**Gordon Institute
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Factors influencing middle managers to enable or inhibit change

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of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Business Administration

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Administration, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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ABSTRACT

Organisations undergo various change initiatives as a result of both external and internal pressures in order to survive and prosper, yet it is estimated that approximately 70% of change initiatives fail. Middle managers play a vital role in change initiatives; however, little is known about their views regarding the factors that enable them to commit to change initiatives. The purpose of this study is to ascertain which factors influence middle managers to enable or inhibit change.

Qualitative, exploratory research methods were employed in this study, with the data being analysed utilising thematic content analysis. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with middle managers from four different industries, representing nine different companies in South Africa. The study was conducted in one city (Durban), with middle managers who had been through a change initiative in the past three years.

The findings identified four broad factors (categories) which enable or inhibit middle managers in their role as change agents, namely personal factors, social factors, organisational factors and change-specific factors. For each of these factors multiple contributing factors were identified. The underlying factor that enables middle managers to commit to change is good leadership that engages employees, i.e. leaders must provide consultation, communication, and support.

There is ample literature on the roles of middle managers in implementing change initiatives, but there is a lack of research on the factors that influence them to enable or inhibit change initiatives. Two models of enabling and inhibiting factors were thus developed to illustrate the myriad of factors contributing to middle managers acting as change agents. This will assist senior managers to prepare for successful change initiatives.

Keywords: Middle managers, Change management, Employee engagement, Leadership

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Not only is change inevitable, but organisational change is necessary for organisations to survive and prosper (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Carter, Armenakis, Field & Mossholder, 2013). Despite organisations experiencing both external and internal pressures to change, it is estimated that approximately 70% of change initiatives fail (Tabrizi, 2013; Choi, 2011; Conway & Monks, 2011; Nohria & Beer, 2000).

Change management involves planning for change, managing change and reinforcing change, and aims to ensure that change is both embraced and accepted (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015). Change management strategies are based on two archetypes, or theories - economic value (Theory E) and organisational capability (Theory O). Theory E concerns creating value for shareholders, while Theory O involves developing a corporate culture and human capability (Nohria & Beer, 2000). Both of these theories have their shortcomings; hence a combined Theory E and O change management process is needed to implement successful change initiatives. The ability to change is influenced by leaders creating sufficient organisational readiness to change, with middle managers being the link between executives (strategy) and employees (implementation) (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014; Conway & Monks, 2011).

The success of change management is dependent on training, coaching and communication. Middle managers play a vital role in the implementation and success of change initiatives as their unique position and function in an organisation allows them to either enable the implementation of change initiatives or to inhibit the implementation of these strategies (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Giauque, 2015; Salih & Doll, 2013). Middle managers are important in organisations as organisations cannot be formed, developed or function without their active participation. Middle managers have first person experience of the challenges associated with the implementation of change strategies, and assume various roles in either enabling or inhibiting change. They are able to adapt rules and strategies in response to day-to-day work requirements and challenges, and their actions during change initiatives can influence both the intended outcomes and the development of organisations.

Middle managers, by virtue of their structural positions, are both the "victims and carriers of change" (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017, para. 5). Middle managers are held responsible for the implementation of change initiatives, which results in a change of roles, i.e. they become agents of change, forming the link between strategic ideas and operative solutions. They have the potential to become extraordinary leaders when they align their personal goals and strengths with those of the organisation (Tabrizi, 2014). Middle managers are thus pivotal during a change process and change management.

Strategy formation and management has typically been the function of top managers, but middle managers will become increasingly strategically important due to changes in organisational structures, combined with firms facing higher levels of internal and external pressure to change in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (Joshi & Jha, 2017). Middle management has been understudied in the area of change management, thus it is useful to study this population given their increasingly strategic importance in organisational structures (Giauque, 2015; Joshi & Jha, 2017). The roles of middle managers in change initiatives has been highlighted in the literature, however there is a lack of research on the contributing factors which influence implementation of change initiatives from the perspective of middle managers (Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia & Van der Voet, 2014; Joshi & Jha, 2017; Salih & Doll, 2013; Giauque, 2015; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014; Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage and Ries, 2016). Middle managers play a pivotal role in organisations, and their position and function are critical in the success or failure of change initiatives.

Companies are undergoing continuous change in response to globalisation, privatisation, deregulation and technological advances, and need to be able to change successfully in order to survive, expand and prosper. Knowing what enables or inhibits middle managers during change initiatives must be taken into account when developing and implementing change strategies, due to the important role that they play in the survival and expansion of organisations.

The purpose of the study is thus to determine which contributing factors enable or inhibit middle managers in their role as change agents, given the lack of research on these factors. This study aims to extend the understanding of the organisational and personal factors that influence middle managers in their role as change agents across various companies and industries. The study will also highlight recommendations to support middle managers to enable change.

Drawing from Kotter's (1995) change management theory and social cognitive theory, the researcher illustrates the relationship between personal and organisational factors within the context of organisational readiness to change. Kotter's change management steps are also used to assess if companies do prepare for change.

Oakland and Tanner (2007) devised a framework for successful change management containing two interacting cycles: 1) readiness for change; and 2) implementing change, as change readiness must be created to facilitate successful change implementation. Social cognitive theory is also used to evaluate the effect of personal and organisational factors on middle management's commitment to change.

Academically, this research will contribute insights into the personal and organisational factors that allow middle managers to either enable or inhibit change initiatives, while in a business context, the study addresses the high failure rate of change initiatives. Businesses need to understand which factors influence middle managers in order to realise a higher success rate in change initiatives, which will lead to the survival, expansion and profitability of organisations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organisational change

Organisational change is necessary for organisations to survive and prosper, and most organisations compete by changing continuously (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Carter et al., 2013). These changes may be strategic, tactical, operational, or a combination thereof. It is estimated that approximately 70% of change initiatives fail, however (Tabrizi, 2013; Choi, 2011; Conway & Monks, 2011; Nohria & Beer, 2000), thus the early involvement of middle managers in the change process is essential to ensure the success of change initiatives (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Giauque, 2015; Tabrizi, 2013; Salih & Doll, 2013; Giangreco & Peccei, 2005; Conway & Monks, 2011).

2.1.1 Middle managers - definitions and why study middle management

Middle managers occupy a central position in organisational hierarchies, functioning between executive managers and frontline employee supervisors (Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012; Salih & Doll, 2013; Giauque, 2015; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014). "Middle managers maintain a central position in organizational hierarchies, are responsible for implementing senior management strategies, and exercise control over junior staff" (Harding et al., 2014, p. 2).

Middle managers are important in organisations as they cannot be formed, developed or function without their active participation. Middle managers also play a vital role in the implementation and success of change initiatives, as their unique position and function in an organisation allows them to either enable the implementation of change initiatives or inhibit them (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Giauque, 2015; Salih & Doll, 2013; Lunts, 2012; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014). Middle managers have first person experience of the challenges associated with the implementation of change strategies, and assume various roles in either enabling or inhibiting change; they are able to adapt rules and strategies in response to day-to-day work requirements and challenges.

Middle managers' actions during change initiatives can influence both the intended outcomes and the development of organisations, and yield unintended consequences. Strategy formation and management have typically been the function of top managers,

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but middle managers are becoming increasingly strategically important due to changes in organisational structures, combined with firms facing higher levels of internal and external pressure to change in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (Joshi & Jha, 2017). Middle managers are "stuck in the middle" of both control and resistance; they control junior staff but are controlled by senior managers, and they may resist strategies but they also have to contend with junior staff resistance.

2.1.2 Functions and roles in change

Middle managers, by virtue of their structural positions, are both the "victims and carriers of change" (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017, para. 5). Middle managers are held responsible for the implementation of change initiatives, which results in a change of roles, i.e. they become agents of change and form the link between strategic ideas and operative solutions.

Middle managers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of change in organisations (Giauque, 2015; Tabrizi, 2013; Salih & Doll, 2013; Giangreco & Peccei, 2005; Conway & Monks, 2011), but may also have a negative impact on change initiatives when they are resistant to change (Conway & Monks, 2011; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014). Middle managers are viewed mainly as managing incremental change, whilst disregarding that they are change leaders. They have the potential to become extraordinary leaders when they align their personal goals and strengths with those of the organisation, however (Tabrizi, 2014).

Middle managers can use their influence to either accelerate or hinder change in an organisation, as they are the all-important link between strategy and execution (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016). Due to the central role that middle managers play in the process of change within an organisation, they have a crucial effect on the eventual success or failure of change initiatives within organisations (Conway & Monks, 2011). For this reason, middle managers must be empowered to play an active role in successful change initiatives (Tabrizi, 2013). Empowered middle managers are able to work across functional boundaries and teams, ensuring the direct involvement of targeted individuals, as disempowerment results in a fear of job loss, fear of failure, risk-aversion, lack of ownership of mistakes, and a feeling of alienation.

Senior managers must possess knowledge of the roles of middle managers during change initiatives in order to leverage these roles to increase change implementation effectiveness. The roles of middle managers during change implementation include: disseminating information; selling implementation strategies to junior staff; coordinating the work of junior staff; managing conflict in their teams; and quality and budget control of projects (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012; Giauque, 2015; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014; Salih & Doll, 2013). Senior managers could promote the fulfilment of these roles by ensuring that middle managers are given: (a) knowledge and information regarding strategy implementation; (b) the freedom to educate, support, and encourage employees; and (c) access to the necessary resources for strategy implementation into the daily activities of the organisation (Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012). Middle managers are thus pivotal during a change process and change management.

2.2 Change management

2.2.1 Definitions

Change management involves planning for change, managing change and reinforcing change, and aims to ensure that change is both embraced and accepted. Its success is dependent on training, coaching and communication (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015).

Change management incorporates a set of tools or structures that is intended to control a change effort, whilst change leadership concerns the driving forces, visions and processes required to make a change process faster, smarter, and more efficient. According to Wulandari, Mangundjayab and Utoyo (2015, p. 2), "Change leadership is defined as the behaviour that targets the specific change and consists of visioning, enlisting, empowering, monitoring, and helping with individual adaptation". Change leadership and change management are both required during a change initiative, with effective leadership being essential for effective change initiatives (Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia & Van der Voet, 2014; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015). Graetz and Smith (2010) confirmed that strong leadership is needed to control organisational change. Management and leadership are different but complement each other. Management copes with complexity whilst leadership copes with change (Kotter, 1997). Change demands leadership (Kotter, 1995; Lunts, 2012). Ethical leadership is vital during change as followers must be able to trust their

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leaders (Sharif & Scandura, 2014). Ethical leaders are able to provide stability and reassurance during change. Behaviour of leaders during change has a direct effect on the performance of employees.

Middle managers are expected to manage change initiatives, and hence are given a mandate and a strategy to implement change. Non-involvement of middle managers in the formulation of the strategy to implement change may lead to their disengagement and poor motivation. Middle managers should therefore be trained to lead change initiatives, as this may result in them taking ownership of a change process and thus having a greater motivation to fulfil the change initiative. Effective change leadership exhibited by middle managers during a change initiative may also result in the enlisting, empowering and monitoring of employees, and assistance with employee adaptation and commitment to a change process.

2.2.2 Change management framework

A literature review was undertaken by Oakland and Tanner (2007) to investigate the critical factors of successful change management in organisations. The four main themes that emerged that influence successful change management are leadership, identifying and defining the need for change, being mindful of the culture of the organisation, and learning from consultants.

- **Leadership** plays a key role in setting direction, influencing change, and ensuring implementation (Beer & Nohria, 2000).
- **Identifying and defining change** leaders must define the need for change with clear measurements of success.
- **Managing change within the culture of the organisation** people are essential to change and communication is vital.
- **Learning** involves the use of consultants for expertise, resources, knowledge, and experience.

Oakland and Tanner (2007) also investigated the enablers and barriers to change, which are depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Enables and barriers to change

ENABLERS	BARRIERS
Data-led analysis	Changes in the organisation
Cross-functional teams	Lack of communication
Disciplined management	Resistance to change i.e. silos, delays
Accountability and goals	Non-involvement of top management
Stakeholder management	
Communication	
Staff involvement	
Senior management commitment	

Source: Adapted from Oakland and Tanner (2007)

A framework for successful change management was devised by Oakland and Tanner (see Figure 1), wherein two interacting cycles for change were identified: readiness for change and implementing change.

Figure 1: Successful organisational change management framework
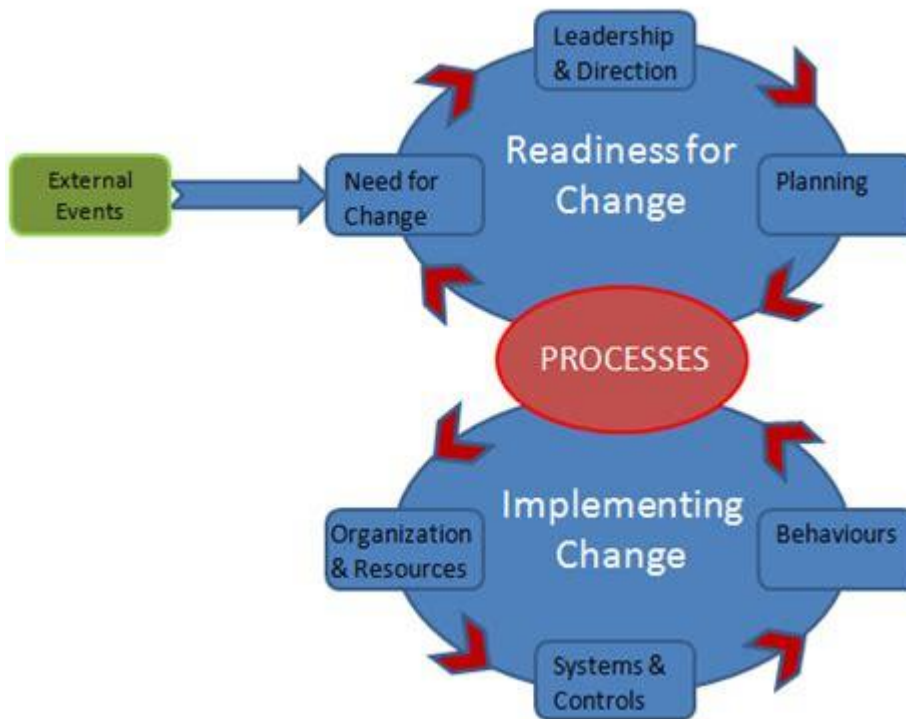
Source: Oakland and Tanner (2007)

2.2.3 Readiness for change

Organisational readiness for change must precede change implementation to ensure that the change initiative is successful (Oakland & Tanner, 2007). Weiner (2009, p. 2) defined organisational readiness as "Organisational members' change commitment and change

efficacy to implement organisational change", while Salonitis and Tsinopoulos (2016) considered developing organisational readiness to be an essential organisational factor related to successful change initiatives. Organisational readiness is considered the first step phase of a continual cycle of events, and can be created through awareness and knowledge which lowers resistance to change (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Kritsonis, 2005). According to Rusly, Corner and Sun (2011), readiness must be created at the initial (preparation) stage to break down resistance to change and facilitate the acceptance of change within an organisation. Individual readiness for change is based on knowledge and understanding of the need for the change, the organisations capacity to make a successful change, and believing that the change will have personal and organisational positive benefits (Choi, 2011).

The cycle of the readiness for change consists of the need for change; leadership and direction; and planning (Oakland & Tanner, 2007).

- **Need for change:** pressure to change may be external and internal. Leaders give meaning to change.
- **Leadership and direction:** leaders determine the values, aims and objectives of a change.
- **Planning:** priorities emerge and focus people's minds on objectives.

2.2.4 Implementation stage

The implementation stage follows on from the readiness for change stage, during which the vision for change is communicated. This cycle involves organisation and resources; systems and controls; and behaviours.

- **Organisation and resources:** organisational structures, roles, competencies, and resources are employed to implement the change.
- **Systems and controls:** performance measures and technology are employed to give the implementation momentum.
- **Behaviours:** the attitudes, values, and beliefs of employees are determined and guided by management.

2.3 Change management models

2.3.1. Lewin's change model

Lewin's change model was one of the earliest models of planned change, and views change as a modification of the forces keeping a system's behaviour stable (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Behaviours are the result of two groups of forces: those wanting to maintain the status quo and those striving for change. Lewin's change management model consists of three steps: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing.

- **Unfreezing**: This reduces the forces that maintain the status quo. Sharing information that shows discrepancies in behaviours can motivate members to engage in change activities, i.e. unfreezing aims to break down resistance to change. This is done by creating readiness for change through building trust and demonstrating a need to change (Kritsonis, 2005; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015).
- **Moving:** Changes in organisational structures and processes result in the development of new behaviours, attitudes, and values. New behaviours are encouraged by creating dissatisfaction with the status quo, allowing employees to work towards new, relevant information, and bring in well-respected, powerful leaders who also support the change to work with the group (Kritsonis, 2005).
- **Refreezing:** The organisation stabilises at a new state of equilibrium, with supporting mechanisms reinforcing the new organisational state. Old behaviours will resurface if new behaviours are not reinforced through policies and procedures (Kritsonis, 2005).

2.3.2 Kotter's change model

Kotter (1995, para. 3) stated that "a successful change process goes through a series of phases that require a considerable amount of time". His seminal work led to the development of an eight-step model of change management (Kotter, 1996):

- **Establish a sense of urgency**: communicate and highlight crises, potential crises and opportunities within the market.
- **Create a guiding coalition:** assemble a team with sufficient power to lead change.
- **Develop a vision and strategy:** give direction to, and achieve a vision of, a change initiative.

- **Communicate the change vision:** extensively use every available platform to communicate the vision. Expected behaviour should be modelled by a guiding coalition.
- **Empower broad-based action:** remove obstacles and change the culture and structure to facilitate the vision.
- **Generate short term wins:** plan for improvements and reward the people who are responsible for the wins.
- **Consolidate gains and produce more change:** change and remove redundant and inhibitory systems, structures and policies. Create HR strategies to support the change initiative.
- **Anchor new approaches in the culture:** enhance performance through improved leadership and effective management, and ensure leadership development and succession planning.

Kotter's change model is an extension of Lewin's change model: communicating the change vision corresponds with freezing, generating short term wins corresponds with moving, and anchoring new approaches in the culture corresponds with refreezing (Cummings & Worley, 2015).

Figure 2: Combined Lewin and Kotter Change Models

	UNFREEZE	• Establish a sense of urgency • Create a guiding coalition • Develop a vision and strategy • Communicate the change vision • Empower broad-based action
	MOVE	• Generate short term wins • Consolidate gains and produce more wins
	REFREEZE	• Anchor new approaches in the strategy
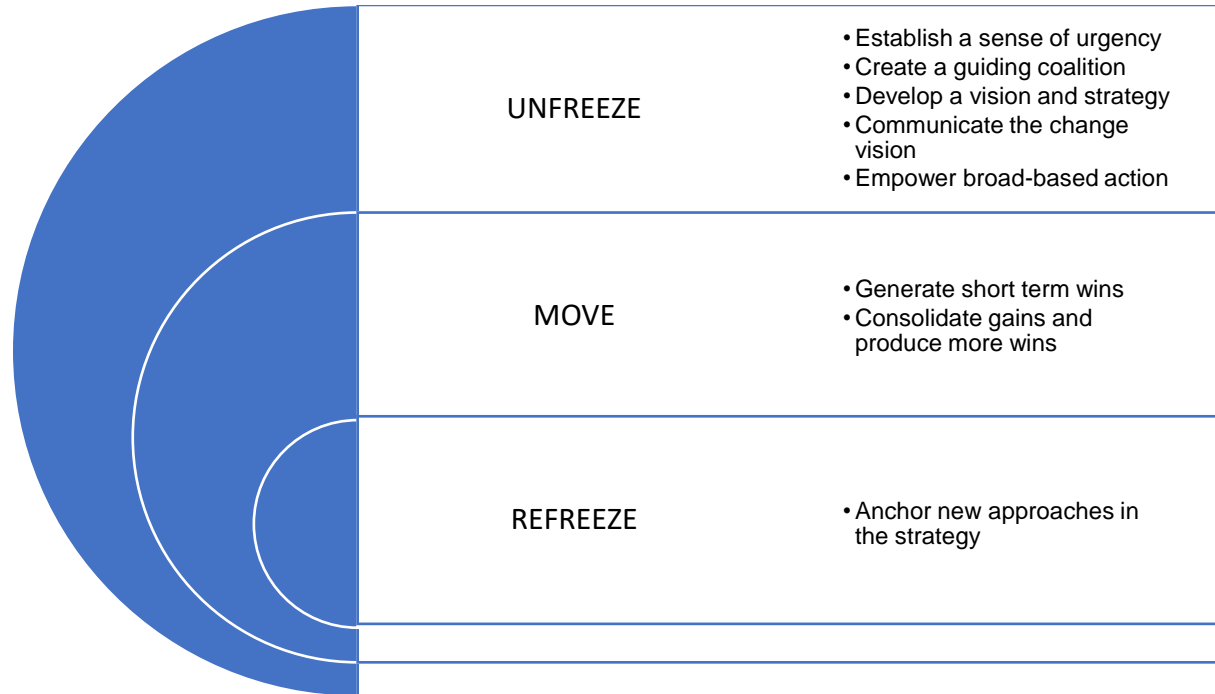
2.4 Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory, proposes that behaviour change is affected by environmental influences, personal factors, and attributes of the behaviour itself. The belief of an individual in their capability to display the behaviour which results in successful change is known as self-efficacy (Lunenburg, 2011; Kritsonis, 2005; Weiner, 2009). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in the need for change and their capacity to produce positive results (Choi, 2011; Bandura, 1977).

The individual's positive expectations of the behaviour should outweigh their negative expectations. Self-efficacy is the most important characteristic that determines a person's behavioural change, and can be increased by consultation and engagement and creating organisational and individual readiness for change (Choi, 2011; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Kritsonis, 2005). Past experience is also a source of self-efficacy (Lunenburg, 2011).

Figure 3: Social Cognitive Theory
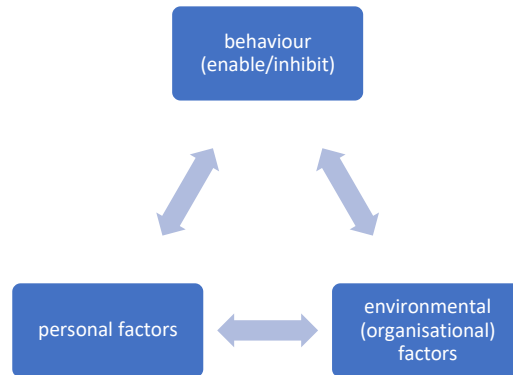
2.5 Change management strategies

Change management strategies are based on two archetypes or theories - economic value (Theory E) and organisational capability (Theory O). Theory E concerns creating value for shareholders, while Theory O involves developing a corporate culture and human capability. Theory E strategies have a "hard" approach to change and include drastic layoffs, downsizing and restructuring, whilst Theory O takes a "soft" approach and is concerned with employee behaviours, attitudes, capabilities and commitment (Nohria & Beer, 2000).

Further, Theory E leadership is top down and motivates through financial incentives, whilst Theory O exhibits participatory leadership, encouraging participation from the bottom up, and motivates through commitment. Middle managers may respond better to Theory O leadership during a change initiative, as this will grant them greater involvement in the change process by allowing for recommendations to enhance the change initiative. Middle managers are more likely to commit to and promote change initiatives when they sense that there is individual consideration in the change process and are thus more committed to promote involvement at employee level. Both of these theories have their shortcomings; hence a combined Theory E and O change management process is needed to implement successful change initiatives.

Table 2: Comparing Theories of Change

Dimensions of Change	Theory E	Theory O	Theories E and O Combined
Goals	Maximise shareholder value	Develop organisational capabilities	Explicitly embrace the paradox between economic value and organisational capability
Leadership	Manage change from the top down	Encourage participation from the bottom up	Set direction from the top and engage the people below
Focus	Emphasise structure and systems	Build up corporate culture: employees' behaviour and attitudes	Focus simultaneously on the hard (structures and systems) and the soft (corporate culture)
Process	Plan and establish programmes	Experiment and evolve	Plan for spontaneity
Reward system	Motivate through financial incentives	Motivate through commitment — use pay as fair exchange	Use incentives to reinforce change but not to drive it
Use of consultants	Consultants analyse problems and shape solutions	Consultants support management in shaping their own solutions	Consultants are expert resources who empower employees

Source: Nohria and Beer (2000)

2.6 Employee engagement

Poor success of change initiatives is a result of leaders underestimating the role if individuals in change (Choi, 2011). Middle managers may commit to change "because they want to (they value the change), because they have to (they have little choice), or because they are obliged to" (Weiner, 2009, p. 2). Middle managers also exhibit a greater commitment to change in top-down initiatives when there has been adequate consultation and communication, rather than when change initiatives are just imposed on them (Conway & Monks, 2011; Weiner, 2009). Middle managers are further committed to driving and implementing a change process when they feel part of the change process and are able to maintain a level of autonomy, as well as when they feel empowered to influence the change process; proactive middle managers present with a greater commitment to implement change initiatives.

In a study conducted by Tabrizi (2013) across 56 companies from various industries that had undergone a change process, middle managers were involved in leading the change in the 32% of companies that were successful at implementing change. Senior managers can enable middle manager commitment to change by involving them in planning strategies and implementation for change, thus improving their ownership and buy-in, which will lead to successful outcomes (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013). Middle managers will feel empowered to lead change if they are armed with knowledge of the change, experience the support of senior management and feel a sense of recognition within the organisation. Middle managers will want to implement change strategies due to sharing the value of the need for change and this will yield more successful change initiatives (Wulandari et al., 2015; Weiner, 2009; Giauque, 2015). Employee participation is essential for the successful implementation of change initiatives, and affording middle managers the opportunity to take up an active role in decision-making serves to enhance their engagement (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). A participative management style is effective in stimulating employee engagement (Salih & Doll, 2013; Joshi & Jha, 2017). An autocratic management style induces resistance to change and a lack of trust between managers and employees (Joshi & Jha, 2017).

Senior management must communicate a long-term vision, create an urgency for change, demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the change process, and model change leadership and management to promote the success of change initiatives. Senior managers must

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continuously communicate with middle managers to remove obstacles to change, and thus enable middle managers to implement change initiatives. Middle managers can capitalise on senior management support by communicating what specific support is needed to enable their commitment to change (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015). Senior management can directly influence middle management to commit to the implementation of change initiatives by demonstrating commitment and support for the change by providing the necessary resources, i.e. equipment and funding, and enforcing policies and practices that demonstrate that the change initiative is a high priority (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013).

In a study by Zenger and Folkman (2014) conducted amongst 320,000 employees across various organisations, middle managers made up the bottom 5% of the most unengaged and uncommitted employees, despite them having received good performance ratings. Key performance indicators (KPIs) for middle managers must thus be tailored to change initiatives to ensure that they are committed to lead and champion change initiatives (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016). Consultation and communication must take place with middle managers to ensure that they are informed of the benefits and necessity of the change process, and are aware of the parameters of their performance assessments. Sharif & Scandura (2014) found that ethical leadership and involvement in the change had a positive effect on employee commitment to change. Engagement with middle managers has a positive effect on commitment to change, whilst a lack of consultation results in resistance to change. There is also a strong relationship between engagement and the motivation of middle managers to carry out change initiatives.

2.6.1 Commitment to change

Commitment to change is essential for successful implementation of change initiatives (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016). Commitment to change can be defined as "a force (mindset) that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative. This mind-set can be reflected to varying degree in three dimensions: a) a desire to provide support for the change based on a belief in its inherent benefits to change (affective commitment); b) a recognition that there are costs associated with failure to provide support for the change (continuance commitment to change); and c) a sense of obligation to provide support for the change (normative

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commitment to change)" (Wulandari et al., 2015, p. 2). Commitment to change has the potential to improve organisational effectiveness, which will manifest as improved performance and successful change implementation. Middle managers play an important role in organisations and they are more likely to commit to change initiatives when they understand the need for change and are able to appreciate the benefits of change. "For organizational change to be successful, individuals must perceive that there is a compelling need for change; there is involvement in the change process; and that the benefits of change are highlighted" (Conway & Monks, 2011, p. 192). Employees are committed to change when they are well-informed and are involved in the early stages of change implementation (Choi, 2011).

In a study conducted by Abrell-Vogel and Rowold (2014), the greatest influence on employee commitment to change was noted as being individual employee attention that was modelled by management. Although change models and transformational leadership sets the tone for change, it is individual consideration that drives commitment to change. Management needs to be acutely aware that it is individuals who implement change strategies in an organisation; middle managers exhibit a greater commitment to change when they feel valued and appreciated as individuals, therefore senior managers must make an effort to provide individual attention to middle managers throughout the change process (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). Successful implementation of change initiatives by lower level employees is strongly influenced by middle management (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016). Middle managers transform into change leaders when they are committed both personally and professionally to the change process (Tabrizi, 2014).

Middle managers are committed to change initiatives when they are able to see an alignment of the change initiative to their own personal and professional aspirations (Tabrizi, 2014; Jansen & Samuel, 2014; Damij, Levnajić, Skrt & Suklan, 2015; Tabrizi, 2013; Giauque, 2015). This alignment with core values improves commitment and ownership, allowing middle managers to realise their full potential, culminating in successful change initiatives. Individual commitment is related to a range of organisational and personal characteristics (Guth & MacMillan, 1986). Managers are under increased pressure to maintain a work life balance (Ford & Collinson, 2011). The traditional masculine culture of management has lent itself to overcommitting at work, but this is now being challenged given the increasing numbers of females occupying management positions. Work-life balance has an effect on

commitment to change, as employees are more likely to support a change initiative that does not compromise their time with their families, but rather yields good opportunities to enhance their personal and professional lives (Giauque, 2015). In a study conducted by Conway and Monks (2011), middle managers exhibited an overwhelming commitment to change in bottom-up ideas, as they took greater ownership and were thus motivated to lead and implement these change initiatives. Senior managers can enhance middle manager commitment to change by creating a favourable work environment in which ownership and leading of the change process is sufficiently supported and fairly rewarded (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013).

The perception of managerial support and favourable work relationships with colleagues and superiors has a positive effect on commitment to change, as do culture fit and favourable working conditions and human resource practices (Giauque, 2015; Giauque, Resenterra, & Siggen, 2014). Middle managers show a greater affinity for collaboration and commitment when they feel well-informed and supported by their senior management. Organisational factors that play an important role in enabling or inhibiting middle managers during a change initiative include: (a) the organisational culture of teamwork; (b) developing organisational readiness; (c) senior management commitment and support; (d) the provision of adequate resources to enable change; (e) sufficient communication and employee engagement; and (f) a sufficient timeframe for the change implementation (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Sharif & Scandura, 2014).

Commitment to change can be inhibited by a lack of understanding of the change process; a fear of job loss; inertia to change; insufficient training; non-involvement and poor commitment from senior management; a lack of employee engagement; malalignment of the strategy with the vision and direction of the company; unclear key performance indicators (KPIs); resistance to change; and a lack of resources to implement the change (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015).

2.6.2 Resistance to change

Resistance to change is a natural response to any change initiative; it must be expected and managed as part of any change initiative. Resistance to change has been mostly viewed as a negative that may cause a problem for an organisation (Conway & Monks, 2011; Giangreco & Peccei, 2005), but it should be viewed as an early warning that there is a problem in the change process. Resistance to change has the potential to provide positive feedback to the change process if it is embraced as part of the change process and managed effectively. Executives and senior managers must not be focused on minimising or overcoming resistance to change, but must seek to uncover the exact determinants of any resistance to change (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005).

According to Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia and van der Voet (2014), there is still no consensus on the causes of resistance to change or solutions on how to overcome it, however senior managers are able to alleviate the concerns of middle managers during a change process and gain greater commitment from them when they actively engage the resistance to change exhibited by middle managers. Conversely, senior managers can become a barrier to successful change initiatives by failing to demonstrate sufficient support and commitment.

Resistance to change can be attributed to a fear of the unknown, a fear of failure, a fear of the loss of something valuable, complacency, and a belief that the intended change will not be good for the organisation (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015). Managers' resistance to change may be influenced by how they perceive the change, the costs of adopting the change versus the benefits, and the degree to which they have been involved in the various aspects of the process of change. Resistance to change can also be influenced by perceptions of a loss of autonomy, a loss of status, an increased workload, a lack of consultation, and poor communication about the change initiative and the processes of change (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Conway & Monks, 2011). Managers may also fear a loss of control, displacement and being moved out of a comfort zone, as most are intent on just maintaining the status quo (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Pardo & Martínez, 2003). Middle managers are thus less likely to resist change if they feel valued and appreciated, and there are no trust issues with senior managers and executives. Senior managers must engage with middle managers to remove fear and anxiety, and thus reduce resistance to change.

Employees will be unwilling to support change when they have been through multiple change initiatives in a short period of time and if they experience, or perceive to experience, increased stress, workload and pressure due to continuous change (Giauque, 2015). Resistance to change is reinforced by a negative mindset towards the change initiative, which is influenced by a lack of knowledge and understanding of the change process (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015). Senior management can cultivate a positive mindset amongst middle managers towards the implementation of the change through communication, training and engaging workshops, which empower the middle managers with knowledge and understanding of the benefits and need for change, as well as the implementation process. Middle managers exhibit less resistance to change if they are involved in the process and if they perceive greater benefits to themselves as a result of the change initiative.

In a study by Giangreco and Peccei (2005), it was found that middle managers' resistance to change was expressed primarily passively by not championing the change initiative, rather than through direct acts of protest and dissent. Middle managers who perceive that they may be negatively influenced by change may misdirect or sabotage a strategy, delay its implementation, or produce a low-quality effort (Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014; Guth & MacMillan, 1986). Senior managers can become a barrier to successful change initiatives by failing to demonstrate sufficient support and commitment. Senior managers must therefore have ongoing contact with middle managers and their subordinates to ensure that middle managers are actively championing the change initiative. Resistance to change is caused by a lack of commitment and a lack of motivation (Alhaqbani, Reed, Savage & Ries, 2016).

2.6.3 Motivation

Job motivation and satisfaction are directly linked with commitment to change (Choi, 2011). A motivated employee is able to commit to a task to see it to completion. According to Robbins and Judge (2015, p. 216), "Motivation is the processes that account for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal". Motivation of employees will significantly boost both productivity and work performance, and thus organisational effectiveness. "The primary responsibility of middle managers is to motivate operational employees and direct their efforts in order to achieve predetermined

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organisational goals – which in most cases are high productivity and profits" (Jansen & Samuel, 2014, p. 53). Middle managers must be motivated in order to motivate others; however, they can only be motivated to commit to and promote change initiatives when it is understood what motivates them.

Several theories guide and give clarity to the issue of motivation in the workplace, including Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation Theory (also called Motivation-Hygiene Theory), McClelland's Theory of Needs, Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Robbins & Judge, 2015; Damij, Levnajić, Skrt & Suklan, 2015), Alderfer's ERG Theory, Locke's Goal Setting Theory (Damij et al., 2015; Jansen & Samuel, 2014), Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, Reinforcement Theory, and Equity Theory (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

Motivational (intrinsic) aspects of employment include achievement, recognition and reward of good performance, advancement and career growth opportunities, whilst extrinsic (hygiene) factors include healthy interpersonal relationships, favourable working conditions, fair company policies, an inclusive management style, and fair remuneration (Jansen & Samuel, 2014). Motivational factors are a prerequisite for motivated employees and hence higher performance, whilst extrinsic (hygiene) factors ensure that the organisation has a great environment and employees are happy. Employees are motivated by personal aspirations and company culture, procedures and policies, which is why businesses must ensure that these are favourable to middle managers if they are to be motivated to commit to and promote change initiatives. Middle managers are motivated to implement change strategy when their self-interest is at stake, as per Expectancy Theory (Guth & MacMillan, 1986). Expectancy theory states, "close alignment of individual and organisational goals is but one of several factors related to individual effort" (Guth & MacMillan, 1986, "Expectancy theory and strategy implementation", para. 1).

"The hygiene function requires constant reinforcement and is reflected in the short-term results, whereas the motivation is based on the need for personal growth and an inner generator, consequently the benefits are long-term" (Damij, Levnajić, Skrt & Suklan, 2015,

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para. 5). In a study conducted by Jansen and Samuel (2014), it was concluded that a combination of both intrinsic (motivation) and extrinsic (hygiene) factors is important to motivate middle managers to commit to the implementation of organisational strategies, and thus the achievement of organisational goals. An employee is motivated to superior performance by a combination of the following: achievement; recognition and rewards for achievement; interesting work content; opportunities for growth, development and advancement; and a competitive salary (Jansen & Samuel, 2014). In a study by Damij, Levnajić, Skrt and Suklan (2015), the top motivational drivers amongst managers were found to be a sense of achievement (high quality work execution), interesting work and good interpersonal relations with colleagues, whilst the top inhibitors to motivation are poor interpersonal relations with superiors and colleagues, and unhelpful colleagues.

Factors contributing to the demotivation of middle managers include not being valued or appreciated, inefficient and ineffective organisations, being overworked, a lack of trust, being treated unfairly, work contribution that lacks meaning and purpose (not aligned to the greater organisational mission), no career advancement or promotion opportunities, and a lack of good leadership (Zenger & Folkman, 2014).

Recommendations to maintain and improve the motivation of middle managers include: simplifying the reporting structure to improve workflow; assessing and restructuring communication between middle managers and their superiors and their subordinates; aligning middle manager roles and responsibilities to the greater organisational mission; granting increased autonomy to middle managers; and embracing a more inclusive organisational structure (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017).

2.6.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the change management processes employed by organisations. Kotter's (1995) Change Management Model and Oakland and Tanner's (2007) Framework of Change Model both emphasise the importance of leaders creating change readiness prior to implementing change. The change management theories gave

an understanding of the type of leadership that is needed to enable change, with the interface between senior management and middle management during change being critical, hence the emphasis on employee engagement.

Given the important role that middle managers play during organisational change, there is ample literature on the roles of middle managers in implementing change initiatives, but factors that influence middle managers in their role as change agents are not well understood. The aim of this research is to establish if companies do prepare for change, and to investigate the factors influencing middle managers to enable or inhibit change initiatives. These aims led to the formulation of the research questions which will be covered in   Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Middle managers have been identified as playing a vital role in change initiatives (Joshi & Jha, 2017; Tabrizi, 2013; Salih & Doll, 2013; Giangreco & Peccei, 2005; Conway & Monks, 2011), however little is known about the views of middle managers regarding the organisational factors influencing change initiatives (Giauque, 2015; Salih & Doll, 2013; Kuipers, et al, 2014).

The researcher sought to establish if companies do prepare for change, aimed to gain deeper insights into the factors that influence middle managers to enable or inhibit change initiatives, and endeavoured to provide recommendations to prepare middle managers to enable change.

The research questions were thus set out as follows:

Research Question 1

Do companies prepare for change?

Developing organisational readiness is important in any change initiative. The successful management of a change process goes through a series of phases, thus Kotter's (1995) eight-step model of change management will be utilised in this study to evaluate change preparation. This question aims to assess if companies commit to these steps when preparing for and managing change.

Research Question 2

What factors influence middle managers to enable or inhibit change?

Social cognitive theory, suggests that behaviour change, including middle manager behaviour as an enabler or inhibitor of change, is affected by environmental factors and personal factors.

By identifying the enablers and inhibitors, this research will add to the literature on the factors that influence middle managers to implement change initiatives, thus improving the likelihood of success of change initiatives.

This question attempts to uncover both the personal and organisational factors that enable or inhibit middle managers to implement change initiatives.

Research Question 3

What recommendations can be made to support middle managers to enable change?

Middle managers have been identified as playing a vital role in the success of change initiatives. This question aims to provide recommendations to support middle managers in implementing change initiatives, and thus improve the success rate of change initiatives.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

A qualitative, inductive research approach was utilised by the researcher for this research study. The aim was to investigate which factors contribute to middle managers being enablers or inhibitors of change, and to propose recommendations to support them to enable change initiatives. The intention was for the research to contribute to the literature on the study of factors that enable or inhibit middle managers in their role as change agents from the perspective of middle managers, an area where little research has been done.

The nature of qualitative research is mostly inductive and exploratory (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). An exploratory study was conducted as this research aims to provide new insights and tentative answers to initial questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) regarding the factors that contribute to middle manager being enablers or inhibitors of change. An exploratory study enables the analysis of research questions in detail (Patton, 2002). The intention was for the research study findings to stimulate further research on this topic (Turner, 2010; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). A qualitative exploratory study was most able to resolve the aims of the research. Qualitative research facilitates "study in natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 7).

An inductive approach was utilised as it allows for the emergence of new insights, resulting in potential patterns that lead to the formulation of general conclusions or theories (Patton, 2002; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Prior assumptions were limited, although some aspects of deductive reasoning were utilised. Both inductive and deductive strategies were appropriate to uncover insights in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The data were collected through face-to-face, in-depth interviews that lasted approximately one hour each. The interviews were conducted using an interview guide, which is a primary data collection tool, that was designed to accurately capture the various aspects of the research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.2 Population

The population is the complete group of members of targeted participants, while the sample is a subgroup of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The population for this study was middle managers who had been through a change initiative within the last three years, or who at the time of the research were involved in the advanced stages of a change initiative. The timeframe was chosen as it was assumed that the experiences of the change would still be fresh in the minds of the participants, which would facilitate easier identification of the factors that enabled or inhibited them in their role as change agents. The sample were selected from nine different companies and represented four industries, namely manufacturing, services, retail and government, in Durban, South Africa.

4.3 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is a description of the level at which research is conducted (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2008), which in this research was the enablers or inhibitors of middle managers who had been through a change initiative within the last three years, or who at the time of this research were involved in the advanced stages of a change initiative. Through exploratory investigation, the researcher hoped to determine what enables or inhibits middle managers in their role as change agents.

4.4 Sampling method and size

A non-probabilistic, purposive sampling approach was used for this exploratory, qualitative research study, which "involves a variety of sampling techniques for selecting a sample when you do not have a complete list of the population" (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.134). The absence of a complete list of the population prevented a random selection of a sample.

"Purposive sampling is the most frequently used form of non-probability sampling and is used to select a small sample when collecting qualitative data" (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.138). Participants had to meet two basic criteria for selection, 1) had to be a middle manager, and 2) must have been through a change initiative within the last three years or presently involved in the advanced stages of a change initiative. The sampling techniques included both the quota and snowball methods (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Patton, 2002); the quota method ensures that the participants meet the criteria for selection, while the snowball

method allows for the identification of additional participants by earlier interviewees. This ensured that the best participants were chosen for the research project, as "Purposive sampling size typically relies on the concept of 'saturation', or the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data" (Guest et al., 2006, p.59).

The researcher interviewed 15 middle managers who had been through a change initiative within the last three years, or who at the time of the research were involved in the advanced stages of a change initiative. A sample size of 15 is regarded as being sufficient for qualitative research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013). For homogeneous populations the sample size should be approximately 10 participants to reach data saturation, whilst for heterogeneous populations, the sample size should be approximately 15 participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The interviews were semi-structured, one-on-one and face-to-face, with open-ended and probing questions being asked to gain deeper insights into the factors that enable or inhibit middle managers in their role as change agents.

4.5 Measurement instrument

An interview guide was used as the research instrument, which was composed of structured, demographically-oriented questions, open questions and sub-questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). These questions were developed from the research questions. Sub-questions were only asked to gain further information if initial response did not provide sufficient information.

The questions were designed to ensure that the data obtained were able to answer the research questions and meet the objectives of the research project, i.e. content validity was achieved. Construct validity was achieved by ensuring that the questions provided enough data about what they intended to measure. Open-ended questions were asked to get more detailed answers, as this research was exploratory and inductive in nature (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013). The interviews were voice recorded and handwritten notes were also taken (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The interview guide was created to answer the research questions:

- Do companies prepare for change?
- What factors influence middle managers to enable or inhibit change?
- What recommendations can be made to support middle managers to enable change?

Structure of the interview guide:

- The first part of the questionnaire covered demographics and tested if companies prepare for change.
- The second section sought to investigate what enables or inhibits middle managers in their role as change agents.
- The third section aimed to obtain some recommendations regarding how to support middle managers to enable change.

4.6 Data gathering process

"A semi-structured interview is a method of data collection in which the interviewer asks about a set of themes using some predetermined questions, but varies the order in which the themes are covered and questions asked" (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 151). A pilot interview was conducted to test the understanding of the questions in order for the research questions to be answered. The pilot interview was used to test that the interview guide did provide the researcher with the data that were needed, and also tested the interview technique and skills of the researcher (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The researcher made changes to some of the questions as it was found that they were not clear, and a second pilot interview was conducted to re-assess the clarity of the interview questions.

A selection of middle managers was contacted telephonically to arrange meeting dates for the interviews. An outline highlighting some of the key questions was emailed to the interviewees prior to the interviews, to provide them with some indication as to the nature of the interviews and to allow them time for preparation. Each participant signed a consent form at the beginning of their interview and the researcher gave a brief description of the aim of the study to provide context to the interview. Everyone who participated in the study had freely consented to participate, without being coerced or unfairly pressurised (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The participants were assured that the intention of the interview was to evaluate processes and not the individual or the company, and they were requested to answer based on their own experiences and perceptions. Further, they were reassured of the confidentiality of the interviews and that all specific references to people or companies would be anonymised prior to analysis and not appear in the final research report.

The data were collected through face-to-face, in-depth interviews that lasted approximately one hour each. The proceedings of the interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy of data

collection and analysis procedures, which produced consistent findings. The recordings of the interviews were transcribed and together with the handwritten notes formed the data that were analysed (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This helped to ensure the reliability and the validity of both the research design strategy and the research process.

According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2010, "Dealing with interview data", para. 1) "interviews are a highly efficient way to gather rich, empirical data and have become the primary source of data collection". The interviews thus allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of what enables or inhibits middle managers in their role as change agents.

A cross-sectional approach, which is very useful for qualitative methods (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), was employed due to time constraints and the nature of the research. Data were only collected from participants at one period in time.

4.7 Analysis approach

Great care was taken to ensure consistency in the preparation of the qualitative text for transcripts to ensure the reliability and validity of the analysed data. Each interview transcript was saved as a separate file and checked for typing errors in preparation for analysis. The transcripts were anonymised by removing both the participants' and organisations' names as per the informed consent forms that were signed at the beginning of the interviews by both the participants and the interviewer (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Data were analysed using computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), namely Nvivo11. The usage of Nvivo11 simplified the analysis process and ensured the validity of this qualitative research by making sure that the explanation fit the description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The coding process involved a thorough reading of every line of the transcripts to evaluate the meaning of the text, after which the generated codes were consolidated to generate themes. The interviews were analysed thematically to categorise information with similar characteristics. Boyatzis (1998, p.vi) defined thematic analysis as "a process for encoding qualitative information". A "theme is a pattern found in the information that at a minimum describes and organises possible observations, or at a maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon under study" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. vii).

This investigation adhered to an inductive approach, whereby an analysis of the text allowed themes to emerge (Patton, 2002; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The research intention was to investigate which personal and organisational factors enable or inhibit middle managers to support change. Content analysis of the organisational factors revealed a merging pattern of change specific factors, which appeared to be differentiated from standard organisational factors. The researcher continued to explore those patterns and the content analysis revealed organisational, change-specific and personal factors that enable or inhibit middle managers to support change. Organisational factors related to the general culture of organisations, whilst change-specific factors were related to how change was undertaken. The researcher thus maintained the distinction between organisational and change-specific factors influencing change.

Topic and descriptive coding were utilised, which entailed labelling portions of the text according to their main subjects (Richards, 2013). Codes were grouped in themes in line with the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.8 Limitations

The subjective nature of qualitative research can be affected by both interviewer and interviewee bias (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund, et al, 2013), thus the interviews may have been biased in the manner in which they were carried out (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), which could have been influenced by researcher bias and the researcher's expectations of the information gathered in the interviews.

The researcher attempted to eliminate subject bias by requesting that interviewees speak freely and openly, and by assuring them that the aim of the research was not about individuals or companies, but about processes. This was done to prevent the interviewees from giving unreliable or 'padded' information so as not to present themselves or their companies in a bad light (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Observer error and observer bias were eliminated by the research being undertaken by one researcher.

The results cannot be generalised to the entire population due to the use of non-probability sampling. As this qualitative research was exploratory in nature, a detailed quantitative study will have to be done to gain greater accuracy of results.

The participants were from one metropolitan area in South Africa, which also indicates geographical bias.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the methodology that was used in the study, i.e. the research utilised a qualitative, exploratory study method that incorporated quota and snowball sampling. Semi-structured interviews utilising an interview schedule were employed to collect data, which were transcribed and thematically analysed using an inductive approach. Themes were aligned to the research questions and the limitations of the research method were stated. The findings/results will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Overview

This chapter will focus on the content analysis of the interviews, which were conducted in an attempt to answer the research questions. An inductive research approach was employed, which drew on the theory of Kotter's (1995) eight steps of change and social learning theory. Kotter's eight steps are a guide as to how companies should prepare for and implement change, while social learning theory states that both personal factors and environmental factors have an influence on the behaviour of individuals. An individual must believe in their ability to model the changed behaviour, and must perceive that there is sufficient incentive(s) to model the behavioural change.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 middle managers, and each interview lasted an average of one hour. The interviews were audio recorded and handwritten notes were also taken in order to capture the context of the statements made (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Patton, 2002). The audio recordings were then transcribed, with each transcript varying in length between seven and ten pages, providing substantial information. The transcripts were word processed and analysed as text data, which were then analysed using computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), i.e. Nvivo11.

Topic and descriptive coding was utilised and the generated codes were consolidated to generate themes. This investigation adhered to an inductive approach, whereby an analysis of the text allowed themes to emerge (Patton, 2002; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The research intention was to investigate personal and organisational factors which enable or inhibit middle managers to support change. Content analysis of organisational factors revealed a merging pattern of change specific factors, which appeared to be differentiated from standard organisational factors. The researcher continued to explore those patterns and the content analysis revealed organisational, change-specific and personal factors which enable or inhibit middle managers to support change. Organisational factors relate to the general culture of organisations, whilst change-specific factors relate to how change is undertaken.

5.2 Sample population

The table below presents the profile of the 15 participants in the study.

Table 3: Profile of participants

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION	TENURE	INDUSTRY
1	Male	30 – 50	Matric	5 to 10	Manufacturing
2	Male	30 – 50	Matric	Below 5	Manufacturing
3	Female	Above 50	Diploma	Above 10	Services
4	Male	30 – 50	Postgrad	5 to 10	Government
5	Female	30 – 50	Undergrad	5 to 10	Manufacturing
6	Male	30 – 50	Diploma	5 to 10	Manufacturing
7	Male	30 – 50	Postgrad	Below 5	Manufacturing
8	Male	Above 50	Diploma	Above 10	Manufacturing
9	Male	30 – 50	Matric	Above 10	Retail
10	Female	Above 50	Matric	Below 5	Retail
11	Female	30 – 50	Matric	5 to 10	Retail
12	Female	30 – 50	Diploma	5 to 10	Services
13	Male	30 – 50	Postgrad	Above 10	Manufacturing
14	Male	30 – 50	Diploma	5 to 10	Services
15	Female	30 – 50	Diploma	Above 10	Retail

The majority of respondents were males (9). Twelve middle managers were between 30 – 50 years old, and only three were above 50 years old. Interestingly, the sample shows a diversity in terms of highest academic level; there was an almost equal number of middle managers with diplomas (6) and matrics (5), whilst three middle managers held a

postgraduate degree and one had an undergraduate degree. This indicates that the sample studied provides an eclectic view in terms of educational level.

In terms of tenure, seven participants had between five and ten years' experience in management, five had more than ten years' experience, and only three had less than five years' experience. The middle managers who participated in this study came from four different industries, representing nine different companies. The majority of the participants (seven) were working in the manufacturing industry, whilst four were from the retail industry, three were from the services industry, and one was from the government sector.

Overall, the middle managers' profile reflects the heterogeneity of the participants. A sample size of 15 is regarded as being sufficient for qualitative research, as data saturation for heterogeneous populations is reached at 15 participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013).

5.3 Research question 1 – Do companies prepare for change?

A short questionnaire was given to each interviewee to evaluate how their companies had prepared for change based on Kotter's eight steps of change. Each of the eight steps were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, with the endpoints being Very well (5) and Not at all (1). (See Table 4 below.)

Limitations: This questionnaire was done for a very small sample of 15 people, which did not provide adequate data to undergo a full statistical analysis for quantitative data. The sample did, however, give an idea as to how these companies have prepared for change, which influences whether middle managers are enablers or inhibitors of change.

The scores for each step were aggregated and the average for each step was calculated. The table below represents these averages.

Table 4: Kotter's eight steps of change
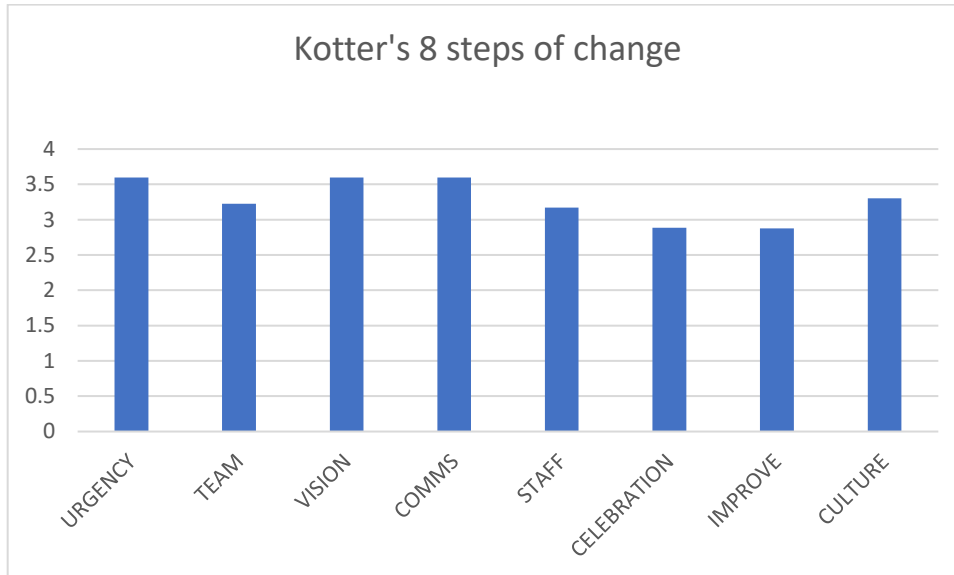
None of the average scores (mean) in each of the steps are above 4. The highest average scores (3.59) indicate creating a sense of urgency; developing a vision and strategy for change; and communicating the change vision. The next highest scores were incorporating the resultant change into the culture (3.30); creating a guiding coalition (3.22); and encouraging staff to promote change (3.16). The lowest averages were identifying and celebrating small successes in change (2.88) and making improvements to the change process (2.87).

Companies score well on creating an urgency for change, highlighting the external and internal needs for change, and are also able to create visions and strategies, as well as communicating the visions for change. These historically fall to the senior managers and executives who create strategies for companies.

Companies do not score well in terms of involving the rest of the workforce in change initiatives, however, or in creating mixed teams of influential personnel across the organisation to drive change. They also do not actively recruit staff to be drivers of change.

The change stages are not followed to the letter as organisations score poorly in making improvements to the change process and in celebrating small successes in the change process. This could be a result of not providing or receiving feedback, as well as being fixated on the end result of the intended change initiative and not continuing to guide the change as it progresses. Companies do well in promoting the need for change, however their management of both the process and the people during the change is not given priority.

5.4 Research question 2 – What factors contribute to middle managers being enablers or inhibitors of change?

The data analysis revealed both enabling and inhibiting factors that contribute to managers supporting change. These factors were broken down into three groups, namely: personal factors incorporating social factors; organisational factors; and change-specific factors. These groups were based on the patterns that emerged from the content analysis (see Section 4.7)

5.4.1 Factors enabling change

Figure 4: Factors enabling change
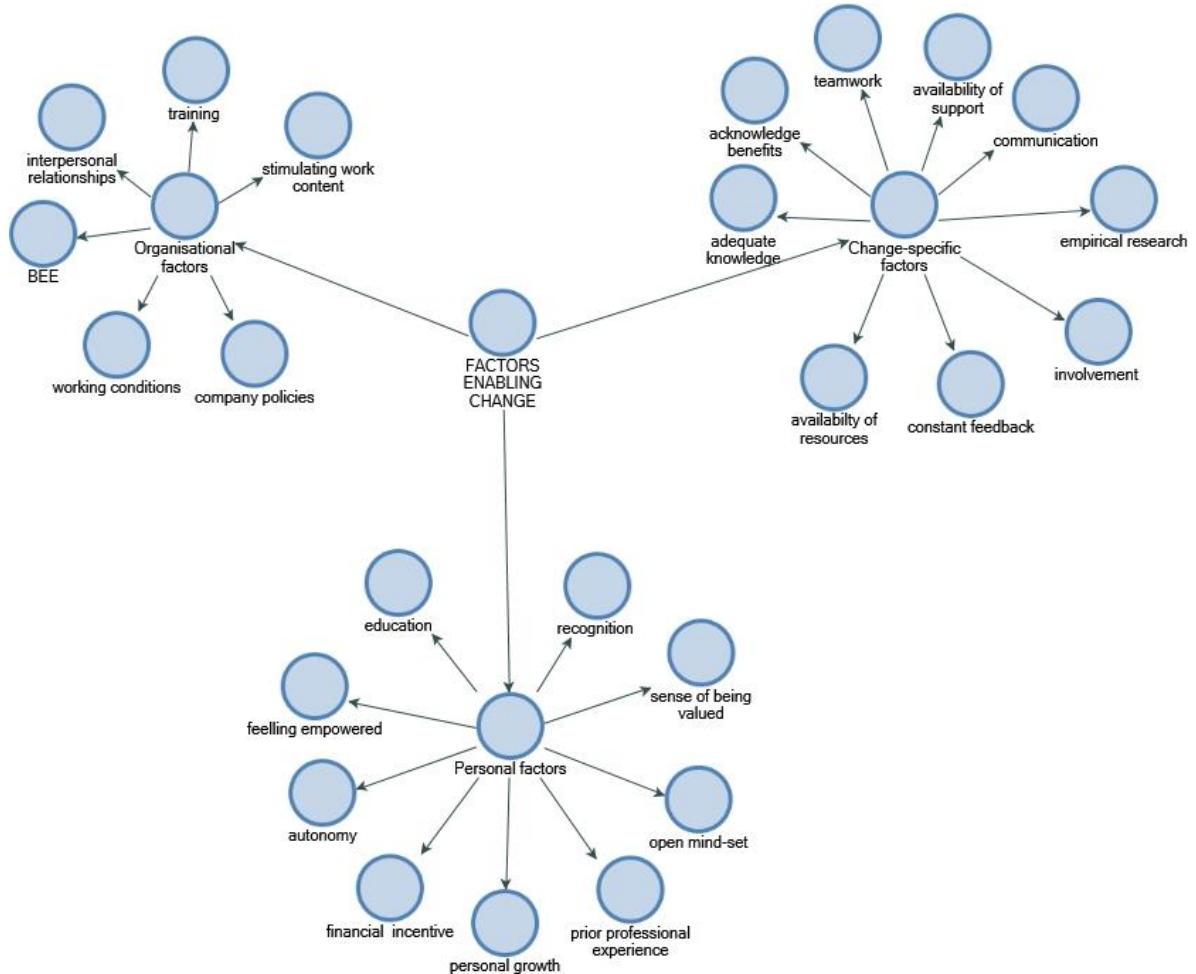
5.4.1.1 Personal factors

Personal factors enabling change include personal growth; feeling empowered; a sense of being valued and appreciated; an increase in remuneration; recognition; more educational opportunities; prior professional experience; level of autonomy; and an open mindset.

(a) Personal growth

The participants stated that the change should have a positive effect on their personal growth. The general attitude was that if they are going to commit to implementing change then they need to assess what's in it for them. The change should produce personal growth relating to position, knowledge or status. Personal growth was the leading personal factor for middle managers to commit to change. This factor was highlighted by nine participants.

> Participant one stated, *"…because of the opportunities it will give us individually and as a company… Opportunity for growth, getting a senior position and growth opportunities internationally for myself."*

Participant four also spoke strongly about being committed to change based on the opportunities for personal growth,

> *"One for my exposure and personal growth as well as my CV that was another factor that drove me to support this change. I saw it as a benefit to personal growth – these were the main driving key points, personal growth and the experience in new things as well."*

The idea of personal growth being a driver of commitment to change was echoed by participant 13,

> *"…but it also gave me the opportunity to travel with the company. I am getting involved in the other side of the business. We have international competition."*

(b) Feeling empowered

The idea of the middle managers feeling empowered is another factor that influences commitment to change. Some of the participants argued that when they feel empowered to influence the change, they are more likely to commit to implementing the change initiative and influencing the rest of the employees to commit to change.

> *"The thing that caused me to be in favour of the change was to see people grow and because I was given the opportunity to change people's lives and not only change people's lives, but also grow the company in a new aspect, but the*

motivation factor was; what I am going to do with the power I have in my hand now?", stated participant two.

Participant one contended that,

"I have the authority to make up sops (standard operating procedures) and enforce them through our systems, so if the process is not working I will change it and have it approved, then we follow it, so at the moment I am busy with sops (standard operating procedures) and fixing up problems". Participant one also stated, *"I was poached from company X, and I have been given full authority."*

Participant four expressed that the learnings from the project have enabled his ability to lead the process and influence the employees to commit to the change initiative by stating,

"There's a lot of things I have learnt out of the whole project, from project planning point of view, a number of milestones, how to celebrate those milestones, to be able to say 'guys this is where we are', and keeping the guys motivated".

Participant 13 also expressed a feeling of empowerment in leading change,

" …achieved all the objectives and I have changed a few outcomes to make it better, so even on the production side, I have put in my thought and experience from previous companies. I helped in getting the company streamed up, and you must have happy employees, if not, you won't do well".

The feeling of being empowered was highlighted by nine participants, as middle managers are able to commit to and lead change initiatives when they feel empowered. This feeling of empowerment causes middle managers to influence other employees to commit to the change initiative, thus improving the success rate.

(c) Sense of being valued and appreciated

If middle managers feel valued and appreciated they are more likely to commit to the change process. Middle managers exhibit a greater commitment to change when they feel valued and appreciated as individuals, therefore senior managers must make an effort to provide individual attention to middle managers throughout the change process. This view of feeling

valued and appreciated is supported through statements made by the middle managers during the interviews.

Middle managers are committed to change when senior managers express the value which they add to the organisation. Participant 13 stated,

> *"…when my CEO came to me and said he's planning to retire in two years' time we started the process, and he told me that I was the candidate to carry out the change initiation in the organisation".*

This sense of belief in one's abilities by senior management enables middle managers to support and promote change initiatives. Participant three, who was very committed to the change initiative due to feeling valued and appreciated, exclaimed:

> *"My boss believes in me, and my capabilities - that's why he selected me!"*

Participant six stated that his senior management took an interest in the well-being of individuals, which created a sense of being valued and appreciated:

> *"And this strategy in time was to get things back in line, so they engaged with people. For two years you have upper management will engage with you on a personal level and sharing the well-being of people. One of our visions was to return home safely, and it was not just you physically getting home, it was mentally, your well-being and all those things."*

The feeling of being valued and appreciated was highlighted by seven participants. Being valued and appreciated gives middle managers a sense of belonging and influences them to commit to change initiatives.

(d) Financial incentive

Financial incentives associated with the change were highlighted as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change. Financial incentives were mentioned by seven participants. Middle managers are more likely to commit to change initiatives when they feel that they are being fairly compensated for any work done and there are financial rewards associated with supporting change.

An increase in remuneration brings change into the personal lives of employees, and middle managers will commit to change when they perceive that it will result in an improvement in their lives. This sentiment was shared by participant eight, who stated,

> *"…we do understand money comes to affect in many ways. It's an enabler to make things happen. When I got the promotion, it changed our lives. We as a family always wanted to educate our children and send them to university. It forced us to buy a house which we never thought of. We have a doctor and one of my daughters got a degree and now she's working here in HR, so for me I see change as key to unlock things and we adopt a positive thinking in order to grow the business."*

Financial incentive, although not a primary driver to commit to change, does motivate employees to commit to change. Participant six stated,

> *"…that really helped the morale. They introduced the monetary bonus system where your middle management and top management are paid on performance that remains as is, however your people lower than that had the biggest morale impact. They introduced the fourteenth cheque that was performance based and if the company did well, we received the cheque and it really became a good incentive for us".*

The importance of fair remuneration when supporting change was confirmed by single statements from two participants.

> Participant eight stated, *"…they pay decent salaries and you work in a secure environment",* while participant 13 stated, *"…salary is one of it. You must be paid for what you do!"*

Middle managers are more likely to show an increased commitment to change when their efforts will be rewarded according to their input. Participant seven noted,

> *"…because the way the remuneration systems has been structured is quite smart. If the business does well, then the division does well."*

(e) Recognition

Middle managers are more likely to commit to change initiatives if they are being recognised for their contributions to the organisation. The importance of personal recognition was highlighted by seven participants. Personal recognition reaffirms the value that middle managers add to an organisation and evokes an element of pride and a sense of belonging, which influences them to commit to change initiatives.

> *"But it's nice to be recognised, we all like recognition and I have received recognition in ways that I have been told that I am the best person for the job",* stated participant four when mentioning enabling factors to commit to change.

Participant 11 reinforced the importance of being recognised whilst explaining the workings of a newly adopted communication and employee engagement model:

> *"Because if you look at it. We don't spend that much time here but we spend more time on the recognition because everybody wants to be recognised."*

Participant 12 showed an element of pride in explaining the role of personal recognition as an enabler to commit and make a contribution to the change within the organisation:

> *"Because they could identify me as one of the stronger people and I am of super use today, so I would assist where I can with training of staff members. I was very fortunate that I could adopt it quite easy."*

(f) More educational opportunities

Middle managers are likely to commit to the change process when the change initiative provides educational opportunities for them to further their studies and acquire the necessary knowledge in line with their present and future positions. The incentive of more educational opportunities was highlighted by five participants. If an organisation can provide opportunities such as educational opportunities, employees are likely to commit to the change process.

Formal educational opportunities for senior management enables middle managers to commit to change with the hope of being promoted to be given these opportunities. Participant 11 stated,

> *"…the senior management get opportunities to study with Stellenbosch University in management, to further their management skills because when you get taken in this company you get taken as managers and trainers and you go through a programme and you graduate".*

Middle managers are highly likely to commit to change when the educational opportunities will benefit them on a personal level. Participant 14 stated,

> *"I'm in favour because the bank is doing more towards educational in terms of investments and finance because we find a lot of people who are working for financial institutions are indebted."*

Participant two shared the same sentiment when talking about staff and management getting opportunities to study and develop their careers and knowledge. Participant two stated,

> *"I always look down and say, 'Who can we bring up?' So, the company pays for six people who are studying. We took one of the cleaning ladies and she is doing a B. Com and we have another sales guy who completed his B. Com last year. The cleaning lady needs to write two more subjects, and there are people who are doing internal learner ships in the company. We are doing an apprenticeship where we are taking people from colleges and technical colleges".*

(g) Prior professional experience

Prior professional experience is an enabler to commit to change and increases the confidence of experienced middle managers to support change initiatives. This experience may be related to tenure, expertise or a higher level of education. The advantage and benefit of prior professional experience as an enabler to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by six participants.

Participant 13, who had more than ten years of experience and a postgraduate degree, supported the idea,

> *"Well I think I have come up from a clerk and I built myself up, so I have a whole experience of all departments especially in finance. Another factor that helped is that when I started here the business was still under construction so I got to know all the processes and aspects of the business".*

Participant three, who had more than ten years of experience in management, stated,

> *"Definitely my experience as a nurse and quality management. The first one is that I have been in a similar process in 1998, and I really felt part of it, apart from the working, it was the wonderful seeing systems in place. And by that, I mean integration of system control and health and safety, so that each of those system was not working in silos."*

Participant four who has between five and ten years of experience, a postgraduate qualification and expertise, stated,

> *"It was my professional background, in the sense that I have been an internal auditor for four or five years, auditing systems, so there were a number of risks and gaps that were identified along the way. I think it is this experience, in terms of the work that I was doing. It was one of the factors."*

Participant one, who had between five and ten years of experience and the technical expertise and qualifications to commit to and lead the change, stated,

> *"The main factors were basically my technical understanding of the process. Well the field that they are going into, the core is printing and lamination. Now I am qualified in both trades. That's how I ended up in training. So, it was easy for me."*

Middle managers who have prior experience of the proposed change initiative are more likely to commit to managing the change initiative. Middle manager commitment to change is also influenced by either tenure of management, or possessing expertise and qualifications, or a higher level of education.

(h) Level of autonomy

Middle managers are further committed to driving and implementing a change process when they have been given authority by their senior management and are able to maintain a level of autonomy in implementing change initiatives to produce the desired results. The influence of a level of autonomy as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by five participants.

Participant 12 stated,

> "I think I really managed quite nice and I am a really fast learner when it comes to computer programmes and I don't have a problem and I was actually assisting with the training in the other facilities".

Participant one emphasised his level of autonomy in the change initiative in this statement:

> "I have the authority to make up sops (standard operating procedures) and enforce them through our systems. So, if the process is not working, I will change it and have it approved, then follow it. So, at the moment I am busy with sops and fixing problems, but it will take time."

Participant two, demonstrating a level of autonomy to implement the change initiative, which increases his commitment as he is in a position to influence the desired results of the change, stated:

> "I began to challenge them on. he processes that they were doing, because I felt as if we were just running in a circle, doing the same thing and it became a norm. So, for me that 'norm' didn't settle well with me. I started to see things in a different way, and getting to see customers, began to understand what is required more in the market."

(i) Open mindset

One participant mentioned the advantage of having an open mindset as an enabler to commit to change initiatives within the organisation.

"I was more open-minded to the working of the company and I wasn't one-track minded, for example, if you are appointed as a sales person, I wasn't only doing sales, I would go as well into the repairs department to see what they were doing there" - participant two.

An open mindset increases the ability of the middle manager to fully understand the workings of the organisation thus increasing the likelihood of supporting the change due to being able to appreciate the effect of the intended change on the entire company.

5.4.1.2 Organisational factors

Organisational factors that are perceived favourably by middle managers also positively influence their commitment to support a change initiative. Organisational factors are related to the culture of the organisation, and an organisational culture that facilitates change enables middle managers to commit to change initiatives. Organisational factors that enable commitment to change include good interpersonal relationships; training and empowering opportunities; company policy and structure; a stimulating work environment; favourable working conditions and the political environment.

(a) Good interpersonal relationships

An organisational culture of good interpersonal relationships enables middle managers to commit to the implementation of change strategies. These good interpersonal relationships with colleagues, subordinates and senior management are necessary to ensure the success of change initiatives, and thus motivate middle managers to implement change. The role of good interpersonal relationships as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by nine participants.

The importance of good interpersonal relationships within an organisation when implementing change and requiring cooperation from other employees was highlighted by participant 12, who stated:

> *"And the relationships with subordinates. Mostly, speaking for myself, I think it is very good. I am hands on with the staff and I am always motivating them and encouraging them. I would say, good relationships. And I don't think they ate afraid of me and they come and talk to me about anything."*

Good interpersonal relationships increase the likelihood that middle managers will commit to change initiatives and will continue to support the change during difficult times. Participant six stated,

> *"I have buy-in with the campaign, and I like what they stood for and what they wanted to do and I have a good relationship with the company. I was committed to them.   I shared the highs and the lows. From that perspective, I wanted them to be successful because I am successful if they are successful."*

Participant 9 and 13 emphasised the role of good interpersonal relationships between employees and the senior management that enables middle managers to commit to and support change initiatives.

> *"Our staff are very vocal and we have a very down to earth CEO, she entertains the staff and makes sure they are happy with what they are doing,"* stated participant nine.

> *"Having the CEO as someone you can call on. He has a wealth of experience. So, you can just pick up the phone if you are not sure about something and you get some feedback. So, I think having that as a backup for me was great. I needed that to go forward,"* stated participant 13.

(b) Training and empowering opportunities

Training and empowering opportunities can be a driving force to enable middle managers to commit to the implementation of change initiatives. Middle managers feel empowered and confident enough to implement change initiatives when they have been trained and have the knowledge to lead subordinates during change. This training may be either certified or

uncertified. The role of training and empowering opportunities as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by nine participants.

The availability of resources enables middle managers to commit to leading change initiatives. Participant seven stated that the available resources enabled commitment to the change*:*

> *"I will say for me the resources were made available and I think we have more than enough resources to carry out the change. We have access to material and online learning materials."*

Informal training by senior management and the supply of material is sufficient to enable middle managers to be confident enough to implement change initiatives. Participant nine stated:

> *"We had a manager meeting and the briefing was held and they explained on how to go about and how to address the staff on the change. They gave tools on how to tell your staff."*

Participant 14, confirming that training was an enabling factor when committing to implementing change, stated:

> *"We had some kind of training, mild training. As management we do have short courses as well, that helped and the knowledge enabled us. So, there was some kind of training which was courses, that was short courses."*

(c) Company policies and structure

Company policies and structures which facilitate change act as enablers that influence middle managers to commit to organisational change. Company structures may also be very rigid, giving middle managers no choice but to comply with intended changes. This strategy may have merit when it is easy to measure and inspect the work of middle managers in change initiatives, namely structural or software changes. The influence of company policies and structures as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by five participants.

Participants 10 and 12 confirmed the role of rigid structures in getting middle managers to implement change initiatives. These managers were involved in structural and software changes in their organisations.

> *"They had to change because it was the company's vision and they are working for the company,"* stated participant 10, while participant 12 stated:

> *"For me it was not negotiable and I do accept it, and I accepted it that, that was what the company had planned to do."*

An understanding of company policies and structures enables middle managers to commit to change initiatives, as this fosters a greater appreciation for the vision and intentions of senior management. Participant six reiterated the role of company structure in change initiatives:

> *"We had that breakdown. More vibrant, more knowledge, more up to date senior managers came into the company. They came up with the new vision, they developed this and where the direction of the company will go in terms of international market and what we would be producing."*

(d) Stimulating work content

Stimulating work content is another factor that enables middle managers to commit to organisational change, as they become more involved and their curiosity, coupled with excitement and stimulation, drives them to discover new things which will ultimately lead to change in the organisation. Stimulating work content as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by seven participants.

Participant three expressed the passion of working within a stimulating environment by stating,

> *"What I loved about it was that its very progressive so the accreditors will constantly come and assess you and tell you, 'this is where you need to be more involved, this is where you need to leave it, and this is where you need to interface'."*

Stimulating work content is able to arouse interest in change initiatives, thus enabling middle managers to commit to implementing change initiatives. Participant 11 stated,

> *"It's like creating interest and they are aware of that because they are telling me the same information and they see it working for them. So, we will ask, "what principles will they use in their pack?""*

Stimulating work content enables middle managers to commit to change due to opportunities for access to further stimulation through technological advancement. Participant one stated:

> *"Because of the opportunities it will give us individually and as a company. Like so far, we have teams that went to India and we are planning to go to Italy to see a different side of the company. And we have access to global technology, databases with information and access to technical information."*

(e) Favourable working conditions

Favourable working conditions are essential as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives in organisations, as they facilitate the ease of implementation.

Participant eight stated that favourable working conditions have enabled commitment to change:

> *"They pay decent salaries and you are in a comfortable working environment."*

Favourable working conditions are created by the management culture and the values of the organisation, as stated by participant nine:

> *"Well our company works on values, we have a value-based management culture, we call it X. We work closely with our set of values, like service, sustainability. Each letter has a meaning to it. So, we like integrity, do what you say you will do."*

Favourable working conditions are influenced by people, organisational values and structures. Favourable working conditions as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change initiatives was highlighted by three participants.

(f) Political environment

The role of the political environment as an enabler of commitment to change initiatives was mentioned by one participant in terms of economic policies and legislation. Participant six stated:

> *"For many years, the political environment in South Africa didn't really bear well for me as a white male in South Africa. So, for job security, which pays good money, if you got one you hold on to it as tight as you can. So, really that's one of the bigger drivers that I needed to be successful."*

5.4.1.2 Change-specific factors

Change-specific factors that are perceived favourably by middle managers also positively influence their commitment to support a change initiative. Change-specific factors include: involvement in the change process; good communication; availability of support; acknowledging the benefits of the change; teamwork and collaboration; availability of resources; constant feedback and assessment; adequate knowledge of the change process; and change informed by empirical research.

(a) Involvement in the change process

The involvement of middle managers in the formulation of the change process enables them to commit to the implementation of the change process, as they have a better understanding of the reasons for the change and they are able to take ownership of the process. Often employees are not provided with adequate information about the organisational changes that must be implemented. Middle managers desire involvement in the formulation of the change process as they will be able to contribute to the process and influence how the process will affect them on both a personal and a functional level. Eleven of the fifteen participants advocated for the idea of involving the middle managers in the formulation of the change process.

Participant four commented that management style has a big influence on the involvement and participation of middle managers in the formulation of the change process:

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"I think also the management style; the management style of the leadership was a style that encouraged people to participate. It was not hostile and at the same time, the leaders, that are part of this, are people that are able to relate or interact with staff at all levels."

The involvement of the middle managers in the change process enables them to commit to the change initiative, due to a greater understanding of the vision and a sense of being better prepared to implement the change. Participant five stated:

"We were made to understand the vision and what the company was driving at. I think the preparations. I was happy to be part of that. I knew what was expected from me. I was not just thrown into the deep end. That's what made me commit and I am quite passionate about it."

Participant seven reinforced that companies that do change well involve their employees in the change process and create avenues for dialogue and input from their staff:

"I think what our company is doing with change is very good as they start at the top, advertise it and come down to the divisions and make presentations and interact with people and they actually open up dialogue where you can put in suggestions."

The involvement of middle managers in the formulation of the change process enables them to commit to the implementation, as they have a better understanding of the process and feel as though they have contributed to how the change will affect them, and are therefore able to take ownership of the change initiative.

(b) Good communication

Good communication within an organisation during change is absolutely essential to ensure the success of the change initiative. The lines of communication must be open and effective between senior managers and middle managers, to ensure that the change is implemented as intended by the strategists. Nine participants highlighted the role and importance of good communication as an enabler for middle managers to implement change initiatives.

Good communication ensures that middle managers understand the purpose of the change and the appropriate methods of implementation. Participant nine stated that good communication enabled the successful implementation of their change initiative:

> *"Well, I think it's by communicating it properly and ensuring that we understand what the brief entails."*

Participant eight maintained that communication is a major factor in enabling commitment to the change through this statement:

> *"Purely communication, it's more communication."*

Senior management must take responsibility for communicating during a change initiative to ensure that a single message is carried across the organisation, which will enhance the success of the change initiative and encourage middle managers in their role as agents of change. Participant 15 confirmed the role of senior management in driving communication during a change initiative.

> *"I think to communicate in the best way to our staff. And it had to. I think it came all the way from our head office, throughout all our stores, our divisions, through our districts, everyone had to be on the same page with regards to it."*

Good communication is not only important between middle managers and senior managers, but is also essential between middle managers and subordinates, as it maintains uniformity of the message between senior managers and frontline employees. Participant 11 made the following statement whilst demonstrating a new communication method within the organisation:

> *"Communication is important. And the staff love to know what is going on. And this is the best way for me to communicate. So, I can say change yes and resistance at first because of the way it was presented."*

(c) Availability of support

Middle managers face various challenges during the implementation of change strategies, and the availability of senior management support to assist as operational needs change is an encouragement and an enabler to middle managers to continue with the implementation of change management strategies. Eight participants highlighted the role and importance of availability of senior management support as an enabler for middle managers to implement change initiatives.

Senior management should be available for advice, emotional support, the provision of facilities and motivation of the team. Participant three confirmed that the support of senior management is a necessary enabler to circumvent the challenges associated with the implementation of change:

> *"Management needs to support you, in terms of trainings and overtime if they are new things being implemented. You cannot do it alone and if you have a bad crew – you are in trouble. I really embrace this because I know it will have a positive effect on business."*

Availability of support from senior management is essential in achieving positive results associated with the strategies and vision of change. Participant six commented that:

> *"So, there is two sides to it. In order to achieve it, you obviously have the top management supporting it and that is the vision of pulling you forward, anything that falls in line within that strategy or that vision, you have to support it to that point, from my perspective."*

Middle management support of a change process is directly aligned to senior management support of change. Senior managers create strategies for change but must support the implementation of those strategies to ensure success. Participant three stated:

> *"My support for the change is more…very much my personal feeling. How much support we get for getting this process to work is going to be interesting, simply because from past experience, I do find that companies come up with ideas, roll it and then it's your baby."*

(d) Acknowledging the benefits of the change

Middle managers' knowledge of the benefits of the change process influences them to commit to the change process, thus senior managers must engage with middle managers to ensure that they are informed of the benefits of change. Eleven participants highlighted an acknowledgement of the benefits of change as an enabler for middle managers to commit to change.

Participant four confirmed the importance of acknowledging the benefits of change:

> *"I was in favour of the change because from the presentation that was presented to us as part of the management team, there were a lot of positive spinoffs that would come out of the change and it would improve our business processes and models and the information was going to be timely, and the number of risks that the company was going to be exposed to will be minimised."*

Participant five stated that being informed of the benefits of the change was an enabling factor to commit to the change initiative and support the vision of growing the company.

> *"I was in favour of the change because it meant that the business was going to grow from the picture I was seeing and from what we were aiming to achieve."*

Experience of both the challenges and victories in an organisation gives middle managers an advantage in acknowledging the benefits of the change. Participant six stated:

> *"I have buy-in with the campaign, and I like what they stood for and what they wanted to do and I have a good relationship with the company. I was committed to them. I shared the highs and the lows. From that perspective, I wanted them to be successful because I am successful if they are successful."*

(e) Teamwork and collaboration

Six participants highlighted team work and collaboration as one of the enabling factors to commit to change. It is not possible to implement change initiatives alone, therefore teamwork and collaboration across business departments and employee levels is essential for successful change initiatives. Participant one confirmed this with the following statement:

> *"You can't change a business alone. You need team work!"*

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Participant 11, meanwhile, highlighted collaboration across employee levels to achieve goals.

> *"So, I think this has helped because in our previous plan, it was I say and you do. But now in the new system, you're giving the individual an opportunity to think and come up with their own ideas. And you sort of merge what you want to achieve for the day."*

Changing roles and functions of employees creates an appreciation for the agility of team members, and is a great way to improve teamwork and collaboration. This will have a positive impact on change initiatives and will enable middle managers with the implementation of change. Participant two highlighted the benefits of changing roles and functions to improve teamwork and collaboration in change initiatives.

> *"So, we began to change people around in the company and make them do each other's jobs so that they can understand each other's jobs and it took away lots of frustration amongst the workers because working on someone else's position would make you sass the problems that they go through. Ant that is how we began to fix those problems and that is how we came together on board."*

(f) Availability of resources

Three participants highlighted the necessity of the availability of resources to enable change. Sufficient resources must be available timeously in order to facilitate the implementation of change.

Participant seven, when highlighting the need for sufficient resources to enable change, stated:

> *"I will say for me the resources were made available and I think we have more than enough resources to carry out the change. We have access to material and online learning materials."*

Participant one, confirming that the availability of equipment enables middle managers to implement change initiatives, as well as access to the relevant experts concerning resources, stated:

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"So, then we had to set our equipment. We have some good equipment and we were comparing to our equipment to India. We were doing teleconferencing with the guys in India to understand how certain components and small additions to our machines can make us run different applications."

(g) Constant feedback and assessment

Feedback and continuous assessment as enablers of change were mentioned by eight participants, as it assists in evaluating progress and enables them to continue working with confidence.

Participant 13 mentioned that the feedback from senior management was invaluable in helping him during the implementation of the change initiative:

"Having the CEO as someone you can call on. He has a wealth of experience. So, you can just pick up the phone if you are not sure about something and you get some feedback. So, I think having that as a backup for me was great. I needed that to go forward."

Participant seven added that being able to give feedback enabled commitment to change, as it allowed middle managers to function as developers of change. Companies were thus assessed by participants as being excellent at initiating and implementing change.

"I think what our company is doing with change is very good as they start at the top and advertise it and come down to the divisions and make presentations and interact with the people and they actually open up dialogue where you can put in suggestions."

Participants expressed that being able to give feedback on the progress of the change was useful in ensuring that their efforts and opinions added value to changes in the organisation. Participant 11 stated:

"We had the opportunity for feedback… And we come to our sessions and we give feedback to the manager and the manager will give feedback to the HR and the HR to the store managers and the regional meeting. So, there is opportunity to get it measured."

(h) Adequate knowledge of the change process

Nine participants mentioned adequate knowledge of the change process as a contributing factor enabling commitment to the change process, as they had a better understanding of the reasons for, and the direction of, the change.

Participant four stated that adequate knowledge gave reassurance of the change journey:

"They started with the plan by demonstrating where we were, where we are, and where we are going. You could see they had a plan to take us somewhere."

Middle manager buy-in to the change was strongly influenced by adequate knowledge of the change process. Participant six stated:

"I have buy-in with the campaign, and I like what they stood for and what they wanted to do and I have a good relationship with the company. I was committed to them. I shared the highs and the lows. From that perspective, I wanted them to be successful because I am successful if they are successful."

Adequate knowledge of the change process gave reassurance of the progress of journey and thus enabled commitment and support of the change. Participant seven stated:

"What was critical in this stage was the communication as to prepare the people for the change that is to come. We had a person that ran with change, a person in charge of the finance for the change and internal newsletters that keeps you alert of what is happening."

(i) Change informed by empirical research

Three participants claimed that they are more likely to commit to the change process if the change is informed by empirical research. They highlighted that change which is informed by research is usually not just another change initiative and will have fewer issues. Participant 12 mentioned the value of pilot projects through the following statement:

"It started with the pilot site and they ironed out all the teething issues and I know that every practice is different and will always have some problems, but it was quite nice. We had proper training, so it did make it easier."

Research-led change projects not only positively influence middle manager commitment to change, but also stimulate improved cooperation from frontline employees. Participant two stated:

> *"2015 June we did the plan, then we started doing the research with the rest of the staff and we started informing people on a weekly basis that this is what I am going to be doing, this is what I will be following up on. I need your support."*

5.4.2 Factors inhibiting change

The contributing factors inhibiting change were broken down into three groups, namely: personal factors incorporating social factors; organisational factors; and change-specific factors.

5.4.2.1 Personal factors

Of the 15 participants, only 3 were anti-change whilst 12 were pro-change. For this reason, fewer personal issues as inhibitors of change were identified.

The lack of personal growth opportunities and the fear of a loss of control were highlighted as contributing factors that inhibit middle managers from committing to organisational change initiatives. Under social factors, the participants mentioned racial discrimination and limited quality time with family and friends as contributing factors.

(a) No personal growth

Participants are less likely to commit to change initiatives which do not produce personal benefits. Participant 14 stated,

> *"If I don't see the benefits to my life personally, it would be hard for me to commit to the change process in the company".*

Figure 5*: Factors inhibiting change*
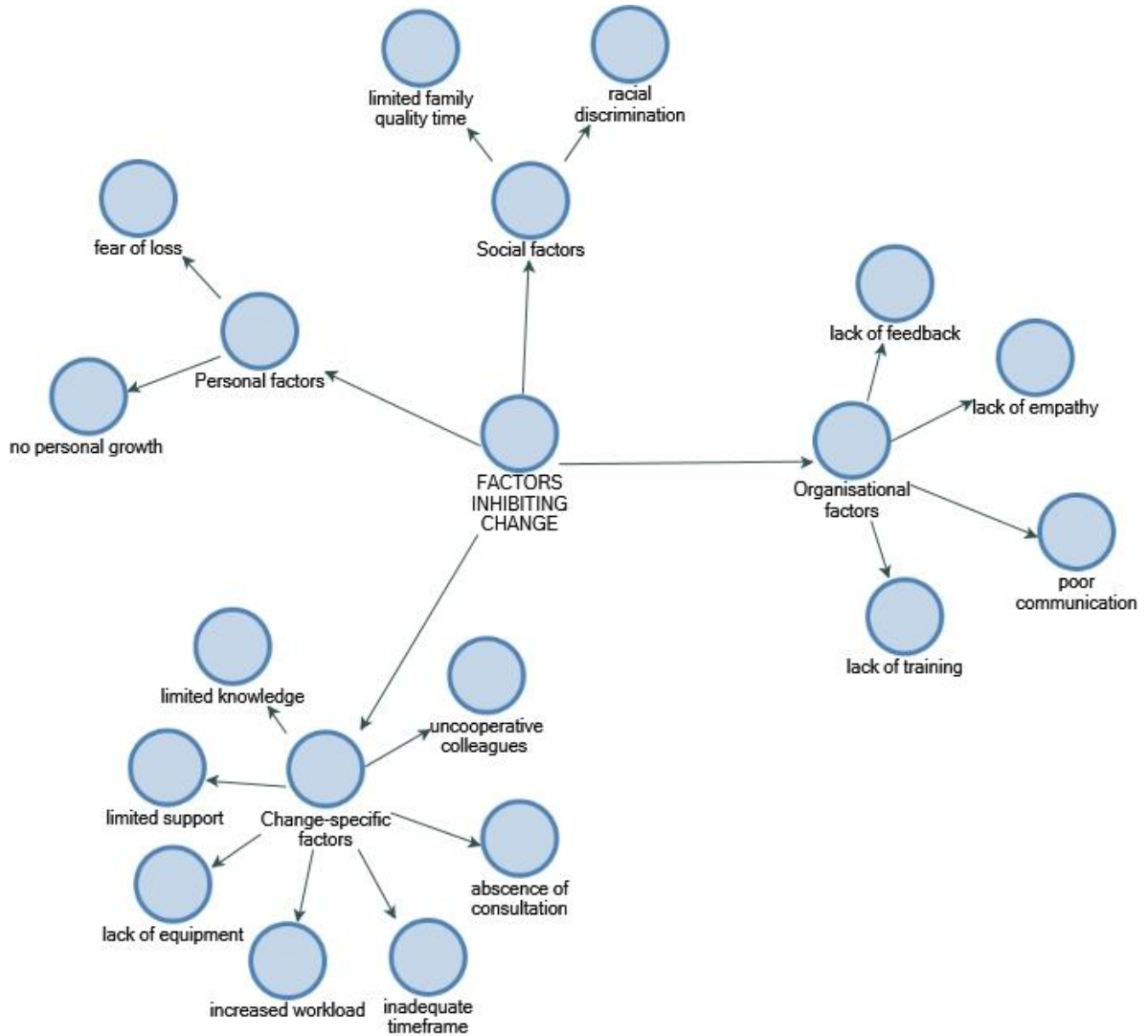
Middle managers do not want to commit to change initiatives which result in personal loss or stagnation, or which negatively affect subordinates. Participant 10 reinforced this view in the following statement:

"Profit loss to the company means percentage increase for me is affected."

Participant seven confirmed the notion of not supporting change initiatives which negatively affect subordinates:

"If it was to affect my staff in any way, I wouldn't have not supported it. I wouldn't have been keen to support it, if it was going to affect positions or with the change losing positions."

(b) Fear of a loss of control

Participants expressed a perception of a loss of control as an inhibiting factor in committing to change, or if the change will result in a transfer of power to subordinates.

Participant 11 stated,

"…what I felt was challenging for me because I was used to telling and now you have to invite them to hear their point and I felt I was losing my position and my power as a manager because I now had to embrace the idea that we have to talk and involve everyone".

Subordinates may embrace a change initiative, but the change may be ambushed by middle managers who perceive a loss of control by implementing the change. Participant two stated:

"So, the staff were also happy that change was coming in but we were still getting some resistance from the middle managers due to them feeling that they are losing power."

(c) Limited quality time with family

Two participants mentioned that any change initiative which reduced quality time with family was a contributing factor which inhibited commitment to change.

Participant nine stated,

> *"A lot of them didn't want the change because their long weekend fell away. Our staff will normally go to the farms to see their families and others lived far, so they actually loved going away during the long weekend. So, this hindered then from seeing their families."*

Participant 12 stated,

> *"One of the least important thing is that, I have a family and it was long hours that we spend working long hours. So that was quite hectic and I did battle with it because I have a small child and this could have contributed a lot for me not to buy-in into the change".*

(d) Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination was also identified as a contributing factor which inhibits middle managers from committing to implement change initiatives. Participant two expressed the view that racism is still rife in the organisation, and that particular ethnic groups are given preference for promotions and leadership roles, which inhibits the disadvantaged groups from committing to change.

Participant two stated,

> *"…they supress the people. I really do not want to go into the racist thing, but in saying that, racism is still alive and you see it, where the white people were getting promoted for no good reasons, regardless that some didn't have the qualifications, they were just promoted and the blacks with qualifications being left out and you expect them to commit to the change innovation…"*

Participant eight confirmed the views of participant two by stating:

> *"It happened that I was told that I was not ready for a senior position and they brought a white man over me. But five years later they saw that I deserved the higher position as I did all the work and that's how it changed for me."*

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Racial discrimination contributes to reducing the efforts of middle managers from implementing change initiatives due to poor cooperation from fellow employees. Participant two stated:

"Firstly, they look at the colour of your skin, and secondly, they looked at the experience that you have, but they never saw the capability of the individual."

5.4.2.2. Organisational factors

Organisational factors which inhibit middle managers from enabling change are rooted in the culture of the organisation. These factors include poor communication; a lack of empathy from the organisation; a lack of feedback, evaluation and follow-up; and a lack of training and development programmes.

(a) Poor communication

Poor communication within the organisation as an inhibitory factor was highlighted by five participants, as middle managers are the link between strategy (senior management) and implementation (frontline employees). Poor communication derails change initiatives and contributes to middle managers becoming disillusioned, discouraged and disengaged.

"It's been going on since I have been in this company and its been seven years now. And every single meeting we have, we complained about the communication channels and nothing has been done. So, I honestly don't think anything can change. Just move on. Oh, move on? Yes, move on…So, in a nutshell, that is how our company is, that you are not allowed to speak to the top people," stated participant 12.

Two-way communication is the lifeline of any organisation. Many failures in organisations are the result of inadequate communication channels, which lead to frustration and resistance from employees. Participant 14 alluded to this frustration:

"It becomes frustrating because there's no channels of communication where you can just express your views and say as a management, this is not working for me."

Participant 15, reinforcing the difficulty of exchanging information regarding the progress of change process, which is part of the culture of the company, stated:

"From a people point of view communication was poor."

(b) Lack of empathy from the organisation

A lack of empathy from senior managers was highlighted by four participants as an inhibitor to commit to change, i.e. senior managers must take cognisance of the contextual challenges faced by individual middle managers within an organisation.

"I think they also didn't take into consideration the challenges each store has in implementing the change," stated a frustrated participant 10.

Senior managers who do not seek to understand the challenges faced by their middle managers or attempt to alleviate their frustrations contribute to the discouragement and disillusionment of middle managers, which has a knock-on effect of poor commitment to change initiatives. Participant 12 expressed their frustration towards poor leadership:

"There is always something changing and I mean if you look last month our HR manager left. And he was not replaced. And it is a huge adjustment and you do not know where to go and you don't know what to do, and up until today we still don't know. And we, I have some problem that neds to be dealt with by the HR and I really where to go and get the help."

Participant four confirmed that leaders who lack empathy inhibit middle manager commitment to change, even when the benefits of change are acknowledged as being positive.

"Because if you have a hostile and arrogant leadership people are likely not to support the change even if it's positive."

(c) Lack of feedback, evaluation and follow-up

Participants argued that a lack of feedback, evaluation and follow up inhibits commitment to change processes; a lack of feedback and evaluation leaves middle managers feeling isolated and produces resistance towards change.

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"No, we had no communication from the head office asking for inputs on how it has worked. For the first six weeks, we checked sales, they wanted us to check sales. So, they are aware of our loss and sales. That's it! Since then, there has been no feedback on going forward and it looks like it going to stay this way," stated participant 10.

A lack of feedback demotivates staff from committing to change to the very end of the project, as they have no way of measuring the impact of their efforts. Participant 14 stated:

"At this point in time, we haven't received anything as yet. I'm assuming they'll still bring logistics to come and see and measure, but as we speak, nothing as yet. We haven't received any survey to evaluate or any follow up, no follow up meetings to date or to ask the guys, 'How is it going?' So, we haven't had any kind of follow up meetings in that regard as yet."

A lack of feedback undermines the change initiative as middle managers are unable to navigate challenges, and this lack of support creates resistance to the change initiative. Participant 12 stated:

"Poor communication and battling to get answers and support from the powers that be when you need it, it is not there in time."

(d) Lack of training and development programmes

Participants identified a lack of training of both managers and subordinates as an inhibitory factor in implementing change initiatives, i.e. organisations fail to provide training programmes that develop the skills which are necessary to support the change. A lack of training and development programmes on change produces uncertainty and a lack of confidence in middle managers to commit to implementing change initiatives.

Participant 14 expressed the frustration of being inadequately trained:

"It becomes a bit frustrating when it comes to knowledge retention as well. When you have to deal with multiple products and you haven't been adequately trained. So, when you become a manager you have to train two or three, but now as manager you automatically have to become a master of all five problems and sometimes you do not have the knowledge as well".

Inadequately trained staff has an impact on change initiatives and affects the progress of change, as per participant five, who stated,

> *"…(its) a bit painful because we experienced issues where the employees would say, 'yes, its fine I can do this job', then we revise the role and put together the trainings and we were challenged firstly by the level of education. The employees could not cope with the training manuals which put us on the backfoot a little. Some of the employee could not read the manuals and do basic numeracy. It held us back from the target we had set for ourselves. We had to devise another plan."*

The need for staff training specific to change initiatives was also raised by participant 14,

> *"For most strategies obviously, there is no specific training needed, but I will speak on behalf of my staff. I would say to the guys that training would have enabled this. They just need a higher level of financial training, they are not trained, but just a little extra is needed in training. Maybe more time even at the training to get an understanding, you know."*

5.4.2.3 Change-specific factors

The manner in which change is introduced and conducted in organisations has a direct effect on middle manager commitment to change. Change that is done poorly can lead to resistance from middle managers in implementing change initiatives.

Change-specific factors that inhibit middle managers in a change initiative include absence of consultation and involvement; limited support from senior management; limited knowledge of the change process; increased workload; uncooperative colleagues; lack of equipment; and an inadequate timeframe.

(a) Absence of consultation and involvement

An absence or lack of consultation concerning the change process was identified as a factor that contributes to the lack of support for a change process by four participants, who desire to be involved in the early stages of the change process and influence on how the change will be implemented by them. Most participants complained of the processes being top-down, and would prefer involvement in directing the decision-making of change initiatives.

Participant 12 noted:

"Oh, it was an instruction. You as a manager, 'this is what you will do to ensure that this process is smooth and everybody accepts. And you will do it.' It wasn't optional…Yes, then I am forced to do it because I am paid for that.'

The notion of a lack of ownership of the process due to a top down approach was expressed by participant ten, who stated:

"I don't think I had a personal attribute in the change because it was a top down process. We just had to implement it. So, there was no personal influence."

Participant 14 complained that the frequent roll out of projects without any consultation or evaluation of previous projects was a major contributing factor to resistance to implement change.

"Some of the frustrating things that we are experiencing in the organisation, just a frequent rollout of various projects, will cause me to resist. I will say, 'wait, hold on', we just implemented something else, we are on to something new, we haven't even met everybody, we just want to see it its working rather than jumping on to the next thing and without consultation on these projects."

(b) Limited support from the management team

Limited support from senior management inhibits commitment to change initiatives. Participant three pointed out the difficulty in implementing change without the desired support, saying

"… there is too much trouble, if I am asked to travel a lot… support from head office is a constant problem, especially if you ask for policies that have not been issued and if there's no support from finance in terms of the required changes".

Middle managers have to seek support from their colleagues in the absence of support from senior management. Participant 12 stated:

"And if I speak to my boss, once in a month it will be too much…I don't get answers. So, I have gone other routes where I can get answers."

A lack of support and accountability on the part of senior management hampers the progress that can be made by middle managers. Participant eight stated:

"A couple of things I have picked up is that people promise to embark on things that never happen."

(c) Limited knowledge of the change process

Participants concurred that a limited knowledge of the change process inhibits their commitment to implement and support the change. Participants found it difficult to promote a process that they did not understand.

Middle managers are resistant to change initiatives when they have limited knowledge of the change.

"I don't have full understanding of the change process. It becomes difficult to buy into something when you don't give us time to flesh it to yourself before fleshing it out to others. You can't give us a new strategy now and then in three months we are already onto something else and we haven't really given it time to see whether everything is working or not," stated participant 14.

A limited knowledge of the change process affected their confidence in influencing subordinates, which created problems in the delivery of the change process. Participant five stated:

"During that period, the employees were not embracing the change. They were saying, 'why did you change the processes? We were fine with it.' So, it was a difficult time."

(d) Increased workload

Some participants argue that an increased workload inhibits their commitment to change and increases resistance towards the change. Participant 12 stated:

"I think what caused the resistance was that it was a big job and we are dealing with a large diversity of people and you know, it is quite frustrating. Everyone has to get on the bandwagon, and some of the people have never used anything on the computer except for their programmes that they were using. It was really terrible and it was really like starting from scratch as if you are teaching the children to walk. And, I think the long hours were also tiring ad frustrating."

An increased workload causes middle managers to become discouraged and disengage from the change process. Participant 14 contended that,

"This is not working for me; the work load is too much".

Participants also advised that the increased workload takes up much of their time and leads to an increased number of incomplete projects as commitment to the project diminishes.

Participant seven noted that it *"…takes much longer to do and complete"*, while participant 12 said, *"It took up all of my time, pacifying everyone to complete their tasks by the use of spreadsheets and making sure that everybody is going to accept it and be happy."*

(e) Uncooperative colleagues

Nine participants highlighted the inhibitory effect of uncooperative colleagues on the change process, which may be rooted in an unwillingness to change or a misunderstanding of the purpose of the change process.

"But it also comes with some challenges because guys do not want to listen…There are still challenges like guys who are resistant to change. They dint understand the process, so basic stuff, you need to prove to them over and over. I ran for two months to collect data to prove myself right in order to show the guys that the process was time consuming. And now we are using that process successfully," stated participant one, elaborating on the effect that misunderstandings have on the process.

Participant three stated that "window dressing" by subordinates rather than fully implementing the change resulted in a loss of enthusiasm to implement change:

"The part of not being in favour is that you get clinic management who do not embrace it, and therefore its done shoddily. What I mean is that if there's an inspection coming up, everything is done in a rush to get things in place, whereby this was supposed to be a lifestyle change."

An unwillingness to change is prevalent amongst longer serving employees of an organisation, as per participant two:

"Because we have lots and we still have lots of resistance from the previous managers who were doing 1,2,3,4,5. So if I may say, stuck in their ways. So, for change to come, we had to break those procedures down and implement new ones, with a new strategy and a new vision for the company."

This was confirmed by participant nine, who said:

"...mainly resistance from the oldest staff that have been in the business for quite some time."

(f) Lack of equipment

The unavailability of equipment and a lack of resources inhibits middle managers, as per seven participants. A lack of equipment can delay the implementation of change initiatives, which risks causing the process to fail and decreasing commitment from the middle managers. Participant 11 stated,

"The problem can be equipment and not having enough and to wait for others is frustrating".

The unavailability of the necessary equipment also compromises the change initiative, as inferior equipment has to be used resulting in a loss of commitment towards the change. Participant 10 stated:

"I think it was the timeframe that they gave to us to complete the implementation, and equipment for the implementation. To date, it has not been sent to us. So, we had to make use of what we had."

(g) Inadequate timeframe

An unrealistic time frame to perform the change process can have a negative impact on commitment to change, as highlighted by some participants. An inadequate time frame compromises the change process and reduces the possibility of success.

Participant 14 stated:

> *"We don't have the time to measure the quality of what we are putting out, so I think those are the things that will cause resistance. We don't have time to really sit and say like this is actually working."*

Participant 10 contended that an inadequate timeframe contributes to the failure of the change project,

> *"I think it was the timeframe that they gave to us to complete the implementation, and equipment for the implementation. To date, it has not been sent to us. So, we had to make use of what we had."*

An inadequate timeframe reduces the impact of the change initiative, as per participant seven:

> *"One thing that tends to be a challenge is the timeframe that I give. Sometimes, the timeframe is too tight and also the possibility that there are so many options to choose from or ways of doing things. So, for me, its timeframes and picking one method of allocating the business."*

5.5 Research question 3 – What recommendations can be made to support middle managers to enable change?

The participants suggested a number of recommendations to prepare middle managers to enable change. These recommendations included both organisational and change-specific factors. Interestingly, none of the recommendations included personal factors or social factors. The recommendations included: involvement in and consultation in the change process; proper communication; proper forecasting and surveys; an understandable policy about the change process; training, assessment and feedback; an appropriate timeframe to implement change; a simplified structure to improve workflow; motivation of staff and

management; provision of adequate equipment; no racial discrimination; encourage a positive mindset; and undertake customer behaviour research (customer feedback and profiling).

(a) Involvement and consultation

The participants strongly recommended that there is a need for middle managers to be involved and consulted regarding change initiatives, as this will improve their buy-in, improve the success rate as they are closer to the day-to-day workings of the organisation, and improve working relationships between senior management and middle managers.

Participant 14 argued that the involvement of middle managers in the formulation process will improve the working relationship between middle managers and top managers:

> "…when you involve your management more in terms of the vision and the direction of the organisation we, middle managers and the top management, help each other to reach for resolutions."

Participant five advocated for the early involvement of middle managers in the change process, saying that senior managers must,

> "…involve all the stakeholders from the onset".

As per participant 10,

> "They can consult us as well and get our buy in," and participant four, "if they are implementing a system of change, it's important to get the buy in and do enough consultation to all stakeholders that might be affected by the system."

(b) Appropriate communication

Proper communication concerning the change initiative was also strongly recommended by participants. Participant 12 believed that improved communication will increase the rate of success of change initiatives through sustained implementation efforts:

> "I think they really have to work on the communication. I really think it is very important. Just to communicate, answer the email and say, 'I cannot make it or help you'. Because all of these things fall into limbo when you really don't know, when you really don't get an answer."

Open communication without the fear of victimisation will also improve the strategy and direction of organisation. As advised by participant 14:

"…to communicate without having any fears of being victimised if we say the wrong thing or if we don't think this is the correct strategy. Because most times, we as middle managers, sometimes we have different views in terms of the direction the organisation is going. For the most part, we keep quiet. Just open the lines of communication!"

(c) Staff surveys

Some participants advocated for the use of staff surveys to enable middle managers to implement change initiatives, as they may help in addressing the challenges and issues that middle managers face and provide assistance in improving change.

Participant one advised that employee surveys will provide insight into the challenges they are facing, and facilitate much-needed assistance for middle managers during change initiatives:

"I think the company should have done an employee survey, to understand the staff and see the challenges and how to assist."

Surveys will give direction to change initiatives, improving the efforts of middle managers. Participant seven stated:

"I will say before you even decide on the direction you want to take, you need to listen to the people, and use surveys at different levels, don't just take it at the level of CEO because those people have no clue what is happening at the ground level. The guy at ground level can give you valeyable advice that may change the process."

Participant nine added:

"Just the surveys, and find out how they are doing, how they are feeling and if there's anything they can do differently."

(d) Understandable policy

An understandable policy will improve workflow for middle managers and improve work relations across departments. Participant three advocated that standardised policies will improve efficiency and hence the impact of work undertaken by middle managers:

"So, it's all about effective efficiency and standardisation of polices. The integration of these processes is so important."

Meanwhile, participant five, who believes that understanding processes creates cohesion and improved work relations in the organisation, stated:

"And explain all the processes-the financial implications-explain to them as they did to us. Don't leave out other departments who will be affected by the change or even if they will not be affected, they are part of the organisation and it creates the 'us and them' type of thing in the organisation."

(e) Training, assessment and feedback

Some participants recommend training, assessment and feedback, as this will improve the confidence of middle managers to engage with employees and lead the change process. Participant 14 advocated that a lack of assessment affects the confidence of middle managers:

"Send me for training. I haven't been to that formal training. We need training and assessment to check whether we managed to master what we have been trained on."

Participant four recommended ongoing training, saying that:

"Training is important. Do your training in phases."

Participant 11 advocated that training improves the confidence of middle managers to lead change initiatives,

"I think we had workshops and I think we should have had more feedback sessions on how to receive and engage."

(f) Appropriate timeframe

An appropriate timeframe to achieve the objectives of the adopted change initiatives was recommended by participant 11:

> *"So, the timeframe presents a challenge and if you look at the structure, you wouldn't want to lose anything because it is quite simple because it gives you direction of what you want to achieve and do."*

(g) Simplifying the structure to improve workflow

A simplified organisational structure that will improve workflow and the efficiency and impact of the middle manager in implementing and leading change was recommended by participant 12:

> *"I think it's about the structure and the way they ambition the structure. If you take myself, I am a business manager and I have three other clinics and I believe they should have one manager per clinic, and it used to be like that. They tried it and it worked and I believe it worked better because, once every week, I have to be out of the office and I need to visit the other clinics and they have to see me once a week."*

(h) Motivation of staff and management

Senior management involvement in the motivation of staff and management will enable middle managers to implement change initiatives, as this will reduce resistance amongst staff.

> *"I think one big thing I did mention was improving the way it was dine, and better communication from our director to the middle-class managers, because what I found was if I had spoken with the director on changes, he was supposed to filter it down to the middle-class mangers. And I got lots of resistance because there was no communication between him and the middle-class managers in what was discussed",* stated participant two.

The presence of, and engagement with, senior managers will heighten the priority of change initiatives and increase the profile of assignments of middle managers.

"And maybe somebody from operations could come and visit and speak to the people on the floor in the clinics. I thought that will also be nice. It is always nice to have an external party, not always the manager, to communicate every day on such issues," stated participant 12.

(i) Adequate equipment

The timely provision of adequate equipment will ensure the efficient implementation of change, which will enable middle manager commitment to change and instil pride in work undertaken, as per participant 10:

"And implement the change when we have equipment, infrastructure complete. Procure the stock for the change and have enough stock to implement the change so that we are not sitting with empty shelves for weeks."

(j) Not to be race conscious (no racial discrimination)

Racial discrimination inhibits the progress of middle managers from marginalised ethnic groups. Participant two recommended that senior management address racial discrimination in the workplace, or the organisation will not gain from the knowledge and the skills of marginalised ethnic groups.

"Be open to people, not looking at the people for their colour of their skin, but what a person can bring with the knowledge they have and the experience that you have."

(k) Encourage an open mindset

Senior managers must have an open mind to different ideas as this will allow for the growth of middle managers and improve commitment to change. An open mindset will open up new opportunities for the organisation. Participant two stated:

"So, listen to other people's opinions and don't you shut people down because if you shut people down, you are shutting down some good ideas and you are shutting down some good potential candidates because you think that you are always right."

(I) Undertake customer behaviour research

The services and retail industries are very customer centric, thus change initiatives in these industries are almost always customer driven. Improved customer behaviour research will directly influence the success and relevance of change initiatives.

Participant 10 advocated for the use customer surveys to drive change:

"I think when the companies do changes like this, they should consult people from the stores and also to do a customer survey because remember the customers are going to buy the products."

Participant 14 confirms that:

"Simple things like, have a competition about this. Let's do some challenges, client surveys around this. Let's hear from our clients, what do they have to say about our new strategy."

5.6 Conclusion

There appears to be an overlap and an interconnectedness of all factors across personal, organisational, and change-specific, including recommendations. Enablers and inhibitors are almost directly opposite to each other. The next chapter will present a detailed discussion of these results in alignment with the literature review from chapter 2.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the semi-structured interviews were aligned with the research questions listed in Chapter 3 and presented in the previous chapter. This chapter will include a detailed discussion of the results from Chapter 5 in alignment with the literature review in Chapter 2.

The objectives of this study were to determine the below:

- Do companies prepare for change?
- What factors contribute to middle managers being enablers or inhibitors of change?
- What recommendations can be made to prepare middle managers to enable change?

6.1 Research question 1 – Do companies prepare for change?

Weiner (2009, p. 2) defined organisational readiness as "Organisational members' change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change". Organisational readiness for change must precede change implementation to ensure that the change initiative is successful. Salonitis and Tsinopoulos (2016) considered developing organisational readiness an essential organisational factor related to successful change initiatives.

Organisational readiness is considered the first step in a continual cycle of events. Kotter (1995, para.3) stated that "a successful change process goes through a series of phases that require a considerable amount of time". His seminal work led to the development of an eight-step model of change management (Kotter, 1996), the first four phases of which refer to change readiness. The second four phases of the model refer to change implementation. Oakland and Tanner (2007) advised that readiness for change must precede implementation of change to ensure that the change initiative is successful. According to Rusly, Corner and Sun (2011), readiness must be created at the initial (preparation) stage to break down resistance to change and facilitate the acceptance of change within an organisation. The importance of breaking down resistance was confirmed by Asnan, Nordin and Othman (2015), who stated that creating organisational readiness for change through awareness and knowledge can lower resistance to change.

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The first four steps described by Kotter (1995) are: establish a sense of urgency; create a guiding coalition; develop a vision and strategy; and communicate the change vision, while the next four steps are: encourage staff to promote change; generate short term wins; consolidate change and produce more change; and incorporate the resultant change into the culture.

The highest average scores (3.59) represented: creating a sense of urgency; developing a vision and strategy for change; and communicating the change vision, which are related to change readiness.

The next highest scores were incorporating the resultant change into the culture (3.30); creating a guiding coalition (3.22); and encouraging staff to promote change (3.16). The lowest averages were found for identifying and celebrating small successes in change (2.88) and making improvements to the change process (2.87), which are related to change implementation.

Although none of these mean scores are particularly high, companies score better on change readiness as opposed to change implementation, thus it can be concluded, based on the above information and taking into account the limitations mentioned in Section 5.3, that companies do prepare for change.

6.2 Research question 2 – What factors contribute to middle managers being enablers or inhibitors of change?

The contributing factors enabling change were broken down into three groups, namely: personal factors; organisational factors; and change-specific factors.

Personal factors enabling change include: personal growth; feeling empowered; a sense of being valued and appreciated; financial incentive; recognition; more educational opportunities; prior professional experience; level of autonomy; and an open mindset. All of these personal factors are interrelated, as each one has an effect on another. Personal growth was the most cited of the personal enablers to change, and was highlighted by nine participants. The general attitude was that if middle managers are going to commit to implementing change then they need to assess, "What's in it for me?", which is based on expectancy theory (Guth & MacMillan, 1986). The change should produce personal growth relating to position, knowledge or status. Participant one stated,

"…because of the opportunities it will give us individually and as a company…
Opportunity for growth, getting a senior position and growth opportunities
internationally for myself."

Middle managers are committed to change initiatives when the opportunities provided by the change are aligned to their personal and professional aspirations (Tabrizi, 2014; Jansen & Samuel, 2014; Damij, Levnajić, Skrt & Suklan, 2015; Tabrizi, 2013; Giauque, 2015).

Personal growth as an enabler will overlap with more educational opportunities and financial incentives, both identified as enablers by participants, if these are core to the personal and professional aspirations of middle managers. The participants indicated that they are more likely to commit to change initiatives when they feel that they are being fairly compensated for any work done, and if they perceive that there is an associated financial incentive for supporting the change initiative, as per Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin and Schaefer (2013) and Jansen and Samuel (2014). The use of financial rewards as an incentive to reinforce change is typical of combined Theory E and Theory O change management strategies (Nohria & Beer, 2000), which are needed to implement successful change initiatives. Participant six highlighted the role of a financial incentive to reinforce commitment to change and stated:

"…that really helped the morale. They introduced the monetary bonus system
where your middle management and top management are paid on performance
that remains as is, however your people lower than that had the biggest morale
impact. They introduced the fourteenth cheque that was performance based and
if the company did well, we received the cheque and it really became a good
incentive for us".

Participants indicated that they were more likely to commit to change initiatives if they were being recognised for their contributions to the organisation, as per Wulandari et al. (2015), Weiner (2009), Giauque (2015) and Jansen and Samuel (2014). Participant four stated:

"But it's nice to be recognised, we all like recognition and I have received
recognition in ways that I have been told that I am the best person for the job."

Personal recognition reaffirms the fact that middle managers add to an organisation and evokes an element of pride and a sense of belonging, which influences them to commit to change initiatives. Although change models and transformational leadership sets the tone for change, it is individual consideration that drives commitment to change.

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<u>Prior professional experience</u> may have been related to participant three, who had more than ten years of experience in management, being recommended to lead a project.

> *"Definitely my experience as a nurse and quality management. The first one is that I have been in a similar process in 1998, and I really felt part of it, apart from the working, it was the wonderful seeing systems in place. And by that, I mean integration of system control and health and safety, so that each of those system was not working in silos."*

Participant three, who was very committed to the change initiative due to <u>feeling valued and appreciated</u>, exclaimed:

> *"My boss believes in me, and my capabilities- that's why he selected me!"*

This sense of belief in one's abilities by senior management enables middle managers to support and promote change initiatives. Abrell-Vogel and Rowold (2014) conducted a study confirming that individual employee attention has the greatest influence on employee commitment to change. This was confirmed by the participants, who felt a sense of <u>empowerment</u> due to being singled out by senior management and being given the freedom to train others and influence processes.

Middle managers are committed to driving and implementing a change process when they feel part of the process and are able to maintain a <u>level of autonomy</u> (Conway & Monks, Weiner, 2009). Autonomy and empowerment are also linked to prior professional experience, knowledge and qualifications. Participant one, who had between five and ten years of experience and the technical expertise and qualifications to commit to and lead the change, stated:

> *"The main factors were basically my technical understanding of the process. Well the field that they are going into, the core is printing and lamination. Now I am qualified in both trades. That's how I ended up in training. So, it was easy for me."*

The participants argued that when they feel empowered to influence a change, they are more likely to commit to implementing the change initiative and influencing the rest of the employees to commit to change. Tabrizi (2013) indicated that empowered middle managers are able to work across functional boundaries and teams, and ensure the direct involvement of targeted individuals. Senior management can empower middle managers towards the

implementation of the change through communication, training and engaging workshops regarding the benefits and need for change and the implementation process to ensure success (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015).

One participant who mentioned the advantage of having an <u>open mindset</u> argued that it increases one's ability to fully understand the workings of the organisation and thus commit to supporting the change, due to being able to appreciate the effect of the intended change on the entire company. As per Asnan, Nordin and Othman (2015), an open mindset is related to empowerment through education, communication and employee engagement.

The personal factors that inhibit change are fewer than those enabling change, however no social issues were identified as enabling factors to commit to change. In fact, some factors were in direct contrast to those enabling change. The <u>lack of personal growth</u> opportunities and the <u>fear of a loss</u> of control were highlighted by participants as contributing factors that inhibit middle managers from committing to organisational change initiatives. Participant 14 stated:

> *"If I don't see the benefits to my life personally, it would be hard for me to commit*
> *to the change process in the company".*

As per Tabrizi (2013) and Giauque (2015), middle managers are committed to change initiatives when they are able to see an alignment of the change initiative to their personal and professional aspirations. Middle managers are demotivated by the perception of a lack of career advancement or promotion opportunities (Zenger & Folkman, 2014), which the participants expressed as a perception of a loss of control which inhibits a commitment to change. Middle managers are less likely to commit to change if the change process may reduce their level of control and power or if the change will result in a transfer of power to subordinates, i.e. a fear of a loss of control by middle managers contributes to resistance to change (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Pardo & Martínez, 2003; Conway & Monks, 2011).

Under social factors, the participants mentioned <u>limited quality time</u> with family and friends and <u>racial discrimination</u> as contributing factors that inhibit them from committing to organisational change initiatives. Participant 12 stated:

> *"One of the least important thing is that, I have a family and it was long hours*
> *that we spend working long hours. So that was quite hectic and I did battle with*

*it because I have a small child and this could have contributed a lot for me not
to buy-in into the change".*

This was confirmed by Ford and Collinson (2011), Ford and Harding (2003) and Whittle (2008), who found that work-life balance has an effect on commitment to change as employees are more likely to support a change initiative which does not compromise their time with their families, but rather yields good opportunities to enhance their personal and professional lives (Giauque, 2015).

All enabling factors are related and are cultivated by senior management who engage employees through consultation, communication and providing support. Senior managers could promote the fulfilment of these roles by ensuring that middle managers are given: (a) knowledge and information regarding strategy implementation; (b) the freedom to educate, support, and encourage employees; and (c) access to the necessary resources for strategy implementation into the daily activities of the organisation (Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012). Inhibitory factors are due to a lack of engagement by senior management and are indicative of a lack of readiness for change. Creating organisational readiness for change through awareness and knowledge can thus lower resistance to change (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Kritsonis, 2005).

Jansen and Samuel (2014) found that it is a combination of all enabler contributing factors that influences employee commitment, e.g. personal factors interlink with organisational factors to influence middle manager commitment to change, as proposed by social cognitive theory (Kritsonis, 2005; Weiner, 2009). Engaging with middle managers will address personal issues and enable middle managers to implement change successfully. Middle managers are motivated through engaging with senior management and experiencing their support, thus senior management must foster and model an inclusive style of leadership.

Organisational factors that are perceived favourably by middle managers also positively influence their commitment to support a change initiative. Organisational factors are related to the culture of the organisation; an organisational culture that facilitates change enables middle managers to commit to change initiatives (Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2014). Organisational factors that enable commitment to change include: good interpersonal relationships; training and empowering opportunities; company policy and structure; a stimulating work environment; favourable working conditions and the political environment. Change-specific factors that are perceived favourably by middle managers also positively

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influence their commitment to support a change initiative. Change-specific factors include: involvement in the change process; good communication; availability of support; acknowledging the benefits of the change; teamwork and collaboration; availability of resources; constant feedback and assessment; adequate knowledge of the change process; and change informed by empirical research. Organisational and change-specific factors are linked, as organisational factors have a direct influence on change-specific factors.

Good communication within an organisation is essential to create a culture that is conducive to embracing change; the lines of communication must be open and effective between senior managers and middle managers to ensure that the change is implemented as intended by the strategists (Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012). Good communication ensures that middle managers understand the purpose of the change and the appropriate methods of implementation, thus senior management must take responsibility for communicating during a change initiative to ensure that a single message is carried across the organisation which will enhance the success of the change initiative and enable middle managers in their roles as agents of change.

Participant 15 confirmed the role of senior management in driving communication during a change initiative:

> *"I think to communicate in the best way to our staff. And it had to. I think it came all the way from our head office, throughout all our stores, our divisions, through our districts, everyone had to be on the same page with regards to it."*

Good communication is the basis of all progressive relationships and influences interpersonal relationships in an organisation, while an organisational culture of good interpersonal relationships enables middle managers to commit to implementation of change strategies. Participant 13 emphasised the role of good interpersonal relationships between employees and the senior management, which enables middle managers to commit to and support change initiatives:

> *"Having the CEO as someone you can call on. He has a wealth of experience. So, you can just pick up the phone if you are not sure about something and you get some feedback. So, I think having that as a backup for me was great. I needed that to go forward."*

These good interpersonal relationships should be effective across the organisation, as senior management creates the culture (Oakland & Tanner, 2007). Good interpersonal relationships are top motivational drivers amongst managers (Damij, Levnajić, Skrt & Suklan, 2015; Jansen & Samuel, 2014), and are usually interlinked with <u>favourable working conditions.</u> Good interpersonal relationships can also compensate for poor working conditions. Culture fit, favourable working conditions and human resource practices have a great impact on commitment to change (Giauque, 2015). Favourable working conditions are influenced by people, organisational values and structures, and are a motivational aspect of employment (Jansen & Samuel, 2014).

Good interpersonal relationships and favourable working conditions are conducive to <u>team work and collaboration</u>, which in turn are essential for implementing successful change initiatives (Giauque, Resenterra, & Siggen, 2014; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). Participant one confirmed this, saying,

> *"You can't change a business alone. You need team work!"*

Empowered middle managers are able to work across functional boundaries and teams and ensure the direct involvement of targeted individuals (Tabrizi, 2013). Working across functional boundaries creates opportunities for middle manager involvement in <u>stimulating work projects</u>; their curiosity, coupled with excitement and stimulation, drives them to discover new things which will ultimately lead to change in the organisation. This creates opportunities for access to further stimulation through technological advancement. Participant one (1) elaborates on his commitment to change, stating,

> *"Because of the opportunities it will give us individually and as a company. Like so far, we have teams that went to India and we are planning to go to Italy to see a different side of the company. And we have access to global technology, databases with information and access to technical information."*

In a study by Damij, Levnajić, Skrt and Suklan (2015), high quality work execution and interesting work were found to be amongst the top motivational drivers for managers. Middle managers feel empowered and confident to implement change initiatives when they have been trained and have the knowledge to lead subordinates during change. Training and engaging workshops empower middle managers with knowledge and understanding of both the benefits and need for change (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015). Participant seven discussed that the availability of training material enabled commitment to the change:

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"I will say for me the resources were made available and I think we have more than enough resources to carry out the change. We have access to material and online learning materials."

Participants advised that an <u>understanding of the change process</u> and being <u>informed of the benefits</u> of the change enabled them to accept and commit to the change initiative. Participant four confirmed the importance of acknowledging the benefits of change:

"I was in favour of the change because from the presentation that was presented to us as part of the management team, there were a lot of positive spinoffs that would come out of the change and it would improve our business processes and models and the information was going to be timely, and the number of risks that the company was going to be exposed to will be minimised."

Giauque, Resenterra and Siggen (2014) concluded that middle managers show a greater affinity for collaboration and commitment when they feel well-informed of the change. Individuals who understand both the benefits and the need for change are committed to the implementation process (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Conway & Monks, 2011).

Participants identified <u>involvement</u> in the formulation of the change process as enabling them to commit to its implementation, because they have a better understanding of the reasons for the change and are therefore able to take <u>ownership</u> of the process. Similarly, Conway and Monks (2011) found that commitment to change is influenced by involvement in the change process, as well as a perception that there is a compelling need for change and that the benefits of change have been highlighted. Senior management can enable middle manager commitment towards the implementation of the change by engaging with the middle managers and empowering them with the knowledge and understanding of both the benefits and need for change (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015).

Participant four commented that management style has a big influence on the involvement and participation of middle managers in the formulation of the change process, saying,

"I think also the management style; the management style of the leadership was a style that encouraged people to participate. It was not hostile and at the same time, the leaders, that are part of this, are people that are able to relate or interact with staff at all levels."

Nohria and Beer (2000) expanded on this, concluding that Theory O advocates participatory leadership, encouraging participation from the bottom up, and motivates through commitment. Middle managers may respond better to Theory O leadership during a change initiative, as this will grant them greater involvement in the change process by allowing for recommendations to enhance the change initiative. Middle managers exhibit a greater commitment to change in top-down initiatives when there has been adequate consultation and communication, rather than when change initiatives are just imposed on them (Conway & Monks, 2011; Weiner, 2009). Participant five confirms the importance of involvement and consultation,

> *"We were made to understand the vision and what the company was driving at. I think the preparations. I was happy to be part of that. I knew what was expected from me. I was not just thrown into the deep end. That's what made me commit and I am quite passionate about it."*

A combined Theory E and O change management strategy involves setting direction from the top and engaging the people below to ensure successful implementation of change initiatives (Nohria & Beer, 2000). Senior managers must thus engage with middle managers to ensure that they are informed of the benefits of the change (Wulandari et al., 2015; Weiner, 2009; Giauque, 2015).

Involvement in the formulation of the change process provided participants with adequate knowledge of the change process, which increased their buy-in to the project as they had a better understanding of the reasons for, and direction of, the change. This was confirmed in the literature, which notes that adequate knowledge of the change process enables commitment and a support for change (Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012; Giauque, Resenterra, & Siggen, 2014; Wulandari et al., 2015; Weiner, 2009; Giauque, 2015; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015).

Senior management support was identified as an essential enabler for middle managers to commit to implementing change initiatives. Participant three confirmed that the support of senior management is a necessary enabler to circumvent the challenges associated with the implementation of change:

> *"Management needs to support you, in terms of trainings and overtime if they are new things being implemented. You cannot do it alone and if you have a bad*

crew – you are in trouble. I really embrace this because I know it will have a positive effect on business."

The findings of Wulandari et al. (2015), Weiner (2009) and Giauque (2015) supported the above, i.e. senior management empowers middle managers to lead change by arming them with knowledge of the change initiative. Middle managers show a greater affinity for collaboration and commitment when they feel well-informed and <u>supported by their senior management</u> (Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2014). Commitment from top management throughout the change process is also essential for successful change initiatives (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016).

<u>Company policies and structures</u> which facilitate change act as enablers that influence middle managers to commit to organisational change. Senior management can directly influence middle management commitment to the implementation of change initiatives by enforcing policies and practices which demonstrate that the change initiative is a high priority (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013). Participant six confirmed this, reiterating the role of company structure in change initiatives:

> *"We had that breakdown. More vibrant, more knowledge, more up to date senior managers came into the company. They came up with the new vision, they developed this and where the direction of the company will go in terms of international market and what we would be producing."*

<u>Sufficient resources</u> must also be made available timeously by senior management in order to facilitate the implementation of change (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013; Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012). The role of the <u>political environment</u> as an enabler of commitment to change initiatives was mentioned by one participant, in large part due to the role of economic policies and legislation within South Africa. Participant six stated:

> *"For many years, the political environment in South Africa didn't really bear well for me as a white male in South Africa. So, for job security, which pays good money, if you got one you hold on to it as tight as you can. So, really that's one of the bigger drivers that I needed to be successful."*

This was in contrast to the views of participant two, however, who stated that racial discrimination was an inhibitor to commitment to change.

Feedback and continuous assessment as enablers of change were mentioned by eight participants, who stated that middle managers value feedback and assessment as it assists in evaluating progress and enables them to continue working with confidence. In addition, being able to give feedback enables commitment to change, as it allows middle managers to function as developers of change. Companies that provide and receive feedback were thus assessed as being excellent at initiating and implementing change. Participant 13 in particular mentioned that feedback from senior management was invaluable in helping him during the implementation of the change initiative,

> *"Having the CEO as someone you can call on. He has a wealth of experience.*
> *So, you can just pick up the phone if you are not sure about something and you*
> *get some feedback. So, I think having that as a backup for me was great. I*
> *needed that to go forward."*

The literature concurred, adding that good communication is a prerequisite for two-way feedback (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). The participants highlighted that change which is informed by research is usually not just another change initiative and will have fewer issues. Participant 12 mentioned the value of pilot projects, saying:

> *"It started with the pilot site and they ironed out all the teething issues and I know*
> *that every practice is different and will always have some problems, but it was*
> *quite nice. We had proper training, so it did make it easier."*

Research-led change projects not only positively influence middle manager commitment to change, but also stimulates improved cooperation from frontline employees. Senior management can empower middle managers with knowledge and understanding of both the benefits and need for change through communication, training and engaging workshops to ensure the success of an implementation process (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015).

The manner in which change is introduced and conducted in organisations has a direct effect on middle manager commitment to change, i.e. change that is done poorly can lead to

resistance. Organisational factors which inhibit middle managers from enabling change are rooted in the culture of the organisation. These factors include: poor communication; a lack of empathy from the organisation; a lack of feedback, evaluation and follow-up; and a lack of training and development programmes. Change-specific factors that inhibit middle managers in a change initiative include: absence of consultation and involvement; limited support from senior management; limited knowledge of the change process; increased workload; uncooperative colleagues; lack of equipment; and an inadequate timeframe.

Poor communication within the organisation was identified as an inhibitory factor to enabling middle managers in their role as change agents. This is typical of an organisational culture, created by senior managers, which is not conducive to change.

> *"It's been going on since I have been in this company and its been seven years now. And every single meeting we have, we complained about the communication channels and nothing has been done. So, I honestly don't think anything can change. Just move on. Oh, move on? Yes, move on…So, in a nutshell, that is how our company is, that you are not allowed to speak to the top people,"* stated participant 12.

Resistance to change can also be influenced poor communication about the change initiative and the processes of change (Conway & Monks, 2011). Poor communication between senior management and middle managers inhibits any change initiative as middle managers are the link between strategy (senior management) and implementation (frontline employees). Poor communication derails change initiatives and contributes to middle managers becoming disillusioned, discouraged and disengaged. Two-way communication is the lifeline of any organisation Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu and Schaefer (2015). Participant 14 alluded to this, saying:

> *"It becomes frustrating because there's no channels of communication where you can just express your views and say as a management, this is not working for me."*

Many failures in organisations are the result of inadequate communication channels, which leads to frustration and resistance from employees. Inadequate communication channels create a lack of feedback, evaluation and follow up within an organisation, and leaves middle

managers feeling isolated, producing resistance towards change and demotivating staff from committing to change to the very end of the project as they have no way of measuring the impact of their efforts. A lack of feedback undermines the change initiative, as middle managers are unable to navigate challenges, and this lack of support creates resistance to the change initiative.

Participant 14 stated:

> *"At this point in time, we haven't received anything as yet. I'm assuming they'll still bring logistics to come and see and measure, but as we speak, nothing as yet. We haven't received any survey to evaluate or any follow up, no follow up meetings to date or to ask the guys, 'How is it going?' So, we haven't had any kind of follow up meetings in that regard as yet."*

Poor communication is a precursor for an absence of consultation. Participants desire to be involved in the early stages of the change process and desire an influence as to how the change will be implemented by them (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016, Conway & Monks, 2011). Most participants complained about processes being top-down, and would prefer involvement in directing the decision-making of change initiatives. They also complained about change initiatives being forced upon them, which results in a lack of ownership (Conway & Monks, 2011; Weiner, 2009). Participant 14 complained that the frequent roll out of projects without any consultation or evaluation of previous projects was a major contributing factor to resistance to implementing change:

> *"Some of the frustrating things that we are experiencing in the organisation, just a frequent rollout of various projects, will cause me to resist. I will say, 'wait, hold on', we just implemented something else, we are on to something new, we haven't even met everybody, we just want to see it its working rather than jumping on to the next thing and without consultation on these projects."*

Employees are unwilling to support change when they have been through multiple change initiatives in a short period of time (Giauque, 2015).

Participants concurred that a limited knowledge of the change process inhibits their commitment to implement and support a change, as they find it difficult to promote a process that they do not understand. A limited knowledge of the change process also affects their confidence to influence subordinates, which creates problems in the delivery of the change

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process (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). Participant five stated:

> "During that period, the employees were not embracing the change. They were saying, 'why did you change the processes? We were fine with it.' So, it was a difficult time."

Resistance to change by <u>uncooperative colleagues</u> may be rooted in an unwillingness to change, a misunderstanding of the purpose of the change process, or policies not being enforced. Senior management can influence middle management to commit to implementation of change initiatives by enforcing policies and practices which demonstrate that the change initiative is of high priority (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013). The participants also identified uncooperative colleagues as an inhibitory factor in implementing change initiatives.

> "But it also comes with some challenges because guys do not want to listen…There are still challenges like guys who are resistant to change. They dint understand the process, so basic stuff, you need to prove to them over and over. I ran for two months to collect data to prove myself right in order to show the guys that the process was time consuming. And now we are using that process successfully," stated participant one, elaborating on the effect that misunderstandings have on the process and an unwillingness of colleagues to embrace change.

One participant identified minimal effort by colleagues, rather than fully implementing the change, as resulting in a loss of enthusiasm to implement change. Middle managers' resistance to change was expressed by not championing the change initiative, misdirecting or sabotaging a strategy, delaying its implementation or producing a low-quality effort (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005; Guth & MacMillan, 1986). An unwillingness to change is more prevalent amongst longer serving employees of an organisation (Giauque, 2015).

Participant nine confirmed this, stating that there is

> "...mainly resistance from the oldest staff that have been in the business for quite some time."

Senior managers who do not seek to understand the challenges faced by their middle managers or who do not attempt to alleviate their frustrations were identified as inhibitors to enabling middle managers to commit to change.

> *"I think they also didn't take into consideration the challenges each store has in implementing the change,"* stated a frustrated participant 10.

Senior managers must thus communicate with middle managers to remove obstacles to change and enable middle managers to implement change initiatives (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015). Participant four confirmed that leaders who lack empathy inhibit middle manager commitment to change, even when the benefits of change are acknowledged as being positive. A lack of empathy was considered tantamount to a lack of support from senior management, which hampers the progress that can be made by middle managers (Zenger & Folkman, 2014; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013).

Participants also argued that an increased workload inhibits their commitment to change and increases their resistance. Participant 12 stated:

> *"I think what caused the resistance was that it was a big job and we are dealing with a large diversity of people and you know, it is quite frustrating. Everyone has to get on the bandwagon, and some of the people have never used anything on the computer except for their programmes that they were using. It was really terrible and it was really like starting from scratch as if you are teaching the children to walk. And, I think the long hours were also tiring ad frustrating."*

This finding was also supported by the literature (Zenger & Folkman, 2014; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Giauque, 2015).

Along with a heavy workload, an unrealistic time frame to perform the change process can have a negative impact on commitment to change, as highlighted by both the participants and the literature (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). Participant 10 contended that an inadequate timeframe contributed to the failure of a change project, saying:

> *"I think it was the timeframe that they gave to us to complete the implementation, and equipment for the implementation. To date, it has not been sent to us. So, we had to make use of what we had."*

6.3 Research question 3 – What recommendations can be made to prepare middle managers to enable change?

The participants suggested a number of recommendations to prepare middle managers to enable change, which included both organisational and change-specific factors. Interestingly, none of the recommendations included personal factors or social factors. The recommendations included involvement in and consultation in the change process; proper communication; proper forecasting and surveys; an understandable policy about the change process; training, assessment and feedback; an appropriate timeframe to implement change; a simplified structure to improve workflow; motivation of staff and management; the provision of adequate equipment; no racial discrimination; the encouragement of a positive mindset; and customer behaviour research.

The participants strongly recommended the need for middle managers to be <u>involved in and consulted</u> regarding the change initiative. This will improve their <u>buy-in</u> as well as the success of change initiatives, as middle managers are closer to the day-to-day workings of the organisation (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Giauque, 2015; Tabrizi, 2013; Salih & Doll, 2013; Giangreco & Peccei, 2005; Conway & Monks, 2011). Participant five advocated for the early involvement of middle managers in the change process, saying:

> *"…involve all the stakeholders from the onset".*

Participant 12 added that <u>improved communication</u> will improve the success of change initiatives through sustained implementation efforts:

> *"I think they really have to work on the communication. I really think it is very important. Just to communicate, answer the email and say, 'I cannot make it or help you'. Because all of these things fall into limbo when you really don't know, when you really don't get an answer."*

The issue of sufficient communication being required to implement change initiatives was also raised in the literature (Asnan, Nordin & Othman; 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos; 2016; Birken, Lee & Weiner; 2012). It was recommended by the participants that senior management ensure a greater presence and interaction with frontline employees, as their involvement in the motivation of staff and management will enable middle managers to implement change initiatives due to a reduction in resistance amongst staff. The presence and engagement with senior managers will further heighten the priority of change initiatives and increase the profile of assignments of middle managers. According to participant 12,

"And maybe somebody from operations could come and visit and speak to the people on the floor in the clinics. I thought that will also be nice. It is always nice to have an external party, not always the manager, to communicate every day on such issues."

Participants recommended that senior managers must have an <u>open mind</u> to different ideas, as this will allow the growth of middle managers and improve their commitment to change. An open mindset could also open up new opportunities for the organisation. Participant two stated:

"So, listen to other people's opinions and don't you shut people down because if you shut people down, you are shutting down some good ideas and you are shutting down some good potential candidates because you think that you are always right."

Senior management can cultivate a positive mindset amongst middle managers towards the implementation of the change through <u>communication, training and engaging workshops</u> to empower the middle managers with knowledge and understanding of both the benefits and need for change and the implementation process to ensure success (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015). Participant 14 also advocated for training, saying that a lack of assessment affects the confidence of middle managers:

"Send me for training. I haven't been to that formal training. We need training and assessment to check whether we managed to master what we have been trained on."

Senior management can also influence middle manager commitment towards the implementation of a change by giving them the freedom to <u>educate and train employees</u> (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012). Some participants indicated that an <u>understandable policy will improve the workflow</u> for middle managers and enhance work relations across departments. Participant three advocated that standardised policies will improve efficiency and hence the impact of work undertaken by middle managers:

"So, it's all about effective efficiency and standardisation of polices. The integration of these processes is so important."

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Participant 12 also recommended that <u>simplifying the organisational structure</u> will improve workflow and the efficiency and impact of the middle manager in implementing and leading change. Senior management can further influence middle management commitment to implementation of change initiatives by enforcing policies and practices that demonstrate that the change initiative is a high priority (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013).

An <u>appropriate timeframe</u> to achieve the objectives of the adopted change initiatives was recommended by participant 11, who stated:

> *"So, the timeframe presents a challenge and if you look at the structure, you wouldn't want to lose anything because it is quite simple because it gives you direction of what you want to achieve and do."*

Salonitis and Tsinopoulos (2016) had a similar finding, saying that a sufficient timeframe for the implementation of change is needed to support middle managers to implement change initiatives.

Another suggestion by participants was to implement <u>staff surveys</u>, as this may help to address the challenges and issues that middle managers face and provide assistance in improving change. Participant one commented that employee surveys will provide insights into challenges and facilitate much-needed assistance for middle managers during change initiatives:

> *"I think the company should have done an employee survey, to understand the staff and see the challenges and how to assist."*

As the services and retail industries are very customer centric, change initiatives in these industries are almost always customer driven, thus participant 10 advocated for the use of customer surveys to drive change in those industries:

> *"I think when the companies do changes like this, they should consult people from the stores and also to do a customer survey because remember the customers are going to buy the products."*

Participant 14 confirmed that <u>customer surveys</u> drive change, saying,

> *"Simple things like, have a competition about this. Let's do some challenges, client surveys around this. Let's hear from our clients, what do they have to say about our new strategy."*

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Participants also commented that improved <u>customer behaviour research</u> will directly influence the success and relevance of change initiatives, which are directly related to middle manager commitment to change. The request for staff and customer surveys are evidence of the lack of involvement, communication and engagement with senior management.

<u>Racial discrimination</u> inhibits the progress of middle managers from marginalised ethnic groups, thus participant two recommends that senior management address racial discrimination in the workplace or the organisation will not gain from the knowledge and the skills of marginalised ethnic groups:

> *"Be open to people, not looking at the people for their colour of their skin, but what a person can bring with the knowledge they have and the experience that you have."*

Racial discrimination and change management may be an area that this is understudied or may have been understated in previous studies, and will thus require future study given the political and social history of the South African context.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter aligned the results from Chapter 5 with the literature review in Chapter 2. The next chapter will present the main findings of this chapter and outline recommendations for business. The limitations of the study will also be presented, together with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The previous chapter included a discussion of the results from Chapter 5 and focused on aligning the results with the literature review from Chapter 2. This chapter will present the main findings from Chapter 6, which includes a framework of factors enabling change, together with a consolidated table of interviewee mentioned factors. Recommendations for business, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will also be presented.

7.1 Findings

7.1.1 Readiness for change

Organisations scored higher on readiness for change than implementation for Kotter questionnaire in research question 1. These overall scores are indicative of a lack of leadership in creating readiness for change and implementing change. Organisational readiness for change must precede change implementation to ensure that the change initiative is successful (Rusly, Corner & Sun, 2011; Weiner, 2009). Creating organisational readiness for change through awareness and knowledge can lower resistance to change (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Kritsonis, 2005).

Aspects of personal enablers and inhibitors are related to organisational features (Oakland & Tanner (2007), which play an important role in enabling or inhibiting middle managers during a change initiative (Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2014; Giauque, 2015). The underlying factor to enabling or inhibiting change, be it personal, change-specific or organisational, is leadership. A framework of change model developed by Oakland and Tanner (2007) emphasises the role and responsibility of leadership in creating a readiness for change and implementing change, while the Kotter model of change management also emphasises the continual cycle of readiness for change and implementation of change (Kotter, 1995; 1996).

Leaders are responsible for creating the need for change, nurturing the culture of the organisation, removing resistance to change through communication and knowledge sharing, developing organisational structures, availing the equipment and competencies, monitoring and maintaining momentum for implementation, and modelling the behaviours,

values and beliefs of the organisation both during and after the change (Oakland & Tanner, 2007; Kotter, 1995; 1996). Nohria and Beer (2000) emphasised that the combined Theory E and Theory O management is necessary to lead effective change, which was also seen in this study.

As effective leadership is critical for successful change (Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu & Schaefer, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016; Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin & Schaefer, 2013; Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012), leaders must lead both the preparation and implementation stages of change (Oakland & Tanner, 2007; Kotter, 1995; 1996), using an inclusive management style (Jansen & Samuel, 2014).

7.1.2 Factors influencing middle managers to enable or inhibit change

Inhibiting factors are linked to a lack of readiness for change and implementation, whilst enabling factors may be linked to a readiness for change and greater success in implementing change (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). The findings that emerged from the interviews with the middle managers established which influential factors enable them to encourage or inhibit change. There is a consistency of enabler and inhibitor contributors across personal, organisational and change-specific factors, which led to the development of a framework depicted below (see Table 5). The three factors are: consultation and involvement; communication; and support. These cover all personal, organisational and change-specific factors influencing change, including recommendations.

Senior managers need to engage and consult more with their middle managers, who are the implementers of all strategy and change initiatives, and provide adequate support (Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016). Middle managers can be empowered through knowledge and training (Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012; Giauque, Resenterra & Siggen, 2014), which will enable them to commit to change initiatives (Wulandari et al., 2015; Weiner, 2009; Giauque, 2015; Conway & Monks, 2011).

There is a direct relationship between the roles of middle managers and the underlying factors which influence them during change initiatives (Birken, Lee & Weiner, 2012); change efforts fail because middle managers (agents of change) are expected to give that which they do not possess. Leaders must thus engage with middle managers to influence their commitment to change, as they become demotivated by a lack of good leadership (Zenger & Folkman, 2014).

Table 5: Summary of enablers, inhibitors and recommendations

	Enablers	Inhibitors	Recommendations
Consultation & Involvement	• Personal growth • Sense of being valued • Education • Financial incentive • Recognition • Prior professional experience • Interpersonal relationships • Stimulating work content • Involvement • Teamwork • Empirical research	• No personal growth • Fear of loss • Racial discrimination • Absence of consultation • Uncooperative colleagues	• Involvement & consultation • Staff surveys • Motivation of staff (Coms& Support) • No racial discrimination • Open mindset • Customer behaviour research
Communication	• Feeling empowered • Financial incentive • Open-mindset • Communication • Acknowledge benefits (EE) • Constant feedback • Adequate knowledge (EE)	• Poor communication • Lack of feedback • Limited knowledge (EE)	• Adequate communication • Feedback
Support	• Education • Autonomy • Training • Company policies • Working conditions • BEE (EE) • Availability of support • Availability of resources	• Limited family quality time • Lack of empathy • Lack of training • Limited support • Increased workload • Lack of equipment • Inadequate timeframe	• Understandable policy (EE) • Training & assessment • Appropriate timeframe • Simplify structure • Adequate equipment

Black: Personal   Green: Social   Blue: Organisational   Red: Change-specific

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Figure 6: Factors influencing middle managers to enable or inhibit change
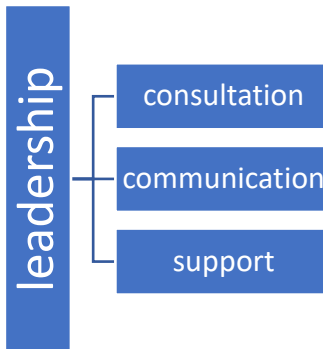
7.2 Implications/Recommendations for stakeholders

Most of the interviewees were grateful for the opportunity to be heard and to reflect on the process ('let off steam'), while others were surprised at the anger, frustration and helplessness they feel in their roles and employment. One female participant requested a time-out as the interview was overwhelming and she needed to compose herself, while one of the male participants remarked, *"This is what is missing in the workplace.... we need this!"*

The emphasis on self-gain when committing to projects took me by surprise. Most participants have a great expectation of personal gain from committing to change initiatives (Tabrizi, 2014; Jansen & Samuel, 2014; Damij, Levnajić, Skrt and Suklan, 2015; Tabrizi, 2013; Giauque, 2015).

There is a definite need for consultation and involvement, improved communication and adequate support for middle managers. A strategy to improve commitment to the implementation of change could be to pair middle managers with projects that are aligned to their professional and personal goals and aspirations. These can be established through consultation, which could be sustained through regular communication and support, as middle managers need feedback and assessment about work done.

Leadership is critical for successful change management (Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia & Van der Voet, 2014; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Graetz & Smith, 2010), and leaders must be committed to both the preparation and management of change (Oakland & Tanner, 2007; Nohria & Beer, 2000; Asnan, Nordin & Othman, 2015; Salonitis & Tsinopoulos, 2016).

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7.3 Contribution to the literature

This study contributes to the literature by providing key insights into the factors that contribute to enabling middle managers to implement change initiatives, as well as by providing an understanding of the interrelatedness of these factors. The importance of change readiness and senior manager commitment to the implementation of change initiatives have been emphasised. It is thus hoped that this research contributes to the practice of change management being undertaken by organisational leaders and consultants who are seeking to implement change, and improves the success rate of change initiatives within organisations.

7.4 Recommendations for further research

- Investigate the influence of an individual's cultural background and country context on change implementation, for example the effect of racial discrimination and BEE on change in South African organisations, with particular emphasis on its effect on middle managers and how it is being addressed by senior management.
- Three anti-change participants were from the services industry and contributed the most to inhibitory factors. Seven participants were from the manufacturing industry and made the biggest contribution to enabling factors. The services industry participants were from the banking and healthcare industries which are highly regulated, and as a result, change can be very challenging (Fried, 2017). Future research could investigate middle manager perspectives of factors influencing change comparing unregulated and highly regulated industries.
- Understand what senior managers perceive to be enablers or inhibitors of middle managers' implementation of change, versus the perception of middle managers in the same organisations.
- Investigate the factors that influence change implementation at different levels within an organisation, namely senior managers, middle managers, and frontline staff.
- Investigate the perception of personal gain on a middle manager's commitment to implement change.

7.5 Limitations

This study provides empirical findings with respect to the factors influencing middle managers to enable or inhibit change. However, as with all research, this study does have several limitations. These limitations are listed below:

- The subjective nature of qualitative research can be affected by both interviewer and interviewee bias (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund, et al, 2013). As this qualitative research was exploratory in nature, a detailed quantitative study will have to be done to gain greater accuracy of results to assess these factors from a broader spectrum of middle managers.

- The interviews may have been biased in the manner that they were carried out (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). This could be influenced by researcher bias and the researcher's expectations of the information gathered in the interviews.

- The researcher attempted to eliminate subject bias by requesting that interviewees speak freely and openly, and by assuring them that the aim of the research was not about individuals or companies but about processes. This was to prevent the interviewees from giving unreliable or 'padded' information so as not to present themselves or their companies in a bad light (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

- Observer error and observer bias were eliminated by the research being undertaken by one researcher, but this may have influenced the analysis of data.

- This study was biased towards Kotter's (1995) change model and may have ignored other variables that influence change middle managers, such as particular goals and organisational changes, which may have an impact on the factors enabling change.

- Twelve participants in this study were pro-change whilst only three were anti-change. This had a direct influence on the created model of inhibiting and contributing factors. The pro-change participants contributed less to recommendations and inhibiting factors as they thought that change was done well. A more even distribution of pro-change and anti-change participants may have given a more balanced view of contributing factors.

- There were some disparities between how the participants assessed the process in a short questionnaire (Kotter evaluation) and their contributions during interviews, i.e. some were not convinced about their initial selection when they went back to review their selections post the interviews. This may have been due to initial subject

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bias, or because they viewed the process differently post-interview. It may thus have been beneficial to assess readiness for change post-interview.

- The results cannot be generalised to the entire population as non-probability sampling was used.
- The participants were from one metropolitan area in South Africa, which indicates geographical bias.

7.6 Conclusion

This research sought to offer some insights into the gap in the literature on the factors that influence middle managers to enable or inhibit change initiatives. The literature shows that organisations are constantly undergoing change in response to both internal and external stimuli, and there are various models and strategies of change management that organisations can employ when undergoing change. However, the success of change initiatives is very low. This study highlighted that effective leadership is critical for the preparation and implementation of change, and identified senior management as the underlying factor that influences middle managers to enable or inhibit change.

Given South Africa's social and political history, South African organisations are under great pressure to change due to economic policies being imposed on them to bring diversity into the workplace. There is an increasing pressure to create diversity in the middle and upper management structures of companies. South Africa remains a divided nation and this is evident in the workplace. The white minority are pressurised and insecure due to black economic empowerment and there is still rampant racism being felt by the rising black middle class from the white minority who hold the higher positions of power in organisations. The discomfort and insecurity felt by both sides has been detrimental to unity.

South African organisations exhibit a lack of ethical leadership in the wake of the recent scandals involving prominent auditing and consulting firms and leaders in government. Ethical leadership is needed to build trust amongst followers to improve self-efficacy for turnaround in business and government. South African organisations need a new breed of dynamic transformational leaders who will face up to and address these challenges and create a new fully inclusive culture which will be conducive to change. These leaders need to rise in order for South African organisations to thrive and expand and take their place in the global business environment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE   *Interviewee number : _____*

i. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Gender

MALE	
FEMALE	

2. Age

<30	
30-50	
>50	

3. Education

MATRIC	
DIPLOMA	
UNDERGRAD	
POSTGRAD	

4. Years in management

<5	
5-10	
>10	

5. Industry

MANUFACTURING	
HEALTH	
GOVERNMENT	
RETAIL	
SERVICES	
OTHER	

ii. READINESS TO CHANGE

Please rate how well the following have been done in your organisation with regards to the change.

(1 being not at all and 5 being very well done).

DID YOUR COMPANY:	NOT AT ALL				VERY WELL
CREATE AN URGENCY FOR CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
CREATE A CHANGE TEAM CONSISTING OF INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS AND LEVELS TO LEAD CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
DEVELOP A VISION AND STRATEGY FOR CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
COMMUNICATE THE CHANGE VISION	1	2	3	4	5
ENCOURAGE ALL STAFF TO PROMOTE CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
IDENTIFY AND CELEBRATE SMALL SUCCESSES IN CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CHANGE PROCESS	1	2	3	4	5
INCORPORATE RESULTANT CHANGE INTO YOUR CORPORATE CULTURE	1	2	3	4	5

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Briefly explain the change. (4 sentences)
2. What was your role and involvement in the change?
3. Were you in favour of the change?

   (a) Why or why not?
4. Thinking back to the expectations and plans in relation to the change, what turned out as intended? *(What did the change do?)*
5. Thinking back to the expectations and plans in relation to the change, what <u>did not</u> turn out as intended? *(What did the change <u>not</u> do?)*
6. What factors <u>enabled</u> your ability to support the change?

   (a) Company structure, culture, relationships, management style

   (b) Personal skills, development, workload, resources
7. What factors <u>inhibited</u> your ability to support the change?

   (a) Company structure, culture, relationships, management style

   (b) Personal skills, development, workload, resources
8. How could they have gotten you on board to support the change?
9. What is your personal opinion on the results of the change?

   - *Why was it successful or not successful?*
10. How much could you, your colleagues, or subordinates influence the intended change process?
11. How could you provide an evaluation or feedback on the implementation and results of the change?
12. Thinking back to your recent change initiative, what are the factors that enabled you to commit (or not commit) to the change? *(Same as 2)*
13. Thinking back to your recent change initiative, what are the factors that caused you to resist (or not resist) the change? *(Same as 3)*
14. What recommendations would you make to improve the change process?
15. Looking at the rating scale, why did you say ……?

APPENDIX 2

Gordon Institute
of Business Science
University of Pretoria

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Sir/Madam

TOPIC: Middle managers – enablers or inhibitors of change

I am conducting research as part of fulfilment of requirements for completion of my Masters of Business Administration (MBA) at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria.

The research is aimed at identifying the contributing factors that enable or inhibit middle managers from implementing change initiatives. I would sincerely appreciate your participation in this research project which will be conducted by means of an interview.

The interview length will be approximately 60 minutes.

Your participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to end the interview at any time. This study is anonymous and no information will be collected or retained about your identity. The interview will be audio recorded, all data will be aggregated and reported on anonymously.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are provided below.

Researcher	Research Supervisor
Owen Rawlins	Professor Karl Hofmeyr
owenrawlins16@gmail.com	hofmeyrk@gibs.co.za
Cell: 0840338775	Tel: (011) 771 4000

Researcher Signature_____   Participant Signature_____

Date _____   Date _____

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APPENDIX 3

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

20 July 2017

Owen Rawlins

Dear Owen,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee