



Leadership and communication strategies for managing organisational change: insights from eThekweni automobile dealerships



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ABSTRACT

Research studies have proven that leadership styles and communication are positively and significantly related to effective change management. This implies that the influence of leadership on effective communication is integral to the success of any organizational performance. These leadership styles include transformational and transactional leadership. The study was based on two different theories; the leadership theory and the communication theory. The study was descriptive in nature considering a sample size of 300 employees in the selected dealership organisations operating in the eThekweni, South-Africa. Data collection was achieved by handing out questionnaires to 300 employees, out of which 170 were returned completed. The study was analysed by means of correlational and regression analysis ascertained through the structural equation model (SEM). The study found that leadership styles and communication were positively and significantly related and are major determinant to the success of an effective organisational change management. The study further concluded that leadership styles and communication were positively and significantly related to effective change. Conclusively, it was indicated that the transformational leadership style stands out as the most effective leadership style for successful change management. It was also agreed that integrated communications which involves the application of more than one communication strategy to pass important information especially regarding change management was vital. The study recommended the adoption of transformational leadership style in the various departments of the organization. Also, it considers the application of integrated communication which includes verbal, non-verbal, written, assertive and electronic means of communication.

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Introduction

Today's organizations require effective leaders who understand the complexities of the rapidly changing global environment (Kezar, 2023). Different leadership styles may affect organisational change management resulting to the success or failure of appropriate organizational change (Errida & Lotfi, 2021). This has been largely credited to the role of leadership and communication management which implies that each organization may require a different type of communication and leadership style (Lee, 2021). Leaders must be able to adapt based on the group they work with, their behavior, thoughts, feelings, and general perception and responses towards change (Dunn, 2020). Every organisation has its own way and methods towards organizational success and this could be achieved through their set goals, vision and mission as well employees' willingness to change adaptation (Dunn, 2020; Drigas & Mitsea, 2020). Employees' commitment to change must analyse how results are accomplished considering the role of leadership style and communication management practiced (Bagga, Gerra & Haque, 2023).

Leadership styles include the leader's method of providing direction which is significant in determining the morale of the employees within the organization (Tamba & Pratt, 2023). According to Fischer and Sitkin (2023), leadership styles are critical in determining

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how and when the knowledge and skills available to the leader will be used. Abidin (2023) established that organisations need to analyse various attributes of leadership competencies as well as interactions. This is always essential for the success of an effective change management.

In today's global business environment, the notable leadership styles involves the transformational, transactional and passive leadership styles. However, research studies identify the transformational leadership amongst others as the most effective due to its unique nature in self-transformation of employees (Dane, 2023). Soelton (2023), further revealed that organisations are able to establish a mechanism to motivate employees towards a positive commitment to change increasing work performance and productivity. Such motivational attribute are unique to the transformational leadership which is known for its great role in effective change management (Moosa, Moosa and Faheem, 2023). Other major roles affiliated to the transformational leadership style for successful change management includes the establishment of self-awareness and good relations among employees, consideration of employees' feelings, emotions and concerns (Chandra, 2023). In contrast, transactional leadership attributes portray a negative connection on employees' perception toward change in most organisations (Ahmad, Saif & Aboelmaged, 2023).

Communication on the other hand, is important in every organization for minimizing the chances of misunderstanding and conflicts among employees (Shastri, 2023). Effective communication between the management and staff enhances efficiency, productivity and most importantly easily acceptance and commitment to change (Flaxman, Prudenzi & Zernerova, 2023). The channel of communication used in an organization needs to be reachable to majority of employees. This is because unclear communication increases the possibility of inefficiency, delay in change adaptation and sometimes increases resistance to change tendencies (Kontturi, 2023). The responses of employees at selected organisations for this study emphasizes the crucial role of leadership styles and communication practiced, having in mind the effective difference it brings to the organization towards a successful change management.

The automobile sector has reportedly suffered from poor leadership skills which has greatly affected workers performance and lack of interest towards the success of effective change management (Samson & Swink, 2023; Kontturi, 2023; and Shastri, 2023). The automobile organisation's have been associated with the practice of inefficient and unreliable leadership styles, especially waking up to the tremendous success of other organisations's response to change after the Covid era (Oravsky, 2023). Based on literature reviewed by Chandra (2023); Bagga, Gera and Haque (2023) and Shastri (2023), the issue of inadequate information from the management to the employees further contributes to the decline in efficient change management. The knowledge gap needed further empirical investigations as most studies around this area are mostly considered advanced, like the U.S., Japan, and other European countries. However, other studies by Van Walker (2019); Nielson (2018) and Melo (2023) conducted in South-Africa where this study was carried out hardly paid attention to these two major concepts as major determinants to the success of change management. Therefore, the study is worthy of being conducted to bridge the existing knowledge gap. This formed the basis of the study. The research objective of the study are:

- i. *To investigate the effects of leadership styles on employee resistance to change.*
- ii. *To investigate the effects of communication effectiveness on employee resistance to change.*
- iii. *To investigate the effect of leadership styles on communication effectiveness in relation to resistance to change management.*

Literature review

The literature review section focuses on the theoretical framework of the study based on leadership and communication as well as scholarly contributions of several authors.

Theoretical framework of leadership and communication

Gordon Allport established the leadership trait theory in 1936 (Melo, 2003) The theory was founded on the understanding that leaders are people who can totally share themselves while others cannot, and this is what makes them different from other individuals (Raelin, 2005). A leader has the appropriate combination of attributes which makes him a good leader and the same theory elucidates that a great leader is the one who is led by objective orientation and supervisory skills. However, other scholars argued that the theory did not establish the factors that makes leaders perform better than others in the organization when given certain duties to carry out, such as revealing the true intentions of leaders (Melo, 2003; Mc Clesky, 2014).

The communication theory on the other hand, reveals how communication procedures would engage others in discussion. According to Al-Shuairek (2015), the interaction process consists of steps: message, inscribing, transferring, getting, translating, comprehending, and responding. Information sources ought to be clear and accessible to everyone. The channel utilized could be interactive and engaging which allows for members to get more involved and are aware of concerning issues (Huang, Clarke, Heldsinger & Tian, 2019). Communication could be spoken, non-verbal, official or non-official, as long as it sends a productive message. Good communication is thought about as a found ability most people are naturally born with (Butt, 2023).

A number of authors indicated that communication is central to leadership (Mc Clesky, 2014; Samson & Swink, 2023 and Janislawski, 2023). This was further proven by other research studies investigating the effect of leadership styles in relation to

effective communication skills (Rabiul, Shamsudin, Yean & Patwary, 2023; Bagga, Gera, & Haque, 2023). It can be agreed that effective leaders build two-way patterns of communication which consist of formal and informal channels of communication which allows for free flow of interaction and engagement (Bin Abdullah, 2023). This implies that successful organisations must have a realistic view of effective leaders who communicate change adequately. According to Riggio and Newstead (2023), leadership exists only through communication and the main role of such communication is to further develop shared meanings in order to seek and use information effectively. In lieu of the aforementioned relevant studies on leadership and communication, it was found that the majority of these studies dealt with leadership style and organisational effectiveness, job performance and commitment. There is however, limited amount of literature that combines the nexus between leadership and communication in relation to successful change management dealing with these mentioned fields separately (Muttonford & Cai, 2023).

Empirical review and hypothesis development

Leadership designs include the leader's approach to offering direction which is recognizable from the staff morales within the organization (Shatila, Agyei & Aloulou, 2023). Numerous features of leadership attributes as well as communication is essential for improved performance in every organization. This is the reason why most scholars emphasize the need for transformational leaders who are considered more efficient in managing their employees feeling and emotions as compared to transactional leaders who are less empathetic and more concerned with what employees simply have to offer not minding their feelings (Salman, Hamed, & Faisal, 2023). It was revealed that transformational leadership expertise has a positive relationship with communication and are both indicators of successful organizational change (Salman, Hamed, & Faisal, 2023). The study also sought to explore whether leadership styles determine effective communication and job performance. The investigation results indicated that leadership styles are key determinant for successful change commitment.

Communication is essential in every company and minimizes the chances of misconception and conflicts in an organization (Kim & Kreps, 2020). Network of communication used in an organization requires easy access by all members and if this is uncertain, it results in inadequacies. Based on the previous studies reviewed thus far, this study sought to analyse whether leadership designs and communication impact successful change management and commitment to change.

Conceptual framework

Various scholars have affirmed that positive attitudes are vital for realising organisational objectives and successful change programmes (Wang, 2019; Stouten, Rousseau & De Cremer, 2018; Oluwaseun, 2018). In this regard, leadership and communication has remained the most significant variables amongst others which helps in curbing resistance to change in every organisation, thereby influencing a successful organisational change. This implies that, without an effective leadership and communication system for change management, the execution of a change process will be ineffective (Mitra, Gaur & Giacosa, 2019). The suggested conceptualised model in Figure 1 below depicts the relationship between Leadership management, Communication management and Resistance management. The conceptualized model is incorporated from various literature studies on leadership, communication and resistance management in order to recommend an effective change management in the organisation (Neill, 2018).

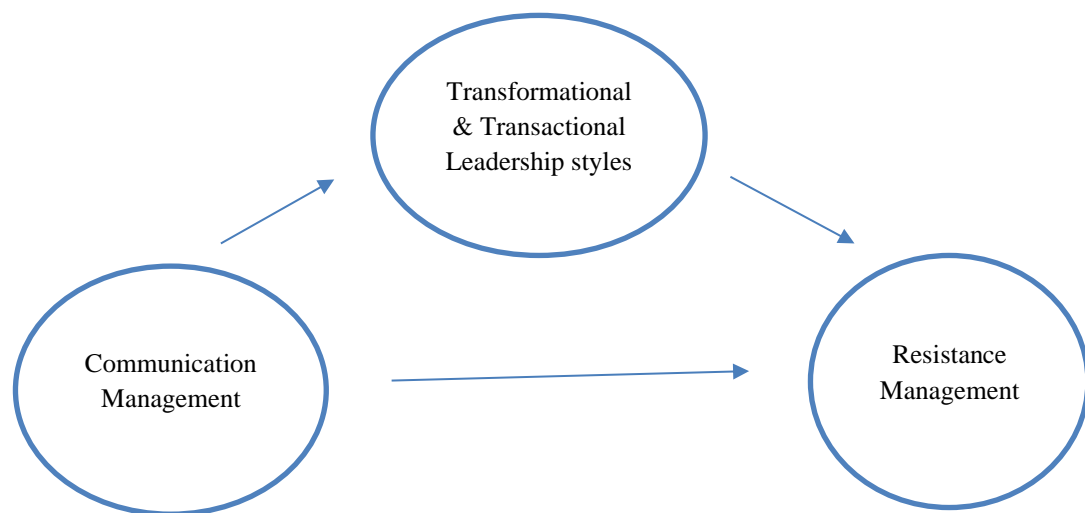


Figure 1: Components of the conceptualised leadership framework model. *Source:* Wang (2019:3448); Stouten, Rousseau and De Cremer (2018:752); Oluwaseun (2018:181)

These three aspects include:

- i. The transformational and transactional leadership styles are necessary for organisational change. The transactional leadership style further comprises of: intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, and

individualized consideration. The transactional leadership style on the other hand, comprises of; active management by exception, passive management by exception (Oluwaseun, 2018:181).

- ii. Resistance management components include cognitive rigidity, stimulation avoidance, short term focus (Al-Ghamdi, Kazmi, Sohail & Aldhafeeri, 2020).

These dimensions influence resistance tendencies which affects change management (Oreg, 2006).

- i. Communication management also comprising of the structure, organisational roles of members and channel of efficiency. These three dimensions are tools of communication to manage the change management process at each phase (Stouten et al, 2018).

The concept of communication management

Numerous authors deliberate on the significance of communication during a change process (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2012; Black, 2017; Steffen & Schoeneborn, 2019). Kotter and Schlesinger (2012) claim that the most reasonable process to tackle change is to enlighten individuals earlier. Workers must be knowledgeable about when change is to occur; the method of execution; the expectations from employees; the impact of the change process on their jobs; and ways in which the organisation intends to inspire and encourage employees to remain dedicated throughout the change process (Seiger; Franceschetti & Weber, 2023). Hopkins and Blyth (2019) also observed that people have a desire for cognitive closure in order to predict the work environment. Hence, organisational leaders or managers must forecast positive results from the change process and should guarantee that all employees are knowledgeable about how the change process is to be implemented and the methods of applying the change process.

Researchers of organisational management have recognised the significance of communication efficiency in organisational change practices (Stouten et al, 2018; Blyth, 2019)). Ford and Ford (1995) explained that “communication displays a dire role for acquiring information”. On the other hand, Stouten et al (2018) are of the opinion that other integrative factors, such as proper management planning, ought to be considered.

In a change management context, communication is regarded as a tool for announcing and explaining information about change; preparing people for the positive and negative consequences of change; and reducing anxiety and stress (Kuzior & Lobanova, 2020). The need for organisational communication is important for any change management practice as it involves the exchange of information (Stouten, Rousseau & De Cremer, 2018). As a result, information also plays a significant part in any transformational process. Information imported from the external environment is necessary to organise the internal mechanisms needed to ease change in a way that is well-suited to a change strategy (Lai & Mahapatra, 2014; Mirbabaie, Stieglitz & Bunker, 2021).

Goldhaber, Yates, Porter and Lesniak (2014) add that the communication of internal roles and adjustment to changes in the external environment depend on information competence. Goldhaber et al. (2014) further recommend three vital mechanisms that impact on the efficiency of information distribution.

First, is the structure of the communication system is the arrangement of relationships in the communication setup; and arrangements are difficult by nature. The dissemination of information is governed by the amount of employee indecision and ecological complications; the opinions and acknowledgements of participants; the scope of the system; and the steady process of managerial change. Significantly, Nadler and Tushman (2011) contend that, in extraordinary circumstances, the flow of communication ought to be introduced, starting from the top management to the lower levels of management, thus allowing for the appropriate delivery of crucial information, and the generation of novel actions which permit employee involvement in change procedures. After investigation, Laurer (2021) pointed out the clear role of top-to-bottom management communication in being responsible for transparency in communication, thereby motivating the change process and removing any ambiguities.

The next mechanism allows for communication efficiency that demands the communiqué role executed by participants of the organisation (Goldhaber *et al.*, 2014). Sias, Krone, and Jakubik and Berazhny (2017) use the term “workplace relationship”. Workplace relationships are exceptionally relational interactions with significant effects on people concerned with the growth of the organisation (Sias, 2015; Alhussain, Abusamaan, Al-Shobaki, Talla, and Abu-Naser, 2021). The flow of communication is influenced by a person’s mental individuality and how they relate to others (Chu, Chen & Gan, 2020). It is expected that top management (managers) should have more information to pass down to their subordinates, to ensure efficient task performance. In other words, to avoid a complicated process of change in an organisation, the onus lies on the management to provide adequate information to workers in order to reduce the pressure and anxiety, which often results in opposition to change.

Finally, is the flow of communication being channels and messages. This recognises how management establishes the flow of information (Goldhaber et al., 2014; Haefner, Wincent, Parida and Gassmann, 2021). It also influences the distribution of information and allows effective communication in organisations. The South African government, understanding the frail competitive situation of the South African automotive industry, has put pressure on the OEMs to increase their indigenous components to 70%, to off-set the cost of refining machines using long supply chains (Slabbert, 2021; Venter, 2009; Mphalwa, 2008). Integrated communications entrench communication adequacy and teamwork in business procedures, resulting in an upsurge in work-place productivity and

efficiency. Combined communication resolutions ought to be software-based, built-up and support the customer's choice of services (Szmelter, 2015).

The concept of leadership management

Leadership is a multi-faceted skill which is critical in the work place. Every person recognises and acknowledges distinct strategies and schemes for the reasonable management of workers, managers and the necessary infrastructure in the various divisions. The one vital element required throughout is leadership (Schermyly & Meyer, 2020; McClesky, 2014). Expertise in change management leadership has been identified as most important in controlling the actions and associations amongst team members and in businesses (Galli, 2018). This is determined through the actions, and consequential effects, of a leader's performance (Kurgat, 2019; Torlak, Desai & Bond, 2019). Such leadership expertise can be separated into two key classifications: orthodox and current change leadership expertise. Orthodox leadership involves the transactional and transformational leadership typically exercised as time and circumstances changes; whereas current leadership expertise is not highlighted in the study (Baskarada, Watson & Cromarty, 2017).

According to all the leadership sources mentioned, there is a developing perspective which stems from the capabilities related to effective change management. These perspectives are occasionally unsuccessful in distinguishing the leadership functions. On the other hand, an evaluation of leadership capabilities often recognises the probable capability that necessitates successful change management. This study assesses aspects of the two major leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and the major functions and impact they have on developing organisational change.

A core function of organisations today is the effective management of organisational change. Leadership has been the most worrying concern for organisations in recent times. The term 'leadership' can be viewed from numerous standpoints (Edmondson, 2018). Recent appraisals define leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Andriani, Kesemawati & Kristiawan, 2018). Countless descriptions of leadership have been offered, but ultimately it is "a process of social influence through the leader-follower relationship towards the achievement of an expected goal" (Tian, Deng, Zhang & Salmador, 2018:663; Barbuto, Fritz & Matkin, 2001).

Druckman and McGrath (2019) stated that, leadership is a practice of inspiration employing rules, plans and control to force followers to put effort into embracing organisational goals. As Ali (2021) stated, the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through actions and behaviours has been unable to clarify the features of leadership in recent times. Organisational leaders ought to establish diverse ways to relate with followers, as the discrepancies in leadership definitions from various researchers has been established, based on their understanding (Abdullah & Anwar, 2021). Other scholars believe that leadership management might be successful in handling dysfunctional circumstances; or even better, for improving work presentation (Stollberger, Las Heras, Rofcanin & Bosch, 2019; Nishi & Paluch, 2018).

Leaders are individuals with the power to initiate decisions and execute them (Bodla & Nawaz, 2010). Leadership is the process of taking a set of imposing practices regarding business, individual or social aspects of influence, where groups, teams or organisations are able to increase their capacity (Stamolampros, Korfiatis, Kourouthanassis & Symitsi, 2019). This activity by leaders is critical for the efficiency of the organisation and its survival (Nishii & Paluch, 2018).

This implies that leaders need to embrace certain change leadership styles in order to advance strategically and successfully adapt to change. It is also obvious that the management of a business is determined by the capability of the leaders to defend the business's welfare and to achieve similar objectives which demands active participation and team work of the organisation's members (Beer, Ayres, Clower, Faller, Sancino & Sotarauta, 2019). By so doing, transformational leadership has a core function in nurturing an organisation and ensuring that teams work is vital to confront issues that arise.

Transformational leadership is vital in work settings where practices involve performances as clarifying objectives; interactions; taking reliable actions; caring and creating chances for growth. According to Ackoff (2014), transformational leadership is defined as "a leadership style that formulates an inspiring vision, facilitates the vision, encourages short term sacrifices and makes pursuing the vision a fulfilling venture". Transformational leadership theory represents a corner stone in leadership research. Kim and Choi (2020) stated that: "Transformational leadership theory has garnered substantial scholarly attention since its inception more than 40 years ago and continues to be one of the most actively researched leadership paradigms". Transformational leaders can be nurtured as leaders who can connect with their members; define, select, and conduct a strategic operation; co-ordinate and design work schemes to encourage teamwork; and offer support (Robinson, 2020; Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). The transformational leadership philosophy involves certain attributes that inspire workers to go beyond expectations (Robinson, 2020; Yin, Ma, Yu, Jia & Liao, 2019; Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). These first attribute can be traced in transformational leaders who progress, intelligently encourage, and stimulate workers towards a collective purpose, vision, or mission (Khan & Khan, 2019). The second attribute can be observed in leaders who logically stimulate their expectations and principles and those of their followers (Murphy & Anderson, 2020). The third attribute are noticed in leaders who display individual consideration in adapted responsiveness to each person's needs so that the inspiration to relate an idea with confidence and positive belief is achievable. Finally, the fourth attribute can be noted in leaders who easily influence others through their guiding principles and values support (Robinson, 2020; Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013).

By contrast, transactional leadership is a ‘hands off’ style of leadership (Rioveros, 2020; Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). Transactional leaders are not involved in decision making or deciding outcomes of productivity. They are also not responsible for acting when problems arise. However, they are solely responsible for taking corrective actions and addressing wrong actions taken by employees (Tembo, Hickey, Montenegro, Chandler, Nelso, Porter, Dikomitis, Chambers, Chimbari, Mumba & Beresford, 2021). Overall, transactional leadership results in fear and mistrust when managing employees, and this promotes a stressful environment, which is not conducive to change (Pirson, 2019; Bodla and Nawaz, 2010). The impact of change on employee resistance is greatly influenced by the change leadership style. This implies that there is a correlation between the acceptance of, or resistance to, change and the change leadership style practised.

Transformational leadership in the context of change

Leadership is a vital element in any organisation. More importantly, every change management process needs successful change leadership. In this study, it is therefore necessary to integrate the literature on ‘change’ and ‘leadership’ in order to ascertain the significance of leadership to a change management process and also to emphasise those skills required for effective leadership and change (Men, Yue & Liu, 2020). There has been no suitable study assessing the relationship between change theories and leadership (Khattak, Zolin & Muhammad, 2020). This is a key gap addressed in the research work.

Transformational leaders realise greater outcomes with the organisation’s members once there is awareness of what is expected from the workers; and workers, on the other hand, are also allowed to contribute to the organisation’s mission (Keifer, 2015; Tucker & Russell, 2004). A transformational leader inspires creativity, which involves risk taking in order to realise expectations. This implies that a transformational leader is generally dynamic, which paves the way for an encouraging work setting that motivates diverse personalities (Kaiser, 2017).

The effect of transformational leadership on resistance management

According to Chou (2015), “*the function of a leader has an immediate impact on job satisfaction of people*”. Varshney (2020) added that, for adaptation to drastic environmental change, as with the Covid-19 pandemic, organisations can only be well positioned to orientate their employees to adapt effectively if there is room for transformational leadership. Changar and Atan (2021) clarify that workers are content with their leaders displaying combined attributes of transformational and transactional operations. A research study by Sung and Kim (2021) agrees with existing findings stating the strong link between a transformational leadership style and employee resistance to change. To this end, Huynh (2020) relates transformational leadership to improved working conditions for employees. The following components of transformational leadership style will be addressed relative to employee resistance to change:

Idealised influence and employee resistance

Changar and Atan (2021) posit that a transformational leader places emphasis on improved morals and standards in order to attain the vision of the organisation. By means of idealised influence, organisational members sense the leader’s ethics and standards, which earn the leader profound admiration. The optimistic ambitions of effective leaders heighten their followers’ contentment (Gassemi, Papastamatelou & Unger, 2021). In other words, employees become confident in their leaders and become more dedicated and committed to achieving the vision of the organisation.

However, Koo and Lee (2021) noted that the consequence of idealised influence tends to occur between top- instead of middle-managers. This is obvious in a scenario where the followers are restricted by managerial guidelines. This reduces their capacity to initiate creative ideas and further lessens their desire to achieve expected outcomes.

Intellectual stimulation and employee resistance

Grill, Nielson, Grytnes, Pousette and Torner (2019) reinforced the application of transformational leadership to curb resistance among workers through intellectual stimulation. Mansaray (2019) further emphasised that organisations that wish to stimulate their employees to engage in effective change management ought to promote openness to innovation and discover exciting means of stimulating employees intellectually to facilitate creative means of handling problems that arise in the organisation. Transformational leaders deal with old-fashioned expectations by creating innovative work settings and ensuring that employees are aware of other employees’ distinct creativity and intellects (Hillman & Baydoun, 2020). This is realised by addressing issues diversely in order to develop change readiness (Oosthuizen, 2019). This implies that, once employees are encouraged and stimulated positively, there are more tendencies for them to embrace change and the innovations that facilitate working from home; as well as the use of robotics at the workplace of the future.

Individualised consideration and employee resistance

Yue, Men and Ferguson (2019) agree that transformational leadership encourages, inspires and stimulates employees to effect positive changes. Transformational leadership is a favorable style that satisfies workers’ requirements. Productive results of transformational leadership are aligned with the capacity of management and the distinct ambitions of followers (Novitasari, Asbari, Wijayanti, Hyun & Farhan, 2020). Oduwusi (2018) asserts that embracing cultural differences should be part of the training for

leaders and employees and ought to be considered in organisational policies in order to reduce resistance tendencies and eradicate business challenges. This can only be possible by educating and mentoring followers in decision making, and by creating a friendly environment, ensuring that followers have a sense of belonging. Outcomes from the study indicated a strong relationship between transformational leadership and welfare.

Transactional leadership in the context of change

A transactional leader can be regarded as one who pays attention to daily operational activities in the organisation to realise instant outcomes. Such leaders place more emphasis on task completion (Chen Li & Leung, 2016). According to Changer and Atan (2021), transactional leaders expect workers to submit to their expectations and meeting, or not meeting, these expectations results in organisational rewards or punishments. In other words, transactional leaders can be perceived as task-oriented persons who exploit their influence to control and demand submission from the members. This type of leader indirectly explains job requirements by means of related rewards or benefits for submission; or punishment for non-submission.

The effect of transactional leadership on employee resistance

The effect of transactional leadership on employee resistance is discussed by considering the attributes of transactional leadership discussed below:

Active management by exception and employee resistance

Iscan, Ersari and Natiyok (2014) assert that leaders act in certain ways to avoid possible concerns in the future. This normally results in criticism, and eventually non-compliance, from the workers. Results from a study led by Truninger, Ruderman, Clerkin, Fernandez & Cancro (2020) indicate that leadership based on deliberately identifying errors poses a grave risk to the attainment of independence. Control procedures employed by the management tend to reduce the freedom of their followers. This further reduces the participation of the employees in the process of change, decision making and scheduling work, which invariably increases employee resistance, thereby affecting high-quality work performance (Arellano, Meuer & Netland, 2021). The next attribute to be discussed is the contingent reward.

Contingent rewards and employee resistance

Tardieu, Daly, Esteban-Lauzan, Hall & Miller (2020) noted that aligning employee expectations with the management's expectations, and providing the rewards expected by followers, improves job satisfaction. However, the inability to realise the expected objectives results in inefficiency and further discourages employees from achieving the expected goals (Kim & Beehr, 2020). Kim & Beehr (2020) further posit that employee resistance can still be triggered if leaders are not committed. The last feature is passive management by exception and its connection with employee resistance.

Passive management by exception and employee resistance

Leadership through passive management is identified by an additional response. Employees may obtain some level of independence and freedom in task operation. This precept concerns leadership interference when issues arise (Franken, Plimmer & Malinen 2020). Furthermore, the fear of defeat would be inculcated in employees' imaginations due to the response of the leader, who only intercedes when their achievements do not meet expectations. This often results in negative consequences. Findings from studies by Bligh, Kohles & Yan (2018) indicate an adverse relationship between employees' resistance and passive management by exception. According to Chou (2015), predictable factors that result in change resistance and resentment are mostly initiated by relational connections between management and organisational members. The outcome is further emphasised if management is perceived by members as not helpful and unavailable when required, particularly in the early periods of problem recognition.

Resistance management

A multidimensional interpretation of change opposition, otherwise referred to as resistance, speculates that undesirable responses to change are conveyed through three distinctive channels: emotional, cognitive and behavioural (Luminel, Nielson & Ridout, 2021; Piderit, 2010). Piderit (2010) suggested that it was possible that employee responses to change can be seen in an ambivalent context where feelings, behaviours, and thoughts about change differ. On the other hand, Luminel et al. (2021) suggested that all studies on behaviour revealed patterns of deficits which were not restricted to emotional contexts. Piderit (2015) added that uncertainty can arise in the cognitive and behavioural spheres, when a worker trusts that change introduced in an organisation is vital but that the intended change is inadequate. In this case, an effort to fight against change can arise. The employee might follow his or her reasoning by displaying resistance through unsigned explanations in the recommendation box. However, open opposition to the change might not be expressed, owing to fear of a manager's reactions.

Based on Piderit (2010) conceptualisation of resistance, Oreg (2003) led a study to explore resistance to change and identified four factors that define an individual's tendency to resist change.

Routine seeking

Routine seeking is an interactive aspect involving an act, or reason for reacting to a change (Bolten, 2020). This element clarifies two significant features of a person's propensity to accept or resist change. Whereas one area of repetitive search centres on a person's desire for inspiration and novelty, the other area stresses an unwillingness to give up old practices (Guttman, Gilboa & Partouche-Sebban, 2021). Routine seeking can lead to discrepancies – such as in a person who chooses greater inspiration over lesser levels of inspiration, and innovation can be realised (Bae, 2018).

Emotional reaction

The second element in Oreg's (2003) precursors to resistance to change is emotional reaction. Oreg specified that emotional reactions are an expressive aspect that reveals the attitudes of workers when faced with change. In agreeing with Oreg, Quinn (2014) described emotional stimulation as a phase where “one moves from thinking, to feeling, experiencing, and expressing feelings about the problem”. In addition, Hawi, Afnibar, Syaifulloh and Mukhlis (2020) stated that emotional reactions manifest in response to a stimulus, caused by an individual not being able to fulfil or please anyone. Such reactions affect an individual's behaviour as long as the stimulus is active. Mental resilience is a character trait that highlights a person's willingness to manage with change. People with more mental resilience are eager to accept, adapt and display enhanced managing abilities in reaction to change (Caughter & Croft, 2018; Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne, 1999). Unwillingness to fail can be regarded as a predictor of an individual's capacity to manage change. People are more optimistic about managerial change when they trust that they are in control of their surroundings (Jakubik & Berazhny, 2017; Lau & Woodman, 1995).

Short-term focus

This implies that a person's focus at work wavers, thereby limiting a worker's capacity to accept innovative ways of working (Rice & Reed, 2021). This element includes an unwillingness to take risks and exhibits narrow-mindedness towards change and change management practices. Substantial change overtly necessitates that workers familiarise themselves with the new practices or procedures, and this can generate an intolerance to adjusting to the changes working (Rice & Reed, 2021). Reasonably, workers typically liken their present abilities with the expectation of meeting their responsibilities. Additionally, employees will compare the results of their previous routine with the possible results of the new arrangement (Ofuo, Anderson & Ntourou, 2018).

Resistance can occur when employees' long-term benefits are at risk, and this highlights the period of deferment prior to a series of premeditated changes (Hedayati, Sadeghi-Firoozabadi, Bagheri, Heidari & Sze, 2021). These scholars point out that a worker's knowledge or ability is an evolving process, which needs certain duration for the production of innovative abilities.

Cognitive rigidity

This is the fourth aspect of resistance to change and refers to a worker's opinions and principles regarding change (Stephen, Byars & Stanberry, 2018). Oreg (2003) stressed how a person's thoughts and principles bring about change, once the individual is able to adjust his or her beliefs and principles in order to accept change. Stephen et al. (2018) pointed out the need for change to be guided by seeking individual interests in alignment with organisational goals. This aspect refers to the ease and occurrence of a person's ability to conform to the expected change in actions and behaviour. Consistencies in psychological personalities can be addressed through concerns such as intellectual complication, dictatorship and rigidity, and sensitivity (Malka, Soto, Inzlicht & Lelkes, 2014). Rigid persons are naturally closed-minded and less likely to embrace innovative conditions – hence their resistance to change (Stephen, Byars & Stanberry, 2018).

The effect of leadership style and communication effectiveness on resistance to change- determination of organizational success

Leadership is usually defined as an influential process that guides the behavior of individuals and groups towards the achievement of goals (Dinibutun, 2020). This study looks into three major leadership styles which are transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. The transformational leadership theory was created by Burns (1978) describing leaders as inspirational guides who help staff achieve higher level of morale and motivation at work. These leaders alter the work place, encouraging collaboration and supporting empowerment. This leadership style consists of the following dimensions; idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation (Ifeanyi & Odumeru, 2019). Next is transactional leadership which refers to the process where there is an evolution between the leader and follower. The leader is not interested in the follower's concerns or needs (Franken, Plimmer & Malinen 2020). They tend to believe that leaders are motivated through reward and punishment.

According to Kuzior and Lobanova (2020) communication satisfaction is believed to be a multidimensional construct because employees express varying degrees of satisfaction. Communication can be defined as how employees share or express their feelings, efforts or report information. The issue of communication plays a significant role in organisations as it affects the key aspects of organizational outcomes. Multiple studies have examined the association between communication and employee productivity or job performance (Goldhaber et al, 2014). Other studies on communication covers communication satisfaction on job commitment and work motivation (Lai and Mahapatra, 2014; Mirbabaie, Stieglitz & Bunker, 2021).). However, there has been limited studies on how leadership and communication effectiveness impacts on a successful change management.

Based on the above mentioned considerations, the following hypotheses were set forth in this paper:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and resistance to change.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between transactional leadership and resistance to change.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between communication and resistance to change.
- H4: There is a significant relationship between both leadership styles and resistance to change.
- H5: There is a significant relationship between communication and both leadership style.
- H6: There is a significant relationship between communication and resistance to change.

Research and Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design with a target population of approximately 1,750 employees from selected automobile dealership organisations in the eThekweni region. This figure resulted from the research formulae applied based on the National Association of dealership automobiles (NADA) reporting 278 dealership organisations in the KwaZulu-Natal province and 35 organisations in the Durban metropolitan region (NADA, 2015:11). The sample size was 300, out of which 170 staff actively participated by completing their questionnaires and returning to the researcher. The unit observation included staff members.

Sampling method

Research sampling techniques are broadly grouped into the probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The probability sampling principles ensures the generalizability of the study and allows the investigator to generalize findings of the sample to the target population. It includes random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling and the clutter random sampling. The non-probability sampling on the other hand, includes the convenience/ purposive sampling, quota sampling and the snow ball sampling (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena & Nigam, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the following sampling designs mentioned below were considered.

Convenience sampling method

According to West (2021) “convenience sampling is normally undertaken using a specified number of fixed area plots allocated either randomly or systematically across a landscape”. Convenience sampling essentially depends upon untestable norms (Klar & Leeper, 2019). This study adopted convenience sampling as a means of data collection as it is a simple and understandable, but it could have biased the study (Sharma, 2017).

Sample size

Sampling is the practice of selecting a few samples from a larger group. A sample is a subsection of the population with which the researcher is concerned (Thelwall, 2021). For this study, six dealership companies presently involved in change management processes in the Durban Metropolitan Region were considered, which gave a sample size of 300 (50 in each of the six selected dealership companies) (Sekeran & Bougie, 2014). The researcher was limited to these companies as they were willing to share information regarding their change management experience. This was the reason and justification for the selection of these six companies, to the exclusion of others.

Research instrument

Receiving information scale (RIS)

Communication effectiveness was measured in this study with the use of receiving information scale. It measured the difference between individual self-reports of information staffs wanted to receive as against the amount of information they actually received (Hu, Park, Day & Barber, 2021). The table below depicts the reliability of the receiving information scale.

Table 1: Reliability of the receiving information scale (RIS)

Receiving information scale (RIS)	Number of items	Cronbach-alpha
Communication effectiveness based on organisational structure (CAOS)	12	0.934
Communication adequacy based on organisational members (CAOM)		0.733
Communication adequacy based on communication channel efficacy		0.862

Based on applying the receiving information scale as an instrument, the above table shows communication effectiveness based on the organizational structure resulted to a Cronbach-alpha of 0.934, while the communication effectiveness based on organizational members resulted to 0.733 and finally, communication effectiveness based on communication channel efficiency resulted in 0.862. It simply means that overall reliability is above 0.7.

The multi- leadership questionnaire (MLQ)

The multi-leadership styles were constrained by the modified form of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (2004). The questionnaire intended to differentiate between two leadership styles. The questionnaire comprised four components relating to transformational leadership and three components relating to transactional leadership. The questionnaire consisted of 31 items. All questions use a five-point Likert measurement scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’; ‘disagree’; ‘neutral’; ‘agree’; to ‘strongly agree’. Respondents were required to tick any one of the selected boxes.

Leadership styles in this study were based on a combination of a person’s opinions, standards, and inclinations, and also the organisational philosophy and customs needed to inspire some leadership styles and discourage others. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was operationalised by Avolio and Bass (2004), describing transactional and transformational styles. There are five general components of transformational leadership: idealised influence (attributed); charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualised consideration. The three general components of transactional leadership are contingent rewards; active management-by-exception; and passive management-by-exception.

Studies of the MLQ factor structure revealed that there were high, positive correlations between the four transformational leadership scales (Hetland, Hetland, Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Malloy & Kavussanu, 2021; Meedeniya, 2021). However, Avolio and Bass (2004) and Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) confirmed that these four factors forming transformational leadership were conceptually and empirically distinct. In addition, active management-by-exception displayed both low optimistic or undesirable relationships with the transformational leadership items and contingent reward (Alrowwad & Abualosh, 2020). Active management-by-exception also showed a positive correlation with passive management-by-exception (Willis, Clarke & O’Connor, 2017).

However, Raziq, Borini, Malik, Ahmad & Shabaz (2018) reported a negative relationship between active management-by-exception and passive management-by-exception. Howell and Avolio further noted that contingent reward was distinct from all factors in transformational leadership and the two factors representing management-by-exception.

Coefficient alpha reliabilities for this scale, reported in the work of Avolio and Bass (2004:18) and Barbuto (2005), were: idealized influence: .75 -.79; idealized influence/behaviour: .70 -.75; individualised consideration: .73- .75; intellectual stimulation: .70 -.71; contingent reward: .71- .77; active management-by-exception: .69 -.77; and passive management-by-exception was .71 -.75. To rate a leader in this study, the re-formed 17-item questionnaire by Avolio and Bass (2004) was considered. The items were also changed from the original 0-4 to 1-5 for consistency in the questionnaire and to facilitate the respondent’s understanding of the questions. The respondents were asked to judge how often their leader displayed each of the behaviours using a five-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Applying the Multi-Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) instrument in the pilot test, the study revealed the following, as summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Reliability of the multi-leadership questionnaire (MLQ)

Multi-leadership (MLQ)	Questionnaire Codes	Cronbach-alpha
B1 (Transformational leadership style)	B1: TLS 1 (IF) Idealised influence (IF) Inspirational motivation (IM) Intellectual stimulation (IS) Individualised consideration (IC)	0.966
B2 (Transactional leadership style)	B2: TLS 5 (CR) Active management by exception (AME) Passive management by exception (PME)	0.775

This implies that the Cronbach-alpha for both leadership styles is above 0.7. The transformational leadership style reveals a reliability of 0.966, while the transactional leadership style is 0.775.

Analysis and Findings

Association between leadership styles and resistance to change using correlation analysis

The examination of the correlation analysis was considered which exhibits the association between the variables in Hypothesis 1, 2 & 2a as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and resistance to change.

H2a: There is a significant relationship between active management by exception and resistance to change.

H2b: There is a significant relationship between passive management by exception and resistance to change.

The hypotheses sought to examine whether there exists an association between transformational and transactional leadership styles (independent variables) and if this has a significant relationship with resistance to change (dependent variable) as presented in the matrix table below.

Table 3: Correlations showing the association between resistance to change and change leadership style management

Resistance to change	to	Leadership style management		
		Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership Active management	Transactional leadership Passive management
Cognitive rigidity	Pearson Correlation	-.002	-.037	.313**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.984	.635	.000
	N	170	170	170
Routine seeking	Pearson Correlation	-.053	-.093	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.495	.226	.000
	N	170	170	170
Short term focus	Pearson Correlation	.037	.047	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.630	.539	.000
	N	170	170	170

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

There is a significant relationship between the leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and resistance to change. As shown in Table 4 above, the Pearson correlation values reveal that a passive management leadership style correlates positively with routine seeking ($r=0.316$; $p<0.001$), cognitive rigidity ($r=0.313$, $p<0.001$), and short-term focus ($r=0.323$; $p<0.001$). However, the association was found to be weak. No association was found for routine seeking and communication adequacy, based on the organisational system ($P>0.05$). No association was measured between transformational and transactional leadership style and the resistance to change constructs (routine seeking, cognitive rigidity, and short-term focus).

Association between communication and resistance to change using correlation analysis (hypotheses 3a & 3b).

The examination of the correlation analysis was considered which exhibits the association between the variables in Hypothesis 3a & 3b as follows:

H3a: There is a significant relationship between communication based on structure and resistance to change.

H3b: There is a significant relationship between communication based on channel efficiency and resistance to change.

The hypotheses sought to examine whether there exists an association between communication adequacy (independent variables) and resistance to change (dependent variable) as presented in the matrix table below.

Table 4: Association between communication adequacy and resistance to change

Resistance to change		Communication adequacy	
		Structure of the organisation system	Channel efficiency
Cognitive rigidity	Pearson Correlation	.176*	.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.0
	N	170	89
Routine seeking	Pearson Correlation	.123	.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	.204
	N	170	170
Short-term focus	Pearson Correlation	.192*	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.056
	N	170	170

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

From the results shown in Table 5, the Pearson correlation reveals that communication adequacy based on the structure of the organisational system correlates weakly with both cognitive rigidity ($r=0.176$, $P=0.021$) and short-term focus ($r=0.192$, $P=0.012$). No association was found between routine seeking and communication adequacy, based on the structure of the organisation ($P>0.05$). There was no correlation between channel efficiency and the resistance to change constructs (routine seeking, cognitive rigidity, and short-term focus) ($P>0.05$).

Association between both leadership styles and employee resistance to change using the structural equation model –SEM (hypothesis 4)

H4: There is a significant relationship between both leadership styles and resistance to change.

This hypothesis was analysed using the structural equation model (SEM). The SEM was computed using Amos (IBM software) to identify the causal relationship between both leadership styles constructs (transformational and transactional) and resistance to change (routine seeking, cognitive rigidity and short term focus).

There are sets of criteria used to determine the model fit in SEM. The generated Chi-square value χ^2 , divided by df, and expressed as CMIN/DF, must be less than 5 (Atiku, 2014). The comparative fit index (CFI) is another determining value, which is a form of incremental fit index that measures the fit of the model. As a rule of thumb, the CFI value is recommended to be greater than 0.9 for the model to be considered a good fit (Kline, 2011). Another important measure of model fit is the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). For the RMSEA, a value that is less than 0.08 is recommended, which suggests an approximate fit (Hooper, 2008:54).

As illustrated in Figure 7.8, the observed model fit indices are: Chi-Square = 1674.568; df = 941; $p < .001$; CMIN/DF = 1.780; CFI = .0892; RMSEA = .068; TLI=0.893; and IFI=0.881, which suggest that the SEM has adequate model fit.

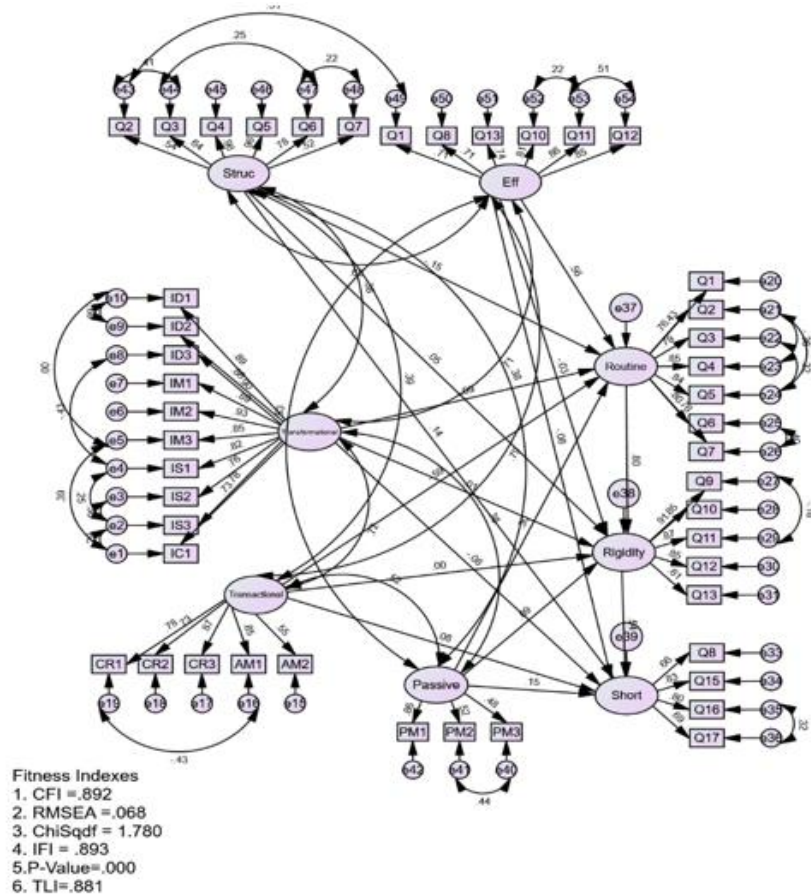


Figure 2: SEM model

It was found that the relationship between routine seeking and transactional leadership style (active management) was significant (P=0.006). A similar significant relationship was observed between routine seeking and communication based on effectiveness (P=0.033).

Association between both leadership styles, communication adequacy and employee resistance to change (hypotheses 4, 5 & 6) using regression analysis.

H4: There is a significant relationship between both leadership styles and resistance to change.

H5: There is a significant relationship between communication adequacy and both leadership style.

H6: There is a significant relationship between communication adequacy and resistance to change.

The hypotheses sought to examine whether there exists an association between the leadership styles and communication adequacy (independent variables) as against resistance to change (dependent variable). This is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 5: Regression analysis on the relationship existing between the constructs

Predictor	F-value	P-value	R	Beta Coefficients	Error	R Square	Predicted	Significance
Communication adequacy	118.071	0.000	0.642	0.642	.049	0.413	Change leadership	.000
	5.647	0.019	0.180	0.180	0.083	0.033	Resistance to change	0.019
Change leadership	4.961	0.027	0.169	0.169	0.101			0.027

Table 5 indicates that there was a strong causal relationship (0.642) between communication adequacy and both leadership styles and the relationship is significant (p<0.001). There was also a significant relationship between communication adequacy and resistance to change, albeit, a weak causal relationship (0.180). In terms of the relationship between both leadership styles and

resistance to change, the regression analysis indicates that there was a significant relationship ($P=0.027$). The beta coefficient (0.169), however, suggests the relationship was weak.

Conclusions

The study concluded a positive and significant relationship between leadership styles and communication. The study also noted that transformational leadership had an inverse relationship resistance to change which depicts that the more effective the leadership style was, the less resistance to change was experienced in the organization. The study concluded that the organization needs to embrace transformational leadership style. A transformational leader focuses on transforming others to help each other, look out for each other, be encouraging and harmonious, and look out for the organization. In this leadership, the leader enhances his follower's motivation, morale and communication effectiveness.

The study also concluded that communication was positively and significantly related to leadership styles and that improved communication caused less resistance to change. It was further concluded that integrated communications includes applying multiple communication strategies as communication is important in every organization for minimizing misunderstanding and conflicts. Effective communication between the management and junior staff enhances efficiency and the most effective communication strategy is when the information reaches the intended recipient in time and targets the right audience or people. The study concluded that effective communication strategies ensure everyone in the organisation has adequate information regarding any change introduced and means to manage change successfully, thereby curbing resistance to change.

The study recommended the best leadership style need to be adopted within the organisations. The most impressive leadership style is transformational leadership style and thus these organisations need to embrace enhancing transformational leadership which accommodates employee involvement in decision making as well improves their morales. The study also recommends the use of multiple channels of communication which involves channel of efficiency, role of organizational members in communication and the structure in which communication is dispersed. These communication channels need to be reachable to majority of employees and should flow in all directions in the organization so as ensure clarity and minimize conflicts or misunderstanding. This will further assist in curbing employee's resistance to change, instead improve on the successful management of effective change in the organisations.

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