An Investigation on the Middle Managers' Attitudes towards Organisational Change within the Automotive Industry

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ABSTRACT As a result of global recession, the automotive industry has been going through a series of changes but at a very slow pace. This study builds on the prior research of change management. In the current study the main premise was that, to explain middle managers' attitudes towards change, factors such as administration of the change process, threats and benefits of the outcomes as well as opportunity for personal growth are influential. Therefore, using cluster sampling technique to draw a sample from selected organisation, the current study was conducted to empirically investigate the attitudes of middle managers towards organisational change. To collect data, a modified attitude to change questionnaire to gather primary data from selected organisations and the findings indicated that middle managers have positive attitudes towards technological change, innovative change and total quality management. However, middle managers displayed negative attitudes towards re-organisation. There were moderate significant relationships between factors influencing attitudes and the attitudes portrayed. The researchers found that middle managers are effective instruments to facilitate organisational change and if given power to make decisions and participate fully in the change process, they can work until they achieve the goals of change.

INTRODUCTION

Organisations are in a turbulent state as a result of changes in the markets, competition, and globalisation, widespread technological advancement leading to faster, flexible and cheaper ways of doing work, which leaves the future of employees in a very uncertain state. No company today is in a particularly stable environment; even the traditionally stable industries such as energy and utilities have witnessed and will continue to experience turbulent change (Robbins and Judge 2009). The changes across the globe also brought about additional unpredictability with the result that many employers move towards greater flexibility by expanding or shrinking the workforce to correspond with the shifting demands (Bessinger 2006). Therefore, change or die is the rallying cry among today's managers worldwide. According to Demerouti (2001), change is evident everywhere from the simplest everyday changes to the most difficult situations relating to reorganisation, downsizing, innovation and improvement of product quality. Specifically looking at the economic crisis faced by the automotive industry, change needs to be immediate and fast (McShane and Von Glinow 2008). In addition, Nair (2009) highlighted that, within the automotive industry, there is increased global competition, outsourcing, and fast changing new technologies resulting in massive confusion and challenges for those involved in such a volatile environment.

As much as organisations are realising the need for change, individuals involved in implementing the change are part of the major challenges faced by change agents in trying to implement any type of change. In the research done by Dennis and Erwin (2010) only 38% of the subjects studied thought change initiatives were successful and only 30% thought change contributed to the sustained improvement of their organisations. Prochaska (2001) supported by Bovey and Hede (2001) argued that resistance to change is the number one reason for failures of organisational change initiatives and it is a common problem.

Recent literature (McShane and Von Glinow 2008) noted that, various surveys indicate that more than 40% of executives identify low-level managers' resistance as the most important barrier to corporate restructuring or improved performance. The major question facing the top management today is whether this resistance is a symptom of a deeper problem in the change

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process, or it is a result of negative attitude towards change itself. Giangreco and Peccei (2005) pointed out that as much as change is inevitable; it leads to a state of chaos, low job security, additional workloads and guilt for the management team responsible for implementing the changes. This may result in consistent and strong negative attitudes towards change caused by fear, cynicism and ambiguity. Beer and Nohria (2000) indicated that, some forms of change leads to emotional exhaustion among managers resulting in their failure to give as much support and care to clients as planned. This is consistent with a recent survey (Giangreco and Peccei 2005) in which most employees admitted that they do not follow through with organisational changes because they like to keep things the way they are or the changes seem to be too complicated, time-wasting, and takes away their autonomy. However, does the same apply to middle managers who are given the authority to manage the processes of change?

Automotive Industry in South Africa

South Africa's automotive industry is a global, turbo-charged engine for the manufacture and export of vehicles and components. Many of the major multinational firms use South Africa to source components and assemble vehicles for the local and international markets. This makes the sector one of South Africa's most important, contributing at least 6% to the country's GDP and accounting for almost 12% of South Africa's manufacturing exports, making it a crucial cog in the economy as statistics show that in 2010, 271 000 vehicles were exported (Brand South Africa Count Portal 2013). Nair (2009) pointed out that the automotive industry is undergoing significant changes owing to the global financial crisis and it is without doubt going through one of its toughest times ever. The Motor Industry Development Program (MIDP) noted that South Africa's manufacturing sector of local component suppliers is under continuous pressure to improve their performance or lose business to competitors in other emerging economies (Automotive Supplier Park [ASP] 2008). The only solution to this problem was seen as the implementation of different organisational change intervention programmes in which the middle managers were identified as overseers of the whole process (Nair 2009).

Some of these envisaged future enhancements include E-invoicing, Supplier performance measurement tools, goods importation management and a completely redesigned user interface for the My Xchange portal (Nair 2009). The Automotive Industry Development Centre's [AIDC] (2011) recent survey on change progress however indicated that the transformation aimed at growth and development has failed to yield outcomes above standard set. Revenues have dropped, sales have dwindled and short-term future predictions on production volumes are very low, the industry is on its knees (Automotive Industry Report 2008). It has therefore become questionable whether middle managers have anything to do with the delay and wide spread resistance since they are leading the change programs (Dennis and Erwin 2010).

Manifestation of Organisational Change in Automotive Industry

According to Werner (2007), organisational change refers to a transformational process where a company moves from the known to the unknown. A number of factors, in the modern business scenario, have necessitated this transformational process. Organisations aim to increase responsiveness to clients, as well as productivity and efficiency through employee involvement and participation. According to Wagar (2000), organisations are adopting flatter, more agile structures and more empowering, team-oriented cultures to be competitive. Robbins and Judge (2009) emphasized the importance of middle and junior managers on the day-to-day commitment of their teams to improvement and change activities.

The study of organisational change is one area of investigation in which cognition research has been interested in, among other areas such as decision making and environmental sense making. The intersect of researching how change phenomena are construed and managed, with how they are measured is a crucial issue in our quest for understanding how managers reason and behave in changing work conditions. The extent to which machines replace human energy, dexterity, diligence, judgment and evaluation of the manufacturing process is of great importance. Managers participate in the planning and execution of such change efforts, and they also react to them in various modes, thus

affecting the strategy, progress and viability of their organisations depending on how the change manifests itself in the organisation (Wood and Albanese 1998). Organisational change can manifest in organisations as un-planned or planned change, developmental change and or transformational and transitional change. In this study, the researchers concep-tualised organisational change in terms of inno-vative change, technological change, reorgani-sation/restructuring as well as Total Quality Management (TQM). Organisational restructur-ing seem to have become a way of life and a feature of many organisations in the industrial world (Ryan and Macky 1998). The impetus be-hind restructuring efforts appears to be a desire to reduce organisational costs and increase pro-ductivity and overall competitiveness (Cascio 1998).

Secondly other organisations resort to or-ganisational innovation. Wood and Albanese (1998) contend that organisational innovation has been consistently defined as the adoption of an idea or behavior that is new to the organi-sation. Innovation can either be that of a new product, a new service, a new technology or a new administrative practice. Technological change is also one of the common changes that occur within the automotive industry which has had a huge impact on employees and manage-ment. Lastly, Total Quality Management (TQM) is one of the forms of change occurring within the automotive industry. According to Duffin (1995) as cited by Giangreco and Peccei (2005), TQM implies such issues as leadership, zero defects, continuous improvement, mistake-pre-vention, process and team work.

The automotive industry is experiencing a state of continuous change in order to remain competitive; these ongoing and seemingly end-less efforts put much strain not only on organi-sations but also on individuals resulting in them experiencing uncertainty, insecurity and exhaus-tion. Previous researches (Beer and Nohria 2000; Werner 2007) indicated that 70 percent of change initiatives fail with the main reason being resis-tance to change, closely linked to negative atti-tudes towards change among employees. If or-ganisational change is inevitable for the auto-motive industry today and to ensure that the industry move in a positive direction, managers' attitudes towards organisational change need to be thoroughly understood and potential im-

pediments to change be identified. Therefore, in line with the above, the research seek to investi-gate middle managers attitudes towards organi-sational change in the automotive Industry.

Hypothesis 1: Middle managers have nega-tive attitudes towards Organisational Change

Middle Managers and Organisational Change

Many studies suggested that organisation-al change efforts can be very stressful experi-ence for individuals (Elrod and Tippett 2002). Emotions and responses to change can be so intensive that the literature in organisational change has compared them with individual re-sponses to traumatic changes such as death and grief. There are many emotional states that a person can experience during change process-es, which are equilibrium, denial, anger, bargain-ing, chaos, depression, resignation, openness, readiness and re-emergence and these emotion-al states are similar to those experienced in grief (Vakola and Nikolaou 2005). To note also is that organisational change leads to lack of clarity and predictability of the outcomes of a person's behavior (Beer and Nohria 2000). It produces unclear role perceptions which directly affect job performance especially for the middle man-agers.

Attitudes towards Organisational Change

According to Vakola and Nikolaou (2005), attitudes refer to certain regularities of an indi-vidual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspect of his environment. Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1995), indicat-ed that attitudes reflect a person's tendency to feel, think or behave in a positive or negative manner towards the object of the attitude. Atti-tudes help people to understand the new face of the environment, to assimilate each new item into a set of beliefs that transmit value and guide behavior. In times of change, if the members of the organisation embrace the change or believe it will bring benefits, they will probably adapt rapidly to the new system of work. Piderrit (2000) argued that, although change management liter-ature has provided practice, frameworks and methodologies to understand and manage change, the results are quite disappointing. In line with the above the study seek to investi-

gate the attitudes of middle managers' attitudes towards organisational change in a different context and chronological space.

Research Question: What are the attitudes of middle managers towards organisational change?

Hypothesis 2: Middle managers are not effective instruments to facilitate change in the automotive industry

Individual Attitudes and Resistance to Change

Middle managers comprise of managers who head specific departments or serve as project managers responsible for implementing the company policies and plans. This is the group of individuals which are usually the first to be slashed in the resizing of a firm and can also be active drivers of change (Cummings and Worley 2005); therefore it is interesting to investigate how they view organisational change. They further argued that managers' attitudes to change determine employee participation and the successful development of programmes of change, which suggests that individuals' cognitive processes constitute a determining factor in processes of organisational change. According to Trader-Leigh (2001), the topic of resistance to change, is directly related to attitudes towards change. Therefore it was well acknowledged in this study as a critical success or failure factor. Resistance to change is a controversial subject, from the cognitive point of view; three basic types of explanations of resistance can be identified. The first refers to resistance as a natural and normal process generated by distorted beliefs or by individuals' tendency to assess situations using extreme categories. The second measures resistance as the intention to resist, and analyses resistance as the set made up of perception of the impact of change, of irrational ideas and of affect (Bovey and Hede 2001). The third attributes resistance to a negative emotional reaction activated by the inconsistencies and discrepancies between the cognitive schemes of individuals and those present in the proposals for change (Campbell 2000).

Research Question: Are middle managers effective instruments for change in the automotive industry?

Hypothesis 3: There are different factors influencing middle managers attitude towards organisational change in the automotive industry.

Factors Influencing Attitudes towards Organisational Change

There are many factors that affect employee attitudes towards organisational change and these include but are not limited to; need for personal growth, locus of control, internal motivation, past experience, organisational commitment, type of the change, communication, degree of involvement, and the threats and benefits posed by the change programmes (Werner 2007). According to Giangreco and Peccei (2005), individuals' perceptions of the actual content and the outcomes of a change initiative and the extent they will personally gain or lose as a result of the change are strong predictors of their attitudes towards change and their level of resistance to the change.

Research Question: What are the factors that influencing attitudes of middle managers towards organisational change within the automotive industry.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

In this section, the research objectives were translated into specific data needs. The study at hand obtained information from the primary sources and this section focuses on the methodology followed to carry out the research. This takes into consideration aspects such as the research design, population of the study, sample, and sampling procedure, the data collection method, description of the instrument, administration of the instrument, and how the data was analyzed. Quantitative research design adopted, defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) as a type of research used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena.

Participants and Procedure

In the study at hand, the population consisted of 170 mid-level employees (N=170) in the selected automotive companies in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. In this study, a probability sampling procedure was employed and the sample consisted of department leaders as well as supervisors whose opinions and preferences were captured to determine how middle managers perceived organisational

change within the automotive industry. The sampling units were in clusters randomly drawn from the Marketing/sales, Human Resource, New vehicles department, manufacturing and engineering departments. Our study focused on three selected automotive industries and targeted middle managers whose names were listed in the companies' database. Using a 7% margin of error; 90% confidence level and 50% response distribution in the Raosoft sample size calculator, the recommended minimum sample size of 70 employees was determined. However, a total number of 100 questionnaires were distributed and 72 usable questionnaires were returned indicating that 39 male and 33 female respondents took part in the survey. The majority of the participants were between 37 and 55 years.

Materials

In this study, semi-structured, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 100 randomly chosen middle managers representing different departments within the organisation. In most cases five individuals emerged from each department for each specific organisation. Participants completed a self-report questionnaire pack, which incorporated the measures of attitudes to change and factors influencing those attitudes. In addition, personal and demographic data relating to age, gender, marital status and educational background were also collected.

Measures

Attitudes to change were measured by quasi adopting items from the Attitudes to Change Questionnaire (ACQ) developed by Vakola and Nikolaou (2005). The scale consisted of 47 items (27 positive and 20 negative); the negatively stated items were reversed so that a high score would indicate positive attitudes towards organisational change. The participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with each item on a five-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). To measure the *factors influencing middle managers' attitude towards change*, a list of items relating to general factors influencing attitudes towards change were adopted from the instrument developed by Oreg (2006). The scale consisted of 12 items in which the participants were requested to rate the extent to which particular factors influence their attitudes towards change on a five point likert scale. The instrument was a standardised self-administered semi-structured questionnaire.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Middle managers have negative attitudes towards organisational change

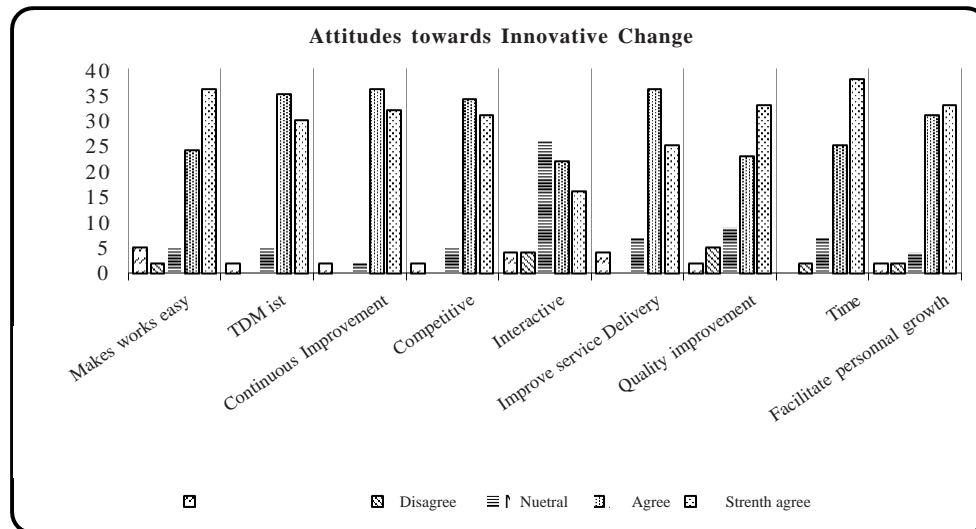As highlighted earlier on, organisational change was broken down into four major com-

Fig. 1. Attitudes towards innovative change

ponents viz: technological change, innovative change, TQM and re-organisation. The attitudes of middle managers towards the highlighted changes were separately tested using the instrument adopted from Vakola and Nikolaou (2005).

Figure 1 indicates the middle managers attitudes towards innovative change. The collated responses from a combination of statements testing attitudes towards innovative change summarised show that generally the middle managers had positive attitudes towards innovative change. As illustrated in Figure 1, 43% of the respondents strongly agreed with the benefits brought about by innovative change and 41% agreed. This therefore depicts that 84% of the respondents have positive attitudes towards innovative change. On the other hand, 5% of the middle managers showed negative attitudes towards innovative change. In this regard, it can be concluded that, middle managers in the automotive industry had positive attitudes towards innovative change and were more likely to support any change brought into the organisation which is innovative in nature.

As shown in Table 1, the middle managers disagreed with most of the positive statements testing attitudes towards re-organisation. From Table 1, most (64%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed with the posi-

tive statements of reorganisation, and had negative attitudes towards re-organisation. It can be concluded that, middle managers had negative attitudes towards change in form of re-organisation. Table 2 represents the attitudes of middle managers towards TQM. In this study, most middle managers were highly involved in TQM.

Considering that the largest percentage of the respondents is made up of middle managers who agreed with the positive statements testing attitudes towards TQM, it can be concluded that, middle managers had positive attitudes towards TQM. Therefore they are more likely to reinforce and support any change related to total quality management.

As illustrated in Table 3, 59% of the respondents were more inclined towards technological change, 10% were neutral and 31% reported negative attitudes towards technological change with the main issue being that new technology cause confusion at first. Therefore, there is a possibility that when such change is introduced in the automotive industry there might be mixed feelings in different individuals.

Attitudes towards Organisational Change

The collated opinions for all change types indicated that 32% of the respondents strongly

Table 1: Attitudes towards re-organisation

Re-organisation	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Result in loss of control	40	10	3	11	8	72
Increase co revenue	18	14	6	16	18	72
Threaten security	30	8	12	13	9	72
Career development	17	18	7	16	14	72
Sustain the organisation	30	20	8	7	8	72
Threaten power and status	25	20	4	14	9	72
IMCMM	32	20	5	5	8	72
Increase workload	38	12	6	7	9	72
Decision making	34	17	0	14	7	72
Total	264	139	51	103	78	

Table 2: Total quality management

Total quality management	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Quality improvement	2	5	9	23	33	
Mistake prevention	18	14	6	16	18	
Competitive	9	12	12	9	30	
Customers interaction	14	16	7	18	17	
Quality service delivery	8	7	8	20	30	
Quality time	0	2	7	25	38	
Improve products	8	5	5	20	32	
Improve customer satisfaction	9	7	6	12	38	
Total	68	75	60	143	236	

Table 3: Attitudes towards technological change

Technology	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Increase productivity	4	0	7	21	40	
Better wk environment	0	4	5	25	38	
Fear to lose job	14	13	11	26	8	
Generate chaos	24	14	11	19	4	
Generate lack of satisfaction	18	19	10	16	9	
Increase morale	5	15	9	26	17	
Complete	17	20	4	14	17	
Improve communication	4	2	5	22	39	
Total	86	87	62	169	172	

agreed with change, 28% agree, therefore, 60% of the respondents had positive attitudes towards organisational change in general. 10% were neutral and 30% had negative attitudes towards organisational change. With this in mind, the first hypothesis was therefore rejected because middle managers had positive attitudes towards organisational change.

Hypothesis 2: *Middle managers are not effective instruments to facilitate change in the automotive industry*

Hypothesis two depended on hypothesis 1, that is, if middle managers have positive attitudes towards organisational change then they are effective instruments to facilitate change in the automotive industry. To support this, the predictor of effective instruments to facilitate change adopted from Oreg (2006) was used to confirm the hypothesis and the results are indicated in Figure 2.

As presented in Figure 2, out of the total 72 participants, 63 indicated that they can facilitate change, 5 were neutral and only 4 indicated that they cannot facilitate change. Bearing this in mind, the conclusion was that middle managers are effective instruments to facilitate change in the automotive industry therefore hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Hypotheses 3: *There are different factors influencing middle managers attitude towards organisational change in the automotive industry*

From the findings shown in Table 4, attitudes to change demonstrated statistically significant correlations with a number of factors influencing middle managers' response to organisation-
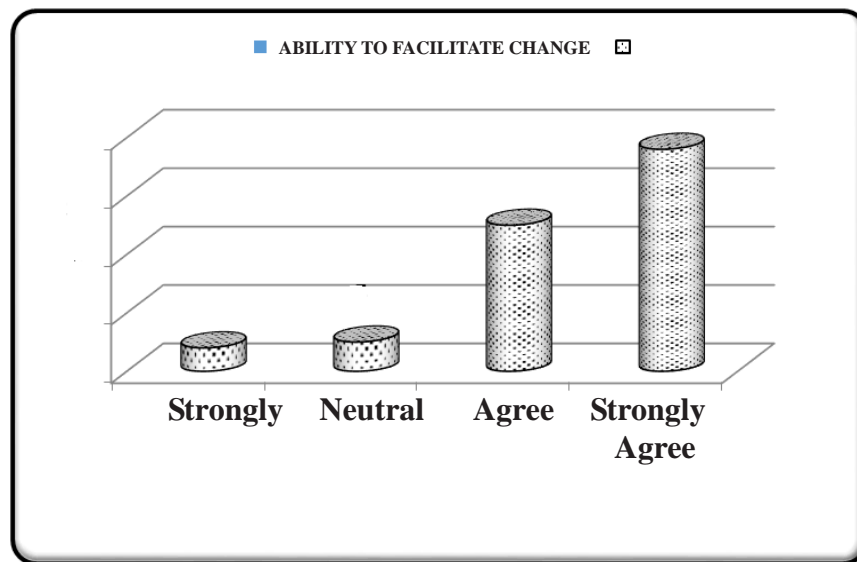

■ ABILITY TO FACILITATE CHANGE

Strongly   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

Fig 2. Ability to facilitate change

Table 4: Correlations of factors influencing middle managers' response to organisational change

Variable	Correlations Marked correlations are significant at p< .05000 N=72 (Case wise deletion of missing data						
	Experience	Communi-cation	Involve-ment	Threats and benefits	Personal growth	Autonomy	Admin
Technology	.0942	.1363	-.0590	.1111	.1236	-.0154	.1380
	P =.431	P=.253	P=.622	P=.353	P=.040**	P=.898	P=.248
Reorganisation	-.2602***	-.1082	-.0600	-.1903	-.1125	-.0392	.0339
	P=.027***	P=.365	P=.617	P=.109	P=.347	P=.744	P=.777
Innovative	-.1473	.0740	.0047	-.0602	.0101	-.1053	-.0404
	P=.217	P=.536	P=.969	P=.615	P=.933	P=.379	P=.736
TQM	.1656	.0599	-.1037	.1951	.0205	-.0271	.2424**
	P=.165	P=.617	P=.386	P=.100	P=.864	P=.821	P=.040**
Involvement	-.0712	-.2255	-.1726	-.1877	-.0018	.0191	-.0070
	P=.552	P=.057	P=.147**	P=.114	P=.988	P=.873	P=.953
Adjust	-.2219	-.1577	.0321	.0344	.3724**	.0354	-.0133
	P=.061	P=.186	P=.789	P=.774	P=.001**	P=.768	P=.912
Ambiguity	-.0562	-.1649	.1619	.2811***	-.0884	-.2611**	-.0562
	P=.639	P=.166	P=.174	P=.017**	P=.461	P=.027**	P=.639
Facilitation	.1937	-.1611	-.1601	-.0198	-.0071	-.2519**	-.0341
	P=.103	P=.176	P=.179	P=.869	P=.953	P=.033**	P=.776

al change, namely; the relationships between re-organisation and past change experience (.027, $p <.05$), attitudes towards technological change and personal growth significantly correlated with a coefficient of .040 ($p <0.05$). Participating and involvement were significantly positively related (.147, $p <0.05$). Respondents who indicated that change is ambiguous are highly influenced by threats and benefits to change with a significant correlation coefficient of .017, ($p <0.05$). Middle managers who can easily adjust to change were highly influenced by opportunity for personal growth at (.001, $p < 0.05$). Those who can facilitate change indicated that they were highly influenced by autonomy at (.033, $p < 0.05$). There was also a significant relationship between Total Quality Management and the administration of change (.040, $p < 0.05$). A positive relationship was also identified between Involvement, and the three factors which are perceptions of co-workers (.049, $p < 0.05$), uncertainty (.040, $p < 0.05$) and type of change (.005, $p < 0.05$).

Moreover, autonomy highly influenced positive attitudes to change at (0.31, $p <0.05$), confirming the respective hypothesis of the current study. Although the latter correlation was weak, it is in line with the previous literature (Oreg 2006) identifying links between employees' attitudes to change and several factors influencing those perceptions toward organisational change.

From the above discussion, hypotheses 3 was therefore not rejected since the results indicated that middle managers were influenced by different factors. However, certain factors seemingly had much influence on the positive attitudes towards change. From the results, top three factors influencing middle managers attitude towards organisational change were administration with 34% of the respondents, followed by threats and benefits with 26% and then personal growth with 20%. Although literature (for example, Piderit 2000) indicates that employees are highly influenced by participation, in this case only 13% of the respondents indicated that they were influenced by participation. Therefore, for middle managers it seems to be a different issue.

DISCUSSION

It is remains every organisation's goal to successfully cope with continuous changes in the business environment. They therefore, frequently embark on planned change interventions which are becoming more and more the rule rather an exception in organisations. The findings of this study highlight the need for acknowledging the significant effect of middle managers' attitudes towards organisational change to the success of the change process. The findings of the present study can be useful in implementation of organisation change by actively

ensuring that the increased demands being placed on managers as a result of the change process are corresponded by sufficient support. By doing so, organisations are more likely to become healthier for existing and more attractive for prospective employees and managers. Generally, the results indicated that middle managers have weak positive attitudes towards organisational change. It may therefore be concluded that, the reason why change is very slow in the automotive industry is because some of the change initiatives that can be in the form of re-organisation threaten security and comes with additional workload. On suggestions to improve change process however, the respondents indicated the need for adequate communication, good administration as well as need for necessary skills to eliminate uncertainty and to enable them to face the new challenges brought by change in the workplace.

Respondents suggested that, highly involvement in the facilitation of change is closely related to being positive and working towards achieving the goals of the change process. This confirms the arguments of the Job-Demand-Resource model which entails that, if employees are given the platform to exercise their potential and are highly involved in the change process, it is possible that high job demands associated with positive feelings of accomplishment will develop and build positive attitudes towards change. In addition to that, the findings that middle managers have positive attitudes towards all other types of change except re-organisation confirms the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, that every individual is concerned about job security. Middle managers indicated that, re-organisation brings with it decentralisation of power which generates fear, because there is a sense of loss of control and status. The findings showed that re-organisation threaten middle managers' power and status and is associated with a lot of uncertainties. Moreover, from the findings, the support given to innovative change confirmed that employees generally like innovative change, normally because it brings with it better products, increased sales, profits and empowers the agents involved with new skills and creates opportunities for career development as well as improve quality of products.

CONCLUSION

An important link to employees' attitudes towards change, widely found in literature was also confirmed by the results, which is the administration of the change process such as training, allocation of duties and drafting short-term and long-term indicators of progress. Employees should feel adequately trained, informed and ready to participate in the change process. This is by virtue of the fact that effective communication reduces fear and uncertainty. This may possibly explain why administration factor was found to be the main factor influencing attitudes towards organisational change. Most of the middle managers suggested incentives to reinforce those who are positive to improve the change process in the organisation and also noted autonomy and support by their supervisors as important. It can be concluded also that that reward system can be used as the best way of facilitating the success of change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has several practical implications for managers and organisations facing organisational change. It was shown that middle managers are effective instruments to facilitate organisational change, and if given power to make decisions and participate fully, they are more likely to work until they achieve the goals of change. This, therefore, means that, organisations should empower the middle managers with skills as well as decision making power to enable them to facilitate change successfully. Good and effective work relationships also emerged as very important aspects of organisational change. Supportive work relationships and effective communication were identified as high contributing factors to the formulation of positive attitudes towards change and eventually to the success of a change programme. Therefore management are challenged to ensure good administration, relationships as well as good communication of change programmes.

Additional workload was found to be one of the major problems why change agents are negative about re-organisation so organisations should try to control and effectively manage extra workload brought about by the organisational change process. Respondents indicated that problems are encountered when new and old systems are used in parallel during or after the change implemented. As a result, there is extra workload for employees and this may create negative attitudes towards change. As a result, the individuals involved become negative and reluctant to participate in the change process. In-

crease in workload is not only easily attributable to the change process but also makes change unattractive and problematic leading to non-supportive attitudes. Managers are therefore encouraged to plan the change processes carefully in order to create a well-structured work environment and well balanced work schedules to reduce stress and uncertainty. Moreover, the highly involved middle managers, the more positive they become. Organisations should provide continuous support especially training to those individuals actively in facilitating the change process. Therefore, in order to build positive attitudes towards change and to facilitate success in terms of change, middle managers should be given necessary training. To encourage participation organisations can positively reward high achievers to keep up the good spirit and to attract the attention of individuals who are negative as well. This can be done through recording and informing employees about the short term successes in particular change initiatives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

There are huge complex areas under organisational change management which have not yet been adequately and empirically investigated including areas relating to the detrimental effects of organisational change on employee emotional well-being. It should be recognised that this research contains few important limitations that will need to be addressed in future studies. Firstly, the study at hand suffers a disadvantage of being a small questionnaire-based study, but it has an additive contribution to the body of literature on the topic of change management and the findings can serve as a basis for future research in the area. Therefore, larger multi-site investigations can be conducted to confirm these results before firm conclusions. Finally, the direct focus of the investigation only on the automotive industry and strictly among middle managers may have an effect of limited generalisability. As a result the study remains in reality, not representative of all other industries and all other levels of employment in organisations.

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