



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PLANNED
ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT: AN
INVESTIGATION OF A SELECTED CASE WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Cameron Maurice Visagie, declare that the contents of this dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'am/visagie', written over a horizontal line.

June 2010

Signed Date

ABSTRACT

Change has become a normal occurrence within organisations in South Africa, more so in telecommunication organisations due to the rapid technological advances. In a competitive global economy, organisations are forced to stay abreast with technological changes in order to survive. The South African telecommunication industry is no exception as global changes will ultimately result in local changes. Harker (1996: 1) maintains that “a tidal wave of change is headed towards the telecommunication industry”. He mentions that the change experienced within the telecommunications industry will transform the economic, social and political environment for nearly every person in the world. The change taking place is affected by the rapid advancement in technology and convergence of computing, communication and information. Therefore only organisations that are ready for these changes will survive.

The research was conducted in a large telecommunication organisation in South Africa (Company A) with over 20 000 employees currently employed in the organisation. Company A is embarking on organisational restructuring initiatives that will involve a number of organisational change processes. Organisational change processes may cause resistance to change as feelings of fear, uncertainty, reduced levels of trust in management and an increase in employee resignations may result (Bovey & Hede, 2001: 372, Coch & French, 1948: 512-548).

The purpose of this research was to determine the levels of employee commitment to Company A and employee perceptions of the planned organisational changes at Company A. Organisational commitment was conceptualised to include affective, normative and continuance commitment. Employee perceptions of the planned change was conceptualised to include readiness for change, resistance to change perceptions that change is personally and organisationally beneficial, perceptions of change communication and employee trust in management.

The present study utilised a combination of three intact instruments namely the Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), the Readiness for Change Questionnaire developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007: 238) and The Officer Attitude Survey developed by Durmaz (2007: 168). Organisational commitment was measured using the complete Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire and attitudes towards organisational change were measured by using a number of items selected from the Readiness for Change Questionnaire and the Officer Attitude Survey developed by Durmaz (2007: 168). The questionnaire developed for this study that comprised of the selected items from the abovementioned questionnaires was made available via a web link in an email sent to the sample. The sample consisted of 380 employees within the selected section at Company A and was completed by 30% of the sample. The sample consists of contractors, technical officers, operational managers, operational specialists and managers. In terms of the structure of Company A, these levels account for employees in the first five levels in the organisation.

Reliability analysis was conducted on all scales used in this study. In addition, factor analysis was conducted on the affective commitment scales as the reliability was low. After the factor analysis was conducted, it was found that affective commitment loaded on two scales namely Affective Commitment A and Affective Commitment B. Affective Commitment A refers to the extent to which employees either identify with or the sense of ownership towards the organisation, whereas Affective Commitment B refers to the extent to which employees feel emotionally attached to the organisation.

The results collected for this research indicate that positive correlations exist between Affective Commitment A and employee attitudes and perceptions of change. The results also suggest that higher levels of Affective Commitment A are associated with more positive perceptions of change. Lower levels of Affective Commitment B are associated with more positive perceptions of change, as the items for Affective Commitment B are negatively phrased.

The research also shows that positive correlations exist between Normative Commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions of change. This suggests that higher levels of Normative Commitment are associated with more positive perceptions of change.

No significant correlations were found between Continuance Commitment and employee attitudes towards and perceptions of change. This suggests that employee perceptions of change have no bearing on Continuance Commitment. However as the results display a moderate mean value for Continuance Commitment, an employee may still have a desire to remain with the organisation due to the cost and investment associated with leaving the organisation.

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DEDICATION

Firstly, I would like to thank God for giving me the ability to complete this dissertation. I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife Gillian Visagie, for all her patience for the period of this course, and for her constant support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my family for the sacrifices they had to make during my studies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The only constant and omnipresent happening is that of change, as change occurs everywhere and all the time (French & Bell, 1995). No one has the ability to resist change and remain the same once change occurred. Everything is subject to change. Change will occur in organisations and for whatever reason, organisations need to change in order to survive and to be effective in the ever-changing technological environment (Durmaz, 2007: 1).

The telecommunications industry in South Africa is no exception to the changes currently taking place across the globe. Harker (1996: 1) maintains that “a tidal wave of change is headed towards the telecommunications industry”. He further states that the change that will be experienced within the telecommunications industry will transform the economic, social and political environment for nearly every person in the world. This change is being initiated by the rapid advancement in technological innovation and the convergence of computing, communication and information. Only organisations that acknowledge and prepare for this revolution will survive.

When mains electricity first became generally available, many firms went out of business. The steam engine became obsolete and suppliers of gas lighting closed their doors. Digital technology represents a similar change for the telecommunications industry. Digital technology creates homogenised, easily delivered information that is instantly convertible into whatever form the user chooses. The primary factors driving this change are government, regulation, competition, technology and consumer demand (Harker, 1996: 1).

Company A, a large telecommunications organisation in South Africa, planned a massive organisational change initiative that commenced in early 2009, and rumours regarding the change initiatives began in late 2007. The organisation planned to

embark on an organisational restructuring initiative, which involved a number of organisational change processes.

As part of these change processes, the organisation sought to engage in mergers and acquisitions, partnering and outsourcing key activities. Company A is in the process of segmenting the organisation and they are doing this by dividing the organisation into smaller more strategic organisation. These smaller organisations are mobile, retail, wholesale, international and local operations (Company A, 2010). In addition to these changes, Company A is in the process of streamlining its management structure, with media reports suggesting that Company A will reduce the number of operational employees currently employed (Media Report, 2009).

Research shows that a shift from a known organisational structure to a new structure may result in resistance to change (Bovey & Hede, 2001: 372). Similarly, Coch and French (1948: 512-548) maintain that organisational change challenges the way things are done, and therefore generates feelings of fear and uncertainty. As a result, the impending change at the company left many employees with feelings of uncertainty about their futures with the company. Such uncertainty and fear can lead to increased levels of stress, reduced levels of trust between management and employees and low levels of organisational commitment that may ultimately lead to an increasing number of employee resignations (Schweiger & Denisi, 1991: 110). Employee union research documentation of Company A shows that there were approximately 1 000 resignations in the first quarter of 2008. In addition, the media reported that the organisation intends to reduce the number of contract employees. More media reports speculate that a large number of employees had already been laid off by the end of December 2009 and that additional contract employees were going to be laid off at the end of March 2010. Such reports are likely to have caused further apprehension regarding the change process at Company A, and may have resulted in a further decline in organisational commitment.

1.2. Problem statement

A number of researchers have suggested that the strongest elements resulting in the failure of organisational change initiatives include: negative employee attitudes towards and perceptions of the change, resistance towards organisational change and reduced levels of organisational commitment (Coetsee, 1999; Durmaz, 2007: 2; Dopson & Neumann, 1998: 55; Bellou, 2007: 70). While the change initiatives implemented at Company A are intended to improve efficiency and increase global competitiveness, reports suggest that emotions at Company A are running high as a result of the uncertainty about the organisation change processes. This may be largely due to the fact that change processes at Company A have not been communicated clearly to employees leaving them guessing about what may happen and how they could be affected. Given the fact that employee turnover at Company A has increased over the past couple of months, it can be deduced that organisational commitment levels are on the decline. Literature suggested that organisational change initiatives may create undesired responses such as stress, cynicism, reduced organisational commitment, denial and increased resistance to change and decreased levels of acceptance towards organisational change (Durmaz, 2007: 2; Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999: 298).

As a result, many organisational change initiatives fail in spite of the effort and money that is invested in trying to make change initiatives successful (Stanleigh, 2008: 34). Research also suggests that organisational commitment plays an important role in the extent to which employees accept organisational change (Darwish, 2000). Organisational commitment can therefore not only be described as an outcome of organisational change processes, but can also be considered a determinant of attitudes towards organisational change. According to Lau and Woodman (1995) committed employees are more likely to embrace and accept organisational change, if they perceive the change as beneficial to them.

While in the context of the present study it is assumed that voluntary turnover has increased at Company A due to the announcement of the planned changes. Due to this observation the levels of commitment may have declined as a result of perceptions towards the change. However it is beyond the scope of the present study to investigate

the direction of causality in the relationships between perceptions towards organisational change and organisational commitment. This study will instead describe the nature of the relationship, but will be limited in terms of explaining causality in either direction.

The proposed research will therefore seek to determine the relationship between attitudes towards planned organisational change and organisational commitment at Company A. As discussed earlier, turnover at Company A is on the increase. It is postulated that this may be due to declining levels of organisational commitment as a result of negative attitudes towards planned organisational change at the company.

1.3. Purpose statement

The purpose of the study is to describe the relationship between employee attitudes toward change and organisational commitment at Company A (a large telecommunications company in South Africa).

1.4. Methodology

The present study employs a quantitative research methodology in the form of a survey. To this end, a number of validated measurement instruments are used to measure levels of organisational commitment and perceptions of organisational change. Normative, Affective and Continuance commitment are measured using an instrument developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). Attitudes towards change are measured using a combination of two questionnaires developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007: 238) and Durmaz (2007: 168). The questionnaire was distributed to a specific service unit within Company A consisting of 380 employees ranging from operational employees to senior management. The population for the intended research consists of permanent employees, contract temporary employees, managers and specialists who all face the reality that the organisation will be undergoing organisational change initiatives. The questionnaire was made available to respondents via a web-based application that interfaces with an Oracle database. Respondents were asked to answer all questions individually and all employees within the specific service unit at Company A were invited to participate in the survey.

1.5. Definition of key concepts

1.5.1. Organisational change

For the purpose of this research, organisational change is defined as minor, major and transformative change that may influence an individual's choice of personal action (Bianey, Ulloa, & Adams, 2004: 146; Durmaz, 2007: 25). Minor change involves changing the employee's attitudes and behaviour without a shift in perception. Major change is referred to as behavioural change and when the employees begin to behave in the way managers desire. Transformative change is said to be accompanied by a fundamental shift in consciousness, values and perceptions (Buckley & Perkins, 1984: 4).

1.5.2. Attitudes and perceptions of organisational change

As will be shown in the literature review presented in Chapter two, attitudes and perceptions of organisational change can be conceptualised according to a number of categories. These categories include general employee attitudes towards change, readiness for change, perceptions of the change communication process, employee perceptions of training for organisational change, confidence in the change process, need for change and whether the change is perceived as organisationally and personally beneficial.

1.5.2.1. General employee attitudes towards change

Employee attitudes may be referred to as hypothetical constructs that represents an employee degree of like or dislike for an item (Bagherian, Bahaman, Asnarulkhadi & Shamsuddin 2009: 252). Elias (2009: 39) defines attitudes towards organisational change as an employee's overall positive or negative evaluative judgement of a change initiative implemented by their organisation.

Miller, Johnson and Grau (1994: 59-80) and Vakola and Nikolaou (2005: 162) suggest that positive attitudes towards organisational change are critical in preventing failure of

organisational change initiatives. They maintain that positive attitudes towards change increase employee cooperation while preventing change resistant behaviours such as hostility and a lack of cooperation with management (Miller et al, 1994: 59-80). Employees with positive attitudes toward change are less likely to leave the organisation if the pressure related to organisation change initiatives is increased (Stevens, Beyer & Trice, 1978: 383). The beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of employees are critical to implementing successful change initiatives. Unless the majority of the employees perceive that the company develops supportive organisational mechanisms to change it will be a stressful experience (McHugh, 1993). Organisational change can be received with excitement and happiness or anger and fear resulting in employee responses that may range from positive intentions to support the change to negative intentions to resist the change (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 162).

1.5.2.2.Readiness for change

Readiness for change is defined as the employees' beliefs and attitudes regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organisation's ability to successfully complete the intended change (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993: 681). Readiness for change is also viewed as a precursor to resistance or acceptance to change. If there is readiness for change in an organisation, the change effort itself will have a higher chance to succeed and the perception of readiness for change may predict the employees' level of receptivity to change (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1; Cochran, Bromley & Swando, 2002: 52).

1.5.2.3.Perceptions of change communication

An important aspect that may ensure successful implementation of organisational change initiatives is proper communication with employees. Organisational change initiatives often fail as a result of poorly-managed change communication and may result in rumours, resistance to change, the exaggeration of negative aspects of change and ultimately a crisis (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1). Organisational challenges such as leadership, empowerment, shaping organisational

culture, building effective teams and managing changes are all pivotal to communication activities (Flock, 2006: 1).

Communicating partial success and development in ongoing change initiatives may also garner more employee support for change and create positive perceptions towards the organisational change. A good strategy to overcome pessimism, and to diminish negative employee attitudes about change, is to publicise all successful change. In the same way past failures should be explained and mistakes admitted in order for management credibility to be restored and maintained (Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000: 149).

Proctor and Doukakis (2003: 270) mention that poor communication is a key driver for the development of negative feelings amongst employees when organisations embark on organisational change initiatives.

1.5.2.4. Employee perceptions of training for change

Research suggests that training employees about the change may eliminate and minimise their fear and uncertainty that is related to the organisational change process (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 163). Therefore, training for change may be defined as transference of accurate information from the change manager to employees regarding the motives, the desired outcomes and the impact of change on the employees (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 163; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

1.5.2.5. Change confidence

Change confidence is defined as the extent to which employees feel that they have or do not have the skills and the abilities to execute the tasks and activities that are associated with the implementation of the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238).

1.5.2.6. Need for change

Need for change may be defined as the extent to which employees feel that there are or are not legitimate reasons and needs for the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238).

1.5.2.7.Perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial

Perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial include the extent to which employees feel that the organisation will or will not benefit from the implementation of the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 239).

1.5.2.8.Perceptions that the change is personally beneficial

Perceptions that the change is personally beneficial includes the extent to which employees feel that that they will or will not benefit from the implementation of the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238).

1.5.3. Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is not a new concept in research pertaining to organisational behaviour and is defined as “a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a definite desire to maintain organisational membership” (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974: 604). According to Falkenburg and Schyns (2007: 709) and Meyer and Allen (1991: 67) organisational commitment consist of three elements. These elements are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

1.5.3.1.Affective commitment

Affective commitment is defined as the strength of an individual’s identification and involvement with an organisation. It is categorised by a strong belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the organisation, a willingness to put in extra effort on behalf of

the organisation and a desire to remain a member of the organisation (Maxwell & Steele, 2003: 362; Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007: 709).

1.5.3.2. Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment is defined as the commitment an employee has towards an organisation because of investments they have made in the organisation or the cost associated with leaving the organisation. Continuance commitment is developed when an employee realises that they have benefits or investments they would lose if they had to leave the organisation (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007: 709). The distinction between affective and continuance commitment is that employees who have a high affective commitment will remain with the organisation because they want to; whereas those who have a high continuance commitment will remain with the organisation because they have to (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007: 710).

1.5.3.3. Normative commitment

Finally, normative commitment is a form of commitment that is based on an individual's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007: 710). An example of normative commitment is that if an organisation is loyal to the employee or may have supported the employees' educational efforts, the employee may report higher degrees of normative commitment (Williams, 2004).

1.6. Objectives

The objective of the research is to determine whether a relationship exists between affective, continuance and normative commitment and perceptions of and attitudes towards planned organisational change. This should assist change managers to better manage the change process and will enable them to see the extent to which attitudes towards and perceptions of organisational commitment may influence organisational commitment. Researchers and change managers will therefore be able to implement processes to improve employee attitudes and perceptions of change, thereby

improving the level of employee commitment and increase the success of the change initiatives.

1.7. Research questions

The following research questions are addressed by this study:

1. What are employee perceptions of planned organisational change at Company A?
2. What are the levels of affective, normative and continuance commitment at Company A?
3. Is there a relationship between affective commitment A and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?
4. Is there a relationship between affective commitment B and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?
5. Is there a relationship between normative commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?
6. Is there a relationship between continuance commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?

1.8. Significance

Telecommunication providers globally are latching onto business models for their organisations. For the economy and the provider itself this may be an excellent move towards convergence. However, for the employees of these organisations this could be a daunting experience as telecommunication providers are embarking on organisational change initiatives that will affect employee behaviour and attitudes towards the organisation.

Little research has been conducted in South Africa regarding the relationship between organisational commitment and attitudes and perceptions of organisational change in the telecommunications industry. It is hoped that this research will contribute to this body of knowledge. The research will analyse the relationship between employee

attitudes towards change and organisational commitment within a specific business unit at Company A. By adding this research to the body of knowledge, other researchers and change managers will be able to use the research to better manage the change process. This research will enable them to see the extent to which attitudes towards organisational commitment may influence organisational commitment. Researchers and change managers will therefore be able to implement processes to improve employee attitudes and perceptions of change thereby improving the level of employee commitment and increase the success of the change initiatives.

1.9. Limitations

This research will focus on the theory pertaining to employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change and its relationship to organisational commitment. The sample will include only one department of Company A that consists of 380 employees. However the researcher is aware that the research would only be generalisable to this particular department and possibly similar departments within Company A. A company-wide survey would not be practical for the purpose of this proposal and dissertation. Furthermore this research is subject to casual limitations as the research will only describe whether a relationship exists but will not determine the direction of causality between the variables.

1.10. Chapter breakdown

Chapter two presents the literature review that will provide the reader with a good theoretical foundation of employee attitudes and perceptions of organisational change and employee commitment. In addition the literature review will deal with a conceptual model that will display the inter-relationships between variables relating to attitudes and perceptions of organisational change and variables relating to organisational commitment.

Chapter three will present the research approach and methodology used in this study. The chapter will describe the research methods applied in this study, the sample from which the data was collected, the questionnaire, questionnaire structure and

administration thereof. In addition, the data analysis methods used in this study will also be covered.

Chapter four presents the results of the survey. These include the descriptive statistics for the sample and correlations between commitment and perceptions of change.

The final chapter of the dissertation will include a discussion of the results detailed in Chapter four with the purpose of answering the research questions detailed in Chapter one of this study. The latter part of this chapter will include a summary and conclusion of the findings of this research and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The first section of this literature review includes a brief description of the intended research. This will be followed by a general overview of organisational change and a discussion of the various aspects of organisational change. The third section includes a general overview and discussion of attitudes towards change. The fourth and the fifth sections deal with organisational change communication and trust in management respectively. These sections will be followed by a discussion on training for organisational change. The sixth section deals with various aspects relating to organisational commitment. Finally, section seven will cover the relationship between organisational commitment and attitudes and perceptions of organisational change. In addition, the final section will present a conceptual model pertaining to the relationship between organisational commitment and attitudes and perceptions of organisational change.

Research examining attitudes towards change and organisational commitment has been conducted extensively internationally (Durmaz, 2007: 1). As far as could be established, little research related to these subjects has been conducted in South Africa. In a study measuring readiness for change at the Durban Institute of Technology, May and Mason (2007: 151) explored the human aspect of a merger. More recently, Louw and Jackson (2008: 29) conducted research pertaining to managing culture and change in South African organisations. They maintain that one of the key challenges in South Africa is the management of multiculturalism and the dynamics of change. Research conducted by Manetje and Martins (2009: 87) investigated the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in the South African motor industry, and maintain that organisational change initiatives may affect the level of organisational commitment within the organisation. Even less research has been conducted on organisational change and organisational commitment in the telecommunications industry in South Africa. This

phenomenon therefore merits further research on organisation commitment and attitudes towards change in the South African telecommunications industry.

2.2. Organisational change

Organisational change and components of change are discussed in this section of the literature review. The components of organisational change are as follows: communicating change initiatives, readiness for change, receptivity to change, trust in management and training for organisational change.

Change management has become a popular topic in the scientific management literature (Schraeder, 2004: 332; Gilmore, Shea, & Useem, 1997: 175). Despite this proliferation of research, many organisational change initiatives fail to achieve the desired results (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1) due to the fact that they place a large amount of strain on the both the organisation and the employees.

2.2.1.Types of organisational change

According to Durmaz (2007: 24), organisational change is categorised in a number of ways. These include minor, major, and transformative change processes.

Minor change involves the modification of an individual's mental attitudes and behaviours without a shift in perception. This type of change is said to address surface-level issues, and avoids threats to deep-seated beliefs. Through this type of change, the individual or organisation implements various change options, while remaining stable and relatively unchanged.

Major change occurs when an individual or an organisation develops a new perspective and truly begins behaving in new ways. This generally involves a high degree of ambiguity, turmoil, and chaos. As the old ways of conducting oneself or doing business are discarded, new systems and patterns are developed. This level of change involves a search for underlying causes in order to reorganise the whole system, rather than just some parts. Within a major change, a transformation may or

may not occur, depending on the readiness and willingness of the individual or the organisation.

Finally, transformative change is said to be accompanied by a fundamental shift in consciousness, values, and perceptions (Buckley & Perkins, 1984: 4). This level of change entails a profound transmutation of the prevailing vision of reality. The basic ways that an organisation or individual may respond to the environment may be altered as a result of this shift in consciousness. Transformation occurs when new meaning is successfully established in relation to the organisation's environment (Buckley & Perkins, 1984: 3). The types of change taking place at Company A include restructuring, termination of employee contracts and reorganisation of the business operation into a distinct profit centre. These can be classified as major changes which may or may not eventually result in transformation.

2.2.2. The importance of managing and communicating organisational change effectively

The manner in which change is managed is important since organisational change alters the attitudes and behaviours of employees in accordance with the objectives of the change initiatives (Durmaz, 2007: 25). An example may be when a change programme is developed to increase productivity. In such an instance, the change programme will focus on behavioural change in order to achieve the desired results. These change programmes may produce changes in the behaviour of the employees that may in turn result in the majority of employees behaving in such a way that the organisation desires. As a result, human factors are extremely important in change initiatives as the successes of organisational change initiatives are dependent on these (Durmaz, 2007: 25).

Research suggests that positive attitudes toward organisational change are critical in preventing failure of organisational change initiatives because positive attitudes toward change increase employee cooperation (Nevia, Ros & da Paz, 2005: 82). Employees with positive attitudes toward change are less likely to leave the organisation if the pressure related to organisation change initiatives are increased (Stevens, Beyer &

Trice 1978: 383). Managers' attitudes and behaviours towards change may also determine employee participation and subsequently the successful development and implementation of change initiatives (Nevia et al., 2005: 81). Efforts should be made to prevent change-resistant behaviours such as hostility and a lack of cooperation with management (Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1994: 60; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 162).

Attitudes towards change should therefore be considered and managed throughout the change process which can be divided into 3 stages (Armenakis & Harris, 2002: 169).

These stages include:

- 1)readiness for change;
- 2)adoption of change; and
- 3)institutionalisation of change.

During stage one, employees will become prepared for the organisational change and will either become supporters or detractors of the intended change initiatives. The second phase (adoption phase) is characterised by the adoption of new methods and procedures that have been implemented. Armenakis and Harris (2002: 169) mention that this phase is only a trial, or experimental, period as the employees may still reject the change implemented. The final phase, institutionalisation, encompasses an effort to maintain the adoption period and to reinforce the changes until they become internalised and accepted by the employees. These phases are represented in **Figure 2.1**.

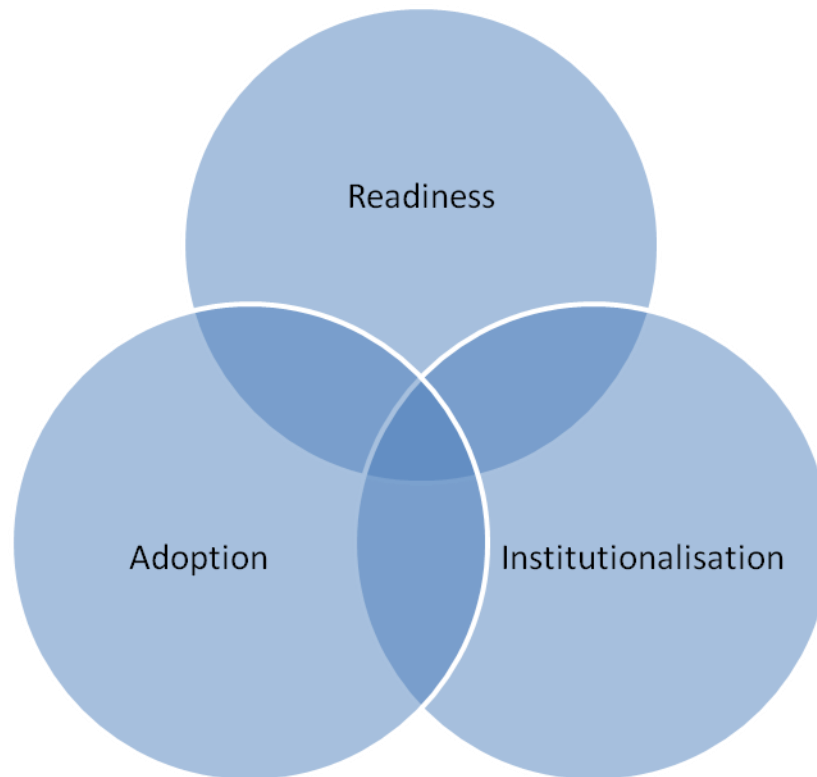


Figure 2.1: Cycles of planned organisational change

Adapted from: Armenakis & Harris (2002: 170)

Successful communication of change is crucial in coordinating these three stages. If managers are unable to persuade employees to support the change initiative, then change initiatives may fail (Fox & Amichai-Hamburger, 2001: 85). Uncertainty and mistrust toward change managers may result in resistance to change initiatives. This can however be avoided or resolved by the use of open and effective communication. Five dimensions have been identified that should be considered while preparing communication about the change. These are listed below:

- 1)the core message about the change;
- 2)how the message is packaged;
- 3)the characteristics of the change leaders;
- 4)the interaction of change leaders with the audience; and
- 5)the setting in which interaction takes place (Fox et al., 2001: 87).

In addition, employees should be provided with information about past successes and failures of change initiatives (Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000: 149). Past experience, both positive and negative, of change should also be studied and improved upon to make future change programmes better. Publishing all successful change programmes may diminish negative employee attitudes about the intended change. Furthermore, all change should be communicated clearly and timeously, no matter how big or small the change actually is (Wanous et al., 2000: 149). In the same way, past failures and mistakes should be explained and admitted in order for management to maintain credibility amongst employees (Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997: 53).

2.2.3. Attitudes towards organisational change

An attitude is referred to as a hypothetical construct representing an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing, or event (Bagherian, Bahaman, Asnarulkhadi & Shamsuddin, 2009: 252). These views are often referred to as the attitude object. In this instance the attitude object is referred to as the individuals' view of the change and is not a physical entity independent of the individual (Culbertson, 1968: 79).

Elias (2009: 39) defines attitudes towards organisational change as an employee's overall positive or negative evaluative judgement of a change initiative implemented by their organisation. Bianey, Ulloa and Adams (2004: 146) define attitudes towards change as the internal state that influences an individual's choices of personal action, or a response tendency towards the change. Attitudes towards change may be defined as certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act toward some aspect of his or her environment (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 162; Secord & Beckman, 1969: 167).

Piderit (2000: 786) maintains that attitudes towards change have three components namely: cognitive, emotional and intentional. The cognitive component refers to the individual's thoughts about the change. The emotional dimension of an attitude refers to an individual's feeling in response to the object. Is there anxiety related to the change? Does it feel like a betrayal or an opportunity? Finally, the intentional

(behavioural) component refers to the actions and intentions of the individual towards the intended change. Will the employee actively resist or support the change?

Employee attitudes towards organisational change may range from strong positive attitudes to strong negative attitudes. Change may therefore be received with happiness and excitement, or fear and anger. Furthermore, employee response may range from positive intention supporting the change, to negative intentions opposing the change (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 162). Some employees may perceive organisational change as an opportunity for growth and improvement, whereas others may perceive it as instability and risk (Cochran, Bromley & Swando, 2002: 509).

While change is implemented for positive reasons such as to maintain the competitiveness of the organisation and improving profitability, employees often respond negatively towards change and may resist the change efforts (Jones, Watson, Hobman, Bordia, Gallois & Callan, 2008: 294). Negative reactions towards change occur because change causes increased pressure, stress and uncertainty for employees (Jones et al., 2008: 294). Furthermore, uncertainty about careers, fear and anxiety, communication and new roles may all have an impact on the employee's response to change (Jones et al., 2008: 295).

Negative attitudes will be a disabling factor when trying to successfully implement change initiatives (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 162). Negative employee attitudes such as scepticism, stress, cynicism, and denial may result in the sabotage of intended change initiatives (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999: 9). Employees may feel that they may lose something of value as a result of change initiatives and may therefore reject change (Durmaz, 2007: 39).

Jones et al. (2008: 297) suggests that during organisational change, social identities may become more important, especially when the change is perceived as threatening such as in the event that the intended change involves a downsizing or restructuring exercise. Similarly, Pasmore and Woodmen, (2007: 158) maintain that an individual's reaction toward the intended change will be related to the strength of the individual's identity, importance of identity and seriousness of the threat to the identity of the

individual. Change managers should therefore establish ways to protect the individual's sense of identity as it may logically lead to reduced resistance to change. If the threat to the individual's identity is reduced, the negative reaction might be lessened. It is therefore imperative that change managers analyse issues related to the individual's identity. This should be done in order to determine ways to protect the individual's identity. An example may be to include the employees in pertaining to the change, making them feel part of the process, thereby protecting self-esteem and work-related identity. Consistently providing employees with truthful information and open communication regarding the intended change may show employees how the organisation intends to protect their identities. In addition, this may show the employees the new opportunities that may arise from the intended change initiatives (Pasmore et al., 2007: 158).

The general sentiment in change literature is that different employees at different levels of authority within the organisation have different responses towards change (Jones et al., 2008: 309). Supervisory employees may be more directly involved in the change process than non-supervisory employees and therefore possess more information about the change process. Executives are generally more concerned about the process and outcomes of the change initiative, than the emotional and attitudinal issues related to the change. Supervisory employees, on the other hand, appear more concerned about issues relating to workloads and job-related uncertainty, rendering them more negative about change initiatives when compared with executive level employees. Non-supervisory employees appear more concerned with emotional and attitudinal aspects of change. As a result, they generally show considerably more negative attitudes towards change than their executive and supervisory counterparts (Jones et al., 2008: 309).

2.2.4. Receptivity to change

Receptivity to change is defined as an interpretive, attitudinal state (both cognitive and emotional) to accept the need for the proposed change (Frahm, 2005: 17). Therefore receptivity to change includes both positive and negative feelings towards the change and includes components related to openness to change, change fatigue, change

resistance, change cynicism and change contempt. Receptivity to change is therefore an indication of the employee's willingness to accept change, and the employee's belief in the effectiveness and efficiency of the change initiative in the organisation.

During organisational change, change managers may find that employees may not have the same level of receptivity to change and new ideas as they may have. In the same way employees may not show any level of willingness to embrace new methods and procedures. Receptivity is therefore a tool that aids change managers to conduct an analysis of organisational change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999 in Durmaz, 2007: 40). Cochran et al. (2002: 511) developed three models that show how various factors relate to receptivity to organisational change. The first being a life experiences/life changes model; it incorporates employee socio-demographic and employee work experiences and the influence on their level of openness towards organisational change. These employee socio-demographic and employee work experiences include race, education, gender and years of service. In their research they make the assumption that receptivity to change will be positively related to the employee's level of education and position whilst negatively related to experience and age. However, in the findings they found that demographic variables did not have a significant effect to the level of receptivity to change.

Their second model is the employee/organisational subculture model. This model focuses on the influence of work orientations such as service work orientations, traditionalism and employee cynicism and employee receptivity on planned organisational change. They noted that employees who adhered to elements of the subculture of the organisation are the least receptive to organisational change initiatives as they may have high scores for cynicism and traditionalism. Whereas employees that have a strong social-service orientation are most receptive to organisational change. Elements of the subculture include traditionalism, employee cynicism and service-work orientations (Cochran et al., 2002: 511; Durmaz, 2007: 40).

The third model is the organisational/structural model. This model shows that employee receptivity to change is a function of employee perceptions of the level of preparedness and readiness of the organisation to engage in the intended change

processes. According to Cochran et al. (2002: 512) this model was derived from literature that shows a relationship between employee receptivity to change and their perceptions of the organisation's readiness for change. Employee readiness for change is related to adequate employee training, administrative commitment and resource distribution and reorganisation.

Receptivity to change is therefore an important precursor to effective implementation of organisational change initiatives (Cochran et al., 2002: 526). Literature suggests that receptivity was found to be a function of the degree of training employees received and of the perceived appropriateness of resource allocations during the change process (Cochran et al., 2002: 510). Further research states that for change initiatives to be successful, training and support describing the change and the impact on employees and the organisation should be provided to employees (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997; Devitsiotis, 1998; Bank, 1992; West et al., 1993 in Cochran et al., 2002: 526).

Unless the majority of the employee's perceive that the company will develop supportive organisational mechanisms to change, it will be a stressful experience.

2.2.5. Readiness for change

Levels of readiness for change are viewed as a precursor to resistance or acceptance to change. If there is readiness to change in an organisation the change effort will have a higher chance to succeed. The opposite is also true. If there is a low level of readiness for change, then the success of the planned change may be diminished (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1). Cochran et al. (2002: 520) maintain that employee readiness for change is significant when associated with receptivity to change. The perception of readiness for change may predict the employee's level of receptivity to change.

Readiness for change is the cognitive precursor to behaviours of either resistance or support for a change effort (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993; Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1). Readiness for change is reflected in the employee's beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are

needed and the organisation's ability to successfully complete the intended change (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993: 681). If employees are not ready for organisational change, conflicts between organisational leaders and members may be encountered. For the desired outcome to occur, conflicts have to be resolved so that the employee's beliefs and cognitions align with those of the organisation's management (Holt, Armenakis, Field & Harris, 2007: 234).

The state of readiness for change will have to be created within the organisation. It is therefore of critical importance that the level of readiness for change is assessed and measured prior to the change initiative being introduced (Holt et al., 2007: 234). Instruments that could be used to measure the level of readiness for change within an organisation should measure readiness from several perspectives. These could include the change process perspective, the change content perspective, the context perspective and the individual absolute perspective (Holt et al., 2007: 234). The change process includes the steps that are followed during the implementation of the intended change initiative. An example of this may be the level of employee participation permitted during the process. Organisational change content refers to the particular initiative being implemented. Context refers to the conditions and environment in which the employees function. For example, a telecommunications organisation is one in which employees may face continuous technological advancements and changes in technology but employees may not necessarily embrace this continuous change. Technological advances could be improvements in technology, the development of new and better equipment and automation of manual tasks. These changes in technology may result in organisations implementing change initiatives. The last perspective is the individual attributes of employees. For instance some employees are more inclined to favour organisational change than others.

Holt (2002: 106) identified five themes related to readiness for change. These include:

- 1) Principal support that refers to the assumptions employees make regarding their support for change that may be influenced by their leaders. Literature has shown that readiness for change is influenced by co-workers and organisational leaders (Holt, 2002: 106).

- 2) Discrepancy refers to the extent to which organisational members make assumptions regarding the change that is needed.
- 3) Personal valence (personally beneficial): the perception that members feel that there may be intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for themselves if the change is implemented.
- 4) Efficacy: the perception that organisational members feel the organisation is capable of implementing the change successfully (Holt, 2002: 109).
- 5) Appropriateness: the perception that benefits will be reaped if the change is implemented (Holt, 2002: 112).

Individuals with higher levels of readiness for change are committed and demonstrate less resistance and more supportive behaviours towards the change. Holt (2002) found that the readiness for change was the best predictor of the commitment, support, and resistance to change.

As can be seen, receptivity and readiness for change are closely related. Receptivity and readiness for change influence an employee's level of acceptance or willingness to accept change.

2.2.6. Resistance to change

Watson (1969: 488) asserts that resistance to change is a natural reaction of individuals and social systems, originating from the need for a relatively stable environment (Beenebroek & Gravenhorst, 2003: 4). Bovey and Hede (2001: 372) describe resistance to change as a normal and natural response to change as the individual is expected to move from the known to the unknown. Literature also suggests that readiness for change may pre-empt the likelihood of resistance to change; and this is a barrier in the change process that has to be overcome.

Resistance from employees is one of the most serious obstructions for the implementation of change initiatives (Beenebroek & Gravenhorst, 2003: 4; Coch & French, 1948: 512). However there is an increasing body of research that suggests that overcoming resistance is short-sighted. Resistance may not always be a negative aspect, but instead a constructive utility within change (Waddell & Sohal, 1998: 54 in

Frahm, 2005: 68). Bovey and Hede (2001 in Frahm, 2005: 68) mention that resistance is a natural part of the change process. Management should take cognisance of employee resistance to change which could lead to the failure of many change initiatives (Martin, 1975; Maurer, 1997; Spiker & Lesser, 1995; Walderse & Griffiths, 1997). Management will have to overcome the level of resistance to change, as doing so could improve the intended change initiatives. Recent literature pertaining to resistance to change suggests that employee resistance to change is being used as an excuse by managers for failure or poor implementation of change initiatives (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Piderit, 2000; Waddell & Sohal, 1998).

Resistance to change manifests itself in different ways. It can occur in the form of grievances, high employee turnover, low efficiency, restriction of output, and aggression toward management (Coch & French, 1948; Beenebroek & Gravenhorst, 2003: 5). Furthermore, expressions of resistance may alter during a change process. These could include employees who may have accommodated management breaches, becoming less committed to the organisation and they may even begin to exploit weakness in management (Hallier & James, 1997: 222). In addition, resistance to change may be associated with irrational behaviour and ideas (Bovey & Hede, 2001: 379).

2.2.7. Communicating organisational change

One of the important aspects to ensure that organisational change initiatives are implemented successfully is proper communication with employees. Poorly managed change communication could result in rumours, resistance to change, the exaggeration of negative aspects of change and ultimately a crisis (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1). Flock (2006: 1) mentions that communication is a critical issue in any aspect of corporate life and even more so in times of organisational change. Today, the most pressing organisational challenges such as leadership, empowerment, shaping organisational culture, building effective teams and managing changes, are all pivotal to communication activities (Flock, 2006: 1).

Organisational communication is dependent on how the communication process is viewed by the receiver. Communication can be in the form of a verbal message or text message. The communication process does not only involve the exchange of messages, but also the creation of new perspectives on the reality within the interaction process between actors. The primary objective of communication is the elicitation of the intended meaning (Stewart, 1966: 108).

Durmaz (2007: 49) argue that it is of critical importance to provide good communication about organisational change, since lack of communication, or poor communication, may result in an unclear purpose of the change programme. Negative employee attitudes such as cynicism and scepticism are believed to be negatively correlated with employee perceptions of the adequacy of communication concerning the intended change initiative (Durmaz, 2007: 49). It is suggested that when the level of information and communication is increased, employees level of cooperation increases and negative attitudes and resistance to change decrease (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979: 107).

Research conducted by Stanley et al. (2005 in Durmaz, 2007: 51) examined the relationship between communication and cynicism and scepticism towards change. It was found that if the reasons for change are not communicated to employees, it may have disastrous effects on the success of the change initiatives. To remedy this, it was suggested that management use alternate strategies such as identifying and using trusted employees within the organisation to communicate and convince other employees of the motives for the intended change. Their research also shows distrust concerning the motives for the intended change as a result of poor communication, is a source for resistance towards change.

As already mentioned, the change process comprises three stages, namely readiness, adoption and institutionalisation (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Change communication coordinates these three stages (Durmaz, 2007: 51) by creating readiness and motivation for the change initiatives (Armenakis & Harris, 2002).

Fox and Amichai-Hamburger (2001: 84) suggest failure of change initiatives is impacted by the inability of change managers to persuade employees to support the change initiatives. Therefore change managers should ensure that they create trusting relationships in the organisation as mistrust and uncertainty towards change managers may cause resistance to the intended change. Change managers have to make use of open and effective communication, show the benefit of change in order to reduce uncertainty and increase trust. Fox et al. (2001: 84) suggest that using emotional elements to promote organisational change initiatives are essential to the success of organisational change implementation. They mention that emotional changes affect employee emotions and are related to motivation and organisational citizenship behaviour. Emotional elements will rapidly mobilise and direct employee behaviour; therefore emotional appeals may develop the connection between the employee and the intended change. Emotional elements of persuasion could include pictures, colours, voices, music, taste, smell, atmosphere, sensation, aesthetic, analysis, information, numbers and graphs (Fox et al., 2001: 87).

Fox et al. (2001: 87) identified five issues that should be taken into consideration when preparing organisational change messages. These include the core message about the change, how the message will be packaged, the characteristics of the change manager (such as their credibility, fairness and likability), the interaction of the change manager with their audience (for example, does the change manager listen to the employees concerns, objections and do they treat the employees in a courteous manner) and the environment in which the interactions take place.

Another important aspect to the rational and emotional components of a change message is to provide employees with past achievements and failures with regards to change program. Past successes and failures of organisational change are not forgotten by the employees. Instead they should be studied and lessons should be learnt from them in order to avoid the same mistakes. (Reichers et al., 1997: 53)

Literature suggests that by communicating partial success and development in ongoing change initiatives may also garner more employee support for change. A good strategy in order to overcome pessimism and to diminish negative employee attitudes about

change is to publish all successful change (Wanous et al., 2000: 149). In the same way past failure should be explained and mistakes admitted in order for management's credibility to be restored and maintained.

2.2.8. Trust in management

Mayer and Davis, (1999: 124) define trust as a "willingness to engage in risk-taking with a focal party", while Rousseau et al. (1998: 395) define trust as a "physiological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectation of intention or behaviour of another". Willingness to assume risk is the common element in the conceptualisations of trust (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995: 724). Change processes in organisations involve both an element of risk and vulnerability. Employees who have high degrees of trust in management are therefore more likely to accept the risks and vulnerability associated with change processes.

Research maintains that employees who trust management of their respective organisations will make themselves vulnerable toward risks that may arise from the decisions and actions that management may take. As a result, it is suggested that a relationship exists between trust in management and employee attitudes towards change. Employees who trust management are more likely to react positively to organisational change initiatives that will eventually lead to acceptance of organisational change (Durmaz, 2007: 47). Conversely, if employees do not trust management, they may resist organisational change initiatives. Furthermore, trust may decrease the level of uncertainty, fears of job loss and eliminate speculation, thereby improving the success of organisational change initiatives.

Top management should note that their behaviour during the change process may either erode the employee trust or evoke feelings of trust (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989: 394). This fact implies that trust is a core factor in the evaluation of organisational change. Employees who consider management to be trustworthy may be more receptive to organisational change initiatives and hold positive attitudes towards change, thereby organisational change initiatives may be able to be implemented more effectively

without having to spend much time on dealing with issues concerning resistance to change (Albrecht, 2003: 113).

Employees are more willing to trust competent managers' decisions even in the event that the conditions may be risky or uncertain. Therefore trust in management was found to be a significant contributor towards positive employee attitudes towards planned organisational change (Durmaz, 2007: 129).

2.2.9. Change confidence

Change confidence is defined as the extent to which employees feel that they have or do not have the skills and the abilities to execute the tasks and activities that are associated with the implementation of the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238). Bandura and Adams (1977: 288) suggest that the stronger an employee's perceived change confidence is, the more active are his or her coping efforts. Employees whose confidence levels are low, or whose coping efforts cease, may resist the organisational change initiatives.

2.2.10. Need for change

Need for change may be defined as the extent to which employees feel that there are or are not legitimate reasons and needs for intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238). Bharijoo (2005: 82) mentioned that some of the reasons for the need for change may be as a result of environmental changes such as economic and market changes, technological changes, legal or political changes and the availability of recourses. Some other reasons are deficiencies in the present organisation as a result of poor organisational structure, duplication of work, poor procedures, weak management and a lack of cooperation. Change managers may therefore identify the need for change and may implement changes to solve these problems (Bharijoo, 2005: 83).

2.2.11. Perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial

Perceptions as to whether the change is organisationally beneficial are defined as the extent to which employees feel that the organisation will or will not benefit from the implementation of the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 239). Employees are more likely to be committed to organisational change initiatives if they see a potential benefit to the organisation (Erez & Kanfer, 1983; Erez et al., 1985). Employees that accept the organisation's change are more likely to engage in change-related behaviour that contributes to the success of the organisational change initiatives (Jansen, 2004). Employees who believe the change is beneficial to the organisation are more likely to support the change, whereas employees who do not believe the change is a benefit to the organisation will resist the change initiatives (Jansen & Michael, 2010: 6).

2.2.12. Perceptions that the change is personally beneficial

Perceptions that the change is personally beneficial refers to the extent to which employees feel that that they will or will not benefit from the implementation of the intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238). Organisational change initiatives that are viewed as beneficial to the employees may have a better rate of success than if employees feel that they will not benefit from the organisational change. Organisational change will affect each employee differently; there will be some who may perceive the change as beneficial while others may not view the change as beneficial. Some employees may perceive themselves in a better position than others, whilst others may perceive themselves in an unfavourable position regardless of their perception of the benefits to the organisation (Roskies, Liker & Roitman, 1988; Jansen & Michael, 2010: 6).

2.2.13. Training for organisational change

Research suggests that organisational change is stressful. As the unknown and the vagueness behind the change increases, the employee's desire to maintain the status quo also increases. Research further suggests that training employees about the

change may eliminate and minimise their fear and feelings of uncertainty (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:163).

Educating and communicating the motives behind organisational change may overcome employee resistance to change. A lack of, or inaccurate, information may produce negative attitudes towards the planned change. This may be avoided by training employees regarding the change initiatives before they are implemented, or before rumours of change and possible consequences of change begin to surface (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

Literature suggests that employees who felt they were uninformed about motives driving the change within the organisation are more likely to be cynical towards change. They suggest that employees have to be informed and educated about the necessity for the change, the progress and problems associated with ongoing change processes, and the results of such change programs. Information minimises employees' opportunities to fill in the blanks of missing information (Durmaz, 2007: 53).

To summarise, employee attitudes towards change (whether positive or negative) are influenced by a number of factors. These include readiness for and receptivity to the change process. Furthermore, the extent to which employees embrace the change process is dependent on the extent to which they trust management implementation of the change. Whether they perceive that change has been properly communicated, whether they believe that the change is personally and organisationally beneficial and whether they have received adequate training in preparation of the change. As suggested at the start of this chapter, previous research suggests that negative attitudes towards organisational change, may result in decreased levels of organisational commitment. The present research will therefore describe the relationship between levels of organisational commitment at Company A and employee factors related to perceptions of, and attitudes towards change and the change process.

2.3. Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification and involvement in an organisation (Porter et al., 1974: 3; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 163). Organisational commitment is not a new concept in research pertaining to organisational behaviour and is defined as "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership" (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974: 604). It is suggested that organisational commitment may establish an exchange relationship; meaning that employees attach themselves to an organisation in exchange for certain incentives and rewards (Mowday et al., 1982: 4; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2006: 163). When an individual joins an organisation, there are certain needs, skills and expectations that they hope to satisfy. Employees have desires to find an environment where they can use their talents and skills. If an organisation is able to meet the employee's needs and provide them with these opportunities, it is suggested that organisational commitment will be increased.

According to Falkenburg and Schyns (2007: 709) and Meyer and Allen (1991: 67) there are three kinds of organisational commitment namely: affective, continuance and normative commitment.

2.3.1. The three component model of commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1991: 67) commitment is conceptualised in three components referred to as affective, continuance and normative commitment. The common thread running through these approaches is that commitment is a psychological state that "characterises the employees relationship with the organisation and that there may be repercussions for the decision to continue or discontinue the services to the organisation".

Meyer and Allen (1991: 67) state that these types of commitment are theoretically and empirically exclusive, even though there may be an overlap between affective and

normative commitment and refers to them as components of commitment rather than types of commitment. They believe that employees may experience all the components of commitment at different levels. The psychological states reflecting these three components of commitment will develop distinctly different antecedents and have different implications for work-relevant behaviour other than turnover.

Affective, continuance, and normative commitment are best viewed as disguisable components of attitudinal commitment, meaning that employees may experience each of these psychological states to varying degrees. Some employees may feel both a strong need and a strong obligation to remain, but no desire to do so, while others might feel neither a need nor obligation but a strong desire (Brown, 2003: 30).

2.3.1.1.Affective commitment

Affective commitment is defined as an employee's emotional attachment to, relative strength of an employee's identification with, involvement, and commitment to an organisation and its goals. It is categorised by a strong belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the organisation, and a willingness to put in extra effort on behalf of the organisation and a desire to remain a member of the organisation (Maxwell & Steele, 2003: 362; Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007: 709). Work experiences that are consistent with employees' expectations and their basic needs will assist to develop affective commitment to the organisation (Stallworth 2004: 946). Therefore employees with affective commitment will maintain membership to the organisation because they see it as natural and because they want to (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 67; Falkenburg & Scyns, 2007: 709).

Antecedents of affective commitment fall into four categories namely: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics and work experiences. Personal characteristics, such as demographic information have been linked to commitment; though the relations are neither strong nor consistent (Mottaz, 1988 in Meyer & Allen, 1991: 69). However, personal dispositions such as the need for achievement, affiliation and autonomy, higher-order need strength, personal work ethic, locus of control, and central life interest in work have been found to correlate,

albeit modestly, with commitment. These correlations suggest the possibility that employees differ in their propensity to become affectively committed to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 70). Interaction with environmental factors may be another way to examine commitment. In this approach if an individual's work experiences are compatible with their personal dispositions, they should have more affective commitment than those whose work experiences are less compatible.

Relatively few studies have examined the relations between organisational characteristics and commitment, however evidence that affective commitment is related to decentralisation of decision-making and formalisation of policy and procedures does exist. It is suggested that the influence of structural characteristics on commitment is mediated by work experiences such as employee-supervisor relations, role clarity, and feelings of personal importance, that are associated with these structural characteristics. Work experience can be divided into two categories: those that satisfy the employee's need to feel comfortable in the organisation, both physically and psychologically, and those that contribute to the employee's feelings of competence in the work role (Joiner, 2006: 230).

Research conducted by Meyer and Allen (1991: 64) suggests that an employee's desire to remain with an organisation will depend on the work experiences of the employee. Employees will remain in membership to the organisation if the organisation has afforded them positive work experiences. Furthermore employees may remain in membership with the organisation as a result of the benefits of the relationship. Employees will become committed to an organisation that shares their values. Employees will therefore work towards the success of the organisation as this would be consistent with their values. Once employees develop affective commitment it is suggested that it should have an effect on employee behaviour. The behavioural change would be that the employee is more likely to exert effort and contribute to the organisation by maintaining fairness between themselves and the organisation. Employees with a high level of affective commitment will act in the interest of the organisation, even in unforeseen situations. If a common set of needs and values exist, it should be possible to identify a set of common work experiences that should contribute to the development of affective commitment.

2.3.1.2.Continuanace commitment

Continuance commitment is defined as the willingness to remain in an organisation because of awareness of personal investment and the cost associated with leaving the organisation. These personal investments could include close working relationships with co-workers, retirement investments and career investments, acquired job skills and years of services. Continuance commitment is also strengthened by a perceived lack of employment alternatives which increase the cost associated with leaving the organisation (Stallworth, 2004: 946). Employees with high degrees of continuance commitment will remain in service to the organisation because they need to (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 67; Falkenburg & Scyns, 2007: 709).

Continuance commitment refers to anything that influences employees perceptions of the cost associated with leaving an organisation. Potential costs associated with leaving the organisation may accumulate over time, without the employee being aware these cost. Hence employees may develop higher levels of continuance commitment. If an employee's skills are becoming less marketable outside the organisation when they test the market, the employee may develop continuance commitment. It is through the recognition of these costs that continuance commitment develops. Because continued employment in an organisation is a matter of necessity for the employee with high continuance commitment, the nature of the link between commitment and on-the-job behaviour is likely to be dependent upon the implications of that behaviour for employment (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 71). For example, an individual whose primary tie to the organisation is a high level of continuance commitment, may exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation if they believe continued employment requires such performance. Where employment is essentially guaranteed, however, performance may be barely acceptable (Coetzee, 2005: 3).

2.3.1.3. Normative commitment

Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment in the organisation. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organisation. Normative commitment holds the view that employees believe that remaining with the organisation is the moral and right thing to do (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 67; Stallworth, 2004: 946). An example of normative commitment is that if an organisation is loyal to the employee or may have supported the employee's educational efforts, the employee may report higher degrees of normative commitment.

Feelings of obligation to remain employed by an organisation may result from normative pressures. Socialisation experiences that may lead to normative commitment may begin with the observation and guidance of role-models and/or with the contingent use of rewards and punishment. Employers and organisations may also influence new employees by utilising socialisation experiences that communicate what the organisation expects and values.

2.3.2. Correlations of commitment

Previous research on the topic of organisational commitment has shown an association between age and levels of commitment. According to Nijof, de Jong and Beukhof (1998: 243), younger employees may display higher levels of commitment as a result of high motivation levels at the start of a career. Conversely, Boon and Arumugam (2006: 110) maintain that older employees display higher levels of organisational commitment than their younger counterparts. They further found that employees with shorter service periods display higher organisational commitment than employees that have been employed for a longer period. Gasic and Pagon (2004: 9) similarly found that older employees are generally more committed than younger employees.

Previous research has also found that levels of education can have an impact on organisational commitment. Nijof et al. (1998: 244) found that employees with higher

levels of education display higher levels of commitment towards the organisation. In contrast, Joiner and Bakalis (2006: 441) found that highly-educated employees have higher expectations of the organisation. When the organisation is unable to meet these expectations, organisational commitment suffers. The present research will therefore include the demographic variables of age and educational level.

2.3.3. The relationship between affective, continuance, and normative commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991: 67) used affective, continuance and normative commitment to capture the multi-faceted nature of organisational commitment. Of the three, affective commitment is said to be the most effective measurement of organisational commitment. Employees with high levels of affective commitment will be more motivated and will display higher levels of performance and will contribute more meaningfully to the organisation than those employees exhibiting continuance or normative commitment.

Regarding supervisory feedback; research found that with proper feedback about performance and where employees are allowed to participate in the decision-making processes, the level of affective commitment increases and is considerably stronger than continuance and normative commitment (Brown, 2003: 30-35).

The research indicates that job satisfaction is positively related to both affective and normative commitment, whereas job satisfaction is negatively related to continuance commitment. The research also revealed that affective, continuance and normative commitment are negatively related to turnover intentions. Continuance commitment had the strongest negative relationship with turnover (Brown, 2003: 32).

Research conducted by Cohen and Kirchmeyer (1995), reveals that employees who remain with the organisation because they choose to remain, displays higher involvement and enjoyment with work activities. Whereas, employees who remain with the organisation because they feel they need too, reflect less involvement and dissatisfaction with work activities.

2.3.4. Commitment and organisational change

Research into the relationship between perceptions of organisational change and organisational commitment is rich and varied. In some instances, levels of organisational commitment are said to influence perceptions of organisational change. In other instances, perceptions of organisational change are said to have an effect on levels of organisational commitment. The present study is therefore subject to causal limitations, since it only describes whether a relationship exists, but does not determine the direction of the causality between the variables. Research discussing causality between the variables will, however, be discussed below, since it will facilitate the interpretation of the findings of the present study.

People and organisations often change to improve themselves, their profitability and efficiency. Technology is a key driver of change in organisations. Company A is no exception to the constant wave of change and is one such organisation that is embarking on a change programme. However with change, various challenges could surface that may or may not affect organisational commitment and attitudes toward change.

Highly-committed employees may be more willing to accept organisational change initiatives if they perceive the change initiatives to be beneficial. Therefore highly-committed employees may also resist change if they perceive it as a threat rather than a benefit (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005: 163; Lau & Woodman, 1995: 540).

According to Kyei-Poku, (2006: 12), organisational commitment is critical when an organisation engages in organisational change activities, such as mergers and acquisitions, as committed and loyal employees will provide many benefits to the organisation that is undergoing change. Benefits may include employees putting in extra effort, serving as positive public relations representatives and going above and beyond the norm to assist the organisation in functioning effectively. It is therefore critical to maintain employee commitment during organisational change initiatives as organisations cannot afford to recruit and equip new employees to carry the organisation through the change implementation. Unfortunately, many change

initiatives are faced with employee resistance, as individuals feel threatened and afraid in the face of change (Kyei-Poku, 2006: 21). Employees may feel insecure in positions held due to the fear of losing jobs, and can therefore become less loyal and committed to the organisation.

2.4. A conceptual model

Schraeder (2004: 344) mentioned that models are valuable tools when conducting research in organisations. Organisational change is a dynamic and often chaotic process that may be characterised by a multitude of events occurring simultaneously. Shraeder (2004: 344) suggests that the use of models for assessment and diagnoses can help clarify the situation being assessed in a timely manner. In addition, models are valuable when used as planning instruments to guide organisational change initiatives.

The model developed for the present study includes all variables discussed previously that are related to perceptions of, and attitudes towards organisational change and organisational commitment. The model is displayed in **Figure 2.2** and shows the inter-relationship between the following variables relating to employee attitudes and perceptions of organisational change namely: communication, training, trust in management, readiness for change and receptivity to change.

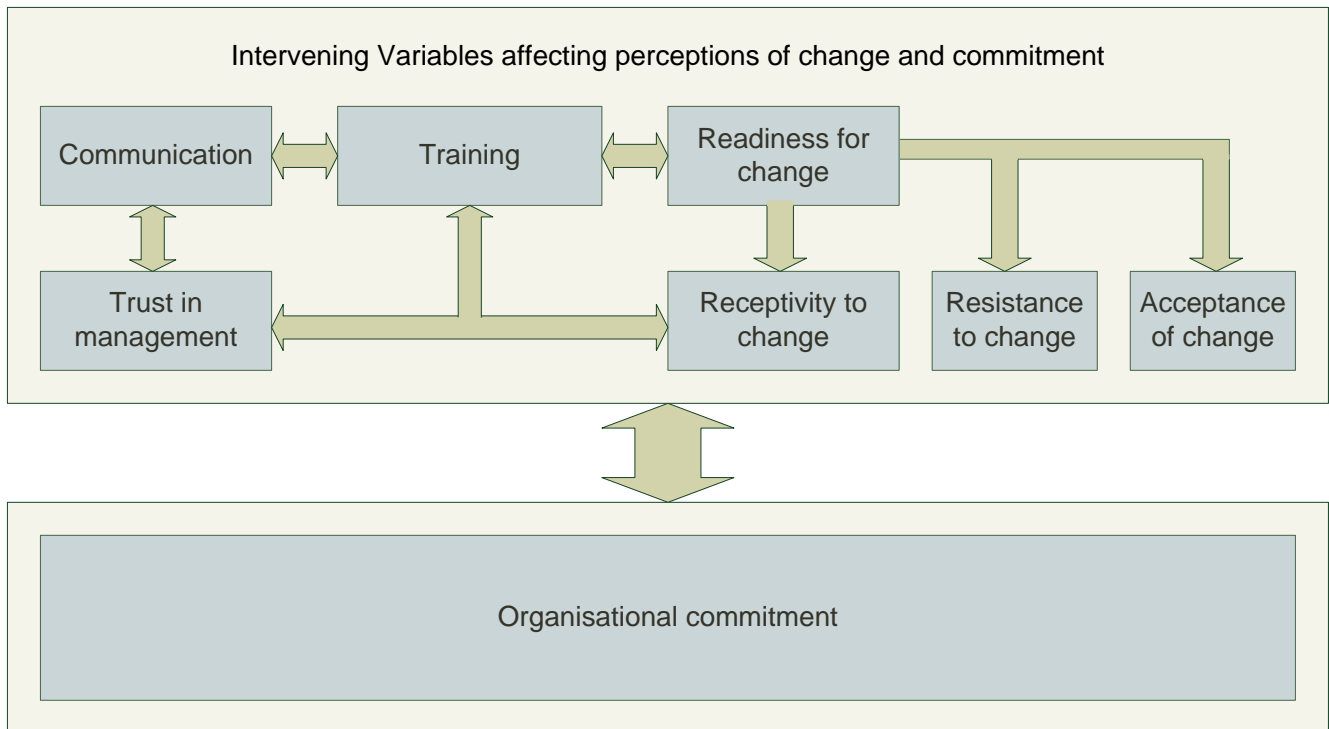


Figure 2.2: Organisational change and commitment model

In addition, the model shows that readiness for change is a precursor to receptivity to change and therefore will influence the level receptivity to change. Readiness for change will determine whether employees will resist or accept the change initiatives. **Figure 2.2** also shows that the organisational change variables have an interrelationship with organisational commitment. Perceptions of organisational change can influence organisational commitment. Similarly, levels of organisational commitment can influence how employees perceive and react to organisational change.

It should be noted, however, that this model and the causal linkages depicted in the model, will not be empirically tested using this research. The model merely provides a conceptual framework which can be used to interpret potential relationships between perceptions of organisational change and commitment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The literature review provided a theoretical foundation on organisational commitment and attitudes towards organisational change. This chapter will cover the research approach and methodology used in the present study. It will describe the research methods applied in this study, the sample from which data was collected, the questionnaire and administration thereof. The final section of this chapter will describe the data analysis methods used in this study. As mentioned in Chapter one, the aim of this research is to determine whether there is a relationship between employee attitudes towards change and organisational commitment within a South African telecommunications organisation.

In order to address the primary objectives of the research, a quantitative research methodology in the form of an electronic survey was used. The quantitative survey methodology was deemed most appropriate in the context of the present study since the relationship between quantifiable variables was assessed. To this end, a number of validated instruments, with which to measure perceptions of organisational change and organisational commitment, were utilised.

3.2. Questionnaire

3.2.1. Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire used for the present study incorporated a number of intact instruments. Organisational commitment was measured using an intact instrument called The Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). Attitudes towards organisational change were measured by utilising a number of items selected from two instruments. These instruments are the Readiness for Change Questionnaire developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007: 238) and The Officer Attitude Survey developed by Durmaz (2007: 168).

3.2.1.1.Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire

The Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1977) was used to measure organisational commitment. As mentioned in Chapter two, affective commitment measures the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. Normative commitment reflects pressures on an employee to remain with an organisation resulting from organisational socialisation, while continuance commitment refers to commitment associated with the cost that employees perceive are related to leaving the organisation. The reliability of each of these scales is good, representing a Cronbach Alpha of between 0.77 to 0.88 for affective commitment, 0.65 to 0.86 for normative commitment and 0.69 to 0.84 for continuance commitment (Fields, 2002: 51).

There are 22 items measuring affective, normative and continuance commitment. Eight items measure affective commitment, six items measure normative commitment and eight items measure continuance commitment. Each item is measured on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree".

All the items from the Affective, Normative and Continuance Questionnaire were selected as they form part of an intact instrument. The items can be viewed in Appendix B (on page 91).

3.2.1.2.Readiness for Change Questionnaire

The Readiness for Change Questionnaire developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007: 232) was tested in two organisations, with more than 900 organisational members from the public and private sector participating in the development of the instrument. The Readiness for Change Questionnaire incorporates the measurement of a number of constructs including appropriateness (discrepancy and organisational valence) having a reliability of 0.94, personal valence with a reliability of 0.66, change efficacy at a reliability of 0.82 and leadership support having a reliability of $\alpha = 0.87$

(Holt et al., 2007: 251). Self-efficacy refers to the extent to which individuals feel they do or do not have the skills or are not able to execute the tasks and activities that are associated with the implementation of the intended change process. Discrepancy refers to the extent to which an individual feels that legitimate reasons exist for the intended change. Personal valence (personally beneficial) refers to the extent to which an individual may feel that they will or will not benefit from the intended change process, while organisational valence (organisationally beneficial) refers to the extent to which the organisation will or will not benefit from the intended process. Senior leadership support refers to the extent to which one feels that the organisation leadership and management are committed to and support the intended organisational change (Holt et al., 2007: 241).

Two items from the change confidence scale, three items from the need for change, six items from the personally beneficial and six items from the organisationally beneficial scales in the readiness for change questionnaire, were incorporated into the questionnaire used in this study. These items were selected as they were found to be the most suitable for the purpose of this research. The items selected from the Readiness for Change Questionnaire best suited the intention of this research are listed in Appendix B (on page 91).

3.2.1.3. Officer Attitude Survey

This instrument was utilised by Durmaz (2007: 170) to measure officer attitudes towards organisational change in the Turkish National Police Force. A pilot study with 34 officers was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The survey comprises a number of scales, including: officer attitudes towards change, receptivity to change, readiness for change, trust in management, communication of organisational change and training for organisational change. Reliability coefficients from the pilot study display good internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha for officer attitudes towards organisational change is 0.74, receptivity to change is 0.77, readiness for change is 0.76, commitment to the organisation is 0.78, trust in

management stands at 0.74, and communication of organisational change is 0.82. The training for change scale presents a reliability of 0.74.

The items selected from this survey are repeated in Appendix B (on page 91), and were selected as they best suited the intention of this research.

The scales utilised in the questionnaire developed for this study included a number of items from the scales in the Officer Attitude Survey.

The final questionnaire consists of 55 items, with additional items used to collect demographic information such as age, gender, position, Employment Equity (EE) status, income band and level of education. The Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment Questionnaire used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (Fields, 2002: 51). A 5-point Likert scale was utilised in the questionnaire measuring attitudes towards organisational change. The questionnaire took between 5 and 8 minutes to complete. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix A (on page 86).

3.2.2. Questionnaire administration

Permission to conduct the research was requested via a request for information template accessible via the human resource management portal on the organisations intranet. This was a lengthy process that started in November 2008. The final letter of approval was eventually received in August 2009 from the Chief of Human Resource Management at Company A. However in December 2008, prior to receiving the official documentation, the researcher received email approval from the executive of the service organisation from which the sample was selected. An email confirmation and an approved request for information has been received from Company A.

The questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher’s supervisor and a statistician from the university. The final amendments were then made to the questionnaire. Once these changes were made, the questionnaire was distributed to all 380 employees via a web link in an email, see Appendix A (on page 86) for a copy of the letter. An email was

sent to all respondents within the selected service organisation notifying them of the questionnaire and the intended research. In this email respondents were informed that the questionnaire is confidential and that no employee identification data will be stored – guaranteeing confidentiality. The email also advised employees that the questionnaire would be available for two weeks from the date of receiving the email notification. In addition to sending the initial email, reminders were sent every second day in order to ensure maximum responses. They enable the researcher to make use of large sample sizes and provide the ability to select and target specific respondents (Rogers International, 2008). In addition to these advantages they can be distributed to a large group of potential respondents relatively quickly by means of an email. Accessibility to the internet was overcome by storing the questionnaire on the internal company network (intranet). Each employee of Company A has access to the intranet making the distribution and accessibility easier than if the questionnaire had to be distributed via the internet.

Once the questionnaire was completed by the closing date, the data was exported to Excel and imported to SPSS and deleted from the server at Company A on which the questionnaire was hosted.

3.3 The sample

The questionnaire was completed by 113 respondents, with two responses partially completed, representing a response rate of 30% ($113/380 \times 100$). 62.8% of the respondents are male and 37.2% are female. The sample consists of contractors, technical officers, operational managers, operational specialists and managers. In terms of the structure of Company A, these levels account for employees in the first five levels in the organisation. No senior managers, or executives, completed the survey though there were a number of them included in the sample. The most likely reason for senior managers and executives not completing the survey may be as a result of work pressures and they may not have wanted to divulge their personal and demographic information.

3.3.1 Description of the sample

3.3.1.1 Demographic information

The demographic indicators consist of the following items: age, gender, employment equity status, income group, number of children, position, qualification and section in which employed.

Table 3.1 displays the mean, median, standard deviation, minimum and maximum age of the respondents in this study.

Table 3.1: Age of the respondents (n = 113)

N	Valid	113
	Missing	0
Mean		35.89
Median		34.00
Std. Deviation		9.79
Minimum		22
Maximum		56

The youngest respondent that participated in the research is 22 years old, while the oldest respondent is 56 years old. The mean age of the respondents is 35.89 (SD = 9.79) years. The average age of employees at Company A is 36 years old and it can therefore be concluded that the sample mean age is representative of the average age of employees at Company A.

Figure 3.1 displays the gender profile of the sample.

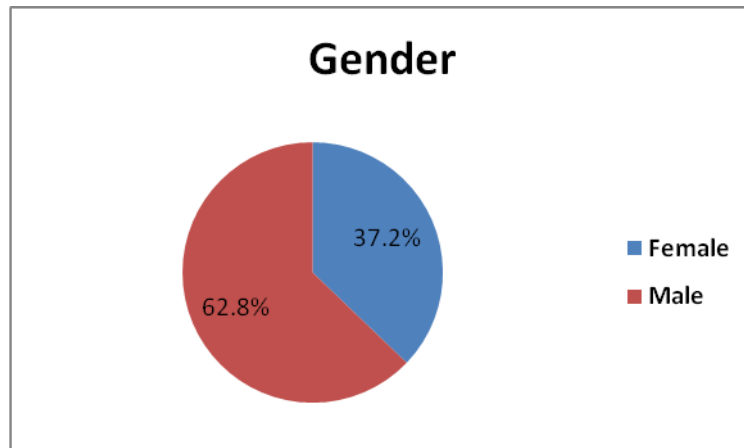


Figure 3.1: Gender spread within the sample (n = 113)

The sample comprises of 42 females and 71 males; translated into 37.2% and 62.8% respectively. This indicates that the sample is predominantly male.

The Employment Equity (EE) status as shown in **Figure 3.2** indicates that the majority of employees are coloured (54%), followed by white (19%), black (16.8%), and Indian (6.2%) respondents. Other and non-responses accounted for 3.6% cumulatively.

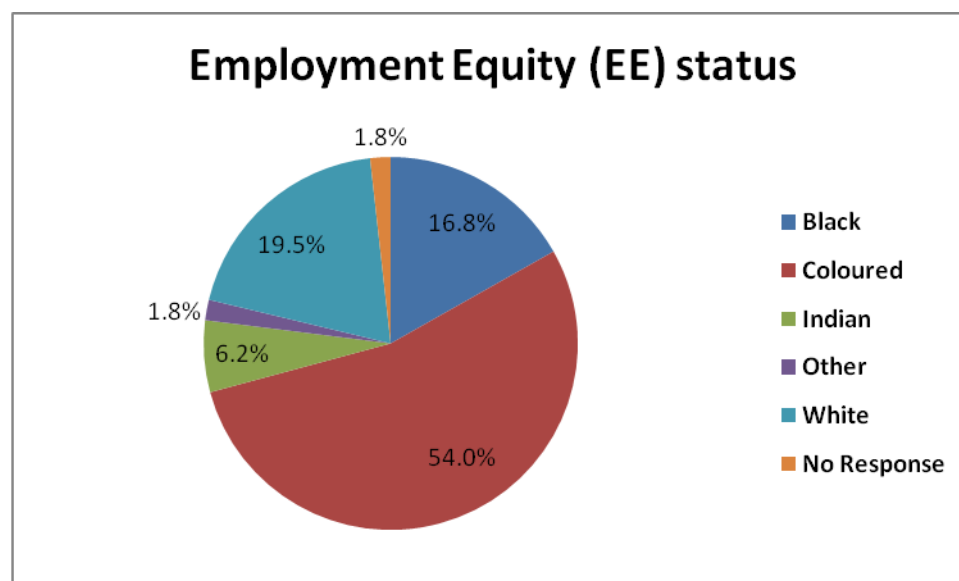


Figure 3.2: Employment Equity (EE) status (n = 113)

Figure 3.3 displays the educational level of the sample.

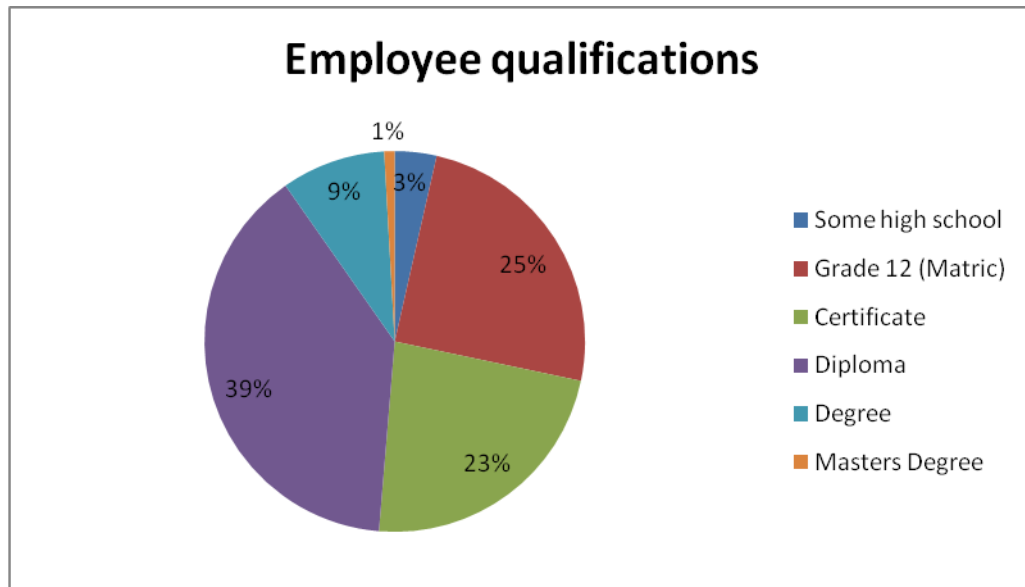


Figure 3.3: Employee educational qualifications (n = 113)

The majority of the sample consists of employees in possession of a diploma (39%), followed by a Grade 12 (matric) (25%) and a post-school certificate (23%). An interesting observation is that a number of respondents do not have a Grade 12 (matric) qualification (3%), given the fact that the company is a leading telecommunications organisation with the minimum qualification being a Grade 12 (matric) qualification. It would have been expected that these employees would have been aided and coached to at least obtain the minimum education criteria.

Table 3.2 displays the composition of the number of employees per position for the sample used in this study.

Table 3.2: Frequency of positions (n = 113)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Contractor	25	22.1	22.1
Manager	10	8.8	31
Ops. Manager	9	8	38.9
Ops. Specialist	8	7.1	46
Technical Officer	61	54	100
Total	113	100	

Seventy six percent of the employees were contractors and technical officers, while 24% held positions in the operational manager/specialist and management levels.

The incomes of these groups of employees are displayed in **Figure 3.4**. The difference between the maximum income of the lowest-paid employee and the minimum of the highest-paid employee in this sample is R25 000.00 per month. According to the sample, there appears to be a big disparity in the salary scales of employees at Company A.

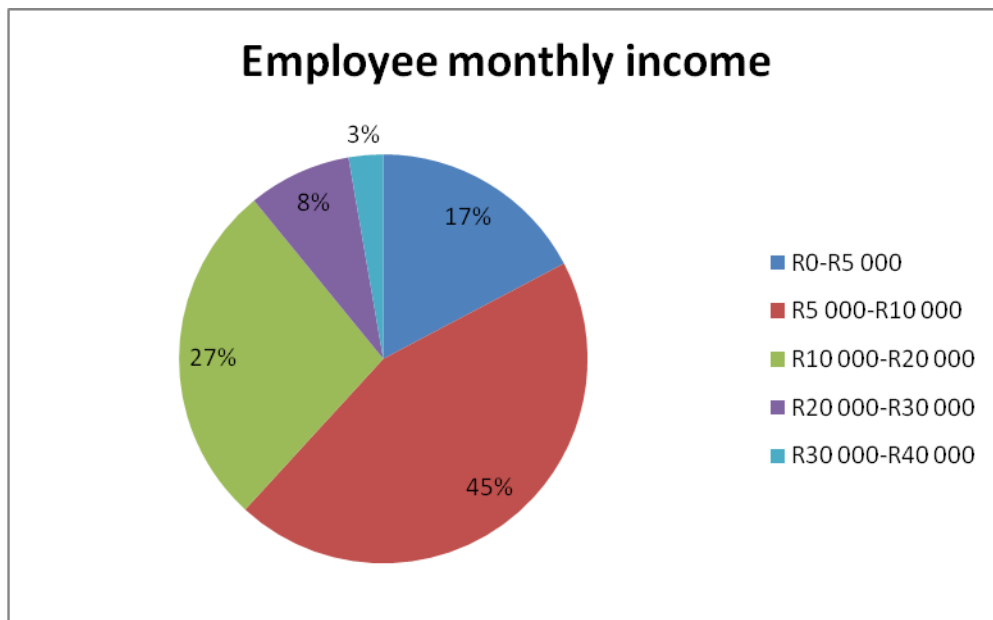


Figure 3.4: Monthly incomes of sample (n = 113)

3.4 Reliability of scales

Hair, Bush and Ortinau, (2006) describe factor analysis as an independence technique, its primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in an analysis. Factor analysis is a method by which the reliability and order in phenomena can be discerned. As phenomena co-occur in space or in time, they are patterned. Because these co-occurring phenomena are independent of each other, one is able to identify a number of distinct patterns (Rummel, 2002).

Factor analysis was conducted in order to determine the constructs underlying the individual items used in the questionnaire. Although the items used in the questionnaire were obtained from validated research instruments, it is still necessary to conduct factor analysis to determine whether the factor structure of the present sample corresponds to the factor structure of the original instrument, the items measure appropriate underlying constructs in the present sample. Items were retained if they loaded >0.25 without significant cross loadings. Internal consistency of each of the scales was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. A Cronbach's Alpha of greater than 0.6 was regarded as sufficient.

3.4.1 Factor analysis and Reliability of Commitment scales

The reliability of the affective commitment scales comprises namely: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7 and A8 was tested using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. As indicated in **Table 3.3**, the result for the reliability test was low at 0.211, suggesting that the items that form the scales may not load onto a single factor.

Table 3.3: Reliability of the affective commitment scale (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.211	8

Principal component analysis using Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation was conducted on all affective commitment items. The factor analysis resulted in two factors comprising four items each. From the results two new scales were constructed namely Affective Commitment A and Affective Commitment B. The rotated component matrix is displayed in **Table 3.4**. Items comprising of Affective Commitment A are A1, A2, A3 and A7. Items for Affective commitment B are A4, A5, A6 and A8.

Table 3.4: Rotated component matrix affective commitment items (n = 113)

	Component	
	A	B
A1 – I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organisation.	0.771	
A2 – I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it.	0.736	
A3 – I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.	0.785	
A4 – I think I could easily become attached to another organisation as I am to this one.		0.552
A5 – I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.	-0.303	0.697
A6 – I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.	-0.334	0.780
A7 – This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	0.0561	-0.418
A8 – I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.		0.792

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

The reliability of Affective Commitment A was tested and it showed high reliability with a Cronbach Alpha being 0.743 and is indicated in **Table 3.5** and the items used to construct this scale are listed in **Table 3.6**. Affective Commitment A refers to the extent of ownership that the employees may have towards the organisation. Although Affective

Commitment A refers to ownership, this research is measuring commitment. The items in this scale are phrased in such a way that it refers to the ownership/identification part of affective commitment as per the definition of affective commitment mentioned in Chapter two.

Table 3.5: Reliability of Affective Commitment A (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.743	4

Table 3.6: Items for Affective Commitment A

A1 – I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organisation.
A2 – I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it.
A3 – I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.
A7 – This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Next, the reliability of Affective Commitment B was tested and it also showed a high reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.723 as indicated in **Table 3.7**. The items included in this scale are listed in **Table 3.8**. The items comprising of Affective Commitment B are reverse-coded and therefore lower scores on Affective Commitment B indicate higher levels of affective commitment.

Table 3.7: Reliability of Affective Commitment B (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.723	4

Table 3.8: Items for Affective Commitment B

A4 – I think I could easily become attached to another organisation as I am to this one.
A5 – I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.
A6 – I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.
A8 – I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.

The reliability coefficient for the Normative Commitment scale is reflected in **Table 3.9** and indicates an acceptable reliability. Items incorporated in this scales are reflected in **Table 3.10**. Affective Commitment B refers to the extent to which employees feel emotionally attached to the organisation. Although Affective Commitment B refers to the level of emotional attachment, this research is measuring affective commitment. The items are phrased in a way that it refers to the emotional attachment component of affective commitment as per the definition of affective commitment mentioned in Chapter two.

Table 3.9: Reliability for Normative Commitment (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.604	6

Table 3.10: Items for Normative Commitment scale

A9 – I owe a great deal to this organisation.
A10 – I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people of it.
A11 – This organisation deserves my loyalty.
A12 – I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.
A13 – I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.
A14 – Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave the organisation.

Next the reliability of the Continuance Commitment scales was tested and displayed adequate reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.674 as shown in **Table 3.11**.

Table 3.11: Reliability for Continuance Commitment (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.674	8

Continuance commitment items for the Continuance Commitment scale as identified by Meyer and Allen (1997) is listed below in **Table 3.12**.

Table 3.12: Items used for Continuance Commitment scale

A15 – Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.
A16 – It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.
A17 – I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.
A18 – One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
A19 – I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.
A20 – Right now staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
A21 – It would be too costly for me to leave my organisation right now.
A22 – One of the major reasons I continued to work for this organisation is that leaving would require a considerable amount of personal sacrifice – another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here.

3.4.2 Reliability of perceptions of change scales

Next, the reliability of perceptions of organisational change was tested and displayed an average reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.544, as listed in **Table 3.13**.

Table 3.13: Cronbach Alpha statistics for attitude towards organisational change (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.544	2

Organisational change items are listed below in **Table 3.14**. These items were identified by Durmaz (2007).

Table 3.14: Items for attitude towards organisational change

A23 – Most of the initiatives that are supposed to solve problems in this organisation do not do much good.
A24 – I am quite confident the organisational change initiatives will have the desired effect in my organisation.

Next, the reliability of the readiness for change scale was tested. The scale displayed a good reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.702 as displayed in **Table 3.15**.

Table 3.15: Cronbach Alpha statistics for readiness for change (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.702	4

The items listed below in **Table 3.16** are related to readiness for change as identified by Durmaz (2007).

Table 3.16: Items for readiness for change

A27 – Organisational changes improve our organisation’s overall efficiency.
A28 – Our senior managers encourage all of us to embrace organisational changes.
A29 – My managers are committed to making the change effort a success.
A30 – My colleagues support organisational change efforts.

The reliability of the perceptions of communication of organisational change was tested and displayed a high reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.744 as shown in **Table 3.17**.

Table 3.17: Reliability statistics for perceptions of change communication (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.744	3

Table 3.18 lists the items for the perceptions of change communication scale.

Table 3.18: Items for perceptions of change communication

A32 – I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about the changes in my organisation.
A33 – I know how to access necessary information (i.e. competent department/staff, internal phone number or internet address) about the changes in my organisation.
A34 – I believe that the information transmitted about the changes in this organisation explains why change is needed.

Next, perceptions of training for organisational change were tested and a good internal consistency with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.723 was displayed. These statistics are listed in **Table 3.19**.

Table 3.19: Reliability statistics for training for organisational change (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.723	2

Table 3.20 lists the items for the training for organisational change scale.

Table 3.20: Items for training for organisational change

A35 – This organisation's head office arranges seminars or workshops in order to train personnel about the changes in this organisation.
A36 – I consider myself adequately trained about the changes in this organisation.

Two items made up the Change Confidence scale. This scale was tested and displayed a low reliability with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.277 as shown in **Table 3.21**. As a result of this poor reliability coefficient, this scale will not be used for further analysis.

Table 3.21: Reliability statistics for change confidence (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.277	2

The items for change confidence are listed below in **Table 3.22**.

Table 3.22: Items for change confidence

A37 – I am intimidated by all the tasks I will have to learn because of this change.
A38 – I do not anticipate any problems adjusting to the work I will have when this change is adopted.

The items that comprise the need for change scale were tested and displayed a Cronbach Alpha of 0.455 suggested an inadequate reliability (**Table 3.23**). This scale consists of three items as shown in **Table 3.24**, but will not be used for further analysis due to the low reliability coefficient.

Table 3.23: Reliability statistics for need for change (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.455	3

Table 3.24 below, lists the items for the need for change.

Table 3.24: Items for need for change

A39 – There are legitimate reasons for us to make this change.
A40 – No one has explained the reason why the intended changes must take place.
A41 – I am suspicious about the reason for the change initiatives to take place

The six items of the personally beneficial (personal valance) were tested and showed an acceptable Cronbach Alpha of 0.624 displayed in **Table 3.25**.

Table 3.25: Reliability statistics for personally beneficial (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.624	6

Table 3.26: Items for personally beneficial

A42 – When this change is implemented, I envision financial benefits coming my way.
A43 – This change will disrupt many of the personal relationships I have developed.
A44 – The prospective change will give me new career opportunities.
A45 – When this change is implemented, I don't believe there is anything for me to gain.
A48 – My future in this job will be limited because of the intended changes.
A49 – The intended change makes me question my future employment with this organisation.

Perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial showed a high reliability with the Cronbach Alpha being 0.749 as shown in **Table 3.27**.

Table 3.27: Reliability statistics for organisationally beneficial (n = 113)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.749	6

Table 3.28: Items for organisationally beneficial (n = 113)

A50 – I think the organisation will benefit from this change.
A51 – The organisation is going to be more productive when we implement this change.
A52 – When the intended change is adopted, we will be better equipped to meet our customers' needs.
A53 – This change will improve our organisation's overall efficiency.
A54 – This organisation will lose some valuable assets when we adopt this change.
A55 – The intended change matches the priorities of our organisation.

The next chapter will present the data analysis of the data pertaining to this study.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The primary objective of the research is to determine whether relationships exist between the various forms of organisational commitment and perceptions of organisational change. To this end, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are employee perceptions of planned organisational change at Company A?
2. What are the levels of affective, normative and continuance commitment at Company A?
3. Is there a relationship between affective commitment A and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?
4. Is there a relationship between affective commitment B and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?
5. Is there a relationship between normative commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?
6. Is there a relationship between continuance commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?

The present chapter documents the correlations between organisational commitment and perceptions of change and includes descriptive statistics representing the sample means for commitment and perceptions of change scales. Correlations are regarded as statistically significant and practically relevant when $r \geq 0.25$ and $p < 0.05$.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

This section will cover the descriptive statistics for the sample. Descriptive statistics covered in the research are that of the commitment scales and perceptions of change scales. Commitment scales include affective, normative and continuance commitment. Descriptive statistics relating to perception of change include general employee attitudes towards organisational change, perceptions of the change communication,

readiness for change, perceptions of training for change, perceptions whether the change is organisationally beneficial and personally beneficial.

4.2.1 Levels of organisational commitment at Company A

The commitment items in the questionnaire made use of a 7-point Likert scale; therefore the middle category (4) indicates a moderate response to the question.

As indicated in **Table 4.1**, sample means for Affective Commitment A (Mean = 4.7, SD = 1.259), Normative Commitment (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.993) and Continuous Commitment (Mean = 4.2, SD = 0.907) indicate that respondents generally display moderate levels of commitment to the organisation. Levels of Affective Commitment B are lower, with a mean score 3.88 (SD = 1.273). These findings suggest that respondents display moderate emotional attachment to the organisation and that they generally have a desire to remain with the organisation.

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for commitment items (n = 113)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Affective Commitment A	113	1	7	4.7	1.259	1.58
Affective Commitment B	113	1	7	3.88	1.273	1.62
Normative Commitment	113	1	6	4.05	0.993	0.99
Continuous Commitment	113	1	7	4.2	0.907	0.82

4.2.2 Attitudes towards change at Company A

Perceptions of and attitudes towards change were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. According to **Table 4.2**, the mean sample scores for general attitudes towards organisational change (Mean = 3.13, SD = 0.856), perceptions of the change

communication (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.824), readiness for change (Mean = 3.47, SD = 0.756), perceptions of training for change (Mean = 2.87, SD = 0.988) and the perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.571) are moderately positive. Perceptions regarding training for change and whether the change will be personally beneficial (Mean = 2.99, SD = 0.621) are generally more negative.

Table 4.2: Statistics for organisational change (n = 113)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Employee Attitudes towards organisational change	113	1	5	3.13	0.856	0.73
Readiness for Change	113	1	5	3.47	0.756	0.57
Communication for organisational change	113	1	5	3.4	0.824	0.68
Training for organisational change	113	1	5	2.87	0.988	0.98
Personally Beneficial	113	2	5	2.99	0.621	0.39
Organisationally Beneficial	113	2	5	3.4	0.571	0.33

4.3 The relationship between organisational commitment and perceptions of change

4.3.1 Affective commitment and perceptions of change

Affective commitment and perceptions of change are indicated in **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3: Correlations of affective commitment and perceptions of organisational change items

	Affective Commitment A	Affective Commitment B
General employee attitudes towards organisational change	0.413**	-0.333**
Readiness for change	0.418**	-0.310**
Communication for change	0.373**	-0.270**
Training for organisational change	0.422**	-0.159 [†]
Personally beneficial	0.195*	-0.344**
Organisationally beneficial	0.265**	-0.078 [†]

n = 1130

** = $p \leq 0.01$

* = $p \leq 0.05$

[†] = $p \geq 0.05$

Significant positive correlations exist between Affective Commitment A and employee attitudes towards organisational change (0.413, $p < 0.000$), readiness for change (0.418, $p < 0.000$), perceptions of the change communication process (0.373, $p < 0.000$); perceptions of training for change (0.422, $p < 0.000$); perceptions of the change as personally beneficial (0.195, $p < 0.001$) and perceptions of the change as organisationally beneficial (0.265, $p < 0.005$). This information suggests that higher levels of Affective Commitment A are associated with more positive attitudes towards organisational change, readiness for change, positive perceptions of the change communication process, positive perceptions of training for change, a higher need for change and feelings that the change will be both personally and organisationally beneficial.

The significant positive correlations reflected in the **Table 4.3**, are generally moderate in strength, with “personally beneficial” and “organisationally beneficial” displaying significantly positive, albeit weak correlations with Affective Commitment A. Confidence

in the change process did not display a significant correlation with Affective Commitment A.

Affective Commitment B displayed less significant correlations with perceptions of organisational change. Employee attitudes towards organisational change (-0.333, $p < 0.000$); readiness for change (-0.310, $p < 0.001$); perceptions of the change communication process (-0.270, $p < 0.004$) and the belief that the change process is personally beneficial (-0.344, $p < 0.000$) all display significant negative correlations with Affective Commitment B. It must be noted that items in the Affective Commitment B scale are negatively phrased, which suggests that higher levels of Affective Commitment B are associated with more positive attitudes towards organisational change; higher levels of readiness for change, more positive perceptions of the change communication process and the belief the change process is personally beneficial.

4.3.2 Normative commitment and perceptions of change

Table 4.4 indicates that significant positive correlations exist between Normative Commitment and employee attitudes towards organisational change (0.277, $p < 0.003$); readiness for change (0.447, $p < 0.000$); perceptions of change communication (0.446, $p < 0.000$) and perceptions of training for organisational change (0.392, $p < 0.000$). In other words, higher levels of Normative Commitment are associated with more positive perceptions of attitudes towards change, higher levels of readiness for change, positive perceptions of change communication and positive perceptions of training for organisational change.

The majority of significant positive correlations as indicated in **Table 4.4** are moderate in strength, with “need for change” and “organisationally beneficial” displaying weak correlations with Normative Commitment. “Personally beneficial” did not display a significant correlation with Normative Commitment.

Confidence in the change process (-0.041, $p < 0.667$) displayed an insignificant correlation with Normative Commitment.

Table 4.4: Normative Commitment and perceptions of organisational change

	Normative Commitment
Employee Attitudes towards organisational change	0.277**
Readiness for change	0.447**
Communication for change	0.446**
Training for organisational change	0.392**
Personally beneficial	0.127 [†]
Organisationally beneficial	0.204*

n = 113

** = $p \leq 0.01$

* = $p \leq 0.05$

[†] = $p \geq 0.05$

4.3.3 Continuance commitment and perceptions of change

As indicated in **Table 4.5**, no significant correlations exist between continuance commitment, attitudes towards organisational change, readiness for organisational change, perceptions of training for organisational change, change confidence, need for change and perceptions that the change is personally beneficial or organisationally beneficial. A positive yet low and significant correlation does, however, exist between Continuance Commitment and perceptions of change communication (0.209, $p < 0.028$). This suggests that higher levels of Continuance Commitment are associated with more positive perceptions of change communication.

Table 4.5: Positive correlations of Continuance Commitment

	Continuance Commitment
Employee Attitudes towards organisational change	-0.146 [†]
Readiness for change	0.076 [†]
Communication for change	0.209 [*]
Training for organisational change	-0.026 [†]
Personally beneficial	-0.049 [†]
Organisationally beneficial	0.108 [†]

n = 113

** = $p \leq 0.01$

* = $p \leq 0.05$

† = $p \geq 0.05$

4.4 Summary of findings

The sample means for the Affective Commitment A, Affective Commitment B, Normative Commitment and Continuance Commitment scales suggest that employees at Company A have a moderate emotional attachment to the organisation and may therefore have a desire to remain with the organisation. Respondents showed moderate levels of perceptions of change, suggesting that employees may be willing to support the organisational change initiative implemented by Company A. In terms of correlations, the most significant positive correlation is between Affective Commitment A and perceptions of change and normative commitment and perceptions of change. Continuance commitment displays only one significant correlation with perceptions of change. Strong positive correlations suggest that higher levels of commitment are associated with higher levels of perceptions of change. Affective Commitment B showed significant negative correlations, however the items for this scale are

negatively phrased and therefore higher levels of continuance commitment are associated with more positive perceptions of change.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The objective of the present study was to determine whether a relationship exists between employee perceptions and attitudes towards organisational change and the levels of organisational commitment at Company A. For the purpose of this study, perceptions of change are categorised into a number of components and include:

- general employee attitudes towards organisational change;
- readiness for change;
- perceptions of change communication;
- perceptions of training for organisational change;
- perceptions that the change is personally beneficial; and
- perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial.

Organisational commitment was categorised as:

- Affective Commitment
- Normative Commitment
- Continuance commitment

Literature suggests that organisational change initiatives will only be successful if the employees at Company A accept and support the change initiatives (Durmaz, 2007:124). Change often places strain on both the organisation and its employees. Therefore change managers should always consider employee emotions, conduct training and communicate the intentions of the change with the employees in order to positively influence perceptions of change and increase the levels of employee commitment. As a result of the implementation of organisational change some employees may react positively while others may react negatively.

5.2. Research Questions

5.2.1. What are the levels of Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment at Company A?

The data presented in the previous chapter suggests that Affective Commitment B, Continuance and Normative Commitment at Company A are at moderate levels, with employees showing higher levels of Affective Commitment A towards the organisation. Moderate levels of commitment could easily change to low levels of commitment and low levels of employee commitment may therefore result in failure of the change initiatives.

Affective Commitment A refers to the extent of ownership that the employees may feel towards the organisation. Whereas Affective Commitment B refers to the extent to which employees feel emotionally attached to the organisation. The definition for Affective Commitment refers to the strength of an individual's identification and involvement with an organisation. It is categorised by the acceptance of the organisational goals and values, a willingness to put in extra effort on behalf of the organisation and a desire to remain in the employment of the organisation (Maxwell & Steele, 2003:362; Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007:709).

This suggests that employees display a strong sense of identification with the organisation. Employees with a strong sense of identification to the company may be willing to put in extra effort and support the goals of the organisation as an owner would do for their business (Maxwell & Steele, 2003:362; Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007:709). This effort may include employees being willing to work overtime if required to do so, encouraging other employees to embrace the change and be willing to perform additional functions without additional remuneration to make the change a success (Meyer and Allen, 1991: 64).

The level of Affective Commitment B is moderate but reflects the lowest mean score (3.88, SD 1.273) when compared to Affective Commitment A, Normative Commitment and Continuance Commitment. This suggests that while employees identify with the

organisation, they may be less emotionally attached to it. Employees that develop a stronger emotional attachment to the organisation may be more willing to remain with the organisation whereas employees who develop weaker emotional attachment may have a stronger desire to leave the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 64). Employees may develop a strong emotional attachment to the organisation if they feel that Company A is the only organisation in which they are able to earn a decent salary. For older employees Company A may have been the first organisation they worked for or Company A may have enabled employees to further their careers and education. Therefore these employees may have higher levels of Affective Commitment A.

The definition for Normative Commitment mentions that employees will remain with the organisation because they feel obligated to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 67; Stallworth, 2004: 946). Therefore moderate levels of Normative Commitment (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.993) may mean that some employees have developed a strong sense of obligation towards Company A. This may be if they have large amounts of debt that is funded by Company A, for example student loans for themselves, student loans for their children or loans taken from their pension funds. In this case Company A would have supported the employees' effort to further their education but they also in turn indebted to the organisation. Normative Commitment holds the view that employees believe that remaining with the organisation is the moral and right thing to do as a result of the organisation assisting them in their endeavours to further their education or assist them in a time of financial difficulty (Meyer & Allen, 1991:67; Stallworth, 2004:946).

The definition of Continuance Commitment mentions that employees may remain with the organisation because of the personal cost associated with leaving the organisation to (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 67; Falkenburg & Scyns, 2007: 709). Therefore moderate levels of Continuance Commitment (mean = 4.2, SD = 0.907) suggests that employees who develop more positive levels of Continuance Commitment may have a stronger sense of the cost associated with leaving the organisation. Therefore employees may be more willing to remain with the organisation. Conversely if the level of Continuance Commitment is more negative the sense of personal cost associated with leaving the organisation may be weaker and employees may be more willing to leave the organisation. Should employees not remain with the organisation, Company A may be

left with unskilled employees that will have to be trained or Company A may have to recruit employees externally and spend additional resources on training and development of these new recruits.

These moderate levels of Continuance Commitment could be explained by the fact that employees with longer years of service lost a substantial amount of money from the decline in pension funds as a result of the 2008/2009 economic crisis, therefore they may want to remain with the organisation to recover the losses (Stallworth, 2004: 946). With the economy on an uptrend and employee pension funds on the rebound, may result in more positive levels of Continuance Commitment towards the organisation, being displayed by employees. However the two year moratorium signed between Company A and employee unions in 2009 will be ending in the next 12 months and will add further pressure on employees. This added pressure may result in employees seeking alternative employment in order to have a sense of job security and may therefore result in more negative levels of Continuance Commitment.

5.2.2. What are the perceptions of planned organisational change at Company A?

Perceptions of planned organisational change at company A are generally moderate. This suggests employees could either develop more positive or negative perceptions of planned organisational change as the change process continue to unfold.

Perceptions of attitudes towards change (3.13, SD = 0.856) and readiness for change (3.47, SD = 0.756) at Company A are moderate. Attitudes towards organisational change are defined as an employee's overall positive or negative evaluative judgement of a change initiative implemented by their organisation, as certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act toward some aspect of his or her environment (Elias, 2009:39; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:162; Secord & Beckman, 1969:167). Readiness for change is defined as the employees' beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organisation's ability to successfully complete the intended change (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993:681). Therefore Company A should want to see higher levels of employee attitudes towards organisational change and higher levels of employee readiness for

change. Moderate levels of employee attitude towards planned organisational change or employee readiness for change are not favourable and may result in the failure of the planned organisational change initiative.

Employee perceptions of training for change has the lowest mean score (2.87, SD = 0.988) when compared to the other perceptions of change scales, suggesting that the employees may have received insufficient training for change. This may further suggest that should Company A want to improve perceptions of training for change, they may have to improve the training provided to employees. Research suggests that training employees about the change may eliminate and minimise the fear and uncertainty experienced by employees during the implementation of organisational change initiatives (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:163). Although the perceptions of training for change are low, the data in chapter 4 suggests that some employees feel that they have received some sort of training for change. This is an interesting finding as employees have not received any formal training regarding the current change process. Employees may be confusing communication for change in the form of employee broadcasts or employee communiqués with training for change, hence they may feel they have received training for change.

Employee perceptions that the change is personally beneficial (mean = 2.99, SD = 0.621) are more negative than employee perceptions that change is organisationally beneficial (mean = 3.4, SD = 0.571). More negative levels of the perceptions that the change is personally beneficial may be related to the organisation retrenching contract workers and employee unions only signing a two year moratorium against retrenchment of operational employees ending on the 31 March 2011 (Holt et al., 2007: 238). With higher levels for perceptions that change is organisationally beneficial when compared to perceptions that change is personally beneficial, suggests that employees at Company A may be less likely to support the change. This may be as a result of employee perceptions that the organisation is more likely to benefit from the change and they are less likely to benefit from the change (Erez & Kanfer, 1983; Erez et al., 1985).

The score for employee perceptions of communication for change (3.4, SD = 0.824) suggests that employees feel that Company A has provided some sort of communication about the change. This may be a result of Company A communicating via employee broadcast on a regular basis the progress of the change process. Company A may be able to increase the perceptions of change communication by engaging employees on a more personal level or using other forms of communication other than employee broadcasts (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1).

5.2.3. Is there a relationship between Affective Commitment A and Employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?

Affective Commitment A has the strongest correlation with employee attitudes towards change, perceptions of training for change, need for change and organisationally beneficial when compared with the correlations for Normative and Continuance Commitment.

A significant positive correlation exists between Affective Commitment A and general employee attitudes towards organisational change (0.413, $p < 0.000$), suggesting that higher levels of Affective Commitment A are associated with more positive perceptions of employee attitudes towards change. This may be due to employees having a strong sense of ownership towards Company A, hence employees at Company A may want to support the change (Piderit, 2000: 786). Employees may also have a tolerant attitude towards the change as change occurs regularly within this selected department, hence is reflected as a strong correlation with Affective Commitment A.

A positive correlation exists between Affective Commitment A and readiness for change (0.418, $p < 0.000$), suggesting that higher levels of employee readiness for change is associated with higher levels of Affective Commitment A. This may be as a result of employees being exposed to similar change initiatives in the past and because of the awareness of possible outcomes of the change.

A significant correlation of 0.373 ($p < 0.000$) exists between perceptions of effectiveness of communication about change and Affective Commitment A. Therefore

this suggests that more positive perceptions of change communication may be associated with higher levels Affective Commitment A. This may imply that employees at Company A who receive regular communication about the change are more likely to develop higher levels of Affective Commitment A.

Similarly a significant positive correlation exists between perceptions of training for change (0.422, $p < 0.001$) and Affective Commitment A. This suggests that higher levels of perceptions of training for change are associated with more positive levels of Affective Commitment A. Therefore if Company A provides employees with additional training for change the additional training for change may result in employees developing more positive levels of Affective Commitment A (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:163).

5.2.4. Is there a relationship between Affective Commitment B and Employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?

The items for Affective Commitment B are negatively phrased. This means that higher scores on the Affective Commitment B scale actually imply lower levels of Affective Commitment B.

The correlation between attitudes towards organisational change and Affective Commitment B (-0.333, $p < 0.001$) suggests that low scores for employee attitudes towards change are associated with low levels Affective Commitment B. Similar to Affective Commitment A this significant correlation may be the result of employees being exposed to similar change initiatives in the past and as a result of employees being aware of the possible outcomes of the change.

A low score for employee perceptions of readiness for change is associated with low levels of Affective Commitment B (-0.310, $p < 0.001$). This implies that respondents that feel ready for the change, exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment B than those that do not. Again this significant correlation may be the result of employees being exposed to similar change initiatives previously and are aware of the possible

outcomes of the suggested change. Furthermore this may imply that the implementation of the change may be successful.

Low scores for employee perceptions of communication for change are associated with higher scores of Affective Commitment B (-0.270, $p < 0.001$). Suggesting that employees with higher scores of Affective Commitment B, will have higher levels of perceptions of communication for change. Therefore if Company A continues to provide meaningful communication about the intended change process to employees, employees may develop higher levels of Affective Commitment B (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1; Flock (2006: 1).

Affective Commitment B has the strongest correlation with personally beneficial (-0.344, $p < 0.01$). Therefore this suggests that low scores for employee perceptions that the change is personally beneficial are associated with higher scores of Affective Commitment B (implying lower levels of commitment). Employees with lower levels of Affective Commitment B have a higher level of emotional attachment to the organisation hence may perceive the change to be personally beneficial.

5.2.5. Is there a relationship between Normative Commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?

Significant positive correlations exist between Normative Commitment and employee perceptions towards organisational change.

A correlation between attitudes towards organisational change and Normative Commitment (0.277, $p < 0.003$) suggests that more positive employees' attitudes towards change are associated with higher levels of Normative Commitment. This significant correlation may be as a result that employees at Company A may have been exposed to similar change initiatives and may be aware of the possible outcomes of the change, therefore resulting in this significant correlation.

The strongest correlation between perceptions of readiness for change exists with Normative Commitment. This may be a result that employees with higher levels of

Normative Commitment feel obligated to remain with the organisation hence they may feel obligated to accept the change (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1). More positive perceptions of readiness for change are associated with higher levels of Normative Commitment (0.447, $p < 0.000$). This may imply that the stronger this correlation the more likely the success of the change initiatives. Furthermore, this correlation may be as a result of employees at Company A being exposed to similar change initiatives in the past and therefore they may feel they are ready for the change, hence the strong correlation with Normative Commitment.

Perceptions of change communication correlated most strongly with Normative Commitment. Therefore, higher levels normative of are associated with more positive perceptions of communication for change (0,446, $p < 0.000$). This may imply that if Company A continues to provide meaningful communication about the change to employees, may result in higher levels of Normative Commitment and resulting in the successful implementation of the organisational change initiatives. Perceptions of communication for change have the strongest correlation with Normative Commitment when compared with the affective and normative commitment. This may be as a result that employees feel obligated to the organisation hence they may want to comply with instructions and requests sent via employee communiqués (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1; Flock, 2006: 1).

Similarly higher levels of Normative Commitment are associated with more positive perceptions of training for change (0,392, $p < 0.000$). This may imply that sufficient training for change has been provided to employees, resulting in higher levels of Normative Commitment (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:163). Therefore the successful implementation of the organisational change initiatives may be successful, should this positive correlation be maintained at Company A.

5.2.6. Is there a relationship between Continuance Commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards organisational change?

The research indicated that Continuance Commitment do not have a relationship within perceptions of change. The definition of Continuance Commitment suggests that

employees with higher levels of Continuance Commitment will remain with the organisation because of the personal investment and personal cost associated with leaving the organisation.

Possible reasons for Continuance Commitment not having a relationship with perceptions of change may be because the research was conducted at the beginning of the change processes and employees may have not felt the impact of the intended change process. Continuance Commitment may therefore not yet have been affected by the change process. In addition correlations between Continuance Commitment and perceptions of organisational change may only start to develop later during the change process as employees begin to feel the impact of the intended change.

5.3. Limitations

This research focused on the relationship between organisational commitment and employee attitudes and perceptions towards change in a particular department at Company A. An analysis of the entire organisation would have been beyond the scope to this dissertation because the organisation consists of 24000 employees, geographically located across South Africa. The sample size consisted of 380 employees and a response of 30 % was obtained. The researcher is aware that the research would only be generalisable to this particular department and possibly similar departments within company A. This research determined whether a relationship exists, but did not determine the direction of causality between the variables.

5.4. Recommendations for future research

The main objective of this research was to determine whether a relationship exists between organisational commitment and employee attitudes towards change. Therefore further research may be conducted to determine the direction of causality between organisational commitment and employee perception towards change. In addition and with regards to future research, a longitudinal study could be conducted at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the change process to be able to determine whether the correlation changes during the change process. Research may

be conducted to determine whether the correlation will be more positive or more negative after implementing some of the suggestions mentioned in the section on correlations.

5.5. Significance of the research

South African literature pertaining to organisational commitment and employee attitudes towards organisational change within the telecommunication environment is lacking. Therefore this dissertation seeks to add to the body of knowledge by conducting a thorough analysis of the above mentioned areas of research within the telecommunication industry in South Africa. Through this research, a single instrument measuring employee commitment and perceptions of change, has been developed. This instrument also measures the relationship between employee commitment and employee attitudes towards change. The instrument was developed by using the Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment questionnaire, the Readiness for change questionnaire and the Officer Attitude survey. Only relevant items were used from the Readiness for change questionnaire and from Officer Attitude survey in order to develop the instrument used for this research. The researcher developed a conceptual model that shows the association between employee attitudes towards change and employee perceptions of change.

Employee attitudes are important, as employers and change managers are able to determine whether employee attitudes are negative or positive and therefore the necessary measures to steer employee attitudes towards change in a positive direction. Negative employee attitude may hinder the change initiatives and results in resistance to change. Durmaz (2007:141) suggests that employees may not resist the change but rather the way in which they are treated in the change process. He further suggested that probable causes or negative outcomes of change are loss of status, loss of income, or a change in working environment.

Although this research was conducted in a telecommunications organisation, the research was not specific to the telecommunications industry. The significance of the

findings of this research is that may be used in other industries as this was found to be generic.

5.6. Conclusion

This research provides the reader with an understanding of the current levels of employee commitment and perceptions of organisational change at Company A. Included in this research paper is a thorough analysis of the literature relating to organisational commitment and perceptions of change. The researcher developed a conceptual model that shows the association between employee commitment and employee perceptions of organisational change and graphically displays these associations, making them easy to understand. In addition, a single instrument was not available to measure organisational commitment and perceptions of change.

Durmaz (2007:153) suggests that if an organisation truly wants to change, then the change managers and leadership should first understand all aspects relating to it. Therefore change managers will require perceptions of employee attitudes towards change and organisational commitment to be at favourable levels for the organisational change initiatives to be a success.

In order to improve the chances of success of an organisational change initiative, change managers will have to provide proper change communication pertaining to the intended change initiatives. Poorly managed change communication could result in rumours, resistance to change, the exaggeration of negative aspects of change and ultimately a crisis (Elving & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2009: 1). Training will have to be provided on an ongoing basis in order to prepare employees for the intended change as training for change may minimise the employee fear and feelings of uncertainty (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:163). Company A may even provided non-related training to employees and provided financial assistance to those who may have entrepreneurial abilities that may be affected by retrenchments. Training for change may enable employees to realise the need for change which is defined as the extent to which employees feel that there are or are not legitimate reasons and needs for intended change (Holt et al., 2007: 238). Reasons for the need for change may be as a result of

environmental changes such as economic and market changes, technological changes, legal or political changes and the availability of recourses (Bharjoo, 2005: 82). When employees understand the need for change they may be more willing to support the change initiatives being implemented by Company A. Company A should seek and retain employees with high levels of Affective Commitment A and Affective Commitment B as these employees will remain with the organisation because they want to (Maxwell & Steele, 2003: 362; Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007: 709).

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[term=Normative%20Commitment,%20Definition\(s\)%20of&area=All](#)
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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PLANNED ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT: AN INVESTIGATION OF A SELECTED CASE WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Dear respondent

I am a MTech: Business Administration student at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. My research will seek to determine the relationship between attitudes towards planned organisational change and organisational commitment at Company A.

This questionnaire will be anonymous and confidential, thus none of the respondents will be identifiable. The section pertaining to demographic information is for analysis and statistical purposes for this study only.

Respondents will be able to access the questionnaire via the following URL (URL omitted to protect the identification of the organisation).

Respondents please note that there are 3 sections to this questionnaire that will measure organisational commitment, attitudes towards change and a final section to acquire demographic information. All questions will have to be completed for a particular section before being able to move onto the next section.

Section 1 includes questions pertaining to organisational commitment and consists 22 items.

Section 2 includes questions pertaining to attitudes towards change.

Section 3 is a survey of demographic information that will be used for analysis in this study.

Please NOTE that the second section is scored differently to section three. The question should take approximately 5 – 10 minutes to complete and will be available until 12 June 2009.

Thank you very much for your participation. It is much appreciated.

Kind Regards

Cameron M Visagie

NTC 5, ND: Electrical Engineering, BTech: Business Administration, MTech Business Administration Candidate (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), CEA

Section 1 – Organisational Commitment

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organisation.							
2	I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it.							
3	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.							
4	I think I could easily become attached to another organisation as I am to this one.							
5	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.							
6	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.							
7	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.							
8	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.							
9	I owe a great deal to this organisation.							
10	I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people of it.							
11	This organisation deserves my loyalty.							
12	I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.							
13	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.							
14	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.							
15	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now							
16	It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.							
17	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.							
18	One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.							
19	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.							
20	Right now staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.							
21	It would be too costly for me to leave my organisation right now.							
22	One of the major reasons I continued to work for this organisation is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organisation may not match the overall benefits that I have here.							

Section 2.1 – Attitudes towards Change

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
23	Most of the initiatives that are supposed to solve problems in this organisation do not do much good					
24	I am quite confident the organisational change initiatives will have the desired effect in my organisation					
25	I would support and do my best for any change initiative which I believe as beneficial to this organisation					
26	Most changes in our organisation make my work more effective and efficient					
27	Organisational changes improve our organisation’s overall efficiency.					
28	Our senior managers encourage all of us to embrace organisational changes.					
29	My managers are committed to making the change effort a success.					
30	My colleagues support organisational change efforts.					
31	In this organisation, competent authorities convey the reasons for the changes in all aspects.					
32	I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about the changes in my organisation.					
33	I know how to access necessary information (i.e. competent department/staff, internal phone number or internet address) about the changes in my organisation.					
34	I believe that the information transmitted about the changes in this organisation explains why change is needed.					
35	This organisations head office arranges seminars or workshops in order to train personnel about the changes in this organisation.					
36	I consider myself adequately trained about the changes in this organisation.					

Section 2.2 – Attitudes towards Change

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
37	I am intimidated by all the tasks I will have to learn because of this change.					
38	I do not anticipate any problems adjusting to the work I will have when this change is adopted					
39	There are legitimate reasons for us to make this change.					
40	No one has explained the reason why the intended changes must take place					
41	I am suspicious about the reason for the change initiatives to take place					
42	When this is change implemented, I envision financial benefits coming my way.					
43	This change will disrupt many of the personal relationships I have developed.					
44	The prospective change will give me new career opportunities.					
45	When this change is implemented, I don't believe there is anything for me to gain.					
46	People tend to pretend they agree with the changes, but in reality do not allow them to be introduced.					
47	It is common to continually change direction, not giving continuity to what was already done.					
48	My future in this job will be limited because of the intended changes.					
49	The intended change makes me question my future employment with this organisation.					
50	I think the organisation will benefit from this change.					
51	The organisation is going to be more productive when we implement this change.					
52	When the intended change is adopted, we will be better equipped to meet our customers' needs.					
53	This change will improve our organisation's overall efficiency.					
54	This organisation will lose some valuable assets when we adopt this change.					
55	The intended change matches the priorities of our organisation.					

Section 3 – Demographical Information

1.What is your gender?

- 1.1.Male
- 1.2.Female

2.What is your age? () Years:

3.EE Status:

- 3.1.Black
- 3.2.Coloured
- 3.3.Indian
- 3.4.White
- 3.5.Other

4.Income per month:

- 4.1.R 0.00 – R 5000.00
- 4.2.R 5000.00 – R 10 000.00
- 4.3.R 10000.00 – R 20 000.00
- 4.4.R 20000.00 – R 40 000.00
- 4.5.Greater than R 40 000.00

5.Number of Children:

6.Section Name:

7.What is your present position?

- 7.1. Contractor
- 7.2.OP1 – Technical Officer
- 7.3.Ops Specialist/Ops Manager
- 7.4.Specialist/Manager
- 7.5.Senior Manager
- 7.6.Executive
- 7.7.Group Executive
- 7.8.Chief

8.What is the highest level of educational you have completed?

- 8.1. Some High School
- 8.2. Grade 12/Matric
- 8.3. Diploma
- 8.4. Degree
- 8.5. Masters Degree
- 8.6. Doctorate

9.How long have you been employed at the organisation? (years of service) Years

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire Items

Items from the Affective, Normative and Continuance commitment questionnaire

- A1.I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organisation.
- A2.I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it.
- A3.I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.

- A4.I think I could easily become attached to another organisation as I am to this one.
- A5.I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.
- A6.I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.
- A7.This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
- A8.I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.
- A9.I owe a great deal to this organisation.
- A10.I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people of it
- A11.This organisation deserves my loyalty.
- A12.I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.
- A13.I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.
- A14.Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.
- A15.Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.
- A16.It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.
- A17.I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.
- A18.One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
- A19.I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.
- A20.Right now staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
- A21.It would be too costly for me to leave my organisation right now.
- A22.One of the major reasons I continued to work for this organisation is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organisation may not match the overall benefits that I have here.

Items from the Readiness for change questionnaire

1.Change confidence:

- A37.I am intimidated by all the tasks I will have to learn because of this change.
- A38.I do not anticipate any problems adjusting to the work I will have when this change is adopted

2.Need for change:

- A39.There are legitimate reasons for us to make this change.

A40.No one has explained the reason why the intended changes must take place.

A41.I am suspicious about the reason for the change initiatives to take place

3.Personally Beneficial:

A42.When this is change implemented, I envision financial benefits coming my way.

A43.This change will disrupt many of the personal relationships I have developed.

A44.The prospective change will give me new career opportunities.

A45.When this change is implemented, I don't believe there is anything for me to gain.

A48.My future in this job will be limited because of the intended changes.

A49.The intended change makes me question my future employment with this.

4.Organisationally beneficial:

A50.I think the organisation will benefit from this change.

A51.The organisation is going to be more productive when we implement this change.

A52.When the intended change is adopted, we will be better equipped to meet our customers' needs.

A53.This change will improve our organisation's overall efficiency.

A54.This organisation will lose some valuable assets when we adopt this change.

A55.The intended change matches the priorities of our organisation.

Items from the officer attitude questionnaire

5.Employee Attitudes towards organisational change:

A23.Most of the initiatives that are supposed to solve problems in this organisation do not do much good.

A24.I am quite confident the organisational change initiatives will have the desired effect in my organisation.

A25.I would support and do my best for any change initiative which I believe as beneficial to this organisation.

6.Receptivity to change:

A26.Most changes in our organisation make my work more effective and efficient.

7.Readiness for change:

A27.Organisational changes improve our organisation's overall efficiency.

A28.Our senior managers encourage all of us to embrace organisational changes.

A29.My managers are committed to making the change effort a success.

A30.My colleagues support organisational change efforts.

8.Trust in Management:

A31.In this organisation, competent authorities convey the reasons for the changes in all.

9.Communication of organisational change:

A32.I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about the changes in my organisation.

A33.I know how to access necessary information (i.e. competent department/staff, internal phone number or internet address) about the changes in my organisation.

A34.I believe that the information transmitted about the changes in this organisation.

10.Training for organisational change:

A35.This organisations head office arranges seminars or workshops in order to train personnel about the changes in this organisation.

A36.I consider myself adequately trained about the changes in this organisation.