

**CHANGE OF THE LEADER IN AN ORGANISATION AND ITS
IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

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Current research highlights change of the leader as the new normal as organisations respond to austerity measures forced by changes in the global economy, shifting markets, mergers and acquisitions and rapid technological advancement. The Caribbean is not immune from these dynamics as many companies are foreign owned and led and as such, experience similar predicaments. Yet, there is a lack of understanding on how these changes affect employee engagement and more so, how employees should respond to them. Furthermore, there is a dearth of literature in academia that can fully respond to this new phenomenon of leadership change that is occurring at a rapid pace. Thus, the purpose of this study is to augment the lack of literature on the relationship between change of the leader and employee engagement. It highlights a new focus or gap on the employees' responses to leadership change. The study pays specific attention to leadership change at the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) level.

An initial pilot study using a qualitative questionnaire provided direction for the development of the mixed method approach used in this

research. Two instruments were developed from the responses in the pilot that guided the implementation of a scale and a focus group aimed at understanding the experiences of leadership change and its impact on employee engagement. A sample of 51 participants were selected from two financial institutions in Barbados. Employee engagement was used as the indicator of a successful leadership change and the conceptual framework demonstrates the co-dependency of human resource driven factors to mitigate the impact of organisational change on employees.

The findings revealed that unmanaged changes can wreak havoc in the organisation and employee engagement can be drastically affected by this occurrence. The type of effect however, is largely dependent on how this change is implemented and managed. Engagement may also be affected by the complexity, potential disruption and fallout experienced by employees. Though in some instances change of the leader may be as a result of attrition and can therefore be planned and well managed, all types of leadership change whether planned or unplanned must be adequately managed. The findings have shown that while change is inevitable, it can be managed by a well thought out communication strategy, bolstered by a trusting environment where there is a culture of transparency and truthfulness. Further, the Human Resources professional as a change agent can be used to help manage this process. Along with other recommendations, this study provides a toolkit to guide organisations through a successful change of the leader at the CEO level.

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This doctoral thesis has been a labour of perseverance and self-discovery born out of my belief in the human capacity to be compassionate, empathetic and respectful to each other regardless of our differences, qualities which make us special, unique and one of a kind, to be treasured and valued.

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KEY TERMS

There are several recurring terms that will appear in this study and these are:

c-Suite

This refers to the Senior Management level of the organisation (CEO, CFO, CIO, etc).

Change of Leader

In this study change of leader is defined as turnover at the most senior level of the organisation, that is the Chief Executive Officer

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is described as one's passion and commitment to the job which contributes to the level of morale and productivity.

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer also referred to as the CEO, is the highest position held in an organisation

Unplanned Change

Unplanned change is any sudden and/or abrupt occurrence of change to a situation.

Organisational Change

Organisational change is any change made in an organisation's process, policy system or people.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher who lived around 500 BC, was one of the first persons to discuss change stating that “change is the only constant in life”. This notion has been supported by various authors and scholars who, over the years, have shared similar sentiments on the occurrence of change (Nasim & Sushil, 2011). In the more modern context, The Business Dictionary (2019), defines change as “the process of causing a function, practice or thing to become different, somehow compared to what it is at present or what it was in the past” (p. 1). In its most simplistic form, change can also be a response to either a significant threat or opportunity (Herweijer, Ranger, & Ward, 2009). Since people are the drivers of human existence, anywhere that people are, the change will occur and there will be an impact whether negative or positive (Cardador, 2014). Therefore, since change can affect individuals on a micro level, it is also extended to communities and organisations on a macro level. Evidence exists showing that where change occurs at the *c-Suite* level of an organisation, there may be an impact on employee engagement as stated by Bersin, lead researcher for the 2017 Deloitte Report (Bersin, Walsh & Volini, 2017).

It was noted by (Odor, 2018) that it is necessary to understand what the causes of change are, given that depending on an organisation’s current situation

and future goals, the company will react to external and internal stimuli in a unique way (Delich, 2015). Further, organisational change can have many connotations and can range from process improvement, strategies and processes to people changes. Nonetheless, while all change will have some impact and may face resistance, one of the most complex changes the organisation may face, is that of a change of its leader. The leader, and in this context, reference is specifically made to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), drives the strategy and direction for the entire organisation and is the principal change agent. Any sudden departure of the leader may create uncertainty and disruption, particularly if he was well-liked or accepted, or conversely, may evoke feelings of relief and euphoria if he was not (Lo, Ramaya, & Run, 2010).

A critical component of being a facilitator of change, is that one must be aware of what is occurring externally and internally to the organisation that could have an impact, given that the impact could be good, (for example giving the organisation an edge on the competition) or bad, thus impacting the profitability of the organisation (Shafique, Ahmad, Abbas, & Hussain, 2015).

Hilb and Dubs (2004), posit that organisational change will continue to be a factor in response to shareholders wanting to claim more value for their investments as they seek to find more cost-effective ways in attracting and retaining talent. The new business model for organisations, coupled with technological advancements, will see “a flatter, less bureaucratic, less

hierarchical, faster, and a more efficient organisation emerging as the model for the future” in response to all of these changes (Hilb & Dubs, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, there is no novelty in the concept of organisational change as noted and these changes will be with us indefinitely as technology increases and improves and consumers demand change and value for their money. Conversely, we are also seeing an increase in organisational change not only from the systems and procedures perspective, but more critically, at the apex of the organisation, the Chief Executive Officer is also being changed for varying reasons.

Change of the leader can occur either through a natural progression such as retirement, which is anticipated or planned for or through a more traumatic process such as the urgent separation or part of the succession strategy of the organisation (Abbas & Asghar, 2010). This was not the norm in prior years as CEOs in previous generations remained in their positions up until or even after the age of retirement. Moreover, when it was time to leave the company due to retirement, it was sometimes expected that they would remain either because they were the original owners or related to the owners of the business. Additionally, these persons may have institutional knowledge which was not written anywhere but was inside of their heads, or they felt that they were not ready to exit the workforce as they had difficulty dealing with succession and retirement. For instance, Weinberger (2019), when discussing this trend noted

that in the 70s and 80s era, CEOs' responsibilities were limited, and once successfully executed and the business was maintaining a healthy profitability, they were allowed to extend their tenure in the organisation. Whatever the reason, it was not unusual to have the CEO remain with the organisation past the expected retirement age.

Today's CEOs however are tasked with a more dynamic environment especially in the face of global changes. They have to find ways to increase shareholder value; engage in several socio-political events that can impact business traffic; provide solutions to company challenges; ensure that all actions are conducive to the corporate governance and ethics, while being very careful of their actions that can be easily scrutinised by the public, shareholders, investors and the Board of Directors. However, just as they are critical to the organisation, they are also becoming more disposable, especially in response to socio-political issues.

A clear example of the harsh scrutiny which CEOs now must operate under is clearly that of the late Roger Ailes, who was the former chairman and CEO of Fox News Network and the Fox Television Stations. He began his career at Fox News in 1996 as the CEO and rose to become the chairman in 2005 until allegations of sexual impropriety forced him into a sudden departure from the news station in July 2016.

Another glaring example is John Schnatter who founded the popular multi-billion-dollar enterprise PAPA John's Pizza in 1984. He was ousted from his own company in 2018 for using a racial slur on a telephone call between company executives and a marketing agency. Likewise, Leslie Moonves, another successful media executive who served as chairman and CEO of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) News Network from 2003, was forced to resign in September of 2018 following numerous allegations of sexual harassment and abuse. One of the largest CEO turnovers in the last few years is that of Chief of Staff in the White House, under the Presidency of Donald Trump. This post has been changed four times in the past three years of Mr. Trump's presidency, an unprecedented event, not only because of the rapid turnover but because these dismissals were allegedly not based on poor job performance or inappropriate behaviours but based on a broken relationship with the President.

These are some of the more recent examples of the pace at which CEO turnover is occurring worldwide. To further support this view, Surowieckli (2016), wrote an article in The New Yorker on "Why C.E.O.s are Getting Fired More". He states in this article that "we are in the era of what Marcel Kahan, a law professor at N.Y.U., calls 'the embattled CEO', where big shareholders and boards of directors have more power and are more willing to use it and CEOs have been the net losers" (p. 1). This is evident as the foregoing examples showed that CEOs, even if they were the founders or owners of their

organisations, were not precluded from dismissals. Therefore, though the history of organisational change varies, recently we have significantly observed more movement at the CEO level, usually inferring that the particular organisation will go through or has been through a paradigm shift in the way it operates.

Much like the developed nations, the Caribbean region also experiences organisational challenges that come in the form of global competition, trade liberalisation and deregulation, resulting in tremendous pressure being applied on employment relations (Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 2018). As such, companies are now being forced to rethink and reshape their business model in an effort to address these and a myriad of other challenges. Governments and the private sector constantly use varying organisational change strategies and have been doing so for many years (Jalagat, 2016).

The Caribbean islands being home to many offshore companies are not spared from these widespread changes. From my personal perspective, in Barbados, the island where I reside, several companies have experienced change at the CEO level along a continuum in both the public and private sectors, in small and large proportions, and even as recently as this year 2019, as a result of economic downturn. Though rare, Barbados is not isolated from dismissals due to socio-political or criminal issues as recently, one CEO of a financial institution was dismissed for financial impropriety. However, the change of the CEO locally is mainly linked to the performance of the company due to

economic constraints or the change in the company's operating business model, as opposed to socio-political dilemmas.

As a result of the international economic challenges that have trickled down into the Caribbean community, many islands have resorted to international debt restructuring in order to qualify for financial aid. This requires the country to adhere to the rules set by these international agencies in order to reduce debt. Some of these mandates will force many businesses to look at their operating model, often forcing a change in the leader. While the change at the CEO level has quickly become a norm more than a rarity, there is little known on how this growing phenomenon impacts the worker.

The possible linkage was brought forcibly to me in my role as a Human Resource Practitioner for many years and a Change Strategist in more recent times. More often my remit was to improve productivity and to investigate how the organisation can improve its image and consequently its bottom line. This required in depth discussions with staff at all levels of the organisation as part of my root cause analysis; for example, why was the organisation not profitable or efficient? In seeking to understand employees' resistance to organisational change such as policies and procedures, change in team dynamics, introduction of new equipment or processes, there was a distinct and different response than when there was a change of the CEO. This piqued my interest even further when the reason given as to why an employee had died quite unexpectedly was that

the constant change of the CEO (which was every three years), and the imposition of new strategies and direction created much stress ‘and this led to his sudden demise’. In this organisation there were also employees with no signs of previous medical challenges, who attributed their illness to the stress and pressure caused by the expectations of the new leader, thus changing from being productive to almost lackadaisical in their response to their job.

In conducting exit interviews, this factor also scored higher than most any other change factors. It appeared that there was something special and different about this occurrence and though it seemed insignificant at first, the repetitive submissions led me to conduct some informal research by way of my human resource network and friends who had experienced change of the CEO in their respective organisations. The opinions shared were far reaching and enough for me to conclude that this was an area that needed further exploration.

Significance of the study

This research thesis is important as it seeks to not only add to the variety of research on organisational change but focuses on change at the CEO level and its impact on employee engagement. As employee dissatisfaction grows as evidenced by high absenteeism, low productivity, walk outs, union strikes and other negative activity, the analysis of the reasons does not seem to clearly link the change of the CEO to the reason why these issues do occur. This maybe the

reason why there is a scarcity of literature on this topic. But what is employee engagement?

Three definitions of employee engagement have been identified as useful in understanding this dynamic.

- ❖ Firstly, Khan (1990) defines employee engagement “as the harnessing of organisation members' to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694).
- ❖ On the other hand, literature written by Schaufeli (2013), defines employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour is the exhibition of high levels of energy into the job (Kataria, Garg, & Rastogi, 2013); dedication is the extent to which an employee is willing to invest his or her time, energy and effort into his or her job and the sense of meaning, pride, or challenge derived from the job (Cahill, McNamara, Pitt-Catsoupes, & Valcour, 2015); while absorption, refers to the difficulties experienced in disengaging from work (Jeve, Oppenheimer, & Konje, 2015).
- ❖ Thirdly, much like Schaufeli (2013), Rothbard and Patil (2011) provide the definition of engagement as a psychological presence that involves two critical components, attention and absorption. They further define attention as cognitive ability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role

while absorption means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus.

These definitions therefore prove the importance of employee engagement in the organisation and why it can be impacted by change at the CEO level because, while that change can be considered disruptive, engaged employees can help mitigate from the organisation going into hysteria (Tavakoli, 2014). Yet, empirical studies concerning the effect of change in leadership on employee engagement are limited. Thus, the aim of this study is to understand leadership change at the CEO level and its impact on employee engagement, while exploring ways that we can mitigate any negative effects or fallout.

Additionally, this study constitutes the first effort to explore the relationship between change of the leader and employee engagement in Barbados. Further, it is important to stakeholders and Human Resource (HR) practitioners who need to understand the effects of this form of organisational change, given its continued use as a transformation strategy. Organisations depend on their human resources to perform particular tasks or functions. Therefore, it is inherently natural to expect that employees undertake these tasks to the best of their ability and to be fully engaged in adhering to any work-related standard (Berger, 2018).

As such, this study will broaden our theoretical understanding of how the change in leader can affect the level of engagement of employees. The findings

could potentially provide stakeholders and HR professionals with guidelines on managing leadership change whenever initial deliberations of organisational change commence. Consequently, HR policies and practices could be better directed to achieve more favourable organisational behaviours.

In summary therefore, I have identified the main aim of my study and have set out four objectives as to how I intend to fulfill my overall aim and lend to the body of knowledge on organisational change at the CEO level, and how the management of this phenomena can help or hinder employee engagement.

Aims and objectives of this research

The aim of this research therefore is to investigate leadership change within organisations specifically at the CEO level and to determine if this significantly impacts employee engagement. There are four key objectives emanating from the aim of the study:

- 1) To critically analyse literature on leadership change in organisations and its impact on employee engagement
- 2) To investigate the perception of the employees on the change of the leader in the organisation and how this change impacts their level of engagement
- 3) To identify the employees' perceptions on what would be the appropriate organisational strategy for maintaining their engagement

- 4) To develop a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing and maintaining engagement of employees during the change of the leader.

The Approach

This study employed a Mixed Method approach to explore the relationship between change at the CEO level on employee engagement. First, a scale was used to measure engagement along with six open-ended questions on the questionnaire (See Appendix A), followed by an interview schedule consisting of six open-ended questions to be further explored by the focus group. These six questions from the interview schedule were informed by the questionnaire as the final set of questions to understand the change of the leader and its impact on employee engagement. These questions were:

1. Is there a relationship between unplanned changes of leadership and the engagement of employees?
2. Is there a difference in employees' engagement based on their position?
3. What are the effects of change of the leader on morale and productivity?
4. What are the effects of change on organisational culture?
5. What is the greatest challenge of the change of the leader?
6. How is change of leader was managed?

Research Context

The Caribbean is not immune to the global changes described above and has experienced significant fallout particularly in sectors where there is a heavy

reliance on foreign investment and foreign trade, such as tourism and offshore financial services. The small size of the English-speaking Caribbean, with a population of less than 0.56%¹ of the world's total population, possess limited natural resources. Therefore, there is a heavy reliance on the importation of raw materials and food since what is made or grown locally can only satisfy a small portion of the local and regional market requirements (Latin American Economic Outlook, 2019)

Consequently, there is a significant dependence on Europe, North America and to some extent China, for goods and services which cannot be produced in local and regional markets. In addition, the reliance on the tropical climate of year-round sunshine and the beautiful Caribbean Sea to bolster tourism numbers in the region, have, over the years, been battered by events in other markets such as the terrorist attack on New York on September 11, 2001. This had a negative impact on travel to the Caribbean during that time.

Further, the intense competition from other tourism markets which offer similar attractions have also reduced the visitor numbers to this Caribbean destination (Lutz & Lutz, 2018). Most recently, climate change has been added to the list of barriers or challenges to the tourism product since it has compromised beaches with an over-abundance of Sargassum Seaweed, making

¹ This is based on data provided by Worldometer at the time of writing. Retrieved from <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/caribbean-population/>

bathing in the crystal-clear waters of the Caribbean Sea almost impossible, and thus posing a major threat to tourism, the main foreign exchange earner (Klak, 2007).

From as early as the 1900s, the Caribbean has benefitted from the establishment of foreign companies, particularly in the financial services sector. In fact, most of the commercial banks in the Caribbean were and still are foreign-owned. It is only within the last decade since the financial crisis in the United States that these institutions have sought to divest their interest in the Caribbean due to the dearth of opportunities for further expansion and a change in their business model to explore new world markets (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, 2018).

International commercial banks such as Barclays Bank of England, Bank of Nova Scotia and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce of Canada, established branches in the Caribbean from as early as the 1920s. At the start-up of these operations, the staff were sent from the head office to manage these entities which have grown to employ approximately ten thousand people across the Caribbean (Hilman & D'Agostino, 2003). Over time, as the businesses have expanded, more local staff were recruited and trained by expatriates in the various disciplines of banking. However, the business model has always been to retain the Head of the institution from the corporate office, either in Europe or North America (Hilman & D'Agostino, 2003). This practice has not changed

over the years and almost one hundred years later, the CEO of any foreign-owned bank in the Caribbean is still an expatriate (Hilman & D'Agostino, 2003). Further, this practice is also found in the tourism sector, particularly in hotels, which are mainly foreign-owned; in the telecommunications sector where there is major foreign investment headquartered outside of the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2015).

The University of the West Indies, formerly the University College of the West Indies before its name changed in 1962, was first established in Jamaica in 1948 and subsequently in Trinidad in 1960 and Barbados in 1962. It was birthed from an idea created by the Vice-Chancellors of a number of universities out of the United Kingdom who felt that consideration should be given to promote higher education, learning, and research in the British colonies. This internationally recognized institution has afforded ordinary Caribbean nationals opportunities to study the disciplines of management and leadership. With these accomplishments, they have been able to challenge the notion of the inadequacy of local talent to fill leadership roles in transnational organisations operating throughout the Caribbean region (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993).

The Caribbean's history of colonialism and plantation slavery has shaped the dynamics of employer and employee relationships; heavily influenced by the riots of the 1930s and the emergence of trade unionism and its advocacy on behalf of the workers (Goolsarran, 2006). Prior to independence in the 1960s,

Caribbean countries were colonised by the British. The main industry then was sugar, augmented by bananas, cocoa, and coconuts. The colonies were dependent on the exportation of agricultural produce to Britain, which was considered the mother country, and during this era, employees had absolutely no rights or control within the sugar economy (Lewis, 1968).

Post-World War 1, the price paid for produce was impacted when there was a reduction in demand, though Britain attempted to subsidize sugar which was an expensive venture and quickly became unprofitable (Lewis, 1968). There was also a movement of people from the Caribbean to Britain in search of new opportunities and a better way of life. This movement was caused by the shortage of job opportunities for those seeking to find a better life for themselves and their families (Lewis, 1968). In addition, there were many grievances against the plantation owners as workers were given little for their labour, giving rise to desperately low wages which did not allow workers to progress under this particular system (Lewis, 1968). The plantation owner exemplified Lewin's 1947 theory of the autocratic leader, all-powerful, leaving workers in an exploitative position.

The remnants of slavery remained even after emancipation in the 1800s and manifested itself through the inequality of wealth, where the white plantocracy was able to exert their power on the natives who were kept poorly educated and therefore powerless (Lewin, 1947). This led to the riots of the

1930s across the region, where there were uprisings against the oppression of the masses. This gave impetus to the strengthening and growth of the trade union movement, whose main goal was to agitate for better wages and working conditions for the workers (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993).

The trade union leaders were young men and women who became the pioneers of change across the Caribbean, through their vigorous appeal for better working conditions, higher wages and the empowerment of workers. The riots forced the British Government to pay greater attention to the Caribbean, leading to the passing of the Colonial Development Welfare Act which provided opportunities for those over 21 to vote and also aided in the establishment of a self-governed model (Hart, 2002)

Out of these initiatives, political parties were formed and, along with the trade unions, were able to fight for independence. The Moyne Commission, which was set up by the British to investigate the reasons for the uprisings, supported the political and social reforms that were advocated by the unions, and the other similar organisations that had been formed. The Moyne Commission Report (1945), exposed the poor living conditions in the West Indies. These changes led to a shift in power relations between employer and employee and the gradual movement towards a new leadership model and a new type of leader in the Caribbean.

The endorsement of these reforms provided the base for the institutionalisation of the political organisations. Through these means and the constant agitation for change, the power of the elite class was weakened and a new era of freedom which saw the emergence of black political leaders, was ushered in (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993). This eventually resulted in full independence from Britain in the 1960s.

The struggles in the Caribbean, during this period, though egregious, provided the environment for persons to take advantage of the opportunities particularly in education, as a way to liberate the minds of the masses. Additionally, through independence, some were able to provide education not only to a select few but to all of their constituents. As time progressed, educational opportunities were afforded to those who were formerly oppressed, and this gave rise to tertiary education in the Caribbean. The University of the West Indies emerged as the primary educational institution for programmes, which not only educated locals but further ushered in new concepts of leadership and changed what leadership looked like prior to the Moyne Commission Report in the 1940s.

This historical perspective has informed the present situation on leaders and leadership and on the employee engagement through change (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993). As the dynamics of the plantocracy system changed and gave way to a more equitable distribution of power, wealth and autonomy, the

emergence of leaders in corporate establishments, primarily in family-owned businesses was realized (Lewis, 1968). This allowed for more engagement as there was more local control of the economic wealth. The emergence of locally owned businesses also provided the forum for workers to have a voice and to influence how the businesses functioned (Lewis, 1968).

It can be argued that there is still a heavy dependence on foreign businesses to invest in the region and as a result, leadership of these large enterprises still remain predominantly foreign (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993). Though necessary in the time of open markets, this can be viewed as one of the risks of competing in the international markets; new trade partners and movement of skills. The offshore industry has also practiced globalisation as international companies seek to diversify risks and to reduce the cost of doing business in their home country. This has benefitted the region significantly, as countries have become prime beneficiaries of this practice, which creates jobs for locals as well as investment opportunities in the local infrastructure (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993).

Notwithstanding their location in the Caribbean, the offices of offshore companies are still headed by an expatriate who may be rotated over the tenure of the business. The culture and practices of the head office are still retained, and locals are trained to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled. However, there

is often a direct collision with the two cultures, and this can have severe implications for employee engagement (Beckles & Shepherd, 1993).

Although not currently prevalent in the Caribbean, a study on mergers and acquisitions in Trinidad and Tobago showed that there were 75 such transactions between 1980 and 2009.

In Barbados, the largest merger to date has been that of Barclays Bank PLC and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in 2001, which impacted over 5000 employees (Joseph, 2018).

Unfortunately, this business model always impacts people, as the employer may have to make harsh decisions where there is duplication of roles or the obsolescence of others (Shuler & Jackson, 2001). This and other new business models are a signal that employees are no longer promised “a job for life” and so the degree of commitment as in the past may not be as intense (Vance, 2006). Although this research has an international scope the researcher will have a Caribbean focus and provide the context on how change of leader impacts employee engagement not only at the global level but specifically in the Caribbean region.

How the thesis is Organised

This thesis comprises six chapters together with a number of appendices which are provided as supporting material and outline the process that the researcher took to investigate the aims and objectives of this study. Chapter Two

presents a review of the literature. It focuses on three key themes of this study specifically change, the leader and employee engagement and their connectedness that helps shape the underpinning for the research. The third chapter will discuss the research methods and methodology which outlines the researcher's philosophical stance and provides clarity on the views and opinions outlined in this research thesis. The results and findings as well as an analysis of the data gathered during this research are discussed in Chapter Four. The fifth chapter further expands on the findings and considerations from the data. It provides the justification for the contribution to research as determined by the researcher. Finally, Chapter Six provides a summary of the research process, outcomes, limitations, implications and recommendations for future research and policy development.

Profile of the Researcher

I have been a Human Resources Practitioner for most of my working life, some 35+ years, being a generalist involved in all aspects of the industry. I have also been responsible for change management within the organisations where I have been employed and have participated in many strategic planning and change management programmes and workshops. This research was therefore important to me as this is an area not thoroughly explored in the past. It has revealed that there was no real body of work available. In my experience, there is empirical evidence of the correlation between change of the leader and

employee engagement. Further, where organisations have not considered this in their attempts at transformation, there have been resultant failures.

As we move to Chapter Two, the emphasis will be on solidifying the concept of organisational change, reviewing the relevance or importance of the CEO and examining whether employee engagement is critical to an organisation's success.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Many theories have been espoused about organisational change, leaders of organisations, employee engagement and the relevance and importance of these factors combined, to the success of any organisation (Coine & Babbitt, 2014). These linkages cannot be ignored as the general adages "people make the world go around" and "change is constant" are just as applicable for any organisation today as they were in the past (Coleman & Thomas, 2017). Not only is change constant but it can be as complex, and it is inevitable (Daft, 2018).

Even the most sophisticated and successful companies are threatened by a turbulent global environment with an ever-evolving change in technological advancements, global economic fallout, and political turmoil. These, coupled with the escalating costs of doing business and the management of diverse skills and culture, force organisations to make critical assessments on their global positioning as the dynamics of the market change (Ewenstein, Smith, & Sologar, 2015).

This literature review seeks to examine past conclusions on the research topic and explores those areas emanating from the aims and objectives of this study, the purpose of which is to investigate the effects of the change of a leader in an Organisation, particularly at the CEO level, and how this can impact on

employee engagement. However, a thorough review of the existing literature on this topic shows that though the phenomenon of change of the leader is real, current research has rarely explored the topic in itself as a terminology.

The following sections will provide a discourse on the three variables of the research topic by first discussing the theoretical perspectives of change to ground the research. In this section, importance is given to change of leadership at the CEO level. To fully understand how a change in leadership at the head of an organisation has a trickledown effect, a brief exploration on managers and supervisors is included in the first section. Section 2 explores theories on leadership, focusing on the Great Man Theory and how leadership is developed. Section 3 focuses on employee engagement and explores the literature as it relates to how a change in leadership at the head impacts the engagement of employees within the organisation. These three variables show not only how they impact each other but collectively, how this phenomenon can contribute to the organisation's success or failure.

Theoretical Perspectives of Organisational Change

Kurt Lewin was considered as the father and the largest contributor to the operationalizing and conceptualizing of organisational development, change management and group dynamics for over 40 years, resulting in the development of the three-step model of change. He proposed that an Organisation experiences

three stages during the process of change, namely unfreezing, absorbing and refreezing (Lewin, 1947). In the unfreezing stage, the individual is forced to confront biases in their current mind set and in the second stage, these biases are then being replaced by new concepts and ways of thinking. However, this second stage proves to be uncomfortable and persons are usually in a state of cognitive dissonance. Nonetheless, in the last stage, the individual begins to accept the new changes and thus return to a level of comfort.

Similar to Lewin's three-step theory is the Bridges Three Stage Transition Model. This theory was created by William Bridges in 1991 and emphasised the transition process more so than the change process. He noted that “change is situational and happens without people, whilst transition is psychological and is a 3-phase process where people gradually accept the details of the new situation and the changes that come with it” (p. 4). Change is seen as an external occurrence that the employee has no control over, whilst transitions are those inner feelings and thoughts about the new changes. Employees going through leadership changes may experience feelings of denial, shock, anger, frustration, stress and ambivalence. The transition process is slow and takes time for employees to accept the new changes but when they begin to accept them, they experience more positive feelings (Bridges, 1991).

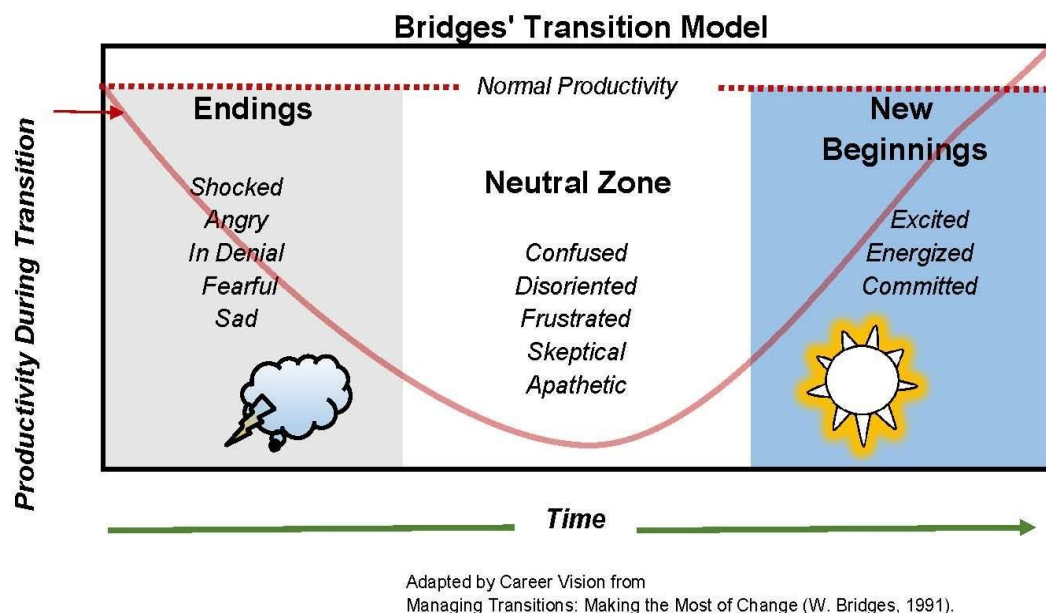


Figure 1 Bridges Three Stage Transition Model

The diagram demonstrates Bridges Transition Model which shows that when the change occurs the employee may experience discomforting feelings and productivity can decline, as illustrated in the dip. This can continue until the employee is in a stage of trying to understand the change and then acceptance of the change. During the neutral phase, productivity is at an all-time low as employees acclimatise to the change. As the employee begins to accept the change in the organisation, the level of engagement will improve. However, some authors have refuted Bridges' model, noting that it is over simplistic, narrow, static and is not a true representation of the current organisational dynamics (Child, 2005; Clegg, Kornberger, & Pitsis, 2005; Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992).

Further, it has been posited that “based on a comparison of what Lewin wrote about changing as three steps, with how this is presented in later works, it is argued that he never developed such a model and it took form after his death” (Cummings, Bridgeman, & Brown, 2016, p. 1).

Elizabeth Kubler Ross expressed a similar yet different perspective to that espoused by Bridges, in her Five Stage Model. The theory was initially developed to understand the stages of the acceptance of death and grief. Similar to the diagram used in Bridge’s Model, when faced with the news of the death of a loved one, the feelings experienced are similar in nature. It is suggested that when Kubler Ross’ theory of loss is applied to this research it can mean that during a change of the leader in the organisation, the remaining employees may initially go through a phase of denial and shock that the change has occurred. They can then become angry because of this change and will bargain for the person to stay or ask questions as to why they cannot. Following this, the employee can feel a sense of hopelessness and experience feelings of depression and eventually, over a period of time, may begin to accept the process for what it is.

Other organisational change theories have emerged over the years. According to Van de Ven and Poole (1995), there are four theories that explain organisational change, and these include the life cycle theory, teleology theory, dialectical theory, and evolutionary theory. Firstly, the life-cycle theory postulates that change is innate in any organisation and even though there may

be external factors, change can be controlled and mitigated from within (Kezar, 2011). The teleology theory puts forward a philosophical doctrine which posits that all entities are guided to a purpose or goal, which is the ultimate cause of the movement of the entity. The entity in and of itself is therefore purposeful and adaptive while moving toward its endpoint (Chen, Suen, Lin, & Shieh, 2010). Therefore, as an organisation moves towards its goals it will adapt its strategies to accommodate any changes that may occur.

The dialectical theory assumes that the organisational entity exists in a pluralistic world of colliding events, forcing or contradicting values that compete with each other for domination and control (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Though opposing entities maintain the status quo, it will be confronted when one entity has sufficient power to challenge it (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Thus, organisations must decide when and how to respond to organisational change and must determine their priorities in managing change.

Evolutionary theory suggests that change occurs naturally within an organisation in response to internal environmental factors, external circumstances and situational factors. Therefore, people have a minor impact or little to no control on the nature and direction of the change (Kezar, 2011). These theories help us to understand the various facets of organisational change and to confirm that change is inevitable and sometimes unpredictable (Alkaya & Hepaktan, 2003).

In order for any change to be successfully achieved, a few principles must be adhered to. The ADKAR Model by Hiatt (2003) highlights a few of these principles which include:

Awareness of the need for change,

Desire to participate and support the change,

Knowledge on how to change,

Ability to implement required skills and behaviours

Reinforcement needed to sustain the change.

Kotter (1997) also provides another concept of change management in his eight-step change model, which suggests that for an organisation to successfully implement any change the following steps should be taken:

- i Increase Urgency - establishing a sense of urgency that helps others to see the need for change and they will be convinced of the importance of the change.
- ii Build the Team - creating the guiding coalition which involves coordinating a team which can strongly assist in the change management effort.
- iii Get the Vision - developing a change vision to help direct the change effort and develop strategies for achieving that vision.

- iv Communication - communicating the vision so as to ensure that as many as possible understand the vision and embrace what you are trying to achieve.
- v Get Things Moving - empowering broad-based action which speaks to removing any obstacles to change or anything that would undermine the vision, as well as encouraging risk-taking and non-traditional ideas and activities.
- vi Focus on Short Term Goals - generating short-term wins with plans for achievements that can be seen easily and implementing or executing those achievements and acknowledging those employees who were involved in this process.
- vii Do Not Give Up - never letting up which advises using increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that are out of sync with the vision and to recruit and develop those employees who can implement the vision and reinvigorate the process with new themes, projects and change agents.
- viii Incorporating Change - integrating changes into the culture which suggests that one should articulate connections between new behaviours and Organisational success and should continue to look at ways to ensure leadership development and succession.

Another theory that emerged albeit in 1962, likens organisational change to that of the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), (Rogers, 1983). One of the specifications of his theory is how to effectively create buy-in from employees on any new changes in the organisation. Rogers' theory provided four elements that must be considered when change occurs or is about to occur, so that the change agent can increase awareness and positivity around the new change. These change agents are usually managers, supervisors and human resources practitioners.

Rogers viewed the innovation-decision process as occurring over five phases:

- ✓ Knowledge - in this first stage, individuals who are responsible for implementing the change or managing the change process, should provide information regarding the new change, so that employees will begin to process what is about to occur.
- ✓ Persuasion - the change agent converses with individuals, preferably in small groups or on a one-on-one basis to have an idea of what the employee is thinking and feeling about the change so that, if necessary, their views can be persuaded on the side of the organisation. These changes must be explained and reasons provided as to how the changes will be beneficial not only to the company but also to the employee.

- ✓ Decision - employees begin to rationalize the changes and make decisions on whether they can accept or reject the new change.
- ✓ Implementation - as people begin to rationalize the change efforts, the change agents continue to advertise and share information about the changes and their benefits as a way of continued influence.

I. Change and its impact on the Organisation

Change in any environment can bring with it many challenges and many different feelings. This change, whether self-imposed or externally driven, is a part of the world in which we now live (Senior & Swailes, 2016) and against a backdrop of new and emerging trends, which include technological advances, regulatory policies, socio-cultural challenges and global competition, organisations have been forced to create their own responses. These, sometimes in combination with bad decision making or an unexpected crisis, require that actions be taken to mitigate any fallout from the challenges which may force change. As Shivappa indicated, change can be radical, planned or unplanned, immediate or long-term (2015). However, as posited earlier the life span of businesses is becoming shorter buffeted by a number of factors which are often attributed to managerial failure.

Organisational change means that the company has recognised some weakness or strength that they want to capitalise on and this in turn may require

a change either in their operation or even in their leader to affect the desired change. Successful organisational change, however, is not merely a process adjustment but requires effective skills and capabilities to manage the process and conversely, it is not only having the desire to change but also the ability to effectively manage change.

Organisational change occurs as a reaction to an ever-changing internal and external environment, and an organisation with a willingness to survive must take whatever action is required in order to retain its relevance in a world of intense competition, constant scientific progress, and the need for instant communication (Ilhan, Ahmet & Durmaz,Yakup, 2015). Hence, the ability to manage change has become one of the most significant and critical strategies for organisations.

In order to achieve a successful change within the organisation, there must be a strategic focus and a clear understanding of what skills need to be employed to appropriately respond. Conversely, failure to execute the change strategy successfully and the inability to modify the organisation's management style and behaviours to accommodate these changes can lead to an undesired outcome and negative fallout (Jones, Firth, Hannibal, & Orgunseyin, 2018). In looking at the positive and negative impact of change, it is suggested that the way in which it is managed will make a difference and it will determine the success of the new change/initiative. While change can invoke fear and worry

because of its unpredictability, it can also evoke employee confidence and deeper engagement to the organisation's goals and objectives (Razzetti, 2018).

The foregoing demonstrates that change is occurring rapidly and aggressively and often without warning. In a dynamic environment where results are expected almost immediately, and where there is a lag on positive results, the organisation may be forced to look at ways to mitigate such loss.

II. Leadership Change and its Impact on Organisations

Organisational change may bring about the change of the leader especially if it is a strategic initiative which the organisation is seeking to explore. To fully appreciate how the change of the leader can impact the organisation, the following section will seek to define leadership and its relevance to the organisation. It also seeks to provide some context on the change of the leader and its impact on employee engagement and this is necessary to understand the role of the leader.

While there is no one single definition for leadership, it can be concluded that good leadership is about a leader influencing and using his role to cascade strategy and policy throughout the organisation. Leaders are viewed as individuals whose footprints are everywhere but who are nowhere to be seen (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Since leaders have the ability to influence from the top of the organisation, they can make decisions which will then be implemented

by those who report to them (Voon, Lo, Ngui, & Ayob, 2011). It is important to select a leader not only because of technical ability and characteristics but also based on values and maturity (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011; Bolden, 2010).

Are leaders born or made?

There is an ongoing debate as to whether leaders are born or made (Di Guilio, Galanti & Moro, 2016). The word “leader” first appeared in the English Language in the 1300s and its definition was “to travel or to lead the way” (Sorenson, 2000). There have been numerous studies since then to determine whether leadership was a skill that could be acquired through training or if this was a trait that was present from birth (Bennis, 1959). James MacGregor Burns (1978) is credited with conducting a number of studies in the late 1970s and was so strong in his conviction that leaders were not born, he considered it a myth and dismissed the notion as nonsense (Bennis, 1959).

The Great Man Theory was one of several theories on leadership and promoted the notion that people, men, in particular, were born with certain characteristics which made them natural-born leaders (Northouse, 2015). This theory was ascribed to some of the great leaders of that time including Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King. The theory suggested that these great men were naturally gifted with confidence, charisma, integrity, motivation and

intelligence to name a few, and because of such talents, they have made a great impact on the world.

It is difficult to confidently adopt one theory over the other, but theories have provided a blueprint for identifying those with leadership potential. Our modern-day leaders such as Barack Obama or Warren Buffet, clearly exhibit a number of the qualities identified in the Great Man theory. On the other hand, Trait theory posits that while people may be born with some leadership qualities, with training, they can also augment and complement their natural behaviours (Deure, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011).

The key characteristics of common leadership traits are knowledge of the business, initiative, tenacity, creativity, confidence, energy, flexibility, emotional intelligence, drive and motivation to succeed, honesty and integrity, good cognitive skills and the ability to use good judgement and decision making. While everyone has their own special characteristics that make them unique, there are people with these traits that are not good leaders nor do they possess the desire to be a leader (Van Seters & Field, 1990). There are also those who may not possess some of these traits but yet have been successful at leading people towards a common goal (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

The role of the leader in the organisation

Leaders are often seen as role models to their employees and are revered by them even though there may be limited physical interaction between the two.

Additionally, leaders can have a powerful influence on the organisations' culture through behaviour (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Overtime, almost every college and university or learning institution have included leadership training on their curriculum. There now seems to be a wider acceptance of the theory that leaders can be made once they acquire the requisite skills and possess the ambition to be a leader.

Why change of the leader?

CEO turnover is the movement, whether planned or unplanned of a company's Chief Executive Officer in place of another (Intintoli, Zhang, & Davidson, 2014). As an insight into this phenomena, the change may not always be aggressive as the CEO may be changed due to natural attrition such as retirement, the expiration of a contractual arrangement, or a strategy for organisations to develop and strengthen their leadership talent as part of their succession development strategy (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

A study conducted in 2018, by Price Waterhouse Coopers showed that CEO turnover rates fluctuated throughout the years and at that time, was at 17.5% worldwide. This was the highest turnover rate recorded in the past 18 years. These rates were based on results from 2500 public companies worldwide which shows that the rate of CEO turnover is increasing globally.

An organisation, depending on its size, can have more than one layer of management but inevitably it is the Chief Executive Officer who leads the management team and has overall responsibility for determining the company's direction. As stated earlier, in any environment, change can bring with it many challenges which in turn elicits many different feelings, depending on how far up the organisational chain one sits. This change, whether self-imposed or externally driven, is a part of the world in which we now live, and as these challenges become more intense as a result of trade liberalisation and open markets, companies will be forced to respond if they want to retain their profitability and relevance in the market place (Reeves & Puschel, 2015). In response to this low performance, one of the organisation's strategies may involve changing the leader/CEO. This can be as a result of a myriad of reasons. At the apex of the Organisation the CEO is charged with ensuring that the company is profitable and managed well. When these results are not achieved, the CEO is held accountable for this failure. Therefore, the CEO turnover can be caused by the individual's inability to perform at the level expected by his employers (Jalagat, 2016).

The Importance of the role of the leader/CEO

The leader or CEO is considered the change agent in chief and the one who drives strategy, he is critical to the success of the organisation and therefore disturbance at that level will cause some concern among all employees. The

organisation is normally divided into three layers of hierarchy identified as the organisational structure. The line staff sit at the lower level of the organisational structure. The organisational structure determines not only the operational functions of the business but also the structure of relationships among positions and jobs with the primary aim being that of achieving the company's overall objectives. An organisational structure is designed to clarify the areas of responsibilities and those who are responsible for specific results and removes any confusion and uncertainty as to the lines of authority.

The organisational structure as illustrated in Figure 2 is similar to a pyramid, where the most powerful member of the organisation sits at the top, while those with the least amount of power are at the bottom. In other words, the line or support staff may sit at the bottom of the structure, while the CEO will sit at the top. This demonstrates the importance of the CEOs' role as they are responsible for managing all those below their line of authority whether directly or indirectly.

Saddled between the CEO at the top and the line staff at the bottom are the management and supervisory teams. For the purpose of this study the terms supervisor/manager will be referenced as middle managers. In an article entitled "Manager/Supervisor's role in Change Management", Prosci noted that "managers and supervisors are a lynchpin in the success of a change initiative.

In times of change those who lead the teams impacted by change can be both a great ally and a real obstacle for change leaders”.

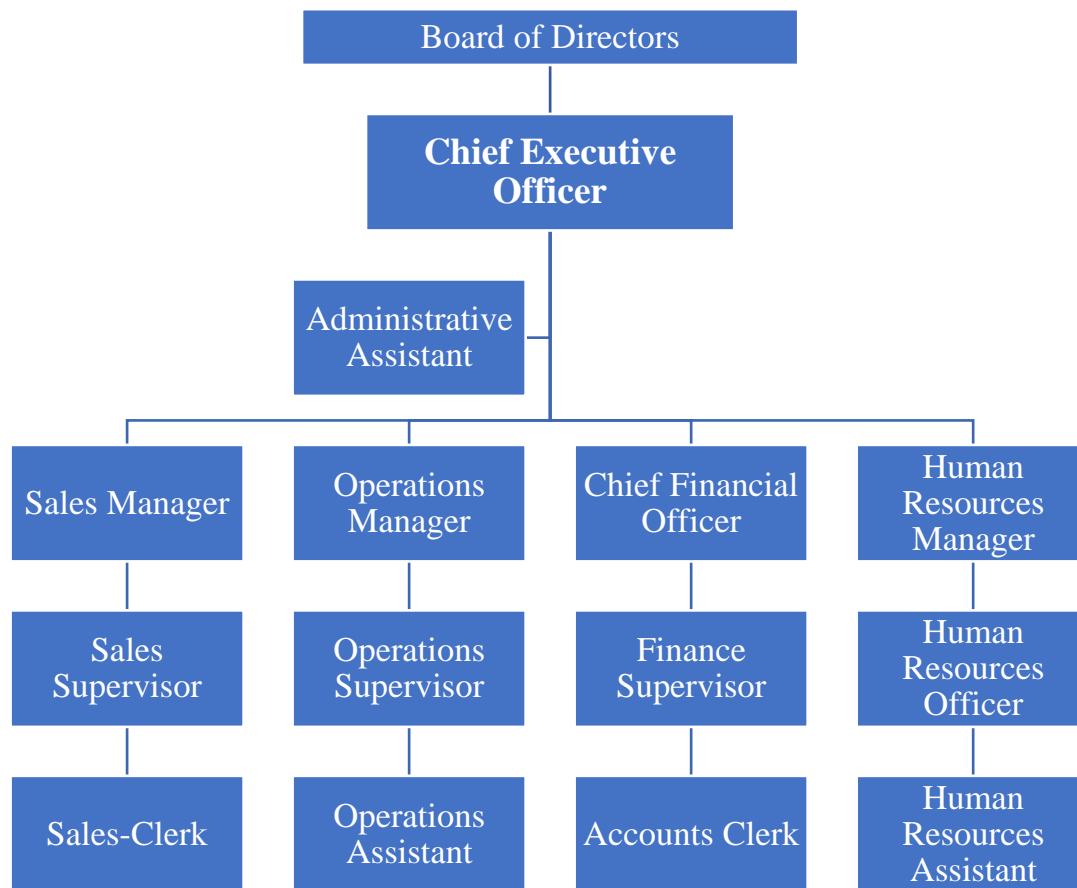


Figure 2: Organisation Chart

In a study conducted and contained in the Best Practices in change Management -2016 edition, participants identified engagement with and support from the middle managers as a top contribution to change management success.

In another similar type of research, 84% of employees ranked their middle managers' involvement in change initiatives as extremely or very important. Middle managers are extremely vital because of the relationship they have with the employees. They are closest to the line staff because of the reporting relationships and they are the communicators and influencers to the staff they supervise. When change occurs within an organisation, employees want to hear about the change and how they will be impacted from their supervisor. This is the person with whom they have the most interaction and who there can openly ask questions of and share their concerns (Harter & Adkins 2015).

However, the middle managers may themselves not be au fait with all of the information about the change and may have questions of their own, which may not be answered. Often, they are left to wonder about what is happening and how this new leader will impact them and their ability to manage. Gray (2012) cited that the major role of the leader was to create a vision for the organisation and play a major role in shaping the organisation's culture. The leader is expected to organise and plan, and this is particularly important when there is any change that must be implemented across the organisation (Senior & Fleming, 2006).

It is not unusual for leaders to drive the change process as they are considered the change agents with the responsibility of taking the initiative for bringing change to the organisation (Senior & Fleming, 2006). They are usually

the first to be aware of any shift in the organisation's dynamics and can, therefore, be proactive in addressing the issue or putting measures in place to mitigate against any potential fallout (Deal & Kennedy, 2000). The leader should fully understand if this change may cause any disruption or fallout and plan how to implement the change, while mitigating any potential negative issues that can arise from the change (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Thus, the ability to manage change must be at the forefront of any leader's job description as this is the reality in today's world. Organisations must respond to rapid changes that occur almost on a daily basis such as intense competition from local and international markets, open markets and customers' demand for better service. Therefore, to be effective in navigating this very rough terrain, the leader must be focused on developing strategies to respond to these eventualities and must make timely adjustments to ensure that the organisation remains a viable and successful enterprise (Bossidy, Charan, & Burck, 2002). Failure to respond or to fully understand what is needed both at the operational and at the strategic level will have a negative impact on the organisation (Bossidy et al., 2002). Leadership, therefore, is about a leader's demonstrated action of taking ownership for creating the strategy for the organisation and the overall responsibility for the performance of the organisation and its employees.

Employees will follow leaders who they perceive as having focus, control, and direction and are inspirational and sensitive to the importance of

their needs (Reis & Gable, 2010). However, according to Bator (2014), when there is change at the CEO level, employees can become very disenchanted. The change may be that the leader who is in the current position is trying to manage some changes within the company, and during this process may have to leave the organisation quickly, sometimes before the initiatives and strategies that they would have spearheaded have been completed (Arpino, n.d). The impact of this change can be staggering and the pace at which it takes place can leave employees feeling uncertain and in a state of flux and even frustrated as to the turn of events (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Unplanned change destabilises everyone in the organisation and employees will seek to understand what is happening, and more so, how this will impact them personally and professionally (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). This can lead to nonchalance and restlessness particularly if answers are not forthcoming.

III Employee Engagement

Employees around the world have experienced organisational change over the last few years in response to increasingly complex and interrelated economic, regulatory, business and demographic trends. In a study conducted by Hilb and Dubs (2014), it was found that engagement is influenced by organisational change, strategy transformation and restructuring and it was further noted that -

The proportion of highly engaged employees does not change from the baseline due either to strategy transformation or restructuring. This may indicate that the most engaged employees remain resilient during these types of change. However, the percentage of actively disengaged employees increases substantially during these times. By contrast, more employees appear to become highly engaged when their company makes an acquisition that has no impact on their job—perhaps they see an opportunity to expand their sphere of influence or see positive possibilities for the future without any personal threat. The data also suggest that acquiring another Organisation is easier on employees than being acquired.

The term “employee engagement” was coined by Professor William Khan of Boston University (1990), to describe his research into why employees were unmotivated and unwilling to do more than was required unless they were directed to do so. Managers did not know how to fix the problem and mistakenly believed that it was because of poor or low compensation, or that the employee simply did not enjoy or fit the job. Khan thought the words engagement and disengagement clearly described how people related to their jobs, similar to a romantic relationship, where in order to show their commitment, people became engaged. He further opined that employees can determine how much of themselves they would invest in the organisation they worked for, based on a number of factors including job satisfaction, reward, recognition, and loyalty (Khan, 1990).

The organisational phenomenon of employee engagement has not been around for a long time, but rather emerged in the late 1980s/1990s when the global market began to shift in response to the downward spiral of the global

economy, and companies were looking for a competitive edge to remain relevant and profitable (Mcbain, 2006). In defining the term employee engagement, three main characteristics were identified: vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, 2013). Vigour is the exhibition of high levels of energy into the job (Kataria, Garg, & Rastogi, 2013). Dedication is the extent to which an employee is willing to invest his or her time, energy, and effort into his or her job and the sense of meaning, pride, or challenge derived from the job (Cahill, McNamara, Pitt-Catsouphes, & Valcour, 2015); while absorption refers to the difficulties experienced in disengaging from work (Jeve, Oppenheimer, & Konje, 2015). However, it may be difficult to have one definition of engagement, as what may engage a young person just out of school and entering into his first job, may differ vastly from someone who is at the senior level of the organisation or someone who has been with the organisation for a long time (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, & Thomson, 2005).

Towers-Perrin (2003) in his attempt at defining employee engagement, suggests that it is not only emotional, but also rational factors that relate to work life. Engagement is tied to people's personal satisfaction and the sense of inspiration and affirmation they get from their work and being part of their organisation. Conversely, engagement may go beyond a simple satisfaction with these things and is more deeply rooted in the emotional connection the employee feels to the organisation. Engagement is more about a passion and commitment

- the willingness to invest oneself and go beyond what is normal in an effort to ensure that the company succeeds (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Employee engagement is also connected to other concepts such as organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. Currently, these additional concepts are causing the notion of employee engagement to become vague or diluted and are threatening its credibility and very existence (Lencioni, 2007).

When an organisation shows interest in the development and well-being of its employees, the more engaged the employees will become as they believe the organisation cares for them, not only from a professional stance but also on a personal level as well (Anitha, 2014). Employees are more productive and likely to stay with the organisation when they are engaged (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). The Gallup organisation conducted a study of more than 80,000 managers during the late 1980s to determine what great managers or leaders did differently. Employee engagement was clearly noted as one of the areas that managers needed to pay closer attention to, as a disengaged employee left unchecked could destabilize the business and work against the company's objectives (Alton, 2017).

Burke (2005) posits that engagement and satisfaction are inextricably linked, whether it be satisfaction with the company, manager/leader, workgroup, job or work environment. Some may believe that an employee's satisfaction

with their working conditions is enough to determine that they are engaged (Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2016). This may not be the case since an employee can be totally engaged in an environment where conditions are not the best; the compensation may be low, and the physical space may be counter-productive (SHRM, 2016). Yet, the employee is willing to overlook these matters because they feel a sense of fulfilment, loyalty and oneness with the organisation, the leader or even with the team members (SHRM, 2016). Additionally, some authors view engagement as being actively engrossed in performing the task at hand at the time and that if one is mentally and physically exhausted or burnt out, then disengagement can set in (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

Nonetheless, any disruptive change in the organisation will have an impact particularly on those employees who care about the organisation, are engaged and who feel a sense of oneness and belonging (Wittig, 2012). This can lead to disengagement or nonchalance particularly if they are unclear on what the changes can mean for them or if the landscape has changed so significantly that they no longer identify with the organisation they once loved (Wittig, 2012).

The feelings or emotions of loss resulting from the leadership change can be similar to those felt by persons experiencing grief (Wittig, 2012). Kubler-Ross (1980) outlined the various steps of the grieving process in her change curve model. The first stage is denial; where people who receive the news of

change are shocked and cannot comprehend what is happening. It can feel as though they are experiencing a bad dream, that the loss is unreal, and they are waiting to “wake up” expecting that things will be normal. Once the first phase is over, anger sets in. This is usually followed by bargaining, depression and then general acceptance that the loss has occurred or will shortly occur. As such, some employees who consider the change of a leader as a loss can respond by disengaging with the work environment.

One of the most stressful issues for employees to deal with might be the fact that their role, position and internal network may suddenly disappear overnight once a new CEO takes hold and starts making changes. Employees will need to have trust that the new leadership has the ability to steer them through uncharted territories. Only with that kind of confidence can employees feel safe enough to let go of some of their old biases about how the company should operate, quickly become comfortable with new product and go-to-market strategies, and humble themselves to the fact that much of the reputation and relationships they have built before may have to be rebuilt.

These are difficult issues to deal with, and often these are the reasons why many employees consider leaving when a new CEO arrives and regime change takes place. On the positive side, however, a new CEO often means new energy,

business growth and opportunities to move in new directions. Gain the trust and confidence of employees and they will be energised with new possibilities.

Perhaps the most important thing to understand is that, in many cases, the entrance of a new CEO will be disruptive and unexpected and employees will have to deal with the uncertainty which that change can cause. New leadership should make sure that they take the time to communicate how and why new decisions have been made. If employees find the new leadership impossible to accept or understand, the company may soon find itself facing the costly consequence of high turnover (Bersin, 2017).

Engagement and commitment

Engagement is demonstrated in a number of ways and there is no one single facet which determines the level of engagement. As previously stated, engagement can mean different things to each employee depending on their focus and it is difficult therefore, to measure employee engagement. However, when an employee is engaged there is a level of commitment to the organisation and to its goals and objectives.

Commitment is defined as a psychological state of attachment or binding force between an individual and the organisation (Bentein, Vandenberghe, & Florence, 2005). Commitment is regarded as an antecedent of various organisationally relevant outcomes, including various forms of prosocial

behaviour and/or organisational/job withdrawal (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Based simply on the commonly specified antecedents and consequences of commitment and state engagement, an affective commitment must be regarded as a facet of state engagement but not the same as state engagement (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004).

Therefore, when an employee is recruited, there is a natural expectation that they will be committed to the job and will work to the best of their ability to achieve the company's goals. In exchange, there is a natural expectation that the organisation will provide employment and adequate compensation along with any other benefits outlined in the contract of employment (Vance, 2006). These agreed-upon commitments engender a relationship of trust between the two parties (Vance, 2006).

As the employment relationship progresses, the employee determines how much more committed he would become based on a number of factors including the organisational culture, level of compensation, teamwork, the quality of work and acknowledgment for the work performed. If all of those factors come together in a meaningful way and the employee becomes passionate and engrossed in his job the level of his engagement will increase (Tsai, 2011).

One organisational phenomena of the 21st century is that of mergers and acquisitions (M&A). These have become the way of doing business, especially

when companies find themselves having to adopt a survival strategy, due to stiff competition or dilution of their particular product or service. Mergers and acquisitions are one of the ways for companies to realise growth, diversify their product offerings, create synergies and increase profits (Warter & Warter, 2016). This has become such a norm that companies have created M & A departments, whose sole responsibility is to scout out vulnerable companies to create either a partnership or to assume full ownership (Warter & Warter, 2016).

Engagement as job involvement

At a casual level, job involvement as a construct clearly occupies a portion of the conceptual space labelled state engagement. Indeed, as indicated earlier, Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) specifically equated engagement with both satisfaction and involvement. Similarly, building on the work of Lodahl and Kejner (1965), Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran (2005) defined job involvement as “the degree to which an employee psychologically relates to his or her job and the work performed therein” and specifically equated job involvement with job commitment (p. 244). Similarly, in his review and meta-analysis of job involvement, Brown (1996) indicated that a “state of involvement implies a positive and relatively complete state of engagement” (p. 235).

Within the broader research literature, Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) suggested that engagement can be characterised by energy, involvement,

and efficacy. As others have done (Brown, 1996), these scholars describe job engagement as conceptually distinct from organisational engagement because the focus is on work rather than the organisation, much as job commitment can be regarded as different from organisational commitment. On balance, it seems appropriate to regard the views of Maslach et al. (2001) and Salanova, Agut, and Peiro (2005) of job engagement as a broad, multi-dimensional theory. Employee engagement encompasses a family of related and more specific constructs focused on individuals' relationships with their work roles. Therefore, job satisfaction including task engagement and job commitment as traditionally conceptualized and assessed, is an important facet of the psychological state of engagement (Lepold, 2018).

Engagement as psychological empowerment

Rothbard (2001) provides his definition of engagement as psychological presence but further states that it involves two critical components: attention and absorption. He defines attention as cognitive ability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role while absorption means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus. Further, literature written by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Rom, and Bakker (2002) defines employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption.

Psychological empowerment has been treated within both two and four dimensional frameworks (Mathieu, Gilson, & Ruddy, 2006). Within the two-dimensional framework, Mathieu et al. (2006) suggested that empowerment is the “experience of authority and responsibility” (p. 98). Conceptually, empowerment defined in this manner might be considered an antecedent or a condition of engagement.

Distinctions between state engagement and psychological empowerment become considerably less clear when considering the four-dimensional model suggested by Spreitzer (1995). These dimensions include meaning (sense of purpose), competence (self-efficacy), feelings of self-determination (feelings of control), and impact (the belief that one's efforts can make a difference). These connote a readiness and/or an inclination toward action that fits our perspective of state engagement as energetic. Indeed, Spreitzer (1995) articulated the idea that the four cognitions imply an active way of ‘wishing to’ shape one’s work role and context; a meaning clearly aligned with previous conceptualizations of engagement. In this perspective, the state of feeling empowered, as represented in an orientation toward action, would seem to occupy a portion of the conceptual space we would regard as state engagement. Supporting an interpretation of psychological empowerment as engagement, Spreitzer (1995) suggested that outcomes of empowerment include effort, persistence and initiative.

Job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job involvement, and feelings of empowerment all can have relevance for the state engagement construct. The state engagement construct presented to this point in the review is thus a new blend of old wines with distinct characteristics and ‘feel’ (Macey & Schneider, 2008). More specifically, although aspects of these older constructs are relevant to state engagement (those connoting affect and feelings of energy), those facets of the older constructs connoting satiation and contentment are not. The measurement of these older theories in practice leaves something to be desired with regard to the kinds of affect and sense of energy the state engagement construct we propose would require. Some measures of job satisfaction that have been used to infer engagement are not effective in nature at all and frequently do not connote or even apply to a sense of energy but represent conditions that might promote the state engagement (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), a topic discussed in some detail later.

Engagement and stress

When an employee’s momentum is interrupted by change, the initial shock can evoke many emotions. One of these emotions is stress which can manifest itself in diverse ways, both psychologically and physically (Wisse & Sleebos, 2016). Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when an individual perceives that life demands exceeds their personal and social resources; it is

considered a natural reaction of the body to any demand (pleasant or unpleasant) placed on it (Spector & Fox, 2005). This reaction can be mental/emotional (like hurry and worry) or physical tension (having to hit brakes) (Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, & Cole, 2003). Stressful jobs span an organisation's ladder from the bottom rung to the very top. Selye (1936), posits that stress is pressure which always forces employees not to give of their best. In fact, no one is immune to job-related stress, making its existence a severe problem for employers and employees alike (Sauter, Murphy, & Hurrell, 1990). Although normal stress is seen as part and parcel of the job, it can be heightened when there is a perceived threat to one's comfort zone and any new change within the organisation (Imtiaz & Ahmad, 2009).

To gain insight into the impact of change on an individual, a study was undertaken in the healthcare industry which measured the reaction of the individual before, during and after the change process (Smollan, 2015). Although this study was done on a broad spectrum of change in the organisation and not specifically on the change in leadership, it revealed that while the job as a healthcare worker for the most part had some stressful elements because of its very nature, the nurses genuinely enjoyed the job and managed even the difficult aspects well. Stress was predominantly seen as part of the routine of caring for the sick and they were prepared for the challenges that presented such as the

death of a patient, staff shortages and working long hours. This was considered “normal” stress.

However, when the nurses were presented with the news that the organisation was restructuring and that some of them would be affected by the change either through separation or reassignment, the level of stress intensified. There was a feeling that the leadership was not sharing enough information in a timely manner and this led to much uncertainty and anxiety. The nurses felt that they had been abandoned by management who they felt either did not care about them or whom themselves were highly stressed by the changes. The “wait and see” dynamic was rather daunting and took a toll on the health and well-being of the affected staff. Some of the resultant effects on individuals included disturbed sleep patterns, weight gain, emotional outbursts and anger (Smollan, 2015).

Not all employees will respond to the changes in the organisation in the same way. In a company, there was also conflict among the team as persons jostled for positions and people became verbally aggressive to their colleagues and to management. Some employees resented the fact that they had to reapply for their jobs. Once the changes had been implemented, it took some time for persons to fully understand and embrace the changes. In one instance, an employee stated that it took one year for her to fully understand the changes. There was resentment towards each other and any new recruits who were

brought in to replace those who had exited the system. Since the organisation had gone through several major restructurings, there was high anxiety that there would be more. Some had to seek counselling and other support systems to assist them with the transition.

It has been found that some important potential sources of stress were not investigated extensively (Mossholder et al., 2000). For example, the impact of the role of emotions in organisational change has been underestimated and because of the strength of the reactions attached to organisational change, researchers of change have begun to consider its emotional undercurrents (Mossholder, Settoon, Armenakis, & Harris, 2000). For instance, a study conducted by Vakola, Tsaousis, and Nikolaou (2004), showed different types and depths of emotions (e.g. anger, cynicism, anxiety, resentment, resignation) displayed by those involved or affected by change activities.

Consider the case of the Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) in 1998. JAMPRO was the result of a merger between three companies and there were immense organisational issues which followed thereafter. One such issue was found in the organisational structure which came about due to organisational change resulting from the merger. There were as many as five restructurings between 1988 and 1992, with the 1992 cut resulting in a 25 percent reduction in staff. As reported, this created feelings of instability and uncertainty among

employees. Quite inevitably, this, in turn, resulted in lowering employee morale, momentum and energy (Marcelle-Peart, 1998).

Kim and von dem Kneseback (2015), suggested that strain from perceived job insecurity can increase somatic complaints and hypertension. Not only are these adverse outcomes important for investigation from the perspective of the employee, but they also place burdens on firms in the forms of health-care costs and absenteeism (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989).

Engagement and fear

Worrying about job security can evoke feelings of fear (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). One of the most renowned modern-day motivational speakers, Tony Robbins, opines that one of the six basic human needs is certainty, which he defines as a need for security, reliability and stability (Robbins, n.d.). Therefore, when there are organisational changes that will impact on the staff, the feeling of job security is replaced by fear – “will I have a job tomorrow, can I survive this change and at the end of it where will I be?” Job insecurity is seen as a primary outcome of organisational change as well as potential reason for disengagement (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989).

Fear can result in loss of focus and productivity and as a result attention is shifted to the change and potential fallout professionally and personally (Williams, 2019). This can be exacerbated by poor communication from the

leadership and give rise to speculation. The less people know about what is happening the more fearful they become. This can result in rumour, innuendo and the informal office grapevine which in itself is quite powerful, albeit sometimes with no credence or with insufficient information. Fear, coupled with anxiety and lack of information, can invoke resistance to change and promote active disengagement (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006).

Engagement and job insecurity

Employment is the means whereby individuals can provide for their personal needs and that of their family and improve and maintain their standard of living. Any threat to their livelihood through a job loss or change will evoke resistance and a personal threat to the vital economic, social and personal aspects of their lives (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2006).

Prior to the global recession in 2008, jobs were relatively secure and there was not much turmoil in the job market. An employee could determine if they wanted to stay with the organisation for their working life and retire at the end with a golden handshake and a token of a gift as appreciation for their long service. This dynamic has shifted significantly and the global pressures of running a successful company has forced many to reduce their headcount, forcing even long-term loyal employees to seek other positions.

This uncertainty, defined as job insecurity, is the threat of job loss or job reclassification (Goksoy, 2012). Job insecurity is based on an employee's perceptions and interpretations of their current work situation and this implies that subjectively experienced threats are derived from objective threats processed perceptually and cognitively. Therefore, if in characterising their work conditions, an employee feels any uncertainty or ambiguity, this will negate any readiness or acceptance of change either within or external to the organisation.

Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) identified five components in their multidimensional construct of job insecurity. These are a perceived threat to various job features; the perceived importance of each feature to an individual; the perceived threat of the occurrence of various events that would negatively affect an individual's total job; the importance attached to each of those potentialities and powerlessness. An increase in employees' perceptions about job-insecurity leads to diminishing loyalty of the employees towards their organisation (Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, & König, 2010). A survey of the survivors of restructuring programmes conducted by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), showed that this anticipation about organisational change has the same effects on the employees, as if it really occurred. A mere decision of the organisation to downsize its work-force may also work as a source of uncertainty among the employees and resultantly affect their performance and perceptions about job security. Employees working in such stressful environs are vulnerable

to experiencing diminished loyalty towards the organisation (Rehman & Naeem, 2012).

Though changes in organisational dynamics have been part of the operational strategy of businesses for many years (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006), the more frequent changes, coupled with the continued sluggish growth rates of the worldwide economies, have caused some concern among employees (Stallings, 2010). Human Resources practitioners, as part of their remit, must respond to the concerns that arise among employees, given the fact that organisations are faced with challenges that force them to adjust, especially those that are changing the way they do business or restructuring their business model. However, the substantive remit in strategising for Human Resources practitioners is not only negating the concern among employees but also aiding in the strategy that steers companies through challenges to realize successful results (Carnell, 1990).

Since the 1990s, words such as re-organising, re-engineering, right-sizing and restructuring have become synonymous with the practice of constant organisational change in order to ensure that the organisation can survive. These continual and relatively endless actions put a strain not only on those implementing the change but also on the individuals experiencing the varying changes. Research pertaining to organisational change is usually geared toward the factors forcing these changes and it has been found that by doing so, the

people-oriented issues are usually grossly neglected (Vakola, Tsaousis, & Nikolaou, 2004). This can have severe implications for employee fallout.

Change, in most forms, signifies the creation of something new and is symbolic of a move toward a new direction, usually away from the status quo, which can be a positive move but, in most instances, will create fear among employees (Alkaya & Hepaktan, 2003). Even those who are not directly impacted and who may survive any restructuring or downsizing, experience uncertainties as it relates to their future employment. Other studies show that job insecurity is linked with psychological distress as well as psychosomatic complaints (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995).

Issues influencing organisational change, when juxtaposed against those influencing job insecurity, bear glaring similarities. Increasing global competition and the rise of outsourcing and cost-cutting pressures have influenced the movement of global corporate layoffs and workplace restructuring (Goksoy, 2012). To this end, even though organisational change is no new option presented to workplaces, employees in this era must increasingly contend with the reality of job insecurity and the ever-present potential for unemployment and redundancy (Goksoy, 2012).

Engagement and communication

Communication is the method by which management can share ideas and relay information to employees. Having an effective internal communication strategy provides employees with critical information about the company, their role, their colleagues and what is happening externally (Berger, 2018). Communication can help stimulate, build trust, create shared identity and foster engagement, while providing an opportunity for individuals to express emotions, share hopes and ambitions, celebrate and remember accomplishments (Berger, 2018). Communication does not only entail sending out an email or having staff meetings where some people may not even be present to hear the message. Instead, it is having a comprehensive communication strategy that speaks to frequency and timeliness, transparency and clarity of the information being transmitted and a mechanism for feedback so that employees can ask questions or seek further information (Berger, 2018).

Communication is vital for employees as it is the basis for individuals and groups to make sense of their organisation, what it is and what it means. Therefore, it is critical that managers not only provide useful information on any changes in the organisation but seek to understand the employees' concerns (Tavakoli, 2014). There are many reasons why organisational change programmes fail and this can include poor planning, change in strategy, the culture and even the timing. However, one of the chief reasons for the failure of

organisational change efforts is communication (Elving, Golob, Podnar, Ellerup-Nielsen, & Thomson, 2015). Effective communication is a two-way process and is key to any change management strategy, and as a mechanism for continuous information sharing and gathering (Allen, Jammieson, & Borda, 2007).

As indicated earlier, in a competitive environment, organisations will have to change if they must respond to what is happening in the market (Seward & Allen, 2011). The way that change is introduced or implemented makes the difference and it is critical that there be two-way communication from the top down to the bottom up so that there can be a level of trust and buy-in from the employees (Elving, 2005). Employees must be kept abreast of the changes and be encouraged to ask questions as often as possible (Kaplan & Norton, 2000). Further, the organisation should map out clear, short-term goals and this will motivate employees to embrace changes and make the task more achievable and less daunting (Kaplan & Norton, 2000).

Engagement and turnover

Turnover is the measurement of the number of employees who leave the organisation over a defined period of time (Bamboo HR, 2019). Thus, the higher the percentage of turnover the more challenging this may be for the organisation. Turnover can be as a result of voluntary or involuntary separation of the

employee from the organisation and can be tied to organisational change or employee engagement. When an employee leaves the organisation, depending on their job knowledge, experience and skill, they are taking with them institutional knowledge which may have to be replaced and is sometimes difficult to find (Reh, 2019). Over time, employees learn the job and become familiar with all the requirements to complete their tasks skilfully, therefore, when they leave, there is a void that needs to be filled. Moreover, backfilling, as this is familiarly known can be an expensive exercise. The skills that are lost may not be readily available on the market and the organisation may have to undergo an expensive recruitment exercise to find the right skill and talent. Depending on the level of the job in the organisation the cost may be exponentially greater than that of an entry-level position (Cascio & Boudreau, 2008).

Turnover can also impact team dynamics. It is natural for there to be informal groups in an organisation; employees may find a common interest and so may form relationships based on these shared interests. Therefore, when one person from the group leaves the organisation the others may become depressed and this may have an impact on their productivity (Dess & Shaw, 2001).

Turnover, however, can benefit the organisation if the employee was unproductive and disruptive (Dalton, Krackhardt, & Porter, 1981). This can provide the organisation with an opportunity to recruit fresh talent with new

ideas. This is more so relevant at the leadership level, since they tend to grow more inflexible the longer they stay in the leadership role, and therefore stifle the organisation's ability to grow and to benefit from fresh ideas (Katz, 1982).

Although research has shown that employees often respond negatively towards change due to increased work pressure and stress, a well-structured plan can result in a positive response and buy-in from employees (Robbins & Judge, 2013). This response can only redound to the benefit of the organisation and assist in the achievement of its strategic goals, thereby reducing turnover in the organisation (Jones, Jones, Steer, & Datta, 2009).

Engagement and Morale

In recent years there has been an increase in employee engagement surveys to measure the morale of employees. These surveys inform the organisation on the mood of the employees which in turn can impact on the productivity and profitability of the organisation. Morale can be described as the healthy state of the organisation and is as essential to the organisation as good health is essential to the wellbeing of an individual. A high level of morale can be evidenced by elevated and sustained levels of productivity and buoyancy that, though the latter is intangible, can be felt throughout the organisation. A good gauge of morale is employees' response to and participation in company-wide social activities. In addition, good morale can also be evidenced by the

employee's contribution to innovate ideas and create solutions to organisational problems.

Conversely, low morale can have a ripple effect throughout the organisation and can be pervasive and contagious. Although morale is an intrinsic state its effects become almost viral in that the heavy atmosphere infects those who are otherwise engaged, and they then can become disengaged as a consequence. In order to fully understand the level of employee morale, organisations conduct employee engagement surveys periodically as morale is tied to productivity. These surveys are conducted particularly after a major organisational change has taken place or when the organisation is attempting to diagnose the root cause of low productivity. Or low morale. It is therefore incumbent on the employer to act on the findings of the survey so that they can stem or eliminate any downward spiral which can impede the strategic focus and direction of the organisation.

Summary of the Impact of Change of the Leader on Employee Engagement

In the context of outsider CEO successor values, the mechanism of social identity is likely the most important. As discussed, the values of new outsider CEOs can begin to reshape the mission, strategies and culture of an organisation. As this shift takes place, employees may no longer feel passionate about the organisation's mission. As strategic changes take place, such as restructuring,

employees may no longer feel secure in their positions. These actions will have a negative effect on employee commitment.

The methodologies and practices based in commitment theory are primarily focused on the employee-employer relationship, which is maintained and developed over time. When a new CEO is hired and begins to imprint his or her values on the mission and culture of the organisation, the employee employer relationship changes. Trust must be re-established for employee commitment to be maintained (Lockmer, 2014).

Change of the leader can occur for a number of reasons; an important one is to fix an internal problem which is preventing the organisation from growing or from being profitable. Change will always bring some level of disruption; whether planned or unplanned, if poorly executed, will not escape this dilemma.

Constant change has become the new normal as world economies change, global markets expand, and companies see mergers and acquisitions as the only way to remain relevant and profitable (Arussy, 2018). Changing leaders, while not a new phenomenon, will become more frequent as companies respond to these world challenges. The new leader's mandate or strategy may be to disturb the organisational structure which may see employees being shifted up or out of the organisation, roles being changed, created or eliminated and new teams being formed (Gill, 2002). While for some this may be a negative, for others this may

present new opportunities for them to move up the corporate ladder, learn a new skill or even to assume greater responsibility.

A new leader will bring their own personal style, and this in itself can have an impact on employee engagement (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). As discussed earlier, employees will support and accept a leader they believe is trustworthy, transparent and consistent not only in their communication but also in their behaviour (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). What is critical to the acceptance of a new leader is the presence of full and open communication on the change before, during and after its occurrence (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). The level of communication prior to the entry of a new leader greatly shapes the perception or expectation of the employee. Little to no communication will create anxiety for employees and they will worry or seek to find answers about the new leader; what kind of a leader is this person, will they be a difficult or autocratic leader, or will they be one who is affable and people-oriented (Bolden, 2010).

The adage that ‘people do not leave jobs, they leave their managers’ suggests that if a leader or manager does not fulfil or live up to the expectations of their employees, they may stand to lose that particular talent (Goler, Gale, Harrington, & Grant, 2018). In a 2017 Gallup poll on managers, it was found that 70% of the variance in employee engagement was attributed to managers and particularly on how employees felt about their manager’s attitude towards them (Zaleznik, 1977). It can therefore be said that employee engagement has

more to do with the response to the leader than with the job function, benefits or any other working conditions. According to Doriane and Manon (2013), a leader's behaviour can be so destructive that good talent may exit the organisation, not because of the job but because of the leader's style of leadership.

Statistics have revealed that turnover at the CEO level has risen significantly over the years, increasing by as much as 59% between 1995 and 2006, and this seems to be the new trend in the dynamics of organisational change (PWC, 2018). However, a natural change of leadership through retirement provides the employee with the opportunity to become accepting or familiar with the notion that there will be an eventual change (Alkaya & Hepaktan, 2003). Conversely, the departure of a leader whose relationship with employees has been fractured and toxic will be highly anticipated and may even be celebrated (Arussy, 2018).

However, where there is a sudden departure of the leader there is conjecture and speculation as to the reason why. In recent times, we have seen the abrupt departure of a number of CEOs from companies such as General Electric and Uber, to name a few of the Fortune 500 companies. The reasons given were varied but included the individual's performance or some form of misconduct as well as a change of business model. Whatever the reasons, employees begin to worry and possibly panic, particularly if there is no

immediate replacement. Even with the announcement of a new leader, employees may still have their concerns since new executives usually bring in their own team and there is often some restructuring and displacement, as was noted earlier (Alkaya & Hepaktan, 2003). While it may be inappropriate to share the full details of the departure, the leaders who remain or the Board of Directors should move to quickly communicate a plan for moving forward and not leave employees speculating and not knowing what to expect next.

The impetus is for there to be trust and communication on both sides so that objectives can be achieved and that there is a return to normalcy as soon as possible. Change is not always negative; a new leader can bring renewed vigour and new business opportunities which can provide more stability and security for employees and can re-energize and re-invigorate employees' level of engagement (Tayal, Upadhya, Yadav, Rangnekar, & Singh, 2018).

In 2015, Amtrak experienced a terrible and devastating accident. Scott Span, in an op-ed piece stated that although mechanical error cannot be ruled out, it was possibly a number of factors responsible for the accident including turnover at the top of the organisation. He shared that the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had published an op-ed piece on the churn at the top of Amtrak and that they had changed CEOs at least eight times since 1970. This was a substantial loss of institutional knowledge which may have impacted in the operations and resulted in the unfortunate event.

Another organisation that has undergone significant turnover at the leadership level is the American Red Cross which has had five leaders in eight years. In commenting on this David Hoffman, CEO of DHR Recruiting expressed his doubts about the organisation's ability to gain or maintain any momentum with such frequent leadership changes. We have seen this in the loss of credibility in the Red Cross Organisation and the performance of its mandate is constantly under scrutiny.

Noted it is not simply the change of leadership but more so how the change is managed that can lead to a dysfunctional environment which can then lead to low productivity. These two real-life scenarios demonstrate that such turmoil at the top of the organisation can result in dire consequences, which can lead to a toxic work environment including a destabilized and disengaged workforce.

Conclusion

Since an organisation achieves success through its employees, it is important that employees are engaged. If not, it is predictable that their focus will not be on the things that are critical to the Organisation's success. Critical factors contribute to the successful change of the leader; it is not one single factor but a combination of many. Research has shown that a communication plan is critical to any change process (Statista, 2014). Not only must there be a plan,

but it must be effective in identifying, measuring and communicating to the stakeholders the benefits of the change.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) stated that no matter how elaborate and comprehensive the plan is, employees will not receive it at face value if there is an element of mistrust. Therefore, trust is an integral component to the communication plan and is cultivated through action and words. Without these elements the response to unplanned change can become chaotic, disruptive and emotional for the employees and the organisation overall. Therefore, while change may be the Organisation's panacea to prevailing economic conditions, there must be a consideration for how these changes are managed in order for there to be any successful change implementation.

CONCEPTUAL MAP OF THE STUDY

Figure 3 is a pictorial view of the key elements of the study and explores the relationship between the change of the leader and employee engagement. The centre of the model reflects employee engagement at the centre of the process and is influenced by the behavioural or leadership style of the CEO. Three main elements of trust, open communication and transparency are critical to employee engagement. Where the employee is committed the centre panel shows that high morale, commitment, productivity and motivation will emanate from the engaged employee, which then has an effect on the culture of the

Organisation. The arrows at this level are bi-directional to demonstrate that the two factors affect each other. Similarly, the arrows between employee engagement and Organisational change indicate that employee engagement will be impacted by a change in the Organisation, which will also have an impact on the Organisational culture and any change in the Organisation and its culture via

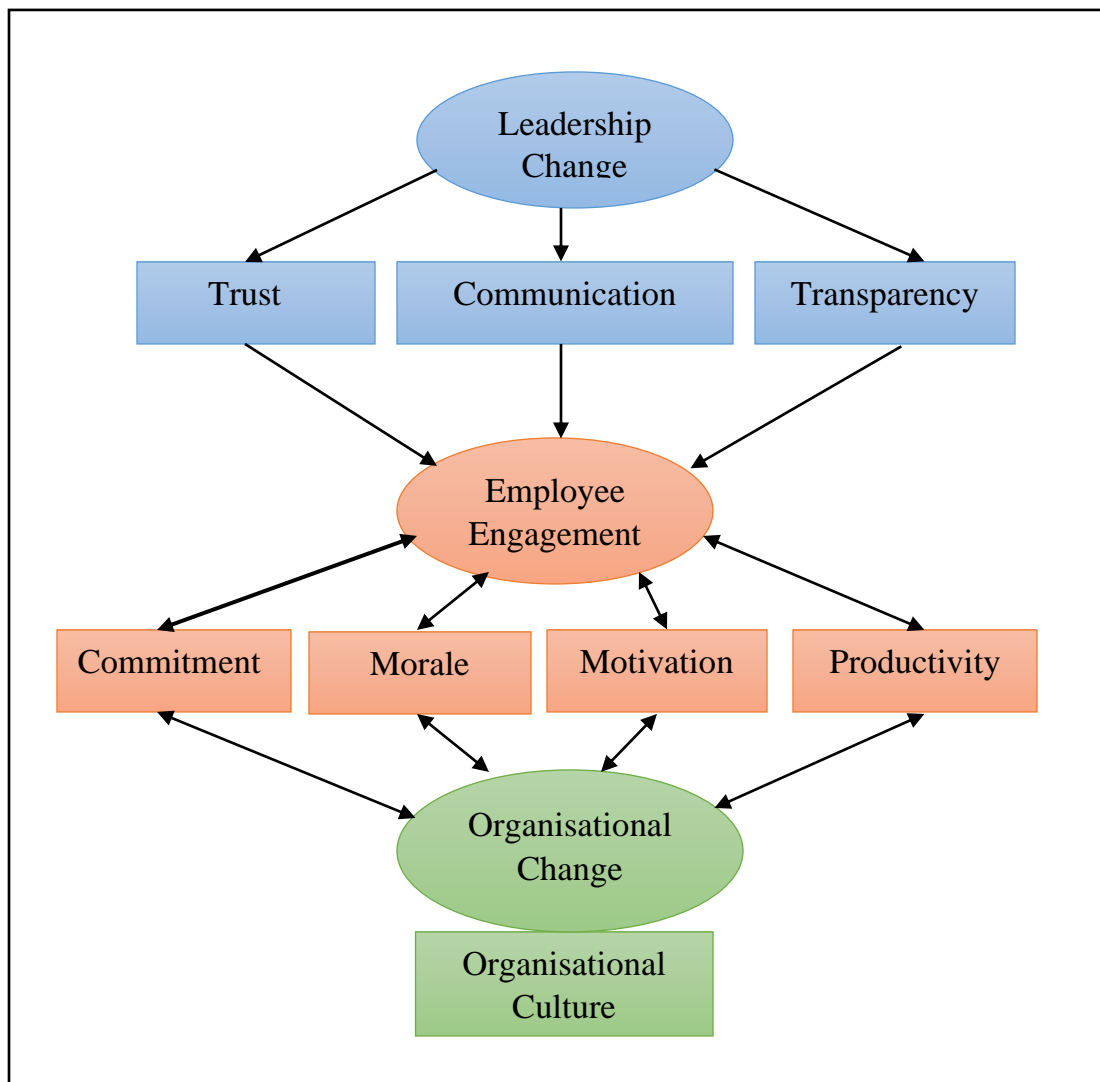


Figure 3 Conceptual Map of the study

the change in the leadership, will have an impact on employee engagement.

The study seeks to fill in the gap in research on employee engagement when it is impacted by a change at the apex of the organisation. Although change can occur daily the change of the CEO is one that is unique and different from change at any other level of the organisation. The importance of this role in the organisation cannot be understated as it shapes the vision for the organisation and therefore when this position is impacted or disrupted it can result in low productivity and morale.

Table 1

Research Questions Framework

Research Questions	Literature	Practice
Is there a relationship between unplanned change of the leader and the engagement of employees	Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).	-
Is there a difference in employee's engagement based on their position	Harter & Adkins 2015)	-
What are the effects of change of the leader on morale and productivity*	Weakliem DL, Frenkel SJ.	This was developed from the research findings
What are the effects of the change on organisational culture	(De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007	-
What is the greatest challenge on the change of the leader*	Williams, 2019).	This question was developed from the research findings
How is change of the leader managed*	-	*This question was developed from the research findings

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Overview

Chapter Two presented a review of the literature by providing fundamental insights into the role of the leader in the organisation and how the phenomena of change at the very top of the organisation can impact employee engagement and engender feelings of mistrust and fear if not properly managed. Further to this, the literature review identified the theoretical framework to guide this research. The aim of the study as outlined in Chapter One is to examine whether the change of the leader in an organisation, significantly impacts on employee engagement. To answer this question data was collected and analysed to provide the context for how the research was to be conducted.

In light of this, Chapter Three will outline the overall procedure that was followed in data collection and processing, the research method, the population, sampling, data collection techniques and an analysis of the findings of the pilot study. This chapter also focuses on reliability and validity of the data as well as the ethical considerations for the study.

Research Methodology

Most research studies are informed by and based on a theoretical stance called methodology. Research is appropriate when there is a need for a broader

understanding of a phenomena; in this case, the change of the leader and the impact on employee engagement. To fully satisfy the aim of the study, the researcher must be guided by core philosophies that will influence his or her choice of methodology and the approach to the objectives being addressed.

When the research problem is complex or if the researcher determines that one method or strategy may not adequately address the research problem, a mixed method approach can be used. Mixed method is a research approach where researchers collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study. This gives the researcher a more panoramic view of the research landscape and involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative (experiments, surveys) and qualitative (focus groups, interviews) data (Creswell, 2015).

It was recognised that several approaches needed to be employed in order to fully understand the employees' perceptions on engagement and change of the leader. As a result, the mixed method approach was determined to be the more suitable approach to maximise the benefits of both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches to the study while compensating for the weakness of any one particular methodology.

Scholarship has given support to a mixed method approach, having recognized the weaknesses and strengths of positivist and interpretivist

approaches solely for this study. Positivism relies on scientific data and as such a quantitative approach is based solely on assumptions and is used as the method base to analyse and conduct research in relation to policing and policing concepts. As such, it recognises only those things that can be verified by logical and mathematical proof. Conversely, interpretivism asserts that there is no objective knowledge waiting to be discovered and instead that reality and knowledge are socially constructed by human beings (Walsham, 1993). This epistemological position contrasts with positivist science in which hypotheses concerning an objective reality are tested and may be replicated by others.

The mixed method approach is considered to be the most comprehensive research tool to use to obtain a more accurate assessment of the responses and minimizes the weakness while drawing from the strong point of both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In addition, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously, and this can have significant time and cost saving benefits. Although the mixed method approach was chosen for this study, the more dominant approach used was the qualitative method.

It was critical to understand the differing views of the employees when there was a change of the leader in the organisation and as such the qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate. However, in order not to simply rely on subjective views of the employees in the small focus groups a quantitative

methodology was also used through a survey designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

Advantages of a Mixed-method design

From this study the following advantages and disadvantages were observed:

1. The mixed-method design provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. For instance, quantitative research is weak in understanding the context or setting in which people behave, something that qualitative research makes up for. On the other hand, qualitative research is seen as deficient because of the potential for biased interpretations made by the researcher and the difficulty in generalizing findings to a large group. Quantitative research does not have these weaknesses. Thus, by using both types of research, the strengths of each approach can substitute for the weaknesses of the other.
2. The mixed-method design provides a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem than either a quantitative or qualitative approach alone.
3. The mixed-method design provides an approach for developing better, more context specific instruments. For instance, by using qualitative research it is

possible to gather information about a certain topic or construct to develop an instrument with greater construct validity, i.e. that measures the construct that it intends to measure.

4. The mixed method approach helps to explain findings or how causal processes work.

Disadvantages of the Mixed-method design

1. On the other hand, the mixed-method research design can sometimes be overly complex.
2. This design takes much more time and resources to plan and implement.
3. It may be difficult to plan and implement any one method by drawing on the findings of another.
4. It may be unclear how to resolve discrepancies that arise in the interpretation of the findings brought forward by the mixed methods.

The grid in Figure 4 is an example of Crotty's (2012) typical string which he posits that researchers should follow this model to be able to determine how the study would be shaped.

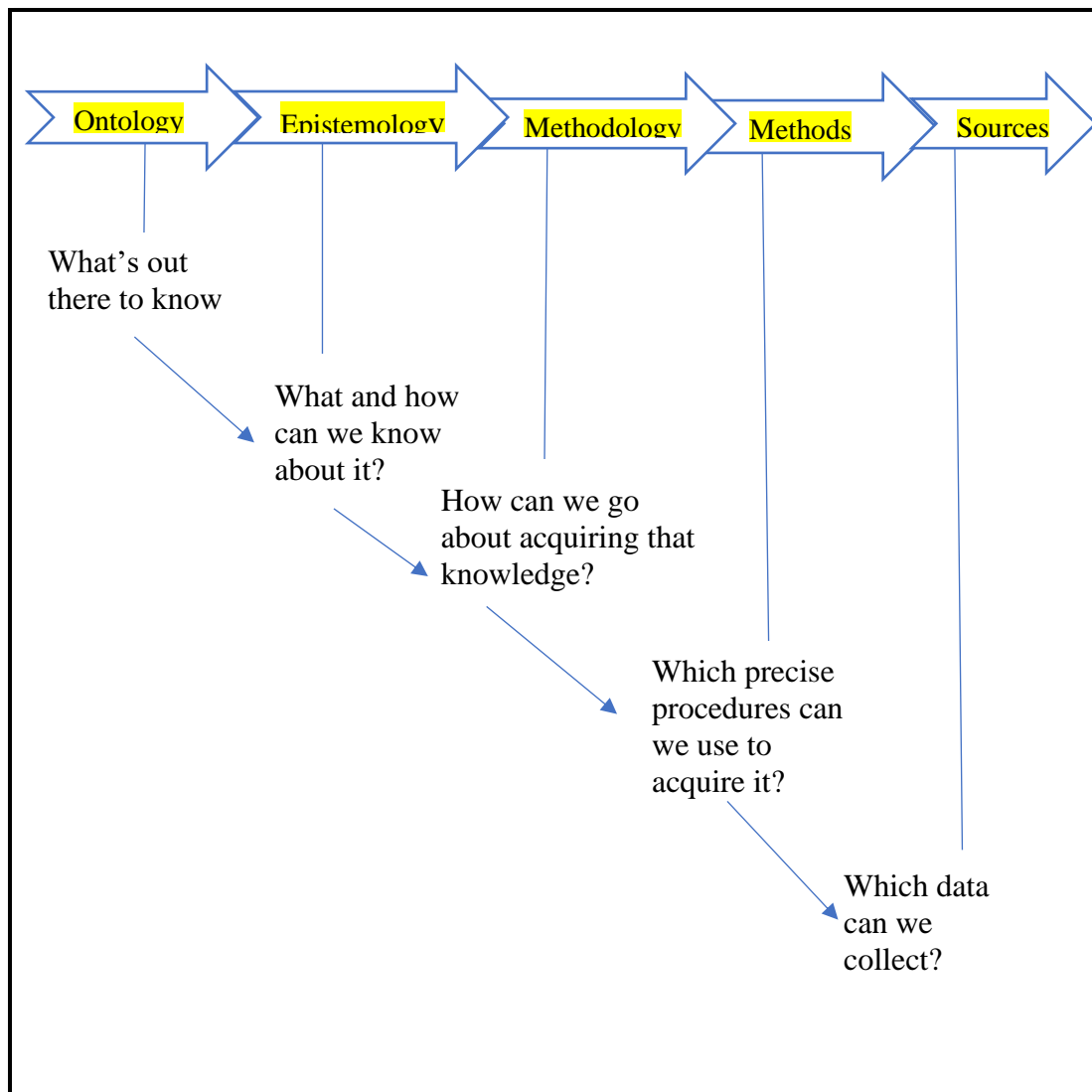


Figure 4. The relationship between the building blocks of research (Grix, 2004, p. 66)

Ontology deals with the nature of study and is not defined as one specific thing but rather it asks, “*what kinds of things are in the world*” and “*what is out there to know*” (Grix, 2010). It is a system of belief that reflects an interpretation by an individual about what constitutes a fact. While Hudson and Ozanne (1988)

consider ontology as the nature of reality, Bryman and Bell (2011) imply that two questions must be considered when developing a philosophical perspective: whether social entities should be considered as an objective reality that exists without the external intervention of social actors, or whether it should be defined from the subjective social perceptions and actions of social interactions.

Developing an ontological perspective is mirrored in the values and senses that have been built up during one's development of understanding and perceptions. Bryman (2012) posits that social phenomena and their meanings are influenced by external factors. This is an objectivist stance of external influencers which exist in their own right. Social existence without any external influence, a contemporary outlook would be 'it is what it is. However, there is a contrasting argument from a constructivist viewpoint which posits that our experiences influence our ontological perspective and therefore, since this research is focused on employees' views and perspectives on change of the leader, a constructionist ontology is relevant to this study.

Subsequent to the viewpoint posited by Grix (2010) which states that ontology is the starting point of all research, and that everything logical is derived from one's own ontology, epistemology is what and how we can know about it. Thus, the epistemological perspective must be examined to determine its suitability to this research.

Epistemology revolves around the philosophical enquiry into the scope and nature of human knowledge and seeks to distinguish that knowledge from belief, that is, what is out there, knowledge is fact, and how can we know about it. Just like ontology, there are numerous viewpoints on epistemology which can be considered as a positivist perspective where it asserts that facts are concrete and cannot be manipulated, while the subjectivist believes that facts are based on human views and values. The epistemological position of this study is routed in the assumption that the perceptions of the participants is based on their own personal experiences in their day-to-day lives.

Although it was not listed in the grid, it is important to consider axiology when identifying the researcher's philosophical perspective. Axiology is the branch of philosophy that considers the study of principles and values. These values are divided into two main kinds: ethics and aesthetics. Ethics refers to the questioning of morals and personal values, whereas aesthetics refers to the examination of what is beautiful, enjoyable or tasteful.

In conducting this research, the researcher had both an objective and subjective view of the topic. It is believed that changes at the highest executive level, the CEO, may cause severe unease in an organisation, and this is supported by the experiences of the researcher. As a result, the researcher intends to investigate if this is also true for other organisations. Therefore, to find out the impact, two research objectives were conceptualised as aforementioned. Based

on this, the pragmatic approach was used. Pragmatism is a research philosophy that believes the world and the research process can be interpreted in many different ways, showing multiple realities and not just by one single point of view (Saunders, Philip, & Thornhill, 2012). Therefore, this approach to collect and analyse data proved best, as the researcher preferred the data to be guided, based on findings and not on one's subjective experiences which would inform any biases.

As indicated in the problem statement, engagement is a personal stance so employees will respond to change differently. Those who are involved in the problem will see things differently than those who are just observing or do not have intimate details of the situation. Employees at the supervisory or management level for example, will be more involved when there is a change of leader as they may be asked to assist with communicating the change. Conversely, line staff may not be intimately involved and may only draw assumptions based on information they may hear from unofficial sources.

Mix of Methods

The research design has been created to consider the views of the interviewees in a phenomenological design. To explore the first objective using a positivist framework, a questionnaire was utilised. Positivism depends on data that is quantifiable or that can be measured to understand the facts of a situation

or human experience (Collins, 2010). For the second objective using an interpretivist framework, an interview schedule was employed. The interpretivist framework is concerned with how or what certain situations mean for people (Collins, 2010). These frameworks further informed how the data in this study was retrieved.

From the positivist angle, the quantitative aspect sought to gather information from multiple people to examine multiple experiences. In addition to the information gathered from the quantitative aspect, the qualitative approach allowed for more interpretation of what was found. The goal of this study was to find out the impact of leadership change on employee engagement. The key term ‘impact’ refers to how two or more things, whether tangible or intangible, relate to each other when brought together.

To understand the impact, the researcher looked at the literature pertaining to leadership change and employee engagement and this informed on the type of method to pursue. Employee engagement is measured within the literature by several output variables such as morale, commitment and productivity. Since these variables are measurable, the researcher decided to use the employee engagement scale to be completed by employees. Though there was no specific literature examining leadership change, based on how it has been conceptualised in this study, the researcher concluded the context as being unplanned changes at the CEO level.

With employee engagement being measurable, the researcher wanted some in-depth interpretation of how it is exhibited and so was able to retrieve such information from the focus groups with those managers and supervisors who generate the tangible reports on employee engagement levels. The understanding is that even if some employees reported that they were or were not engaged, their superiors may have a different perspective. The researcher sought to examine both perspectives and hence the reason for the mixed method approach.

To gather research questions for the main study, the researcher first conducted a pilot study which contained questions based on literature which was previously collected. Using the feedback from the pilot findings, the official research questions were formulated and agreed on. It is important to note that most of the questions were utilised again but some elements were added.

To conduct the data collection, the researcher first sought to find the companies which not only recently had leadership changes but were also willing to participate in the study. This was accompanied by an official letter stating the intentions of the researcher's study. Once that was completed, the researcher confirmed a time and day that the questionnaires could be completed by staff members. The overall timeframe established to collect the data via the questionnaires was one month. Once the questionnaires were completed, the researcher sought to gather the participants from the same companies to take part

in the focus group. It is key to mention here that respondents to the questionnaires were generally non-management employees and for the focus group, participants were made up of managers and supervisors.

Since the researcher wanted to find out about the impact of leadership change, the researcher thought it was optimal to find employees who experienced this change and could therefore speak to it. Originally, the researcher wanted as many employees as possible, but she had to settle for forty-three (43) for the quantitative aspect. For the focus group, there was a total of five (5) managers and supervisors who were able to attend the session. The researcher created an inclusion and exclusion criteria for the participants in the study, requiring them to have been employed within the company long enough to have gone through more than one change of leadership. This would allow them to draw from a place of experience as they provided feedback via the questionnaires and in the focus group.

For the questionnaires, the researcher used the SPSS software to analyse data. The researcher conducted Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), one-way ANOVA, charts, and graphs. For the focus groups, the researcher used the thematic analysis approach by looking at the responses and noting the most recurring. The opportunity to organise more than one focus group was not afforded as there was a general reluctance by those organisations identified to facilitate this. Most of the participants who were approached preferred to have

one-on-one sessions but were reluctant to share their views with other participants.

To satisfy the research objective, the researcher utilised both a questionnaire consisting of closed (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) items and a fully qualitative focus group interview schedule. Creswell (2015) noted that this type of approach to research is used when the integration of both methods provides a better understanding of the research problem than using one method of investigation. Moreover, the use of the focus group interview schedule was chosen as it provided the opportunity for open dialogue and the ability to probe further on any responses which were vague or appeared ambiguous. Given the study's focus on collecting data on shared experiences with organisational change and how these experiences translated to feelings, the mixed methods research methodology was deemed appropriate.

By mixing both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher gains in breadth and depth an understanding and corroboration, while offsetting the weaknesses inherent to using each approach by itself (Clegg, Kornberger, & Pitsis, 2005). One of the most advantageous characteristics of conducting mixed methods research is the possibility of triangulation, that is, the use of several means (methods, data sources and researchers) to examine the same phenomenon. Triangulation allows one to identify aspects of a phenomenon more accurately by approaching it from different vantage points using different

methods and techniques (Clegg et al., 2005). Successful triangulation requires careful analysis of the type of information provided by each method, including its strengths and weaknesses.

Participants

In this study, participants were selected from two large-company organisations within the financial sector in Barbados, one being international and the other local. For the qualitative aspect, of the five (5) participants in the focus group, four were individuals who have been in management level positions at their respective organisations for at least ten (10) years. The job functions of the participants varied, with the four (4) persons operating at the senior management level while the fifth person was at the administrative/clerical level at the time of the interview.

For the quantitative method, the questionnaire was issued to forty-three (43) participants who were selected from two companies. Of the forty-three (43) participants gathered, twenty (20) were from organisation A and the other twenty-three (23) from organisation B. Although the organisations were purposively selected based on a large-company portfolio, convenience sampling was utilised to gather the participants. All participants fell within the 30 - 65 age bracket, and the participants were divided by gender in the following format: twenty-three (23) males, and twenty (20) females.

Materials

To investigate participants' experience of leadership change and its impact on employee engagement, two types of instruments were used: a questionnaire and an interview schedule for the focus group interview (See Appendix A and B).

Focus Group Interview Tool

The focus group interview tool consisted of an interview schedule with five open ended questions (See appendix B). The questions sought to gauge participants' views on:

- (1) the relationship between the number of unplanned changes of leadership and the employee engagement,
- (2) the difference in employee engagement based on their position within the organisation,
- (3) the effects of changes of leadership on morale, productivity, and organisational culture.

The tool also sought to capture the participants' opinions of the greatest challenge regarding change of leadership.

Questionnaire

The 17-item, self-administered questionnaire was divided into three sections: A, B, C, utilizing both open and closed-ended questions to capture the participants' views on the relationship between change of leadership and employee engagement (See Appendix A). The questions were developed from the broader research questions outlined in chapter one and the intent was to understand how each participant felt about the change of leadership within their respective organisations and its effect on morale, productivity, and organisational culture.

Section A focused on gathering demographic information relating to the background of the organisation in which participants worked, their job position and responsibilities, their overall expectations and perceptions of the organisation as new entrants into the organisation and relevant demographics such as age and gender.

Section B captured participants' perceptions and self-evaluation of their engagement. This section was quantitative in nature and used nine (9) questions to capture their feedback.

Section C presented four open-ended questions which provided the interviewer with the opportunity to further probe and seek clarity on any topic raised during the interviews. This section assessed the participants' perceptions of the impact of organisational change on the organisation, and it included

questions such as ‘What impact do you believe these changes had on the organisational culture?’ and ‘Is the greatest challenge in this experience the change of the individual or the management of the process or both?’ (See Appendix A).

Employee engagement was measured as a multi-dimensional attitude via three dimensions (West & Dawson, 2012). This represents both engagement with work (i.e. motivation) and with the organisation (i.e. advocacy and involvement). Within the first dimension of **Motivation**, which reflects an enthusiasm for and psychological attachment to the activities of the job, the questions included, ‘I look forward to going to work’, ‘I am enthusiastic about my job’ and ‘Time passes quickly when I am working’.

The second dimension of **Advocacy** analyses the belief that the organisation is a good employer as well as a service provider and is worthy of recommendation to others. The questions presented were, ‘I would recommend my workplace as a place to work’ and ‘I would highly recommend my organisation to a friend seeking employment’.

Finally, the dimension of **Involvement** explored the employees' feelings about how many opportunities they considered to be available to suggest and make improvements to their own job as well as to the wider workgroup or organisation.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criterion

The feedback of forty-three (43) persons constituted the sample for this research. For the success of this research, and as a baseline criterion for sample selection, it was necessary to include only employees or managers who would have undergone significant leadership change (at least one) over a sustained period of time in their organisation. This type of sampling frame is known as purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a selection methodology under the non-probability sampling design which selects participants on the basis of specialized inclusion criteria (Crossman, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

Before access to participants was obtained, the study was first approved by the Business School's Research Integrity Committee. Once this was approved, a letter requesting permission from the organisation was sent to the relevant management personnel prior to executing the data collection process.

As part of the key ethical considerations, voluntary consent was sought and obtained from both the organisation and selected employees who participated in the study. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and all participants were interviewed in a manner that respected their privacy. Participants were interviewed in a location that they were most comfortable in. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and their feedback

about the interview process and the instrument was also obtained (See Appendix).

Data Analysis Technique

For the qualitative segment of the research, a thematic analysis technique was used to analyse the data obtained from the interviews with participants. This technique allowed for the assessment of open-ended qualitative data to extract data analysis codes and resulting thematic categories which relate directly to the core research objectives. This technique was developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and was recommended for most qualitative studies adopting an interpretivist research design. For the quantitative information, quantitative statistics SPSS was used to analyse the data.

Pilot Study

In the words of De Vaus (1993) “Do not take the risk. Pilot test first” (p. 54). Therefore, to make sure that this study was feasible, a pilot study was conducted. A pilot study, also referred to as feasibility study, is a small scale study conducted to pre-test particular instruments such as a questionnaire or an interview schedule, to uncover any potential issues with the data gathering process or the project (Teijlingen & Hundle, 2002). The advantages of conducting a pilot study are that:

(1) it will highlight any discrepancies with regards to respondents understanding the questions or if they were appropriately documented,

(2) it could inform the researcher if the instruments used is sufficient in finding out what the research seeks to uncover,

(3) it can provide advance warning on whether the project will be a success, and inform the researcher of any areas, questions or concepts that need to be explored or covered (Teijlingen & Hundle, 2002).

The research topic for the pilot was “The Impact of the frequent change of Leadership on Employee Engagement”. A purposive sample of five members of staff in management and line staff categories was chosen as the key participants in the research. Added to this was an interview schedule with 15 questions which explored the background and employees’ perceptions, perception of transient leadership and strategies for managing transient leadership. The results revealed that respondents could not identify with the term ‘frequent change of leadership’. Also, scheduling individual interviews was challenging and it was determined that more male perceptions were needed. The researcher also found that the questions should be more unstructured allowing for better interpretations. These recommendations occasioned a revision of the research questions and the overall topic and led to the introduction of a pre-tested scale.

Conclusion

As indicated in the title, this chapter sought to outline the selected research methodology which was based on the mixed-method approach. The researcher chose to utilise this model given that the intention was to have the data speak for itself. The researcher preferred to neither have her subjective experiences in the field produce any bias, nor that the information should be seen through a single lens.

Another fundamental motivator for the use of this methodology was to identify and understand if the topic being researched was indeed a problem, how big of a problem it really was and, if significant enough, what could be done to fix it. Granted that the research sample was quite small, the researcher concluded that the mixed method approach consisting of both quantitative and qualitative methods would be the most apt for gathering measurable data and producing a fruitful analysis as outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the findings on the change of leader in an organisation, namely the Chief Executive Officer, and its impact on employee engagement. A mixed methods approach which included the administration of a questionnaire and the facilitation of a focus group was utilised. The quantitative method served to gather a general perspective from participants on their experiences with the change of the leader and the qualitative method provided a more in-depth exploration of the managers' experiences with the same phenomena. The findings from the questionnaire helped to inform the final Interview Schedule that was used in the focus group. Additionally, suggestions and recommendations that were made during the pilot study were considered in the development of the final six questions that were ultimately used. This process allowed for a much richer, in-depth process of collecting data that was informed by participants, thus allowing the data gathered through the pilot study and the questionnaires to be further explored and obtained. These two methods adequately provided information to understand the subjective experiences of leadership change and how these impacted on employee engagement and the organisation as a whole.

For the focus group, a thematic analysis was incorporated to examine the qualitative data, whilst the quantitative data was analysed by the Statistical

Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS) programme. All results, block quotes, tables and figures in this section are presented in the American Psychology Association (APA) 6th edition format. For the SPSS data, findings will be revealed under two sections namely, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. All inferential statistics are evaluated at a .05 alpha level and all numerical findings are rounded off to 3 decimals places. These are the findings to this study.

Section One: Quantitative Phase

Descriptive statistics

The quantitative sampling consisted of a questionnaire which was administered to 43 participants (n = 43). Of these total participants, 53.5% were male (n = 23) and 46.5 % were female (n = 20). The participant response rate was 100%. The majority of the participants in the sample were between the ages of 25-35 years (46.5%, n = 20), followed by the 36-45 aged category which accounted for 30% (n = 13) of the sample, and 23% (n = 10) of participants were ages 46-65 years. Moreover, 26% of the participants were managers, 16% were supervisors and 58% were part of the administrative staff. Participants had an average of 10 years of employment at their respective organisations (See Table 2).

Table 2

Analysis of Demographics

Demographic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender			
Male	23		
Female	20		
Age			
26 – 35	20		
36 – 45	13		
46 - 65	10		
Position			
Manager	11		
Supervisor	7		
	25		
Administrative	43	10	5.83
Tenure			

Note: Survey Data

Inferential Statistics

R1: Is there a relationship between unplanned changes of leadership and the engagement of employees?

A Pearson's *r* correlation coefficients analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between the number of unplanned changes in leadership, as compared to the level of employee engagement within participants' respective organisations. The results revealed that the relationship

was statistically insignificant, negative and weak in nature ($N = 43$, $r = -.007$, $p > 0.05$). Though the relationship is statistically insignificant, the r value shows that as an organisation experiences changes in leadership, the engagement of the employees decreases (See Table 3).

Table 3

The relationship between changes of leadership and employee engagement

Variables	Number of Participants (N)	Pearson's r	Sig.
Changes in Leadership	43	-.007	.966
Employee Engagement	43		

*Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Survey data.*

R2: Is there a difference in employees' engagement based on their position?

A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference among the positions of employees in their level of employee engagement. The results revealed no statistically significant differences in employee engagement among the positions of the employees, (F

(3, 40) = 2.429, $p > 0.05$) (see Table 3). Further, Post Hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that mean scores for employee engagement showed no significant differences in relation to participants' job positions. Nonetheless, analysis indicated that Managers had the highest level of engagement ($M = 36.91$, $SD = 4.93$) of the three positions. Interestingly, Administrative Staff ($M = 34.68$, $SD = 5.52$) had a higher level of engagement than Supervisors ($M = 31.00$, $SD = 6.53$). (See Table 4)

Table 4

Differences among Staff Positions in Employee Engagement

Self-Efficacy	Df	SS	MS	F	P
Between Groups	3	149.418	74.709	2.429	.101
Within Groups	40	1230.349	30.759		
Total	43	1379.767			

Note: Survey data

R3: What are the effects of change of the leader on morale and productivity?

Participants were asked about the effects of change of the leader on morale and productivity. Forty-four percent of them indicated that the change of

the leader had no effect on their morale or productivity. On the contrary, 23% of the participants thought that the change in leadership had a negative effect on the morale of employees of the organisation. Those who indicated such believed that the constant change in leadership led to the morale of employees taking a severe hit, as persons were unaware of what to expect from new leaders that were incoming to the organisation.

Further, some participants indicated that both productivity and morale were affected by the change in leadership (22%). These participants lamented that constant change led to a stall in productivity, since they felt as though they had to restart their work to match the incoming leader's vision. Lastly, 11% believed that change in leadership led to a positive effect on staff morale and productivity within the organisation. Participants who believed such, indicated that the change led to persons being more efficient in their day-to-day activities (See Figure 5).

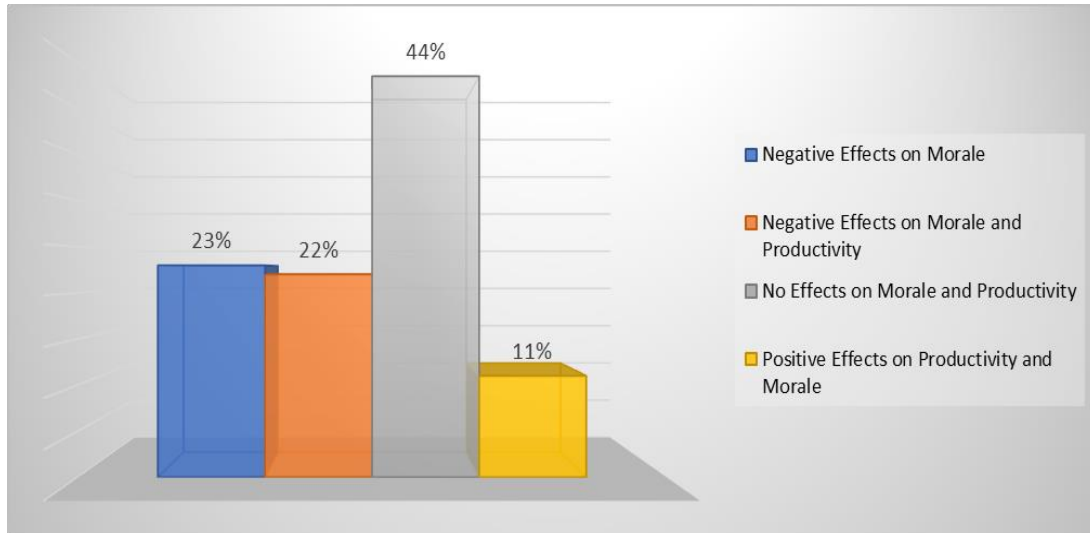


Figure 5. The Effects of Change of the Leader on Morale and Productivity

Nonetheless, the style of the incoming leader greatly impacted on the morale and productivity of staff either negatively or positively. Where employees previously experienced a particular style of leadership, any change from that position affected how the organisation operated, thus, affecting staff responses.

R4: What are the effects of change on organisational culture?

Change of the leader is one of the most concerning issues for businesses and organisations. Participants were asked about the effects of the change of the leader on the culture of the organisation and 35% indicated that the change in leadership had no impact on the culture of the organisation, while 26% of the participants thought that the change of the leader had a negative effect on the employee culture of the organisation. On the other hand, some of the participants

believed that the change of the leader led to a culture of efficiency and high productivity within the organisation (17%). Importantly, 9% of the participants believed that the change of the leader in the organisation led to less interaction among staff. They indicated that change of the leader led to change in structure of the organisation which resulted in less interaction between departments. The remainder of the participants believed that the change of the leader affected the morale and productivity factor and consequently the culture (4%). Still others believed that the change of the leader usually led to the culture becoming energized (4%), and the number of changes of the leader led to a culture of high employee turnover which created job insecurity among staff (4%) (See Figure 6).

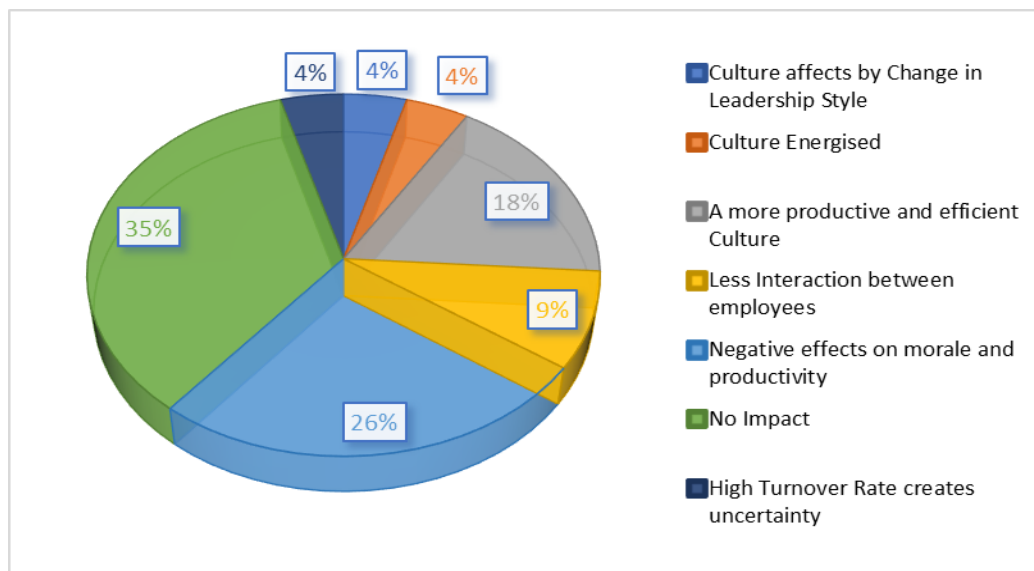


Figure 6. The Effects of Change of the Leader on Organisational Culture

Additionally, where there is uncertainty about the direction of the company due to a change in leadership style, staff become disengaged with their work consequently changing the culture within the organisation. As outlined in the Literature review, every organisation has a culture and that culture is informed by the demographics including geographical location, customs and practice. This can be impacted even by language barriers where a common practice can be deemed offensive by an incoming leader.

R5: What is the greatest challenge of the change of the leader?

Respondents were asked to pinpoint the greatest challenge they encountered as a result of the change of the leader. They were first asked to either choose the challenge in relation to the change process, incoming leaders or to both. The majority of the participants separately indicated that the management of the change process (27%) and the adjustment to a new leader's style (27%) were the biggest challenges they experienced. On the other hand, 23% of the participants indicated that both the change of the leader process and the adjustment to the incoming leader were a challenge. They expressed that the leader was a product of the change process and those two factors are inseparable. Lastly, 23% of the participants indicated that they had no challenges (See Figure 7).

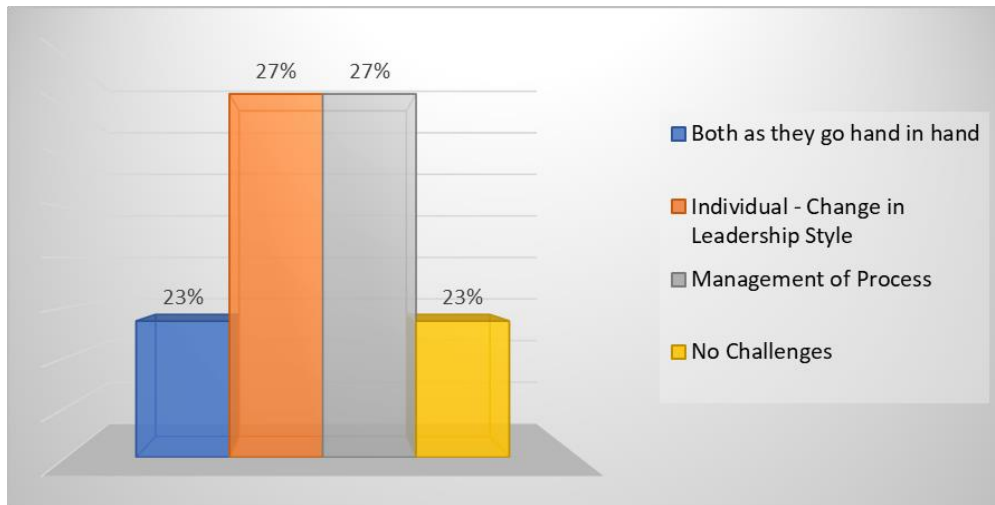


Figure 7. The Greatest Challenges during the Change Process

Every organisation has a vision and mission and any change of the leader should reflect these and can ensure the continuity of the company's organisational goals (Conger, 1992, p. 18). Leaders are the ones who set the strategic direction of the company and who are tasked with ensuring that everyone fully understands the strategy and as such, gain full commitment from the staff.

Regrettably, there are many who do not practice or follow this philosophy and instead have their own strategy or agenda which may counter the already stated strategic path. This may be deliberate as the hierarchy may have mandated these changes be affected or it may simply be a personal style which counter the organisation's strategic goals.

Change of the leader is reliant on a thorough vetting process if the company is to maintain its strategic focus. Organisations have a responsibility

to recruit leaders that are equipped with the necessary skillset to take the company forward. The personal style of the leader will determine the results. Shepherd (2011), noted that in a competitive environment, organisations will have to change if they must respond to what is happening in the market.

R6: How is change of the leader managed?

When participants were asked about how effective their organisation was in managing the change of the leader, it was indicated that there were improvements that could be made to the process. Thirty-six percent of participants indicated that the organisation should communicate more to its employees about the change of the leader, before, during and after the process. Additionally, 36% of the participants also believed that restructuring the organisation as part of the change in leadership could be more cost effective and efficient. It was further noted that change in leadership usually resulted in some employees becoming redundant and this could also lead to job insecurity. Of the remaining participants, 18% indicated that the transition was handled well by the organisation, 5% believed it was not managed well in general and 5% were unsure as to how it was managed (See Figure 8).

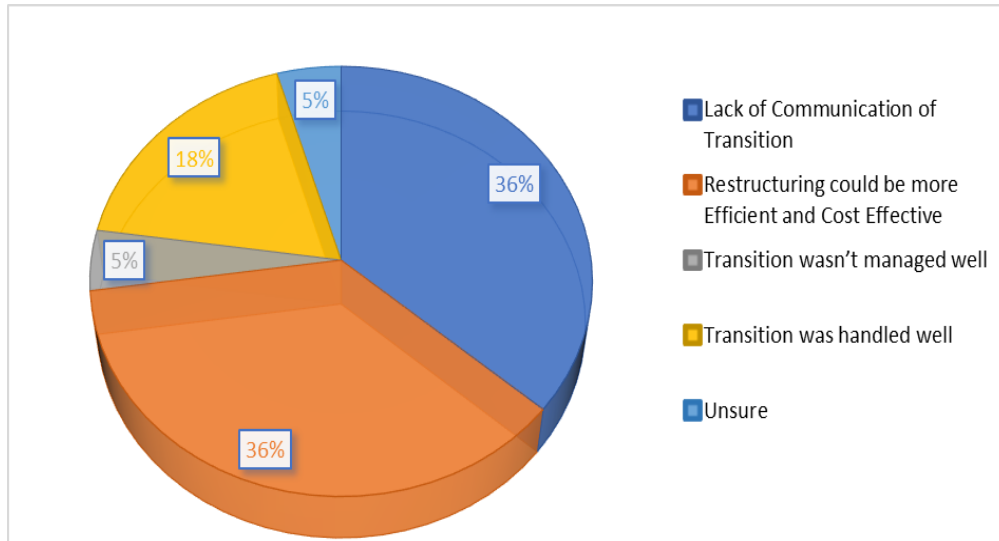


Figure 8. How Change of the leader was Managed

For this question, it was evident that the lack of communication and the restructuring process were the main challenges relating to leadership change. The lack of communication led to conjecture, speculation, fear and uncertainty which further led to bad decision making by key employees. Moreover, ineffective communication not only affected management but all other staff and customers of the organisation. This, of course, affects the company's marketability and profitability.

Section Two: Qualitative Phase

Focus Group Findings

Background of participants.

Data was collected from a focus group consisting of two males and two females ranging from 40 - 55 years old. All participants were employees at their present company for at least ten years, having acquired either management or senior level positions. These employees therefore would have experienced at least three changes of the CEO within their company, hence, they were knowledgeable about its overall impact.

At the beginning of the interviews, it was important to put the participants at ease and to encourage them to share their experiences of when they underwent the change of the CEO in the organisation. The group shared openly and were responsive to the questions at times showing raw emotion when remembering some of the situations which existed during this process. It is important to note that the participants worked at the same organisation and had just experienced another CEO change which was viewed as abrupt and disruptive to the organisation. It was reported that this change was so significant and because of the circumstances surrounding the displacement of the leader, also became a public matter.

Participant 1 – Female – 40 years old – joined the organisation as an administrator 10 years and had experienced two CEO changes – she was promoted to a supervisory level by one of the CEOs

Participant 2 – Female -age 55 – almost thirty years with the company from the start-up of the operation and had experienced all of the CEO changes

Participant 3 - Male – age 49 Senior manager– ten years with the company and had experienced two CEO changes

Participant 4 – Male – age 42 – joined the organisation twelve years ago and was hired as a junior manager.

The interview process

The interview was held in the corporate office and participants knew each other as they were work colleagues. Each person was once again reassured of the protection of their identity and appreciation was expressed for their cooperation in participating in this study. Each participant was asked to introduce themselves and to indicate their length of service and specific job title. They were each asked to speak on the opening question about the number of leader changes they had experienced. The other questions were drawn from their responses as a way to extract their personal views.

Themes which emerged

The focus group interview consisted of open ended questions that led to an enriched discussion from which several themes emerged. However, the overarching themes emerging from the focus group that addressed the impact of change of the leader on employee engagement were (1) how the feelings of uncertainty and fear of the unknown manifests themselves, (2) distress and lack of company engagement, with sub themes of fear, hopelessness, vulnerability and the importance of communication. These themes were borne out by the participants as they shared their views in response to the questions emanating from the scoping study and the pilot study.

Discussion on the themes

Fear of the unknown

All the participants acknowledged that adjusting to new behaviours, attitudes, and dynamics frequently within the company left them in a state of confusion as they were unsure of what was expected from them.

The respondents noted:

When XXX left I wondered how I would adjust to a new style. Certainly when Mr. XXX came it was totally different. Like one employee said – ‘he shot from the hip, he never polished anything’. He said exactly what he wanted, how he wanted to, he would make decisions on his own, something I did not like, and therefore I had to adjust to that more harsh, sometimes brash, plain speaking way of leadership. To me it was like moving from one extreme to another, so I had to alter my whole psyche

to adjust to XXX style (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Another interviewee referred to as Respondent 2 made these statements:

So having sat under two male managers previously we wondered what a female manager would be like, so it was the whole paradigm shift of adjusting to a female manager. I never got accustomed to the meeting aspects of her style. And to be honest I never fully adjusted to her style before her departure. You kind of went along with the flow almost feeling like you were dragged along with the tide. I honestly never fully understood her style (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Respondent 3 also echoed these sentiments with:

We had a CEO who would have been trying to pave their way and that was cut short and now you have a new person who will be bringing a whole new strategy to the team. Even that confuses staff (Respondent 3, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Respondent 4 added this:

Each manager came with a completely different style. I found it difficult to adjust because every time you thought you were making headway a new manager would come with a completely different perspective. My challenge was that I am finding difficulty dealing with these different styles and now I too have people to manage who also feel this uneasiness (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

The confusion impacted on how these employees learned new company roles and ways of engagement. Often, this transformation was difficult and misinterpreted as the employee being resistant to company changes and new leadership. Two of the respondents stated:

I remember when XXX came on board it seemed like he was getting the impression that we were going against what he was trying to do. I had to inform him that that was not the case (Respondent 3, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Change can be a good thing but we got into our tussles early with management (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Distress

As questions were asked regarding the participants' experience with leadership change, the respondents indicated high levels of anxiety, fear and stress. All participants worried about their personal livelihoods and their careers within the company. Individuals believed that the incoming change would either be to cut staffing or implement goals that are unattainable. Some of the respondents stated:

When the news finally came that she would no longer be with the Company it was almost expected. However, some similar feelings remained. For instance, what is going on, what will happen with the company, fear of the unknown, fear of the future (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

When we learned that he would be leaving there was a feeling of the bottom is going to fall out of the bucket and at that time we did not know who was coming and therefore at that time it felt like all hope was lost given that he was everything to the company. There was an air of hopelessness, apart from the shock, and you basically wondered where we would go from here (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

When he called me in his office to tell me he was leaving I was numb. You were not sure of what you were going to get next (Respondent 3, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

I was apprehensive to apply for an internal post due to the fact that I would have to deal with him directly. It is still very difficult to try to make decisions when in the back of your mind you're thinking that something will happen or change again (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

The sense of loss often repeats itself until there is another event or where an employee may come to the realization that the feeling of loss or emptiness can no longer continue and may begin to seek alternate employment.

With the new CEO you felt as though the Company was almost split into two. In that you had employees who were here for a long time and then those who were coming in with the bright ideas; so you felt marginalized and side-lined. It was like you had a split between those who were here for a while and those who came in to take the Company forward (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

One participant felt strongly about how unplanned change of the leader personally affected all of them:

The disruption that immediate unplanned change created left many feeling uncertain of the future even after the initial shock wore off. The distraction caused many to lose focus on their tasks and instead gave way to anxiety and even fear. I felt uncertain and anxious because of the sudden departure. It was as though he was here one day and gone the next and even though we did not have the best relationship, as I did not agree with his management style nor everything that he did or said it was very strange. I felt shocked because it was as though everything had stopped, and this strange feeling of loss prevailed over the organisation (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Another aspect of distress was experienced by managers. Participants in their leadership roles felt additional stress in responses to junior/line staff members who were struggling with change. It became cumbersome as some managers and supervisors had to manage their staff and their emotions, whilst simultaneously trying to handle their individual work and emotions. Three respondents noted:

I was worried, and the staff were worried so I was no help to them as I could not even help myself. No information was forthcoming as to what was going to happen next and I knew that staff believed I had more information which I did not have but I felt that I could not show any emotion because my staff expected me to be strong and resilient. Though I was experiencing my own emotions my role in the company dictated that I had to take full responsibility of whatever had happened or was about to happen (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Everyone was looking at the Human Resources Department for answers as to what happened but we knew nothing more than the announcement. I felt sad that we could provide no answers to the staff and I could tell that as the days went by employees kept to themselves, stopped asking questions and just became introverted. They focused only on the job and were very rigid when it came to their work. They were present, but they only did what they were required to do and nothing more. At the end of the work day everyone left at the end of their shift promptly. Only the managers stayed behind (Respondent 3, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

For instance, we were interacting with one person then one day to hear that the person is gone. So basically, we were in limbo again. So it's an ongoing process and my biggest challenge is trying to deal with all these changes, while still trying to keep the persons who report to you focused even though you are aware that so many things are going (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

In addition, another stressful element was having to deal with customers. Many of them would constantly inquire or express concern about the stability and future success of the organisation and whether this would impact their share prices. There were no answers that could have been given to their many questions and as a result, not only was it stressful for the managers or supervisors to interact with them consistently, but their engagement with the company decreased. This factor was highlighted as a participant expressed:

It was difficult to face the customers and because I had to deal with them on a daily basis it was extremely hard to interact with them, especially those customers who had been clients of the company for a long time and knew the former leader extremely well. I was concerned that the Board of Directors did not meet with the employees and only met with the management team who was then left to disseminate the information as they understood it. Even when the Chairman decided to have a staff meeting his comments were vague and did not fully answer the questions because of limitations (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Managers are often the first to hear of the change in most cases and they are charged with the responsibility of disseminating this change to their staff. They also have a challenge with what information to disseminate since some changes have a high level of confidentiality. Where a leader is being displaced, there is often a high level of privacy surrounding the terms and conditions of the separation. Some of this information is often leaked to the public before being officially communicated to staff. This produces some conflict and resentment

as the public, vendors and customers may ask questions that cannot be answered by staff.

Middle managers or supervisors are often caught in between the chaos because their seniors may not share enough information with them to maintain the morale within the organisation, while their juniors may ask questions based on information heard through the grapevine or on the street. This creates inner turmoil for the supervisor who may be torn between loyalty to his managers and to his staff.

Participants shared their feelings on how they felt internally but could not show this outwardly because they had to be brave for their staff. They believed that a sign of weakness on their part would only create a situation of confusion and panic causing more chaos and impacting on their ability to focus on their jobs. This would then impact on productivity and generate more feelings of worry and stress. One of the respondents noted how evident elevated stress levels were in the organisation by stating:

You could tell that there was an impact and that people were worried for various reasons and of course people were distracted in their minds but because we were a customer service organisation, we had to maintain a straight face and be professional (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Lack of Company Engagement

Participants noted that another major effect experienced was the lack of company engagement during or after the change of the leader. A level of

disengagement was observed in employees as they continued to grapple with change and uncertainty in this new organisation. Low morale and decrease in productivity was evident of how the employees felt. The participants indicated that:

Staff not knowing what is going on and coupled with all the changes that happened staff have resigned themselves to do the bare minimum. Obviously, productivity will decrease, and morale will decrease but the underlying issue will always be communication (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

I have definitely seen a reduction in the overall drive of the staff. We are going towards a goal but it's almost like they lost their way and for the months that the old CEO was away you saw that lack of zeal to go above and beyond the call of duty, which I think was because of the lack of communication (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Before people would be at work late and now you can see a change in that thinking and approach to work. You are moving from a place where people willingly worked to an instance now where people are watching the clock; so there is a level of disengagement (Respondent 3, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

As can be pinpointed from the previous statements made by Respondents 4 and 2, some of the respondents felt that the lack of communication about the leadership changes contributed to the lack of company engagement and consequently affected staff motivation. This lack of company engagement contributed to a change in the organisational culture; change of the leader was

also identified as indicative of affecting organisational culture. Two respondents stated that:

Where there is limited communication staff begin to speculate as to what is happening to the organisation. The organisational culture appeared to change under our very eyes. It was once a vibrant organisation with employees who had been with the company for an average of fifteen years and who were once very proud of the organisation and all that it had accomplished (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

We saw this other person visiting the company often and having meetings and we thought she was there for another reason. It turned out that she was the new CEO and her style was totally different. She really did not know the business and so she had to learn on the job. Many times mistakes were made but she was also a go getter and as such she was able to network externally. Some of her decisions did not sit well with the staff and overtime there was a disconnect with the staff who did not trust anything that she said. Overtime, the culture changed and you could feel it, staff became less engaged and was just going through the motions (Respondent 1, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Democratic Leader with Emotional Intelligence

Along with the aforesaid major themes that spoke to the impact of change of the leader on the organisation, another interesting theme emerged from the data, that of democratic leader with emotional intelligence. All of the participants made an indication of how they favoured and felt more comfortable with the leader who not only was result-oriented but made them feel included in decisions and was interested in their well-being. These types of leaders were more respected and motivated employees to go beyond in their roles and

responsibilities. These leaders were equally results-oriented and people-oriented. On the contrary, leaders who possessed an autocratic style were challenging to work with and disliked by staff. Some of the responses corresponding with this theme were:

My first CEO was a true leader, very kind and charismatic. He got along with everyone and he had the respect of everyone. It was very sad when the new CEO arrived. He was a complete opposite to our former CEO, there was nothing smooth about him. He was not afraid to disagree and to challenge anyone who did not support his position. He was loud and rough and would berate in public both his managers and the general staff. He was very dogmatic and if he believed in something there was no changing his mind. Some described him as arrogant and autocratic. He resisted any change. His manner was brusque and he did not care who he offended.

In fact, I have witnessed him many times disobeying the instructions of the Board and the Chairman and was very much a law unto himself. We eventually resigned ourselves to who he was, but many times I felt like giving up and could not understand why he would not listen to his leaders. All ideas came from him and we were expected to implement those ideas without question. He was very autocratic and difficult to reason with. He was not interested in spending money to make the staff comfortable and simple things such as amenities for staff such as ergonomic equipment, good lunch room facilities and anything that would make the staff more comfortable. He just did not want to spend any money and as a result the office was very cramped and looked untidy. These things were not important to him, but they were important to the staff and they felt as they were being ignored and all that matter was the profits (Respondent 2, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Another respondent spoke of the difficulty experienced in their personal management of the change of leader.

The last change I experienced was a difficult one more so because of the kind of person he was; soft spoken individual but carried an air of respect and was well liked by the staff. When he announced his resignation there was a feeling of 'the bottom is going to fall out the bucket' and it felt as

though all hope was lost. He was very interested in your wellbeing and he remembered your family, every little detail that you shared with him. He would remember if your child was sick or any other life event. He was very approachable and was willing to share his knowledge with everyone. I learned a lot from him, even how to be a good leader. When he announced that he was leaving I was stunned and did not know what to say. I was very sad as was all of the staff. Some employees cried. Up until his final day at work he was the same as he always was. He went to everyone and shook their hand, thanked them for their support and wished them well. He was the epitome of a good leader – he never showed his anger and you could not even tell when he was angry or annoyed. He never criticized in public. The morale during his tenure was great, employees were happy to work with him and there was a spirit of camaraderie. We looked out for each other and he encouraged that type of relationship. After he left it was [as] though we were in grieving (Respondent 3, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

These sentiments are mirrored in the those made by respondent 4.

When I joined the organisation, I was recruited by the second CEO and so I had no experience with the first one although I often heard staff referring to the fact that he was a likeable person and that they missed him and his leadership style. The new CEO was rough and loud and he called a spade a spade. Sometimes his timing was poor. Our department did not have any autonomy and everything we did had to be authorised and signed off by him. He was a very autocratic leader. He communicated when he needed to but he was not always opened to suggestions and recommendations. Eventually I became accustomed to his rough manner after some time and I was not afraid to approach him to ask questions although some of my colleagues were. We developed a healthy respect for each other after time and were able to have free and open dialogue without fear of reprisal. Not everyone enjoyed the same relationship however (Respondent 4, personal communication, September 5, 2017).

Summary of Key Findings

The key findings of the study have identified specific themes and responds to the research questions listed below providing evidence that the

change of the leader can impact employee engagement. For review the research questions are:

1. Is there a relationship between unplanned changes of leadership and the engagement of employees?
2. Is there a difference in employees' engagement based on their position?
3. What are the effects of change of the leader on morale and productivity?
4. What are the effects of change on organisational culture?
5. What is the greatest challenge of the change of the leader?
6. How is change of leader was managed?

Quantitative Summary

From the results of this research the following conclusions can be inferred:

1. There is no significant statistical correlation between unplanned change of the leadership of an organisation and employee engagement.
2. There is no statistical significance with respect to the differences in the level of employee engagement among the categories of positions.
3. Although the largest segment of the participants indicated that change in leadership neither affected their morale nor productivity, the combination of the remaining participants (the collective) showed that the higher of

respondents, fifty-six percent, believed that change either negatively or positively impacted their morale or productivity, or both.

4. While 35%, attributed to the largest segment, indicated that the change to leadership resulted in no impact on culture, a significant percentage (65%) expressed that there was cultural impact in an organisation as a result of the change of a leader. However, this is based on different types or categories of cultural impact and at differing degrees.
5. Management of the change process and the adjustment to a new style of leadership were identified as presenting the most challenges during the change process.
6. The majority of the participants (82%) concluded that the process of changing a leader was mismanaged. This was determined from the varied types of responses (from 5% to 36%) regarding the mismanagement of the change process. Most persons indicated that the organisation should communicate more with employees when a change in leadership is occurring and that restructuring the organisation in response to a change in leadership can be more cost effective and efficient.

Qualitative Summary

The major themes generated from the focus group showed that change of the leader and its impact on employment engagement was varied. Feelings of uncertainty, fear, distress and lack of company engagement emerged as the major themes. Participants expressed that as a result of the constant change in leadership they experienced confusion and at times a lack of understanding regarding the direction of the organisation. This stemmed from adjustments to new attitudes, behaviours and organisational dynamics. Persons reported feeling distressed and worried about their livelihoods and careers within the company. There was fear the change would introduce staff cuts and goals or objectives that were difficult to accomplish.

Interestingly, individuals reported feeling distress as it related to their employees and managing their stresses and emotions whilst managing their own. Lack of company engagement was also reported among participant employees, as they struggled with change of the leader within the organisation. According to the participants, decreased morale and productivity occurred as a result. Overwhelmingly, participants in the focus group agreed that they preferred a leader who was people-oriented, exhibited a democratic leadership style and one who was not simply result-oriented but also inclusive in the decision-making process. These leaders seemed to be more respected than leaders who exhibited an autocratic leadership style.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes with the view that there are a number of factors that impact on employee engagement when there is a change of the leader in an organisation. It also addressed that the way change is managed may have a negative impact on the success of the change. The question therefore arises as to the extent to which this study is transferable to other organisations based on their size, industry and supervisory ratio or where it is an organisation where the employee has experienced just one change.

Despite the sample size of the study being small (43 respondents), the researcher advances that the study is indeed transferable to other organisations. The above criteria will now be discussed in turn.

The research was conducted in two financial services organisations, one a large organisation and the other a medium size organisation. This would suggest that the study can be applied across any industry as change occurs across all sectors of business.

Although the ratio of supervisors to non-management employees in the study was 42%, it was not significant enough to determine that the number could not be greater than or smaller than the study. Chapter Five provides further discussion of these themes in relation to the literature and concludes with a conceptual model presented as a contribution to practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Overview

The aim of this study was to understand leadership change at the CEO level in an organisation and its impact on employee engagement while exploring ways that we can mitigate any negative effects or fallout from this change. This chapter therefore will discuss and expand on the findings in relation to the literature on the impact of the change of the leader in an organisation on employee engagement. It will be noted that the main findings of the study indicated that there is an impact, however, there are a few variables that were highlighted in the findings that were deemed appropriate to explore.

Conceptual Framework

Reiterating the focus to investigate the impact of leadership change on employee engagement, below is an outline with the two variables used in this research along with their conceptual and operational definitions. Included is a diagram of the conceptual framework identifying the key themes in this study. Further, these perspectives will be depicted in the form of a diagram that can help us to understand the impact of the change of the leader on employee engagement.

Table 5

Conceptual and Operation Definitions

CONCEPTS	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION
Change of the leader	Turnover at the CEO level	A series of closed and open-ended questions about leadership change
Employee Engagement	One's passion, commitment, morale and productivity on the job	A series of closed and open-ended questions about employee engagement

Discussion on Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between unplanned changes of leadership and the engagement of employees?

By using a mixed method design, the researcher has been able to garner some insight into the relationship between CEO change in an organisation and its impact on employee engagement. The change of the leader was and is very prevalent in the world today and is a common function of organisational dynamics. Though some literature shows that this form of restructuring does work, many lack information on the organisational implications and only until recently included the impact of the change of the leader on its employees. However, some research has provided evidence supporting the damaging effects

of organisational change on the persons who experience it (Jayawardena, 2002). Similarly, the findings in this research though showing a weak relationship between change of the leader and employee engagement, indicated that the results are more negative than positive.

This implies that as an unplanned change occurs, the level of employee disengagement will rise. It is a fact that employee engagement may decrease because of the level of fear of the unknown as the employees contemplate their future, both from a professional and personal level, within the organisation. This naturally occurs in instances where employees might have been on an upward trajectory in the organisation and had been recommended for some type of job enrichment or enlargement which would have led to career advancement. The advent of a new leader could jettison those plans, as a new CEO would be seeking to set his stamp on the operation and he might not see the need to pursue the plans made by his predecessor.

The fear factor cannot be minimised. My research has shown that any change in an organisation brings *real fear*. Once there is *a wind of a change*, the employees' internal reasoning and self-questioning commences. Some of the questions being asked are

- 1) What does this change mean to me?
- 2) How will it impact me?
- 3) How will I cope with the change?

- 4) What will the end result be?
- 5) Will this change be beneficial to me?
- 6) How will I survive after this change?

If the change of leader benefits the individual, there is acceptance, but if it is thought to be disadvantageous, the internal negotiation and questioning continues until there is some definitive communication from the new management.

Anecdotal Evidence to Research Question 1

Anecdotal evidence reports on an instance where a major change was taking place in a company and it was rumoured to be relocating to another territory, resulting in job loss. There was this fear for months among the employees, some of whom were unsure how to respond to the news. This possible organisational change became the hot topic at the water cooler and in the lunch room and each day as the rumour gathered traction, the leadership team was being asked about the validity of the rumour. They too were unaware of the rumour and sought to allay the fears of the employees, assuring them that this was nothing more than some grapevine information. However, as the months went by the leader was informed by the corporate head office that they were exploring other locations, as the Barbadian cost of living was too high to sustain

a viable business. He informed his management team of this potential disruption and requested that the information be kept confidential until the official announcement was made.

In addition, in an effort to sway the decision of the corporate team and to convince them that although Barbados was a high-priced business, the quality of the product was outstanding and since the possible alternative site did not have English as their first language, it would be more advantageous to retain Barbados as the hub. There was a commitment to improve productivity so as to reduce the cost of the operations. This required the commitment of the employees to improve their time keeping, reduce errors, eliminate overtime and regularise the work schedules so that there was no weekend work which increased cost. Employees were eventually informed that the head office was contemplating the move to another territory and advised that it was because of the high cost to operate in Barbados. Some employees on the verge of making life decisions such as obtaining loans to become homeowners shelved those plans because they were fearful that they would not be able to honour their financial commitment should the company make the decision to relocate.

This state of flux continued for two years and every announcement made by the head office was greeted with doubt and cynicism as staff were convinced that since cost was the deciding factor the decision would not be in their favour. Yet employees engaged themselves in the process to make the operation more

cost effective and efficient. During this period, the foreign-born leader exited the organisation to return to the corporate office in the United States and a local CEO was installed. This move created greater fear as employees saw this as the beginning of the end and that the exit of the CEO was a signal to start the restructuring process. Employees “then existed in a state of limbo” in the organisation, as the eventual closure came some two years after the initial news of relocation.

During the two-year period, some employees had however shown increased engagement, as they had started to lobby to keep the operation going locally, though this proved futile. When the news of the change came there was just a quiet acceptance and some employees were relieved that the decision had been made and that they could move on with their lives. There was no chaos in this change and since the CEO was local, he understood the requirement of the labour laws and negotiated with the parent company for a settlement for each employee that not only satisfied what was statutorily due, but where employees were given ex gratia, outplacement support services, guidance on becoming an entrepreneur and investment lessons to ensure that the severance received was not squandered. This softened the blow of the loss of the company as employees were able to plan their next steps without any significant financial losses. This shows that although negative change can occur, the management of such can still be positive.

Conversely the experience of a disruptive change in the organisation was borne out when the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer of a major company in Barbados were ousted at the same time for allegedly committing some type of fraud. Another company terminated its entire leadership team at the same time when it was discovered that they had presided over a significantly poor financial year with no evidence of any effort to mitigate such loss. Notably, the colleagues who remained were fearful of future actions that the company would take including a potential closure of the business. This did not materialise but certainly caused the company to suffer some reputational loss and confidence of its employees who felt that the decisions were poorly constituted and not properly thought out.

This is consistent with Wittig's (2012) findings when he noted that any disruptive change in the organisation will have an impact on employees, particularly if there is displacement of colleagues. Further, he also noted in his research that this can lead to disengagement or nonchalance, particularly if employees are unclear on what the changes can mean for them. This latter statement also proved to be true as participants noted on many occasions, that the lack of further direction or details in relation to the leadership change or its effects and after effects, contributed to their feelings and attitudes of detachment and disengagement from the company.

In a most unusual occurrence, it was reported that a leader of an organisation was so disliked by the staff that on his exit from the organisation, the staff celebrated by having a party. The entrance of the new leader was eagerly anticipated, and he was fully accepted into the organisation, since his style was democratic and encouraged staff development, reward and recognition.

Employee engagement in the workplace is a heavily researched topic. This is because research has found in many cases, that of the myriad of challenges that can be experienced by workers, employee engagement has the potential to aide in understanding the position of the worker from a deep level of analysis (Edmonds, 2011). As was found in this research however, regardless of the number of times a leader is changed, conditions must be created for employees to thrive and be responsive to the need to achieve the company's strategic objectives. Employees at all levels of the organisation must be in tuned to achieve the best results for the organisation (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Discussion of Research Question 2

Is there a difference in employees' engagement based on their position?

The findings of the research data reveal that during leadership changes, supervisors appear the least engaged with work than any other position in the organisation. Though there was no statistically significant difference in employee engagement among the varying positions of employees, it was found

that administrative staff had a higher level of engagement than supervisors, and managers had the highest level of engagement. In essence, the study shows that the higher the job position an individual holds, the more engaged with the company they may be. Prins et al. (2015), explained this finding in their research outcomes, noting that middle managers or supervisors are often caught in between the chaos because their seniors may not share enough information with them to maintain the morale within the organisation, while their juniors may ask questions based on information heard through the *grapevine* or on the street. Consequently, this creates turmoil for the supervisor who may be torn between loyalty to his managers and to his staff.

We are also seeing the phenomenon of the manifesting in the administrative grouping, as employees acknowledged and were cognisant of the fact that not everyone would adapt to or be accepting of the new leadership. Dismissals and some attrition would occur and this group would be deemed to be posturing, to be seen as competent to be considered to fulfil any roles that came with a promotion. This is a clear example of the Hawthorne effect which refers to a type of study where employees when monitored, behaved differently and worked harder when they were being observed (Levitt, 2011).

Further, the focus group respondents being managers or supervisors in their job roles, explained that this is also the case, as during leadership changes they are sometimes not provided with adequate information but are expected to

continue exhibiting a level of professionalism. Without adequate information on what is occurring in the company, these managers or supervisors are tasked with spearheading strategies to manage changes of leadership at the CEO level but like their subordinates, are in a state of dissonance as well.

Managers have no problem being respectful and professional as they believe that if they acted out of character, subordinates looking on would become more disengaged with their work and begin to panic. However, they also felt anxious about the company's next direction and worried about being dismissed. Yet, they try to remain as calm as possible during the change process. However, it was difficult to answer any questions or queries from subordinates and more often than not, these middle managers found difficulty in knowing what their next steps should be to assist in such situations. What obtained is that managers and supervisors continued to operate as normal, while waiting for more information to be provided to them.

However, this period of waiting, in what some may call a state of limbo, fostered a continual decrease in employee engagement with some employees in lower positions not willing to put in any extra effort to complete or execute their work. As Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2006) noted, what is critical to the acceptance of a new leader is the presence of full and open communication on the change before, during and after its occurrence. When this happens, then all

employees, from middle management to layman, can better adapt to the change in leadership.

Discussion on Research Question 3

What are the effects of change of leader on morale and productivity?

The majority of respondents to the questionnaire believed that morale and productivity were not affected by the leadership change, whilst some of them indicated that it did. However, this question was further investigated with the focus group and they shared differing sentiments. As managers and supervisors, they have documented evidence of a decline in morale and productivity; though at face value their subordinates appear to be calm and even detached during such leadership changes.

For this reason, managers and supervisors believed that if they remained outwardly brave to their staff and showed no weakness as leaders, then they would prevent employees from going into a tailspin, causing more chaos which then impacts on supervisees being able to focus and perform well in their respective roles. Although these middle managers experienced similar emotions to their subordinates, they could not exhibit such. It was necessary in their roles to be calm and strong for their colleagues.

Interestingly, the results indicated that change had different connotations for line staff as compared to managers or supervisors. Line staff felt that though

there was an initial shock of the separation and feelings of dissonance, that there was no decrease of their engagement with the company. They felt that their daily routines and responsibilities were executed efficiently as per usual. However, this was not consistent with the views of managers or supervisors as aforementioned.

Yet, managers or supervisors had no speculations before the reports emerged that their subordinates were impacted by the change process and it was believed that they were managing it well. Could this be a case that at the unconscious level employees were unaware of what they were truly feeling, or did they know and were apprehensive in sharing? In my 35 years as an H R practitioner, it has been my experience that employees are mistrustful of completing surveys and are hesitant of speaking against their employers. Survey responses are therefore known to be skewed, as they tend to be '*middle of the road*' so as not to ruffle any feathers. There is also the fear of being identified and victimised.

Further, the question must also be asked whether it is that managers or supervisors need more training in detecting such discrepancies early on, so that change strategies can be implemented, or can we say that like the subordinates, managers and supervisors were also operating on a decreased level of engagement, but with no one to monitor them this could not be proven? This is

an occurrence that has yet to be explored in research and can inform a new aspect of organisational change and employee engagement.

Of note, on the one hand, the majority of line staff in this study believed that their productivity or morale was not impacted by the leadership change, but their managers and supervisors reported that it did based on work output. This can further give insight to the types of training that managers may need to undergo, to effectively pinpoint any emotional challenges or changes with their employees and be able to implement any necessary employee assistance programmes. As noted by Abbas and Asghar (2010), a culture of recognition, accountability and empowerment will motivate employees to be more engaged and thus, the organisation can grow and thrive even in the face of challenges. This, however, still reflects a similar disposition with the literature as acknowledging that leadership change does in fact impact on morale and productivity (Marcelle-Peart, 1998).

Based on the previous paragraphs, when an organisation is going through such changes, employees look to supervisors or managers for direction. However, it was revealed that those in such positions often do not have answers or direction to provide. Conger (1992) reiterated that when the organisation is going through a difficult period of change and the employees look to the leader for direction and communication to no avail, employee morale can be severely impacted, weakening the organisation's and leader's ability to deal with the day

to day running of the business successfully and responding to external competition.

Morale and productivity are two of the most critical elements in an organisation's success, one impacting directly on profitability and the other on the employees and therefore when they are threatened the organisation must ensure that they are not allowed to deteriorate. Organisations must be aware that every action that is taken can impact on morale and productivity positively or negatively. As a consultant, as I visited my clients, I was often told that the morale was low yet when I sought to find out why, no significant, specific reason was given. In cases where a reason was forthcoming, this mainly centred on the behaviour of the leader to the staff where there was disrespect, little to no acknowledgement of their efforts and a feeling of stagnation. When there is a new change of leadership there is an air of expectation and a bright outlook as staff look to the new leader for direction and guidance.

Anecdotal Evidence to Research Question 3

In our school system an acting principal has dredged up an old policy where the male students are not permitted to wear facial hair. This rule has not been applied for many years and so the practice has been to allow for the wearing of facial hair. With this new rule there has been protest by the parents and the school has not been able to settle down into the new term. In an almost comical

spin, it is interesting to note that the principal wears a full beard with unkempt dreadlocks. Therefore, staff, students and parents are calling this move unfair, hypocritical and biased. Thus, this leadership change has caused the morale and productivity to decline and a relatively quiet school environment appears now to be in turmoil. This will impact on the students who should be focused on an exhaustive syllabus and cannot afford to lose time on what some may consider as frivolous (Barbados Today, 2019).

Discussion on Research Question 4

What are the effects of change on organisational culture?

Chatman and Cha (2003) and Kerr and Slocum (2005) define organisational culture as a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that show people what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. These values are believed to “have a strong influence on employee behaviour as well as organisational performance.” Wong (2020) list nine key qualities that organisations should cultivate. These are appreciation where recognition is given for contributions made in the organisation; alignment where the organisation’s objectives and the employees’ motivation are aligned; trust, which allows employees to freely express themselves while knowing that their backs are ‘covered’ so to speak; performance where employees are motivated to succeed; resilience which allows leaders to watch for changes and respond to such with

ease and teamwork, which encompasses collaboration, communication and respect among all levels of employees.

According to Rooij and Fine (2019), a toxic culture does not inspire an employee to work harder and very often results in resentment and disengagement. Where the culture is negative and feelings of disengagement exists, disconnect and low morale can overshadow and undermine the objectives of the organisation and can derail the strategic direction (Rooij & Fine, 2019). On the other hand, a positive culture encourages the employee to give of his best and engenders a spirit of teamwork and innovation (Rooij & Fine, 2019).

In this study, culture within the organisation was affected by change based on the outgoing or incoming leadership style of the leader. The democratic style of leadership was more favoured by the participants, therefore, if the person leaving the company exhibited such qualities, then employees felt a sense of loss and disconnect at the change. However, if the person coming in ascribed to a democratic style of leadership then the company momentum if negative, will shift to a positive one. Thus, if the outgoing or incoming leader exhibited an autocratic style of leadership, participants are impacted negatively, disrupting the culture of the organisation.

This was also reiterated by focus group members as they noted that along with their subordinates, they too felt that the culture of the organisation was affected based on the incoming or outgoing leadership style of the individual.

Further, they explained that they thrived best when that leadership style was democratic in nature as opposed to an autocratic leader. As Khan et al. (2015) have noted in their research, an autocratic leader can drive good talent away from the organisation and this can retard organisational growth or stifle creativity and innovation.

Interestingly, the data revealed that culture was also affected by job insecurity as a result of the leadership change. Employees believed that the number of changes in leadership led to a culture of high employee turnover which created concerns for job security among staff. Though the lack of statistical significance could be related to the sample size, which inherently might not show marginal differences, research has found job insecurity to be an integral factor in a person's work life, even more so when restructuring methods are involved. This is due to the fact that employment assists individuals in creating a more structured life and essentially aids in catering to the needs of individuals and their dependents (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2006).

It would be beneficial to researchers based in the Caribbean to understand what these varying structures mean to Caribbean workers. When workers see the phrase 'job insecurity', what do they think of? Though the results showed no significant difference, further analysis could provide data on the issues workers in the Caribbean, more specifically in Barbados, place under labels when they see them in questionnaires. This too gives credence to the importance of

qualitative research, which could potentially assess the many “whys” that would arise during research.

In the Barbadian context, employees are noted for being non-confrontational particularly as it relates to responding to those who are in authority. However, this lack of overt objection has given rise to a more passive aggressive approach to managing the relationships between management and employees. This does indicate that the work force in this region can be difficult to deal with but that persons do accept the status quo even when it disturbs or disrupts the norm. It can be said that this trait stems from a historical past where Barbadians were taught to be respectful, non-challenging and accepting of any decision handed down by anyone seen as an authority figure. Furthermore, the history of slavery and oppression still colours modern-day experiences in the workplace and although this has been slowly changing, over time, there is still a tendency to revert to the comfort zone of subjugation and acquiescence.

In addition, since most of these organisations are trans-national and led locally by expatriates, there is a reluctance by locals to be dissident, as there is an assumption that whatever the new leader is implementing has been given the blessing by those who would have chosen him and therefore, such resistance would bring some form of rebuke or disciplinary action. The current economic situation also contributes to the hesitancy of some to really speak their minds since there is much turmoil in the job market. Furthermore, with the experiences

of restructuring and outsourcing, many are fearful of losing their jobs because of victimisation and persons tend to remain silent or only share their views within their immediate circle of friends. As such, employees would not respond with direct disapproval but rather, this would be borne out in their level of engagement, either through social interactions outside of office hours, reclusiveness and a sole focus only on tasks specific to daily work. Any other non-measurable activity is abandoned in a passive-aggressive effort to show dissatisfaction with the change process and attempts by the management to ascertain views on any change may not be forthcoming, particularly in large forums where the protection of anonymity is absent.

The Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI), an instrument used globally to measure organisational culture assessment and developed by Human Synergistics International of Plymouth, Michigan, measures “12 distinct but interrelated sets of behavioural norms and expectations that describe the thinking and behavioural styles that might be implicitly or explicitly required for people to "fit in" and "meet expectations" in an organisation” (Balthazard & Cook, 2004). These twelve sets of norms are then categorised into three general “clusters” or types of organisational cultures: Constructive, Passive/Defensive and Aggressive/Defensive. From the previous discussion, it can be surmised that when employees feel that they are not part of the organisation’s decision making

process as it relates to change, this leads to what the Inventory refers to as Passive/Defensive and Aggressive/Defensive cultural norms.

Discussion on Research Question 5

What is the greatest challenge of change of leader?

Communication

Hellevig (2012), introduced the importance of leaders in activating engagement during change processes. He posited that leaders should ensure that their staff is fully engaged and committed to giving of their very best. This requires that leaders in the organisation clearly share their vision with their employees and create a culture of openness and trust which will have a positive impact on the relationship. Respondents though agreeing with Hellevig's notions of a leader's effect on engagement during changes, felt that this rarely occurs during leadership changes within their organisations and even after the change is made. Participants noted that there was a lack of communication before, during and after the change process and that the management process which entailed effectively communicating what was occurring, was the biggest challenge for employees.

Allen, Jammieson and Borda (2007), noted that effective communication is a two-way process and is key to any change management strategy, as a mechanism for continuous information sharing and gathering. It is vital for

employees as it is the basis on which individuals and groups make sense of their organisation, what it is and what it means for them. Therefore, it is critical that managers not only provide useful information on any changes in the organisation but seek to understand the employees' concerns (Tavakoli, 2014). There are many reasons why organisational change programmes fail and this can include poor planning, change in strategy, the culture and even the timing reference. However, one of the chief reasons for the failure of organisational change efforts is communication (Elving et al., 2015). Yet, one cannot blame the management staff who do not have adequate information to provide to subordinates or even customers regarding the leadership changes.

As was noted by the focus group, communication was challenging for them as well as they too were unaware of what was occurring. On one hand, though management wanted to answer all line staff queries and engage them in conversation, they were limited with information, and in some instances could not divulge what was occurring because of legalities. Therefore, when participants were asked about the engagement between senior and middle managers, the majority of them in both groups indicated that there is a need for better communication between managers, supervisors and junior staff members.

It is then a query as to who is to blame for this lack of communication as revealed in this study, or who is responsible for sharing such information and why was it not shared in an efficient and effective manner? Beatty (2015), in

her research on communicating during organisational change, noted that there should be a communication plan for when changes occur within an organisation. The individual selected to divulge such information is one who should be able to effectively state the issues without causing panic.

By the time communication and dialogue between employees and CEOs became open, it was more so to direct employees of their next steps. During these dialogues, employees are anxious as they try to figure out the leadership styles of the new CEO since it could either make things better or worse for them in the organisation, and whether or not they would still be an employee in the case of restructuring. Smollan (2015), in his research study indicated that the “wait and see” dynamic is rather daunting and took a toll on the health and wellbeing of affected staff. Some of the resultant effects on individuals included disturbed sleeping patterns, weight gain, emotional outbursts and anger. Though this research did not explore aspects of health that could be impacted, all of the participants divulged feelings of intense distress as a result of the lack of communication.

Many of the challenges associated with disengagement can be competently managed by a sound communication strategy. Leaders should fully understand the importance of communication and this is often taught as the basics for leadership, where the rudiments explain that communication is two-way and that communication is not only about talking but also about listening to

hear and understand. Yet communication often misses the mark as only the top-down approach is applied, where the communication flow from leadership to line staff is practiced.

What stands out in my personal experience is staff meetings which are a perfect forum for effective communication, if done correctly. However, the agenda is usually created by the leader who then presents on his topic and shares his views. At the end of an often-lengthy presentation or which can almost be viewed as a monologue, the question is asked “are there any questions” to which there is hardly ever a response. The new leader believes that he has communicated and many staff members are disengaged from the conversation but are more so engaged with their own thoughts.

There is also a tendency for communication to be sent in memoranda particularly if it is difficult news to share and this may be viewed by the employees as an attempt to stifle feedback. Trust is a critical component to effective communication and if not evident will further erode the engagement of the employee. Even though there may be a sophisticated communication strategy, if the information is not found to be credible it will not resonate with the audience.

One of the respondents described the initial news of a significant organisational change where there was the rumoured merger of the two largest financial institutions on the island, which could impact over 1000 employees.

However, when the leadership was confronted with the rumour, the response was “nothing to see here, get back to work”. Three months later the fallout occurred, and several employees were displaced at all levels across the organisation. This shook the confidence of those who remained and gave rise to a level of scepticism to any further communication on the matter. In hindsight, that company should have employed an effective plan to sensitise employees to the magnitude of the pending change instead of ignoring it until it was imminent. The reputation of the leaders suffered greatly, and 17 years later there still resides an air of mistrust of the leadership. Just recently, a similar error was repeated by this same organisation where news of another major change was relayed via social media before it was formally communicated to staff.

Unfortunately, this practice appears all too common in the Caribbean, particularly in large companies where information is seen in the media before being communicated internally. This gives rise to anxiety and chaos as employees seek to decipher what is true and what is not. In my experience, this anxiety also gives rise to stress related illnesses, disengagement and low morale.

Leadership Style

Another topic that emerged from the data is that of the CEOs’ style of leadership as they enter the organisation. The respondents in the questionnaire felt that the leader who is empathetic, open, encouraging and inclusive had a

greater impact on employees and was easily adjusted to, whilst the leader who did not care about employees' wellbeing, focused strictly on tasks and was not inclusive or encouraging was least favoured. As noted by Applebaum, Habashy, Malo and Shafiq (2012), the democratic leadership style increased morale within the organisation since ideas and suggestions could be shared. In their review, they found out that this style was embraced by most people and it is widely viewed as a more effective style since an excessive, autocratic leadership style often led to some uprising or rebellion.

Employees in the survey favoured the leader who displayed a democratic style of leadership as oppose to an autocratic style. This was problematic because participants had challenges adjusting to any new CEO who exhibited a leadership style that was not democratic in nature and most often this was the case. In such situations, respondents had challenges corresponding or engaging with these individuals and often felt a sense of disconnect with the company as a result. Further, those in management positions within the focus group also confirmed such views. As management staff, they too had challenges with adjusting to any new leadership style that was not democratic in nature. Though they had to take directives from these new leaders, they recognised that their subordinates were struggling or struggled to adjust, especially in instances where the individual who was leaving had a preferred leadership style.

One characteristic of the autocratic style which respondents preferred their new leader to exhibit is the ability to at times be task oriented but in a cohesive way with other employees. Recent studies have suggested that there is no right or wrong style to leadership, but rather that an effective leader can display all of the traits depending on the situation and that these styles can be used intermittently to suit the situation (Goleman, 2014). Goleman espoused the notion that the most effective leaders use a collection of different leadership styles, each in the right measure at just the right time. This type of approach is known as the situational leader. It was realized that though respondents spoke about the terms democratic and autocratic styles, their explanations of their preferences in detail were that of the situational leader.

An effective leader leads from the front and is instrumental in guiding the organisation through challenging times. He or she must recognize and bring out the leadership qualities of all of his employees so that during harsh periods of transition, there would still be a measure of confidence in the process of change.

Anecdotal Evidence Relating to Style of the Leader

An interesting observation to note on a national level is that of the successive governments in our island state. Our former Prime Minister was intelligent and articulate but was not believed to be an effective communicator. He did not exhibit strong leadership and this appeared to result in a disjointed

management team. Despite the numerous pressures faced by the country, he did not address the issues and refused to communicate with the electorate, instead deferring to a laissez faire leadership style and a nonchalant attitude to the concerns raised at the national level.

This gave rise to much disquiet in the country and resulted in agitation by not only social groups, but his own internal team of Ministers. There was allegedly an attempted intervention by a group of concerned Ministers but this was foiled and disbanded before it could occur. In the December 13, 2011 edition of the Nation newspaper, an article entitled “Full Story. Eager Eleven” stated that eleven dissatisfied Members of Parliament were seeking an “urgent” audience with the Prime Minister to discuss the matter of “grave concern” pertaining to his leadership and “to chart a path forward for the retention of our Party in Government.”

Many of our social commentators took to the airwaves to immortalise this leadership style in song and it became a national joke, even where his name is now synonymous with “not saying anything”. This was acute because the previous Prime Minister was the epitome of engagement, dubbed ‘a man of the people’ who spoke frequently either from the political stage or with the ordinary man of the street and until his passing, was revered by all. Therefore, this new style of leadership was vastly different and one that did not bode well with the citizens of the country. Even when the Prime Minister eventually decided to be

more engaging with the electorate he was flatly rejected in a case of “too little too late”.

By this time the country was undergoing significant financial pressures and social services were being undermined such as the mismanagement of the Sewerage Project on the South coast, which was the *proverbial straw that broke the camel's back*. The inability to fix this major international embarrassment which saw sewerage overflowing on the streets, coupled with the apparent nonchalant response from the Prime Minister and his Cabinet and the frequent downgrading of the country's debt rating by Standard and Poor's Global Rating Agency, resulted in his massive defeat at the polls in 2018 where, in an unprecedented move, his entire Ministerial team was defeated.

From this election, a new leader emerged and immediately captured the attention of the country by her engaging leadership style which included frequent dialogue with the country using all types of media including Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Although the demeanour of the new Prime Minister appears *laissez faire* she employs all of the leadership styles described by Lewin (1947), but at the appropriate time. Just recently, when the country was put on high alert due to the imminent passage of a tropical weather system, her proactive style saw her leading from the front in mobilising all of the various social services in putting the country on national alert. It was said that because of this

transformative style, the Prime Minister was able to mobilise those citizens who otherwise would not be motivated to be prepared.

Even in the face of new austerity measures as the country has not fully recovered from the financial challenges faced prior to her election, the Prime Minister has engaged the country at every step and has demonstrated her willingness to listen to the electorate if any decision made is not widely accepted by the country. In some instances, she has reversed her decision and where not possible has continued to speak to the country on the journey to economic stability. Unlike the previous leader, the Prime Minister engages with all social partners and experts while determining the path to Barbados' social and economic recovery.

The anecdote demonstrates how leadership style can influence engagement and redound to the benefit of the common good and the interest of all. Change is constant and this statement by Heraclitus has proven to be true even in our everyday lives. It cannot be emphasized enough that though change is inevitable there is need for it to be managed. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Barbados, cannot be excluded from this change phenomenon and each day there is a story of some organisational change or restructuring particularly as the country undergoes an economic recovery plan called BERT (Barbados Economic and Recovery and Transformation Programme). Unlike large cosmopolitan countries, the job market is severely contracted as under this

recovery plan, over 5000 workers have been retrenched in response to the austerity measures recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This has forced Barbadians to seek alternate employment or to become entrepreneurs. Unlike larger countries where there is opportunity for geographical mobility so that those persons can move away and find other employment opportunities, it is not as easy for a country with 166 square miles of space and limited employment possibilities.

In the Caribbean Single Market and Economy initiative (CSME) which allows for free movement of labour and skills, there is still a restriction on the ease of mobility and the availability of opportunities. Disengaged employees are unable to move freely in the region to take advantage of new opportunities and experience new leadership. Leaders in the region must continually be exposed to good governance and contemporary leadership skills in order to attract and retain the brightest and the best talent to their organisations. There is no cookie cutter approach to leadership as people like to be led differently in order that they can produce good results and maximise their potential. Leaders must not only be technically skilled but must also understand human behaviour in order to respond to their employees' needs and this allows the organisation to benefit from having a fully engaged staff.

Discussion on Research Question 6

How is the change of the leader managed?

The majority of the participants stated that the process of changing the leader was mismanaged and that this caused frustration and uncertainty in the organisation. Employees look to their leader for stability and reassurance especially when there is some change occurring and when this is not fulfilled, there is much ambiguity and misunderstanding. This can have a ripple effect across the organisation and if not corrected can eventually impact on productivity and morale.

When there is a lack of information the participants shared that the opportunity for gossip and innuendo and the ever present office grapevine become more prominent and the truth, when released, can be subsumed by the information that has already been shared even though it may be inaccurate.

Participants cited communication as a critical component of the change management process simply because they believe that information, when shared in a timely manner, can be used to inform decisions and give comfort to those who may be concerned about their future. As stated in chapter two, communication is an integral part of any relationship as it engenders trust and conversely, where there is limited or no communication that trust will be impaired and eroded.

It is almost a given that the organisation has a fiduciary responsibility to its employees to be honest and open about their business or any matter that can affect the employee, and equally the employees have a duty of care to be loyal to their employer. From this sentiment one can understand the importance and value of trust and transparency between the two parties.

Organisations are often reluctant to release information to their employees for a myriad of reasons which may include fear of retaliation and possibly a drop in productivity particularly if they perceive that the change may not be well accepted. From the findings however, it has been recognised that managing the change process, particularly of a change of that magnitude will eventually redound to the benefit of the organisation as any shock factor will be short-lived once a strategic change management strategy is implemented.

The tool kit to follow will identify some of the activities which employers should implement so that any change can occur smoothly and that any fears or concerns that may arise will be given the attention needed to provide comfort to employees. In cases where the change may have a negative impact, even more so than when the news is good, care must be taken to ensure that an effective communication plan is implemented and that any potential fallout is circumvented and contained.

Conclusion

In this discussion, it was revealed that leadership change impacts on employee engagement negatively. Though the subjective views of those line staff involved indicated that no impact occurred, evidence from managers' reports showed differently based on work output. However, regardless of the position one holds, everyone experiencing the change felt a sense of distress as they either mourned the loss of a leader or stressed about who or what will come next. As Wisse and Sleebos (2016) noted, unplanned change of leadership though affecting individuals differently, the experience of the initial shock of the separation is a common experience for all employees.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations

Implications of the Findings

Change of the leader can have long term consequences on employee engagement, if there continues to be a deficit in the management of the change process. Professionally, employees experience feelings of disconnect with the company and therefore show no interest or effort in their work.

One of the indications of employee disengagement is the tendency to do just enough to get by and for some it may be just about collecting a pay cheque at the end of the month. A disengaged employee can become a liability to the company as the attitude of nonchalance and inertia can result in a reduction in the level of output. Failure to produce at the standards set by the organisation can have dire consequences not only on the profitability of the company but also on the employment of the individual and can eventually become a disciplinary issue. In addition, this behaviour can influence other members of staff to mirror the actions of the employee and subsequently, if left unchecked, can infect other employees who may have been slightly more engaged. This can cause significant frustration and may eventually trickle down to the customer who, while not having a sense of the issues occurring within the organisation, may instead determine that they would prefer to conduct business with the company's

competitor. Disengagement can spread throughout the organisation depending on the gravity of the fallout from the leadership change and if not urgently addressed, will result in further turmoil and eventually, a state of disrepair.

Furthermore, an employee who is disengaged is not motivated to go the extra mile and will only do as he is told, sometimes with a significant amount of prodding or even the threat of some disciplinary action to be taken. Thus, the disengaged worker can also be affected personally and may be unsure of how to navigate through this period of chaos and uncertainty. Employees' physical health and wellbeing can be affected during this period as anxiety, fear and stress can be manifested through unexplained illness and time away from work.

Based on this, one can agree that employee engagement involves more than just physical wellbeing. It also encompasses emotional, spiritual, and intellectual health, which contributes to achieving optimal health among employees (Zhang, Kandampully & Choi, 2014). If a change of leadership is to occur therefore, organisations should have step by step guidelines on how to cater to their employees which could aid in facilitating the success of change, in turn helping companies keep their employees engaged even after experiencing such a life changing event. Furthermore, understanding how change of leadership can promote or stunt employees' success within workplaces is of grave importance.

Therefore, the findings of the study give way to suggest that HR policies and practices should consider the important role of understanding and fully discussing the role of change of leadership as a method of organisational change. When a company's leader is changed, the remaining human capital can be seen as numbers in a spread sheet, but in the office environment there are individuals working to provide their daily needs for both themselves and their families. Guidelines associated with employee restructuring methods would therefore be important and HR Executives should also consider developing and implementing training and development programs geared towards helping employees engage in productive emotion management and emotional regulation processes. This helps them to cope with the environmental demands of the workplace (Greenidge & Coyne, 2014) and is vital, especially after a restructuring method has occurred.

Implications for Theory and Practice

This framework has implications for both practice and research related to organisational change efforts. An interaction-based model that suggests enhancing success with change that requires leaders as change agents, to focus on how they motivate and communicate with change recipients is presented.

Motivating employees and providing effective communications are highly and significantly associated with effective implementation of change.

Previously identified predictors of individual motivation included job satisfaction, perceived equity and organisational commitment (Schnake, 2007). These predictors are primarily realized through the work environment, which organisational leaders strongly influence (Drucker, 1999; Howkins, 2002).

Watson, Maxwell and Farquharson (2006) opined that line managers are also human resource managers. This statement confirms that part of the line manager's role is human resources. As long as a manager has direct reports, he becomes a human resource manager. He or she has an integral role to play in any change management process as a partner to the human resource manager who may be leading the charge. Therefore, all line managers are responsible for motivating employees, providing effective communication and implementing the change.

Leadership is deeply tied to individuals' internal motivation systems (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). Therefore, a leader's ability to cultivate a work environment that augments employee motivation proves critical (Carlisle & Murphy, 1986; Hebda et al., 2007). Concurrently, we recognize that communication is the necessary foundation of individual motivation and thus, this research has provided such evidence. Organisations and their leaders devote little attention to communication strategies and skills (Argenti, Howell, & Beck, 2005). However, change recipients seek certainty in the form of frequent, honest information related to change efforts. Insufficient or improper communications

create cynics who doubt the truth of their leaders' messages and contribute to change deficiencies (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989).

This study demonstrates that effectively executing change requires a multidimensional set of skills. Specific abilities elicit particular reactions among respondents. With nearly two-thirds of change efforts falling short of expectations (Beer & Nohria, 2000), the need is clear for change agents to possess a thorough understanding of the relationship between change abilities and change effectiveness. Knowledge of which skills and abilities significantly influence change success can help leaders design and lead more effective change efforts. Furthermore, leaders at all levels are likely to need development in change implementation techniques and the behaviours associated with successful change.

It may be critical that managers be trained in emotional intelligence as this would assist them in understanding their employees' needs and aid in developing a response mechanism to manage such needs. An engaged employee is a highly emotional, intelligent employee and this can only enhance his effectiveness in the organisation.

Limitations

Research reveals numerous cases of organisational change in countries such as the USA and Europe. Yet, there is a dearth of research pertaining to

organisational and leadership change and their impact on employee engagement conducted in small island developing states such as Barbados.

Considering that the research design for this study used convenience as the sample selection method, the results cannot be generalised. Given that a non-random approach to obtaining data was used, the inherent bias in convenience sampling is the high possibility of the sample being non-representative of the population being studied. This undermines the researcher's ability to make generalisations from the sampling population to the wider population.

Comparative to the total number of adults in Barbados who would have experienced organisational change, 47 participants cannot fully represent the relationships which exist between organisational change and job insecurity, psychological well-being and absenteeism among both survivors of organisational change and employees who never experienced organisational change. However, it can give indications or trends.

Using a Likert Scale is another limitation. Likert scales raise the probability of persons not answering some of the data honestly in the questionnaires. This is based on the fact that there is a limitation to the responses they can give even if the response does not fit the one they would have wanted to state. Using the scale in the study is therefore a limitation in and of itself.

However, the entire research design does have its advantages. A questionnaire is easy to replicate, which forms one of the main goals as a social

scientist. Questionnaires are used to explore “taboo” subjects as people may feel more comfortable writing down anonymously how they feel on a questionnaire, as opposed to their voice being recorded or even being videotaped. They can usually obtain data at quicker rates than most other surveying methods and they allow for the researcher to assess the respondents in a timely and accessible fashion. Additionally, in order to gain more clarification of theorized relationships, future research could utilise longitudinal study designs instead of cross-sectional.

Recommendations

For future study, carefully thought-out research has to be conducted in the Caribbean, to first understand what certain phenomena mean to Caribbean people. Another recommendation which arose from the data is that given the lack of scales in the Caribbean, scales from other countries might not be wholly appropriate to use. Can the same definitions be used to define variables? For instance, in this study there is a need for further investigation into the subjective views of those employees involved in the process of such leadership change within organisations. The study showed that these employees did not recognise their own decline in morale or productivity but there was evidence that such occurred. Maybe their subjective views of morale and productivity differs from that of management. If so, this still needs to be explored. However, such research can be timely and extremely cumbersome, and sponsorship would therefore

become a major component in conducting such research. One implication this has for Barbados (and most other Caribbean islands) is that the lack of sponsorship on such issues can cause many great ideas surrounding important issues to be stagnated

This study sought to investigate the impact of change of leadership in the CEO of an organisation on employee engagement. It was revealed that similar to the literature, employee engagement is affected by leadership change and the level of distress is dependent on the leadership style of the incoming or outgoing leader. This current study has created the impetus to learn more about this topic. It has also brought a better understanding and greater knowledge on the issue of change of leadership in a Barbadian context.

Tool Kit

Given the ad hoc method being currently used to implement change in the organisation and which often does not have positive outcomes, it is my view that based on my knowledge of Human Resource best practice, it would be beneficial to develop a toolkit which provides guidance on the most effective way to implement organisational leadership change while sustaining employee engagement.

This toolkit will assist Managers and Human Resource practitioners internationally in leading successful change strategy, thus mitigating any fallout

from such action, once effectively implemented. The toolkit is relevant to small, medium and large organisations. Depending on the magnitude of the change, the toolkit can be phased in over time in response to the needs of the organisation.

Not only is the toolkit for the employee, but there is also a component for the incoming leader. This will address issues of organisational culture (and country if relevant), language nuances and a familiarization or orientation plan which would provide them with information on this new organisation. This will help him to tailor his strategy on becoming a successful and transformational leader.

It will be recommended that there is a social element to the orientation in the form of a 'getting to know you session', usually in an informal setting where there is an opportunity to meet and greet the new leader. This toolkit can be expanded to respond to any company peculiarities in the change and can be reviewed and updated as needed by the organisation. The components are detailed as follows.

Firstly, an effective **Communication Plan**, one of the main components of the toolkit will be developed, providing details of 1) who should receive the information 2) at which time and 3) in what format. It is important to note that not all persons may receive all of the information at the same time and the owner of the plan must be able to determine how this plan is administered. The key

message must be identified and the appropriate medium determined for delivery of the information. After each phase, there should be a review process to determine the effectiveness of the method of disseminating the information and adjustments made based on the results. This plan should be implemented before the change actually occurs as a way to proactively ready staff for what is coming. It should continue during the change to provide updates as well as a forum for answering questions and addressing any nuances that might manifest. Lastly, it should continue after the change as a way of following up with the persons who might be most adversely affected by its implementation.

This is relevant to the Barbadian context when one gives a further look at the feedback of respondents in the Focus Group discussion. It was noted and previously stated that employees first of all felt threatened in their jobs because none of the immediate plans of the organisation was being properly communicated to them. Furthermore, the information being received was based solely on rumours and this further added to their distress. A well thought out **Communication Plan** that involved the employees would have helped to alleviate many of the fears and worries experienced by employees and would have served to nip rumours in the bud.

An external **Employee Assistance Programme** (EAP) to maintain confidentiality would also be essential to the toolkit. This would include counselling for those employees who are unable to cope with the changes as well

as for those who may be displaced when the change occurs. For those impacted, this may include outplacement services, assistance with resume writing, career counselling, retirement and financial planning to ensure that any financial benefits are wisely invested to secure their future. In the context of leadership change, and its potential traumatic impacts, the Employee Assistance Programme should be implemented before the change occurs but take effect during the process of the change and especially after the change would have been completed.

Employee Assistance Programmes are widely used around the world. However, these are not Programmes which are widely used in Barbados, yet the benefits of such are outlined above. In Barbados, generally, the implementation of such would require that the organisation first address the stigma among employees related to counselling and seeking any kind of psychological assistance. This being said, it would not be too far-fetched to wonder if employees' responses to organisational change are not in some way impacted by their own personal situations at the time of the change. An intervention by an EAP can help the employee sort out which feelings and responses are directly

related to the actual organisational change and those feelings that are more to do with events in their personal lives.

Employee Engagement Surveys are used to gauge employee morale and may be skewed due to fear, uncertainty and low morale. Therefore, as a method to engender greater engagement, the organisation would be encouraged to consider an engagement strategy where employees are challenged to contribute to new initiatives and creative aids which lend to the improvement of the bottom line. This can include submitting ideas for any revised core values of the organisation, participating in ad campaigns and working in new areas of the organisation that can provide job enrichment.



Employee Engagement Survey and its Relevance

The Employee Engagement Survey is a mechanism most used by corporations to measure employee engagement and morale. It can be a useful tool if administered appropriately and if findings are revealed and acted upon with alacrity. The survey details a set of questions on the employees' satisfaction with

regard to their job, their supervisor, the department head, their physical comfort and their future goals and objectives. Each employee is requested to answer these ratings, normally using a rating scale and under the cover of anonymity.

There are two constructs to the Employee Engagement Survey. On the one hand employees welcome the opportunity to respond honestly to the questions as they believe that this will provide information to the company to respond to their needs. Conversely, there are those employees who prefer to not be honest as there is a belief that although the survey is administered anonymously, the Manager or the survey administrator can still identify the respondent and may share this information with the leadership. Management recognizes the importance of the survey as they believe that this information can help them to identify why employee morale is low and what they can do to raise the morale thus increasing productivity.

Once the survey is completed, the findings are collated, analysed and presented to the leadership. It has been found that responses received are on a wide range of issues but sometimes the findings can be brutal, particularly when there is a poor evaluation of the leadership style and issues such as trust and confidentiality are rated low on the spectrum. Sometimes the findings are so ugly or so difficult to deal with or embarrassing for the organisation that they tend to look at superficial fixes or they shelve the report until there is another crisis when they once again engage in an employee engagement survey.

This creates more disengagement as by this time, the employees have poured heart and soul into the initial survey, believing that something will be done; when they realize that nothing is done, they become nonchalant about any other surveys and tend not to participate.

Employers also use the Employee Engagement Survey as a checklist to say 'yes, we measure our service'. Over my extensive career I have encountered a few companies that have created an action plan around engagement surveys and have used the findings to build morale, to effect changes and put policies in place and things of that nature. A company should conduct an Employee Engagement Survey to see where employees are and create Think Tanks or committees to manage the process from start to finish. There should be an evaluation of the activity. For example, if there is a complaint about furniture, they can be a committee that would include an expert like the Facilities manager or a builder. These persons would look at the cost, the budgeting and once that is approved, specific action can proceed. Reviews can be conducted over a 30-day, 60-day and 90-day period to test the temperature of the employees' morale after the fixes are made. This can be done through one on one or group discussions as well as reviewing data on absenteeism and productivity.

The **Employee Engagement Survey** is a great way to understand the morale of the organisation, the issues that should be focused on and addressed if the company wishes to extract 100% from its employees. The Survey will also

show if the leadership is effective and serves as a great way to understand the morale of the organisation. It would help in companies understanding what the niggling issues are that need to be addressed, especially if they want to extract 100% from their employees. The Survey will also show if the leadership is effective. Results often show that the direct manager may score well even though the score might be skewed; the leadership team usually gets a very poor score. This occurs as employees see the senior management as distant and out of touch with the staff's realities and bread and butter issues. As a consequence, employees feel disconnected from those in senior management.

A finding of this research was that employees in Barbadian organisations find it difficult to speak about issues within the organisation because of a fear of repercussions and also because the culture within the broader context of socialisation is that those in authority are to be feared and revered. This has been spoken of earlier in this document and attributed to a residual effect of slavery. The **Employee Engagement Survey** instrument would allow employees in Barbadian organisations to feel more comfortable in expressing themselves because of the anonymity such an instrument affords. Furthermore, employees would feel less that they need to stifle their emotions and responses to change and the survey would give them an avenue to put forward ideas and suggestions to those in authority. Ideally, this tool should be implemented in workplaces after

the change has occurred in order to gain feedback about the impact of the change on the organisation.

Change Management Workshops will also be integral as they are interactive fora, preparing employees for change and their responses to it. These will include a question-and-answer component to address some of the concerns of the employees. Ideally, Change Management Workshops should be implemented before the change occurs.

In an earlier anecdotal accounting of a change that occurred in a Barbadian firm, it was noted that when the CEO of the company was changed and a new person was brought into the organisation, this had some negative impact on productivity and morale although employees did not explicitly state this but it was noted by a Senior in the organisation. Had the company engaged the in-coming CEO and the staff with a **Change Management Workshop**, both parties would have been allowed the opportunity to learn from the new CEO what his vision and plans were for the organisation. Furthermore, employees would also be able to voice their concerns regarding the change thereby allowing the new CEO to address their concerns. Such a Workshop would give employees an opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences of the organisation as they would have had the experience of longevity and all the positives and negatives that go with such. The incumbent would also be able to make visual assessments of the employees as he or she interacted with them in this manner

as a Workshop tends to be less formal and employees are less rigid in such a forum.

Conclusion

Organisations today are subjected to pressures both from the external environment as well as from within, whether these changes are forced or voluntary responsiveness. These external factors can include new regulations, new competition and ownership changes through mergers or acquisition or they can simply come from organisational internal growth strategy itself, because systems and personnel that were appropriate at one time are no longer appropriate.

Companies also change when reviewing their profit and loss margins and can recognize that their present performance requires a major shift in their strategy, to ensure growth and profitability. Other change pressures stem from changes in the characteristics of people and/or changes in technologies or internal systems employed. Not all change can be negative as organisations can realize growth in their profits and expansion of their goods and services which would require an increase of personnel, an upgrade in processes, systems or technology.

These pressures can force the Board of Directors to determine whether the current leader possesses the appropriate skillset to take the organisation to the next step. This has led organisations to constantly review not only their

strategy but also their leadership in an effort to ensure that there is congruence between leadership and future strategy and company goals.

Organisational success occurs when the company has the ability to respond to any change initiatives, having the necessary motivation to change, using an effective change method, and reinforcing the change after it occurs so that it stabilizes and endures. There are many individual change methods. Two of the widely used and oldest are training and counselling. Over the years, a great deal of knowledge has been obtained on how to train effectively. Counselling programs can result in a number of positive outcomes, depending on individual needs in the particular situation.

Group change focuses on entire groups or organisational units. In group training, the interdependencies among individuals in a group and the importance of any new behaviour being reinforced and supported by other group members are recognized. Thus, the whole group is trained together so that the members can support one another in their efforts to change. Many organisations' wide change approach focuses on changing a particular system used throughout the entire organisation, such as a performance assessment

One widely used approach is survey research, in which an organisation's members collaborate with outside experts in devising a new program to solve organisational programs. Change is easier if the organisation has a climate or culture that is generally supportive of change. Successful changes require

effective communication, in which concerns and expectations flow easily up and down the organisation. There should be a climate of trust in the organisation, especially between workers and management that will help workers cope with the risk, uncertainty and fear that often accompanies organisational change.

Given the critical nature of change in the global economy, the value placed on ensuring that the right leader at the helm of the organisation has increased. This study illustrates the perceived importance of specific leadership skills and abilities necessary for a successful organisational change. The results indicate the importance of approaching change from a person-centred perspective - that organisational leaders who address issues of motivation and communications are more likely to successfully implement change.

It is clear that the potential to increase market competitiveness and growth is within the control of an organisation's leadership. It is through the deliberate and disciplined action of management that organisations effectively implement change initiatives that cultivate success (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). Therefore, it is important that the leader possesses the right mix of technical capability and people skills to be an effective and competent change agent.

Effective leaders engage their motivation and communications skills and translate these into explicit behaviours to positively influence change initiatives. Organisations and their leaders who fail to recognize the importance of these

skills will become another statistic in the failure rates of change. In a world that is changing both in terms of the global nature of work and the aging of the workforce (Erickson, 2005), having engaged employees may be a key to competitive advantage. This will be especially true if we can show how the engagement construct produces effects at levels of analysis of concern to management.

As with all good things, the challenge of establishing the conditions for state and behavioural employee engagement will be great. Once again, there seems to be no silver bullet. The beauty of this conclusion is that companies that get these conditions right will have accomplished something that competitors will find very difficult to imitate. It is easy to change price and product; it is another thing to create a state and behaviourally engaged workforce.

When there is change of personnel at the top of the organisation, there will be some disruption and turmoil regardless of timing, whether the change was abrupt or unplanned or a natural change due to retirement or part of a shared strategy where the organisation is prepared for the change. Therefore, the role of the leader is integral to an organisation's success much as the captain is to the navigation of a ship and as such, it is critical that there is stability.

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- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3. What is your current job position | Managerial
Supervisory
Administrative |
|--------------------------------------|---|

4. How many changes in leadership have you experienced during your tenure?

0
1-3
3-5
5+

SECTION B: Employee Engagement Scale

Respond to each statement by circling one of the numbers in the columns next to them.

Strongly Disagree – 1

Disagree – 2

Neutral – 3

Agree – 4

Strongly Agree – 5

Motivation					
1. I look forward to going to work.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am enthusiastic about my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Time passes quickly when I am at work.	1	2	3	4	5
Advocacy					
4. I would recommend my workplace as a place to work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would highly recommend my organisation to a friend seeking employment.	1	2	3	4	5
Involvement					
6. I can make improvements happen in my area of work.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There are frequent opportunities for me to show initiative in my role.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I can make suggestions to improve the work of my team/ department.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am involved in deciding on changes introduced that affect my work area/team/department.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C**Please provide responses on an additional paper provided**

1. Describe the effect these Leadership changes have had on you with regard to your morale and productivity.
2. What impact do you believe these changes had on the organisational culture? (give an example)
3. Is the greatest challenge in this experience the change of the individual or the management of the process or both – please elaborate
4. How did your organisation handle the transition? If in your opinion it could have been handled better, state the areas that require improvement.

APPENDIX B

List of Research questions

1. Is there a relationship between the number of unplanned changes of leadership and the engagement of employees?
2. Is there a difference in employees' engagement based on their position?
3. What are the effects of change of leadership on morale and productivity?
4. What are the effects of change on organisational culture?
5. What is the greatest challenge of change of leadership?
6. How is the change of leader managed?

APPENDIX C

Pilot Interview Schedule

Section A – Background and Employee Perceptions

1. How long were you employed with the organisation?
2. What is your current job position?
3. Initially, what were your expectations coming in to the organisation?
4. To what extent were these expectations met? Please elaborate
5. At that time, what were your perceptions/relationship with Senior Management
6. How would you describe the organisational culture at that time?

Section B – Perception of Transient Leadership

7. How many changes in CEO have you seen over your tenure?
8. How were these changes managed by HR? How effective was this change management process (communication, change in policy, engagement)?
9. Is the greatest challenge in this experience the frequent changing of an individual or the management of that process or both - elaborate?
10. How would describe the effect of these changes on the employees (morale, productivity, engagement, absenteeism, turnover)
11. Do you think employees are generally accepting of these changes?
Please elaborate

12. How has the culture in the organisation been affected by these frequent changes in leadership?

Section C – Strategies for managing transient leadership

13. How do you see the role of HRM in managing this process effectively?
14. What strategies do you think the organisation can adopt to better manage this process?
15. What constraints do you see in the management of this process?