Gordon Institute of Business Science
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Factors leading to successful organisational change outcomes: An in-depth study of organisational change at a large South African manufacturer

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Abstract

In an increasingly VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environment, organisations are being subjected to a tremendous amount of change. The need for leaders to develop a competency in organisational change management is critical for the competitiveness of their organisations. Despite extensive academic research, the failure rate of change initiatives remains extremely high.

Purpose and methodology

The study contributes towards the field of organisational change management. The purpose of the research questions was to understand factors that contribute towards successful change outcomes to enhance organisational change models. An exploratory qualitative case study of a large South African manufacturer was the platform for the research. Data was collected from 15 semi-structured interviews of change agents and change recipients within the organisation. The change model adopted by this research was Kotter's eight-step change model.

Findings and practical implications

The first contribution recommends for leadership behaviours to be adapted to the change context. The case study found that an authoritative leadership style can be effective within specific circumstances, which is contrary to existing theory. It is thus proposed for leadership to shift between a transformative and authoritative style as demanded by the change context. Secondly, the adoption of the right organisational structures to support the change and enable the organisation to exercise ambidexterity are key to enabling successful change outcomes. Lastly, the inclusion of more practical steps an organisational change models helps contribute towards reducing the gap between theory and the practice of organisational change.

The outcome of the research resulted in the development of an enhanced organisational change model that brings together concepts of contextual leadership, ambidexterity, and contributes practical steps to Kotter's established eight-step change model.

Keywords Organisational change models, contextual leadership, ambidexterity, Kotter's eight-step change model

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, 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.

Signature:

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Date: 1 December 2020

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List of Abbreviations

EAT   – Expertise and action teams (Operators and artisans, or shop floor)
EMT   – Expert and management teams (Supervisors, specialists, engineers and superintendents)
GDP   – Gross domestic product
SA   – South Africa
TMT   – Top management team
VPO   – Vice President Operations
VUCA – Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous

Chapter 1: Introduction to Research Problem

1.1 Research Problem

The dynamic global economic environment is proving to be ever more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA), providing leadership with the challenge to devise strategies to respond to the changing environment (Johanson, 2012). The frequency and intensity of disruption is driven by a multitude of factors that includes globalisation, advancement in technology, and geopolitical factors (Page & Schoder, 2019). More recently the global health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has caused many countries to institute hard lockdowns, halting economic activity and placing many economies under significant distress. The current zeitgeist has made it imperative for leaders of organisations to develop a change management competency in their response to navigate these dynamic circumstances successfully (Kotter, 2012a; Kotter & von Ameln, 2019; Mitra, Gaur, & Giacosa, 2019).

Organisational change management has been studied extensively in literature; however, it draws significant criticism for creating conflicting and confusing contributions and for the lack of empirical research (Mitra et al., 2019). The criticism derives from the high failure rate experienced by practitioners of organisational change, where it is estimated that more than 60% of change initiatives do not succeed (Kotter, 2012a; Kotter & von Ameln, 2019; Mitra et al., 2019). It can be concluded that a gap remains between theory and the practice of organisational change management (Mitra et al., 2019).

Appelbaum et al. (2017) explain the gap by asserting that there cannot be a one-size fits all model for change management. The various forces driving the change process, the various nuances of the context in which change occurs, and the nature of the people involved in the change process all contribute to the complexity and the determination of change as a dynamic process. It is for this reason that academic literature has struggled to develop the perfect framework or model for change. Thus, when an instance of successful organisational change management is identified, it becomes a valuable nugget for leaders to analyse and understand that success for future learning. The reasons for success are not always well understood and require a deeper analysis that can be provided by academic research.

1.2 Context of Study

South Africa (SA) is going through an inordinate amount of change, and the sluggish local economic performance coupled with the volatile global environment is placing an excessive amount of pressure on local businesses to become both efficient and innovative to remain competitive and relevant (National Treasury, 2019).

SA's context for research on change management does not necessarily provide it with unique circumstances compared to other countries around the world. Twenty-six years into democracy, the country is continuing its transformation journey of creating equal employment opportunities, of having a representation of gender and racial diversity at management and board level, and of providing quality education to all its people. According to the World Bank (2018), the economy is not creating sufficient jobs with unemployment at 27.7% and youth unemployment at 38.6% as of 2017, poverty rates increasing between 2011 and 2015, and the highest level of inequality in the world. These challenges have been recognised as "deep, structural and long-term" (World Bank, 2018:11).

It is important to recognise these deep-rooted challenges, spanning from the long history of apartheid, that continue to impact the psyche of individuals affected by change and those tasked with implementing change. Kutz and Bamford-Wade (2013) state it is "necessary for all leaders – in any context or at any level – to simultaneously consider the past, the present, and the future" (Kutz & Bamford-Wade, 2013:9). Organisational change that takes place within this context provides additional complexities, particularly for a large corporate in SA, where the change initiative can easily diverge into political plays, or power struggles with militant trade unions and management. Further, an organisation's journey to inclusivity and diversity has a direct impact on its employees' perception and attitudes towards growth and innovation (Rabl, del Carmen Triana, Byun, & Bosch, 2018).

South Africa's past and present challenges create a context where stakeholders' resistance to change initiatives is rooted in the deep socio-economic challenges, high levels of inequality, and low levels of trust present between the Top Management Team (TMT) and employees. It is within this context that organisational change is being studied.

1.3 Scope of Study

The research will be conducted at a subsidiary of a multinational operating in the manufacturing sector in SA. The organisation is the only supplier in South Africa of its product and is thus vital to the sustainability of the industry. It is a significant employer and contributor to gross domestic product (GDP), and thus has significant dependencies on a range of sectors within its supply chain. The organisation underwent significant change over the previous 18 months aimed at reducing costs to ensure the business remained sustainable through the downturn in the commodity cycle. The changes included re-engineering the operating model, resizing of the workforce, insourcing and outsourcing of activities, and the revision of reward structures for all employees including those employees participating in the bargaining unit. The restructuring and re-engineering of the organisation's operating model resulted in the following measurable successful outcomes:

- Recognition from the senior leadership team and board
- Improvement in employee engagement score from 70% to 74%
- Safety and production records achieved
- No industrial action from organised labour
- Significant cost-out objectives achieved

The scale of the changes and the recognised successful outcomes resulted in the organisation being chosen as an ideal case study for understanding the factors that contributed to the successful change outcomes. The qualitative nature of the study will allow for an in-depth understanding of the challenges, tactics and leadership that may otherwise be missed through a quantitative analysis.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to progress the understanding of the factors that contribute to successful organisational change by performing a post-hoc analysis of the process followed by a large manufacturer in a SA context.

The purpose of the research is thus to:

1. Isolate the most impactful factors that have led to the widely accepted positive outcomes.
2. Identify enabling and inhibiting factors of leadership style and diversity towards change management.
3. Contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of implementation teams in organisational change management.

1.5 Structure of Document

In the following sections, a literature review covering the constructs of the research questions is performed to understand what is known and what is unknown within current available academic literature. This is followed by the proposed research methodology and design. Chapters 5 and 6 cover the presentation and discussion of the findings, with Chapter 7 providing recommendations for successful organisational change management.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Organisational change has been studied extensively in literature (Maes & Van Hootegem, 2019). There remains however, a low success rate for such change (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Appelbaum et al., 2017; Kotter, 2012a; Kuntz & Gomes, 2012; Mitra et al., 2019; Stouten, Rousseau, & De Cremer, 2018). The high failure-rate motivates the need for continuous study to explore the factors that contribute to successful change outcomes to evolve change models for the fast-changing realities (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Part of this failure has been attributed to the gap between theory and real-life practice (Mitra et al., 2019; Woodman, 2014).

The literature review will provide an overview of change management and change management models, thereafter it will delve into the intersection of change management with specialist fields of leadership, diversity and implementation teams.

2.2 Organisational Change Management and Change Models

Organisational change management is the study of an organisation's response to internal or external triggers that require a renewal or re-envisioning of its goals, objectives or processes in order to sustain competitiveness (Kotter, 2012b; Mitra et al., 2019). Organisational change management is a critical skill for leaders of organisations to learn as the level of change and disruption experienced by organisations intensifies (Kotter, 2012b; Mitra et al., 2019). Advancement in technologies, connectivity, and transport has resulted in increased competitiveness. Organisations are required to adapt and develop agile processes to respond to this increasingly competitive landscape. Such a response requires dynamic leadership, capable of providing the organisation with a long term vision of the future while still being able to manage the demands of short term pressures.

Kurt Lewin is arguably the father of change management theory. In the seminal works of Rosenbaum, More and Steane (2018) this is broadly recognised through a comparison of 13 common planned organisational change models that can be linked directly to the three-step model of Kurt Lewin of Unfreeze, Movement, Refreeze. Further, an enhanced model of Lewin's theory was proposed to consider the iterative nature of change as was originally intended by Lewin (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). The

work has been pivotal in understanding that change research over the past 50 years has been undertaken merely to enhance and build on the original works of Lewin, rather than to fundamentally alter the change process he envisioned (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). Lewin provided the basic building blocks for change model development, and therefore the fundamentals of Lewin's theory of change become paramount before one can undertake any research on organisational change model development.

2.3 Lewin's Theory of Change

Lewin's original works of action research, group dynamics, and force-field analysis recognised the complexity of social change through the three-step process required to effect change; "Unfreezing, Moving, and Freezing of Group Standards" (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b:148, 1947c). The simplicity of the three-step model has resulted in many misconceiving the change process envisioned by Lewin to be linear. However, delving into his original works reveals a much more rich and complex understanding of the change process (Rosenbaum et. al, 2018). These are articulated as the "flexible" change plan, "fact-finding", "reconnaissance" and "feedback processes" as missions to be undertaken by the change practitioner of the previous change step before deciding on how to proceed to the next planned step (Lewin, 1947b). In this light Rosenbaum et al. (2018) reconceptualised Lewin's three-step model to demonstrate the iterative nature of change as originally envisioned by Lewin. Rosebaum's adapted three-step model is shown in Figure 1.

The oversimplification of organisational change models is a key criticism observed. Organisational change is a complex process with many interconnected relationships that can create inertia and resistance to the change process. In addition, organisations are made up of individuals who have self-interest and desire to protect their domains, which, when mixed with organisational culture and politics can result in hidden agendas and intentional or unintentional sabotage to the organisational change process. The multitude of internal and external stakeholders can also negatively impact an organisation's change process. A conceptual model on organisational change needs to consider the tangible steps that will enable change practitioners to navigate such complex environments and achieve successful change outcomes. The inclusion of action research, group dynamics and force field analysis recognise these complexities of change.
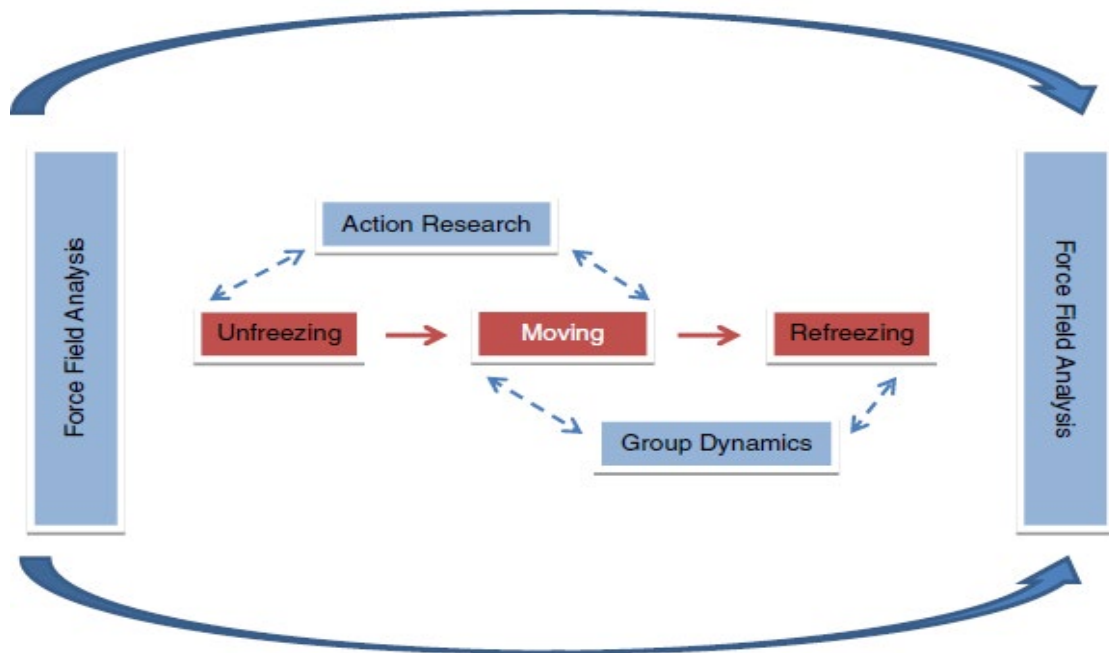
Figure 1. Lewin's change model reconceptualised*.* Reprinted from "Planned organisational change management", by D. Rosenbaum, E. More, and P. Steane, 2018, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 31(2), p.289.

2.4 Change Model Development

Since the development of the original three-step change model by Lewin, much research has gone into planned organisational change management. Some of the most common organisational change models include: Bullock & Batten's phases of planned change; Beer's six-step change management model; Cooperrider and Srivastva's appreciative inquiry; Judson's five steps; Beckhard & Harris' change formula; Kotter's eight-step change model; Kanter, Stein, and Jick's ten commandments; Hiatt's ADKAR model; and Taffinder's five-step corporate transformational model (Mitra et al., 2019; Rosenbaum et al., 2018; Stouten et al., 2018).

In an analysis of organisational change models, Rosenbaum et al. (2018) was able to correlate and map Lewin's original three-step model relative to 13 commonly used change management models. The analysis proved useful, as it identified that much of the research performed in the field of change management has been to provide tailored and enhanced change models for different nuanced situations and contexts

(Rosenbaum et al., 2018). In a similar exercise seven well-recognised organisational change models were analysed by Stouten et al. (2018) with significant overlaps identified between the various models.

The varying models of organisational change management are an attempt by both academics and practitioners to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Arazmjoo & Rahmanseresht, 2019). The varying context of change has led to the oversimplification of change models, to ensure that they can be applied in the broadest of contexts, with this being a contributing factor to the gap between theory and practice. Further, Stouten et al. (2018) proposed in a critical analysis of organisational change models that academic and scientific grounding of change models is a contested issue due to the lack of empirical research to support the development of change models. The lack of critical academic study of organisational change model development is attributed to the unique context in which change occurs, with the variability and long-time frame of change transformations resulting in difficulty in measuring the outcomes of change for academic study (Stouten et al., 2018). Arazmjoo and Rahmanseresht (2019) attempted to develop a dynamic change model that takes into consideration the heterogeneity of change and the context in which it occurs.

Organisational change itself is mainly driven by strategic intent. Organisational change models do not adequately balance the strategy and the execution of the change. Kotter's eight-step model has been identified to provide some level of granularity in this regard, with steps one to three being strategic and steps four to eight being tactical. However, despite this, the eight-step model continues to present an over-simplification of the change steps by not calling out some practical issues that a change practitioner should plan for. For example, Kotter (2012c) stated that the guiding coalition is required to have an appropriate mix of leaders and management. Leaders have a duty of setting the vision, while management assumes the role of planning and execution (Kotter, 2012c). Yet a cursory evaluation of the eight-step model does not provide a practitioner with this key insight to incorporate into a change process. It is thus proposed that the development of a more practical change model can enhance the change process towards more successful outcomes. Lewin envisaged such an end state in his work on action research where he concluded that "research that produces nothing but books will not suffice" (Lewin, 1946:35).

Change management models draw significant criticism for the lack of empirical research and for apparent contradictions between theories (Mitra et al., 2019, Stouten et al., 2018). Kotter's eight-step change model has also drawn criticism for not being empirically tested, even though it has been widely used and accepted by academics and practitioners alike (Appelbaum et al., 2017). In an evaluation of seven common change models, it was found that only Kotter's eight-step change model was empirically tested (Stouten et al., 2018). In addition, this critical review of Kotter's eight-step model was the first study of its kind since the original development of the model (Appelbaum et al., 2012). The criticism supports the need for further research on organisation change management.

Kotter's eight-step model has been used in this research due to its linkages with Lewin's original model of change, the more granular description of the change steps compared to other change models, and the call by Appelbaum et al. (2012) for further testing of the model. The eight-step model has been included in Table 1, with a map to Lewin's three-step model. In addition, the model has been included in Appendix 1.

Table 1

Mapped change model

Lewin (1947a)	Kotter (2012c)
Unfreezing	1. Establish a sense of urgency
	2. Form a powerful guiding coalition
	3. Create a vision
	4. Communicate the vision
Moving	5. Empower others to act on the vision
	6. Plan for and create short term wins
	7. Consolidate improvements and produce more change
Refreezing of group standards	8. Institutionalise new approaches

Note. Adapted from "Planned organisational change management", by D. Rosenbaum, E. More, and P. Steane. 2018, *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 31*(2), p.292.

2.5 Change Leadership

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership "occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interest of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group" (Bass, 1990:21).

It is accepted that resistance should be minimised for a change initiative to gain momentum, and that the workforce should be engaged in the change process if it is to be sustained (Page & Schoder, 2019). While both transformational and transactional leadership can result in employee engagement, research indicates that the most impactful leadership style for employee engagement during organisational change is a transformational leadership style (Humphreys, 2005; Kotter, 2012c; Mahomed, 2017). In particular, for large planned organisational change, transformational leadership is regarded as a key enabler to ensure successful change outcomes (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Kotter, 2012c; Page & Schoder, 2019). Transformational leadership behaviours relevant for organisational change management include inspiring a sense of urgency, developing a clear vision, and communicating to all levels in the organisation (Page & Schoder, 2019).

The setting of the vision and then communicating it are critical steps for ensuring that a solid foundation is set for the organisational change process. The ability to get employees to buy into the new organisational vision, to make personal sacrifices, and work towards a utilitarian outcome requires transformational leadership skill.

While transformational leadership is useful and necessary during the change process, there is a need for the guiding coalition to consist of a balance of different leadership styles (Kotter, 2012c). The successful execution of change requires planning, control, structure, and management to ensure that tasks are executed, and timelines are adhered to. A transformational leader will set the vision, empower and motivate, but they may not be the right leadership to ensure that change is implemented, that resistors to change are decisively dealt with, or that the entrenched cultural habits and comfort zones are broken. However, adopting too much of this tough and dogmatic style of leadership, unmediated by transformational leadership, could result in significant negative impacts on the employees undergoing

the change, create resistance and ultimately result in the failure of the change initiative. The negative leadership behaviours that can present, referred to as dark leadership, are found to compound the already stressful effects that the restructuring or reconfiguring of an organisation can have on employees (Otto, Thompson, & Rigotti, 2018).

2.4.2 Transactional Leadership

In addition to transformational leadership, Bass (1990) identified that transactional leadership creates employee engagement mainly through financial reward mechanisms. This becomes a key challenge in the context of change where many organisations experience significant financial distress and would not necessarily have the financial reward lever available to motivate employees towards change. Thus, transactional leadership is the least desirable type of leadership for organisational change management within the context of this study.

2.4.3 Contextual Leadership

The context in which organisational change occurs can vary considerably. Context generally provides the motivation for the change process to be initiated and can be driven by external factors or internal factors. The reaction of employees and leaders towards these factors could vary depending on whether the reasons for change are seen to be within the organisation's control or not. The contextual variables could determine the level of urgency, the timeframe in which change is required to occur, or the level of resistance the change process can generate. Given the dynamic nature of this context, taking the context into consideration during the planning of the change process is imperative to ensure that the change process has the best chance of being successful.

The phases of the change process itself present differing contexts and may require the leadership response to be dynamic in order to steer the course of the change initiative. Oc (2018) concludes, "for the most part, the empirical research provides evidence for the effects of contextual factors on leadership" (Oc, 2018:230). Oc (2018) further identifies contextual factors at an omnibus and discrete level that mediate the outcome of the influencing process between leaders and followers (Oc, 2018). The omnibus context is identified as: where, who and when. The discrete context is identified as: task, social, physical and temporal (Oc, 2018). Osborn, Hunt and Jauch (2002) proposed that leadership research that does not consider the

context in which the leader leads should be viewed as incomplete, "change the context and leadership changes as does what is sought and whether specific leadership patterns are considered effective" (Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 2002:797).

More recent developments in the field of leadership theory recognise the importance for leaders to harness the skill of contextual intelligence. "Contextual Intelligence is a construct that involves the ability to recognize and diagnose the plethora of contextual factors inherent in an event or circumstance, then intentionally and intuitively adjust behaviour in order to exert influence in that context" (Kutz, 2008:18). Contextual intelligence appreciates the context within which leaders must operate, the external and internal influences, the social constructs, and past, present and future experiences (Kutz, 2013). It has been established that organisational change management occurs within such a context and the nuances of each change event will have a direct impact on the outcome of the change initiative. Consideration to contextual leadership as a leadership style to support successful change outcomes is therefore imperative.

2.6 Diversity in Change

Diversity can be recognised in terms of gender, education, language and demographics. The impact of a diverse TMT or change implementation team has not been studied extensively in literature. A Google Scholar search for "planned organisational change management" and "diversity" and "top management team" yields few results. Studies on the impact of diversity on a firm's performance has provided mixed results, and it is therefore suggested to focus on one aspect of diversity in research due to the complexity of diversity and the context in which it is perceived (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2013).

A longitudinal study of 566 companies in the United States Technology Industry validated the hypothesis that gender diversity of senior management teams improves firm performance in the context of strategic change. This is particularly relevant when moderated with the educational diversity of the top management team (del Carmen Trianna, Richard, & Su, 2019). The research recognises that diversity is valued during strategic change due to the broader range of perspectives developed by the teams in generating innovative solutions (del Carmen Trianna et al., 2019). A further study of 146 Swiss listed firms identified national diversity to have the strongest influence on TMT's decision-making processes (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2013).

Drawing on the literature review on leadership, followers are inspired to action by the vision created by leaders. We can thus infer that followers who identify role models within a leadership team are more likely to support and be positively influenced by the change processes driven by a diverse implementation team and leadership team.

2.7 Implementation Teams

An implementation team is "charged with designing and leading the implementation of an organization-wide change strategy" (Higgins, Weiner, & Young, 2012:366). The use of implementation teams, and the effect of the diversity of the implementation team has not been researched extensively. The findings of the research provide two key insights: (1) The construct of the implementation team is important. The team is required to have clearly identified roles, and the turnover of the team members occupying such roles should not have a significant impact on the team's effectiveness. (2) Positional diversity in the implementation team is an important element when the team is operating in a context that is complex and unclear (Higgins, Weiner, & Young, 2012).

Kotter (2012c) refers to the creation of a guiding coalition, and the importance of the team having the right mix of authority, leadership and management to ensure that they can deliver the change successfully. In recognising a world enveloped in an increasing pace of change, Kotter (2012b) developed a new change model for organisations operating in this environment: the eight accelerators. This model breaks away from the traditionally hierarchical structures of organisations and adopts a network-type structure, that can respond in a more agile and innovative way than the traditional management structures. This network-structure operating alongside the traditional hierarchical structure has similarities to the implementation team outlined by Higgins et al. (2012). The eight accelerators aim to further progress the original eight-step model rather than replace it. A distinguishing feature of the model is that it is centred around a single big opportunity and is akin to theories of ambidexterity that allow organisations to exploit and explore simultaneously. The distinguishing feature of this model is also its flaw. As demonstrated in this case study, organisations need to undergo radical change that requires the simultaneous implementation of multiple change initiatives. The eight-accelerators change model has been included in Appendix 2.

Mitra et al. (2019) combines the theories of ambidexterity and organisational change management to develop a model that can help organisations exploit and explore transformation strategies to enable them to maintain competitiveness. Change initiatives do not occur in a vacuum. While the organisation is undergoing a restructure or reconfiguration, the demands on day to day operational performance remain and thus compete with the resources and the energy of the change process. Failing to consider the impact of the need to exploit and the desire to explore will inevitably cause one to negatively impact the other. Kotter (2012c) recommends for the change management team to be separated from the daily operations to ensure that the change initiative receives the necessary focus and for the organisation to fully benefit from the change process.

The practice of exploration is likely to introduce competing priorities in a traditional production-driven organisation with established processes and systems. Organisations will need to overhaul their operating system to ensure that exploration is not starved off resources due to the immediate demands from day to day operations. For organisations to successfully develop the exploration aspect of ambidexterity, human resources systems, training, and reward structures should be geared to support exploration behaviours by incorporating the differing goals and timelines (Mom, Chang, Cholakova, & Jansen, 2019).

Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) refer to the need for leadership adaptability for organisations operating in a complex environment. Leaders have a role to play to ensure that the tension between operational leadership and entrepreneurial leadership co-exists in order to produce innovation (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). In the absence of leadership intervention, the immediate pressure and demand for production performance is likely to stifle the innovation environment. The engagement described by Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) is seen as a social process where information is shared between various actors through interaction, where ideas are developed leading to increased innovation. Leadership adaptability is grounded in complexity leadership theory that advocates that the TMT alone cannot drive innovation but relies on the empowerment of all employees (Grin, Karadzic, & Moors, 2018).

The social process and group dynamics present during the implementation of change initiatives becomes increasingly important to allow for the implementation teams to

successfully navigate the complexities of the interconnected systems of the organisation. The implementation team needs to have the agency and the social capital to influence actors within the organisation to buy-in and adopt the solutions proposed. Grin, Karadzic and Moors (2018) find connections between relational leadership style and transformational leadership style in being able to positively contribute to innovative outcomes.

As demonstrated above through separate literature reviews, while seemingly unrelated, commonalities are drawn for the need for leadership to be ambidextrous and for the organisation to adopt a structure that enables successful outcomes by balancing the immediate operational demands and the demands of the change initiative. It can be concluded that the separation of the implementation team from the day to day operations of an organisation is a critical factor for successful change management.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review identifies that despite the extensive research on organisational change management, there continues to remain a need for further research to enable the development of frameworks and models to facilitate change within the numerous contextual settings in which change occurs.

Future organisational change research lies in the intersection of traditional change management theory and other fields of study. The literature explored three of those fields of study, being leadership, diversity and implementation teams. This proposed study aims to explore the most impactful elements from these various fields in order to progress the growing need for more dynamic change frameworks and models.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

3.1 Introduction

The qualitative research aims to understand the factors that lead to successful change outcomes within the South African context with the primary aim of enhancing organisational change models to improve the success rate of change programs within organisations. Two key research questions were developed:

3.2 Research question one

What are the key factors contributing to the success of a change initiative for each stage of the change process: before, during and after implementation of the change?

The objective of this research question is to explore the organisational change process from the viewpoint of the organisation's TMT and employees. The purpose is to understand the context, change steps and various decisions that the organisation made throughout the change process to discern between those factors or decisions that led to the widely accepted successful outcomes. The findings will merge into research question two by providing rich data to inform the enhancement of organisational change models.

3.3 Research question two

How can change models be enhanced to close the gap that exists between theory and the practical implementation of change, thereby improving the success rate of change initiatives?

The objective of this research question is to perform a comparative analysis of the organisation's change process to Kotter's eight-step change model. The process of selecting the change model was outlined in the literature review and is supported by Appelbaum et al. (2012), who calls for more empirical research on Kotter's eight-step change model. The purpose of the comparative analysis will be to contribute towards the enhancement of organisational change models to address the gap between theory and practice, thereby improving the success rate of change initiatives.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology, design, population, data collection and analysis techniques are discussed, and the rationale is motivated. The quality and credibility of the research is directly impacted by the diligence given to this aspect of the research process (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002).

The research will be conducted at a subsidiary of a multinational operating in the manufacturing sector of South Africa. The organisation underwent significant change over the preceding 18-months aimed at reducing costs and improving its sustainability.

The scale of the changes and the widely recognised successful outcomes resulted in the organisation being chosen as an ideal setting for understanding the factors that contribute to successful change outcomes. Following a study of peer reviewed academic literature to identify theoretical concepts from the field of change management, Kotter's eight step change model was identified as the most appropriate model to employ in performing of a post-hoc analysis, given the type of change experience, i.e. top-down driven and large scale.

4.2 Philosophy

As discussed in Chapter 2, despite the existence of extensive research on organisational change, there is still a high failure rate on the implementation of organisational change (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). In addition, understanding the linkages between the theory and art of the practice of organisational change will further enhance the subject (Woodman, 2014). Therefore, it will be of value to understand in-depth cases where organisational change has been successfully implemented.

In order to understand the approach followed in initiating, implementing and sustaining change, an interpretive research philosophy was adopted. Interpretivism allows the researcher to understand the actors, their roles and interactions in a social context to gain deep and rich insight into their perspectives and interpretations (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Following this philosophy, the researcher will benefit from

being immersed in the organisational culture, observing the interactions and engagements that take place.

4.3 Approach

An inductive approach will be followed to understand the research context more deeply (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). As the researcher is part of the leadership team of the organisation, it will be of benefit to employ a mindset independent of preconceived ideas, allowing the engagements and observations to be analysed with a different lens, and empathising with the participants under study. This will allow for an understanding of the context of the participants, differing views and experiences to come to the fore, and for new themes to emerge.

4.4 Methodological choices

The methodology to support the research is a qualitative study supporting the requirement to obtain rich and comprehensive data on the participants' experiences, the context, and the environment in which the change occurs. (Buick, Blackman & Johnson, 2018; McCabe, 2010; Wilson, 2019).

4.5 Purpose of research design

Saunders and Lewis (2018) identify three types of studies, i.e. exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive studies aim to "describe accurately persons, events or situations" (Saunders & Lewis, 2018:116). A descriptive study supports the motivation of a qualitative study to gain depth in the research study.

4.6 Strategy

The research strategy employed will be that of a case study. This allows for the interpretation of events within the context of an organisation. It will be valuable to understand the full story by understanding the participants, their relationships, and the complexities of their stories (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). The case study research strategy requires the researcher to keep an open mind and remain objective, thus providing an opportunity to fully share in the experience of the storyteller.

4.7 Time horizon

The study will have a cross-sectional time horizon and be limited to the identified period of 18 months. The timeframe provides the benefit of understanding how participants' perceptions change over time while assessing the impact of how leadership initiatives' post-change implementation has affected perceptions and contributed to sustaining the change initiative (Smollan, 2017).

4.8 Techniques and procedures

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted.

4.9 Proposed research methodology and design

4.9.1 Population

The population consists of all permanent employees of the organisation. The population size is 791 at the time of writing and is divided into two groups.

Group 1 is the leadership team responsible for decision-making and directing of change in the organisation, consisting of 16 leaders. Group 2 is the permanent employees who are affected by the change. This group can be divided into their positions as follows: 341 Operators, 155 Artisans, 31 Superintendents, 81 Supervisors, 136 Engineers and Specialists, and 47 administrators.

Further, the organisation subdivides Group 2 into Expertise and Action Teams (EAT) consisting of operators and artisans, and Expert and Management Teams (EMT) consisting of superintendents, supervisors, engineers, specialists and administrators. This classification is important as the method of management for the two groups differs, due to the EAT group participating in a bargaining unit and being governed by a different set of policies, particularly around remuneration. The EMT group is not governed by the bargaining unit and consists mainly of expert professionals. This has the consequence of creating different subcultures within each subgroup.

4.9.2 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the individual lead team member for Group 1 and individual employee for Group 2.

4.9.3 Sampling method and size

Saturation has been identified as the "golden standard" for the selection of qualitative research sample sizes (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The selection of participants will be performed using non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique. Stratifying the population into more homogeneous groups, i.e. within the same cultural context and level of expertise allows for smaller samples and the ability to reach saturation whilst achieving a high level of accuracy within each grouping (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Samples will be spread between change agents and change recipients. The inclusion of the perspectives of change recipients in organisational change is an aspect called upon by existing literature (Oreg, Bartunek, Lee, & Do, 2018).

4.9.4 Measurement instrument

The data will be collected using semi-structured interviews. Interviews allow for the researcher to uncover underlying issues given the complexity of workplace relationships, experiences on a daily basis, and the culture and context in which the organisational change occurs. The semi-structured interviews allow for the researcher to focus on key aspects of the research without restricting the emergence of unexpected issues (Smollan, 2017).

As guided by Jacob and Furgerson (2012) the interview questions will be formulated based on literature to ensure quality questions focused on answering the research question and on deriving answers to areas that remain as gaps within the literature. In addition, the questions will be phrased in an open-ended way, allowing for the participants to share their story fully. The interviewer will employ active listening as a tool to be fully immersed in the narrative being shared and to carefully consider opportunities to prompt the participant to delve deeper. Consent will be obtained, and each interview recorded, with the promise of confidentiality and anonymity in the presentation of data.

A script will be developed for the beginning and ending of the interview to ensure that the context and frame for each participant is the same (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

4.9.5 Data collection

The data collection methods will be semi-structured interviews. Indicatively, the researcher will aim for 12 structured interviews to be conducted, splitting the interviews equally between Group 1 and Group 2. This is supported in Buick, Blackman, and Johnson (2018), where five semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior management.

The semi-structured interviews of change agents and change recipients will allow for triangulation of data, improve the quality of the research, and enable an understanding of the consistency between responses.

The selection of the employees to participate in the semi-structured interviews will be performed using a non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique. Stratifying the population and sampling across different groups allows for comparison of the data across the different groupings (Buick, Blackman, & Johnson, 2018). In addition, the purposive technique allows the researcher to apply judgement to select the most appropriate person to answer the research question (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). In this case, the Human Resources Manager and key change agents would be essential participants to ensure a quality research outcome.

Each interview is expected to last between 40 and 90 minutes.

4.9.6 Analysis approach

Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Thereafter the interviews will be coded inductively from the transcripts, on a line-by-line basis allowing for comparisons to be performed of each discrete part and between groups to detect emerging themes and patterns (Bhatnagar, Budhwar, Srivastava, & Saini, 2010; Buick, Blackman, & Johnson, 2018; Reissner, 2010). The coding process will be performed utilising Atlas TI software.

4.9.7 Quality assurance

Morse et al. (2002) argue for validity to be used as the measure of rigor for qualitative research. They further propose the following strategies for the ensuring validity: methodological coherence, appropriate sample, collecting and analysing data concurrently, thinking theoretically, and theory development.

The researcher aims to incorporate these strategies into the research as follows:

The methodology outlined above shows clear linkages between the research questions, the appropriateness of the philosophy, and that the approach is clearly motivated to support the most appropriate method to conduct the research. In addition, the researcher will remain open-minded and inductively interpret the data collected, allowing the data to guide the research process rather than preconceived notions of the outcome. This inherently relies on the skill and experience of the researcher. Independence and objectivity have been espoused by the researcher's profession, resulting in it being practiced concepts over the researcher's professional career.

The appropriateness of the sample size is motivated through literature. In addition, the purposive approach ensures that the researcher selects the most appropriate leaders while fulfilling a quota of different groupings of employees to ensure a comprehensive set of stories are obtained. In addition, through the coding process, the researcher will continue with interviews until saturation is reached, taking cognisance of the time limits of the research project (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

The researcher will ensure to follow the sequential steps of interviewing, transcribing, coding and analysing to ensure rigor in understanding what is known and not known and allow for course correction where required.

The process of data gathering across various groups will allow for the triangulation of data from multiple sources to improve the quality while analysing the consistency in responses across the groups. In addition, a full audit trail of decisions, recording of interviews, transcription and coding will ensure replication of activities if required.

4.9.8   Limitations

Researcher Bias

While the researcher endeavours to remain objective throughout the research. It must be acknowledged that the researcher is part of the leadership team of the organisation responsible for influence and implementing change. As with the interpretivism approach, the values of the researcher can influence the interpretation

of certain events and stories and mitigating these impacts relies on the consciousness and skill of the researcher (Saunders & Lewis, 2019).

Language

The home language of many of the employees at the organisation is Zulu, whereas the home language of the researcher is English. This is particularly applicable for employees that fall within Group 2. The business language of the organisation is English, and it is therefore not seen to materially impact the interview process.

Time horizon

A key aspect of the change began 18 months prior to beginning this research project. While key milestones have been reached, further change is likely to occur during the period of conducting the research. The researcher endeavours to set the boundaries of the change period being analysed. This snapshot in time is referred to as a cross-sectional research design.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research was to study organisational change undertaken by a large South African manufacturer, and to understand the factors that have led to successful change outcomes within a South African context. Based on the qualitative inductive methodology, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted.

5.2 Overview of semi-structured interviews

A total of 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted and covered a cross-section of employees in the organisation, and included: TMT, superintendents, supervisors, specialists, artisan and operators. The TMT is made up of managers and functional leads and are largely responsible for change strategy and implementation within the organisation. Given their role in the change management process it was imperative for the researcher to interview more employees from this category to gain an insider view, and at a granular level to understand the change process the organisation underwent. Superintendents, supervisors and specialists are largely seen as part of the broader leadership team in the organisation. Artisans and operators make up employee group regarded as the 'shop-floor'. Given the low employee turnover experienced in the organisation, the individuals interviewed have a vast history of knowledge of the business, previous practices and leadership styles, and have occupied multiple roles within the organisation. One third of the participants are female, and all race groups are represented. A summary of interviews by position and work experience are included in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of participants by role and years of experience

Employee Group	Position	Number of interviewees	Average years of experience
TMT	Operational managers	4	17
TMT	Functional leads	3	15
Middle Management	Superintendent	2	15
Junior Management	Supervisors	2	22
Junior Management	Specialists	2	21
Shop Floor	Artisan and operator	2	12

The semi-structured interview consisted of open-ended questions to enable the interviewer to obtain an understanding of the change process as experienced by the employee, with the researcher asking probing questions to understand constructs that develop during the interview in further detail. In addition, the researcher included a set of questions on Kotter's eight-step change model in the interview schedule to complete the comparative analysis on the change model by developing an understanding of the interviewees' perception of how the organisation's change process performed relative to Kotter's change model. The interview schedule is included in Appendix 4. The interview sample size was pegged at 15 in order to obtain sufficient views across the various employee groups. However, during the coding process, saturation was reached by the fourth interview. Saturation has been depicted in Figure 2.
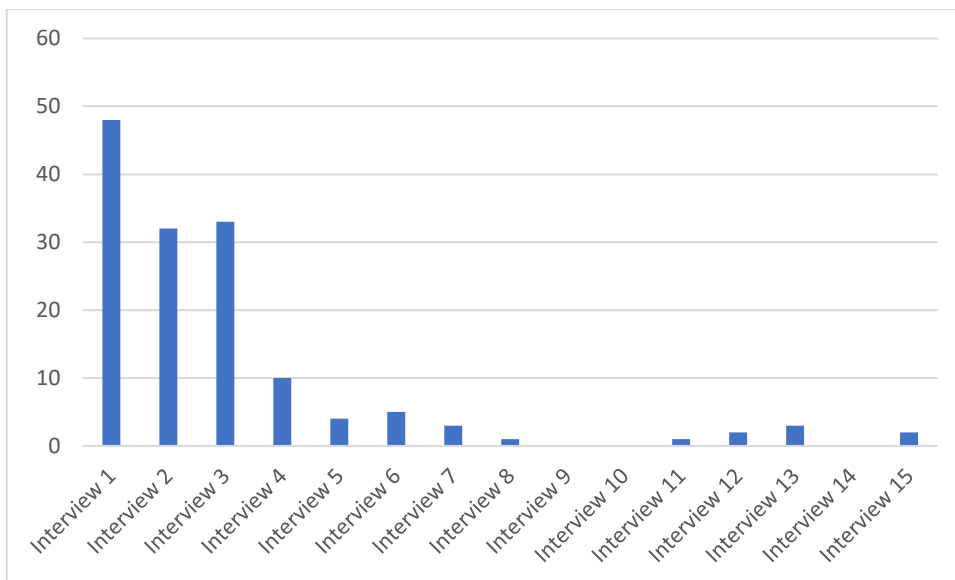
Figure 2. Summary of evidence of data saturation

Interview time was on average 49min, with the shortest interview being 30min and the longest interview being 90min. A summary of the interview data is depicted in Table 3. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using Atlas TI software. Codes were generated inductively, except for codes related to Kotter's 8-step model, which were deductively developed from literature. Codes were then grouped into categories and then further into themes.

Table 3

Summary of interview data

	Unique codes	Quotation Count	Minutes	Word Count
Interview 1	48	49	30	3967
Interview 2	32	58	35	5062
Interview 3	33	78	90	14813
Interview 4	10	57	49	7812
Interview 5	4	48	38	6015
Interview 6	5	43	57	8677
Interview 7	3	34	53	5416
Interview 8	1	55	54	7769
Interview 9	0	29	60	6779
Interview 10	0	42	49	7224
Interview 11	1	18	45	7110
Interview 12	2	30	52	5932
Interview 13	3	47	62	10899
Interview 14	0	24	23	3832
Interview 15	2	25	42	6532
	144	**637**	**739**	**107,839**

144 unique code groups were generated from the coding process of the interview transcripts. The code groups were further analysed and grouped into 12 themes:

1. Describing the change and the reasons the organisation underwent change
2. Understanding the participants' view of the outcome of the change process
3. Leadership style during the change process
4. Risk assessments
5. Reconfigure organisational structure to execute change process
6. Engagement processes
7. Stakeholder management
8. Change control descriptions
9. Communication plan
10. Planning processes
11. Kotter's eight-step model post-hoc analyses
12. Additional information

The findings are presented in thematic form due to the linkages between the two research questions. However, Theme 11 addresses research question two more directly.

5.3 Thematic analysis of interviews

5.3.1 Theme 1: Describing the change and the reasons the organisation underwent change

The purpose of this theme is to provide a descriptive context of the change process that the organisation has undergone, the benefit of which will be determining of the boundaries in which the research findings can be applied. As understood by the literature review, the context in which change occurs is relevant for determining the change model and process that the organisation needs to adopt. Further, the interview question intended to ease the participant into the interview process through an open-ended question that would allow the participant to determine the direction of the interview.

The organisation's change was described as significant and was driven by both internal and external factors. It was observed that the down-side pressures of the commodity cycle provided the opportunistic structural change that was required for the organisation renew itself.

The external factors related to market conditions of depressed commodity prices while input costs remained high. Further cost pressures were attributed to significant increases from a key major supplier, fundamentally requiring a change in the business model of the organisation.

> **Participant 2** *"…we had to make decisions based on the medium to long term view… keep it sustainable for the future and for future generations."*

> **Participant 3** *"…we obviously have a limited ability to enhance our technology to the extent that we can remain competitive with newer technology [competitors] out there."*

> **Participant 5** *"We had head winds with cost, both the raw materials and market factors… if we did not do anything the organisation was at risk of shutting down… the China/America trade war has not assisted."*

> **Participant 10** *"[Commodity price] was low, raw material input costs were increasing at that time etc. We still had what we felt was high labour numbers, high contractor numbers, which all led to this high cost of doing business and looming was the issues of [major supplier] contract… factors that were needing us to reorganise ourselves."*

In addition to the external factors, which are largely out of the organisation's control, internal factors were identified to have contributed to the organisation's current state. The internal factors were identified to be a culture of excess and complacency that had been institutionalised over many years.

> **Participant 3** *"We got bloated over the years, commodity prices started to fall, we had a lot of inertia inside the business. We had people that have been here for too long…they start doing less and get contractors to do more… very inefficient in terms of some of our capital management…"*

> **Participant 4** *"We needed a culture shift and I think that was important for us… a lot of things that have been institutionalised over the years that we needed to challenge"*

Several respondents experienced the change process to be difficult and taxing for both the change agent and the recipient of change. In some cases, a conflict was present with the change agent themselves potentially being negatively impacted by the change. However, getting into the zone of discomfort was necessary to break the organisational inertia.

> **Participant 4** *"It is really tough to be a change agent and change owner… once you start having discomfort it is a place where you want to be… to achieve the greater good."*

This experience is linked to the extensive nature of the change process the organisation underwent, described as radical and extensive due to there not being any single initiative that would result in the organisation returning to sustainability. The change process thus incorporated significant restructuring and reengineering of the organisation, and many small changes to enable the organisation to return to sustainability. In addition, the extensive change process had taken place within a short period of time. The change process had a rational business case, with many

respondents describing change as a phenomenon that must inevitably occur.

> **Participant 2** *"What someone might call radical… to avoid a really negative outcome …it was rapid change… large changes in a short space of time..."*

> **Participant 3** *"There is no silver bullet that is actually going to solve all your problems. There is not a single lever that is going to give you the value derivative that you need to turn the business around…"*

The environment in which the change occurred was described as VUCA, with a multitude of geopolitical factors and localised issues affecting the organisation. The participants also identified the complexity and the risks that internal decisions within the organisation can have on external stakeholders. The VUCA context created the burning platform for change, with **Participant 3** advocating for taking a long-term, principled approach when navigating through such a context. Participant 11 identified the dual role that people within the organisation play as employees and as members of the community. Ensuring that employees maintain a positive attitude towards the organisation was important for the stability of the community in which the organisation operates.

> **Participant 3** *"If your long term thinking is that I want to remain sustainable for this country in the communities we serve here and for the people that is dependent on us… then you are actually doing it for different motivation and you have got a different [time] horizon."*

> **Participant 4** *"I think there was the case for change because if there is a crisis and people identify with the crisis then they mostly participate. We had a burning platform and it was the fact that we need to be self-sustaining as a business, we need to be sustainable for the future."*

> **Participant 11** *"…employees always talk negative about the working place… you will always invite community unrest when the people in that organisation are speaking negatively about the organisation."*

These risks are highlighted in a South African context when the organisation's change results in a restructuring of the workforce. The organisation underwent significant restructuring during the period under research, having exited a substantial portion of the workforce and recruited employees with new skillsets.

Participant 3 *"One of the biggest single things we had to do at the outset was to restructure the business, to get a different operating model."*

Participant 12 *"I think I can see why organisation went the route of the production technician… so having something like that could be good to the organisation."*

Table 4

Theme 1 Describing the change and the reasons the organisation underwent change

Code Group: Reasons for change (12)
Change due to cost pressures
Change due to external factors
Change due to internal factors
Change had a rational business case
Change in operating model of business
Change is inevitable
Change based on the long-term view of the business
Change focus on reducing costs
Change required due to culture of complacency developed over years
Change required due to low profitability
Change to achieve sustainability through commodity cycle
Technology to enhance competitiveness limited
Code Group: Describing the change process (6)
Change experience was difficult for individuals
Change of multitude areas was necessary
Change was radical, multitude of initiatives
Change was significant in short time frame
VUCA environment in which change is being implemented
People turnover and new skill sets brought into business
Mindset that embraces change
Motivation and morale of workforce lowered by change process
Change impacting people must take place swiftly
People who were hinderance to change exit
People's roles defined more clearly in terms of skills and qualifications

5.3.2 Theme 2: Understanding the participants view of the outcomes of the change process

The basis of this study within the chosen organisation is to understand the factors that led to the successful outcome. It was important for the researcher to understand the views of individuals within the organisation on how they perceived the outcomes of the change process. The qualitative study allowed for participants to share freely, and to elaborate on the rich context and nuances of the change process. The value of this approach resulted in the researcher obtaining not only a view of what went well, but also on areas that the organisation could have done better or could have improved upon in its change process.

Despite the overall successful change outcomes achieved, several areas of improvement were identified by participants through the interview process. These areas of improvement have been presented within the various themes. While areas for improvement are important to appreciate the full context of the organisational change process, the researcher noted several limitations:

- Generally, for most areas of improvement identified there is an equal view of what went well for a similar aspect of the change process. For example, Participants 11 and 12 indicated that the communication of the vision and reason for the changes was insufficiently done for the shop floor, yet several participants identified this to be extensively performed.
- The participant may not be fully aware of all strategic aspects of the change process and thus infers conclusions based on their best understanding of the change process
- Some of the areas for improvement do not directly relate to the change process, but were linked by participants to the change process, justified as a factor that would have helped ease the change if the organisation had closed the perceived gap before the change was undergone.
- The short-coming was sometimes noted to be influenced by the personal agenda or philosophy of the participant rather than an objective view of the process e.g. a participant believed employee restructuring should never be the first option for the organisation, whereas it was noted by several participants to be a strategic imperative in order to reset and reengineer the operating model of the organisation.

Most participants agreed that the overall outcome of the change process was successful with most objectives having been met. The successful outcomes are demonstrated through measurable key performance indicators.

> **Participant 2** *"…achieve not just achieve what we set out to achieve, but I think to surpass what we set out to achieve."*

> **Participant 4** *"Looking at our savings, our output in terms of production, records across the board…"*

> **Participant 11** *"We have realised a profit… The last financial year, we hit record production even though there was lock down in the mix."*

> **Participant 13** *"In simple terms, very good… What we have achieved is a short of amazing"*

Success was attributed to a variety of reasons including the stability of operations while undergoing change, no labour unrest, limited reputational damage, successfully adjusting the operating model, and other tangible outcomes that improved cost and productivity.

> **Participant 2** *"…very limited negative impact to the business… from a labour perspective, going against what the entire labour plan for the country is that you want to enhance and create jobs and here we are going as large business and reducing jobs… and to successfully do that with very minimal noise, it was brilliant."*

> **Participant 5** *"There has not been any unrest or strike action from the work force, which historically [the business] has had work stoppages and I think that was good."*

Success was also described in terms of intangible outcomes such as building trust with employees and a change in the culture of the organisation.

> **Participant 2** *"…have been a changing organisation now for years, it is like a learning organisation."*

> **Participant 4** *"But once they see your authenticity they start buying in and that is what we have seen but we are not fully there yet."*

Participant 6 *"We needed to reset that clock, which was done in this change management process. It has removed some of that element of power [that unions had], but also as an employee, it gives me some sort of relief knowing we in the right direction. There is some stability and when you see the culture of the floor in a supervisory space, you do not want militant people working for you…"*

Participant 10 *"Quite a lot of the older folk have left, and we have a new bunch of recruits, which also brings in a bit of energy. And I think that has also played a role in changing the culture."*

Participant 13 *"…been a great outcome, in terms of everyone is now looking at costs. Everyone is looking at efficiencies. The conversations are different now between management and unions, for the first time I heard a union thank management…"*

Table 5

Theme 2 Understanding the participants view of the outcomes of the change process

Code Group: Understanding the participants view of the outcomes of the change process (11)
Successful change outcomes - overall
Success as achieved objectives set out
Success due to no labour unrest
Success incorporating new skill sets in the business
Success leads to sustainability of business and broader socio-economic outcomes
Success proven through tangible/measurable outcomes
Success through improved productivity and lower costs
Successful outcome resulted in culture shift towards a learning organisation
Successful outcome of trust building between leadership and people
Successful outcome resulted in shift in culture
Reward through bonuses
Motivated by job security
Motivated by prevention of job losses
Motivated through recognition (non-transactional)

5.3.3 Theme 3: Leadership style

A strong theme describing the leadership of the organisation during the change process came through several interviews. The leadership style described ranged from transformational to authoritative, autocratic, tough and confrontational, but necessary to implement the change required for the organisation. Several participants attributed part of the successful outcomes to the leadership style.

> **Participant 2** *"Brilliant leadership."*

> **Participant 5** *"It is visionary from the Vice President Operations (VPO) to have led that process... And the leadership having full buy in and driving it to a successful completion..."*

> **Participant 8** *"…as much as it was not nice but for me, I think that is one of the success factors. It helped make that a success in the time that we have done it…"*

> **Participant 10** *"VPO's leadership style played a big role. Quite a few moving parts to it, very engaging, talking to people - he loves that, listening, giving people opportunity…."*

> **Participant 13** *"…let us get it there, let us do it and we will own it, and I think it is his [VPO] mind-set, which is 'I will never let this thing fail'… that gave his management team the confidence to say, even those things that I wanted to do some time back, I could not, [but] I am going to go for it now…"*

The leadership style was attributed to the VPO leading the TMT, who was the new incumbent in the role, the change process began shortly after. Several participants believed that the previous leadership style, described as engaging, consultative, and soft, would not have achieved the successful outcomes. Despite the strong personality of the new VPO and his influence on the TMT, a couple of participants identified that decision-making continues to be collective and that the diversity of individuals within the TMT brings a balance to the team. Diversity was not only observed in terms of race and gender, but also in terms of skills, personality and thought process.

Participant 2 *"It is courageous… This leadership took the bull by the horn, faced up to the challenges… Previous leadership was avoidance theory and this current leadership is confronting the issue and deal with it…"*

Participant 3 *"And I think that was done in a very tough manner, very direct manner but we had to do it at point where we were… And you needed a very, very strong, almost autocratic leadership that held the line. And that was done very well by the VPO."*

Participant 4 *"But I think we have got a tough leader in the VPO, he is a driver, sets out on a project and there are deliverables… but it is our role to say… can we tweak it here… it is our role to then bring that balance [in the decision-making process] and we have successfully achieved that. The good thing with this management team is that we do have the opportunities to bring our views…"*

Participant 6 *"We have never had a manager sit there and say well if you do not like take your things and go and strike…"*

Participant 10 *"…[VPO] does not stand and dictate everything, he always pulls the management team into it, to let it be seen that we as a team are aligned."*

Due to the authoritative style, mixed reactions were received from the participants interviewed. **Participant 4** described the TMT as always leading as a collective, with different voices and balance being brought by the different skills and profiles of individuals to the team. Several participants described the leadership style as tough, direct, courageous and authentic. **Participant 8** felt there was a fear of failure developing within the TMT as a result of the leadership style. **Participants 1 and 4** described the leadership as focused highly on tangible business outcomes. Further, the authoritative leadership style led to the change process being significantly top-down, with some change processes even resulting in the creation of silos and divisions between teams.

Participant 8 *"I think it leans more to 'this is what needs to be done'. And even now I still feel there is a lot of caution in the team."*

Participant 11 *"But it is the how it is being done that I am battling with; it is*

the transition from leadership…"

Participant 12 *"…this management team is not the same that it was a couple of years ago. And that change is difficult because of the approach of the [new] leadership team."*

Several participants identified hinderances in terms of a learning organisation. The one area was in terms of not learning from mistakes and the other related to the fear of failing due to consequences at a leadership level. **Participant 8** perceived inconsistency between the narrative of the change needed and the behaviours of leaders with regards to the management of costs. Symbols of wastage were seen to be a hinderance in getting buy-in to the change journey. **Participant 4** described it as the organisation failing to address issues raised by employees prior to change resulting in scepticism when the change process was being rolled out.

People development processes were identified to be insufficient by **Participant 1**. The gap identified was historic and did not result in sufficient succession planning or stretching the capabilities of people. The gap was described to be particularly evident within junior management level, with Participant 7 recognising the criticality of this level of employee for sustaining change initiatives.

Leadership was a frequent theme that came up throughout the study. Leadership style was seen to both contribute to the success of the changes, but the described leadership style also presented some negative consequences. One area of consequence identified was the emotional intelligence of leaders in planning and implementing complex change. **Participant 6** noted that the leaders involved in complex negotiations require emotional intelligence to engage successfully. **Participant 8** referred to not buying in to the 'how' the change should be done, which resulted in disassociation with the implementation of the change outcome. **Participant 7** identified leaders not holding people accountable as hindering the change process. While the culture of accountability can be seen as a historical leadership failure not directly part of the change process, it was seen as an organisational failing that could collapse an otherwise successful change initiative.

Table 6

Theme 3 Leadership style

Code Group: Leadership Style (6)
Leadership as a collective (TMT decision-making process)
Leadership is currently confrontational and direct in approach
Leadership style attributed to successful outcomes
Leadership style was autocratic
Leadership was authentic
Leadership (VPO) was new
Role of supervision (junior management) in implementing change
Culture of speaking up
Change process created division and silos (due to confidentiality)
Change process was significantly top-down
Insufficient people development processes
Insufficient in holding people accountable
Insufficient emotional intelligence of leaders involved in complex change
Insufficient consistency between action and narrative hindered the process
Insufficient as a learning organisation
Data (reliability) not being used sufficiently in decision-making process

5.3.4   Theme 4: Risk assessments

The performance of detailed risk assessments was identified as a key requirement for successful outcomes by several participants. The organisation has a strong culture of risk management, which naturally fed into the organisational change processes, particularly those that involved large organisation-wide changes.

> **Participant 5** *"We risk assessed every single process of change, we mitigated any risks associated with that in such a way that it made the whole process seamless and everything was documented… we had a separate risk assessment for how we deal with the community as well during the change."*

Several risks were identified through the various change processes such as labour unrest, community unrest, political interference, security of key personnel, loss of critical skills, reliability of plant and equipment. The identification and mitigation of the varied risks could have only been adequately performed through a robust risk

management process. The realisation of any of the risk events could have had detrimental consequences to the organisation and the potential failure of the change process.

> **Participant 3** *"…there was a lot of fear factor out there, that if we make these changes, there will be dire consequences, either in the workforce or from within the community or even politically… it was a high stakes poker game that could have gone very pear shaped and we had a contingency plan for it."*

> **Participant 4** *"One of the biggest issues that came in our change process was security. Now had we not tackled the security issue we would never have been able to do half of what we have achieved… we mapped out the different scenarios with the unions."*

> **Participant 12** *"We lost a lot of extremely skilled people. And unfortunately, skills are not something that you can get overnight."*

Several participants called for risk assessments post change to understand the long-term effects and potential unintended consequences of changes. **Participant 14** recognised this as an area that is improving, but not systemised. **Participant 8** questioned whether the risk assessment process was thorough enough, and advocated for the organisation to do even more, prior to initiating change, during transition, and post change. **Participants 3 and 8** were concerned about the long-term impacts of changes made if they have not been given sufficient consideration. The long term consequences of change being insufficiently assessed can have significant negative consequences for an organisation whose processes operate within a tight standard of deviation.

> **Participant 2** *"…the long-term effects of the change, with every change there are side effects and we need to pick up those blind spots because they can negatively impact us in the long run."*

> **Participant 7** *"Maybe our implementation is not sustainable… when we reduce, something will give. It is important to make sure of that when we do our planning because remember when an incident occurs [the impact is high]."*

> **Participant 8** *"We could have done it differently to evaluate what are the*

downsides. What is the best way to transition from where we were to where we wanted to be…time pressure and I think evaluation, one thing that we do not do very well is to risk assess our organisational changes. Just as we do with a change request in the plant, you evaluate and saying this is the change that I want, what is the impact, how do we transition to it? Is it the right time to do it? For organisational change you also need to have some sort of assessment. I am not saying it was not done, but was it done properly? Maybe we were not thorough enough in terms of assessing what would work and what would not."

Table 7

Theme 4 Risk assessments

Code Group: Risk assessments
Risk assess change process
Risk includes loss of skill sets
Risk post-change understand the long-term impacts of change

5.3.5 Theme 5: Reconfigure organisational structure to support the change process

The organisational structure adopted during the change process was identified by several participants as key for delivering the successful outcomes. The change in organisation structure included the setting up of dedicated improvement teams and a reconfiguration of the TMT to manage the various workstreams while balancing the stability of the operation. The key benefit of the structure allowed for the teams to focus on delivering their workstreams successfully and the resourcing of the right skills into the implementation teams that would deliver the best outcomes. The change was managed almost entirely by internal resources, except where experts were brought in to assist with coordination or training. The ownership of the change process by the TMT was a critical component of the structure.

Participant 3 *"As a management team the good thing we did was we split the team into three. It was the restructuring team, the improvement team and production team."*

Participant 4 *"…a workgroup that purely focused on the restructure process and executed purely in that space without being distracted… focused*

intervention… and then you had a further improvement work stream that sat at the back end and started modelling and front end loading some of the projects that needed to deliver the value rapidly after the restructure."

Participant 5 *"…we had a rigid structure set in place for each of the different work streams."*

Participant 8 *"…to actually have those dedicated teams that focus on specific work. That was a good way of ensuring that we deliver what we need to deliver. One was doing the restructure; one was doing business as usual and maintaining operations, and then the other ones looking at changes. Having specific people doing that worked well because they were able to focus…"*

Table 8

Theme 5 Reconfigure organisational structure to support the change process

Codes Group: Theme - Reconfigure organisational structure to support the change process
Structure - dedicated change teams allowed workstreams to focus
Structure - reconfigured management team
Structure - Skill set of the people involved in the improvement teams was important
Structure - stability of operation maintained

5.3.6   Theme 6: Engagement processes

The engagement processes were a strong theme that came out of the interviews. The nature of engagement by management, the time invested, and leadership engaging directly with the entire organisation including the shop floor are all factors that helped contribute to the positive change outcomes. The process involved engaging multiple stakeholders internal and external to the organisation. It involved the TMT making themselves vulnerable in front of the organisation, to be able to engage in an authentic way in order to seek the necessary buy-in from employees across the organisation. The engagements were carefully planned and informed by the stakeholder map developed through the risk assessment process.

Participant 4 *"As a leadership team we made a conscious decision that we need to involve everybody, now you can do that at different levels… but let us really tap into the people… that process, takes up days of your time but if you*

invest the time you will reap the benefits... with managers actually making themselves vulnerable… being tackled, being ridiculed, or whatever… It is much easier to sit down think of something and implement. But now when you have got to take your management team across the line and then you have got to cascade that to your superintendents, supervisors, unions, employees and sometimes even external stakeholders. It is tough and it takes a lot of time and a lot of planning and a lot of patience."

Participant 5 *"I think we did things differently this time… main recourse was to take every employee of the company through this journey. I think that was critical in the journey, people had to buy-in to the 'why' we are doing it. This was not just an instruction by the leadership… And I think that was key for me, through every level of the organisation everybody was part of the process… We had proper change processes, we had stakeholder engagements quite embedded in our system… It was important that we took our [communities] along on the outside as well."*

Participant 10 *"…the common thread to make it successful for me is the high engagement that we have done as a team… It is from the VPO engaging the teams… the managers in the departments and then our roadshows. All of that has kept people informed and engaged, and them being able to ask the questions and with us giving them answers…"*

The engagement was transparent, factual, delivered a consistent message to ensure that the 'why' of the change process was understood by everyone. The burning platform and why the changes were necessary was clearly communicated by the TMT to the organisation. This included involving the shop floor in the idea generation to ensure that all employees were part of the journey, thus reducing the resistance to the change process. The high level of engagement and the reinforcement of a consistent change narrative through multiple forums enabled the restoration of trust between the TMT and the organisation.

Participant 1 *"It was not projects coming from top management down, it was the people on the floor also giving ideas on how to save cost…"*

Participant 2 *"Because the 'why' and the case for change was explained so well and in such detail to the lowest levels in the organisation, we were able*

to get through what we did... Every single person is taken on the journey, not just the permanent employees but the contractor partners and everybody associated with the business."

Participant 5 *"Where you seek solutions from the lowest levels of the organisation, and in doing so created a good vibe in the sense that people knew they were a part of this journey…"*

Participant 6 *"We have answered the questions and put the data on the table and people have not really been that resistant after… allowing them in these multi-level sessions to have the opportunities to discuss it takes away a lot of obstacles… I am only resistant to change if I have a concern…"*

Participant 10 *"The initial trust issues they had at the start, they have seen what we have been doing over the months, and when they ask questions, they actually verifying what they were doubting at the start. We answered lots of questions from them by giving them all these communication through the engagement sessions. But we also backed it up with emails and the presentations, the flat screen because each cost out group would give regular feedback, you would record the savings and they would see it, they will see the change in the plant…"*

The engagement was done through multiple modes, offsite workshops, electronic media, and displays of symbols across the operation. The multiple engagements allowed for the TMT to obtain a buy-in and a commitment from a critical mass within the organisation and helped reduce the resistance to the change process. In addition, this helped align the organisation behind a common vision and purpose. The process allowed for ideas to flow freely between teams and to leadership.

Participant 2 *"…it was the electronic platforms that was used, the departmental sessions, team sessions and … large group sessions with teams offsite. There was a whole lot of engagements that was happening at any point in time, from different levels, at the very granular level to an organisational level."*

Participant 4 *"So the tapping in part is not easy, so that is why we use the combination of fun, seriousness and also documenting stuff. Writing things*

down, making people sign a pledge, making people get out of their comfort zones, having fun team exercises. And then putting people on camera."

Participant 10 *"The fundamental is if you do not get the sense of urgency right, which links in the vision and then communicating that vision, if you do not get those three right as the base, then you are not going to move."*

Participant 13 *"We also united behind a common message, that journey message…*

Insufficient engagement of all employees in the change process was also noted by some participants as a concern. **Participant 3** perceives that only 50% of middle management had fully bought into the change process. Most of the participants believed that extensive time was spent in engaging the entire organisation on the 'why', and that sufficient buy-in was obtained. In addition, supplier stakeholders and support functions were identified as not consistently being consulted through change processes, the latter potentially being due to the matrix organisational structure adopted by the organisation. **Participants 6 and 8** perceived that there had insufficient consultation by leadership with the shop floor on the details of the change implementation plan. **Participants 11 and 12** supported this notion by stating that delivery of the message to the broad management teams was inconsistent with the messages delivered to the shop floor. This was a consequence of the power plays between the TMT and the union leadership who are frequently viewed by the TMT as having undue influence over the organisation's decision-making processes.

Table 9

Theme 6 Engagement processes

Codes: Themes - Engagement processes
Engagement by change agents with all stakeholders
Engagement by leadership with all stakeholders - direct, significant time invested
Engagement focus on facts and data in communicating the 'why'
Engagement in explaining the 'why' helps reduce resistance
Engagement processes need to include empathy
Engagement with shop floor on idea generation
Engagement with the whole organisation on case for change and the 'why'
Engagements through multiple modes: offsite, within departments, electronic

Commitment and buy-in obtained from all employees
Creating buy-in resulted in less resistance
Vision was created and developed with greater purpose, determining the 'why'
Change process allowed for new ideas to come to the fore
Insufficient consultation of people on change implementation plan hindered the process
Insufficient delivering consistent message
Insufficient in creating sense of urgency
Insufficient in listening to ideas from shop floor

5.3.7 Theme 7: Stakeholder management

When a large organisation undergoes significant restructuring and reorganisation, the impact on the internal and external stakeholders can be wide-ranging. The organisation, through its change processes, appreciated and successfully managed the complexities of its external environment and its relationship with its internal stakeholders. This enabled the organisation to limit reputational damage, ensure that it controlled the narrative of the vision and the purpose, and most importantly, ensure that an external stakeholder didn't become a hinderance or derail the change management process.

External stakeholders at local, provincial and national level include government, regulators, suppliers, customers, communities and unions. Two stakeholder groups came out strongly within the interviews: communities and unions. The community risk was linked to the risk of industrial action by employees. The power dynamics between the TMT and the unions throughout the change process was apparent to several participants. The reset of the relationship with this stakeholder group was a key outcome of the change process. A failure to do so would have created significant resistance to the organisation's change journey.

> **Participant 2** *"…either do something differently or we succumb to inevitable outcome, for a large organisation that would have impacted not just the local environment but the immediate employees. The region, the province and obviously nationally, so the footprint and the impact is massive."*

> **Participant 3** *"In a developing country narrative you sit with a situation where… less people being required to do the same amount of work… where*

job security is a big deal… so you have a level of militancy that sits within your unions and in your society and even in your political environment, and would actually go to riot on those matters if they feel justified to do so."

Participant 4 *"I think we also have a lot of contractors that are very influential in our plant… because a lot of our change involved cutting out some of these contractors…and some of them do have an influence on negatively impacting our change."*

Participant 5 *"…the community was always a factor… if we did not have a change management [process] during that transition, we would not have picked that up… if you have communities that are starting to cause unrest outside the gates, that will pull our employees. We involved all, government, local leaders everyone was part of that process… we had the right communication structures in place to manage it across the business… and it manifested in zero unrest per se from the community, which is quite atypical in South Africa because of non-delivery of service, unemployment."*

Participant 6 *"And the power dynamics laid with the workforce and not management… they have never implemented anything here without the blessing of the unions…You broke this fallacy that existed in the workforce that these unions are strong, and management will bend to their will."*

Table 10

Theme 7 Stakeholder management

Code Group: Stakeholder management (6)
Stakeholder communities impacted by change
Stakeholder impact significant for a large organisation not adapting or changing
Stakeholder in political environment impacting change
Stakeholder power dynamics between management and unions
Stakeholder suppliers influence hindering change process
Stakeholder unions created resistance to change process

5.3.8   Theme 8: Change control descriptions

Given the process sensitivity of the plant being operated, change control within the organisation is important. This requirement was amplified when a process excursion

experienced in 2012 that resulted in significant losses for the organisation. The incident continues to be etched in memory of the participants and has further resulted in the development of a risk conscious culture – one that is seen as a necessity throughout the change processes under study.

> **Participant 3** *"I think our change management of plant and operations has not been that great, we have had a huge variation back in 2012 where this plant was basically almost shut down, modifying things in the name of cost cuts."*

> **Participant 5** *"I think you left shooting in the dark and hoping by chance that you will get things right… we were quite rigorous in that change [control] every step of the way. There was a proper change process, proper sign off, the right levels of sign off, we embedded and communicated every change to every single level that needed it or is going to be impacted by the change. And we involved a whole spectrum of people during the change process… who had the expertise and the knowledge for that process."*

Despite the past learnings of the importance of change control, the execution of the change control with the organisational change process received mixed feedback from participants, with some believing it was applied rigorously, and in other instances being seen to be lacking. Most participants acknowledged the importance of the change control when undergoing significant organisational changes. In addition, it was identified that the administratively cumbersome process is a core issue why change control execution could fail.

> **Participant 2** *"Now that I am getting involved in it, I can see it has been driven the right way. It being owned in the right space; it is not a tick box exercise and it is not just an administrative exercise. I can see now how providing proof of changes, proof of documentation, proof of work or proof of actions, you can only close out now with those things. Previously I felt that it was not genuine, or nobody cared."*

> **Participant 3** *"…our documents and our paperwork are cumbersome… if you want to make a change, you have got to go through a tremendous amount of documentation and paperwork..."*

Participant 5 *"No. And that is why I am re-enforcing it… we documented every single change that we were going through… we risk assessed every single process of change."*

Participant 10 *"there is lots of red tape issues… that would slow us down… it is the organisational factors that really slowed us down the red tape in organisation..."*

Participant 14 *"If you go back many years… what we are finding out now a lot of stuff has been butchered, has been altered. And there is no change management, so it is difficult to understand why people did what they did. That is when… they shut half the plant down… Now that was because of a lack of change management."*

Some participants felt that there was insufficient post-change review. **Participant 8** observed that there is a need to understand if the change provided the results that were desired, and to identify whether the organisation would be bold enough to reverse changes that are not working. **Participant 3** believed that this would assist with helping to produce more change.

Others felt that there were Insufficient support systems during the change process. **Participant 8** believed that poor support systems led to the current state the organisation finds itself in and resulted in a breakdown of trust with the shop floor. **Participant 3** believed that these same systems did not support employees to be agile enough in executing change.

Table 11

Theme 8 Change control

Code Group: Theme – Change control (12)
Change control bureaucracy hindering ability to embed change
Change control historically not good
Change control is critical for successful change outcome
Change control not being done consistently
Change control was rigorously performed
Technology systems hindering change control and administration systems
Post project review to ensure outcomes realised

Agile systems required to institutionalise changes
Data not being used sufficiently to inform post project review
Insufficient post-change review
Insufficient processes to sustain change
Insufficient support systems to change process

5.3.9 Theme 9: Communication plan

The communication strategy was important throughout the change process to ensure that all stakeholders were adequately informed at each stage. The communication strategy ensured that the reasons for the change process were embedded within the organisation with the right facts, information, and narrative being shared consistently and frequently.

The communication strategy was further identified to be important to maintain momentum and morale, and to keep the focus of the organisation on the change process and the outcomes required. Several participants viewed the communication as transparent and a lot more visible than previously. Communication was done through different platforms and included offsite engagements, electronic communications, flyers and other team sessions. Communications was an important step in the process to ensure the inclusion of everyone in the process. Despite the high level of communications that was performed, there continues to be requests for more, leaving the researcher to conclude that 'there's no such thing as too much communication'.

> **Participant 2** *"…definitely about keeping everyone well informed. When everyone is armed with facts and the correct information, then it is easy to take the critical mass on a journey."*

> **Participant 3** *"What has definitely helped us is the very deliberate and very structured, media campaign. It was not a communications campaign. One of your most powerful tools… I think we did that effectively… control the narrative. It was done very well, both in the encouraging messages, the stuff that edifies you, but also in the tough conversations."*

> **Participant 5** *"Our whole communication strategy thereafter was key or fundamental in making sure that the momentum was sustained, even after*

that initial setup that we had with the whole leadership taking the teams through that. We never stopped our communications process, meeting consistently with our teams, telling them where we are in that process."

Participant 6 *"Probably the biggest part would be for be getting people on board, buy in to where you want to go… in previous lessons manage what communication goes out there."*

Participant 10 *"What was successful for me was all the different comms, the different engagements that people have been doing and the regular feedback regular engagements. But there is more that people are asking… feedback more regularly... Let us know where we at, tell us how things are going…"*

Participant 14 *"We took everyone offsite, the whole organisation, we used visible communication, we used the systems that we have, emailed etc. What we have also done through our internal [departmental] engagement process."*

Table 12

Theme 9 Communication plan

Code Group: Theme - Communication plan (10)
Communicating effectively the 'why'
Communicating strategy - regularly and sharing facts and data
Communication during planning stages of the change
Communication needs improvement despite high level of communication
Communication on progress during completion of the project was regularly done
Communication post completion of project
Communication through multiple modes: offsite, within departments, electronic
Communications to control the narrative
Change process and communication was transparent
Insufficient communication of vision to shop floor

5.3.10 Theme 10: Planning processes

A key insight gained was the importance of getting the balance right between planning and execution. While planning and strategizing the change process was recognised as imperative, it was important for the organisation to hasten into the execution phase and not spend too long in the diagnostic phase. Inherently 'low-

hanging fruit' opportunities are generally known and easily executable.

> **Participant 3** *"People always tend to think change happens when you talk about things or when you think about things, change does not happen then, change only happens when you actually execute. You have to do actions, you cannot just talk or think, of philosophize. You have got to execute."*

> **Participant 14** *"there is a lot of good examples that we did not have to go and do analysis for 10 months, we just said let's do it."*

Planning involves developing the overarching strategy, the short term and long-term objectives, as well as prioritising change initiatives, preparing the change agents, and securing the buy-in of the key decision-makers within the organisation. The planning process is continuous throughout the change journey. The organisation is required to continuously revisit and adjust planning in agile way to respond to the new information that is presented as it executes its change initiatives. **Participant 3** felt that prioritisation of a big change upfront was necessary to ensure that the inertia is broken and that the organisation is shifted into action. Participant 5 identified the use of consultants in a limited fashion, with the implementation and ownership of changes residing with employees. Extensive consultation throughout the implementation of the change process was important to ensure that solutions matched the organisation's culture and processes.

> **Participant 3** *"What we did exceptionally well was that we 'front end loaded' the thinking quite extensively… consultation on how to approach changing the structure of the business… [to move] people into a more productive space, maintain maximum technical capability and execute our cost saving opportunities... We needed to have our 'fights' in the right sequence and at the outset do one or two of the very difficult things first, because if you do not, even the quick wins will not follow…We needed a big symbol very early on in the journey from a change management perspective to reset and recalibrate people's thinking… that gave everybody the 'oh shit' moment, we are going to be doing things differently now."*

> **Participant 5** *"Consultants just guided us through, so that there was a framework… but the actual day to day, we did a lot of changes with what they had solicited initially as the expert. We made our own changes from feedback*

from the floor… we took every team through that change process, asking for feedback… the experience resides with them on the floor with the day to day… operating of the plant."

Participant 6 *"I saw some level of preparation in this restructuring process, no manager was previously taught how to manage these situations."*

Despite the detailed planning processes shared by some interview participants, several participants believed that the detailed planning around the change process was insufficient.

Participant 4 believed that individuals in the change team were not adequately prepared for their role. **Participant 7** believed that change leadership did not consider the risks of changes sufficiently before implementation, and the practicality of how the operational staff were expected to balance the work priorities post change.

Participant 8 believed that planning around transition from old state to new state was not always done sufficiently making the process unnecessarily difficult – advocating for a more enhanced evaluation of change to ensure that it remains sustainable.

Participants 3 and 8 referred to insufficient consideration of the longer-term impacts of change. The resultant impact of not understanding how sustainable the change is or not executing the change management sufficiently resulting in long term negative consequences on plant reliability.

Future thinking and scenario planning by leadership was highlighted as an area that was lacking. **Participant 1** believed it was lacking prior to the change process being implemented - a longer term vision could have perhaps avoided the need for the significant organisational change. **Participant 3** believed that scenario planning is required post execution of the change initiatives to ensure that the organisation is still heading in the right direction.

Prioritisation of change processes was seen to be insufficient. **Participant 6, 11 and 12** strongly believed that other improvement areas should have been pursued more fully prior to engaging in the people restructuring process.

Table 13

Theme 10 Planning processes

Code Group: Theme – Planning processes (15)
Planning careful not to be stuck (inertia) and to move into execution
Planning for big change upfront created symbol for mindset shift
Planning for long term sustainability
Planning for short term demands and wins
Planning involved consulting, experts and internal
Planning upfront was extensive, well-planned and prioritised change efforts
Culture established towards safety helped prioritisation - too many activities
Agile - adapting approach throughout change process
Change process included action trackers for accountability
Implementation or execution is harder than strategy of change
Agility in approach to respond to subtle differences across operations
Data not organised and utilised sufficiently
Insufficient detailed planning hindered process
Insufficient planning for future thinking
Insufficient prioritisation of change processes

5.3.11 Theme 11: Kotter's eight-step model post-hoc analyses

The organisation did not adopt any specific change models when developing its own change process. However, several participants during the interview stated that, in hindsight Kotter's eight-step model was largely followed.

> **Participant 1** *"I thought that everything you spoke about happened."*

> **Participant 2** *"If you look at the eight-step model I would say seven and half out of the eight we were good."*

> **Participant 4** *"…If I looked at this model, in fact it is exactly what we did, we may not have done it exactly to the letter."*

> **Participant 5** *"I think we actually followed this model quite closely if you look at the wording."*

Several participants had a view that the organisation is still in Steps 7 and 8 and this reflected in the lower frequency count.

Table 14

Theme 11 Post-hoc analyses of Kotter's eight-step change model

Code Groups: Theme - Post-hoc analyses of Kotter's eight-step change model (9)	Frequency count
Kotter's eight-step model was largely followed	6
1 - Establish a sense of urgency	12
2 - Forming a powerful guiding coalition	11
3 - Creating a vision	12
4 - Communicating the vision	11
5 - Empowering others to act on the vision	10
6 - Planning for and creating short-term wins	13
7 - Consolidating improvements and producing still more change	6
8 - Institutionalising new approaches	5

5.3.12 Theme 12: Additional information

The purpose of this theme is to document additional information that was obtained during the interviews, but that was regarded as being out of scope of the research. The first category group was related to the influence the parent company had on the change process. The second category group related to the impact of COVID-19 on the change process.

A supportive role from the multinational parent of the organisation played an important role in ensuring that the TMT had the confidence and support to execute the changes required. By empowering the TMT, it provided the TMT with the confidence to execute its own plan.

> **Participant 10** *"The multinational parent left us alone and we were not being dictated to by outside consultants… We had done enough evaluation ourselves, we would give that plan forward and be able to follow that plan ourselves. The support from the multinational parent played a big role… A good outcome that I have not spoken about, that they trusted us to deliver and through the VPO's leadership we actually are delivering."*

The change process was disrupted by COVID-19. **Participant 3** strongly believed that given the business's increasingly VUCA context, organisations should be able to rapidly adapt to respond to such black swan events. Such incidents should not hinder the change process as organisations should be agile enough to adapt to the new norms.

> **Participant 3** *"…the plant became unstable as a result of the impacts of COVID-19 and the massive disruption."*

> **Participant 14** *"COVID-19 is really putting me back at least probably two to three months, if not more."*

Table 15

Theme 12 Additional information

Code Group: Theme – Additional information
Multinational - role of parent company in influencing change process
Change process disrupted by black swan events e.g. COVID-19

5.4 Conclusion

The thematic analysis of 15 semi-structured interviews, grouped into 12 themes, was presented above. The themes described the change process, the key factors of the organisation's change process, and a post-hoc analysis using Kotter's eight-step change model. Chapter 6 will provide a discussion of the findings and any linkages to established literature.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

The findings from interviews with 15 participants were analysed and presented in Chapter 5. Themes 1 to 2 focused on describing the change, reasons the organisation underwent the change, and the successful outcomes of the change process. Themes 3 to 10 identified factors that participants believed to be core to the change process. Theme 11 summarised the participants' view of how well the organisation followed Kotter's eight-step model and Theme 12 listed factors that participants identified but that were deemed out of scope for this study.

Chapter 6 has been organised by expanding the discussion on Theme 11 through a comparative analysis of the organisation's change process using information presented in Chapter 5. In performing the comparative analysis, the researcher extracted critical insights for the development of propositions to contribute towards the development of organisational change models.

6.2 Comparative analysis using Kotter's eight-step change model

Kotter's eight-step change model was selected in this research to understand the changes the organisation underwent and to understand factors that may have led to successful change outcomes. The comparative analysis of the organisations change process is based on the themes extracted from the interviews and a critical review of Kotter's change model. The analysis builds on the work of Appelbaum et al. (2012) and Stouten et al. (2018) to identify similarities and contentions between their findings and the findings of this case study.

6.2.1   Establishing a sense of urgency

The first step in the Kotter change model is to create a sense of urgency and includes a diagnostic of the organisation's performance. This step has been validated by Appelbaum et al. (2012) as relevant based on a review of academic literature. However, Stouten et al. (2018) subsequently concluded that the creation of a sense of urgency lacks empirical evidence and warned of the negative consequences the change step can have on the organisation. Kotter proposes that a high level of complacency and low urgency within organisations is likely to lead to change processes failing to gain the momentum needed to transform the organisation

(Kotter, 2012c). The sources of the urgency can be both internal and external to the organisation, but regardless, leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the urgency is instilled throughout the organisation. The source of complacency tends not to originate in a single area but is woven through the systems and culture of the organisation (Kotter, 2012c). While Kotter recognises the role of leadership and describes this role as one that "demands bold or even risky actions that we normally associate with good leadership" (Kotter, 2012:45), he does not delve into considering the impact that different leadership behaviours can have, based on the change context.

A review of the organisation performance

The organisation did well to establish a sense of urgency and to ensure that this was communicated throughout the entire organisation. The leadership team was mobilised, issues were tabled and shared in an open and transparent way. The leadership established new performance indicators to drive the outcomes required. While the economics of the business helped create the urgency, it was also recognised that the issues to be addressed were internal, and a new culture was necessary to ensure that the organisation could sustain its change. Most of the participants acknowledged that this step was performed, but many concluded that the sense of urgency was automatically instilled and driven by external factors.

The TMT did well to recognise that while the urgency is being created by the external factors, the underlying source of change lay in the internal complacency and culture that had been developed over years. In addition, the change occurred on the backdrop of fractious industrial relations, following a period of employee strikes the year before. The leadership therefore mobilised in a transformational leadership style with a high level of engagement, openness and transparency throughout the organisation. External experts were brought in to broker the relationship between the TMT and the organisation and provided further credibility to the change process.

Demonstrated through themes

(1) Describing the change and the reasons the organisation underwent change, (3) Leadership style during the change process, (6) Engagement processes, (9) Communication plan

Critical insight

The research performed confirms the need for the creation of a sense of urgency with a nuance that the sense of urgency should be linked to internal factors contributing to the current state of the organisation, rather than relying solely on external factors that may be beyond the control of the TMT. The identification of internal factors is not as easily determined as the external factors and may require a much deeper diagnostic phase to understand the underlying issues faced by the organisation (Stouten et al., 2018).

The researcher observes that throughout Kotter's eight-step model, little reference is made to the consideration of the leadership behaviours required for the change process to be successful. Yet Kotter (2012c), when discussing the change steps, describes numerous aspects of leadership behaviours that can enable or create resistance to the change process. The type of leadership behaviours that are best suited for each change context, some of which are discussed in Chapter 2, are beyond the scope of this research. However, it is posed that change models that do not account for leadership behaviours as an explicit step in the process are incomplete. The latter is consistent with the conclusions of contextual leadership theory that describe leadership effectiveness to be dependent on the context in which leadership occurs (Kutz, 2013; Oc, 2018; Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 2002).

6.2.2 Creating the guiding coalition

Kotter (2012c) states that creating the right team to lead the change is imperative for achieving successful change outcomes. The team members need to have the necessary mix of leadership and managerial expertise, diversity, credibility, and trust to create and implement the change effort (del Carmen Trianna et al., 2019; Kotter, 2012c; Nielsen & Nielsen, 2013). Further, it is necessary for the organisation to deal with team members who are toxic to the change efforts as they are likely to create resistance to the change at its most critical points. On leadership, Kotter (2012c) emphasises the need to differentiate between management and leadership, advocating for the organisation to strike the right balance between each. Leadership is critical for creating the vision and empowering others to act on the vision, whereas management skills are necessary to ensure the rigour of the change planning and execution (Kotter, 2012c). Appelbaum et al. (2012) concludes the change step to be largely valid, even though there has been some dispute against it in literature.

Stouten et al. (2018) also noted the lack of empirical research for the change step and found that the various organisational change models called for varying criteria in the establishment of the guiding coalition.

A review of the organisation performance

The organisation did well in creating the guiding coalition. This was demonstrated through the buy-in obtained from leadership within the ranks of the parent company, obtaining buy-in from all members of the TMT and then reorganising the organisational leadership team in order to own and deliver the change required. This was recognised by the majority of the interview participants, with many believing it to be a key factor in the success of the change process.

The effort of creating the implementation team with the right level of expertise, resourced from the operational team, also enabled the setting up the right structures for the day to day operational activities to ensure that the immediate operational demands are met, and performance sustained without issue. The organisation made use of external consultants only to bring new ideas or to structure processes, being careful not to give up ownership of the change process to external management consultants. The change vision was owned and developed by the TMT and not an external team to ensure that it connected with all employees in the organisation.

Demonstrated through themes

(5) Reconfigure organisational structure to execute change process, (10) Planning processes

Critical insight

While Kotter (2012c) recognises the need for the change process to be owned by an effective implementation team, he fails to fully account for the context within which change occurs. While organisations are being transformed, production must continue, and markets and customers must be served. Neglecting to take care of this when setting up the guiding coalition can result in the team members being distracted by their day jobs, conflicting priorities or even creating a vacuum that could result in the business being disrupted, bringing the change process to a halt. The need for multiple guiding coalitions was supported by Appelbaum et al. (2012).

The model adopted by the organisation differed from the structure envisioned by Kotter (2012c) and incorporated elements of ambidexterity. The exploration was enabled through the creation of multiple implementation teams to guide the change process, and the exploitation was through ensuring that the day to day operations are adequately managed (Mitra et al., 2019). The TMT owned the creation and communication of the vision, and the implementation teams included sponsors from the TMT.

6.2.3 Developing a vision and strategy and communicating the change vision

Kotter (2012c) states that the creation of a vision is fundamental to ensure that there is alignment throughout the organisation, and that there is a clear understanding of the direction and clarity on the goals that the organisation is pursuing. It represents a foundational step within the change process and an authoritarian leadership is likely to lead to a failure of the change initiative (Kotter, 2012c). Organisations frequently under-communicate the change strategy. Ensuring the change vision is simple and repetitive communication about it through multiple forums is key to ensuring that the vision is understood by all stakeholders in the organisation (Kotter, 2012c).

The creation and communication of the change vision are steps that have been validated as necessary to a change process by both Appelbaum et al. (2012) and Stouten et al. (2018).

A review of the organisation performance

The organisation did well in crafting a vision and cultural statement to underpin the change process. The vision was bold and inclusive, in that it highlighted the significance of the organisation within the South African context and identified a broad range of stakeholders that the organisation supports. The vision shifted the organisation towards a long-term purpose and goal. The vision statement was however not as detailed by the standard that Kotter (2012c) set out, though this was not observed to be a hinderance to the change process. This contention was supported by Appelbaum et al. (2012), who found cases where the vision itself was not as important as the execution of the vision. In keeping the vision broad and towards a greater purpose, the organisation was also able to draw acceptance of the majority of stakeholders, and mitigate the contention drawn by Stouten et al. (2018)

around developing a vision that can be accepted by different stakeholders.

Several participants viewed the leadership throughout the change process as authoritative or autocratic, but necessary to achieve the change outcomes. This is contrary to Kotter's view of only requiring transformational leadership to create a vision, buy-in and empower the change agents (Kotter, 2012c). The identified conflict is best explained through contextual leadership theory, where the TMT shifted through the change process - having adopted transformational leadership upfront but adapting to authoritative leadership to ensure that the resistors to change are dealt with decisively. The authoritative leadership style was however very prominent throughout the interview process, having left a significant impression on numerous participants.

The communication of the vision was performed extensively by the organisation, through multiple forums and modes, including direct communication from the TMT to the shop floor, to ensure the same consistent message was delivered to all employees. Despite the extensive engagement, several participants raised concerns about the consistency of the message or an understanding of the vision, while many took issue with the way that change processes were conducted or prioritised. Many of these issues were observed side effects of the power dynamics that had taken place between the TMT and employees, and the compartmentalisation of information between various actors including those within the TMT. The latter was necessary for one aspect of the change process that required strategic sensitivity but did not apply for the bulk of the changes the organisation underwent. It has been observed that the inconsistency this brought has had a lasting impact on some participants. An authoritative leadership style was found to be effective in trying to navigate through situations that contained power struggles.

Demonstrated through themes

(3) Leadership style during the change process, (4) Risk assessments, (6) Engagement processes, (9) Communication plan, (10) Planning processes

Critical insight

As stated previously, leadership behaviours are required to be adapted to the diversity, culture and context in which change is being initiated (del Carmen Trianna,

Richard, & Su, 2019; Oc, 2018). Leaders need to be able to adapt their leadership style for the situation that is presented before them and can become an important tactic to mobilise individuals, breaking comfort zones, and creating the sense of urgency that is needed to create the momentum for the change (Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 2002; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

It takes great skill for a leader to be able to shift themselves between the different contexts in which change occurred, from requiring to be authoritative and forceful, to shifting towards empowerment, listening and consultation for other change processes. The ability for leadership to move across this continuum was driven by the radical change that the organisation underwent. While many of the interview participants attributed these leadership behaviours to a single leader, other participants identified the balance that is brought through the diverse, open and challenging environment within the TMT and the broader organisation. The latter process can result in negatively impacting some individuals but was necessary to ensure that decisiveness was maintained through critical junctures in the change process and that barriers and comfort zones were removed. Kotter (2012c) calls for more direct engagement processes such as this as organisations go through an increasingly VUCA context.

6.2.4 Empowering employees for broad-based action

The biggest obstacles related to empowering employees comes from structures, skills, systems and supervisors (Kotter, 2012c). Organisational structure can create silos and reduce collaboration and employees may not have the necessary skills to take on the changed processes or the new roles expected of them (Kotter, 2012c). Systems that are not agile or not aligned to the new change vision can create an inertia to the change process. Supervisors who are have not bought-in to the change vision, or are unable to empower team members to change, become a hindrance to the change process (Kotter, 2012c). Appelbaum et al. (2012) validated the step as necessary to the change process. Stouten et al. (2018) identified three related steps: (1) "Mobilise energy for change" (2) "Empower others to act", (3) Develop and promote change-related knowledge and ability" (Stouten et al., 2018:756).

A review of the organisation performance

The organisation ensured that hinderances to the change process were removed.

The first big change was in renewing the organisational structures and reconfiguring the organisation towards a new operating model, resulting in the exit of 30% of the workforce. This act was symbolic and resulted in the disruption needed to break entrenched habits and cultures. Differences from a philosophical standpoint existed between whether this change, impacting job security and employees' remuneration, should have been done before the execution of other changes were completed. However, the strategic imperative of the organisation required for this change to be initiated first, and thus required for authoritative leadership to gear the organisation and its various stakeholders towards this outcome.

The next phase was in recruiting a significant number of shop floor employees with new skills into the organisation. The organisation ensured significant investment was made in providing these employees with the appropriate level of training to successfully assume their new role. The early structure changes led to the many individuals who were hinderances to the change process leaving the organisation. In addition, the recruitment of the new employees brought with it an opportunity for a more malleable culture change.

The organisation changed its performance metrics, simplifying them and ensuring that the metrics were aligned to the change vision. The performance metrics were made visible and communicated through multiple modes. Implementation teams were established and provided with the mandate and platform to initiate and execute change projects, guided with the sponsorship from the TMT.

Demonstrated through themes

(3) Leadership style during the change process, (4) Risk assessments, (7) Stakeholder management, (10) Planning processes

Critical insight

As organisations attempt to improve productivity, misfits and slackers begin to weigh down on the existing structures. It is imperative for the organisation to have a strong accountability structure and process to ensure that individuals who are not productive or do not match the new culture are dealt with decisively (Kotter, 2012c). Investment in training of employees is a critical element and the provision of expert support by consultants to the implementation teams to ensure adequate empowerment and

support is provided throughout the change process (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Kotter, 2012c; Stouten et al., 2018).

Strategizing the implementation of the change process, for example, by prioritising a big change upfront can have the impact of resetting the organisation and thus improve the chance of success for subsequent change processes. This is particularly evident in cases with entrenched habits and cultures. Stouten et al. (2018) found disputes between organisation change models with regards to the speed in which change is executed. The case study supports that change should be implemented at a quick pace, and that high sense of urgency will support such an outcome.

6.2.5 Generating short-term wins

The planning of short-term wins is critical to the change initiative to ensure that alignment to the end state is tested, credibility is built by the guiding coalition, and that moments to celebrate are included to refresh the energy of the change teams (Kotter, 2012c). The importance of the guiding coalition to include managerial skills is emphasised by Kotter (2012c) to ensure that the change process is adequately planned, controlled and executed to achieve the outcomes necessary. This aspect of leadership behaviour is once more discussed but not called out specifically within the eight-step change model. Appelbaum et al. (2012) and Stouten et al. (2018) validate the need for this step, however they caution that the step could result in the organisation sacrificing long-term gains over short-term ones.

A review of the organisation performance

The organisation maintained a good balance between leadership in setting the vision and in management expertise to ensure that the planning was detailed and a critical path to success determined. The setting of the vision and its execution were not necessarily performed by different individuals of the TMT. Several leaders' roles shifted between management and leadership. Where members of the TMT were lacking in the managerial aspect, they compensated by having members within the implementation team who had managerial skills. Short-term wins were celebrated with clear indication of how it fit into the longer term objectives.

Demonstrated through themes

(5) Reconfigure organisational structure to execute change process, (6) Engagement processes, (10) Planning processes

Critical insight

The resourcing of the implementation is a critical step to ensure that the right mix of skills and executive level sponsorship is obtained. While a high-level roadmap of the organisation's change journey was mapped out upfront, leadership adapted the plan and process throughout the change journey as and when planned milestones were achieved. Performance metrics incorporate long term measures such as training and learning to mitigate the consequences of short-term thinking (Stouten et al., 2018).

The organisation moved quickly from planning to execution, adopting an agile methodology of adjusting the plan and strategy as it moved through the change process. There is a continuous learning and adjusting, 'what's next?' throughout the change process. In the dynamic and rapid changing context that organisations find themselves in, setting detailed plans upfront and being unwilling to adapt will yield little benefit.

6.2.6   Consolidating gains and producing more change

Kotter (2012c) identifies a few key areas that halt change processes: the over-celebration of wins resulting in complacency settling into the organisation, the interdependencies within the system making the implementation of change complex, and the simultaneous execution of a multitude of change projects with leadership attempting to be overly involved in the change process. Applebaum et al. (2012) validates the step as necessary to keep the momentum of change. Stouten et al. (2018) refers to the need to ensure feedback processes are established to ensure that the execution plan continues to support the change.

A review of the organisation performance

The management of multiple initiatives was a key focus area for the organisation with 134 improvement projects implemented over a period of one year. This was in addition to major restructuring activity and a reconfiguring of the operating model that had taken place over the same period. The implementation of such large projects required the dedicated focus of implementation teams, with the right skill sets, and

was resourced internally. The use of experts was done to support the implementation but ensuring that the ownership of the change was never given to an external consultant.

Due to fast-changing market conditions, as the external market pressure lifted, the urgency of the change eased, requiring the organisation to find new ways to keep the pressure on the change initiative continuing. Feedback mechanisms were installed through tracking the change progress and regular presentations to the TMT to ensure that the change produced was sustained, and to allow for adjustment to the overall change plan where required.

Demonstrated through themes

(4) Risk assessments, (8) Change control descriptions, (9) Communication plan

Critical insight

Implementation teams that are empowered to deliver the change are critical when pursuing multiple change projects. It is important for the processes and the changes that are implemented to be controlled and risk assessed sufficiently to ensure that change does not result in long-term negative impacts. The negative impact of change that is not controlled through rigorous risk management practices can have devastating consequences and can result in an existential threat to the organisation. The organisation has a long history of the impact that such deviations in change practices can have on its operations. This has led to an entrenched risk-averse culture. The authoritative leadership played a key role in pushing the boundaries of this established culture but supported with the rigorous change control processes to ensure that risks are identified and mitigated.

While external market conditions provide an opportunity to generate a sense of urgency, it is important for organisations to have a strategy upfront for sustaining the momentum of the change needed, even when the pressure from external factors has lifted. These internal factors should be included in the upfront engagement processes and regularly included in the organisation's communication strategy.

6.2.7 Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Behaviours and shared values of the organisation that are not aligned with the new vision of the change process are primary reasons for why changes are not sustained

(Kotter, 2012c). The failure of leaders to become attuned with the underlying culture and take corrective steps can result in the change process unravelling, even after several years of successful outcomes. Connections between the new processes and the successful outcomes must be made to ensure that people have sufficiently bought-in to the change (Kotter, 2012c). Appelbaum et al. (2012) validates this step as important for the overall change process, advocating for adequate support to be given to change agents to sustain change processes. Stouten et al. (2018) finds limited empirical research to support this aspect of change processes but acknowledges the importance of organisations to adjusts its routines and rewards in-line with the new change initiatives.

A review of the organisation performance

The organisation regularly communicated the progress and outcomes of the change process, explaining the actions that would deliver those outcomes e.g. improving productivity is linked to shop floor employees taking back their work, and the reduction in contractor usage. The culture change began early in the change process, with a cultural statement and new behaviours communicated regularly. The new behaviours that were crafted initially were however lost in subsequent engagement processes. It is important for organisations to link the vision, cultural statement and behaviours so that they are consistent and communicated throughout the change journey.

The impact of parent company initiatives on the organisation-led initiatives can result in a significant bombardment of information on employees in the organisation. It is therefore imperative for leaders to ensure that the flow of information is controlled in order to bring focus to key areas that will positively influence the culture towards sustaining the change initiative.

Through the various engagement processes, employees were given the opportunity to reflect and contribute towards the behaviours that were needed to generate the required change, and subsequently to reflect on the behaviours that led to successful outcomes. This level of participation helps create a sense of ownership and allows for all employees to identify the tangible actions that they can undertake to participate in the change process.

Demonstrated through themes

(3) Leadership style during the change process, Engagement processes (7) Stakeholder management, (8) Change control descriptions

Critical insight

There is a limitation in contributing towards this step in the process as the organisation is still going through the change process. However, it is noted that when setting and communicating the vision and strategy, the organisation should also set and communicate new behaviours that are required of employees. This can then become a golden thread that connects to the first and last step of the change model as the organisation attempts to embed the changes. In addition, allowing employees to contribute towards the behaviours can enable further buy-in to the way forward.

6.3 Development of conceptual model using critical insights

The first part of Chapter 6 focused on unpacking Kotter's eight-step model and drawing a comparative analysis between the interviews' and themes extracted in Chapter 5. In performing the comparative analysis, the researcher was able to identify overlaps and contentions in the research findings with the existing theory and identify areas towards the contribution of organisation change model development.

Based on the above critical insights the following propositions were developed:

Table 16

Mapping of critical insights from comparative analysis to propositions

Summarised critical insight	Proposition
Leadership behaviours need to adapt to the context of the change process.	1. The adoption of contextual leadership principles is a critical element currently lacking in organisational change models.
Organisations should adopt a structure that enables exploit and explore, with the TMT holding the space of ambidexterity, allowing for multiple implementation teams in the change	2. The adoption of the right structures is critical to ensure that the organisation can play the dual role of exploit and explore.

process. Implementation teams need to be resourced with diversity, skills and a balance of leadership and managerial expertise.	
Organisations are required to develop a culture and system to ensure accountability and develop new behaviours that are required to be espoused to achieve the new vision.	3. Organisational change models need to have a well-defined set of execution steps to guide change practitioners.
Organisations should diagnose internal factors and link those to the creation of a sense of urgency.	
Agility of change process for continuous adaptation and response to new information. Move to execution space relatively quickly.	
Organisations should invest in training to ensure that employees are empowered, and that change is sustained.	
Risk management and change control processes are fundamental to ensuring that changes are sustained over the long term.	

6.3.1 The adoption of contextual leadership principles is a critical element currently lacking in organisational change models

It is accepted in literature that the effectiveness of leadership behaviours is dependent on the context in which it occurs (Kutz, 2013; Oc, 2018; Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 2002). Further, transformational leadership styles are best suited during times of change and uncertainty to ensure that constituents are onboarded and empowered to deliver the organisation's new vision (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Grin, Karadzic, & Moors, 2018; Kotter, 2012c; Page & Schoder, 2019).

However, a key finding in this case study was the strong presence of an authoritative

leadership style throughout the change process, and the fact that this leadership style was a positive contributor towards the successful change outcomes. It was also observed that, while the authoritative style presented strongly with participants, there were also strong elements of transformational leadership present. This is evidenced by the creation and communication of the organisation's vision and cultural statement, the continuous engagements by the TMT through all levels of the organisation, the openness and transparency, and the empowerment of various implementation teams in the change process.

This dynamic experience of shifting between transformative and authoritative leadership can be guided by factors such as:

- What is the type of organisation that is undergoing change e.g. manufacturing or professional services?
- What is the type of change the organisation is undergoing e.g. people or process restructure?
- What are the power dynamics at play between the various actors within the organisational change process?
- What is the cultural context within the organisation and the national culture?
- What phase of the change process is the organisation in?
- What is the level of urgency at the TMT level?

These and many more questions can become apparent during the change process and thus leads to the conclusion that leaders trained in contextual intelligence will be able to identify the impact the context presents and how best to respond (Kutz, 2013; Oc, 2018; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). It is thus proposed for leadership during organisation change to exist on a continuum with leaders skilled in being able to shift from one extreme of transformative leadership to another extreme of authoritative as the context demands. The contextual leadership behaviour continuum is represented in Figure 3.

Utilising adaptive leadership theory by Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018), it is further proposed that leadership behaviour be centred around adaptive or relational leadership behaviours. This is represented as the equilibrium state and is discussed further in Proposition 2.
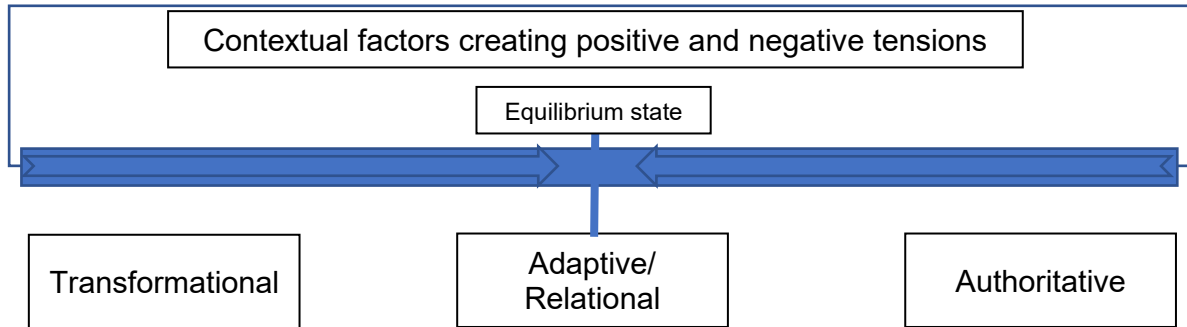
Figure 3. The contextual leadership continuum

6.3.2 The adoption of the right structures is critical to ensure that the organisation can play the dual role of exploit and explore.

Organisational change takes place in a context where the pressure for immediate operational demands remains or can be even greater. The tension that exists between the change initiatives and the operational demands can prove to hinder or create resistance to the change process. It is proposed that the ability for organisations to be able to operate with ambidexterity is a necessary part of any organisational change initiative (Mitra et al., 2019; Mom, Chang, Cholakova, & Jansen, 2019).

The organisation under study developed this ambidextrous capability by creating implementation teams from resources within the business for the change initiative that operated alongside a team that was responsible for the day to day operations. This allowed the organisation to ensure sustained and stable operations, giving the implementation teams the space to be able to focus, explore and implement changes. Deviation in production processes would inevitably have forced the TMT to allocate maximum resources towards bringing stability back to the operations and thereby delaying and potentially reversing the entire effect of the change initiative. The team structure is depicted in Figure 4.

The implementation team was empowered by the TMT through a mandate to deliver on the change initiative. The TMT played the ambidextrous role to ensure that the tensions that were created between the implementation team and the operational team were given the required space to engage in order to arrive at the most optimal outcomes. This is likened to the adaptive space as envisaged by Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018).

Operating within such a network structure can result in competing priorities and agendas, comfort zones, and simply the interconnectedness of the organisation, operating within a context that demands high performance for fast-paced change, requires leadership to continuously adapt to the situation presented. Ultimately, a network structure can only function cohesively through adaptive or relational leadership behaviours proposed by complexity leadership theory (Grin, Karadzic, & Moors, 2018; Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018). However, the role of the TMT to be able to manoeuvre between a more dogmatic leadership style to gain the momentum needed to execute change, and a transformational leadership style that empowers others is necessary.
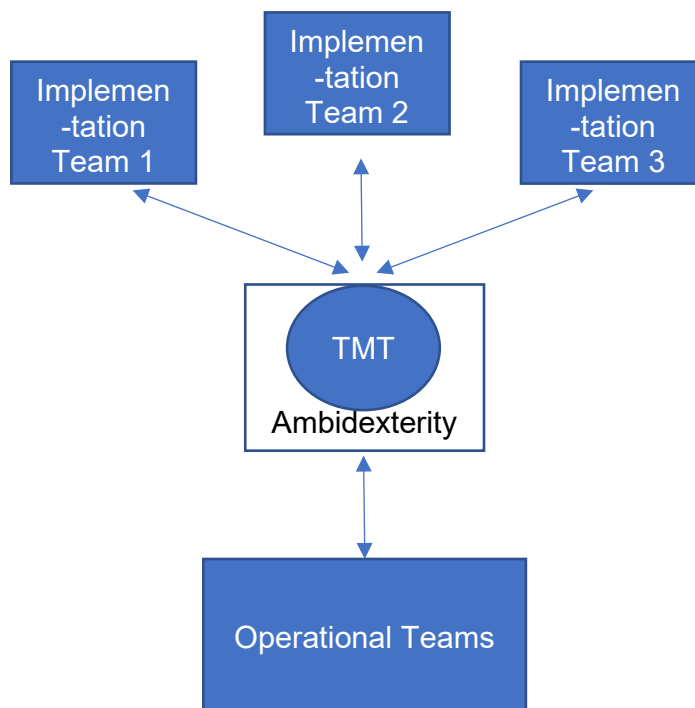
Figure 4. Organisational structure for effective implementation of change

6.3.3   Organisational change models need to have a well-defined set of execution steps to guide change practitioners

"The most critical phase of a change process is change implementation and it is evident that the masterfully originated change process fails due to its poor implementation," (Imran, Bilal, & Aslam, 2017). A key contention on why organisational change has such a high failure rate is the gap between theory and practice (Mitra et al., 2019; Woodman, 2014). Kotter's change process is elegantly packaged into an eight-step model, and through analysis of the case study it was

identified that Kotter's eight-step model was largely followed. However, several focus areas were not apparent within Kotter's model and could be enhanced for the benefit of a more practical organisational change model.

1. Planning and diagnostics

The diagnostic phase as proposed by Stouten et al. (2018) is a necessary step in the organisational process. It is proposed for the organisation to diagnose the internal factors that have contributed towards its current state of affairs, to prioritise the implementation of the change initiatives, and to establish the implementation teams with the right mix of diversity and skills, while ensuring that normal operations continue to receive the right level of attention. The organisation needs to identify internal processes that need to be strengthened to support the change initiative successfully, for example the strengthening of accountability mechanisms and performance management systems.

2. Creating a vision, cultural statement and new behaviours

The creation of a vision is no different to that proposed by Kotter (2012c). It is proposed for the organisation to add a cultural statement and new behaviours that are required to be espoused by employees of the organisation. These crafted behaviours will enable the organisation to begin a process of shifting its culture towards the new vision and needs to be tied into the sustaining phase of change in order to institutionalise new changes within the culture of the organisation.

3. Stakeholder map

The organisation underwent large-scale change across several areas, affecting multiple stakeholders. The management of such large-scale change within the South African context can have wide-ranging consequences. The identification of internal and external stakeholders that need to be managed becomes an important task as neglecting these stakeholders can result in resistance to the change initiative at a later stage.

4. Engagement and communication plan

Once the stakeholder map is developed, the organisation needs to develop a detailed engagement and communication plan targeting both internal and external

stakeholders. The plan should focus on direct engagements between leadership and stakeholders, identify ways and methods to communicate the new vision, and enable two-way communication for feedback on the change initiatives.

5. Risk assessment

The risk assessment of the overall change process will make it possible to anticipate potential negative impacts of the change process and identify resultant obstacles or resistance to change that the organisation may experience. The process will enable the organisation to proactively institute mitigations to ensure that the required outcomes are achieved.

6. Communicate the vision and establish urgency

It is proposed for the communication of the change vision to be merged with establishing the urgency. This will benefit the change process by linking the internal factors obtained through the diagnostic phase with the urgency. In addition, the organisation should use this engagement opportunity to solicit from employees the new behaviours that will be required to achieve the vision. This will empower and enable employees to be part of the change journey.

7. Develop and promote change-related knowledge and ability

This step was identified by Stouten et al. (2018) and validated by the organisation under study. The training of employees contributes towards employees feeling empowered and facilitates the sustainability of the change.

8. Establish change control and risk management processes

The organisation under study has strong risk management practices and culture. Changes executed without adequate change control can result in significant negative consequences and ultimately result in the failure of the entire change process. Executing change on a large scale generally requires risk-taking and bold leadership, attempting to do so in an organisation with an entrenched risk averse culture can result in the change initiative failing to gain the momentum required. However, by capitalising on short-term wins and utilising a robust system of change control and risk management the organisation will be able to mitigate the negative consequences that can come with change and gain the confidence to execute further changes.

6.4 Conclusion

Based on the three propositions stated above, an enhanced model for organisational change management was developed as depicted in Figure 5. The model takes into consideration contextual leadership behaviours and principles, facilitated by an ambidextrous organisation structure, with enhanced practical change steps leveraging Kotter's eight-step change model.

The model continues to adopt the three main groupings of Lewin's change model of unfreeze, moving and refreeze, but recategorized into strategy and planning, implementation and sustaining phases. It prompts the change practitioner to consider multiple aspects upfront to ensure that the change program has the right foundation on which to execute change initiatives upon. It is believed that all steps can be made applicable to change programs big or small, but the intensity in which each is performed should be adjusted accordingly.

The centre block proposes the organisational structure to be adopted in the implementation of change. The implementation team is resourced from the operational team, contains sponsorship from the TMT and external experts where applicable. The team reports to the TMT, who is responsible for ensuring that the tensions between the operational teams and the implementation teams gain the necessary space to create innovative solutions. In doing so, the TMT draws on the continuum of leadership behaviours. The outer box serves as a reminder of the continuous changing context, with the chevrons representing the positive and negative forces continuously at play.

The implementation phase prompts the change practitioner to communicate the vision and to establish the urgency linked to the internal factors that have been identified through the diagnostic phase. In addition, the consideration of the training and coaching that may be required to ensure that the change is sustained.

Lastly, in the sustaining step, the change practitioner is urged to adopt comprehensive change control practices to ensure that the change is sustained and does not present unintended consequences over the long term.

| | Strategy & planning phase (Unfreeze) | Planning & Diagnostics | Create a vision, cultural statement & behaviours | Stakeholder map | Engagement & communication plan | Risk assessment |

Continuum of leadership behaviours

| Transformative | Adaptive/ Relational | Authoritative |

Equilibrium state

Implementation Teams

Operational Teams — TMT Ambidexterity — Team 1 / Team 2 / Team 3

Contextual factors creating positive and negative tensions

Phase	Change implementation steps
Implementation (Moving)	Communicate the vision and establish urgency
	Empower others to act on the vision
	Develop and promote change-related knowledge and ability
	Plan for and create short term wins
	Consolidate improvements and produce more change
Sustaining (Refreeze)	Institutionalise new approaches
	Establish change control and risk management processes

Figure 5. Enhanced model for organisational change management. Adapted from "Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail", by J. Kotter, 2007, *Harvard business review*, 86(97), p.103.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of the research was to contribute towards the understanding of factors that lead to successful organisational change outcomes. In doing so, the research aimed to develop an enhanced organisational change model that will enable practitioners to be more successful in the implementation of change initiatives. This section provides a view of the principal conclusions, the implications for management, the limitations of the research, and some suggestions towards future research.

7.2 Principal conclusions

The study of organisational change has been extensive yet draws significant criticism for its conflicting results and the wide acceptance of change models by practitioners and managers that have not been developed from empirical research (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Appelbaum et al., 2017; Kotter, 2012a; Kuntz & Gomes, 2012; Mitra et al., 2019; Stouten et al., 2018). In addition, the significant failure rate of organisational change presents a call for academics to advance research in this field. The researcher's contribution to organisational change management began with the identification of a large South African manufacturer who had successfully undergone significant change within a short period of time.

A single case qualitative study was undertaken to understand the factors that contributed towards these successful outcomes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a cross-section of employees from the TMT to the shop floor. The diversity of stakeholders interviewed ensured that the researcher obtained a rich context, taking various perspectives into account, and included the perspectives of change agents as well as change recipients. The inclusion of change recipients' viewpoints in the study is an aspect that is called upon for researchers of organisational change (Oreg et al., 2018).

The outcome of the study is summarised through an enhanced organisational change model as depicted in Figure 5. Three propositions were developed in arriving at the conceptual model:

1. The adoption of contextual leadership principles is a critical element currently lacking in organisational change models.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in determining whether an organisational change initiative is successful or not. For leaders to be effective during organisational change, they need to adapt their behaviours to the context and situation that the change initiative presents. The case study identified that the leadership of the organisation adopted varying leadership behaviours throughout the change process - in some cases the leadership was transformational and in other cases it was authoritative. This was explained through contextual leadership theory with the researcher proposing that leadership behaviour be a tactic employed to enable and remove resistance or obstacles to the change process.

Thus, leadership behaviours placed on a continuum, with one extreme being authoritative leadership and the other extreme being transformational leadership. It is recommended for the natural 'equilibrium' state for leadership behaviour to lie within the spectrum of adaptive or relational leadership. The use of leadership style as a tactic in this form has not been considered extensively by organisational change literature.

2. The adoption of the correct structures is critical to ensure that the organisation is able to play the dual role of exploit and explore.

The organisational change process adopted by the organisation presented itself with aspects of ambidexterity, particularly in the way the organisation structured its operational and change implementation teams. The organisation deviated from the guiding coalition as envisaged by Kotter's eight-step change model by having multiple implementation teams. In addition, it was critically important for the organisation to ensure that its operations team was adequately resourced to ensure stability of the plant during the change process. Organisational change programs that fail to adequately account for the immediate pressures presented by operations are likely to encounter resistance, disruption and ultimately failure. This is an area that has not been considered extensively by organisational change literature.

3. Organisational change models need to have a well-defined set of execution steps to guide change practitioners.

The final proposition attempts to address the gap that exists between theory and practice with regards to organisational change. The researcher provides more granular and practical change steps to incorporate within organisational change models. In addition to the findings of this case study, the research incorporated key contributions of Applebaum et al. (2012) and Stouten et al. (2018) to enhance Kotter's eight-step change model. The following steps were added to the first phase of the organisational change model:

- Planning and diagnostics *(new step, Stouten et al. (2018)*
- Create a vision, cultural statement and behaviours *(adapted, Kotter, 2012c)*
- Stakeholder map *(new step)*
- Engagement and communication plan *(new step)*
- Risk assessment *(new step)*

The second phase of the organisational change model incorporated the following changes:

- Merging communication of the vision with the establishment of a sense of urgency *(combined steps, Kotter, 2012c)*
- Develop and promote change-related knowledge and ability *(new step, Stouten et al. (2018)*
- Establish change control and risk management processes *(new step)*

7.3 Implications for management and other relevant stakeholders

The research provides important constructs for the TMT and change practitioners to consider when designing and implementing change initiatives. It is hoped that the contribution towards the enhancement of organisational change models will enable the likelihood for more successful change outcomes to be achieved. The context in which change occurs together with the dynamic and heterogeneous nature of change processes make organisational change initiatives complex to implement and calls for careful consideration of the steps that must be undertaken to realise a successful outcome.

The increasingly VUCA environment in which organisations find themselves having to operate in calls for leaders of organisations to develop a competency in organisation change management to successfully navigate their organisations

through this context. The researcher calls on leaders to equip themselves and their organisations with skills of contextual intelligence and ambidexterity to enable their organisations to adapt to this environment.

Finally, the use of organisational change models suitable to the context, and practical in its guidance will enable leaders to make the right decisions, in the right sequence, balancing the needs of all stakeholders, and ensuring that the change initiative remains sustainable over the long term.

7.4 Limitations of the research

Concepts included within the conceptual model are developed from a single case and thus require further testing before the findings can be extrapolated.

The case study was performed at a large manufacturer within the South African context. The conclusions may not be applicable to organisations that do not operate within the same industry or context.

The bias of the researcher being part of the leadership team responsible for the implementation of change within the organisation under study is noted.

7.5 Suggestions for future research

The following is recommended for future research:

- In general, empirical research is required to test the many organisational change models that are widely adopted by change practitioners.
- Empirical research testing of the propositions developed by the researcher in Chapter 7 to determine the extrapolation of the findings within the industry and within other contexts.
- Empirical research on any of the proposed new steps added to the organisational change model as listed above.

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Appendix 1 Kotter's eight-step change model

EIGHT STEPS TO TRANSFORMING
YOUR ORGANIZATION

1 Establishing a Sense of Urgency
· Examining market and competitive realities
· Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities

2 Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition
· Assembling a group with enough power to lead the change effort
· Encouraging the group to work together as a team

3 Creating a Vision
· Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
· Developing strategies for achieving that vision

4 Communicating the Vision
· Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies
· Teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition

5 Empowering Others to Act on the Vision
· Getting rid of obstacles to change
· Changing systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision
· Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

6 Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins
· Planning for visible performance improvements
· Creating those improvements
· Recognizing and rewarding employees involved in the improvements

7 Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More Change
· Using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don't fit the vision
· Hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision
· Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents

8 Institutionalizing New Approaches
· Articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success
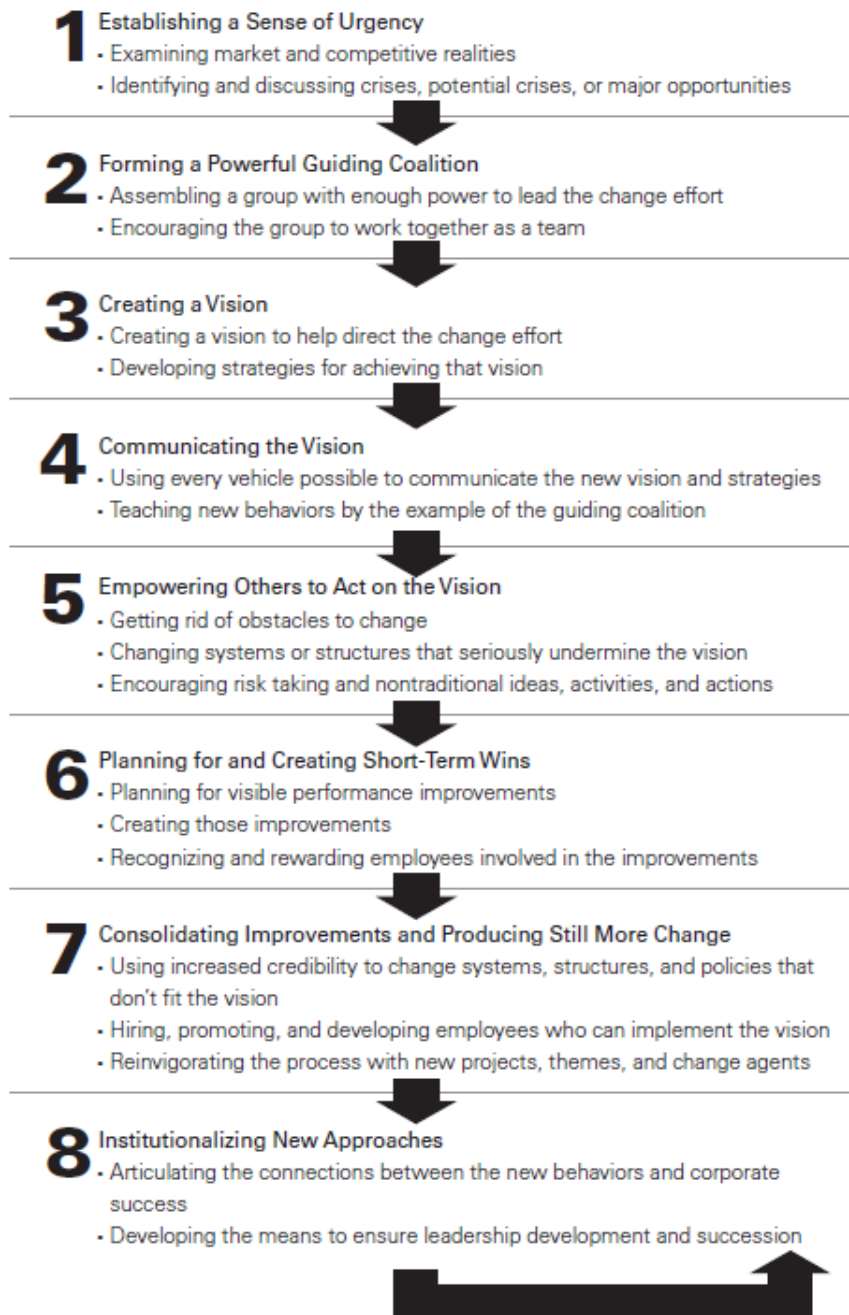· Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession

Figure 6. Kotter's eight-step change model. Printed from "Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail", by J. Kotter, 2007, *Harvard business review*, 86(97), p.103.

Appendix 2 The eight accelerators

The Eight Accelerators
The processes that enable the strategy network to function

Institutionalize strategic changes in the culture.

Build and maintain a guiding coalition.

Never let up. Keep learning from experience. Don't declare victory too soon.

CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY AROUND A SINGLE BIG OPPORTUNITY.

Formulate a strategic vision and develop change initiatives designed to capitalize on the big opportunity.

Celebrate visible, significant short-term wins.

Accelerate movement toward the vision and the opportunity by ensuring that the network removes barriers.

Communicate the vision and the strategy to create buy-in and attract a growing "volunteer army."
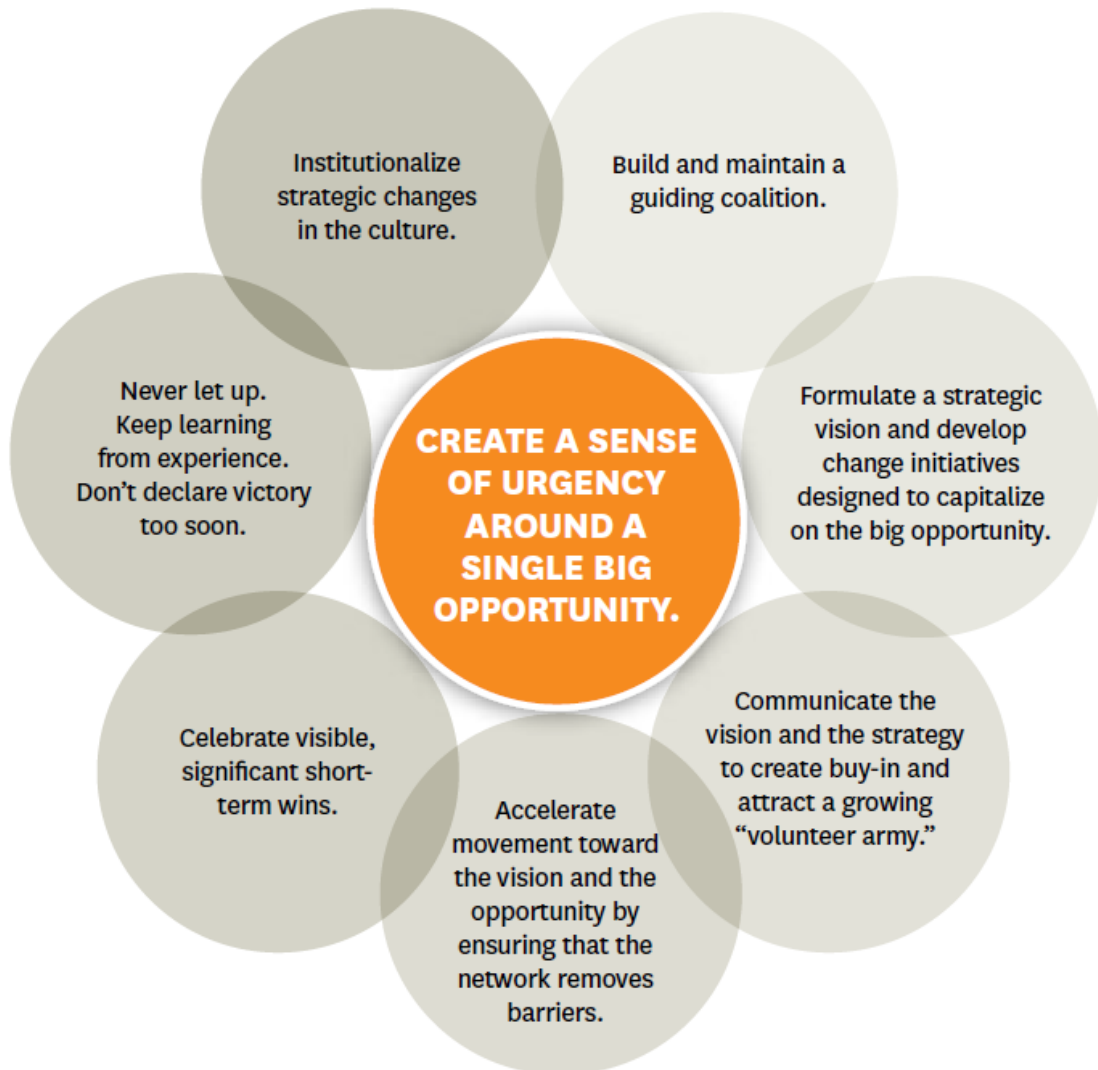
Figure 7. The eight accelerators. Printed from "Accelerate!", by J. Kotter, 2012b, *Harvard business review*, 90(11), p.44

Appendix 4: Interview schedule

I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA. I am conducting research on organisational change management and am trying to find out more about the factors that lead to successful change outcomes. Our interview is expected to last about an hour and will help us understand how South Africans experience the change process and outcomes.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be reported without identifiers. I will give you a couple of minutes to read and sign the consent letter as agreement prior to us continuing with the interview.

The timeframe under study is the period from October 2018 to December 2019 (prior to COVID-19). This encompasses the cost-out work groups, the restructure and rationalisation as well as the production technician integration.

Semi-structured Interview Questions:

1. What do you believe were the reasons for change?
2. How did you experience the change process that the organisation underwent?
3. How would you describe the outcome of the change process?
   a. What were the measure(s) of success for you?
4. What do you believe may have helped positively influence the change process?
5. What do you believe may have hindered the change process?
   (Provide interviewee with a copy of Kotter's 8-step model).
6. The Kotter 8-step model has been widely accepted as a good change management model.
   a. Walk me through which steps you believe were imperative in the change process?
   b. Are there any steps that you believe were less important or that we may have skipped in the change process? Please explain why
7. Is there something I neglected to ask you and you think I should know about, regarding what we have been discussing?

Clarifying question: Can you explain what you mean? Tell me more about ()? What is the reason for that? Conclude: Is it okay if I come back to you if I have more questions?

Appendix 5: Ethical clearance

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Talhah Patel ███████████████

Ethical Clearance Approved

MastersResearch2020 ███████████████
To: ████████████████████

8 September 2020 at 09:05

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Ethical Clearance
Approved

Dear Talhah Patel,

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.

Ethical Clearance Form

Kind Regards

Appendix 6: Consent form template

(Individual signed consent letters have been submitted separately)

<div align="center">

Master's in business administration
Informed consent letter

</div>

I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA.

I am conducting research on organisational change management and am trying to find out more about the factors that lead to successful change outcomes. Our interview is expected to last about an hour and will help us understand how South African's experience the change process and outcomes.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be reported without identifiers. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

1. I confirm that I understand what the research is about and have the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at anytime without giving a reason.
3. I agree to take part in the research.
4. I agree to my interview being recorded.
5. I agree to anonymised quotations being used in publications.

Talhah Patel   *Karl Hofmeyr*
Email ████████████████   ████████████████
Phone ████████████

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____