



The Role of Leadership in Managing Change

Misheck Musaigwa*

Department of Business Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. *Email: msaigwamish@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Organisational change is a sophisticated and challenging process. As a result, many organisations that embark on change initiatives fail to achieve their intended goals and sometimes change leads to high costs, which undermine its benefits. However, despite these challenges, it is becoming increasingly important for organisations to embrace change for their survival and success owing to the dynamic and rapidly changing business environment caused mainly by technological advancement. This research aimed to investigate the role of leadership in managing change. The study employed a qualitative approach and drew a sample of 10 participants who are department managers. These candidates perform managerial and leadership responsibilities in the organization under study. The study employed purposive sampling and thematic analysis to analyse the data. The findings suggested that leadership plays a fundamental role in change management. The leadership roles found include motivating employees, creating a vision for change, communicating change, planning for change, creating a conducive environment for change, getting employees' buy-in and leading staff by example.

Keywords: Leadership, Change Management, Change, Organizational Leadership, Organizational Change, Leadership Role

JEL Classifications: M10

1. INTRODUCTION

The global contemporary economic and technological changes have forced financial institutions to develop new business models to mitigate costs and effectively serve customers. As a financial company, the organisation under study has been responding to the continuous changes taking place in their market. In response to the changes in the business environment, the company fundamentally changed its business model and focused on a new approach of developing a customer-friendly model. van Dierendonck and Sousa (2016) argue that the global competition and a turbulent business environment witnessed by organisations lead to rapid changes and high uncertainty, significantly impacting organisational members. The fundamental objective of organisational change is to improve the performance of organisations (Carter et al., 2013). There are many essential factors that prompt a continuous change in organisations in the contemporary business environment (İkinci, 2014). Some of the significant changes in organisations include sophisticated mergers, downsizing, and acquisitions. These

changes cause employees to panic and feel vulnerable, which may prompt resistance to change (van Dierendonck and Sousa, 2016).

Organisational change is a sophisticated and challenging process and as a result, many organisations that embark on change initiatives fail to achieve their intended goals and some incur significant losses. Ganta and Manukonda (2017) note that approximately 70 percent of change initiatives in organisations fail. However, notwithstanding these challenges, it is significantly important for organisations in the contemporary dynamic business environment to change in order to be successful. Technological advancements globally have accelerated the pace of change as organisations are embracing new digital technologies to remain competitive. Change has become more rapid than before as it is affecting the global economy and business (Mikołajczyk, 2022). One of the reasons that have caused a massive wave of change in almost all sectors is digital transformation which is connected to the fourth industrial revolution (Kaputa, Loučanová and Tejerina-Gaite, 2022). Digital transformation is forcing organisations

to fundamentally change the way they do business, including changing the business model, introducing new technologies to improve efficiency and profitability. Taylor, Cornelius and Colvin, (2013) argue that leadership is significantly important during change as it helps to ensure its successful implementation through guidance, support and directing the organisation towards the desired future. This study sought to establish the essential leadership roles that can help enhance the success of change in organisations considering the dynamic environment that is causing rapid change mainly due to the increasing use of technology.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative approach and the researcher collected data from participants through semi-structured in-depth telephone interviews, which allowed probing questions to obtain rich data. In addition, the research is also exploratory, which enabled the researcher to explore and gain insight into the phenomenon under study. Saunders et al. (2016) argue that exploratory study aids the researcher to understand the problem under investigation in circumstances where the researcher lacks insight about the issue. Exploratory research may be undertaken in different ways, including interviews and literature reviews. Saunders et al. (2016) posit that exploratory study implies that the researcher asks open-ended questions to establish the underlying problem and help provide in-depth knowledge about the topic under study. This study deployed purposive homogenous sampling as a suitable sampling strategy. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to target specific participants with certain required and similar characteristics. The sample consists of head of department managers who perform leadership roles during the organisational change. The telephone interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, and the researcher also took notes during the interview.

2.1. Significance of Leadership during the Change Process

Leadership is a process of influencing people to behave in a particular way that helps achieve the group's intended goals (Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020). Leaders can motivate staff and help them build confidence and ensure trust (Ghavifekr and Adewale, 2019). Today's organisations need competent leaders that comprehend the current dynamic and sophisticated business environment (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). There are various ways to lead, and as such, there are no prescribed universal leadership skills and styles to adopt (Tourish, 2014). Additionally, leadership is significantly vital during change as it aid to ensure a successful implementation of change through guidance, support and directing the organisation towards the desired future (Asbari, Hidayat and Purwanto, 2021).

Burnes et al. (2016) argue that change and leadership are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. This view is supported by Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015), who suggested that it is only through leadership that organisations can timeously and effectively respond to the changing business conditions. Moreover, the authors also acknowledged that leadership understands the significance of change in organisations because change may be necessary for the

survival of a firm. Despite its complexity, leaders embrace change because they believe it benefits the organisation and improves performance (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015).

Van den Heuvel et al. (2014) argue that research on change management has focused on managing the process. However, many organisations have failed to accomplish their change initiative goals despite many studies on change management. Owing to the continuous change in organisations, which includes re-engineering and developing new ways of doing things, it is increasingly becoming imperative for employees to adapt to change, particularly changing their behaviour to maintain the organisation's competitive advantage (Van den Heuvel et al., 2014). Corporations are seeking radical process change, and key to the success of restructuring of firms is the coordination of information technology through the organisation (Njuguna and Wanjohi, 2021). Researcher are recommended to focus on employees' behaviour during change as it has not received enough attention (Van den Heuvel et al., 2014).

Dominguez et al. (2015) note that the paradox of change is that while organisations strive to be stable by avoiding change, they also need to survive in the changing business environment by continuously adapting to change. While change may be regarded as essential but change that is contrary to firm's existing logics may be considered illegitimate by employees (Perrigino, Dunford and Wilson, 2018). Therefore, organisations need to ensure that they align change with the firm's vision and goals. There are various reasons that forces firms to change, and they include competition in the market, government regulations, and ecologists. Each of these factors may force the organisation to react. Moreover, despite the many recommended methods to implement change, there is still a high failure rate in change initiatives that organisations embark upon (Dominguez et al., 2015). For organisational change to be successful, both the organisations and employees should be willing to change. One of the common reasons that was found as vital to avoid failure during change is the employee readiness to change (Engida, Alemu and Mulugeta, 2022).

The speed with which the organisation learn and change in the dynamic environment enhances its chances for survival. Zafar and Naveed (2014) also add that communication is crucial to reduce resistance to change. The vital messages that need to be communicated to workers during change include explaining how change will affect the current situation, reinforcing the firm's core values and how change will benefit the firm and staff, the end goals as well as the alternatives and resources for workers (Men, Neill and Yue, 2020). Lack of communication is one of the significant reasons change fails. Moreover, van den Heuvel et al. (2014) point out that organisations fail to achieve change if the change threatens the degree to which employees identify themselves as members of the organisation. This concept is also referred to as employee's organisational identification. Organisational leaders play an instrumental role during change when the organisation adjusts to the external environment's demands (Taylor et al., 2014). Organizational change failure differs, it may be minor technical errors, breakdowns and large-scale failure caused by transformational change strategies and mistakes that happens

during incremental change (Schwarz, Bouckennooghe and Vakola, 2021).

3. LEADERSHIP ROLE AND INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEES

Servant leaders influence their followers by serving and helping them to develop their sense of service and behavior (Bauer, Perrot, Liden and Erdogan, 2019). Servant leaders act as role models and provide necessary training and guidance and by doing so, they impart their characteristics of “service” to subordinates and help them develop into service-oriented workers (Lemoine, Hartnell and Leroy, 2019). On the other hand, transformational leaders play a very vital role in affecting employees creativity, and their leadership style is appropriate to identify new opportunities and to develop the firm’s competencies (Shafi, Lei, Song and Sarker, 2020). Research found that transformational leaders encourage and motivate their employees to take risks and own their results, this helps stimulate workers to work innovatively and encourages creativity (Shafi et al., 2020). In addition, transformational leaders encourages their subordinates to find alternative ways of executing their work, create ideas and become innovative. Research has also suggested that, there is a relationship between employee performance and leadership style on employees having improved performance within the company (Nugroho, Asbari, Purwanto, Basuki, Sudiyono, Fikri, Hulu, Mustofa, Chidir, Suroso and Xavir, 2020). Transactional leadership focuses on observing subordinate’s behaviour and exchange process using a contingent reward system to engage workers and improve their performance (Baig, Iqbal, Abrar, Baig, Amjad, Zia-ur-Rehman. and Awan, 2021). The Transformational Leaders increase the confidence and values of employees; as a result, the employee’s outcome is increased beyond their expected level. Penava and Šehić (2014) indicate that leaders, as agents of change are in the right position to help shape the views of followers through a compelling vision to achieve the desired change. Furthermore, the authors point out that employees are most likely to resist the change initiative if leadership fails to articulate and elaborate on the importance of change and why it is necessary. For this reason it is suggested that employee engagement is necessary as it play a crucial role for organisational change to be successful. Therefore, it is the role of leadership to ensure that employees are engaged (Magsaysay and Hechanova, 2017). Leadership should also focus on identifying and meeting the needs of followers as this has a positive impact on the follower’s perception of change.

Organisational change is widely known as a complex phenomenon and it is, therefore, essential to approach the challenges related to organisational change in a systematic and coordinated way (Jacobs et al., 2013). Hussain et al. (2018) therefore suggest that due to the complex nature of change, leadership should provide the necessary support and guidance to employees during the change process. Furthermore, organisational change calls for effective and competent leadership to manage the process and achieve the desired goals (Khan et al., 2016). Chou (2014) points out that to avoid failure, organisations should recognise employees as key players in the implementation of change as they are the ones mainly responsible for the execution of change.

Leadership is a complex concept, as leaders are required to perform various roles that require different competencies (Van Wart, 2013). Diebig et al. (2016) explain that the leaders’ fundamental roles in organisations include shaping subordinates’ thinking about tasks to be accomplished, performance appraisals, setting goals, and motivating employees. In addition, Hussain et al. (2018) on the other hand, assert that during the change process, leaders are expected to perform roles such as providing incentives and emotional support to subordinates, communicating effectively, being involved and guiding employees on change.

4. LEADING CHANGE EFFECTIVELY

Effective leaders are able predict the negative impact of organisational change and prevent it from happening (Jacobs et al., 2013). Scholars generally believe that transformational leadership can bring inclusivity in managing organisations, institutions and countries where change is dynamic (Lewa, Mburu and Muriigi, 2022). Some scholars also argue that charismatic-transformational leadership is a more effective leadership style especially during the time of change in the organisation (Van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013). Leaders that care for their follower’s needs and treat them with respect and dignity encourage followers to improve performance and commitment to work (Yasin Ghadi et al., 2013).

Hartge et al. (2015) point out the roles that leadership should perform to ensure the success of change in organisations; these include providing employees with accurate information regarding the breadth and depth of change, communicating the value of change, providing feedback to employees on matter related to the ongoing transformation, driving change, rewarding employees and providing employees with the required resources. Adil (2014) revealed a concept called “leader encouraging behaviour for change,” which is essential and necessary for change. The concept suggest that leaders should evaluate the strength of available resources and employees’ needs, communicate appealing goals to employees, and build trust with employees.

Similarly, Caulfield and Senger (2017) revealed a concept called “ideal leadership themes,” which relate to functions that leaders perform during change; they are as follows: First-inspirational-communicator which relates to how leaders communicate and explain why it is necessary to change. Second-honesty-refers to the confidence and trust followers have in the firm’s leadership. Third-competency-relates to the leader’s expertise and how skilful they are in executing change. Fourth, inclusivity-getting all employees on board and getting their support for change. Fifth-respect-which relates to how leaders should treat employees with respect and dignity. Finally, decision-making- the leader’s ability to make difficult decisions during a complex change process.

5. EXAMINING HOW LEADERSHIP CAN EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT CHANGE

van Dierendonck and Sousa (2016) suggest the following as characteristics of effective change leadership: employee empowerment, open communication, leader’s empathy, and

satisfying employee's needs. Likewise, Stilwell et al. (2016), cited in Gilley et al. (2009), revealed that coaching, communication, involvement, motivation, team building, and reward are significant leadership behaviours and skills for implementing change. Sarros et al. (2014) proposed a concept called "leader motivating language," which is focused on the leader's ability to provide organisational members with direction for the future. In addition, giving direction to employees entails a forward-looking approach where leaders clarify what should be accomplished, provide clear direction and guidance to employees on how tasks should be executed, mentoring, and outline what should be achieved in order to be rewarded.

Baesu and Bejinaru (2014) reveal a five-stage change process that is considered effective for implementing change, and they elaborated on how leadership influences each phase. The five-stage is explained as follows: (a) Commanding style, which implies that leaders adopt a result-oriented approach that aims to influence people to learn by doing, (b) logical style; which relates to leadership focusing on innovation, handling change process prudently, and constantly learning through information gathering, (c) inspirational style, relates to leadership identifying and creating opportunities through developing trust with employees, (d) supportive style, relates to leadership providing support to followers and ensuring they are participating in change. Describe leaders as individuals with power and authority who can make decisions and implement them using their influence. Leaders play an essential role both directly and indirectly by influencing employees' commitment and readiness to change; that is, leadership promotes readiness to change, which brings commitment implement to change (Hussain et al., 2018). According to Packard (2013), leaders are also required to plan and design systems that provide the infrastructure to enable the implementation of change. As managers, organizational leaders use status authority and legitimate powers to effectively deal with organizational challenges. And as entrepreneurs, leaders use the power of personal influence on employees (Sandybayev, 2019). Therefore, the entrepreneurial leadership style is believed to be more effective to manage the organisation than just an informal leader or manager without status authority (Sandybayev, 2019).

Implementing change requires a different leadership approach from the typical leadership functions (Magsaysay and Hechanova, 2017). That is, since change is not routine, the role of leadership encompasses the management of the entire change process to ensure its success (Magsaysay and Hechanova, 2017). Krapfl and Kruja (2015) suggest three essential characteristics that enable leaders to communicate effectively which are usually overlooked. These are as follows: Firstly, leaders should provide a holistic picture to employees and provide information for the scope of work to be accomplished. Secondly, leaders should communicate effectively providing all the necessary information to employees. Finally, leaders are also expected to be good listeners as this helps them understand whether followers comprehend their message.

In an attempt to improve the efficiency of a change process, Baesu and Bejinaru (2014) proposed a change process model which helps to facilitate change. The model is explained as follows; (a) the

planning stage is the phase where the leader provides explanation elaborating and identify opportunities, (b) enabling stage is a phase that include influencing employees and empowering them, (c) the launching stage, entails the execution of change to achieve the set goals, (d) the catalyst stage, consist of motivating and stimulating subordinates by providing support, (e) and finally maintaining stage, relates to the provision of guidance and administering of change to ensure it is sustained.

6. LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEES DURING CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of change is a complex task owing to the various phases involved; there is a possibility of resistance from employees, which may hinder the process. To overcome these challenges, leadership plays a critical role in motivating followers, creating a conducive environment for change, communicating effectively, and resolving employees' problems (Khan et al., 2016). Communicating with employees during change is vital because it helps them to comprehend the need for change and support its implementation (Li, Sun, Tao and Lee, 2021). van den Heuvel et al. (2014) suggest that organisational leaders play a significant role in driving the change. They have a duty to aid employees to perform and accomplish the set objective. Therefore, leadership needs to focus on the leader-member exchange that emphasises on the two-way relationship between followers and leaders. Some scholars advocate for sustainable leadership which is a leadership style that puts into consideration a comprehensive scope of sophisticated interdependent on preservation of the environment, business growth, corporate profits and social values, which stresses achieving success in the long term based on strategic decision-making value (Du and Yan, 2022).

Korbi (2015) suggested several significant leadership aspects that are necessary during the implementation of change; they include the following: First-providing a strategic vision which is the comprehensive framework where the goals and the mission of the organisation fit in. In addition, the comprehensive strategic vision for the strategic change helps explain how a new strategy is implemented in line with the external environment (Korbi, 2015). Leadership as strategists for change are required to predict the future. They must also share the vision with the organisational members and understand the people's aspirations, needs, and values. Furthermore, leadership should create objectives, mould and shape organisational culture (Korbi, 2015). Second- leadership should identify the need to change and find a new strategic response. Fourth- leadership should effectively communicate the reason for the new strategy or change. Fifth- leadership should overcome resistance to change. Sixth- leadership needs the power to influence employees and develop political support. Leadership should also delegate duties, consult, encourage dialogue, motivate employees, involve them and build commitment (Korbi, 2015). The employees are considered ready to change when they indicate acceptance behaviour and embracing plans of changing that will be done. Prior to the employees becoming ready, they must reflect, process, context, content and individual attributes to perceive and

believe the changes that will be done by the organisation (Asbari, Hidayat and Purwanto, 2021). Readiness for change is a crucial element of achieving success of changes (Asbari et al., 2021).

It is essential for leaders to stand back sometimes and credit employees for the milestones that are accomplished during change because this creates a sense of ownership and empowerment in followers and enhances the acceleration of change (Jones and Harris, 2014). According to the study of Johannsdottir et al. (2015), the implementation of a new strategy requires leadership to show commitment and values, and leaders should act as role models and walk the talk by practically acting and behaving according to the message they preach to realise the desired change.

Appelbaum et al. (2015) acknowledge that despite the initiatives taken by organisational leadership to drive and lead change, the implementation of change is done by the organisational personnel at various levels of the organisation. State that it is vital for leaders to establish and understand what causes resistance or why employees reject the change (Darmawan and Azizah, 2020). This understanding will help leaders to make the necessary adjustment in the change plan by removing obstacles and encouraging employees to embrace change. Leadership plays a key role by communicating honestly to followers information related to organisational change, and they should set the future direction for the firm (Appelbaum et al., 2015).

Van der Voet et al. (2014) state that change-leadership is concerned with the leader's commitment to change. The primary role of change leadership is to encourage the followers to embrace a positive attitude towards change to achieve objectives for change. Moreover, change-leadership indirectly influences follower's commitment to change by enhancing high-quality communication and the participation of subordinates in the execution of organisational change (Van der Voet et al., 2014). This correlates with the view of Rogiest et al. (2015), who argue that subordinate participation increases if the quality of communication is enhanced and if the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety is reduced. Appelbaum et al. (2015) also argue that leadership should embrace, practice and encourage the values aligned to change because this aid to create a conducive environment for change. Many authors consider a positive employee's reaction to change as a crucial signal or indicator for a successful implementation of change (Agote et al., 2016).

Appelbaum et al. (2015) note that the successful implementation of change requires leadership to create a conducive environment. To overcome resistance to change, they should articulate the firm's strategic direction and ensure they get feedback from subordinates and mobilise everyone to support change. This can be achieved by involving middle managers at the early stages of change to get their input. In turn, middle managers can easily influence the entire workforce. Kin et al. (2014) revealed a leadership competency concept that comprises four elements necessary to ensure the successful implementation of change. These include reducing resistance and conflict, capacity building, institutionalisation and goal framing. The level of trust employees have in their leaders and leadership style has

a significant influence on their emotions and the success of the change process (Agote et al., 2016).

Ferguson et al. (2015) discussed three leadership levels necessary during change implementation, and they comprise initiators, managers and responders. In addition, the authors explain that: First- as initiators, leaders formulate long-term policies that are unambiguous with clear intent. Second- leaders as managers focus more on controlling resources and the budget and putting procedure in place for change. Third- leaders as responders take into account subordinates' views and concerns during change.

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. How Change is Communicated in the Organisation

The findings indicate that communication is fundamentally important when change happens in the organisation. While other elements such as planning and implementation remain essential, communicating the reasons for change to the entire workforce plays a significant role in reducing resistance and getting employee buy-in. In this study, the majority of the participant concurred with the views of respondent A below as he explained in his words how they communicate change in the company.

Below are the views of Respondent A:

In our case, of course, you have to first come from the perspective that it's a small company with a very flat management structure. That makes communication much easier, you know, in that you do not have to pass it through the ranks where with every layer passing on a message, something could possibly get lost in the transmission. We stopped having executive meetings and stopped distinguishing between strategic meetings and meetings with the rest of the staff. And so, we decided to call an executive meeting a WhatsApp meeting so that everybody takes part in our weekly strategic discussions as to where we are going. And it also allows everybody at the table for honest and frank discussions. We have an attitude in our company that communication should not be according to level. So, when we do the communication, it's a two-way process because a lot of the change is driven by input from the human resources working for us instead of being pushed from the top.

The study's findings suggest that the company under investigation adopted an open-door policy which allows the flow of ideas both from the bottom-up and top-down. This enables employees to give their opinions and input on the change initiative. It further indicates that leadership adopted an inclusive approach and continuous engagement with employees, which show their understanding of the significance of communication during change.

Most of the participants shared similar viewpoints on communication. Thus, majority of respondents overwhelmingly agreed that change is mainly communicated through meetings and discussions, formal and informal platforms as well. These findings also point to the informal communication the organisation uses to discuss change. In addition, the findings suggest that the organisation understands that communication is a two-way process

where management fully engages the staff on everything that is happening and gets feedback from employees. In support of these findings, Christensen (2014) argues that effective communication of change and information strategies are crucial to the successful implementation of change.

In line with the findings about the use of WhatsApp as a communication tool, Berjon et al. (2015) describes WhatsApp as an instant messaging App that is less costly and can be used in workplaces by co-workers to collaborate and communicate. It can be concluded that the organisation under study is using WhatsApp because of its benefits and advantages of being cost-effective and its capability of delivering messages instantly. Malgas and Henrie (2017) posit that organisations should use communication to explain and promote the planned change initiatives among employees. In addition, the authors suggest that leadership should enable effective two-way communication of the change and give a timely response to issues that arise during change. Moreover, the conversations enhance employees' participation in the organisation and facilitate consensus if there are areas of disagreement (Malgas and Henrie, 2017).

The following are the views of participant B:

What we do when it comes to change in our organisation is that we take a topic, and then we discuss it in the exco meeting (executive meeting) and have a debated on issues, and then we decide, ok let's go with this idea and then make a few inputs in the meeting. Then we continue to engage with the staff to investigate and analyse before the staff implements the change. And the staff will be fully aware of the new initiative taking place, so they will also do their research. What is important is that all the different aspects of communication, written, verbal, and policy directives are part and parcel. But the most significant communication aspect from leadership during the time of change is how visible they are in enacting change because they should be live examples of change.

In support of these views about the significance of communicating change, Petrou et al. (2018) acknowledges that both researchers and practitioners share the similar view that communication during change is the most effective strategy to enhance employee adjustment to change. Petrou et al. (2018) further describe communication during change as a process of encouraging and convincing employees to embrace change. Krapfl and Kruja (2015) suggest that one of the essential characteristics of effective leadership during change is that leaders should communicate effectively, providing all the necessary information to subordinates. The findings suggest that leadership empowers the employees and gives them the latitude to make decisions as they are entrusted to take leadership roles and contribute during change. The modern-day organisations are now involving employees in the management decision-making process, unlike the top-down approach that used to be a norm in the past (Zafar and Naveed, 2014). The inclusive approach brings employees on board to participate in the strategic planning and the implementation of change, and this is believed to have a positive impact on the organisation.

The following views were expressed by Respondent D:

I think communication is a process, and the detail at the end of the day is very important if you want to go to the practical side. I think

one of the biggest problems is that companies do not communicate the purpose of change. So, if your workers can see the benefits thereof; how it is going help them do their jobs easier or whatever you know, depending on what the change factors are, it would be very important to communicate the purpose.

A study by Russ (2009) indicated that lack of decision-making authority and resources were viewed as significant challenges during organisational change. Similarly, a study by van der Heuvel et al. (2014) found that experience, supportive leadership and personal resources during change enabled adjustment to change. Moreover, communication from management during change creates employee readiness to change. As organisations are regularly expected to change due to severe competition, technology, and global economic conditions, communication has become a strategic element in implementing change. Therefore, management should recognise that communication during change has become a strategic matter and should fuse communication into the firm's overall strategy (Saruhan, 2014).

8. LEADERSHIP ROLE IN CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

Respondent A expressed the views below:

Well, first of all, as I said right from the beginning, it's inclusivity, making sure that everybody is on board, everybody believes in the direction that we are going, and for management to be open-minded enough to adapt to the feedback that we are getting from the employees. What we try and do in our company is not the bottom up or up-down, but to do a flat approach so that everybody's opinion is as important as the next person, and in some areas, the leadership is taken by, let's say the Analyst. And then, when we move up to the next step, we then realise that the technical guys can now take the leadership role in this particular portion of the implementation of change. Resources in any company, even a small one such as ours, are absolutely vital, and they have to go hand in hand with the budget that we have available. So, really if you look at the broad strokes, you know with the major milestones that we want to achieve, management responsibility is really that of monitoring.

It is apparent from the study's findings that leadership in the organisation under study play a fundamental role in monitoring the implementation process to ensure change is accomplished. In relation to this viewpoint, Louw and Venter (2013) cite that organisational leadership monitors, controls, and manages the implementation of a strategy. The strategy should be translated into performance measures to aid employees to understand what they are supposed to do. Furthermore, apart from monitoring the process, leadership was also found to be more active and instrumental in engaging employees to keep them committed and motivated throughout change. Similarly, the study by Elisabeth Nyström et al. (2013) revealed that the change process comprises the planning, implementation and monitoring to ensure that the firm is on track. The leadership driving change is responsible for ensuring targets are met.

The following views were expressed by Respondent B:

Your planning for change needs to be very specific because you can not try an error when you are making a product.... So yes, it's the planning and should be very specific. And I think we do that very specifically; it's not a haphazard way that you implement change or take on change, it's specific, it's focused, its planned etc. For implementation, you need to have benchmarks that you can measure, it's like measuring a success rate or progress, so there must be an ability to see are we on track and if you need to fine-tune and enhance or maybe alter some of the principles of change management, then you must do it, and you must acknowledge that say, hang on we missed out, we are not quite sure about this...

These findings are supported by the study of Baesu and Bejinaru (2014), who proposed a change process model which helps to facilitate change, and it includes the following; planning stage, where the leadership provide explanation elaborate and identify opportunities for change; enabling stage, which include leadership's influence on employees through empowering them; launching stage, which consists of the execution of change to accomplish the set objective; the catalyst stage, which consists of motivating and stimulating subordinates by providing necessary support; and lastly maintaining stage, where leadership provide guidance and administer change to ensure it's sustained. Arimavičiūtė and Raišienė (2015) also suggest that change is systematic and, therefore, it has an impact on all the components of the organisation.

The following are the view of Respondent E:

I think there are two very specific things that are important for change implementation, so number one is buy-in to the change and to understand the reason behind the change. Employees need to be fully on board with the change. If you do not get the buy-in at all levels, obviously, you will get resistance, and that will make it difficult. The second aspect is that once you have effective buy-in, which is critical for implementation, then the second element that is important is for everyone to adjust to the new way of working. Because it's one thing to get the buy-in, and to be excited about the change, but it's a different thing to change your behaviour and then also to learn the new aspect that is required to implement that change. And not everyone can adapt to that, especially if you are stuck in your behaviours and you are stuck in your understanding of how things must work and suggest that this is how we have always done it. It's very difficult to learn the new behaviours and the new competencies required to see that change.

The findings are in line with the third stage of the change model by Lewin (1947) called "Refreezing." The stage consists of reinforcing the implemented change to ensure employees do not go back to the old way of doing things. In addition, at this stage, change is entrenched and incorporated into the system as a new culture of the organisation to accomplish the goals of the intended change. Moreover, Lewin (1958) change model further advocates for knowledge sharing during change management and emphasises leadership's significance and role during change (Hussain et al., 2018).

9. CONCLUSION

The literature revealed that leadership is an essential component of change management. In addition, effective leadership is needed to accomplish change initiatives in the organisation. It was also found that leadership qualities needed for effective change management in the organisation include good communication skills, management's support and commitment, setting compelling goals for change, and leading by example. The findings indicate that the organisation understudy understands the significance of providing leadership and communication during change. This is evident in the manner they communicate with the entire workforce using WhatsApp to conduct meetings in an inclusive way. The organisation's leadership also understands the significance of buy-in to ensure everyone is on board with the change initiatives, which works well to reduce resistance to change. Despite these successes in providing effective leadership during change, the organisation's leadership is recommended to consider using new technologies such as Zoom and Teams to communicate during change. In addition, with the emergence of the of digital transformation of business which prompts continuous change in organisations, management is recommended to upskill themselves to effectively lead in the digital age. Moreover, the entire workforce also needs to upskill to manage new tasks and challenges prompted by the advancement of technology in business.

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