

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION OF A
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE CITY OF WINDHOEK**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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INTEGRATIVE SUMMARY

This study evaluated how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees and consequently to determine the effects of the communication process on the degree to which buy-in and readiness is created. Armenakis, Harris and Field's (1999) five element model of examining the change recipient's beliefs, namely, *discrepancy*, *appropriateness*, *principal support*, *efficacy*, and *valence* was used as a framework for this study. These beliefs play a major role in affecting behaviours of the change recipients (employees) toward the implementation of a new change initiative in an organisation.

Discrepancy involves assessing if employees believe that a need for change does really exist in the organization. Appropriateness seeks to find out from the change recipients whether the performance management system being introduced in the organization is an appropriate reaction to the need and the vision of the organisation. Principal support describes the support from change agents and opinion leaders for the organizational change. Efficacy refers to a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. Valence refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic attractiveness (from the change recipient's perspective) associated with the perceived outcome of the change.

Literature on organizational change, organizational communication and change implementation were used, to gain and highlight insights regarding the role of change communication during change implementation, and to provide the conceptual framework for the research design and

analysis. A single case study research method was used under a mixed research paradigm. The study used a survey questionnaire that was sent to 711 employees; a sufficient and representative 202 questionnaires were returned from all levels of the organization, yielding a response rate of 22.4%. In addition, three focus group interviews of a representative cross section of staff were conducted as also document analysis to collect data for the study.

The summative average percentages of levels of agreements and disagreements of the respondents for each of the five change recipient's beliefs indicate a fairly high degree of agreement (*buy-in*) and considerably low degree of disagreement (*resistance*) among the respondents to nearly all five change recipient's beliefs. Discrepancy received the highest degree of agreement (*buy-in*) 84%; efficacy received 73%, appropriateness 66% and valence 59% whereas principal support scored the lowest degree of agreement of about 40% of the respondents.

Despite the high degree of agreement (*buy-in*) for these elements, there was also a notable number of the respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed to some of the five change recipient's beliefs. In particular, principal support had 38%, valence had 28%, and appropriateness had 22% who neither agreed nor disagreed. The degree of disagreement (*resistance*) is relatively low in almost all five change recipient's beliefs except for principal support which indicated slightly higher levels of disagreement (19%).

The results of the study indicate that the communication methods e.g., the road show, leaflets and brochures, discussions and training sessions used during the pre-implementation phase of the

new performance management system influenced the change recipient's beliefs on the *discrepancy* for the new performance management system. The evidence is that these communication methods and actions helped to create a sense of urgency and the need to implement a new performance management system among employees.

The new performance management system was also believed to be *appropriate* and its appropriateness was justified through the use of various communication methods which provided detailed explanations on how the new performance management system was different to the earlier performance appraisal system. Notwithstanding the belief in the appropriateness of the new performance management system, the study found that the absence of such a performance management system over a long period of time had cultivated a hidden but unifying shared set of values, beliefs and assumptions among employees that seem not to fit or be suitable to the demands of the new performance management system and the current challenges facing the organization. The employees themselves noted this discrepancy. Hence, they argued, there is a need to bring about new culture with new sets of values, beliefs and assumptions that will better suit and support the current demands facing the organisation and its members.

The study found that although employees significantly believe that they have high levels of *personal self-efficacy*, the change message that was communicated to them did not in itself appear to help to create and further develop this employee self-efficacy. The change message mainly focussed on the need for training, and the design of job descriptions and technical aspects of the performance management system.

The study revealed that the employees' belief in *principal support* of the new performance management system was that principal support was seen as less than sufficient or not as evident as they would have liked. Employees remarked that principal support was only conveyed during the initial stage of communication, thereafter, principal support from senior management was seen to have declined throughout the pre-implementation phase. Nonetheless, immediate supervisors and managers were believed to be more supportive than senior management. The literature points to a lack of belief in principal support as an important cause of a loss of momentum in change initiatives, which in turn may result in cynicism and greater resistance, especially by those who have vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Valence refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic attractiveness (from the change recipient's perspective) associated with the perceived outcome of the change. The results show that respondents have mixed beliefs about the personal benefits associated with the new performance management system. Thus, 63% of the respondents believe that it will benefit them, 75% believe that it will increase their self-fulfilment, 68% believe that it will increase their feeling of accomplishment, 45% believe that their fringe benefit will remain the same after it is implemented, and 58% believe that they could earn high performance return. However, the result also shows that there are still many respondents who neither agree nor disagree to the presence of personal valence with regard to the new performance management system.

This study established that the use of various communication methods persuaded the majority of the City of Windhoek employees to view the new performance management system overall in a favourable light. However, interviewees criticised the communications process on the grounds

that most of these methods were only used once and were not repeated, as they would have liked. Lessons on this item from other change studies are that when communicating new change initiatives, change agents should use different methods of communication and as many times as possible to influence the belief of employees.

This report is structured as follows: Section 1 provides an abstract and introduction to the study. Section 1.2 presents a brief review of core theories and recent empirical studies relevant to the research problem. Section 1.3 provides a description of the research method followed in addressing aim and objectives of this study. Section 1.4 presents the results of the evaluation report and section 1.5 discusses the findings and make conclusive recommendations.

Section 2 of this study complements subsection section 1.2 (in section 1) with a more detailed review of the literature on organizational change, organizational communication and change implementation. This more detailed review was conducted before the field work and write up of Section 1. The literature incorporated into Section 1 was distilled from this more detailed review. Similarly, Section 3 of this study complement subsection 1.3 (of section 1) with an extended description of the research design and research procedure followed in the study.

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JOHANNES ANGULA SHILONGO

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Johannes A. Shilongo, hereby declare that the dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been submitted, and will not be presented, at any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

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Signature

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SECTION 1: EVALUATION RESEARCH REPORT

Abstract

This study used Armenakis, Harris and Field (1999) five element model of examining change recipient's beliefs, namely: discrepancy, appropriateness, principal support, efficacy, and valence, as a framework to assess how the communication of the new performance management system (PMS) of the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees prior to its implementation. A single case study research method was used under a mixed research paradigm. The study used a survey questionnaire that was sent to 711 employees; a respectable and representative 202 questionnaires were returned from all levels of the organization, yielding a response rate of 22.4%. In addition, three focus group interviews of a representative cross section of staff were conducted as also document analysis to collect data for the study.

This study established that the use of various communication methods persuaded the respondents to view the new performance management system overall in a favourable light. Discrepancy received the highest degree of agreement (buy-in) 84%; efficacy received 73%, appropriateness 66% and valence 59% whereas principal support scored the lowest degree of agreement of about 40% of the respondents. Despite the high degree of agreement (buy-in) for these elements, there was also a notable number of the respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed to some of the five change recipient's beliefs. In particular, principal support had 38%, valence had 28%, and appropriateness had 22% who neither agreed nor disagreed. The degree of disagreement (resistance) is relatively low in almost all five change recipient's

beliefs except for principal support which indicated slightly higher levels of disagreement (19%).

It found that discrepancy and appropriateness were among the five change recipient's beliefs that were strongly influenced by the various communication methods. Notwithstanding the believed appropriateness of the new PMS, the prevailing culture and values of the organisation was deemed by employees not to be any longer a good fit for challenges now facing the organization and the new PMS. The study revealed that employees believe that they have high levels of self-efficacy, although the change message is believed not to have helped in creating and developing employees' self-efficacy. Principal support of the new performance management system was observed as less than satisfactory by employees in the organisation, due to a loss of momentum of evidence of such support from senior management. Employees revealed mixed feelings about the personal valence associate with the new PMS with a range of interpretations of likely benefits and evidence of a lack of understanding of the attractiveness and the type of benefits associated with the new performance management system.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Overview of the research

Recent decades demonstrate a robust trend of the world's private and public companies undertaking a large volume of change activities. The main drivers for these changes include factors such as meeting the needs and expectations of customers, employees and stakeholders, requirements for accountability and service efficiency, technological change and global competitiveness.

The primary goal for all fundamental organisational change efforts is to help organisations to cope with challenging market environments relevant to local government in order to achieve competitive and sustainable advantage. Notwithstanding that, and perhaps due to a large volume of change activities undertaken by most organisations in recent years, many organisational change initiatives remain difficult and challenging to successfully implement. Many scholars such as Dally, Teaque and Kitchen (2003), Elving (2005) and Cheng, Dainty and Moore (2007) have established that between 50 % to 70 % of new strategic change initiatives fail to achieve their intended results.

Hobelche (2006) identified three important reasons that explain why change initiatives fail: (1) lack of strategic planning that translates new ideas into a new course of action and a plan for achieving it; (2) the inability of people to adjust their behaviours, skills and commitment to

new requirements; and (3) weak leadership – when there is a mismatch between sponsor’s words and actions or failure to leverage support from other people.

Kotter (1996) identified eight common reasons that explain why change efforts often fail in many organisations, namely: (1) not establishing a sense of urgency; (2) a lack of a powerful guiding coalition to steer and build the change effort; (3) underestimating the power of creating a vision to guide and direct the change effort; (4) under-communicating the vision and rationale for change; (5) allowing obstacles to block the vision; (6) failing to create short term wins to give people a sense of progress; (7) declaring victory too soon; and (8) failure to institutionalise change efforts firmly in the corporate culture.

In the public sector in particular, the lack of technical knowledge and competency necessary to implement change initiatives, lack of transformational leadership, poor communication and lack of individual buy-in of new change initiatives have been cited as potential barriers to the implementation of change (Greasley, 2008).

Amidst many factors that are attributed to the failure of change initiative, this study seeks to evaluate how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees and consequently, to determine the effects of the communication process on the degree to which readiness is created. Organizational communication has been cited as one of the major factors in organisational change efforts that remains problematic (Frahm, 2000) and it is seen as one of the principal reasons for the failure of many organizational change efforts (Daft, 1997).

1.1.2 Organisational Context

The City of Windhoek (also referred to as the Council for the Municipality of Windhoek) was established in 1890, when the first settler from the Cape arrived in Windhoek. It is currently a local authority responsible for the provision of basic services such as water, sewerage and drainage, cemeteries, electricity, public transport, valuation of rateable properties, construction of roads etc, as provided for in the Local Authority Act, 1992 (Act 23 of 1992). It serves a city of about 450 000 inhabitants or about 20 percent of the population of Namibia and employs approximately 1900 employees.

The City of Windhoek is governed by a Municipal Council which consist of fifteen (15) members, of which five (5) are management committee members, the Office of the Chief Executive Officer as principal head, and nine (9) departments. The departments are headed by strategic executives, who, together with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) constitute the senior management team, all responsible for execution of accepted policies, and preparing and guiding policy decisions through Council.

1.1.3 Problem statement

Prior to 1998, the City of Windhoek had a performance appraisal system in place that was done on an annual basis (merely an appraisal and not necessarily a performance management system as such). This practice was suspended after the restructuring that took place in 1998. However, since the suspension of the performance appraisal system in 1998, City of Windhoek has had no institutional mechanism in place to measure, monitor and evaluate employees' performance.

Due to various challenges related to urbanisation, unemployment, economic development, as well as the provision of basic services, the City of Windhoek initiated the implementation of a new performance management system (PMS) using the balanced scorecard framework (Figure 1.1 below) to systematically assess the performance of the organisation on a continuous basis in order to determine whether the organisation is successfully executing its mandate. A performance management system is defined by Den Hartog, Boselie and Pauwe (2004), as an integrated process in which manager's work with their subordinates to set expectations, measure and review results and reward performance in order to improve employees' performance, with the ultimate aim of positively affecting organizational success.

The new performance management system uses a balanced scorecard framework which according to Kaplan and Norton (1992), is defined as a set of measures that gives top managers a fast but comprehensive view of the business. The balanced scorecard provides the organisation with a comprehensive framework that can translate a company or organisation's vision and strategy into a coherent and linked set of performance measures.

The balanced scorecard advocates choosing performance metrics related to (1) financial objectives - measures revenue growth (sales, profit) and financial efficiency (costs, expenses and assets utilisation); (2) customer objectives - focusing on product and service attributes (price, time, service), customer relationships, brand management; (3) the firm's internal business processes objectives - that focus on internal operational management processes, customer management process and procedural or regulatory and social processes in order to achieve financial and customer these objectives; (4) learning and growth objectives - that

enable the organisation to continually bring about value enhancement in the internal business processes which in turn leads to customer and financial outcomes, through staff relationship building and empowerment (recruit, develop and retain), technological innovation and corporate culture management.



Figure 1.1: The City of Windhoek balanced scorecard

SOURCE: Adopted from City of Windhoek performance management framework report (2005)

The structure of the balanced scorecard of the City of Windhoek, as depicted in Figure 1.1 above, provides a prescriptive framework that focuses on stakeholders and customers, learning and growth, resources, and internal business processes of the organisation, in order to create a system of linked strategic thrusts, strategic objectives, measures, targets and initiatives which collectively describe the strategy of an organisation and how that strategy can be achieved.

The implementation of the new performance management system in the City of Windhoek was divided into two phases namely a *pre-implementation* and an *implementation phase* as indicated in Figure 1.2 below. The communication process is embedded in the pre-implementation phase which involves the communication of the vision, strategic objectives of the balanced scorecard, departmental objectives and alignments of job descriptions of the planned new performance management system. The implementation phase involves entering into performance agreements, individual development plans, performance reviews, performance appraisal and recognition.

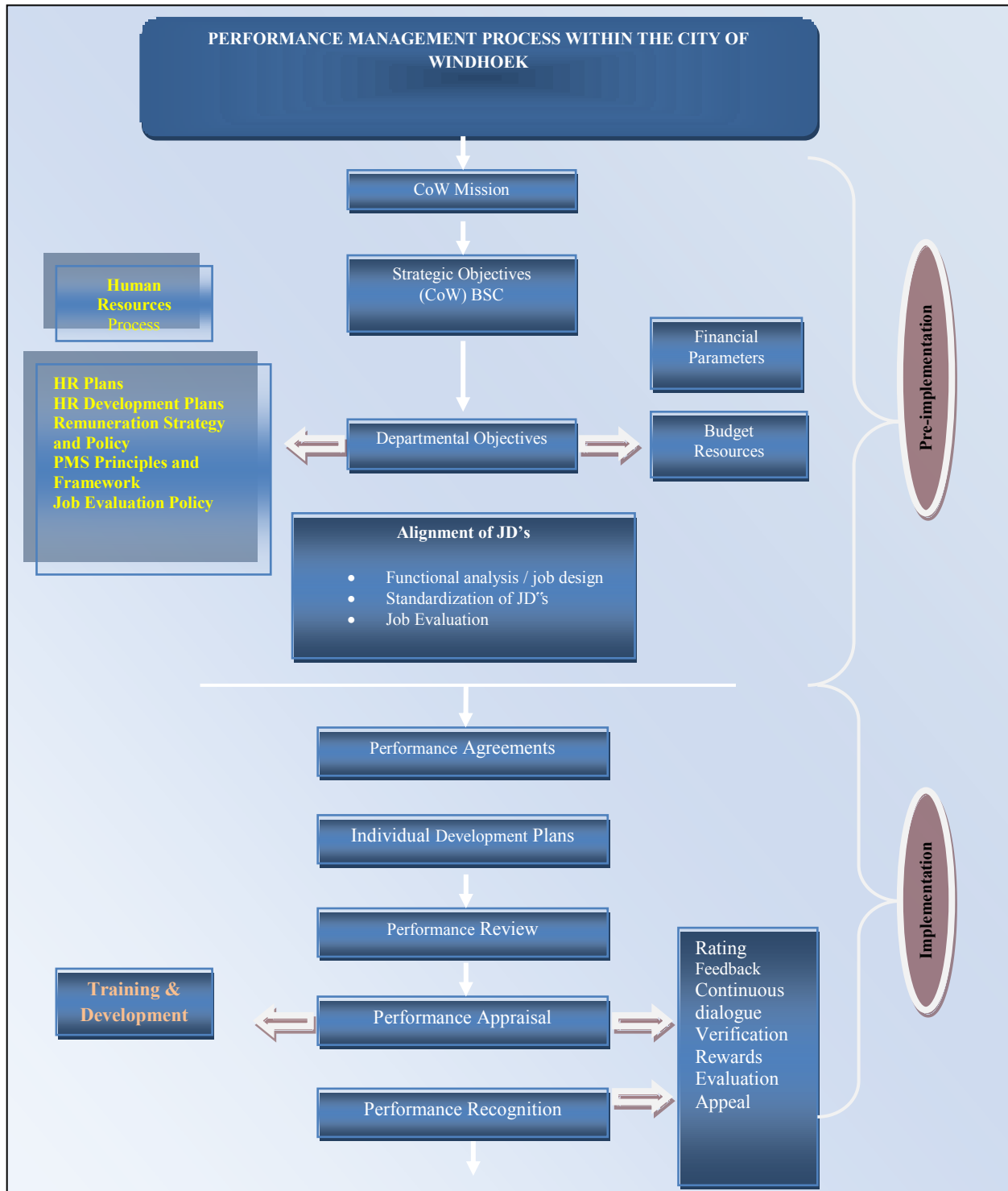


Figure 1.2: Performance management process of the City of Windhoek

SOURCE: City of Windhoek, 2005

Since this study aims to evaluate how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees, it is important that the strategy for and the substance of the new performance management system is communicated clearly to those who are the targets of the planned change (Fraham and Brown, 2007). According to Armenakis *et al.* (2007) the transmitted change messages should encourage the change recipients to embrace organisational change and to modify their on-the-job behaviours.

According to Frahman and Brown (2005), Kelly (2000) and Parremo and Azzemo (2011) communication is defined as the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people, usually with the intent to motivate or influence behaviours. The essence of communicating planned change is to create a shared understanding among employees about the initiative, which may culminate in reduced uncertainty, reduced resistance and high employee involvement and commitment (Wray and Fellenz, 2007). Holbeche (2006) and Elving (2005) indicated that organizational communication is essential in mobilizing people for change by informing them of what is going to happen and how their work is affected.

1.1.4 Research Aim

The primary aim of this study is to identify, understand and evaluate how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees and consequently, to determine the effects of the communication process on the degree to which readiness is created.

This study will use Armenakis, Harris, and Field (1999) five element model of examining the change recipient's beliefs, namely, *discrepancy*, *appropriateness*, *principal support*, *efficacy*, and *valence*, as a framework to assess how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees prior to its implementation. Armenakis *et al.* (2007) assembled the five change recipient's beliefs on the basis that it is the beliefs of the potential adopters that must be influenced.

1.1.5 Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of this study are to:

- (1) Utilise Armenakis and Harris (2001) five key change recipient's beliefs (as a research framework) and evaluate how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees.
- (2) Determine the potential impacts of change recipient's beliefs, the communication methods and strategy used on the implementation of the new performance management system.
- (3) Provide recommendations for communicating and influencing employee's beliefs when planning for future change initiatives.

1.1.6 Key Questions

This research is concerned about the nature and effectiveness of organisational communication of the new performance management system, and whether it is gaining employees buy-in.

Thus, specific questions that drive this research are to understand:

- (1) To what extent do City of Windhoek employees believe in the discrepancy, appropriateness, self-efficacy, principal support and personal valence for the new performance management system?
- (2) What communication strategies and techniques did the organization use to communicate the message of the planned new performance management system, and how effective were they?
- (3) Determine the impacts of change recipient's beliefs on the implementation of the new performance management system?
- (4) What are the recommendations for communicating and influencing employee's beliefs when planning for future change initiatives?

1.1.7 Importance of the study

This study shall bring an understanding of determining employees readiness, and receptivity necessary for successful implementation of the new performance management system, as reflected by their beliefs and understanding of the need for change, the appropriateness of the planned change, their personal capability to implement the planned change, their beliefs in the

existence of management support and perceived benefits associated with the new performance management system.

The study is expected to inform the City of Windhoek senior management about the degree of employee's buy-in (*acceptance*) and/or resistance (*rejection*) of the new performance management system, and subsequent effects on its implementation. The study will contribute to existing theory of organisational change and communication.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 Overview

This section presents a brief review of core theories and recent empirical studies relevant to the research problem. It will highlight contemporary organisational change theories that explain the external or internal environmental forces that compel organisations to change as well as theories that explain the process of organisational change. The section also reviewed recent empirical studies within the literature on organisational change.

1.2.2 Organisational change theories

The Burke and Litwin's (1992) model of organisational performance and change: Building on the work of Litwin and his colleagues (Litwin and Stringer 1968), Burke and Litwin (1992), among others, developed a model of organisational performance and change. The model explains the causes (organisational conditions) and resultant effects (performance results) of

organisational changes and provides guidance for organisational diagnosis, planning and influencing deliberate organisational change.

Burke and Litwin (1992) suggest that organisational change is mainly initiated by forces from the organisation's external environment e.g. changes in the competitive environment, new government regulations and technological breakthroughs (Burke and Litwin, 1992). Changes in the external environment have direct effects on transformational factors (e.g. mission, strategy, leadership and culture) within the organisation as organisations need to respond to the demands of the external environment by changing transformation factors such as systems, structure, management practice etc, within the organisation. Burke and Litwin (1992) developed a 150-item diagnostic questionnaire that accompany the model to assist change agents to diagnose and understand which factors need to be considered when planning for organisational change.

Changing transformation factors such as systems, structure, management practice etc, within the organisation is a massive change process. Following below is a review of four models of organisational change processes developed by Lewin (1947), Kotter (1995), Ford and Ford (1995), Armenakis, Harris and Field (1999) that identify various organisational change processes that change agents should follow when implementing change.

Lewin's (1947) three phases of change process: Lewin (1947) was one of the first to develop the process models of organizational change. He developed a three step change model, essential for consideration when implementing planned change. The first stage is *unfreezing* the present state – this stage requires individuals within the organisation to lose old ways of

doing things by learning about the benefits that would accrue if the new behaviours were implemented (Gordon, 2006). The second stage is *moving* – this stage requires a person or group of people to learn new behaviours and bring about desired change, and the last stage is *refreezing* into the desired state by internalising the change and move forward. Building on Lewin's work are Judson (1991), Kotter (1995) and Armenakis, Harris and Field (1999) who developed various models that explain the process of implementing organisational change.

The Kotter's (1995) eight steps change model: Kotter (1995) identified eight (8) steps that the organization's change agents can follow to successfully implement changes. These steps are: (1) *Establishing a sense of urgency*; (2) *Forming a powerful guiding coalition*; (3) *Creating a vision*; (4) *Communicating the vision*; (5) *Empowering others to act*; (6) *Planning for and creating short term wins*; (7) *Consolidating improvements and sustaining the change*; (8) *Institutionalizing the new approach*.

Kotter (1995) recognizes communication as one of the most crucial steps, because of which many organizational change attempts fail. He points out that senior leaders fail to communicate the vision for change to the change recipients. Specifically, Kotter (1995) noted that a classic error made by leaders trying to implement change is under-communication of the change to the employees that will be implementing it. Thus, he suggest that organizational change agents should identify and utilize every opportunity to discuss the planned change or incorporate the discussion of the planned change into day-to-day activities such as employee training courses, performance reviews, and monthly or quarterly briefing meetings. Moreover, he (Kotter, 1995) argues that to effectively communicate the vision of the planned change, organisational leaders

must demonstrate the behaviours that are consistent with the vision they are promoting. By so doing, the communication of the planned change is not only occurring via words, but also via deeds.

The Ford and Ford's (1995) four types of conversations: Ford and Ford (1995) describe four types of conversations that move the change process through its successive phases: (1) *initiative conversations*, that begin the change process by focusing the participants' attention on what needs to be done; (2) *conversations of understanding*, during which the participants seek to make sense of the problem and start generating methods of addressing it; (3) *conversations of performance*, which concentrate on producing the intended result; and (4) *conversations for closure*, during which the change process is determined to be complete. Essentially, although this model is mediated by conversations, it helps to conceptualize the role of communication during the stages of unfreezing (instigation), change (understanding and performance), and refreezing (closure). Moreover, it expands upon Kotter's (1995) call for communication regarding change to occur in as many contexts as possible within an organization

The Armenakis, Harris and Field's (1999) three phase of change model: Drawing on Lewin's (1951) three stage of change model, Armenakis (1993) suggested three phases in which the organisational change process unfold. The first phase is to *create readiness*. Armenakis (1999) suggested that the action is to create readiness for change by disconfirming organizational members' conceptions of the current situation, stimulate the dissatisfaction with the status quo, creating an appealing vision of a future state of affairs, and fostering a sense of

confidence that this future state can be realized. This first phase is similar to Lewin's (1951) concept of unfreezing whereby change advocates must first "unfreeze" the organization by changing the existing "mind-set" and creating the motivation for change.

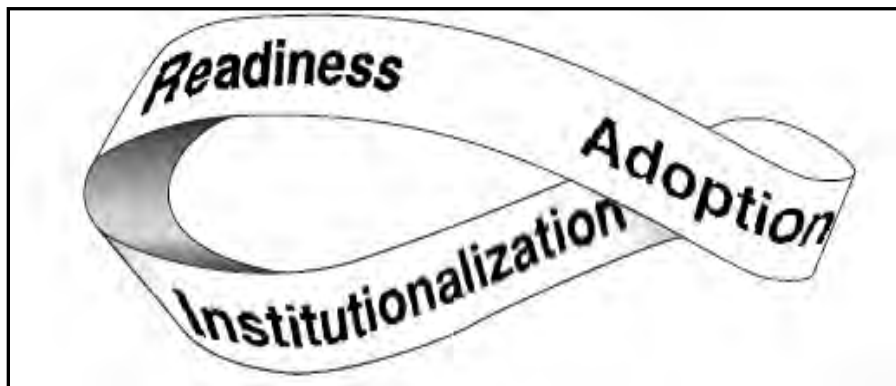


Figure 1.3: Three phases of organisational change process

SOURCE: Armenakis and Harris (2002)

The second phase is *adoption*. This phase is similar to Lewin (1951) concept of moving where the planned change is implemented and employees adopt the new ways of operating. The third phase is *institutionalization*, which flows from efforts to maintain the adoption period and reinforce the change until they become internalized. According to Armenakis (1999) the operating mechanism underlying the three phase of change is the basic change message which should incorporate the five key change recipient's beliefs namely: *discrepancy, self-efficacy, personal valence, principal support and appropriateness*.

However, responding to forces from the organisation's external environment e.g. implementing a new programme or system is not always easy. The literature indicates that organizational change is difficult and the success rates of organisations implementing change initiative range

from 20% to 60% depending on the type of change (Smith, 2002). Consistent with these findings Daly *et al.* (2003), Elving (2005) and Cheng *et al.* (2007) reported that the failure rate of planned organizational changes range between one-third to two-thirds and as high as 70 percent. The following section reviews empirical studies on how successful certain organisations implemented specific change initiatives in response to the demands of changes in their external and internal environments.

1.2.3 Recent empirical studies on organisational changes

Cheng *et al.* (2007) conducted a longitudinal case study on a large project based construction organization based in UK that was implementing a new competency-based performance management system, due to heightened competitive pressure in the construction industry. The aim of designing and implementing a new competency-based performance management system was to improve its performance and align employees' efforts with its espoused visions and values. Data were collected from the interviews with managers and employee representatives as well as through an examination of organizational documents and direct observation. Cheng *et al.* (2007) found that the new performance management system in that organization was not a success. The barriers to implementing a new performance management system mainly stemmed from a lack of senior management commitment, lack of support, lack of participation and leadership ingrained working practices and the absence of appropriate training interventions (Cheng *et al.* 2007).

A case study was conducted by Ruvolo and Bullis (2003) on an organisational change initiative implemented by the U.S Military Academy within the West Point department in 1995, due to the demands of changes in the organisation's internal environments. Specifically, the military students in one of the Military Academy departments had a great academic feel instead of having a great warrior or soldier spirit. As a result, a new head of department with an outstanding reputation was tasked to turn the department around. Ruvolo and Bullis (2003) found that, the change was not successful because after the change was implemented morale, productivity, and retention fell sharply.

According to Ruvolo and Bullis (2003), the reasons for such outcomes were related to lack of communicating the need for change, lack of subordinate empowerment to participate in the change process and lack of insiders' organization understanding. What emerged from Ruvolo and Bullis (2003) is that when implementing a new change agents should ensure that the need for a change is clearly and effectively communicated.

Collyer (2000) conducted a case study on Guinness, a brewing Division of Diageo that was formed in 1997. At that time Guinness was operating in about 150 markets worldwide. Collyer (2000) studied how Guinness implemented an Integrated Business Program project across its five main businesses around the world, due to the demands of its external and internal environments. The aim was to integrate its international supply chain which involves replacing the inefficient activities with more effective ones throughout Guinness, strengthening its brand presence globally, thus preparing itself for the common global challenges at the time.

The implementation of this project at Guinness was successful. According to Collyer (2000), that the success of the project was underpinned by the accessibility of accurate information more quickly to aid everyone involved to make informed decisions. Information about the change project was communicated right at the beginning from the top, in order to get buy-in from everyone in the organization. In addition, Collyer (2000) found that during the implementation of the project, the presence and involvement of senior management played an exceptional role in creating awareness about what was going on.

de Waal and Counet (2009) conducted a study on various organisations that are implementing and/ or using a performance management system (PMS) with the intent to gain insight about the problems encountered, lessons learned and make recommendations that will lead to successful implementation of performance management systems in future. Their study uncovered that although the failure rate of performance management systems is reported by popular scholars (Daly, 2003; Elving, 2005) to be as high as 70%, De Waal and Counet (2009) found out that the failure rate has actually decreased from 70% to 56% over past the past decade (1999-2009).

According to de Waal and Counet (2009) the reasons for the decline are attributed to the widespread usage of performance management systems and the increased publications that enhanced the understanding of many managers on how to approach the performance management system implementation process. As to the performance management systems that fail de Waal and Counet (2009) identified lack of top management support, lack of performance culture, or the performance management system being abandoned after a change

of management, and people not seeing the benefits from the implementation of the performance management system.

These studies demonstrate that responding to forces from the organisation's external or internal environment is not always easy. There are a variety of factors that change agents need to diagnose and understand in order to affect the change effort. Conducting a proper organisational diagnosis may prevent change agents underestimating the requirements necessary for a successful transformation effort (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999).

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Overview

This research aims to evaluate and understand how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees and consequently, to determine the effects of the communication process on the degree to which readiness is created. This section offers a detailed description of how the research study was undertaken.

1.3.2 Research Paradigms

To achieve the aim and objectives of this study (as described 1.1.4 and 1.1.5), this study followed the mixed methods paradigm. The mixed methods approach, also referred to as the *third research paradigm* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) is widely used and recognised by

management scholars. The mixed method forces both positivist and phenomenology paradigms to share the same research questions, to collect complementary data, and to conduct the counterpart analysis (Yin, 2007). It also allows data triangulation which combines multiple observers, theoretical perspectives and methodologies are used interchangeably to describe the research strategies that incorporate a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the study of the same phenomenon. Triangulation strengthens data reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988) and assists the researcher to capture the phenomenon surfaced in the study while increasing the credibility of the study.

1.3.3 Research design

Collis and Hussey (2003: 56) define research design as the science and the art of planning procedures for conducting studies so as to get the most valid findings. This study used a case study as a research design method to conduct the research. A case study is defined by Yin (2007) as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

Fundamental to a case study research method is a belief that “sometimes only by looking carefully at a practical, real life instance can a full picture be obtained of the actual interaction of variables or events” (Renyemi, 1996: 55). The type of case study used in this research is an explanatory case study in which existing theories are used to understand the presumed causal

links in real-life intervention that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies (Yin, 2007).

1.3.4 Data Collection Methods

This study used questionnaires, focus group interviews and document analysis to collect data as described below.

- (1) Survey questionnaires – The online survey questionnaire was administered to 711 employees of the City of Windhoek with access to computers and the Internet to elicit quantitative data from the employees about the new performance management system. 202 responded from all levels of the organization yielding a response rate of 22.4%. The type of questions used were adapted from the content adequacy questionnaire developed by Armenakis *et al.* (2007) that is used to assess the change recipients' beliefs.
- (2) Focus group interviews – three focus group interviews, of which two consisted of seven participants and one consisted of eight participants, were formed and conducted during the afternoon slot of the working hours between the 11 of October 2011 to the 14 of November. Each interview session lasted about 1 hour and 36 minutes, depending on the dynamics of the group participants. The aim of using focus group interviews was to obtain data relating to employees thoughts, feelings and opinions about the implementation of the new performance management system.

(3) Document analysis – additional information relevant to the research study was obtained through the analysis of documents such as memos, e-mail correspondence, announcements, and other written and administrative reports or documents.

According to Yin (2007) the use of multiple sources of data, to collect data allows the researcher to address a broader range of historical and behavioural issues. Using multiple sources of evidence also permits the development of converging lines of inquiry, data triangulation and corroboration, thus making the findings or conclusions of a case study to be more convincing and accurate (Yin, 2007).

1.3.5 Data analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), data analysis is defined as a process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data. The purpose of data analysis is to address the initial propositions of one's study by examining, categorising, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the research data (Yin, 2003).

The fact that this research study employed multiple sources of data collection method, the analysis of data is subject to the use of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis strategies. Quantitative data were statistically analysed using Microsoft Excel tool. Specifically, descriptive statistics such as simple tables and bar charts were constructed and graphically used to summarise and display quantitative data. Qualitative data were analysed qualitatively by relying on theoretical proposition (Yin, 2007). These theoretical propositions will assist in

generating theories from data which will in turn assist in the answering of the key questions of this research.

1.4 RESULTS

1.4.1 Overview

This section presents the findings of the results obtained from the survey questionnaires, focus group interviews and documents analysis. The results of each data collection method used are presented below.

1.4.2 Survey Questionnaire Results

1.4.2.1 Demographic data

A total of 711 questionnaires were sent to employees of the City of Windhoek and 202 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 22.4% of the respondents. Table 1.1 below shows the demographic data which shows that, of 202 respondents, 105 (52%) were male and 97 (48%) were female.

Table 1.1: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	<i>N</i>	%
Male	105	52
Female	97	48
	202	100
Note: <i>n</i> = 202		

1.4.2.2 Department response and designations of respondents

Figure 1.4 shows the departmental responses and the distributions of respondents per department as a percentage of the total sample. The results show that the City Police and Emergency Services department has the highest distribution of respondents of 18%, followed by the Economic Development and Community Services department with a distribution of 14% and the Finance department with 13% respectively. The lowest response rate comes from the Electricity department, ITC and Transportation departments with a combined distribution of 13%. Though these departments show the lowest response rate, the total sample 9of the response rate) is still a good representative.











Response		Percent	Count
Office of the CEO		6%	12
City Police & Emergency Services		19%	39
Economic Development and Community Services		14%	28
Electricity		2%	4
Finance		12%	25
Human Resources		8%	16
ICT		5%	10
Infrastructure, Water and Waste Management (IWWM)		15%	30
Planning, Urbanisation and Environment (PLA)		13%	26
Transportation		6%	12
Total		100%	202

Figure 1.4: Distribution of departmental responses

Table 1.2: Designation of respondents

Designation	n	%
Superintendent	4	2
Section head	26	13
Divisional manager	11	5
Specialist	30	15
Supervisor	32	16
Non-supervisor	97	48
	202	100

Note: n= 202

Table 1.2 shows the designations of all respondents and the distributions of the respondents as a percentage of the total sample. The results show that 97 (48%) of the sample is represented by employees at non-supervisory level, about 32 (16%) of the sample were supervisors, 30 (15%) were specialists and 6 (13%) of the sample were section heads. The smallest numbers were superintendents and divisional managers. The overall response rate provided a balanced and representative sample of the organization.

1.4.2.3 Results on the five key change recipient beliefs

The researcher makes use of Armenakis and Harris's (2001) model of five key change recipients beliefs of *discrepancy, appropriateness, efficacy, principal support and personal valence* (a description in of each of these beliefs is provided in section 2), to evaluate how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees and consequently, and consequently to determine the effects of communication process on the degree to which readiness is created.

The participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5 point Likert response scale with values ranging from 1- *strongly agree* to 5 - *strongly disagree* on various survey questionnaire items that are closely related to each of the five change recipient's beliefs. In order to facilitate the interpretation of the results, the researcher combined all responses that are in agreement (agree and strongly agree) to represent "agree" (*buy-in*), and all that are in disagreement (disagree or strongly disagree) to represent "disagree" (*resist*) and all the responses that indicate neither agree nor disagree to represent "neither agree/nor disagree" (*neutral*).

1.4.2.3.1 Summative average percentage of the five change recipient beliefs.

Figure 1.5 below, indicates summative average percentages of the levels of agreements and disagreements of the respondents for each of the five change recipient's beliefs. The results in Figure 1.5 indicate quite a high degree of agreement (*buy-in*) and considerably low degree of disagreement (*resistance*) among the respondents to nearly all five change recipient's beliefs. Discrepancy received the highest degree of agreement (*buy-in*) 84%, efficacy received 73%, appropriateness 66% and valence 59% whereas principal support scored the lowest degree of agreement of about 40% of the respondents.

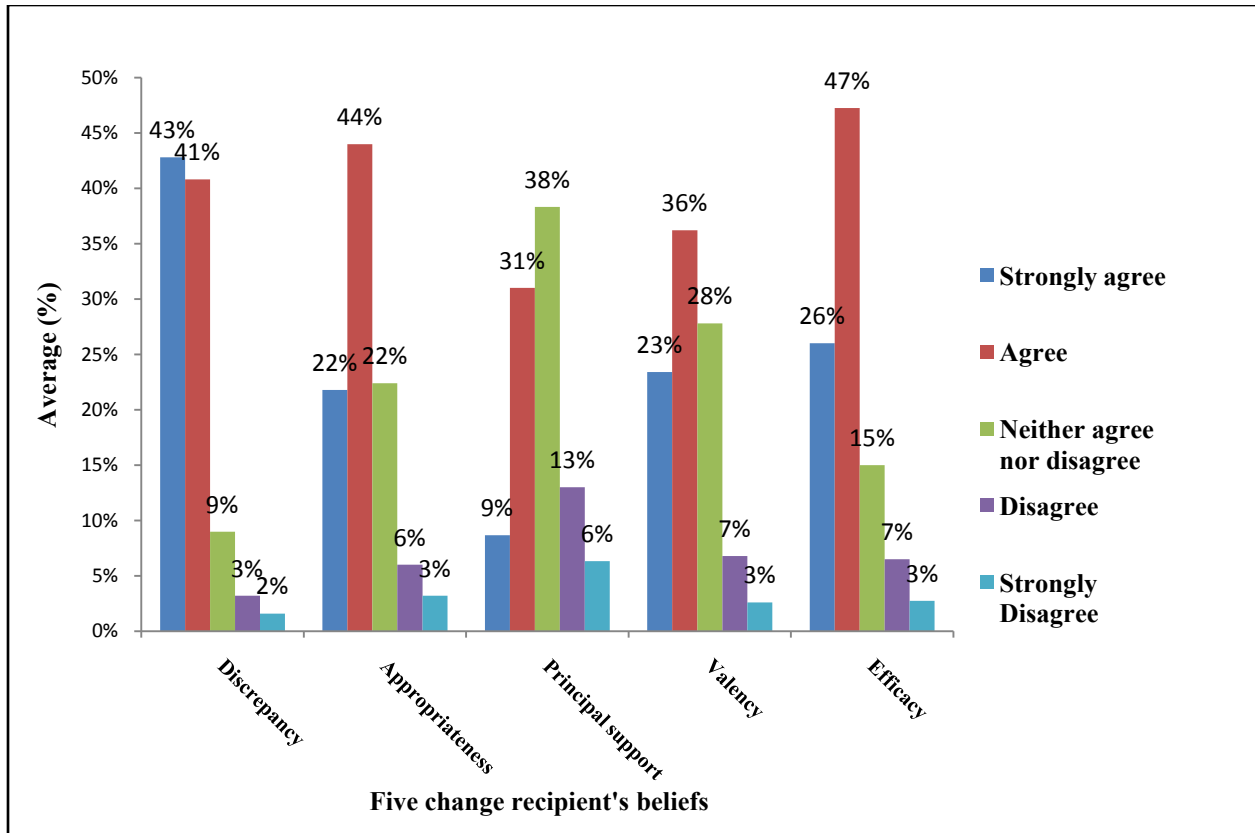


Figure 1.5: Average percentages of the five key change recipient's beliefs

Despite quite a high degree of agreement (*buy-in*) as reflected in Figure 1.5, there are also a notable number of the respondents who neither agree nor disagree to some of the five change recipient's beliefs. In particular, principal support (38%), valence (28%) and appropriateness (22%) indicated a high degree of neither agree nor disagree. The degree of disagreement (*resistance*) is relatively low in almost all five change recipient's beliefs except for principal support which indicated slightly a higher levels of disagreement (19%). Following below is a detailed presentation of the results of each of the five change recipient's beliefs.

1.4.2.3.2 Discrepancy

Discrepancy involves assessing if employees believe that a need for change does really exist in the organization. In order for employees to view the new performance management system in a favourable light, they must be convinced that the status quo is unsatisfactory and something needs to be done to change it. But also the extent to which employees may possibly believe that there is a need for a new performance management system in the organisation will depend on the information communicated to them by the change agents. Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement and disagreement on each discrepancy's questionnaire items as indicated in Figure 1.6 below.

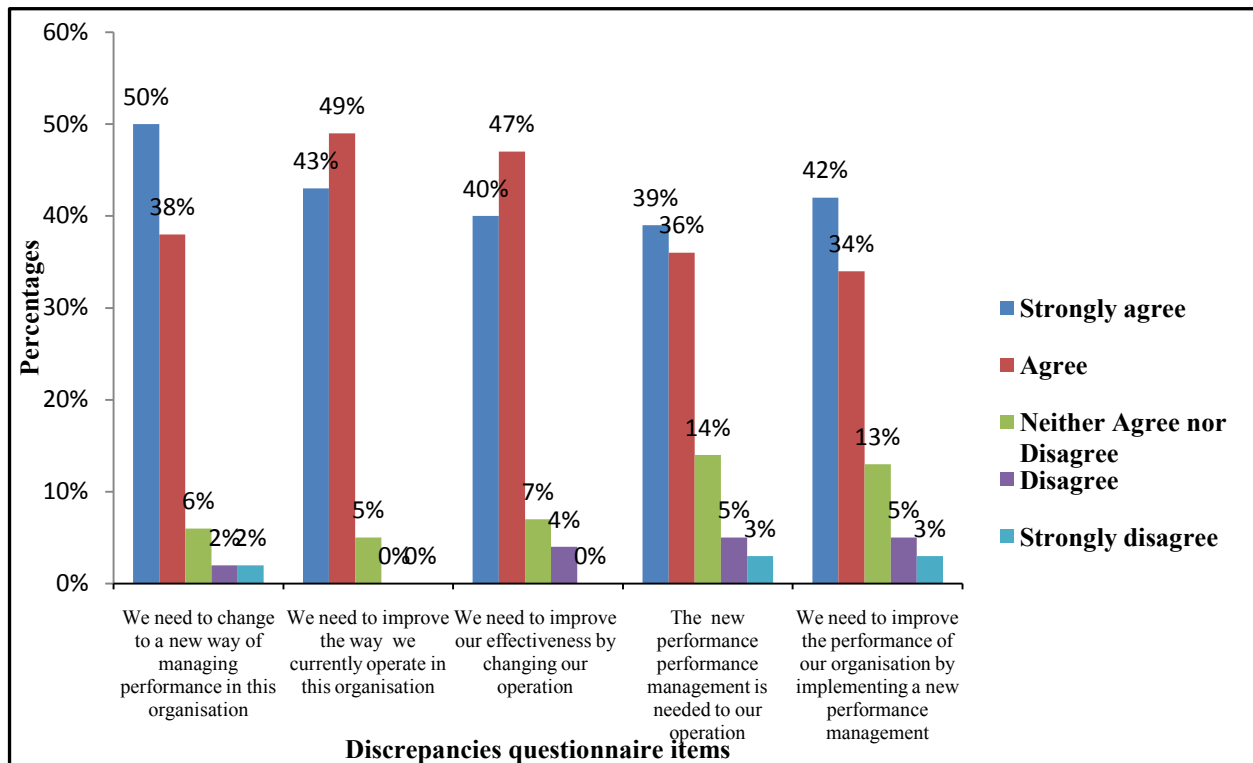


Figure 1.6: Results of discrepancy questionnaire items

The results in Figure 1.6 above indicate a high degree of agreement (*buy-in*) to nearly all discrepancy questionnaire items for the new performance management system. About 88% of the respondents agreed that the City of Windhoek needs a new way of managing performance, while 92 % of the respondents agreed that the new performance management system will improve the way the organisation currently operates. About 87% of the respondents agreed that the change in our operation will improve the effectiveness of our organization, whereas 75% of the respondents agreed that the new performance management system is needed for our operation. About 76% of the respondents agreed that the implementation of the new performance management system will indeed improve the performance of our organization.

1.4.2.3.3 Appropriateness

Appropriateness seeks to find out from the change recipients whether the performance management system being introduced in the organization is an appropriate reaction to the need and the vision of the organisation. According to Armenakis (2001), appropriateness addresses the possibilities that individual may embrace a vision, but they may not necessarily agree that the specific change being introduced is appropriate to support the vision. That is to say, if the proposed performance management system is viewed by the employees as an incorrect approach to pursuing the vision, the employees may not buy into it or try to make it work.

Figure 1.7 shows the levels of agreement and disagreement to the five questionnaire items that were used to assess the appropriateness for the new performance management system. The

results indicate a reasonably high level of agreement (*buy-in*) among respondents as compared to the level disagreement (resistance) and neither agrees nor disagrees (*neutral*).

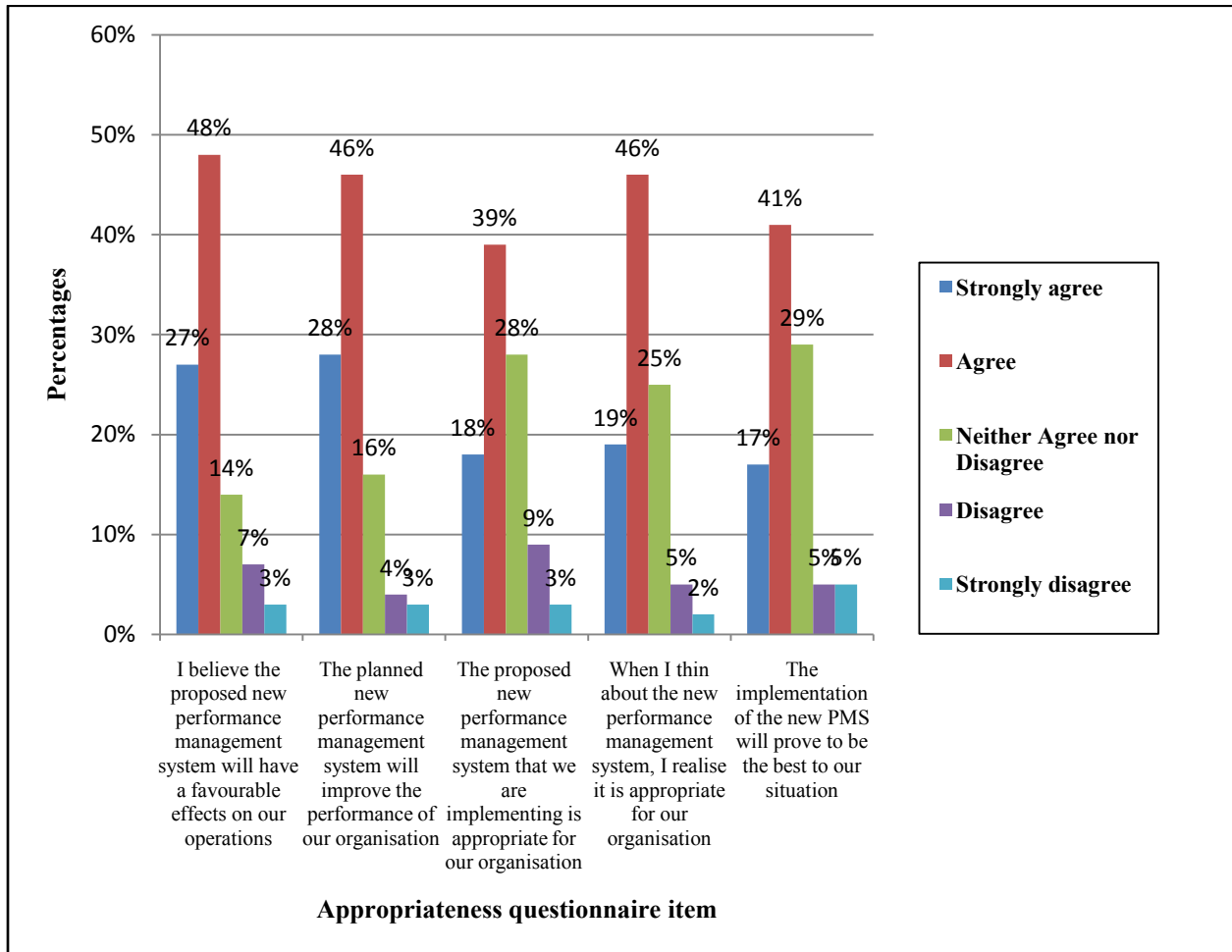


Figure 1.7: Results of appropriateness questionnaire item

As shown in Figure 1.7, about 75% of the respondents agreed to that the planned new performance management system will have favourable effects on the operations of the organisation, whereas 74% of the respondents agreed that the new performance management system will improve the performance of the organisation. However, only 58% of the

respondents agreed that the new performance management system is appropriate and it will prove to be the best to the organization, whereas 65% of the respondents agreed that, they realize that performance management is appropriate for the organization. However, the result in figure 1.7 also show a reasonably high degree of neither agree nor disagree to the appropriateness of the new performance management system. About 25% to 29% of respondents neither agrees nor disagree that the planned new performance management system is appropriate.

1.4.2.3.4 Principal support

Principal support describes the support from change agents and opinion leaders to organizational members. According to Armenakis and Harris (2001), employees from many organizations have seen quite a lot of change initiatives that stall due to a lack of management support and many employees often become sceptical and unwilling to support the change until a clear demonstration for support is made obvious.

Figure 1.8 shows more details on the levels of agreement and disagreement to the six questionnaire items that were used to assess the principal support for the new performance management system. The results in Figure 1.8 indicate that there is a high level of respondents who neither agree nor disagree (*neutral*) to the existence of principle support. Accordingly, between 39% and 45% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that; (1) their peers embrace the new performance management system, (2) their peers are dedicated to make the new PMS works, (3) senior management are walking the talks regarding the new performance

management system, and (4) senior management support the implementation of the new PMS. Moreover, about 31% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that management supports the new PMS. However, 38% of the respondents agree that their immediate managers and supervisors also encourage them to support the new PMS because they are in favour for it.

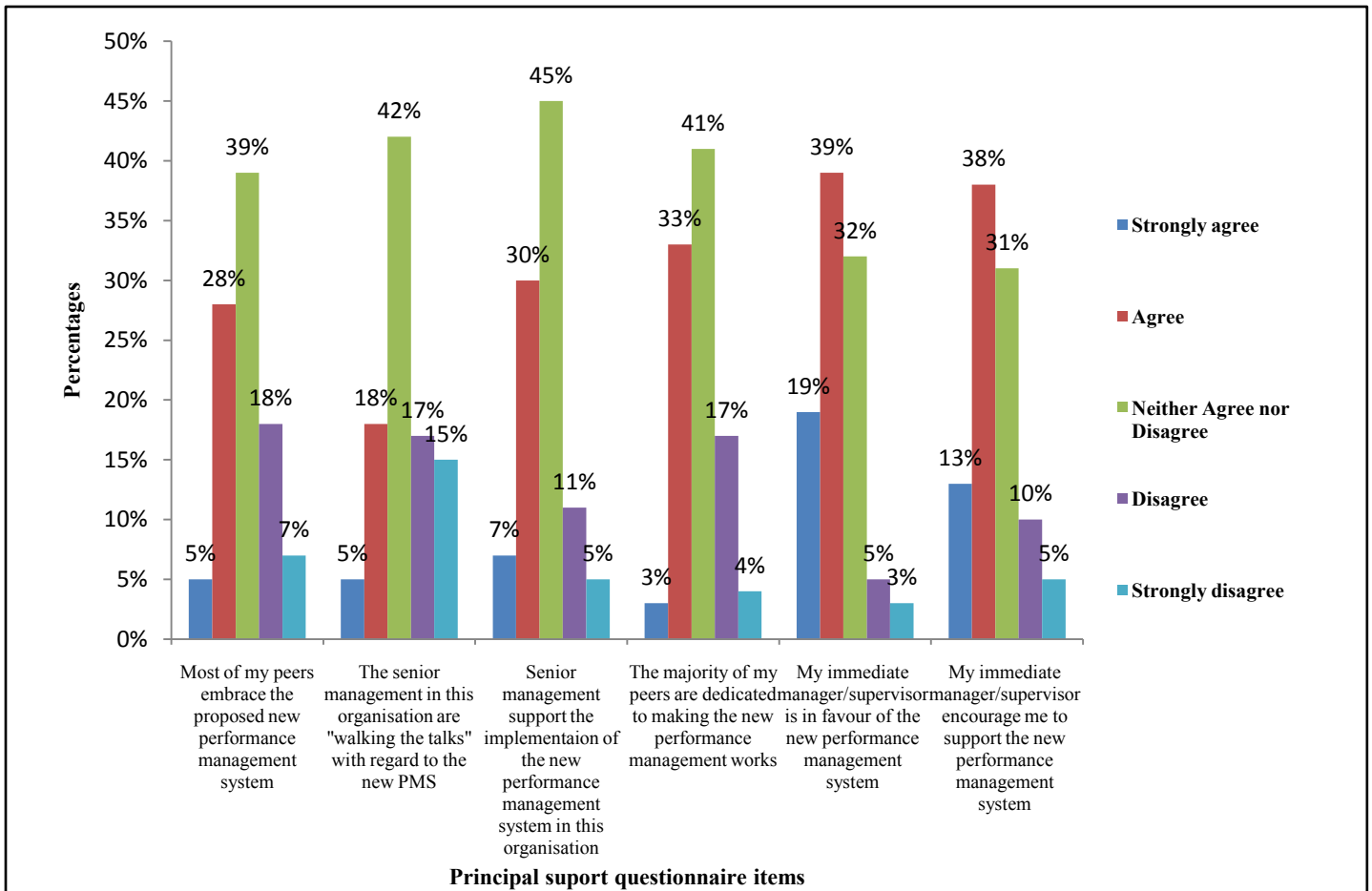


Figure 1.8: Result of principal support questionnaire items

Moreover, the result in Figure 1.8 show a reasonable high degree of agreement (*buy-in*) to the existence of principal support, but to a lesser degree than the degree of neither agree nor

disagree. As shown in Figure 1.8 about 33% of the respondents agreed that their peers are dedicated to make the new PMS work, 58% agreed that their immediate managers/supervisors are in favour of the new PMS and 51% agreed that their immediate managers/supervisors encourage them to support the change. The degree of disagreement is reasonably low for nearly all principal support questionnaire items with the exception of two items where 25% of the respondents disagree (*resist*) that their peers embrace the change and 32% of the respondents disagree (*resist*) that senior management are walking the talk with regard to the new performance management system.

1.4.2.3.5 Efficacy

Efficacy refers to a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1987) and McDonald and Siegel (1996), research has shown that people have different levels of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1987) some people fear and tend to avoid threatening situations they believe exceed their coping skills, whereas some get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situation that would otherwise be intimidating.

Figure 1.9 shows the levels of agreement and disagreement to the four questionnaire items that were used to assess the perceptions and beliefs of individual capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. The results in Figure 1.9 show that the majority of the respondents have a high degree of self-efficacy. As the result

shows, about 72% of the respondents believe in their personal capability to implement the new performance management system, 81% believe that they will be capable of successfully performing their duties with the new performance management system, 72% believe that employees of the City of Windhoek can successfully implement the new performance management system and, 68% believe that employees have the capability to do so. By contrast, the levels of disagreement among the respondents to all efficacy questionnaire items are significantly very low.

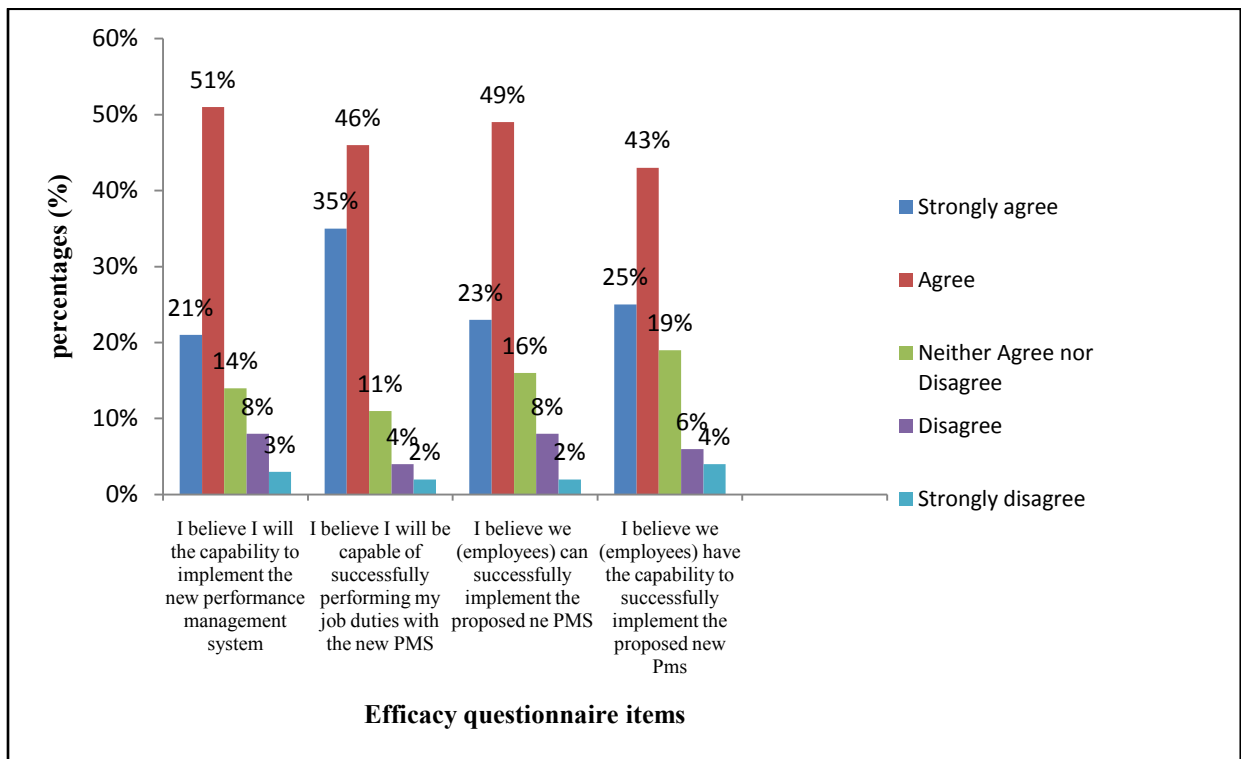


Figure 1.9: Results of efficacy questionnaire items

1.4.2.3.6 Valence

Valence refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic attractiveness (from the change recipient's perspective) associated with the perceived outcome of the change (Armenakis *et al*, (2007). Personal valence recognizes the importance of the organization e.g. the role of organizational leaders, in addressing the personal needs of the employees. In view of that, employees assess the change message communicated to them by their leaders in terms of its positive and negative outcomes and perceived fairness of the planned change. If certain individuals in the organisation realize that their interests are threatened, those affected may not believe and accept the planned change but rather resist it.

The results in Figure 1.10 show that respondents have mixed beliefs about benefits associated with the new performance management system. Accordingly, 63% of the respondents believe that it will benefit them, 65% believe that it will increase their self fulfilment, 68% believe that it will increase their feeling of accomplishment, 45% believe that their fringe benefit will remain the same after it is implemented, and 57% believe that they could earn high performance return.

However, the result shows that there are still many respondents who neither agree nor disagree to the presence of personal valence with regard to the new performance management system. Between 19% and 40% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree (*neutral*) that; (1) the new PMS will benefit them, (2) it will increase their self fulfilment, (3) that it will increase their

feeling of accomplishment, (4) that their fringe benefit will remain the same after it is implemented, and (5) that they could earn high performance.

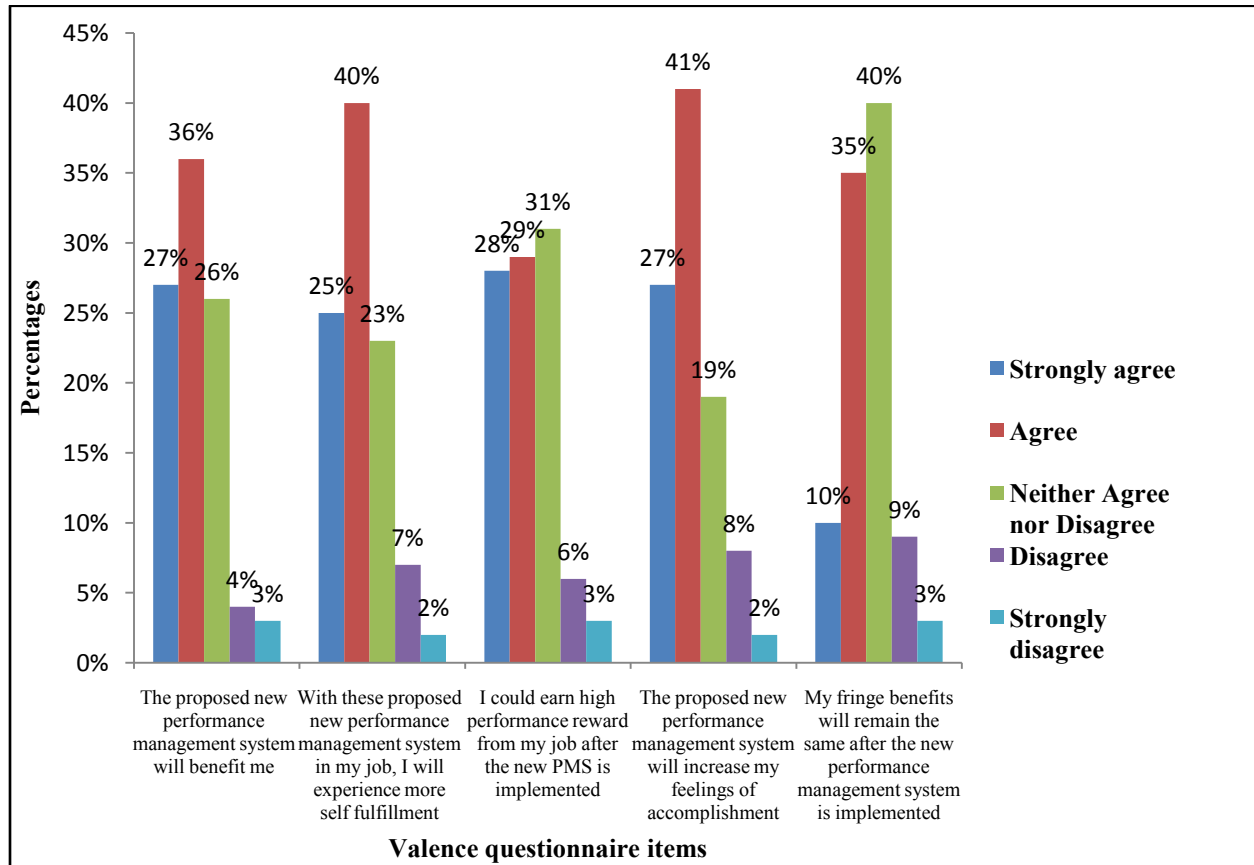


Figure 1.10: Result of valence questionnaire items

1.4.3 Results from Focus group interviews

To complement data obtained from the survey questionnaire, a total of three focus group interviews were conducted to obtain data relating to the thoughts, feelings, opinion and behaviours of employees about the new performance management system at the City of

Windhoek. Two focus group interviews consisted of seven participants and one focus group interview consisted of eight participants. The researcher used some of the questions contained in the questionnaire items related to the five change recipient's beliefs as well as additional questions that are related to the methods of communication and conveying strategies used to communicate the new performance management system.

The questions used for the focus group interviews were mainly in a form of open ended type questions in order to allow the participants the freedom to respond as much as they could. The interview sessions lasted from about one hour to one hour and 36 minutes and all interview sessions were recorded. The results that emerged from focus group interview are presented below using verbatim quotation drawn from the interview transcript of the transcribed sample in order to effectively convey perspectives on the issues raised (Greasly, *et al.* 2009).

All groups interviewed indicated that there was a need to implement a new performance management system which could be used to measure the overall performance of the organisation. The interviewees reflect as follows:

“The new performance management system is needed because it will help the City of Windhoek to achieve its policy objectives and efficiently provide better and quality services to the public we serve”.

The interview participants expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo and accepted that the organisation is faced with many challenges such as increasing demand for better services from local citizens, high urbanisation, high unemployment and a high housing backlog among others, thus putting pressure on the City to constantly improve its service delivery.

While the need for the new performance management system is certain and recognized, the interviewees expressed divergent views about the extent to which the need for it was accepted. Some interview participants indicated that a notable interest of the acceptance of the new performance management system comes from the perceived benefits that are associated with it such as the perceived possibility of upgrading the current job grades, possible job performance rewards and opportunity for a personal development plan. Others interviewees believe that the need for new PMS was something important and valuable as it enhances the performance of the organisation and add value to the customers.

Whereas the need for a new performance management system is embraced, and many interviewees recognized that the proposed new PMS is an appropriate approach to the need in terms of its practical realities, however, all group interviewed expressed some concern with the organisational culture. They suggested that the prevailing culture of the City of Windhoek and the values it holds may not necessarily be congruent with the culture and values required by the new performance management system to be successfully implemented in the organization. A number of interview participants contended that:

“The very nature of our job in this organisation and just the way we do things around here may not necessarily allow all of us to make the new performance management work effectively, in other words, the culture and the values we hold are not necessarily supportive of the new performance management system”.

The quote above implies that the City of Windhoek may need to cultivate a culture that better corresponds to the culture required by the new performance management system in order to make it work. In other words, the interviewees indicated that a new culture of performance

needs to gradually seep into the minds of all organization members before all the new behaviours come into sight. They argued that the City of Windhoek requires time to adapt to the change. According to Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders, G. (1990), organizational culture and core values within an organization play an important role in influencing the overall effectiveness of an organization, as well as individual behaviour and their willingness to welcome and implement change.

The interview participants indicated divergent views on the existence of principal support they received from senior management for the new performance management system. While some interviewees felt that senior management are dedicated and support their employees to implementation of the new PMS, many interviewees express the contrary. The quote below reflects the views of the interviewees.

“The key issue is availability of information and feedback from senior management. You will hardly hear them talking about the new performance management system to us, we are always keen to find out what have we achieved so far and where are we going from them”.

The participants expressed dissatisfaction with level of commitment they receive from their senior management. Specifically, interviewees raised concerns about the lack of feedback on progress of the new PMS. Kotter (1996) cautions that without providing feedback and celebrating short term wins, many people may give up and actively join the ranks of those resisting it. Some interviewees have also indicated that although senior leaders support the new PMS, some do not often demonstrate the required and desired behaviours for the new

performance management system. Furthermore, interviewees also indicated that senior leaders were not actively involved in participating in informational and training sessions held by the Human Resources Management Department together with various groups of employees in order to set directions and promote new behaviour required by the new PMS, nor show the sense of urgency by responding promptly to execute specific task such as accelerating the finalisation of job description required to effect the new PMS.

All groups interviewed expressed a strong conviction that they have the skill and experience that can enable them to perform their tasks as required by the new Performance Management System. The following reflects this position:

“The City of Windhoek has extremely highly skilled and qualified staff, thus I strongly believe we (employees) have the capability to execute our tasks. The only thing that we need is to adopt new behaviours that are consistent with our perceived capabilities in order to make the new PMS work”.

The participant indicated that the City of Windhoek has a diverse and multi-skilled labour force that is capable of effectively implementing the new performance management system.

The majority of the participants believe that the new performance management system brings positive benefits through possible upgrading of their current position, possible performance rewards and opportunities for personal a development plan. The following was example of this expectation:

“I think it is a fair tool since it provides a mechanism by which employees will receive some form of feedback from the organization after committing enormous efforts throughout the year than getting nothing at all, either through performance reward, recognition of achievement, or promotion”.

The quote above indicates that the participant is aware of the potential positive outcomes associated with the new performance management system that serves as motivational factors to commit time and energy to make it work.

The results obtained from the interviewee participants and document analysis indicate that the main methods of communicating information related to the new performance management system prior to its implementation were through a road show, leaflets and brochures, training and discussion sessions, memos, emails and divisional meetings. Yet, the participants expressed the view that methods and the message they carried were not communicated regularly. However, the interviewees stressed that the change messages carried by each communication method were largely persuasive in nature.

1.4.4 Results from document analysis

The document analysis in this study reports the various documents or communication tools that were used in the communication process and other relevant information. The data on the evaluation of the impacts of these communication tools comes from the questionnaire and the focus group interviews. These provide the insights into the possible impacts of these documents and communication events. Below is a summary of the main communication documents and events used in the communication process.

The first communication method that created interest among employees of the City of Windhoek was a „City-wide road show“ that took place in 2008. A road show is a form of personal engagement communication method through which planned change can be communicated to employees (Holbech, 2006). During the road show, the Chief Executive Officer, strategic executives and OPMD task team travelled from one department to another giving live presentations and speeches about the coming of a new performance management system to employees. In all presentations, senior management communicated the need for and benefits that the new performance management system brings to individuals and the organisation.

Secondly the need for the new performance management system in the City of Windhoek was explained through the use of „PMS leaflets and Brochures“. The use of leaflets and brochures are forms of printed media communication methods, also recommended by Holbelch (2006), through which planned change can be communicated to all employees. The OPMD task team created an array of separate and integrated leaflets and brochures containing clear and easily understandable information on topics such as the vision, aims and objectives of the performance management system, the importance of the performance management system for the organisation and what employees can do to prepare themselves for the coming new performance management system.

Thirdly, the OPMD task team communicated about the performance management system by conducting discussions and trainings sessions on the performance management system,

encouraging senior management, managers and supervisors to take ownership of the performance management system in their own departments, divisions and sections in order to leverage buy-in and commitment from all employees throughout the organisation.

1.5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

1.5.1 Section overview

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the literature relating to organizational change and the role of change communication in change implementation and make recommendations on the findings. In so doing, this section will address the specific questions the study sought to explore in order to meet the aims and objectives of the study.

1.5.2 Discussion and recommendations on the five change recipient's beliefs

Discrepancy: The results of this study suggest that the discrepancy for the new performance management system was evidently justified. On average, about 84% of the respondents believe that the new performance management system was needed. According to Kotter (1996), 75% of the organizational members need to believe that the change being introduced is needed in order to create buy-in and a sense of agency in the organisation. The 84% obtained on change discrepancy significantly exceeded the 75% suggested by Kotter (1996).

The justification for the need of the new performance management system was firstly created when senior management endorsed the institution of the new performance management system in the organisation. The endorsement of a new performance management system helped to begin to unfreeze employees and to get them out of their comfort zone and prepare them to get ready for the new performance management system. Secondly, the results suggest that the use of persuasive communication methods such the road show, leaflets and brochures, discussions and training sessions were effective in creating interest and support for the new performance management system in the organisation.

The evidence from this study indicate that these communication methods largely helped the City of Windhoek to establish a sense of urgency for implementing a new performance management system among employees by broadly and dramatically communicating the external environmental realities, real and potential crises as well as the opportunities the organization may benefit from (Kotter, 1998).

The process of convincing employees to believe that there is a need for change begins with crafting a compelling vision that describes it. Thus, senior management must verify the need and persuasively communicate the need for change by employing effective written and oral communication and other forms of active participation. In addition, senior management especially those in the public sector must and rightfully take advantage of the mandate, or political window of opportunity and external influences to verify and communicate the need for change (Fernandes and Raney, 2006).

Appropriateness: The results suggest that employees believe that the new performance management system is an appropriate reaction to the existing need in terms of the practical realities facing the City of Windhoek. Armenakis and Harris (2002) suggested that the best way to communicate appropriateness is to clarify the process (in terms of the policies and operational procedures) by which the change direction had been set. The appropriateness for the new performance management system was justified when senior management and the OPMD task team made use of various communication methods such as the road show, leaflets and training sessions to explain how the new performance management system was different to the earlier performance appraisal system.

In particular, employees were informed about how the new performance management system will provide the opportunity to integrate the vision, mission and organizational strategic plans for the organisation into departmental and divisional objectives and various business processes and systems, and how it will provide the opportunity for proper job evaluation, performance reward system, individual development plans, and the creation of new job grading systems.

Notwithstanding the appropriateness of the new performance management system, the findings of this study, particularly those obtained from focus group interviews, suggest that the prevailing culture of the City of Windhoek and the values held, seem to be incongruent with the performance culture and values required by the new performance managements system.

What is the culture in the City of Windhoek? Since 1998, City of Windhoek has had no institutional mechanism in place to measure, monitor and evaluate employee's performance.

The absence of such a system has, over time, cultivated a hidden but unifying and shared set of values, beliefs and assumptions that ultimately shapes employees' behaviour in the organisation. In the view of the focus group participants these values, beliefs and assumptions seem not to fit or suitable to the demands of the new performance management system and current challenges. This culture can seriously undermine efforts to successfully implement the new performance management system. Kotter (1994) affirms changing culture is complex, takes time and requires leadership which must be guided by a realistic vision of what kinds of cultures enhance performance.

To bring about the desired culture, City of Windhoek needs to develop and absorb distinctive sets of ideologies and cultural forms that will suit the organisation and its members (Holbeche, 2006). This involves changing many cultural elements so that together they reflect a new pattern of values, norms, and expectations (Kanter, 1983). To achieve that, senior management at any level will need to be able to understand the element at work in any change process and to use judgment about the style of leadership required to give the change effort the best chance of success. According to Waterman (1994), top leaders' attitude and what they pay attention to, can produce change. Thus, visible senior management attention, rather than exhortation, gets things done.

Thus, according to Hobelch (2006) to facilitate cultural change, as required by the new performance management system, there need to be a very clear and consistent drive from senior management. They must release avenues and energy for the change by moving people and portfolios, creating new meeting and other arenas where problems can be articulated and

energy focussed around the need for culture change. They need to be persistent and exercise patience in breaking down the core beliefs of the old guard, getting new problems sensed, and articulated in the organisation, developing a sense of concern that those problems are worthy of analytical and political attention and then articulating the new order of doing things.

Self-efficacy: Armenakis *et al.* (1999) suggest that the change message that is communicated to employees should address and influence employees perceived *self-efficacy*, defined by Bandura (1987) as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance outcome. This study found that employees generally believe that they have high levels of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1998) if employees have a strong sense of self-efficacy they approach difficult tasks as challenges, they set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them, (3) they heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure, (4) they quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks, (5) they attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable, (6) they approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Bandura, 1998).

Despite a high degree of perceived efficacy, the results of this study also found that the change message that is communicated to employees did not help to create and develop employees' self-efficacy. The change message mainly focussed on training, designing job descriptions and technical aspects of the performance management system.

According to Bandura (1998) efficacy is best communicate through the four different methods. The first method is *mastery experiences* of successful historical examples (we have succeeded at similar challenges and you have what it take takes to succeed). The second method is *vicarious experiences* – making references to previous change efforts undertaken by similar organisations e.g. bringing one or two expert from similar organizations to share their successful change experience. Seeing people from similar organisation sharing their success experience increases observer’s beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to succeed (Bandura, 1998). The third method is *social persuasion and appeal for commitment* – persuading employees that the organisation will do whatever it can to succeed in order to boosts and leads them to try hard enough. The fourth method is to *reduce people's stress reactions* and alter their negative emotional proclivities and interpretations of their physical states (Bandura, 1998). Demonstration of confidence (e.g. I trust you can succeed) in the organisational members can also develops employees’ efficacy (Armenakis *et al.* 2007).

Principal support: The findings of this study suggest that principal support was less than satisfactorily observed by employees in the organisation. The findings indicate that principal support was only conveyed during the initial stage of communication when a team of executives and the OPMD task team participated in the road show to rally and guide employees to support the change effort. Thereafter, principal support from senior management had declined throughout the pre-implementation phase. Regardless poor principal support, the findings of this study revealed that some immediate supervisors and managers were more supportive and encourage their employees than others for the reason being that some managers and supervisors understand of what need to be done whereas others are not clear on what to do.

The reasons attributed to a poor principal support were mainly loss of momentum from senior management and respected peers as most revert back to their daily work commitments, thus being out of touch with communication processes of the new performance management system, having little time to coach and motivate employees and lack of support from other employees. A lack of principal support may result in cynicism and strong resistance especially by those who have vested interest in maintaining the status quo, which may bring the new performance management system to stall.

When the organisation is undergoing change, individual or a group within the organisation should champion the cause for change (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006). This group or individual must build internal support for the change and reduce the possibility of resistance for it through widespread participation in the process and other means (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006). In particular, senior management and managers must develop and nurture support from employees by motivating them to commit to the change, participating extensively in the change process and express support for it, providing adequate resources and keeping employees updated on the new change progress.

The Human Resources department should provide regular trainings to managers on how to deal with the change, integrating teams and coaching employees prior and throughout the implementation process of the change. This can be very helpful in equipping people with the skills and confidence to try things out. According to Seijts and Roberts (2011), the behaviours and actions of senior management, managers and other colleagues are key drivers of perceived

organizational support. Thus, leaders must act as role models, tackling resistance, creating readiness, building commitment at every level of the organisation and get all employees to be involved in the change process. Such perceived organizational support is a key motivator when employees encounter obstacles and setbacks in their pursuit of change. Failure to do so can be counterproductive, leading to waste of time, morale and resources.

Personal Valence: The findings of this research study suggested that employees have mixed feelings about the personal valence. Whereas some employees believe that the new performance management system comes with attractive benefits, others neither agree nor disagree. This signifies a lack of employees understanding of the attractiveness of the new performance management system which could be attributed to a lack of proper and in-depth communication of the attractiveness and the type of benefits associated with the new performance management system. If the benefits associated with the new performance management system are not properly communicated in such a way that employees believe and recognise the benefits for change, there will be a strong inclination to give up on the new performance management system.

The success of any change initiative depends on how the organisation communicated the personal valence or attractiveness associated with the perceived outcomes of the change (Armenakis, 2007) to its employees. If the planned changes do not reveal that there are some benefits to the organizational members, particularly to those certain individuals who believe that their interests are threatened, then resistance is likely to result (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). Senior management must therefore ensure that the change message communicated to

the employees convince them that the change will bring added value and attractive benefits to all individuals in the organisation.

1.5.3 Communication methods

The evidence from the study revealed that the use of various communication methods, mainly the road show, PMS leaflets and Brochures" and the conducting discussions and trainings sessions as described earlier in section 1.3.3, persuaded employees to view the new performance management system in a favourable light. In particular, persuasive communication – which involves direct communication through live speeches, written communication such as memos, newsletters or annual reports – were used to influence employees that there is a need for change, that the change is appropriate to the need, that they have the necessary capabilities and skills to implement the new performance management system and that there were potential organisational and individual benefits. Employees however, had some reservations with respect to the level of management support for the planned change and the readiness of the organisational culture for the new expected behaviours required by the change.

The interviews however produced some important additional insights. For example, there was dissatisfaction among all groups interviewed with regard to the methods used in communicating the new performance management system. Thus, interviewees criticised the communications on the grounds that most of these methods were only used once and never repeated from time to time and that there was also no sufficient feedback.

In this regard, the literature makes the point that relying on one or two methods of communication and once-off communication can weaken the change effort. The golden rule is “the same thing must be communicated seven times in many different ways before anybody will believe it” (Hammer, 1995: 147). This rule is given emphasis by Duck (1998: 142) who stressed that “if there is a single rule of communication for leaders, it is this, when you are so sick of talking about something that you can hardly stand it, your message is finally starting to get through”. Therefore, change agents should communicate the change effort as many times as possible by using different methods of communication.

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SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview literature review

This chapter presents a review of literature of previous studies on organizational change, organizational communication and change implementation. The purpose is firstly to gain and highlight insights within literature surrounding organizational change and the role of change communication in change implementation; and secondly to provide the conceptual framework for the research design and analysis.

Many organizations at all levels recognize that change is inevitable and many believe that the implementation of transformational change is vital to the continued success of the organisations. However, often senior organisational leaders face serious challenges that prevent their organisations from successfully implementing new organizational change initiative as they respond to stochastic changes in their internal and external environments.

Gordon (2006) reaffirms that, no matter how far-seeing and meticulously planned organizational change may be, it will not be effectively implemented unless it is communicated to the organizational members in such a way that fears are assuaged, resistance is overcome, confusion is minimized, and buy-in by all affected individuals is secured. Thus, Armenakis (2007) emphasized that it is important to ensure that the transmitted messages encourages all affected individuals to embrace the planned change.

2.2 Organisational change

2.2.1 Organisational change theories

Organisational change is referred to as the process by which organizations move from their present state to some desired future state in order to increase their effectiveness (Paton and McCalman 2000). The literatures on organizational change and change implementation have developed many theories that suggest various phases and principles that organisations implementing changes should follow when implementing change. Following below is a description of some of the contemporary organisational change theories that describe the external or internal environment forces that compel organisation to change as well as theories that explain the process of organisational change.

Burke and Litwin (1992) model of organisational performance and change: Building on the work of Litwin and his colleagues (Litwin and Stringer 1968), Burke and Litwin (1992), among others, developed a model of organisational performance and change. The model explains the causes (organisational conditions) and resultant effects (performance results) of organisational changes and provides guidance for organisational diagnosis, planning and influencing deliberate organisational change.

Burke and Litwin (1992) suggest that organisational change is mainly initiated by forces from the organisation's external environment e.g. changes in the competitive environment, new government regulations and technological breakthrough (Burke and Litwin, 1992). Changes in the external environment have direct effect on transformational factors (e.g. mission, strategy,

leadership and culture) within the organisation as it responds to the demands of the external environment. In turn, changes in transformation factors affect transactional factors e.g. systems, structure, management practice etc, within the organisation. Burke and Litwin (1992) a 150-item diagnostic questionnaire that accompany the model to assist change agents to diagnose and understand which factors need to be considered when planning for organisational change.

The impacts of external environmental changes require that affected organisations to respond accordingly and implement the changes within their organisation and align the nature of employees' responses to such change efforts. Following below is a review of four models of organisational change processes developed by Lewin (1947), Kotter (1995), Ford and Ford (1995), Armenakis, Harris and Field (1999) that identify various organisational change processes that change agents should follow when implementing change.

Lewin (1947) three phases of change process: Lewin (1947) was one of the first to establish or design the process models of organizational change. He developed a three step change model, essential for consideration when implementing planned change. The first stage is *unfreezing* the present state – this stage requires a person or group of people to learn or acquire new behaviour, perhaps by recognizing the ineffectiveness of current behaviours or by learning about the benefits that would accrue if the new behaviours were implemented (Gordon, 2006). The second stage is *moving* – this stage requires a person or group of people to learn new behaviours and bring about desired change, and the last stage is *refreezing* into the desired state in order to ensure new behaviour. Buildings on Lewin's work are Judson (1991), Kotter (1995)

and Armenakis, Harris and Field (1999) who developed various models that explain the process of implementing organisational change.

Kotter (1995) eight steps change model: Kotter (1995) eight steps change model: Kotter (1995) identified eight (8) steps that the organization's change agents need to follow to successfully implement change. These steps are: (1) *Establishing a sense of urgency* – which involve examining the external environmental realities and communicate the real and potential crises as well as the opportunities the organization may face; (2) *Forming a powerful guiding coalition* – through the creation of a team of individual (e.g. senior managers, board members and union leaders) who embrace the need for change and capable of rallying and guiding others to support the change effort; (3) *Creating a vision* – that will be used by the change agents and the guiding team to communicate the picture of the desired future; (4) *Communicating the vision* – through numerous channels of communication; (5) *Empowering others to act* – by changing systems, structures, procedures and policies in way that facilitate the implementation of the change; (6) *Planning for and creating short term wins* – through publication success, rewarding and promoting involved individuals; (7) *Consolidating improvements and sustaining the change* – by changing the systems, structures, policies and procedure that are not consistent with the vision of planned change; (8) *Institutionalizing the new approach* – by put out to people connection between the new behaviours, norms and shared values are help to improve the performance of the organization with the new change in place.

Kotter (1995) recognizes communication as one of the most crucial steps, because of which many organizational change attempts fail. He points out that senior leaders fail to communicate

the vision for change to the change recipients. Specifically, Kotter (1995) noted that a classic error made by leaders trying to implement change is under-communication of the change to the employees that will be implementing it. Thus, he suggest that organizational change agents should indentify and utilize every opportunity to discuss the planned change or incorporate the discussion of the planned change into day-to-day activities such as employee training courses, performance reviews, and monthly or quarterly briefing meetings. Moreover, (Kotter, 1995) argue that to effectively communicate the vision of the planned change, organisational leaders must demonstrate the behaviours that are consistent with the vision they are promoting. By so doing, the communication of the planned change is not only occurring via words, but also via deeds.

Ford and Ford (1995) four types of conversations: Ford and Ford (1995) describe four types of conversations that move the change process through its successive phases: (1) *initiative conversations*, that begin the change process by focusing the participants' attention on what needs to be done; (2) *conversations of understanding*, during which the participants seek to make sense of the problem and start generating methods of addressing it; (3) *conversations of performance*, which concentrate on producing the intended result; and (4) *conversations for closure*, during which the change process is determined to be complete. Essentially, although this model is mediated by conversations, it helps to conceptualize the role of communication during the stages of unfreezing (instigation), change (understanding and performance), and refreezing (closure). Moreover, it expands upon Kotter's (1995) call for communication regarding change to occur in as many contexts as possible within an organization

Armenakis, Harris and Field (1999) three phase of change model: Drawing on Lewin's (1951) three stage of change model, Armenakis (2002) suggested three phases in which the organisational change process unfold as depicted in a mobius strip in Figure 2.1 below. The first phase is to *create readiness*. Armenakis (1999) suggested that the action is to create readiness for change by disconfirming organizational members' conceptions of the current situation, stimulate the dissatisfaction with the status quo, creating an appealing vision of a future state of affairs, and fostering a sense of confidence that this future state can be realized. This first phase is similar to Lewin's (1951) concept of unfreezing whereby change advocates must first "unfreeze" the organization by changing the existing "mind-set" and creating the motivation for change.

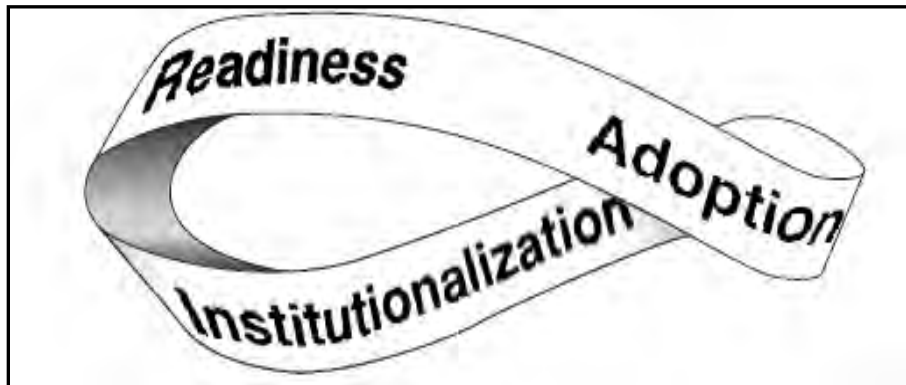


Figure 2.1: Three phases of organisational change process

SOURCE: Armenakis and Harris (2002)

The second phase is *adoption*. This phase is similar to Lewin (1951) concept of moving where the planned change is implemented and employees adopt the new ways of operating. The third phase is *institutionalization*, which flows from efforts to maintain the adoption period and

reinforce the change until they become internalized. According to Armenakis (1999) the operating mechanism underlying the three phase of change is the basic change message which should incorporate the five key change recipient's beliefs namely: *discrepancy, self-efficacy, personal valence, principal support and appropriateness*.

However, responding to forces from the organisation's external environment e.g. implementing a new programme or system is not always easy. The literature indicates that organizational change is difficult and the success rates of organisations implementing change initiative range from 20% to 60% depending on the type of change (Smith, 2002). Consistent with these findings Daly *et al.* (2003), Elving (2005) and Cheng *et al.* (2007) reported that the failure rate of planned organizational changes range between one-third to two-thirds and as high as 70 percent. The following section review empirical studies on how successful certain organisations implemented specific change initiatives in response to the demands of changes in their external and internal environments.

2.2.2 Recent empirical studies on organisational changes

Cheng *et al.* (2007) conducted a longitudinal case study on a large project based construction organization based in UK that was implementing a new competency-based performance management system, due to heightened competitive pressure in construction industry. The aim of designing and implementing a new competency-based performance management system was to improve its performance and align employee's efforts with its espoused visions and values. Data were collected from the interviews with managers and employee representatives

as well as through an examination of organizational documents and direct observation. Cheng *et al.* (2007) found that the new performance management system in that organization was not a success. The barriers to implementing a new performance management system mainly stemmed from a lack of senior management commitment, lack of support, lack of participation and leadership ingrained working practices and the absence of appropriate training interventions (Cheng *et al.* 2007).

A case study was conducted by Ruvolo and Bullis (2003) on an organisational change initiative implemented by the U.S Military Academy within the West Point department in 1995, due to the demands of changes in the organisation internal environments. Specifically, the military students in one of the Military Academy departments had a great academic feel instead of having a great warrior or soldier spirit. As a result, a new head of department with an outstanding reputation was tasked to turn around the department. Ruvolo and Bullis (2003) found that, the change was not successful because after the change was implemented the morale, productivity, retention fall sharply.

According to Ruvolo and Bullis (2003), the reasons for such outcomes were related to lack of communicating the need for change, lack of subordinate empowerment to participate in the change process and lack of insider's organization understanding. What emerged from Ruvolo and Bullis (2003) is that, the when implementing a new change agents should ensure that the need for a change is clearly and effectively communicated.

Collyer (2000) conducted a case study on Guinness, a brewing Division of Diageo that was formed in 1997. At that time Guinness was operating in about 150 markets worldwide. Collyer (2000) studied how Guinness implemented an Integrated Business Program project across its five main businesses around the world, due to the demands of its external and internal environments. The aim was to integrate its international supply chain which involves replacing the inefficient activities with more effective ones throughout Guinness, strengthening its brand presence globally, thus preparing itself for the common global challenges at the time.

The implementation of this project at Guinness was successful. According to Collyer (2000), that the success of the project was underpinned by the accessibility of accurate information, more quickly to aid everyone involved to make informed decision. Information about the change project was communicated right at beginning to the top, in order to get buy-in from everyone in the organization. In addition, Collyer (2000) found that during the implementation of the project, the presence and involvement of senior management played an exceptional role in creating awareness about what was going on.

de Waal and Counet (2009) conducted a study on various organisations that are implementing and/ or using a performance management system (PMS) with the intent to gain insight about the problems encountered, lessons learned and make recommendations that will leads to successful implementation of performance management systems in future. Their study uncovered that although the failure rate of performance management system and the usage is reported by popular scholars (Daly, 2003 and Elving, 2005) to be as high as 70%, de Waal and

Counet (2009) found out that the failure rate has actually decreased from 70% to 56% over past the past decade.

According to de Waal and Counet (2009) the reasons for the decline are attributed to the widespread usage of performance management system and the increased publications that enhanced the understanding of many managers on how to approach the performance management system implementation process. As to the performance management system that fail de Waal and Counet (2009) identified lack of top management support, lack of performance culture or performance management system being abandoned after a change of manage and people not seeing the benefits from the implementation of the performance management system.

These studies demonstrate that responding to forces from the organisation's external or internal environment is not always easy. There are a variety of factors that change agents need to diagnose and understand in order to affect the change effort. Conducting a proper organisational diagnosis may prevent change agents to underestimate the requirements necessary for a successful transformation effort (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999).

2.3 perspectives on organizational change and communication framework

The models of organisational change described above lays a foundation for understanding the role of communication in promoting planned change within an organization. Organisational changes of all types are usually difficult, and without credible employee communication,

change is almost impossible to come about and the change initiative may then fail. In his book “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail,” Kotter (1995) listed “under-communication” as one of the major reasons organisational change efforts do not succeed. Speaking of change in a large organisation he says, “Transformation is impossible unless hundreds or thousands of people are willing to help, often to the point of making short-term sacrifices. Employees will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they believe that useful change is possible. Without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured” (Kotter, 1995). In view of centrality of communication to change success, various frameworks of communication have been developed by researchers studying organizational change.

Barrett (2002), developed the Strategic Employee Communication model that provide the analytical tool to assess and improve employee communications, thus forming the foundation for using strategic employee communication to facilitate change. In a change communication program, the model serve three primary purposes: (1) to illustrate effective employee communications in the context of the high-performing organization (one way to get senior management to listen), (2) to provide an analytical tool to diagnose a company’s communication strengths and weaknesses, and (3) to frame the change programme and the resulting recommendations to improve employee communications so that communication will be positioned to help drive the change.

In his model, Barrett (2002) identifies four major components of employee communications that are related them to each other and to the company’s strategy and operations (Figure 2.2

below). The first component is *supportive management* – senior and middle level management must be committed to foster change communications up, down, and across the organization (Barrett, 2002). The second component is the *targeted message* – the messages must be tailored to the employees to maximise relevance of information, the meaningful, whilst at the same time maintain consistency. The third component is the *mode of communication* – by using all available vehicles to reach its targeted audiences most often through direct, face-to-face communications over indirect, print or various electronic media (Barrett, 2002). The final component is *a communications team or staff* – that is positioned close to the most important business issues and thinks right behind the company’s strategic objectives so that the messages they produce reflect an understanding of the change (Gordon, 2006).

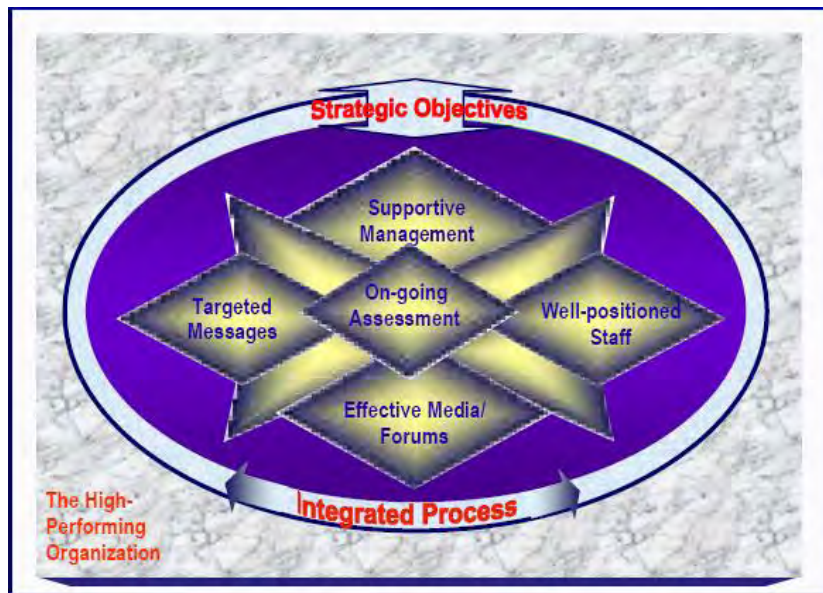


Figure 2.2: Four major components of employee communication

SOURCE: Barrett (2002)

Barrett (2002) provided specific recommendations regarding how the effectiveness of employee communications during times of organizational change may be evaluated, giving an example of a survey instrument to assess perceptions of the current state of communication, suggestions for the development of „cascading workshops“ to spread the message of change throughout the organization, and methods of monitoring how well the message of change has spread and been internalized throughout the organization.

Inspired by Lewin's (1947) unfreezing – changing – refreezing change process model, Puth (2002) proposes a three-phase model in which the communications of change occur. The first phase is *communicating to let go of the old*. Puth (2002) suggests that when change is imminent all members of the organisation face the need to acquire new ways of doing things and lose the old ways of doing things. Such transition need to be supported, at the grassroots level, by communication that acknowledges this loss and that recognizes the difficulty that some individuals may have in letting go of the past (Gordon, 2006).

The second phase is *communicating in the neutral zone*. During this phase, employees may be filled with confusion, anxiety, and some may stagnate between those who want to rush forward and those who want to go back to the old days. Thus, communication during this phase should recognize and attempt to assuage the isolation that may ensue from this confusion (Puth, 2002). According to him, the setting of short term, easily measurable and attainable goals will aid employee morale during this time.

The third phase is to *communicate for a new beginning*. During this phase, employees begin to internalise new values, new understandings, new attitudes and new identities. According to Puth (2002), communication during this time should be focus on acknowledging the short term success that organizational members have accomplished so far in implementing the change and clarification individual roles they plays in the new system.

Drawing on works conducted by organizational scientist such as Ryan and Gross (1943), who study the diffusion of hybrid seed corn among farmers in two Iowa communities, as well as a study by Coch and French (1948) on how mangers of a Pajama factory created readiness, Armenakis and Harris (2002), developed five key change message precursors that needs to be addressed when communicating planned change to employees.

The first component is *discrepancy*. Communication addresses this component by convincing employees that a need from the current state to the desired state exists in the organization. The second component is *appropriateness* – The change agents should clearly communicate to all individual that the chosen change is appropriate to the need. If affected individual are not convince that the proposed change is appropriate to the need, they may not buy-in.

The third component is *efficacy*. Some people fear and tend to avoid threatening situation they believe exceed their coping skills, whereas some get involved in activities when they are capable of handling situation that would otherwise be limiting (Bandura, 1997). The change message should instil confidence in individuals implementing the change regarding their capabilities to implement the change. The fourth component is *principal support* – The actions

and deeds communicated by change agents and opinion leaders must influence the change recipient to believe that there is support from above. The fifth component is *personal valence* which refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic attractiveness associated with the perceived outcome of the change.

2.4 Communication methods

Organizational changes disrupt conventional norms of doing things. According to Denning (2005) new or planned organizational change uproot old norms that have enabled a company to succeed (or at least survive), and invite the adoption of new untried practices. However, to uproot employees' old norms of doing things, all employees and the management team should voluntarily and passionately consent to new ways of doing things in the organisation. Holbech (2006) points out that communication experts often state that if a message is to be heard in an organizational context, it has to be said a minimum of seven times – to the same audience. As such, he identified six communication tools through which planned change can be communicated to all employees.

The first method is *printed media* – such as bulletins, newsletters and briefing packs. The second method is the use of *electronic* – which includes e-mail, electronic newsletter, websites and intranet. The third method is the use of *videos* – through video conferencing and teleconferencing. The fourth method is *personal engagement* which involves road shows, help lines, focus groups, and question and answer clearing houses. The fifth method is the use of

line managers – through team briefings, effective meeting practices, role modelling. The last tool is *staff surveys* – which include upward and downward feedback.

However, the purpose of change communication differs. Thus, Holbeche (2006) suggests that the type of communication methods to be used during the time of change should match the purpose of the change communication efforts. For example, if the purpose is to give instruction to employees, memos, notices, bulletins, e-mails and manuals are appropriate. If the intention is to consult employees, then conferences, sample groups, team meetings, managers meeting and e-mails are relevant. If the aim is to involve employees, then focus group, team meetings, workshops, project teams and large-scale engagement are appropriate. Whereas if the purpose is to empower employees, then large scale engagement methods, team problem solving and workouts are appropriate.

Smith (2006) studied the role of good organization communication and proposed a variety of communication methods and consultation processes that should be used in times of change. These methods include written memos and verbal messages, large and small group briefing, team and one-to-one direct discussion, formal and informal venues, thus applying Kotter's (1995) suggestion that executives must incorporate change communication whenever and wherever there is opportunity to do so.

In addition, Smith (2006) proposed a "rumour board" whereby employees affected by the change are invited to post on the notice board any and all rumours that they have heard about the change. This is a somewhat unorthodox method, yet increasingly popular way of getting

feedback and disseminating information in times of change. A similar suggestion was made by Denning (2005) who suggested the use of spring board stories which are used with the intent to spark listeners' action, imaginations and to get them imagining stories of their own with regard to the planned change.

2.5 Conveying strategies

The change message carried by each communication technique or method is delivered to employees through a choice of different influencing strategies. Armenakis *et al.* (2001) identified three influencing conveying strategies that can be used by those in position of organisation leadership and change agents to convey the change message. The first strategy is *persuasive communication* – which involve direct communication through live or recorded speeches, written communication such as memos, newsletters or annual report. Through persuasive communication, the change agent communicates the planned change directly to those affected primarily by verbal means.

The second strategy is *active participation* – which involve engaging those affected (employees) to discover more information about the planned change. Armenakis (1999) identified three forms of active participation which include: (1) *Enactive learning* – gradually building knowledge, skills and efficacy through successive involvement and practice, (2) *vicarious learning* – through observation and learning from others, (3) *participation in decision making*. The third strategy is *management of information* which refers the use of internal and external sources to provide information regarding the change. According to Armenakis and

Harris (1999) these sources can include sharing article from the popular press about industry trends, competitor successes or failure and sharing organisational financial records to demonstrate a cost management problem.

2.6 Change and the local authority

As local authorities continue to create public values, they are faced with many internal and external challenges such as high urbanisation, high unemployment, and crumbling infrastructure such as roads, water pipelines, bridges, ineffective public transportation and high housing backlog. Yet, the local citizens expect their local authority to provide better services. As a result, only local authorities that are able to proactively implement incremental change program will be in better position to meet the expectations of local citizen demands.

One of the change programs that many local authorities are implementing to address the above mentioned challenges, and which is the nature of the case being examined in this research study, is the implementation of a performance management system (PMS). A performance management system is defined by Den Hartong *et al.* (2004), as an integrated process in which managers“ work with their subordinates to set expectations, measure and review results and reward performance in order to improve employees“ performance, with the ultimate aim of positively affecting organizational success.

According to de Waal and Counet (2009) the use of performance management systems has increased over the years due to the fact that it improves the performance and overall quality of

the organization. However, de Waal and Counet (2009) further point out that the failure rate of PMS implementation and its usage is said to be around 70%. Although private and public organizations face difficulties when implementing change initiatives, Armenakis *et al* (1999) indicated that implementing change initiative e.g. PMS, within public sectors is arguably more challenging than in the private sector. Greasley (2009) cited poor communication, lack of individual buy-in, lack of transformational leadership, and inadequate resources and training as main challenging factors.

2.7 References

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SECTION 3: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This section describes the research methodology followed in the study. According to Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz (1998) a research methodology refers to the procedural framework within which the research is conducted. The purpose of having a research methodology is to provide a view (to the readers) of how the work proceeds as well as why and how we chose to do it (Shahalizadeh, Amirjamshidi and Shahalizadeh, S, 2009).

3.2 Research methodology

3.2.1 Research paradigms

Remenyi (1996) stated that empirical research must be conducted within a specific theoretical standpoint. A paradigm is defined as a scientific procedure that is based on an individual's philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2003). As such, Collis and Hussey (2003) and Remenyi (1996) identify two fundamental research paradigms namely the positivist and phenomenology research paradigm, from which a researcher can choose one or a combination of both to conduct to research.

A positivist research paradigm uses quantitative and experimental methods to test the hypothetical deductive generalizations of social reality. It seeks facts and causes of social phenomenon with little regard to the subjective state of the individual (Hussey and Hussey,

1997). The positivist paradigm is based on the belief that social reality is independent of human beings and exists regardless of whether we are aware of it. According to Remenyi (1996), the positivist paradigm sees the researcher as an objective analyst and interpreter of a tangible social reality.

In contrast, *phenomenology research paradigm* refers to a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (Remenyi, 1987). Contrary to the positivist research paradigm, the phenomenological research paradigm focuses on the primacy of subjective consciousness (Remenyi, 1996). This paradigm views situations through the eyes of the participants, to catch their intentions and their interpretations of a complex state of affairs.

Table 3.1: Features of the phenomenological and positivistic paradigms

Phenomenological paradigm	Positivistic paradigm
Concerned with generating theories	Concerned with hypothesis testing
Tends to produce qualitative data	Tends to produce quantitative data
Uses small samples	Uses larger sample
Data is rich and subjective	Data is highly specific and precise
Reliability is low	Reliability high
Validity is high	Validity low
Generalizes from one setting to another	Generalizes from sample to population

SOURCES: Adapted from Collis and Hussey (2003)

According to Remenyi (1996) the phenomenological paradigm views the world as being socially constructed, subjective, and the researcher is not independent of what is being researched, but is an intrinsic part of it. Table 3.1 above summarises the main features of the phenomenological and positivism paradigms.

More recently, a third methodology known as **mixed methods** has begun to gain researchers' confidence. The mixed methods approach, also referred to as the *third research paradigm* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) is widely used and recognised by management scholars. Thus, study followed the third research paradigm. The third research paradigm or the mixed methods forces both positivist and phenomenology paradigms to share the same research questions, to collect complementary data, and to conduct the counterpart analysis (Yin, 2007).

It also allows data triangulation (as depicted in Figure 3.1 below) which combines multiple observers, theoretical perspectives and methodologies and used interchangeably to describe the research strategies that incorporate a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the study of the same phenomenon. Triangulation strengthens data reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988) and assists the researcher to capture the phenomenon surfaced in the study, while increasing the credibility of the study.

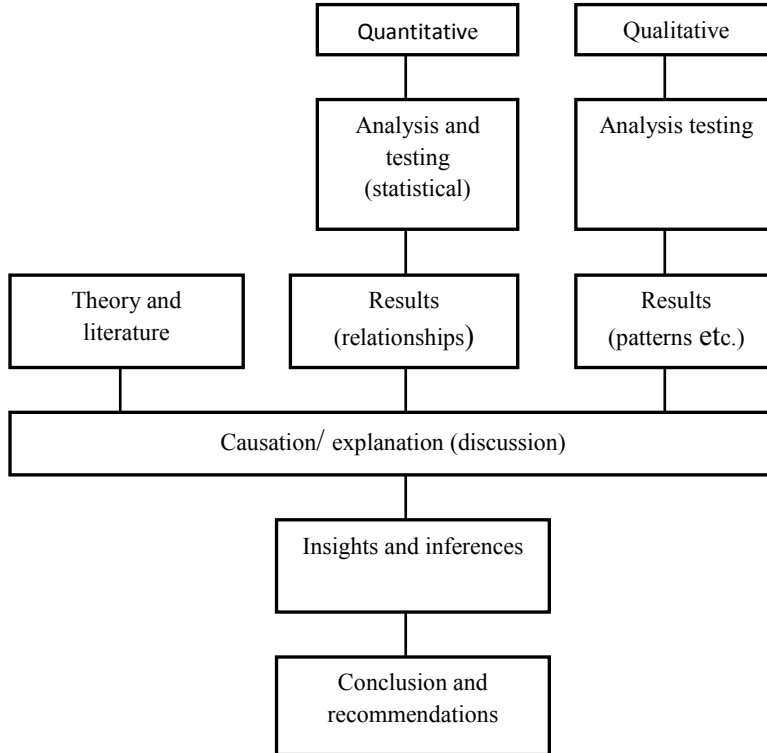


Figure 3.1: Triangulation of multiple sources of data

SOURCE: Adopted from Amaratunga *et al* (2002)

3.2.2 Research design method

Collis and Hussey (2003: 56) define research design as the science and the art of planning procedures for conducting studies so as to get the most valid findings. This study used a case study as a research design method to conduct the research. A case study is defined by Yin (2007) as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

Fundamental to a case study research method is a belief that “sometimes only by looking carefully at a practical, real life instance can a full picture be obtained of the actual interaction of variables or events” (Remenyi, 1996: 55). The type of case study used in this research is an explanatory case study in which existing theories are used to understand the presumed causal links in real-life intervention that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies (Yin, 2007).

3.3 Research methods

3.3.1 Data collection

Data collection is primarily concerned with the means of collecting data or evidence for the case study. Yin (2007) identified six methods of collecting case study evidence namely; documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. In addition, Collis and Hussey, (2003), also identified diaries, individual in-depth interviews, focus groups interviews, observation, and questionnaires as main sources of evidence for the case study research.

When conducting case study Yin (2007), recommend the researcher to use multiple sources of evidence to collect a variety of both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Yin (2007) the use of multiple sources of evidence, to collect data allows the researcher to address a broader range of historical and behavioural issues. Using multiple sources of evidence also

permits the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration. This study makes use of the survey questionnaires, focus group interviews and documents analysis, as described below, to collect data.

Questionnaires: The use of a questionnaire is associated with both positivistic and phenomenological methodologies. In this study, survey questionnaires were used to elicit quantitative data from the employees about how the communication of the new performance management system by the City of Windhoek influenced the beliefs of its employees. The type of questions used in this case study were adapted from the content adequacy questionnaire developed by Armenakis *et al.* (2007) that is used to assess the change recipients' beliefs. The questions were slightly modified in order to suit the aim and objectives of the research.

A total of 711 online survey questionnaires were sent through the office of the CEO to 711 employees of the City of Windhoek with access to computers and internet. The survey questionnaire consisted of 25 closed questions (see Appendix A) and they were classified according to the five change recipients beliefs. The participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5 point Likert response scale with values ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*) to all questionnaire items. Due to the fact that people forget easily, three reminders were sent out from the office of the CEO to all employees every week. From the researcher observation this action reminds and arouses employees' interest and consequently increases or maximise employees' responses rate.

Focus group interviews: Focus group interviews were to obtain data relating to employees thoughts, feelings and opinions about the implementation of the new performance management system. A focus group is defined as a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being „focused“ on a given topic (Rabiee, 2004).

Prior to the conduct of focus group interviews, the researcher sent out a personalized e-mail invite to each selected participant inviting him/her to participate in the focus group interview. In the personalized email, the researcher clearly states the purpose of the interview, for what purpose the information is needed, and why the participant is asked to participate. Also contained in the personalized email invitation was a preliminary interview schedule which indicated the date, time, and venue where the focus group interview will be held. In addition, the selected participants were requested to confirm their interest to participate and to indicate their availability as per the schedule. Upon participant’s confirmation, the researcher scheduled the focus group interviews accordingly and telephonically reminded the participants a day before the interview.

Krueger and Casey (2001) and Rabiee (2004) suggested that the appropriate number of focus groups may only be three (3) or four (4), whereas the optimum number of participants may vary between six and ten, enough to gain a variety of perspectives and small enough not to become disorderly or fragmented. Thus, three focus group interviews, of which two consisted of seven participants and one consisted of eight participants, were formed and conducted

during the afternoon slot of the working hours between the 11 of October 2011 to the 14 of November 2011.

The participants of the focus group interviews included a mix of employees at non-supervisory level, supervisors, superintendents, section heads and middle managers. The participants were selected on the basis that; (1) they are currently working for the council and have worked for Council for at least three years, (2) they have a background of the coming new performance management system, and (3) they have the ability to communicate.

According to Krueger and Casey (2001) it is almost impossible to remember everything that is said in a focus group interview. Thus, the researcher recorded all the interview sessions in order to get adequate opportunity to engage with the group effectively and to enable him the opportunity to analyse data effectively after the interviews. Each interview session lasted on average 1 hour and 36 minutes, varying depending on the dynamics of the group participants.

According to Krueger (2001) the researcher conducting a focus group interview must have the right number of questions that are conversational and easy for the participants to understand. The key questions that were used in the focus group interviews are contained in Appendix B. The questions are thematically developed and structured to enable the researcher to sort data accordingly. The questions were formulated such that they enabled the researcher to ask more open ended questions and avoids asking questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no”, thus giving the participants the opportunity to provide as much information as they can.

Document Analysis: Additional information relevant to the research study was obtained through the analysis of documents such as memos, e-mail correspondence, announcements, and other written and administrative reports or documents. Yin (2007) cautions that, documents analysis as sources of evidence in case studies must be carefully used, particularly if the researcher is inexperienced. Thus, the researcher meticulously established the origin of every document that was used in order to enhance the reliability of the research.

Confidentiality issues: Due to the sensitivity of required data to the organization, the research needed to seek the permission from the organization to collect such data by clearly explaining what information was required for. Thus, the researcher followed organisation research procedures by submitting the research proposal to the Department of Human Resources for approval. The research study was approved by the HR department. During the data collection process, participants in the study were informed that their responses to the questionnaire are completely anonymous. The participants who completed the survey questionnaires and those who participated in focus group interviews were informed and reassured that all data and information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purpose of this study. The researcher also assures the privacy and confidentiality of the participants so that, as a result of their participation, they will not be put in any undesirable position by the organisation.

3.3.2 Data analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), data analysis is defined as a process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data. The purpose of data analysis is to address the initial propositions of one's study and the analysis is achieved by examining, categorising, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the research data (Yin, 2003).

The fact that this research study employed multiple sources of data collection, collected data was both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. Quantitative data was statistically analysed using Microsoft Excel tool. Specifically, descriptive statistics such as simple tables and bar charts were constructed and graphically used summarise and display quantitative data contained in frequency tables. Qualitative data was analysed qualitatively by relying on theoretical proposition (Yin, 2007). These theoretical propositions will assist in generating theories from data which will in turn assist in the answering of the key questions of this research.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Results: ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION OF CHANGE INITIATIVES: The introduction of a performance management system (Case-City of Windhoek)

[Export results to spreadsheet](#) | [Reset results](#)

Please indicate to which gender category you belong

	Male	Female	Total	
Gender	52% (107)	47% (97)	204	Only 202 respondents are considered in this study as the last two counted were late

Which department do you work for at the City of Windhoek

Response	Percent	Count
Office of the CEO	5%	12
City Policy & Emergency Services	19%	40
Economic Development and Community Services	13%	28
Electricity	1%	4
Finance	12%	25
Human Resources	8%	17
ICT	4%	10
Infrastructure, Water and Waste Management (IWWM)	14%	30
Planning, Urbanisation and Environment (PLA)	12%	26
Transportation	5%	12

Response

Percent	Count

At what level of employment are you in the organisation

Response	Percent	Count
Superintendent	1%	4
Section Head	13%	28
Divisional Manager	5%	11
Specialist	15%	31
Supervisor	15%	32
Non-Supervisor	48%	98

DISCREPANCY - (assesses a motive or believe that a need for change exist)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. We need to change to a new way of managing performance in this organisation	2% (5)	2% (5)	7% (15)	37% (77)	50% (102)
2. We need to improve the way we currently operate in this organisation	0% (2)	0% (2)	5% (11)	48% (99)	44% (90)
3. We need to improve our effectiveness by changing our operations	0% (2)	4% (9)	7% (15)	47% (96)	40% (82)
4. The new performance management is needed to improve our operations	3% (7)	5% (11)	15% (31)	36% (74)	39% (81)
5. We need to improve our organisational performance by implementing a new performance management system (PMS)	3% (8)	6% (13)	13% (27)	33% (69)	42% (87)

EFFICACY - (assess the perceived capability to implement the change initiative)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
6. I believe I will have the capability to implement the new performance management system	3% (8)	8% (18)	14% (29)	51% (106)	21% (43)
7. I believe I will be capable of successfully performing my job duties with the new PMS	2% (5)	4% (9)	11% (23)	46% (94)	35% (73)
8. I believe we (employees) can successfully implement the proposed new performance management system	2% (6)	8% (18)	16% (33)	49% (100)	23% (47)
9. I believe we (employees) have the capability to successfully implement the new performance	4% (10)	6% (14)	19% (40)	43% (89)	25% (51)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
management system					

APPROPRIATENESS - (assesses individual feelings on the appropriateness of a particular change)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10. I believe the proposed new performance management system will have a favourable effects on our operations	3% (8)	7% (15)	14% (30)	46% (95)	27% (56)
11. The planned new performance management system will improve the performance of our organisation	3% (7)	4% (10)	17% (35)	46% (94)	28% (58)
12. The proposed new performance management system that we are implementing is appropriate for our situation	3% (8)	9% (19)	28% (59)	39% (80)	18% (38)
13. When I think about the new performance management system, I realise it is appropriate for our organisation	2% (6)	5% (11)	25% (52)	46% (94)	20% (41)
14. The implementation of the new PMS will prove to be best for our situation	5% (11)	5% (12)	29% (60)	41% (84)	18% (37)

PRINCIPAL SUPPORT - (which explore the existence of support from change agents and leaders)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
15. Most of my peers embrace the proposed new performance management system	7% (15)	19% (39)	39% (81)	28% (58)	5% (11)
16. The senior management in this organisation are "walking the talks" with regards to PMS	16% (33)	18% (37)	41% (85)	18% (38)	5% (11)
17. The senior management support the implementation of the new performance management system in this organisation	5% (11)	11% (23)	44% (91)	30% (63)	7% (16)
18. The majority of my peers are dedicated to making performance management works	4% (10)	17% (36)	40% (83)	32% (67)	3% (8)
19 My immediate manager/supervisor is in favour of the ne performance management system	3% (7)	5% (11)	32% (67)	39% (80)	19% (39)
20. My immediate manager/supervisor encourages me to support the new performance management system	5% (12)	10% (21)	31% (65)	38% (78)	13% (28)

VALENCE - (assess the attractiveness associated with the perceived outcome of the change)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
21. The proposed new performance management	3% (8)	4% (10)	26% (55)	36%	27% (57)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
system will benefit me				(74)	
22. With this proposed new performance management system in my job, I will experience more self-fulfilment	2% (6)	7% (16)	23% (47)	40% (82)	25% (53)
23. I could earn higher performance reward from my job after the PMS is implemented	3% (7)	6% (14)	31% (64)	29% (60)	28% (59)
24. The proposed new performance management system will increase my feelings of accomplishment	2% (5)	8% (18)	20% (41)	40% (83)	27% (57)
25. My fringe benefits may remain the same after the proposed new performance management system is implemented	3% (8)	10% (21)	39% (81)	35% (72)	10% (22)

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1.	DESCRIPANCIES
1.1	When you heard that the organization is going to implement a new PMS, do you think there is a real need to change the way we do some things in this organization?
1.2	What prompted you to believe that a new PMS is needed to improve the way we operate in this organization?
1.3	Do you think the need to improve our effectiveness by changing our operations was clearly communicated to you? And if so what communication methods were used and how was it communicated to you?
1.4	Do you all agree that a PMS is needed to improve the effectiveness of our operations?
1.5	How do you think our performance will improve by implementing a performance management system in our org..?
	THE INTERVIEWER ALLOWS INTERVIEWEES TO RESPOND ONE BY ONE.
2.	EFFICACY
2.1	How capable are you in executing the new behaviours and roles required by the new PMS initiative?
2.2	Given your capabilities, how can you implement this PMS in your job?
2.3	How confident are you to successfully performing your job duties with the new PMS requirements?
2.4	What made you believe that you can successfully implement this change?
2.5	Do we collectively agree that have the capability to successfully implement the PMS?
	THE INTERVIEWER ALLOWS INTERVIEWEES TO RESPOND ONE BY ONE.
3.	APPROPRIATENESS
3.1	Considering the extent to which information was communicated to you, do you have any doubt that the new behaviours and roles required by the new PMS initiative are appropriate for our operations?
3.2	How will the PMS initiative improve the performance of our organization?
3.3	Do you think that the PMS the organisation is implementing is an appropriate reaction to our current situation?
3.4	What prompted you to think that the implementation of PMS as opposed to not implementing is appropriate for the current situation of our organization?
3.5	How convinced are you that the change from not having PMS to having PMS initiative will prove to be best for our situation?
	THE INTERVIEWER ALLOWS INTERVIEWEES TO RESPOND ONE BY ONE.
4.	PRINCIPAL SUPPORT
4.1	From your personal observations, how have most of your respected peers embraced the new PMS?
4.2	Given the need to implement the new PMS, to what extend do you think your top leaders in this organization communicate the rationale for a new PMS initiatives? Are they “walking the talk”?
4.3	To what extend do leaders communicated and created a sense of purpose and urgency for the new PMS initiative to employees?
4.4	How well-informed and emboldened do you think your peers are about the new PMS initiative and dedicated to make it work?
4.5	Is your immediate manager is in favour of PMS initiative? Motive your reason.
4.6	To what extend do you think your immediate manager is committed to the new PMS initiative?

THE INTERVIEWER ALLOWS INTERVIEWEES TO RESPOND ONE BY ONE.

5. VALENCE

- 5.1 What are the perceived personal benefits (e.g. personal development) will you gain from the new PMS?
- 5.2 With a PMS in place particularly in your job, will you experience more or less self-fulfilment?
- 5.3 What effects do you think the new PMS will have on your Fridge benefits and other incentives?
- 5.4 The change in my job assignments that is required by the new PMS will increase my feelings of accomplishment?

THE INTERVIEWER ALLOWS INTERVIEWEES TO RESPOND ONE BY ONE