of them determining how decisions are made (Kim and Beehr, 2019).

According to Management Consulting (2021), employees will resist the change for which they are unable to determine the impact, if the change is not aligned to the employee's needs, they will resist it, when employees identify that the change is happening irrespective of their acceptance they may initially resist it but grow to accept it, and when change is perceived by employees as being in their best interests they will accept it. Employees have four reactions to change, namely disengagement, which is the employees withdrawing from the change, disidentification wherein the employees feel the change makes them lose their identities and they feel threatened, and disenchantment which is the realization that the change is present and employees become angry and attempt to create coalitions to fight the change, and disorientation wherein employees are confused about the change and question what to do rather than how to do it (Management Consulting, 2021).

Management Consulting (2021) believes there are five reasons employees resist change, employees become used to their habits, employees may need security and change threatens that, concerns that change will negatively impact income, and fear because the employee does not know what the change will result in, and selective information processing because employees create their world with their perceptions and change influences that so there is resistance to ensure everything stays intact.

2.7.2 Employee emotions and attitudes

Employees' reactions to change are dependent on their emotions and cognitions, communication, and employee involvement in decision-making (Wittig, 2012). Guenter *et al.* (2014) state that delays in communication can have substantial negative consequences for the organisation. Jansen (2011) describes the employees' feelings to change through the affective component which is the employee's individual feelings about the change, the cognitive component which is the employee's feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of the change, and the intentional or behavioural reaction of the individual which is their actions taken or to be taken in the future. Kumar and Velmurugan (2020) add that the employee's morale refers to their state of mind about their commitment and feelings towards the organisation, thus it could be said that the organisation's performance depends on employee's morale.

The aspects of the employee's emotions and cognitions are; emotional intelligence, irrational thoughts, defence mechanisms, and employee attitudes (Wittig, 2012). Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand one's feelings and the feelings of others, to motivate one's self, and manage the emotions in one's self and others (Wittig, 2012). Irrational thoughts are what result in employees' resistance to change; they are the individual thoughts created by employees on what they think is going to happen, and how others perceive them (Wittig, 2012). The defence mechanisms occur in employees as an involuntary response to danger and to reduce anxiety (Wittig, 2012).

Gender, tenure, social systems, and educational attainment impact employee attitudes towards change, and these attitudes are important in the success of the change management process (Wittig, 2012). Therefore, because the success of the change management process is dependent on employee reactions, it is critical to communicate the change with employees to positively influence their reactions (Wittig, 2012). Involving employees in decision-making results in positive effects because it encompasses open communication, expressing new ideas, shared vision, common direction, mutual respect, and trust which employees receive positively (Wittig, 2012). According to Eyasu and Endale (2020), the employee attitudes about change management in the organisation can be either positive or negative. They are the internal state which influences the employee's actions towards the change.

Employees who fear the consequences of change will react negatively to change (Wang and Kabede, 2020). Self-confidence in learning and development also impacts on employee reactions to change. The self-confident employees react positively to change whilst the employees who lack self-confidence react negatively to change. The internal locus of control is the employee who believes they have the control hence this employee will be self-confident and eager to upskill themselves, and the external locus of control is the employee who believes they have no control because the control lies outside of them so they lack self-confidence and will fear the change hence react negatively (Wang and Kabede, 2020). Communication from leadership is key to the change management process because it provides employees with an understanding of the need for change thereby facilitating the process and reducing resistance to change. Also, how the change takes place impacts the employee's perceptions of the need for change in the organisation (Wang and Kabede, 2020).

2.7.3 Organisational resistance

Organisational resistance has many forms such as; the limited focus of change because there are mutually dependent systems in the organisation thus changing one will affect the others, group inertia where some employees are accepting of the change but the group norm dictates otherwise so they conform, the threat to expertise where the change means certain employee expertise is no longer needed, the threat to power relationships because collaboration and participative decision-making styles are introduced, and the threat to resource allocations, especially for employees who control the resources and how they are allocated (Management Consulting, 2021).

Traditionally, resistance was managed as an obstacle and leadership attempts in many organisations have been unsuccessful. An opposing view is the contemporary one, that resistance can be managed through feedback. According to Weiner (2009), organisational readiness is a shared psychological state where employees feel committed to implementing change in the organisation. However, Management Consulting (2021), states that resistance can be managed through strategies such as communication, participation, empathy, and support, which will guide employees through the transformation. Employees require the rationale for the change; therefore, the organisation must communicate and provide accurate and timely information to employees. A lack of open, honest communication only increases the feelings of fear and being threatened amongst employees. The communication must be informative and educate employees on the change and the benefits of change as well as make them feel involved in the change management process. Employees must be engaged and involved for the change to be successful (Management Consulting, 2021).

2.7.4 Assistance from the organisation

According to Commonwealth (2015), employees must continue to be productive during change and the employees who are directly affected by the change must be influenced to seek opportunities and be involved in the change. There are ways the organisation could assist employees in accepting the change such as providing them with the facts and results of the change, providing employees with a strong support network, being proactive and planning ahead of the change, and acknowledge and showing concern for employees' feelings regarding the change. Stensaker and Meyer (2011), state that there are six categories of employee reactions to change; solely focusing on implementing the change, implementing the change

whilst doing daily tasks, distancing from the change and doing the bare minimum in the change, neither dealing with the change or the daily operations, choosing to leave the organisation, and being destructive towards the change. Employees develop change capabilities through their experience, by either transferring their skills or knowledge or through absorbing and applying learned skills more efficiently (Stensaker and Meyer, 2011).

2.8 Role of leadership and HR in Change Management

According to Hayes (2018), leadership and HR are the change agents and they are less effective when they are not aware of the determinants which impact the outcome thus, they cannot be proactive in controlling the outcome. Boikhutso (2013) states that how leaders use or abuse their power determines the success of change management because if they implement changes without communicating and involving their teams there will be negative consequences. According to Furxhi, Stillo and Teneqexhi (2016), leaders use three techniques to encourage employees to accept the change in the organisation, creation of trust, clarity on the reason for the change and communication of the desired future state, and promotion of the involvement in and active participation of employees in the design and implementation of the change management process.

2.8.1 Leadership

According to Fusch, Ness, Booker, Fusch (2020), leaders must provide the employees with the required resources and be aware that it is not enough to delegate the task but delegate the authority to ensure the task is complete. Often in business, this is forgotten because employees want something bigger than themselves and something more than just a job and showing up at work every day. It is the leader who must create the excitement and transition from hard skills to soft skills (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). Employees can easily become complacent and when this happens there is low morale hence low productivity and profitability. Therefore, the leadership of the organisation must involve and communicate to all employees in the change management process.

The Commonwealth (2015) believes leaders must offer support to employees who are struggling to accept the change, by counselling them or simply ensuring open, transparent communication. Leadership must mentor these employees so they perceive the change as an opportunity towards achieving a goal and not as a threat, but must also understand that some

employees will accept the change fast whilst others will take more time. Strong leadership is powerful for successful change management in the organisation, and a successful leader does the following; openly supports the change, monitors the progress, understands the changes which have to take place in the process, and is aware of the employees who have influence but do not accept the change and works towards engaging them on the benefits of the change. The leaders in the change management process must be strong, develop their coping mechanisms and help employees find their coping mechanisms. The leader must set the example for the employees, have realistic expectations, and understand that every employee will reach acceptance of change at a different time and there will be challenges in the process.

Leadership must create a formal case for change and a vision statement. The information provided to employees must articulate a compelling need for change, demonstrate faith that the company has a viable future and the leadership to get there, and provide a roadmap to guide behaviour and decision-making (Fusch *et al*, 2020). Thus, the leaders in the change are critical and must overperform during the process to create mass change in the organisation. It is more than just acceptance of change that is required from employees, but also leaders accepting accountability for making the change happen in every area they influence. Thus, leaders must involve employees in identifying issues and creating solutions. These employee behaviours can be motivated through recognition and rewards.

2.8.2 Communication

The research investigates the role and assistance of leadership and HR in the change management process because they need to adapt to the change for employees to also adapt to the change, thus making the change management process a success. Therefore, the leadership and HR must communicate the importance of the change for there to be a common goal and purpose within the organisation and for all employees to go in the same direction that the business requires. Malek and Yazdanifard (2012) agree that communication answers employee questions and reduces their anxiety. The change management process alters the employee's perspectives thereby creating a process of sensemaking wherein employees communicate together to make sense of the change and sometimes this process results in alternatives to the organisational norms, values, and worldviews (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). It is important for the leadership and HR in the organisation to be aware of the sensemaking amongst employees and address their perspectives when creating a new organisational culture.

The change management process cannot succeed without communication and characteristics of responsiveness, openness, and flexibility which are critical for effective communication (Fusch *et al*, 2020). Furthermore, Fusch *et al.* (2020) state that leaders must take action; often managers focus on their departments in isolation, hence leaders must implement their action plans across the organisation for there to be successful change and to avoid unnecessary expenditures, poor coordination between departments, dysfunctional allocation of resources, bottlenecks and delays in the process, and duplication of effort. For the action plans themselves to be effective in the organisation, leadership must have the ability to communicate the what which is needed in the action plan, when it is needed, why it is needed, how it should be done, and who should be doing it.

Plans only work when the organisation understands, adopts, and acts on them. Generally, leaders make the mistake of thinking that the employees in the organisation understand the issues, agree with the need for change, and see the new direction for the organisation as clearly as they do (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). However, the best change efforts are those which reinforce the message through regular advice that is inspirational and actionable. Communication must aim to provide employees with the right information at the right time, retrieve the employees' input and feedback and be concerned about their emotional responses (Fusch *et al.*, 2020).

Over-communication is most often needed for the change management process to succeed. A great leader communicates to their team from the heart and conveys a deep sense of personal commitment. This leader tells a consistent story and understands that this story is a crucial responsibility in the change management process. According to Rowold and Abrell - Vogel (2014), the transformational leader's behaviours stimulate motivation in employees towards a commitment to the change.

2.8.3 Leadership styles and behaviours

According to Zainol, Kowang, Hee, Fei and Kadir (2020), the use of change agents in the organisation is critical for change management. Therefore, there are critical leadership styles and behaviours that ensure effective organisational change. According to Schmidt, Groeneveld and Van de Walle (2017), when there is renewal in strategies this means there are ideal leadership behaviours in the organisation wherein relationships are built with the employees

and the strategic vision and goals are communicated and there is involvement and participation. Atkinson (2015) views strategic management change as possible if there is effective leadership in the organisation. Zainol *et al.* (2020) agree leaders are required to provide clear direction for the organisation to motivate and drive the employees. Leaders and employees both need the training to further their learning and improve their performance hence should join training programs in the organisation. This in turn will achieve the desired implementation and improve productivity and performance amongst employees. Gilley, Dixon and Gilley (2008) state that leaders who influence effective change in organisations are those who encourage collaboration and communication amongst employees. Leadership must engage employees in participative decision-making because they can learn from the viewpoints of employees.

Change makes everyone feel unsettled, this includes the leaders of the organisation too. However, the leadership must provide strength, support, and direction to the employees of the organisation. For leaders to play this role they must change first and then motivate the rest of the organisation (Zel, 2016). According to Zel (2016), the leader must create their style in adapting to the ever-changing environment to motivate employees to change. The leadership team that is successful in the implementation of change is the one who collaborates and communicates well with each other, is aligned and committed to the direction of the change, understand the culture and behaviours the change brings and can lead as an example of that change.

As the change moves through the organisation it impacts the different levels. In the change initiative, leaders must be identified through the organisation moving downwards. Design and implementation teams must consist of employees at all levels in the organisation. These leaders however must be trained and equipped to lead, must be aligned to the organisational vision, be motivated, and be solely focused on the change initiative. Individuals are rational, this means employees want to know the reason for the change and to what extent it is needed in the organisation, and these answers will need to come from leadership (Zel, 2016).

2.8.4 Human resources

Besides leadership, HR in the organisation also plays a critical role in change management. The human capital drives organisational capacity and especially when the work is complex, difficult to learn, requires a high level of skill, and when extensive training may be needed, it

is the human resource leaders who assist employees to rise to their potential by expanding their skills, boosting their performance, or even by changing the way one thinks through clarification and attainment of goals successfully aligned with the goals and vision of the company (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). This in turn will improve the organisational efficiency as the HR leader uses tools such as feedback, identifying behaviours for change, developing an action plan with employees, telling the truth to employees and leadership, and being supportive and following up with those who can best identify whether an effective change has occurred.

2.8.4.1 Human resource practices

HR practices determine the employee behaviours in the organisation (Neves *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, if the organisation has an attitude towards employees wherein, they are treated as disposable assets, the employees will react accordingly and be disinvested in the success of the organisation. However, when organisations view their employees as valuable assets, and have a long-term focus on them, with humanistic values, the employees will contribute more to organisational success. Neves *et al* (2017) describes this as commitment-based HR practices.

The HR practices will differ from organisation to organisation but they generally encompass, selection practices that reflect the internal labour market, compensation-based practices dependent on the group and organisational performance, and training opportunities focused on improving skill sets and knowledge capital in the organisation. These practices motivate employees to contribute and their behaviours and interests align with the organisation's needs thereby improving the employer-employee relationship (Jeong and Shin, 2017). These HR-based practices influence both the social climate and employee involvement and engagement (Allen *et al.* 2007).

Neves *et al.* (2017) believes that commitment-based HR practices have an impact on how employees predict the future events of the organisation and how they will react. According to Ferreira *et al.* (2020), the HR practices which support its employees, are those which promote an environment of reciprocity wherein there is mutual benefit for the organisation and the employees. This long-term investment will increase employees' obligation to help and protect the organisation, because benefits are exchanged and there is a relationship that involves mutual support and investment.

2.8.4.2 Change strategies for Human Resources

Hee and Shanmugam (2019) reflect on Kotter's change management model to illustrate the change strategies for HR. Kotter's model includes eight steps, the first of which is to have a sense of urgency. This means that change can only occur when the individuals in the organisation initiate it. Therefore, leadership and HR must motivate employees by inspiring them to move toward change. According to Hee and Shanmugam (2019), potential employees overlook the organisation because they take too long to give feedback on the job offer. Thus, the organisation that does not have the best change solution implemented will lose high potential employees. The role of HR then is to ensure a sense of urgency and improve the practices to meet the labour market demands and increase the level of employee engagement.

Subsequently, HR must ensure the organisation has employees who are diverse as individuals but also diverse in terms of their knowledge base. The teams in the organisation must be diverse in their expertise to improve the energy in team leadership. Hassan (2018) believes that the structure does not necessarily have to be founded on hierarchy. It can be seen in the 21st-century organisation that there is an increase in flat organisational structures. Furthermore, HR must be active in creating a transformative vision and strategy for the organisation which includes HR initiatives and the desired future state for the organisation. This strategy will determine the accomplishment of the organisational vision (Hassan, 2018).

2.8.4.3 Human Resources communicating the change

The HR communication to employees regarding the change is critical. Employees prefer to receive communication about the change from those in the organisational hierarchy (Abdi and Rathmaya, 2017). HR must prepare and implement a detailed action plan, allocate resources and time frames, and put strategies into action. Thereafter, employees must be empowered to take action wherein they remove the obstacles and support the change management process. The obstacles will be identified through HR practices such as the distribution of employee engagement surveys. Following this, HR must reward employees when there are short wins to maintain the motivation levels in the organisation and continue the positive momentum (Rathmaya, 2017). According to Brun and Dugas (2008), the lack of reward and recognition is a factor in psychological distress in the workplace. Finally, HR must maintain the change through a transformational plan, reinforcing and communicating the change to employees to ensure the organisation continues to succeed.

2.9 Impact of COVID-19 on Change Management

According to Ikpehai (2020), change initiatives are prompted in the following ways; to deliver a clear vision, to coordinate and streamline business functions to benefit the organisation in response to external changes. The COVID - 19 pandemic is an example of an external change, which is currently impacting organisations globally, in terms of changing lifestyles and behaviours, thus operations and services too. Even with the traditional process of change management, external changes are challenging to deal with (Ikpehai, 2020).

The selected printing company is going through a traditional change management process whilst dealing with the challenges of change due to COVID-19, which is a crisis management response to an extraordinary event. However, irrespective of the change management being traditional, or a crisis response, the objective is to achieve a successful transformation for the organisation. Both the traditional path and crisis path require the same change management tools and leadership (Ikpehai, 2020). COVID-19 has impacted change management in terms of communication and engagement, in that there was no time to formally consult, engage and involve employees regarding operational decisions and changes which had to happen quite quickly in response to the crisis (Ikpehai, 2020). Thus, it is obvious that organisations will face some employee resistance that they must overcome.

2.9.1 COVID-19's positive impact on Change Management

According to Clark (2020), COVID-19 has revealed that when forced, employees are adaptable and capable of using new tools, methodologies, and processes in a short space of time. Digitalisation has become increasingly important as employees move from in-house to remote working. COVID-19 made organisations react and respond to change to survive which many organisations have succeeded. The Gallup poll conducted in May 2020, revealed that 52% of managers will continue to allow employees to work remotely post COVID-19 (Clark, 2020). COVID-19 has revealed that there are errors in the change management process as it is not all wrong but COVID-19 has challenged the presumptions of the past in terms of what can and cannot be done in business process transformation and change management (Clark, 2020). Therefore, organisations have an opportunity to view transformation differently because of the lessons resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership is at a crucial junction in affecting change management strategies to succeed in their business environments, this is the sentiment of Keith Kitani (2020), referred to by Clark (2020). COVID-19 has accelerated digital transformation, with a big shift to remote working. Some organisations are completely digital and employees will expect this to be the new norm. Therefore, the organisation will have to keep up with the speed of these changes in business norms and with the increasing growth of digital communication, this will only become a greater need.

Generally, employees are not happy with the change, but Clark (2020), referred to the statement from L'Estrange (2020), that COVID-19 has had a positive impact because it has reduced the collective resistance to change. The sudden lockdown which was a necessity in the COVID-19 crisis has proven that when there is an urgent need for change, anything is possible. There is a transition in work practices from being in person to being online. This has changed the perception of what is possible and the expectation of what is probable.

Clark (2020) refers to another opinion of Karen Thomas – Bland (2020), who agrees that the pandemic has impacted the way change management is viewed. The assumptions over the years based on stable, predictable growth no longer exists. It is evident there is no return to normal. Markets, strategies, customers, suppliers, technologies, processes, and people all need to be re-evaluated in the new world and the way transformation and change in the organisation in the future must evolve to reflect this. The world is currently facing unprecedented disruption and market turbulence; therefore, transformation revolves around the need to generate new value, unlock new opportunities, drive new growth, and deliver new efficiencies (Clark, 2020).

Despite the reduction in employee resistance, the need for clear, thoughtful communication still exists for successful change management. Communication was the key to business survival through the massive disruption of COVID-19 (Clark, 2020). COVID-19 has resulted in quick transformation through quick decision making and less administration which was traditionally used. In addition, Clark (2020) reiterates the statement of Bill Kirst (2020), that a change management strategy is always important in the process of change, but more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it can be the determining factor between success and failure. Involving and engaging with employees has become more crucial with

the current trying times. Therefore, a change management strategy proves to be a strong vehicle to engage with employees and support them through the uncertainties.

Another positive result of COVID-19 is the awareness that a change management strategy can improve business survival and help it thrive through difficult times. According to Clark (2020), Kirst adds that one of the biggest mistakes an organisation can make is not realising the importance of change management. Change management practices must now reflect the new normal and a fit-for-purpose framework is required. The current world that organisations are operating in demands leadership with purpose and humanity. The change objectives must be connected to the organisation's mission. Organisations must build resilience, sustainability, and constant evolution.

Sung and Kim (2021) believe for change to be implemented successfully the organisation must understand it is important to note the employees' attitudes and behaviours towards change to minimise adverse effects on the organisation. Specifically, with unplanned change like the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be uncertainties that can harm the relationship between the organisation and its employees leading to an unsuccessful implementation of change. Every employee deals with change in their way, hence different processes and strategies can be seen across the organisation. There is proactive coping and passive coping; the former is where the employee aims to fix the stressful situation, and the latter is where the employee avoids the stressful situation (Sung and Kim, 2021). Clark (2020) refers to a statement by Dr Nisha Nair (2020), that the understanding of change is not the reason for failure but COVID-19 has crushed the stages of unfreezing in Lewin's model and created an urgency for change as it is here already, with no time to go through preparation. However, Nair still states, according to Clark (2020), the classical models of change are still relevant and important today as it reflects unfreezing, movement, refreezing, the need for a sense of urgency being established, the need for short-term wins, and the need to anchor change into a new culture.

2.9.2 COVID-19 and Change Management strategies

COVID-19 has resulted in the need for many organisations to deal with uncertainties thus a rapid and effective change management strategy is required (Scherling and Lind, 2021). One of the greatest changes of COVID-19 is the restructuring of the organisation to work virtually and remotely. This meant leaders had to adopt a new management style and there

were new issues and experiences to face. According to Todnem, Burnes and Oswick (2011), for there to be a successful transformation, an understanding of the challenges of the pandemic is required to develop the best change management approaches. Organisations were forced to adapt and respond quickly to the changes brought by COVID-19, employees had to work virtually giving organisations little to no time to gain an understanding and implement changes with good and bad implications for employees and the organisation. Belias and Koustelios (2014) state that it is crucial to make sense of the nature of the real and virtual world, but more research is required on virtual teams, the digital workforce, and the circumstances facing organisations.

The availability of organisational resources often leads to employees feeling certain and in control of stressful situations, thus determining a proactive coping approach (Higdon, 2016). In the context of the change that organisations face due to COVID-19, the level of digital maturity and digital readiness of the organisation is a resource that could create a proactive coping style when transitioning from the office to remote working. The pandemic caused feelings of stress, negative attitudes, and behaviours which can adversely affect the organisation. Therefore, the organisation's understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of its employees toward unplanned change is important (Cullen, Edwards, Casper and Gue 2014).

2.10 Conclusion

The literature review discusses change, specifically change management which is vast in its nature, and clearly indicates that change is not a single process but rather consists of many stages. Popular change management models are depicted and their functions which is still used in organisations are illustrated. The literature discusses the many challenges organisations face with change management, particularly in the current context, such as challenges to change brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges are faced irrespective of how well the change agent may plan the change initiatives because employees' emotions and attitudes cannot be controlled. Every organisation has to engage in change initiatives to sustain and compete in the market. It is evident from the literature that the organisation, and particularly its employees must be committed to the change management process for it to succeed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research study used mixed methodology consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Shorten and Smith (2017), mixed methodology occurs when researchers collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study, and this methodology allows researchers to gain from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data and explore diverse perspectives and uncover relationships which exist amongst the layers of multifaceted research questions. The researcher used the mixed methodology to explore contemporary change management across the diverse settings in a printing company. Creswell (2008) adds that the purpose of the mixed methodology is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative research, provides a better understanding of the research problem than either research approach alone. This research methodology was used to achieve the aim of investigating the employee reactions to change management in a selected printing company. The selected printing company was Uniprint wherein the research was conducted. There was a collaboration of interviews and questionnaires conducted voluntarily. This data provided valuable information on the employee's thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours.

3.2. Research Design

According to Wisdom and Creswell (2013), there are many advantages to mixed methodology, such as; it allows the researcher to compare quantitative and qualitative data and understand contradictions between quantitative results and qualitative findings, and it reflects the participants' point of view and gives a voice to the participants and ensures that the research findings are grounded in participants' experiences, and finally it provides methodological flexibility because it is adaptable to many study designs. The researcher in this study was able to compare the responses from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires (quantitative) to the responses from the open-ended questions in the interviews (qualitative). The responses in the interviews provided an understanding and clarity, specifically on where contradictions found in the research. Also, the researcher was able to extract key themes from the qualitative data and triangulate them to discuss the data with relevance to what was obtained from the quantitative study.

The study aimed to investigate the employee reactions to change management in the printing company, Uniprint. In doing so, the research objectives were achieved. The mixed methodology was expected to be the best research approach to achieving the research objectives. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone (Gunnell, 2016). Furthermore, Creswell (2017) states that using one research method provides a small view of the entire picture when researching complex issues. Mixed methods lessens bias in research and avoids criticisms by cancelling the effects of one methodology (Gunnell, 2016). The mixed methodology allowed the researcher in this study to view the research question from different perspectives and clarify unexpected findings and potential contradictions.

3.3 Data Collection

According to Hiatt (2006), leadership and employees will experience more cohesiveness and success in the process of change. There were interviews consisting of open-ended questions for five respondents within managerial and operational roles. Other questionnaires consisted of closed-ended questions and were completed by all other permanent employees within both the Administration and Production divisions. The researcher managed the distribution of questionnaires by speaking to a maximum of five employees at a time in a closed meeting room. To ensure consent the employees signed the research consent forms, as well as completed and returned the questionnaires to the researcher immediately. The qualitative data collection instrument, namely the five interviews, were conducted at the same premises, but with one employee at a time, considering each one as a single case. There were audio recordings of the interviews and to ensure confidentiality all employee names were given a number. Furthermore, employees were allowed to either agree or disagree with being recorded. Overall, the results of all employees were combined to determine the likes, feelings, thoughts, suggestions, and behaviours of each concerning the change management.

The participants were selected based on their permanent position in the company. The rationale behind this was for the researcher to receive the most accurate and reliable data as permanent staff are the individuals who faced the change. The individuals who were excluded from the study were those who were employed as casual labour for no more than three months. Only managers and operational employees were selected for interviews due to their ability to answer open-ended questions relating to the change in the company and were employed for a long time. Upon successful collation of data, the data analysis dissected the information obtained,

and the information gathered is presented graphically to summarise the largest dataset. This process is favourable as it condenses bulky information without any distortions. The researcher collected the data from both the questionnaires and interviews. As soon as the raw data was collected the researcher went through each question in the questionnaires and interview with every participant. This meant that the researcher interpreted what the participant was trying to convey and present the response or result in their format.

Saunders, Kitzinger, Kitzinger (2015) states that the data collection techniques are influenced by the research questions, and objectives, time, and available resources. For this study to attain enough data and provide quality research, the researcher used interviews and questionnaires.

3.2.1 Interviews

According to Creswell (2011), the qualitative interview is a framework in which the practices and standards are not only recorded but achieved, challenged, and reinforced. The interview is conducted in person between the researcher and participant and involves the transfer of information from the participant to the researcher (Creswell, 2011). The researcher in preparing for the interviews ensured each interviewee received a consent letter requesting their participation in the research. The dates and times of the interviews were arranged with the participants telephonically and took place in a meeting room. At the beginning of the interview, the purpose and procedure of the interview was explained. The anonymity of the participants' identities and responses were assured and all interviews were conducted in English. The assurance of confidentiality of responses and a guarantee of anonymity increased the likelihood of reliable results (Saunders *et al*, 2015).

The interviews provided an opportunity to learn and explore why the change management process occurred. The open-ended questions satisfied the study protocols whilst introducing non-threatening and friendly questions. According to Jamshed (2014), the qualitative interview includes practices and standards that are not only recorded but also achieved, challenged, and reinforced while unstructured interviews allow respondents to express themselves in their ways and pace with minimal control of participants' responses. The interviews that were conducted in this study were structured but participants had the freedom to respond in their own way. Many interviewees were able to provide a history of the selected printing company and prior situations which assisted the researcher in identifying other relevant data. The advantages of

interviews are the interviewer's ability to clarify the question the interviewee may have or not understand (Conrad and Schober, 2020). Interviews that take place face to face result in quicker responses than other survey methods. According to Singleton and Straits (2010), individuals who are interviewed could have tangible evidence which results in their responses.

Only five employees were interviewed and the data they provided was sufficient therefore no further interviews were needed to avoid data saturation. According to Francis, Johnstone, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles, Grimshaw (2010), the point of saturation in research is when there is no new additional data achieved in the data collection. They also state that it is possible for there to be different views of change management and there are pathways to suggest for change management to be better or worse.

3.2.2 Questionnaires

The questionnaire included closed-ended questions that required the participants to indicate whether they agree, or disagree as well as statements to be rated from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For reasons of efficiency and cost, questionnaires enable researchers to include a much broader range of respondents in their research, and thereby find evidence of patterns amongst bigger populations (Creswell, 2011). This will provide information about the actual events, as opposed to any perceived ideal situation (Creswell, 2011). Only closed-ended questions were used in the questionnaires, to identify any trends or patterns. For these kinds of questions, answers have been predefined that could be marked with a cross or circle.

Employees were issued the questionnaires and completed and returned them to the researcher timeously. Before the questionnaires were distributed, the researcher explained clearly the purpose of the research and the concern for confidentiality in the research.

3.3 Population sample and participants

According to Guetterman (2015), practical guidance is required to determine the sample size for thorough research because a lack of guidance results in problems whereby researchers must estimate the sample size to; allocate resources and budget, funding proposals, develop proposals for institutional review boards, and conduct rigorous and systematic qualitative research. The population sample size included all 135 permanent employees of the selected printing company because the research aimed to determine the employee's reactions to change management specifically in Uniprint. The casual employees were excluded from the research

because they were employed for a maximum period of three months and only started their employment after the organisation was sold hence, they could not provide relevant data for the study. It was crucial to have a sample size that could generate enough data (Creswell, 2011).

The sample included all permanent employees within the Administration and Production divisions. These employees were salaried professionals as well as factory employees. The purposive sampling technique was used in both the quantitative and qualitative research methodology because the researcher made an intentional choice in selecting the participants for the study based on the information, they possessed which was relevant to the study. Etikan, Abubaker Musa, Alkassim (2016) state that the purposive sampling technique is the deliberate choice of the researcher in selecting participants who can and are willing to provide the information by knowledge or experience.

3.4 Triangulation

According to Shenton (2004), triangulation involves the use of different methods which form the data collection strategies. Triangulation is visible in the research as it uses the mixed methods approach distributing questionnaires and conducting structured interviews. The research was also conducted using a wide range of respondents. Shenton (2004) states that the use of a wide range of informants verifies individuals' viewpoints and experiences against each other.

3.5 Data Quality Control

The four criteria to determine the soundness of research methods are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, Spiers 2002). The credibility of the data responses was achieved by the researcher taking notes during the interviews to reference additional observations and information which reveal information was not part of the original questions. The researcher observed the participants as they completed and then returned the questionnaires. The purpose of this was to build credibility as the researcher ensured each respondent completed the questionnaire independently and ensured confidentiality. Transferability is when the results of the research can transfer to another setting or context (Morse *et al.*, 2002). The participants were a part of a common issue involving change management in the workplace. The selection of the participants included sufficient variation because it aptly represented the demographic of the company. The impact of change management is not an isolated issue or concern. Therefore, the outcomes of the research may

transfer to other printing companies with the same degree of change. Dependability was achieved by transcribing at every step of the study as it related to the interview sessions and the transcription of responses. The confirmability of the study was achieved through keeping a journal of all the rational decisions and conclusions relating to the study. The comments in the journal were available to the respondents to verify any comments they made which were not on the audio tape. The journal was also used as a reference to view the analysis of the study. The reliability of data minimises the biases and errors in the research (Creswell, 2017).

3.6 Research limitations

The one limitation of the research study was that the sample used was relatively small hence there is a limitation because the research cannot be used for generalisability. Generalisability is the extent to which findings in research can apply to other settings (Burchett, Kneale, Blanchard, Thomas 2020). Due to time and logistical constraints the researcher used the company where she was employed.

Furthermore, COVID-19 posed restrictions in terms of movement and face-to-face interactions in the research study. According to Miki, Chubachi, Imamura, Yaegashi, Ito (2020), the attempt to combat the virus has adversely affected research activities, with many researchers being forced to stop or limit their research during the pandemic. The distribution, as well as ensuring the timeous completion and receipt of the questionnaires was impacted by the restriction in the number of participants allowed in the meeting room. Regarding the interviews, the researcher had to be mindful of social distancing which meant waiting on the availability of specific sized meeting rooms and ensuring a safe distance was practiced, which caused some delays which could have otherwise been avoided.

3.7 Data analysis

The researcher organised and prepared the data for analysis and this involved transcribing interviews that were recorded and arranging the data from questionnaires depending on the sources of information. Thereafter, the researcher read through the data and sectioned it according to common themes and made notes of any uncommon findings. Finally, the researcher applied the process of coding to the data collected. According to Creswell (2017), coding is organising the data by bracketing chunks and writing a word to represent the category of information. Nowell, Norris, White, Moules (2017) refer to thematic analysis which is used to assist the researcher in their data analysis by identifying, analysing, organising, describing,

and reporting themes found within the data. The data analysis is discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology which was used. The researcher selected the mixed methods approach which the literature discusses as a good approach for change management because it provides a broader perspective and a better understanding of the research problem as it combines both the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. Subsequent, to forming the research design, the data collection instruments selected were closed-ended questionnaires and structured interviews. Within this chapter, the research sample design, research population, research sample, sample type, and sample size were presented. The sample size, as well as the mixed research methods that were used, ensured triangulation of the data. The researcher collected the data ensuring trustworthiness through the strategies of validation. Every research methodology has its limitations and the few that this researcher encountered are discussed in the chapter. The data analysis is briefly introduced and the succeeding chapter discusses the data analysis in detail.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methodology research study was to investigate the employee reactions to change management. The research study made use of interviews and distributed questionnaires to employees within the selected printing company, Uniprint, which is based in Cornubia, KwaZulu Natal. There were five structured interviews conducted with employees both in Administrative and Production roles. The majority of employees, specifically 126 completed closed-ended questionnaires. In this chapter of the research study, the data is analysed, and the data results are illustrated, all of which are about the four research objectives.

4.2 Data Analysis

In total there were 126 responses from the questionnaires and 5 respondents from the interviews. The subsections below begin by analysing the responses from the questionnaires and the interviews. These responses are sectionalised by the relevant research question they address within which various themes are identified and discussed.

4.2.1 Themes for Effective Change Management

This first section of themes for effective change management, addresses the first research objective, to determine the key factors in effectively managing change.

All five interviewees expressed that communication is a key factor to manage change effectively. Participant 3 stated that since the change it was important for employees to understand how the company under the new employer group operates, and what it does to leverage the synergy created in the acquisition. Also, employees needed to know how to access the channels required as well as the resources required, in other words, understanding who does what in the organisation to function effectively. Participant 2 in referring to communication as a key factor stated that open, honest communication from leadership and HR was needed for there to be successful change. This participant felt that the communication was visible in Uniprint and was grateful for it specifically since they were personally responsible for managing employee reactions. A key theme identified by the interview respondents was communication, which was seen as an important factor to manage change effectively.

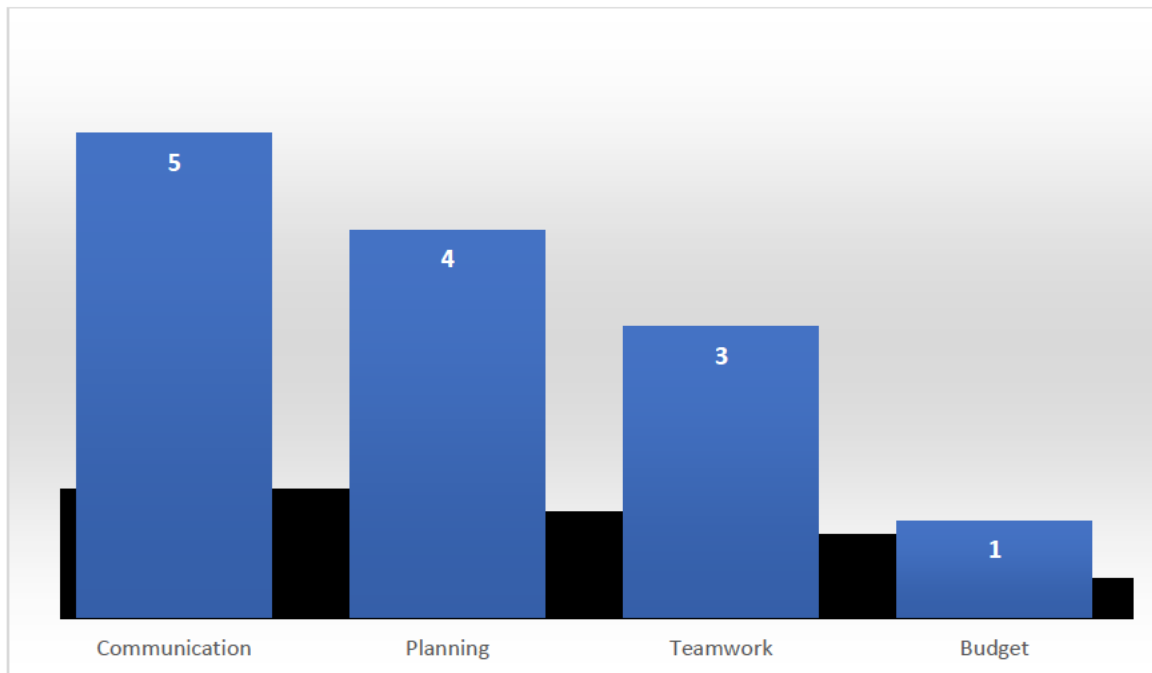
Participant 3 had the view that the culture of the new employer group must merge with Uniprint to enhance the change and improve the organisation's performance by leveraging each business's strengths. Participant 4 mentioned the belief that financial resources specifically were lacking in the change, and it may lead to the change being unsuccessful. Based on these views, it can be deduced that there are different factors in the effectiveness of change management and thus what is happening at Uniprint is already universal. In addition, participant 4 referred to a budget as one of the factors required to effectively manage change and believed that this factor was invisible in the change management at Uniprint. This participant perceived that there may be financial issues in the company and stated that this was the general perception of employees in production, hence their observation that planning was lacking in the change management. A second theme that was identified was resources, specifically, financial resources which was required to ensure effective change management.

Four of the interviewees referred to planning as another important factor for managing change effectively. Participant 1 stated that within planning for the change it was key that employees understood the end objective of the change to work towards a common goal. Another factor that was mentioned was teamwork wherein the entire Uniprint team needed to be committed to the change management process. Participant 3 spoke about their responsibility in planning the change with regards to production and felt it would have been better to have received assistance to fulfil the planning requirements timeously. Participants 2 and 5 mentioned that planning was the key in change management but said it was not specifically required or difficult at Uniprint since the business premises remained the same. Planning was the third theme identified in conducting the interviews as three of the five respondents believed it to be a crucial factor in managing change effectively.

Participants 1 and 2 agreed that teamwork was the key and all employees need to work towards improving the performance of the organisation; this included but was not limited to, reducing spoils, and saving costs in production. Teamwork was another important factor in managing change well and was the last theme identified in this section of the study.

The graph below depicts the factors for effective change management on the x-axis and the number of interview respondents who mentioned the factor is stated in each bar graph.

Figure 1: Factors required to manage change effectively



4.2.2 Employee reactions to Change Management

The second research objective to investigate employee reactions to change management was achieved as the literature below discusses both positive and negative employee reactions which were identified in Uniprint. Upon reviewing the data in the questionnaires within the Administration and Production divisions across all age groups, more than 90 % of participants had relatively positive reactions to the change management. Employees tended to sway towards the agreeable side in terms of the sale of the organisation and the changes it brought being positive. Employees were relatively motivated at work and felt that their work environment was positive and they were willing to make the extra effort in the job.

4.2.2.1 Negative employee reactions to Change Management

There was one interview respondent whose reactions were mostly negative to the change management. These negative responses regarded job security, a demotivating work environment, and a lack of morale. Ten percent of the questionnaire responses were negative. However, even employees who reacted negatively to the change still seemed to have a strong work ethic as they answered positively about putting extra effort into their job. Many employees are neutral or unsure about the impact of the change on organisational performance,

and the impact on job security. Therefore, job security was identified as a theme for the employee's negative reactions to change management.

4.2.2.2 Positive employee reactions to Change Management

The first participant who was interviewed had generally positive reactions to the change management as their perceptions of the change management process was that it was excellent. They also felt that the company has improved since the change in terms of organisational performance and management style because the company can enter the new markets it wants to, and employees have autonomy in their jobs. Participant 2 also had a positive reaction to the change management and stated that it was handled professionally by the company. Leadership engaged employees in the whole process, they spoke to the union members about the future of the company and employees were happy and good communication was received so employees were aware of the change. Participant 2 just like participant 1 viewed the change as beneficial and stated that it was also the view of production employees in that the company was isolated from the previous group but with the new group, the company felt like part of a family. This participant went on to state that when the change took place with the new employer group it was a relief and employees were happy with the way the change management process was handled. Moreover, the organisation's performance has improved as there is an increase in jobs, volumes, clients and many employees have been incentivized by the company in the previous months. These employees' views reflected one of organisational readiness.

Participant 3 also had a generally positive perception of the change management process. This participant stated that the change was needed for the new employer group as well as being a good decision for Uniprint; the decision to make the change was right. Leadership channelled the communication well and there was a lot of communication specifically in the factory. The change could not be pre-empted, but the leadership team were all aware and nobody was misinformed and left out of the communication. Participant 5's view was also that the employee reactions to change in general were positive. Participant 5 went on to state that there was very little that changed for Uniprint, the general perception was that the new employer group was a better association, and the change process was simple and less stressful as it was a logical and obvious move. In reflecting on the responses from four of the five interviewees it is clear that good leadership is the primary theme identified in the employee's positive reactions to change management.

4.2.2.3 Employee expectations of the Change Management process

Participant 1 had mixed expectations due to not knowing what to expect and there were fears and insecurities because of the unknown that came with the change. However, those fears, and insecurities were put at ease when the new owners welcomed Uniprint and when good communication was received from the MD of Uniprint, and all questions were answered. Participant 2 shared the same sentiments as they stated their initial expectation was fear but once the handover was done and the new owners did an introduction with employees the trust was regained. Additionally, participant 2 felt that through the pandemic the new owners were supportive and employees are hopeful and looking forward to the future. Participant 5's expectation of the change management process was that it would go smoothly and that is exactly how it went. Smooth transition in terms of the only change being new ownership. The one expectation which was not fulfilled was more the hope that the sale would go through quicker, however, the agreement on the sale took a little longer than expected.

Participant 4 expected better communication regarding the change specifically to put employees at ease. However, there were concerns that Uniprint was moving to a smaller group which meant it could be bad for the company's performance and there were concerns around job security. Participant 4 believed that despite the formal communication that there would be no retrenchments, employee concerns still exist on future retrenchments. . Furthermore, there is a perception that the company is facing financial issues which can be seen on the factory floor but are also in the rumours heard, and some employees have even asked participant 4 if they need to look for employment elsewhere.

4.2.2.4 A successful Change Management process

The change management process was successful as can be seen amongst the employees who are now motivated, happy, and less stressed; in other words, morale has improved. Furthermore, employees were prepared for the change because there were not many changes besides the executive team and the employer group. The employees all moved with the company and the system remained. Employees had comfort knowing that the same people would move to the new employer group and there would not be too much change. Participant 1 had these views and believed this change only had advantages for Uniprint. Participant 3 agreed that the change management process was successful because organisational

performance continued to be good at Uniprint. The change is beneficial to the new employer group because it builds their business. The synergies are good as Uniprint took the new employer group to the next level. The previous group did not understand the benefit of Uniprint and how it operated but now Uniprint fits in with the new employer group. The change has also been good in terms of an improvement in the management style at the executive level, but financially Uniprint funds itself and makes its payments. Further to this, participant 5 agreed that the change management process has been successful in terms of the organisation's performance, and finances. There is a cash flow challenge, however, this can be expected at the beginning of a change such as this. Also, previously the organisation did not use the cash flow to the extent it currently does and therefore there are slight changes that can be seen.

Participant 4 believed that the change management process was not successful because the company has financial issues which make it seem like the company is in trouble. Participant 4 went on to say that employees are becoming concerned that soon the company may not be able to pay them and the belief that there are financial issues in the company creates the perception that the change may not have been successful for the organisation. The leadership at Uniprint needed to be aware of this to eliminate these negative perceptions and ensure continued success in the change.

4.2.2.5 Employees' readiness for the change

Participant 1 stated that the employees were not adequately prepared for the change because the communication was delayed. Participant 3 agreed by stating that the open, honest communication was visible, however, it was expected to be timeous to deal with employee reactions. The resources and structure of communication were a concern; there should have been a 'middleman' to assist the MD in the breakdown of communication and there would have been no delays. Also, a project person was needed to coordinate the changes across the leadership team.

Participant 4 agreed that leadership and HR needed to communicate more to employees as they were not fully aware of the changes. There was a lot of informal talk and rumours that the company would be sold. This made employees feel confused, fearful, and insecure and they needed to understand the change to feel safe about their jobs. Participant 4 spoke to leadership directly questioning the rumours about the change and leadership was vague and unclear and

did not provide answers or any relevant information at the time. Employees were not adequately prepared for the change because it happened too quickly which shocked employees. Also, the fact that no communication was given when employees initially questioned the change made them feel less prepared. Participant 2 suggested that going forward, there should be honest, open communication from leadership, especially when there is change, it should be communicated timeously, as well as the new owners should engage with employees at least twice a year, as this is important for employees.

Participant 5 had a view that employees were adequately prepared and believed that the vast majority went on as normal as there was no change that they faced. Furthermore, with the new ownership, there were many factors that played a part in the employees being adequately prepared such as communication to employees, team-building with the new employer, the introduction of the new employer, and about the degree of change; this was sufficient to adequately prepare employees. However, participant 5 also mentioned a challenge in that this participant was faced with finding an honest balance between the old employer and the new employer during the transition period. The sale had to be positioned for maximum value for the old employer and be able to deliver on promises to the new employer. The one thing which could have been done differently was an attempt and pressure to close the deal quickly to reduce the risk of information being released ahead of formal communication. However, in saying that it is noted that this was a difficult, complex process, and leadership was instructed on what to communicate and the nature of the deal resulted in a delay and unfortunately a leak in information.

4.2.2.6 Challenges faced by employees during the transition

There were some challenges in terms of previously belonging to a big corporate to now a smaller employer group. The ways of thinking and operating also differ and so it takes time to get used to. To overcome further challenges of change there needs to be open communication at an early stage and leadership and HR must have the freedom to engage with employees openly, making the communication more personable. Employees trust leadership and HR so receiving direct communication from them would have helped put people at ease earlier in the process. There may have been more serious challenges faced if there was more than just the change of new ownership. Participant 3 agrees that the employees were adequately prepared for the change in terms of receiving communication. Employees were not adequately prepared

in terms of communication being limited. Also, there was a lack of involvement, and this was the gap. The employees at a higher level were not adequately prepared because there was less synergy and channels were unknown. The employees at a lower level were not adequately prepared due to communication not being provided early. Participant 2 however, felt different in that the change at Uniprint made access to leadership and HR easier for employees in dealing with their concerns and problems.

Participants 1 and 3 believed that the possibility of challenges was reduced because there were no changes in terms of management, operations, and systems. However, participant 3 did mention a further challenge in their role in terms of the new responsibilities they had. Furthermore, they stated that there was a need for someone to take on the sole responsibility of communication in the change. At times, communication is poor as employees at a level below participant 3 receive information first informally, and participant 3 must then verify the information and is unable to provide clear feedback immediately to employees. Employees required a detailed induction of the change and needed to feel welcome and at ease, this was more important than the purchase and sale itself.

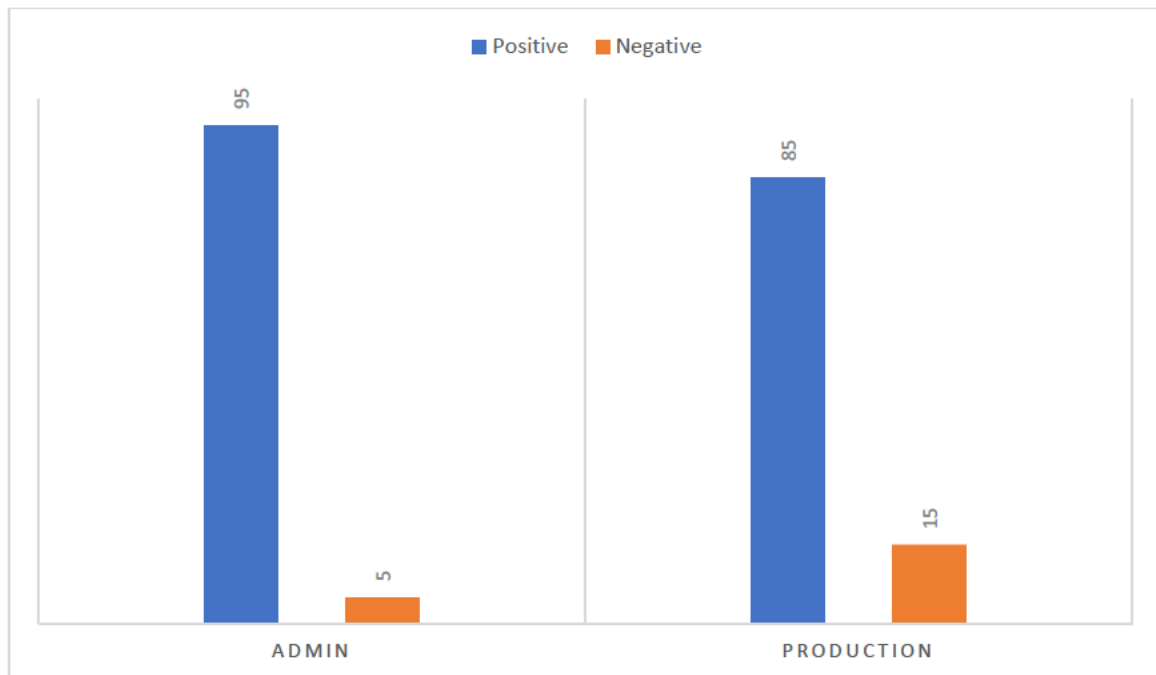
The challenge faced by participant 4 was not receiving clear communication. It seemed like the MD himself was not clear, which then led to the challenge of managing employee fears and anxieties because participant 4 did not receive clarity meant they could not provide employees with clarity to put their minds at ease. Going forward, open, honest, transparent communication is required from the start even if the change is being discussed/considered/negotiated; information must be provided honestly and not be vague. Participant 2 also referred to some vagueness in that employees were adequately prepared for the changes but there was one initial issue because leadership was unable to advise employees whether the business premises would remain the same or change. This caused concern for employees because they did not know what they would do for transport. It was also concerning that when leadership was asked about the premises, they did not have an answer or clarity for employees, yet it was three months before the official change took place. This participant communicated that they had the responsibility of representing employees which included the challenge of making employees understand the change and not fear it. Once employees understood the new employer group, what it stands for, how it operates, and most importantly realised they would not lose their jobs, they felt at ease.

Another concern was that employees were aware of the change before it was communicated by leadership and when leadership was questioned about the change, they denied it. This resulted in a break in trust of leadership as they should have been honest at the time even if it was the early stages of the change. However, this has not resulted in a break in the employment relationship as the change has mostly run smoothly. These three consequences are evident in the responses above, as the minority of employees who had negative reactions began to lose trust in the leadership because they seemed to be unclear about the change and its impact. Another participant spoke about not being aware of the channels required to assist in the process of change, this implied a lack of awareness in terms of roles and responsibilities. The same participant mentioned not being aware of certain changes, and when questioned by employees not having the answers, and this is proof of the leadership team being unaware of employee reactions.

The participants spoke of the fact that most aspects of work did not change for employees, one participant went as far as to say that when the employees woke up on the day the company was sold nothing had changed. Therefore, employees were not moved from their comfort zones, hence the demotivated employee might not be easily seen in the change management at Uniprint.

The illustration below depicts the percentage above each bar graph of the questionnaire and interview respondents in Administration and Production who have positive reactions to change management and who have negative reactions.

Figure 2: Employee reactions to Change Management



4.2.3 The extent of employee involvement in Change Management

The next significant theme identified is the employees understanding of the change and the benefits experienced because of the change. The identification of these themes resulted in the researcher addressing the third research objective, to investigate the extent of employee involvement in change management. The responses from the questionnaires depict that employee involvement in the change management process was lacking. All participants, in the administration division, age groups 25 to 45, and in the production division, age group 25 to 35, even those who have generally positive reactions to the change, did not feel involved in the change management. The participants rated from neutral to strongly disagree regarding leadership involving employees in the change. The admin division, age groups 46 to over 55, and the production division, age groups 36 to over 55, had the majority of participants did not feel involved in the change management.

One of the five interview respondents stated they were involved in the change management process. Participant 1 understood the rationale for the change and received communication. They understood that Uniprint was not a good fit with the previous employer because the brand was different from the market and the previous employer was looking to sell. Fortunately, Uniprint was a better fit for the new employer group, in terms of brand, digital marketing, and the need for a print plant, thus there would be more synergy. This participant is an example of

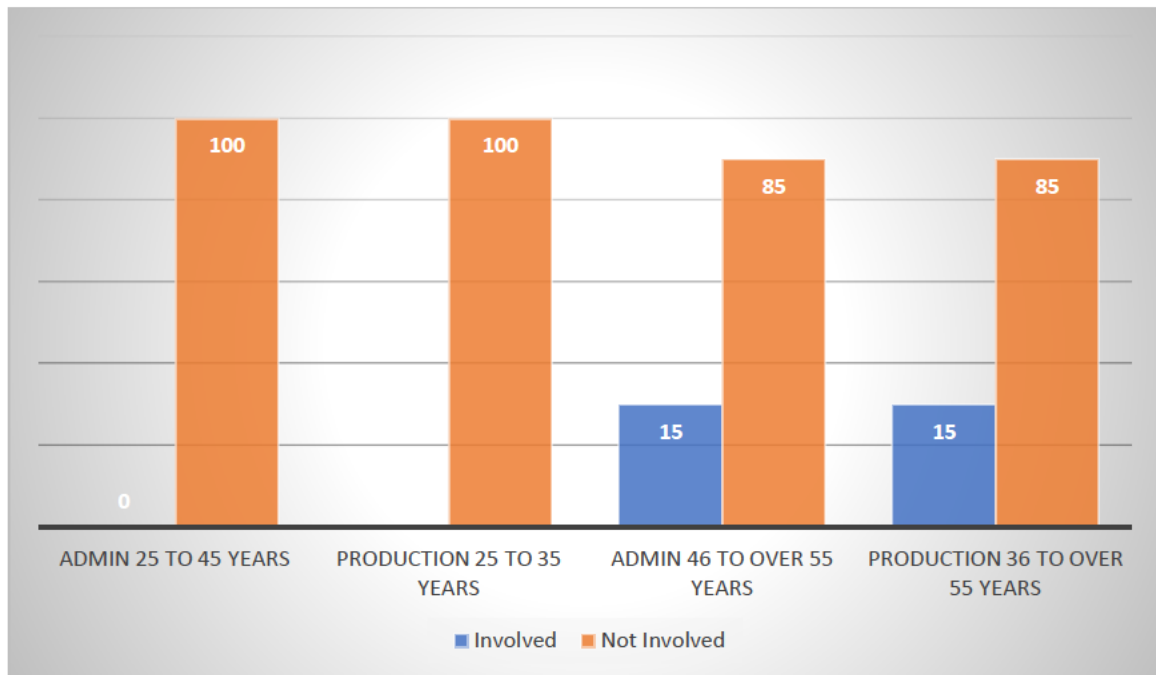
an employee with a positive reaction to the change and who felt involved in the change management.

Three of the interviewees believed their involvement in change management was limited. Participant 2 stated that the communication was received too late in the process, hence, implying a lack of involvement. This participant elaborated further on the rationale for the change being Uniprint overcoming its challenges, meeting its targets, and improving on performance. The previous group did not understand Uniprint as a business and it had a better fit with the new employer. Also, the new employer is a valued customer for Uniprint, and the change would prove to be a good joint business. Participant 5 also felt excluded in the beginning of the process but understood the reasons for it but would have preferred to be involved in the initial communication. Thereafter participant 5 was involved in the change management and fully understood the rationale behind the change and believed it would be logical and the obvious next move for Uniprint. Participant 3 stated that there was communication received at each stage, but it was communicated after the stage was occurring instead of before and that was a flaw. Due to this delay in communication, participant 3 had to manage the employees' emotions. Also, participant 3 would respond to employees' questions based on information received from senior leadership so when communication was not given to participant 3 then employees did not receive open honest communication.

There was one interviewee who felt that they were not involved in the change management because there was talk of Uniprint being sold two years ago and even when questioned at the time, there were no clear answers. When the change took place, the process was already going on for a while and only when the change was official, was participant 4 involved and notified in a formal meeting. It was in that meeting that they understood the rationale for the change being that Uniprint was not a good fit with the old employer group, but it is a better fit with the new employer group and there is more synergy with the new employer group. However, participant 4 still states there are concerns, and employee reactions to the change are generally negative, specifically in Production.

The graph below illustrates the department and age group of questionnaire and interview respondents on the x-axis and each bar graph has a coded colour and percentage to reflect the number of respondents who felt involved in the change management and uninvolved.

Figure 3: Employee involvement in Change Management



4.2.4 The role of HR and leadership in Change Management

The last research objective to be addressed was to determine the role and assistance provided by leadership and HR in change management. The researcher in reviewing the participant responses identified the following themes; open and honest communication from leadership and HR, leadership and HR ensuring they are available, and feedback from leadership and HR. Almost half of the responses from the questionnaires amongst the participants in the administration division, across age groups 20 to 35, were from agree to neutral regarding feedback in the organisation being given openly and directly and were comfortable to participate in the questionnaire and leadership would not use this against them, and leadership cared about employee satisfaction. In the remaining age groups in the administration division, not all, but most participants were agreeable to the organisation providing open, honest feedback, comfort in participating in the study, and leadership caring about employee satisfaction. Participant responses mostly reflected that they were aware of the change and were communicated to, which could imply that HR and leadership did fulfil their role in some way. However, there is still criticism of the role of HR and leadership as the responses to employee involvement in change management were mostly negative.

In the production division across the age groups 20 to 55 years, the responses were mixed with regard to the role of leadership and HR in change management. Even those participants who had positive reactions to the change were not happy with the role that leadership and HR played in the change management, and this was reflected in their responses relating to feedback provided and the care for employee satisfaction. The participants who were over 55 years, provided mostly positive responses with regards to leadership and HR role in change management. However, it must be noted that in this age category there were only 3 participants. Many employees who responded negatively to the change management still intended to work at Uniprint for years to come. This means leadership and HR still have an opportunity to improve their role in change management. This relates to ensuring the involvement of employees from the early stages of change management, instead of simply providing once-off communication when the change has taken place.

According to participants 1 and 2 from the interviews, the previous executive team was committed and assisted in the change, but they were instructing Uniprint leadership during the process of the change. However, the Uniprint leadership team under the new employer group was more accommodating, helpful, involved with employees through the whole process, and employee fears were put at ease. The leaders called a meeting before the official change which showed open, transparent communication. Questions were asked such as whether there would be retrenchments and answers were received from leadership. The meeting provided good news that there was no change to employees' employment, and it was the truth because all employee's jobs remained intact. This statement proved to be true when reviewing the participant responses that leaders themselves were at ease once they received communication about the change and their questions were answered.

Participants 1 and 2 agreed that HR was involved at only a higher level but could have done more in terms of personal engagement with employees at an earlier stage of the change to put their fears and anxieties at ease.

Participant 5 had only good remarks relating to the role of leadership and HR in the change. They stated that considering the resources available, leadership and HR played a good role in change management. The HR person was not initially a dedicated resource to Uniprint and had to also undergo training on the payroll and manage the changes in employee benefits, hence, it can be considered as playing a good role in the change management. There were also system

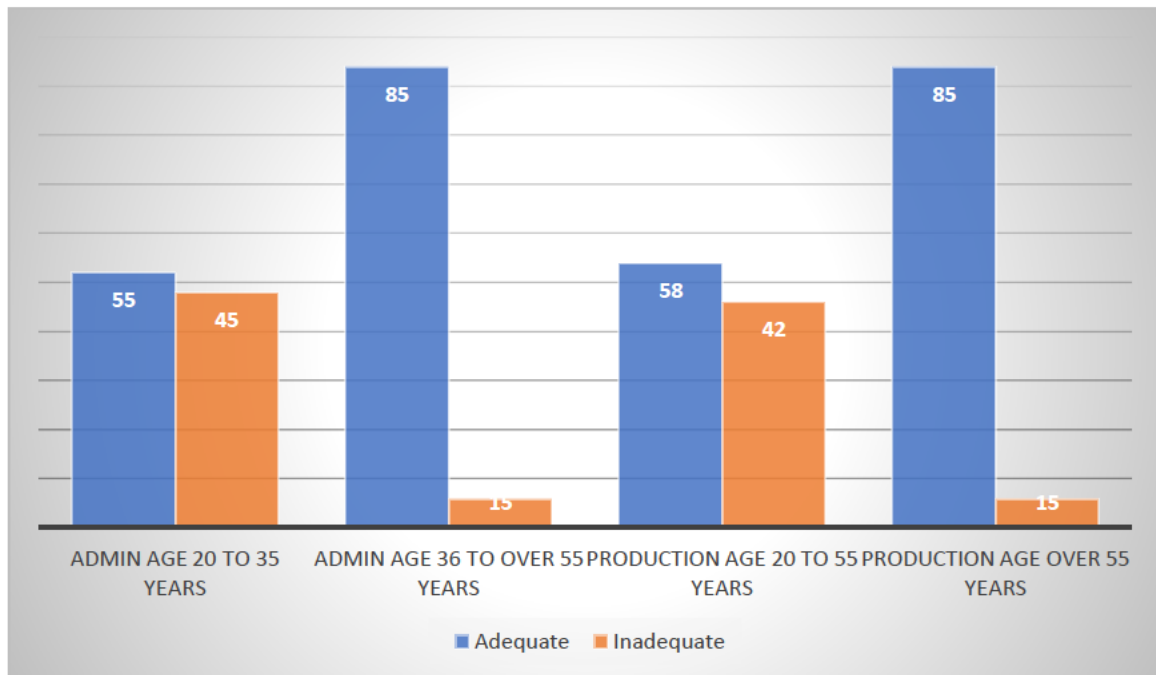
changes amidst the transition that leadership had to take care of. It is important to consider these factors when making a judgement on the role which leadership and HR played in the change management as they did their best under the circumstances.

Participant 3 held the view that during the change process employees expected to be handheld by leadership and HR. More care was required for employees during the change. It would have been good to have a liaison for the change based on site. The liaison could have communicated the rationale for the change, and the benefits of the change, and ensured the involvement of employees specifically at the initial stages of the change process. Also, the teams with the new employer could have come to the Uniprint site so both teams could synergise and leverage each other to improve organisational performance through knowing each other's clients, what the organisation does, and the channels required. Participant 4 also shared criticisms that leadership and HR were not good enough to effectively manage the change process. The reason for this was there was no constant, open, and honest communication and employees could not trust that leadership and HR would communicate timeously.

Communication was the one main concern and challenge in the change at Uniprint because it was raised in the data received from all interviewed participants and was reflected in the majority of questionnaires received. Participant 4's view was that the MD needed to engage employees on the production floor every few months to make employees feel secure and ensure their reactions to the change are positive. Also, there are employee concerns regarding a lack of resources specifically financial resources, but also physical resources which are a requirement for employees to fulfil their tasks.

The graph below illustrates the department and age group of questionnaire and interview respondents on the x-axis and each bar graph has a coded colour and percentage to reflect the number of respondents who believed leadership and HR played either an adequate role or inadequate role in the change management.

Figure 4: Role of leadership and HR in Change Management



4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Factors to manage change effectively

The literature on change management agrees that there are several factors such as communication, planning, teamwork, and a budget required for the change to take effect. This was also the view of the participants involved in the study, although, these factors seem to vary in their degree of importance. Beer and Nohria (2000) agree with participant 3 that it is key to provide the reasons why the changes are needed, communicate the benefits of the change, ensure resources needed for change are in abundance, ensure leadership is equipped to manage the change, and communication so that employees are well informed and feel involved. The communication on how the change will impact employees and their jobs is critical, also the benefits of the change and the resources and alternatives for employees must be communicated (Neill, 2018). According to Packery (2014), communication is important for all employees and it is used in the organisation to share the message about change. Fusch *et al.* (2020) state that the change management process cannot succeed without communication. Participants at Uniprint stated that the communication was either invisible or lacking in some way, and they were aware of the rationale and benefits of the change but mentioned specifically that the communication happened too late in the change management process.

Participant 3 specifically believed that the organisational culture margining is key to the success of change management. Yenice (2018) states that the organisation's personality is its culture, and it is a complex process to change, maintain, and allow the culture to evolve, and it requires clear objectives, effective coordination, and ample resources. Gibson and Barsade (2003) agree that the culture is what holds the organisation together. According to Hussain *et al.* (2018), to implement change there is a need for activities planning and commitment planning, the former is a road map for the change and specifies activities required for the change to be successful, and the latter is people whose commitment is required for the change to succeed. Planning is a key factor in managing change as stated by the participants since Rodda (2010) states that change typology classifies change by the degree of planning involved in the change. Teamwork is a requirement for managing change and was common amongst the responses from participants 1 and 2. Edmonstone (1995) refers to the importance of teamwork, through empowering employees in the change to promote consensus and cohesion thus overcoming the barriers to change. Prosci (2021) agrees with participant 4 that there are costs to change management such as resource costs, training costs, communication costs, travel costs, time, and material costs, and when change is managed poorly there are more costs involved in the process. According to Powers and Been (2014), in change management, leadership must be attentive to budget constraints and there are costs to assigning resources for change management.

4.3.2 Negative employee reactions to Change Management

Isaacs (2018) states that changes impacting job security often manifest in the form of mergers and acquisitions. This is clear at Uniprint wherein some employees have negative reactions, namely job insecurity due to the change which resulted from the company being acquired by a new employer group. Zondi and Mutambara (2016) agree that low morale will negatively affect organisational performance due to demotivated employees and when the organisation goes through changes the stable environment is disrupted leading to employees feeling insecure. Kumar and Velmurugan (2020) add that the employee's morale refers to their state of mind about their commitment and feelings towards the organisation, thus it could be said that the organisation's performance depends on employee's morale.

4.3.3 Positive employee reactions to Change Management

According to Weiner (2009), organisational readiness is a shared psychological state where employees feel committed to implementing change in the organisation. These participants' positive reactions speak to what Jansen (2011) states which is that commitment to change is when employees' efforts are for the change plan and process to succeed. Participant 5 specifically was asked by employees to motivate the company to move to the new employer group. Therefore, this individual does not believe employee resistance exists. However, Maharaj (2021) specifically states that even in successful change there will be employee resistance because it is human nature to resist the norms.

4.3.4 Employee expectations of the Change Management process

Malek and Yazdanifard (2012) agree with participants 1 and 2 in that communication answers employee questions and reduces their anxiety. The fact that participant 2 views Uniprint employees as hopeful reflects their trust in effective leadership, and Shulga (2020) states effective leadership is due to employees' trust in leadership.

4.3.5 A successful Change Management process

Participant 4's sentiments reflect the literature that refers to the importance of leadership's awareness of employees during the change as Gwavuya (2011) believes that leaders must be mindful of employees' attitudes, perceptions, actions, and motivation levels in the change management process.

4.3.6 Employees' readiness for the change

This example provided by participant 3 is in line with the literature, wherein Lunenberg (2010) states that the change agent has the skill and power to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate the change effort. Zainol *et al.*, (2020) agree that the use of change agents in the organisation is critical for change management. The expectation met was specific to the change in the portfolio due to the structural changes which were communicated. Guenter, Emmerik, Schreurs (2014) further agree that delays in communication can have substantial negative consequences for the organisation. Participant 4 remarked that there was a lack of communication from leadership and HR which speaks to Elving (2005) who states, that poor communication results in rumours and amplifies the negative aspects of the change. According to Yuh – Shy (2019), employees react negatively to change when they fear personal loss such as security i.e., losing their jobs, or loss such as money i.e., losing money due to moving business premises farther away from

home. According to Popli and Rizvi (2016), leaders must engage with employees by providing a supportive environment and ensuring organisational success. The fact that the Uniprint leadership may have preferred to communicate the change with employees earlier but were unable to due to the previous executive team reflects the literature of Todnem (2005) who states that one of the criticisms of planned change is assuming that the stakeholders of the change will reach an agreement. However, the change at Uniprint was also radical in that it aimed to take a new direction as stated by Boikhutso (2013).

4.3.7 Challenges faced by employees during the transition

This statement from participant 1 agrees with Jalagat (2016) who states that employees react positively to change when they feel free to express their opinions. The literature explains why employees who were unaware of the correct channels had a lack of communication and would be inadequately prepared. McShane and Von Gilnow (2000) state that encouraging employee involvement, facing, and dealing with employee concerns, engaging with the change agents, commitment to the change management process from leadership, and ensuring leaders are role models in the change are all critical factors in managing the change effectively.

Participant 2 felt that the change resulted in easier access for employees to leadership and HR. According to Abbas and Asghar (2010), leadership abilities such as consultation, problem-solving, good communication, and interpersonal skills are connected to successful organisational change. Galbraith (2018) highlights that the change brings new roles and responsibilities for the employees therefore engagement by leadership is key.

Participant 3 experienced a change in role in the change management process and tried to overcome the challenges through training but could not due to the travel restrictions with the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature of Scherling and Lind (2021) referred to one of the greatest changes of the pandemic being working remotely and virtually from home. One of the opinions of participant 2 is an example of what Quain (2019) refers to which is without proper planning the organisation can fail in the change process so the plan should detail what will change, and how the change will affect the organisation. Participant 2 believed leadership was not entirely truthful from the start of the change management process and according to Mineo (2014), trust is the glue that binds the leader to their followers and provides the capacity for organisational and leadership success.

The participant responses regarding the challenges faced during the transition reflect the literature. Commonwealth (2015) speaks of the ineffective leader as a challenge in change management, which results in employees who lack trust in leadership, roles, and responsibilities being unclear, and the leadership team being unaware of employee reactions. The one common challenge mentioned in all participant responses is communication. Neill (2018) states it is critical to communicate to employees the change and how it impacts their jobs. Some of the responses in the questionnaires as well as the interviews mentioned employees who are demotivated. The literature states that demotivated employees have negative reactions to the change and will not want to get involved in the change process thus causing it to fail. Nthutang (2016) states that it is a big challenge to transform employees from their comfort zone.

4.3.8 Concluding remarks on employee reactions to Change Management

In the process of analysing the data, it was evident that the participants who fear the change are the ones who have negative reactions. This is aligned with the literature, as Wang and Kabede (2020) state employees who fear the consequences of change react negatively to the change. Participant 1 referred to dealing with the change in terms of the employee mindset and the new employer's methods of working. This is referred to as organisational resistance by Management Consulting (2021). Commonwealth (2015) states that the organisation can assist employees in having a positive reaction to the change by providing the employees with a strong support network. Participant 3 stated that there was a need for a support system during the change wherein they referred to access to channels as well as employees being cared for through a proper induction of the changes. The literature speaks to employee resistance however this is not dominant at Uniprint because the majority of employees have a positive reaction to change. There is room for improvement as employees with negative reactions to the change criticise communication. This corresponds with the literature as Jansen (2011) states that a positive employee reaction to change is employees who are committed to the change and want it to succeed and that an important factor for positive reactions to change is effective internal communication.

4.3.9 The extent of employee involvement in Change Management

Participant 1 had a positive reaction to the change because they felt involved in the change management process. According to Awadari and Kanwal (2019), engagement and involvement of employees in the change is key to the success of the change management process. According

to Thomas *et al.* (2019), to avoid employee resistance to change employees who are the ones affected must be involved in the change initiatives. Furthermore, Bhola (2010) stated that when the change agent does not include the employee in the process, they fail to manage the process adequately, and this mismanagement affects the employee negatively which leads to employee disengagement. According to Valackiene *et al.* (2021), involving employees in the change reduces employee feelings of job insecurity and a poor work environment. According to Sverke *et al.* (2008), employee involvement is key to the success of any organisational change and includes involvement in decision making resulting in positive employee reactions to change.

As stated by Wittig (2012) the employee reactions to change are dependent on emotions, cognition, communication, and employee involvement. Therefore, it is evident that employee involvement is key to ensuring positive reactions to change management in the organisation. Reviewing the responses from participants above it reflects that this change at Uniprint could also be classified as radical change because Porter and Van Der Linde (1995) state that there are changes in the environment which impact how the organisation operates. Employees received communication telling them the change is taking place and the rationale for the change. Stouten *et al.* (2018) refer to the rationale behind organisations choosing to engage in change management as changing technology, a changing workforce, competitive pressures, and globalisation. Employees were not asked to participate in the decision-making or to give their views, some employees stated that they received the communication too late which implies that the change was mandatory. More recently Albrecht *et al.* (2020) referred to the terminology of change engagement which describes employees' willingness to support, adopt, and promotes organisational change.

4.3.10 The role of HR and leadership in Change Management

Zel (2016) states that the leader must create their style to adapt to the change to motivate their employees, and those leaders must be identified throughout the organisation as those individuals who can play the role of change agents. Participants 1 and 2 agree with the literature of Abdi and Rathmaya (2017) who stated that employees prefer to receive communication on change from those in the hierarchy such as HR. Hee and Shunmugam (2019) state that HR must motivate employees toward the change. This is required to encourage positive employee reactions to change because these participants stated that HR was invisible and was needed in the communication of change, and the reassurance for employee fears and anxieties. Alfes, Shantz, Bailey, Conway, Marks and Fu (2019) also add that HR plays a key role in managing

and implementing the change by fostering positive employee reactions and generating employee support through the stages of the change. Furthermore, Jeong and Shin (2017) agree that HR practices are important as they motivate employees to contribute, and the employee behaviours and interests align with the organisation's needs. Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia and Irmer (2007) went on to say that these HR practices determine employee involvement and engagement in the change. Additionally, Neves, Almeida and Velez (2017) stated that HR practices impact how employees predict the future of the organisation and how they will react. Hayes (2018) speaks to leadership being less effective when they are not aware of the determinants which affect the outcome and this is in line with participant 3, who could not communicate effectively to employees as they were not aware of the full facts of the change early in the process. The literature corresponds with the participant responses that communication is key for the change management process. Without communication, the change management process cannot succeed (Fusch *et al.*, 2020). In addition, Fusch *et al.* (2020) state that leadership is key to change management in the organisation and must ensure general communication about the change, the employee's acceptance of the change, and must provide employees with the resources required to ensure tasks are complete.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter findings of the study were presented. This was primarily based on the data collected during questionnaires and interviews. The discussion was based on various themes that emerged during the study.

The factors required to manage change effectively; came up specifically in the interviews and there were common themes raised amongst the participants such as communication, planning, teamwork, and resources. The employee reactions to change management included many themes with the two main themes being positive employee reactions and negative reactions. The next theme focused on employee involvement in change management, where participants expressed the view that they felt a lack of or no involvement in change management. The final theme was the role of leadership and HR in change management; participants felt that there was either effective leadership and HR and when their role was considered ineffective, it was due to delayed communication or a lack of engagement with employees.

The research findings indicate that there is strength in communication, planning, teamwork and an ample budget for change management to be managed effectively. The research depicted that

the areas to focus on are employee involvement and the role of leadership and HR for there to be positive employee reactions to the change management. The negative employee reactions occurred in the weakness being a lack of employee involvement, and when leadership and HR were invisible. The research study revealed that participants agreed with the literature on the factors required to manage change effectively, the employee reactions to change management were mostly positive; negative reactions were relative to low employee morale and demotivated employees in the admin division, whilst negative reactions in the Production division were general. Employees throughout the organisation felt they were not involved in the change management, and there were mixed responses across the organisation regarding the role of leadership and HR in change management. The overall findings of the research revealed employees accepted change better when they are involved in the change management and when they receive, timeous, transparent communication relating to the change.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This last chapter concludes the study by summarising the key research findings about the research questions, discussing the value and contribution thereof, and offering recommendations for further studies.

5.2 Conclusion Summary

This study aimed to investigate the employee reactions to change management, specifically at a selected printing company, Uniprint. The results indicate that employee reactions to change management are positive when employees are involved and when leadership and HR play an effective role in the change management process. The research met the objective and answered the question of how change management affected employee reactions because it discovered that employees who felt involved in the change responded positively to change management because they understood the change, the reasons for the change, and their insecurities about the change were acknowledged which resulted in them viewing the change as positive. In addition, the research objective and question of the role and assistance of leadership and HR in change management were met and answered in that they are the change agents who are responsible for communicating and managing the change, and when they fulfil their responsibilities employees react positively. Further findings show that there are key factors like communication, planning, teamwork, and resources such as a budget that are required to manage the change effectively and thus ensure positive employee reactions. The participant responses identified factors which related to the research objective and research question one. The responses reflected that participants believed that some factors are more important than others, communication was the one factor that was common across all responses.

5.2.1 Factors to manage change effectively

There are numerous factors that are required to manage change such as the employee, leadership, training and development, and reward and recognition. These factors are key because the demotivated employee is an issue in change, but this can be overcome with an effective leader. An effective leader communicates, supports, and motivates employees. The literature reflected that the organisations that use training and development, and rewards and recognition as a means to ensure employees accept the change experience with positive

employee reactions to change management. The research answered the research question one of determining factors required to effectively manage change, in that training and development, and rewards and recognition were aspects that were also evident at Uniprint and resulted in positive employee reactions. However, in this study, only some of the factors were referred to which were relevant to the case of change management at Uniprint. Communication was a crucial factor to manage change as revealed by all participants. It was a dominant requirement brought up in the study for successful change management. The communication involves talking to employees about the change, the rationale for the change, and the benefits of the change to the organisation. Also, ensuring continuous feedback to employees to reduce the fears, anxieties, and general resistance which may be present.

Planning was the second most important factor mentioned for the successful management of change. Many of the challenges which occurred during the change could have been overcome by effective planning. The organisation needs to strategise before engaging in the change management and to possibly conduct a SWOT analysis to ensure the strategies are followed and the goals attained. Moreover, the plan must detail what the change will entail, and how it will impact the organisation. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of the key players in the change must be detailed in the plan to ensure clarity through the change management process. Finally, it is important to have deadlines to ensure each milestone is achieved.

The third common factor was teamwork which was about all employees at all levels of the organisation being geared towards the change and committed to achieving the goals of change management. Additionally, there should be teamwork in the sense that employees work in teams during the change management process where they experience autonomy in their work and decision making which increases motivation amongst employees and enhances the change management process.

The last factor mentioned in the research, however to a limited extent was resources, specifically financial resources in the form of a budget. The organisation must ensure they have the resources and budget required for the change management process to be successful. The resources pool must be measured, and the resource availability ensured then only can the change management process be successful.

The study achieved its research objective and answered its research question by determining the key factors to effectively manage change. The research conducted identified all factors required to manage change effectively and discussed the factors which were present at Uniprint and those which were lacking.

5.2.2 Employee reactions to Change Management

The research study answered research question two of how change management has affected the employee reactions specifically at Uniprint. At this printing company, the employee reactions were positive in general. The employees' feelings and attitudes were positive because they believed there was not much change in the company besides the ownership thus, they remained in their comfort zone. The few employees who experienced negative reactions still possessed a strong work ethic. Therefore, Uniprint can ensure these employees' reactions move from negative to positive. The negative reactions to change management are relative to delayed communication, a lack of communication, and the lack of involvement in the change management process. These are aspects that the Uniprint leadership and HR can manage. The employees are not necessarily resisting the change but are experiencing some fears and anxieties which can be put at ease through more communication and feedback about the facts and results of the change.

Communication is a key function in all organisational processes. It is a critical issue in any aspect of corporate life and more so in times of organisational change. The change management process includes stages, and communication coordinates these stages by creating readiness and motivation for the change. It is important to provide clarity of information relating to the change. Employee attitudes such as cynicism and scepticism are visible when communication during change is perceived as inadequate. It is suggested that when the level of information and communication is increased, employees' level of cooperation increases, and negative attitudes and resistance to change decrease. The research reflects evidence that communication in change has an impact on employees' reactions to change management. Poor communication is a key driver for negative reactions amongst employees when organisations embark on change. Effective change communication reduces fear, uncertainty, and resistance, helps employees to better adjust in time, and leads to the positive evaluation and increased willingness to change. Finally, employees need to be convinced about the change before they support it. The information must outline processes and strategies so that employees can align

themselves to the change. Finally, the information must be provided to employees timeously thus supporting employees in the change and ensuring they receive adequate feedback which improves employee reactions.

Therefore, change management has affected the employee reactions positively and negatively at Uniprint. The positive reactions were dominant because employees felt comfortable and realised the benefits of the change. The negative reactions are minimal and can be overcome with effective communication to reduce these employees' existing fears and anxieties, and answer their questions.

The study achieved its objective and answered the research question of what the employee reactions to change management are at Uniprint. The research discovered that there were mixed reactions to change management at Uniprint, however, the majority of employees had a positive reaction to the change management.

5.2.3 Employee involvement in Change Management

Research question three of how was the employee involved in change management was answered in that employee involvement was an issue that existed amongst all employees at Uniprint during the change management process. There is expansive literature that emphasises the importance of involving employees in change management. For there to be positive employee reactions to change employees must feel involved by leadership and HR as well as any other change agents in the organisation. The research has proven that the change is highly influenced by the employee's involvement. In addition, there is a need to also include strong line managers and the change agents in the change for it to be successful. For the change management initiative to be successfully implemented, employee engagement is critical.

From the questionnaires and more so the interviews it became clear that employees can argue in two ways concerning their involvement in the change process. The majority of employees who felt they were involved, but the involvement was limited had a positive reaction to the change but reacted negatively to the factor of involvement in change. The employees who felt they were involved in the change management process, had a positive reaction to the change. For these employees, it can be said with certainty, that they were in favour of the change, and

their belief that they were sufficiently involved in the process led to a positive attitude toward the change.

Involvement in the change management process was a major concern for employees at all levels, managerial, administrative, and operational. These employees expressed fears and anxieties that they experienced due to none, or a lack of involvement. These concerns were managed with some communication, but the employees stated that more continuous involvement would have been preferred. Some of the managerial employees specifically mentioned the lack of involvement as a concern because of their responsibility in the change for control, coordination, the achievement of organisational goals and productivity, and the execution of change processes.

The employees at Uniprint were for the most part not included in the change management and when there was inclusion it was limited. The involvement which did exist was ineffective for the change management because it simply consisted of communicating the change and the rationale behind the change to employees. There was no participative decision-making, and the concept of hearing what employees had to say barely existed, and was not filtered through the entire organisation because most leaders at most levels failed to effectively involve employees in the change.

The study achieved its objective of determining the extent employees were involved in change management. There was a general issue at Uniprint where employee involvement was concerned because many employees felt involved in the change management process but their involvement was limited, and there were some employees who did not feel involved in the change management at all.

5.2.4 The role of leadership and HR in Change Management

The leadership and HR in the organisation are the change agents thus they are crucial to the success of the change management process. They are responsible for communicating with and influencing the employees regarding the change. They also must overcome the challenge of employee resistance which is always an element that exists in any change. The leadership style and behaviour are key to the process, and the participative leadership style is popular as the research alludes to the fact that change management is successful when employees are

involved. HR must partner with leadership and ensure the HR practices in the organisation promote the change.

The employee reactions were influenced by their expectancy of support from leadership and HR. The expectancy of receiving support from leadership and HR would lead to a positive attitude hence where the expectation was met the reaction to the change was positive. Therefore, it can be assumed that employees who felt they did not receive the support of leadership and HR would have negative attitudes thus a negative reaction to the change management.

Human resources as a change agent delivers an organisation that has more competitive advantages. To get and hold competitiveness, organisations must adapt to unavoidable changes in the competitive environment. Human resources should implement practices that help leaders to react to meaningful changes in their organisational landscape. They should also guide line managers to communicate the direction of the future, develop procedures that reward and motivate behaviour that is aligned with the organisation's objectives, and avoid resistance to change. Through the strategic capability of human resources to change behaviours, it becomes clear that human resource professionals do not themselves execute change. They make sure that it is carried out with the implementation of an action plan. Human resources should not decide what changes the organisation should execute, but they should lead the process to make them clear.

Trust in the change agents is a critical factor affecting employee reactions to change. Employees' lack of trust in their leadership and HR leads to negative reactions to change management. This lack of trust in leadership and HR can serve as a recipe for resistance to change. Employees are more willing to trust competent leadership decisions even if the conditions may be risky or uncertain. Employees' trust in leadership results in the support from employees for organisational change. When the employees consider management to be credible and trustworthy, they hold more positive attitudes towards the change. Furthermore, when there is trust in leadership, change initiatives can be implemented effectively thus leadership is not required to spend much time on the change and dealing with resistance. Therefore, trust in leadership and HR is a significant contributor to employee reactions to change management. Once employees trust that leadership will deliver on their promises, they will view the change positively, but if employees do not trust leadership, then the change process will likely fail.

The employee reactions at Uniprint regarding the role of leadership and HR in change management were generally positive. However, some employees had more expectations of the role of HR. It is apparent in the case of Uniprint that leadership and HR are seen in a positive light by employees hence trust is not an issue. However, employees expressed their desire for more personable communication from these change agents. Therefore, Uniprint must ensure the role of the change agent, specifically that change communication expands, in order to eliminate any future potential resistance. Thus, it is evident that the research objective to determine the role and assistance of HR and leadership in change management was achieved.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study may assist printing companies in the process of change management. Specifically guiding the factors required to manage change effectively and ensure positive employee reactions to change management. The study also indicates that effective management of the change process is paramount for positive employee reactions. The findings suggest that it is important to develop effective plans, ensure the availability of ample resources, and most importantly communication is required to confirm commitment to the change from employees. Furthermore, printing companies will understand through this research the importance of involving employees in the change management process to ensure positive employee reactions. Particularly, leadership and HR in other companies will know the significance of their role as change agents in the change management process. Finally, they will be mindful that the involvement of employees in the change is key to gaining buy-in and preventing resistance to the change management in the organisation.

To improve the research on employee reactions to change management, this study is amenable to future research, provides more insight into change management, and also aids future researchers with recommendations. To begin with, the study suggests that ample time must be dedicated to future research. This is beneficial to an extent that it allows the researcher to identify many printing companies to be incorporated in the process of data collection. A wider pool of data presents an element of comparison for effective decision-making. Finally, as the word change suggests, the information in the study is not static and wavers with time. Therefore, it is a recommendation to future researchers to ensure an open attitude towards learning new developments related to change management. Researchers must have

constructive criticism, present alternatives, and solve the academic puzzle, but mostly be flexible and adaptive to new concepts on change management.

5.4 Recommendations

The research depicted challenges like employee resistance to change and managing change is challenging especially when dealing with people issues; serious effort should be spent to reach success considering key factors. The objectives of this study were to focus on important factors required to manage change, investigate employee reactions to change management, employee involvement in change management, and the role of leadership and HR in change management, and in this chapter, a conclusion will be drawn based on the research findings of this single case study. This study shows the importance of change management but also acknowledges the research limitations thus displaying three recommendations.

The first recommendation is the need for change should be emphasised and communicated at the early stages of the change management process. Organisational readiness should be ensured in the first stage of the change process. Effective change agents must be established in the organisation and commitment should be gained from leadership and HR. A change management process should include both technical and non-technical (e.g. communication, motivation, commitment, information sharing, trust, psychological issues, building an effective change management team, leadership) considerations. Strong leadership and necessary support should be provided to employees during the transition.

Based on the research findings, the main issues that may increase positive employee reactions to the change are communication, involvement, leadership and HR commitment, and good support for employees during the transition. From the research findings, it can be recommended that employee involvement in change management should be promoted, but it should not be neglected that it is not enough to only inform people about the change, but a detailed and realistic explanation should be included in the benefits and rationale behind the change management. If employees believe the change to be beneficial, their willingness and commitment to the change will increase. The company will need to show employees the benefits of the change in the main key success factors for better change management which are defined to be communication, motivation, participation, commitment, teamwork, leadership, employee engagement, effective planning, and ample resources. The most effective way of

communication is personal meetings and access to channels where assistance can be provided to employees regarding the change.

It is recommended that these research findings contribute to how organisations understand and manage change in the future. This information is useful for managerial scholars, organisations, leadership, and HR because the presented findings give an in-depth image of employee reactions to change management. Based on these research findings, one can draw conclusions about which factors are required to manage change effectively, how to ensure positive employee reactions to change management, the importance of employee involvement, and the role of leadership and HR in change management.

This research study and the findings were limited by time because the research study has been carried out on a tight schedule, and, under COVID-19 restrictions which might have influenced the process or outcome. However, this research can contribute to the specific context that the case study organisation is in. It is recommended that the study can be used for advice for the company to ensure the best practices for change management. The specific printing company, Uniprint has changed in terms of ownership from a large corporate organisation operating in a silo, to a smaller employer group where the organisation is better understood, fits in, and experiences more synergy.

5.5 Conclusion

In the case of Uniprint, employees were confronted with an organisational change, they have certain beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and feelings which comprised of their reactions to the change management. This research concentrated on determining the key factors required to manage change, investigating the employee reactions to the change, determining the involvement of employees in the change management, and establishing the role of leadership and HR in the change management. For this study, the biggest factor which was required to manage the change was communication. It was key to change management and presented throughout the research. Also, other factors like effective planning, teamwork, and ample resources were discussed. The employee reactions to change management were positive with a few negative reactions due to a lack of communication and involvement. Employee involvement in the change management process in this case study was lacking in most of the organisation, however, fortunately, it was not detrimental to the change process. Uniprint

leadership and HR were perceived by employees in general, in a positive light throughout the change process.

From the questionnaires and interviews, it became clear that employees were happy with the change, and understood the rationale, and benefits of the change. However, the key issues raised were the need to improve communication and to increase the involvement of employees in the change management process. The minority of employees who had a negative reaction to the change still had a strong work ethic. Therefore, with better communication and engagement with employees, this can be overcome, and the fears, anxieties, and possible resistance can be managed. The data acquired from this research study and the results thereof provide valuable information for printing companies intending to engage in change management. The research findings could assist with managing change more effectively, eradicating employee resistance, ensuring employee involvement in change management, as well as effective leadership and HR in the transition through communication.

Change is inevitable and constant; every organisation should embrace change and the change agents should do this in unison. The research study shows that leadership should clearly state the course for the change to be accepted with a few uncertainties. Clear communication lines and involvement mitigate resistance to change. Following proper strategies will help blind spot mishaps and ensure that every aspect of change is dealt with effectively. The responsibility of change communication should filter through all the levels in the organisation, hence line managers in every department should take this responsibility personally and ensure that change is effectively communicated to employees. The line manager must also ensure employee engagement to successfully transition the organisation in the future.

It is the responsibility of the change agents to ensure a successful change management process. To maximise success, leadership must be well equipped to manage the environment (employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, and other stakeholders) affected directly or indirectly by the change. Therefore, the successful management of change is a highly required skill for organisational survival. Change is a bitter pill that must be swallowed despite any form of challenges needed to be surmounted. Individual differences and the ability to accept or reject change contribute to change management. The organisational and individual readiness level to change is significant to change management. Resistance to change should be expected and seen

as part of change management. However, adequate communication to all employees by the change agents is highly essential.

Finally, successfully changing an organisation requires communication, education, training, resources, patience, timing, and the right incentives. Successfully leading change is and will continue to be a front-burner responsibility for the change agents i.e., leadership and HR. Prospects are grim for organisations that either cannot or will not change especially considering all the recent changes which the COVID-19 pandemic has created. There is a clear consensus in the literature that the pace of change has never been greater than in the current continuously evolving business environment. For the printing industry to maintain a competitive advantage in the market it must consistently keep up with the change. Change can be costly financially and otherwise, but it can also be very rewarding if it is carefully thought out and implemented. Since a great deal of financial and human resources are required to affect some process changes, quality plans are required to ensure that the new process is implemented, gaps are promptly identified, and feasible solutions are derived.

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APPENDIX 1 - GATEKEEPER LETTER

27 July 2021

To: Research Ethics Committee
University of KwaZulu Natal
University Road
Westville

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Uniprint A Division of Inside Data South (Pty) Ltd, hereby grants permission to Povinisha Munisamy, student number 208517088, to conduct research titled "THE EMPLOYEE REACTIONS TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN A SELECTED PRINTING COMPANY - A CASE STUDY OF UNIPRINT A DIVISION OF INSIDE DATA SOUTH (PTY) LTD" by collecting data through questionnaires and interviews with the employees at Uniprint A Division of Inside Data South (Pty) Ltd.

Your Sincerely,



Grant Hubbard
Managing Director



APPENDIX 2 - PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 29 September 2021

Dear Uniprint Employee

My name is Povinisha Munisamy from the HR department at Uniprint 0314929329/povinisham@uniprint.co.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the Employee Reactions to Change Management. The aim and purpose of this research is to investigate the employee reactions to change management specifically at Uniprint. The study is expected to enroll 140 participants in total, 100 in Factory and 40 in Admin at the Durban office. It will involve the following procedures; questionnaires and interviews. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 15 minutes for the questionnaire and 30 minutes for the interview.

The study will involve no risks and/or discomforts and no direct benefits to participants. It is hoped however that the study will benefit the organisation in determining how to improve on change management through the investigation of employee reactions.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee approval number 00014167.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0314929329/povinisham@uniprint.co.za or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled.

The data collected will be protected through confidentiality by these consent forms and will be held by UKZN. Any data more than 5 years old will be disposed of according to university rules. The participant's anonymity will be maintained through these signed consent forms and confidentiality and there will be no names provided in the questionnaires and interviews in the data collection. Permission must be asked in order to audio-record interviews.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled the employee reactions to change management in a selected printing company - a case study of Uniprint by Povinisha Munisamy.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

AUDIO-RECORDING YES / NO

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 0314929329/povinisham@uniprint.co.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX 3 - QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PERSONAL AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Please put an X in the appropriate block.

1. Please indicate the department in which you work in:

Admin	
Production	

2. Indicate which age group you fall in:

20 - 35 years	
36 - 45 years	
46 - 55 years	
Over 55 years	

3. How long have you been in this organisation?

Less than 5 years	
6 - 10 years	
11 - 15 years	
More than 15 years	

4. How long do you intend to be in this organisation?

Less than 2 years	
3 - 5 years	
6 - 10 years	
For Life	

SECTION B: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

1. Are you aware of the reasons for the change taking place?

Yes	
No	

2. Did leadership communicate the vision for change?

Yes	
No	

3. Has the change impacted negatively on your morale in the organisation?

Yes	
No	

4. If given the opportunity would you leave the organisation and seek employment elsewhere?

Yes	
No	

Please consider the following statements and indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with each, circling the corresponding number.

1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

5. The sale of the organisation had a positive effect.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. The leaders of my department involved employees in the change.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. Feedback in the organisation is given in an open and direct manner.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. The changes made will be successful and improve the performance in the organisation.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

SECTION C: EMPLOYEE REACTIONS

Please consider the following statements and indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with each, circling the corresponding number.

1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

1. Are you comfortable in participating in this questionnaire and are you sure leadership is not going to use this against you?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. Leadership cares about employee satisfaction.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. I do not mind spending a half hour past closing time if I can finish something, I have been working on.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. The thought of waking up and going to work makes me sick.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. If I had the choice between going to the organisation's family day and staying at home, I would probably stay at home.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. I do only what my job requires, no more, no less.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. I would probably keep working even if I did not need the money.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. My work environment really inspires the best in me in terms of job performance.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. Employees do not feel secure at work because of fear of losing their jobs.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. Uniprint is the last employer I would recommend anyone to work for.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

APPENDIX 4 - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. In general, what was your perception of the change management process since the sale of the organisation?
2. What was your understanding behind the rationale for the change?
3. What were your expectations of the change management process?
4. To what extent has the change fulfilled your expectations?
5. Do you think the change management process was successful?
6. In your opinion, what are the key factors which contribute to managing change effectively?
7. From the factors you have mentioned, which ones were visible in the change management process, and which ones were not?
8. How good was leadership and HR in effectively managing the change process?
9. Were employees adequately prepared for the changes?
10. What challenges have you faced during the transition?
11. Looking back, what could have been done differently and what solutions would you recommend?

APPENDIX 5 - ETHICAL CLEARANCE



19 September 2022

Povinisha Munisamy (208517088)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear P Munisamy,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003402/2021

Project title: The employee reactions to change management in a selected printing company - a case study of Uniprint a division of Inside Data South (Pty) Ltd

Amended title: Employee reactions to change management in a selected printing company - a case study of Uniprint

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 16 September 2022 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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