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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE,
AFFECTIVE RESPONSE AND SELF-ESTEEM

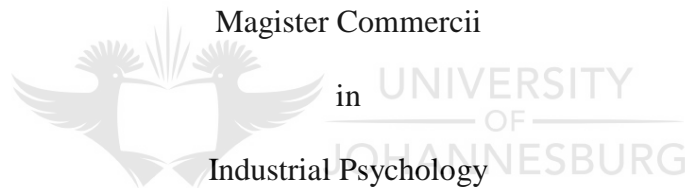
By

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ABSTRACT

Orientation: Organisational change is widely acknowledged to be demanding. The intensification of organisational change globally has resulted in the impact of change on the workforce becoming a major consideration for employee health and well-being.

Research purpose: To understand the nature of the relationships which may exist between the constructs of organisational change, affective response and employee self-esteem.

Motivation for the study: The relationship between organisational change episodes and employees' affective responses to the changes has recently received substantial research attention. However, the relationship between organisational change and employee self-esteem is under researched. Understanding the influence of organisational change on the employee is important from a wellness and support perspective.

Research design, approach and method: A cross-sectional correlational study was undertaken with a small convenience sample (N=42), employing an experimental change questionnaire and Rosenberg's Self-esteem scale.

Main findings: A statistically significant relationship was found between perceived organisational change and affective response to the change event. Change management was the largest predictor of affective response. A direct significant correlation exists between organisational change and self-esteem; intensity of change is the largest contributor to self-esteem. However, there is a non-significant indirect relationship between employees' affective responses to the change and their levels of self-esteem. In this regard negative affect contributes most strongly to self-esteem.

Practical/managerial implications: Change processes need to be managed more accurately and adequately and with greater sensitivity regarding the impact of change on the employee, in order to avoid detrimental workplace consequences.

Contribution/value add: The study reveals the interrelatedness of organisational change initiatives and employees' self-esteem. This has important implications for wellness management, corporate social responsibility and the perceived ethical orientation of management.

Key words: Organisational change, change perception, change experience, affect, self-esteem.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Today's fast-paced world is becoming increasingly characterised by organisational change, which is substantially related to employee affective response and levels of self-esteem. The 21st century has thus far been associated with competitiveness and the desire to be successful and achieve (Stander & Rothmann, 2010; Wentzel & Geldenhuis, 2005). In order to function effectively in this demanding world skills, behaviour and motivation need to be constantly evolving. Change has become apparent within all sectors of society (Wright, 2010) due to an increase in mergers (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006), restructuring (Bourbonnais, Brisson, Vezina, Masse, & Blanchette, 2005; Hansson, Vingard, Arnetz, & Andrezen, 2008; Litwinenko & Cooper, 1997; Wanberg & Banas, 2000), the introduction of diverse demographic characteristics, globalisation, overpopulation, a decrease in resources and the ineffectiveness of social infrastructures (Carnall, 1995). This constant transformation results in an ongoing state of turbulence, chaos and uncertainty (Newstrom, Gardener, & Pierce, 2004), which has the potential to impact the psychological functioning of employees. This has led to the phenomenon of change becoming one of the most researched topics in organisational literature.

Although extensive academic research has been conducted on the relationship between organisational change and employee affective response, much less research has been explored regarding the relationship between organisational change and employee self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to the self-concept whereby individuals evaluate their self-image from feedback and social interactions with others (Albo, Nunez, Navarro, & Grijalvo, 2007). According to Mikolajczak, Luminet, Leroy, and Roy (2007) and Tichy and Ulrich (1984) the change process is often accompanied by a wide range of affective responses which may either elicit positive or negative results for the employee. Positive affective responses are highly related to acceptance of the change process, where as negative affective responses yield considerable resistance and anxiety (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Such responses need to be effectively managed in order to prevent a negative effect from impacting employee self-esteem (Canfield & Miller, 1996). Landry, Panaccio, and Vandenberghe (2010) indicate that the greater the intensity of the affective response with regards to a change event, the greater the likelihood that it will relate to employee self-esteem.

Due to the fact that organisational change has become a world-wide phenomenon, a major consideration is arising concerning the impact of the elicited consequences on employee health and well-being, and subsequently their affective response and levels of self-esteem. It is for this reason that management needs to offer considerable attention towards enhancing communication and interaction techniques in order to encourage a positive affective response from employees undergoing organisational change, consequently enhancing the relationship with their levels of self-esteem. The literature suggests that affective responses are the vehicle whereby external factors such as organisational change influence job behaviour (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). Therefore, a positive affective response to a change initiative may elicit favourable outcomes for the organisation (George & Jones, 2009). The literature also suggests that these affective responses serve as intervening variables through which self-esteem is brought into action (Oreg, 2006). In keeping with the findings of Landry et al. (2010) and extending this view to a change setting, it is possible to argue that the greater the intensity of the affective experience (either positive or negative) in response to an organisational change initiative, the greater the likelihood that self-esteem will be affected. However, very little research has been conducted in this area. There is a clear indication of a need for further research concerning the apparent relationship between organisational change and employee self-esteem.

To further an understanding regarding this issue, the relationship between organisational change, affective response and self-esteem was explored. Three theoretical propositions are implicit in this study.

- The first proposition involves an understanding of the nature of the relationship between perceived organisational change and an employee's affective response to the change.
- The second proposition involves establishing whether organisational change and self-esteem are related and, if so, what the nature of this relationship is.
- The third proposition involves determining whether affective response is regarded as a mediating variable whereby organisational change is related to employee self-esteem.

Therefore the three constructs that are addressed in this study include organisational change, employee affective response and employee self-esteem.

The remainder of the dissertation is structured as follows: First an overview of the literature on the perceived relationship between organisational change, affective response and self-esteem is presented. Next, the research methodology is reviewed and data analysis techniques are discussed. The findings of the study are then summarised. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and managerial implications, limitations and direction for future research.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2. The relationship between organisational change and employee affective response

In order to understand why organisational change is receiving substantial attention, it is necessary to understand the essence of the phenomenon. Organisational change is conceptualised by Van Tonder (2008, p. 2) as “...a non-discrete yet context bound process of energy movement that is reflected in an empirical difference in the state and or condition of the system over time”. In order to maintain a high organisational standard it is necessary to adapt to the developments brought about by change and ensure that the organisation remains competitive in the 21st century workplace (Haslebo & Nielson, 2000). However, a range of affective responses can accompany this change process (Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Tichy & Ulrich, 1984).

Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) propose that most change initiatives impose a large degree of affective strain on employees. This strain, which can be positive or negative, ultimately impacts the effective functioning of the organisation. A negative affect has an impact on employee morale and self-esteem. These negative affective responses to change elicit feelings of unfamiliarity, uncertainty, loss of control and doubt. This in turn influences further affective responses and ultimately impacts employee productivity (Canfield & Miller, 1996). The ability to identify whether the expected change will be viewed as a threat or an opportunity contributes significantly to an understanding of the employees’ response. When change is accompanied by positive responses it enhances and stimulates employee personal development and the progression of the organisation (Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006). In contrast, negative responses elicit sickness at work and job strain, ultimately damaging organisational productivity. Furthermore, the perception of change may be highly variable (Loretto, Platt, & Popham, 2009). These perceptions can impact employees’ affective responses, performance at work and, ultimately, their outlook on life (Dewettinck & Buyens, 2002).

Darwish (2000) suggests that employee commitment levels to the organisation is largely dependent on the employee’s perception of the change and plays a significant role in determining his or her acceptance of the change process. Fedor et al. (2006) state that employees who possess a high degree of organisational commitment experience a greater affiliation with the change process than those with a low degree

of commitment. These highly committed employees are more likely to demonstrate a positive approach towards organisational change (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1996), which may relate to high levels of self-esteem.

The management division of an organisation often does not fully comprehend the impact of the affective response to change (Saka, 2002). Management will emphasise the importance of the tasks leading up to the change event, but fail to acknowledge the consequences that these tasks may have on their employee's emotional state. This leads to an underestimation of the impact of this affective response as well as the behaviour resulting from the response on organisational success (Martin, 2005). The affective responses may be expressed through facial and bodily characteristics as well as through physiological responses (Bovey & Hede, 2001), which are expressed through conscious or unconscious cognitive processes. This affective response is viewed as a transitional process that helps employees adapt to and deal with change. Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory (AET) provides reasons for and consequences of emerging affective responses within the workplace. In the AET affective responses are viewed as mediating mechanisms through which stable environmental factors impact workplace attitudes and performance (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). According to Bovey and Hede (2001), affective responses are intervening variables that impact on the relationship between irrational ideas and intentional behaviour. George and Jones (2009) state that discrepancies within the environment trigger affective responses, which result in significant changes in employee well-being, goals and objectives. It is important to note that individuals are unique and therefore individual reactions to a particular change event will differ. Such reactions may be associated with resistance, acceptance or undermining of the issue at hand (Eriksson, 2002).

The change process involves a series of phases (Kotter, 1996), which are coupled with a range of affective responses (Colville & Milner, 2011). Claes F. Janssen's four rooms model of change explains that these affective responses may include contentment, denial, confusion and renewal. The negative reactions to change may impact both employees and organisations negatively (Duxbury, 2004) and can result in burnout, stress, depression, job turnover and an increase in mental illness. However, employees are not always aware of the potential impact of the change process (De Klerk & Mostert, 2010). If we were to consider that between 65%-75% of

change initiatives fail to meet their intended purpose (Van Tonder, 2004) it can be concluded that organisational change is firstly not as well managed as managers would argue and secondly, that the impact on the affective functioning of employees may be more pervasive than is generally acknowledged. A study conducted by Lopes, Slovey, Cote, and Beers (2005) suggests that possessing the ability to manage these affective responses effectively and positively enhances social interactions and decision-making within the organisation.

Therefore, considering the high potential for negative response to change initiatives, it is important to manage any unfavourable consequences that may emerge. These management strategies should include enhanced communication and employee interaction, with the goal of encouraging a positive affective reaction. Richardson and Denton (1996) highlight the significance of the continuous flow of information and communication between all levels of management and employees. Receiving information regarding the change process provides greater insight and understanding, which consequently helps to reduce apprehension and doubt and enhance employees' ability to cope with the change (Miller & Monge, 1985). As a result, employee psychological well-being and job satisfaction are elevated (Mostert, 2006), resulting in a greater positive affective response to the change.

The literature cited in this section suggests that organisational change elicits strong affective responses which may elicit changes in the self-esteem of employees. It also suggests that the intense experience of negative affective responses such as anger, despair and anxiety can be detrimental to both individuals and organisations (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). These findings therefore support the first proposition of the study which aims to develop an understanding of the nature of the relationship between perceived organisational change and employee affective response to the change event.

Canfield and Miller (1996) state that a poorly managed approach to organisational change elicits uncertainty for the employee, consequently influencing self-esteem. Therefore, in order to ensure that the change process is effectively implemented and well managed, it is necessary to explore the extent to which the change process is related to employees' levels of self-esteem. The effects of this relationship must also be explored.

2.1 The relatedness of change perception and employee self-esteem

Various factors are believed to impact employees' self-esteem. However, change is regarded as one of the critical factors to do so (Canfield & Miller, 1996). Changes in roles, duties and identity can result in a decrease in self-esteem and an increase in anxiety. This may impact the degree of resistance to the change process. This perspective suggests that change exacerbates a pre-existing inclination to respond negatively to situations due to inadequate levels of self-esteem. Employees' responses to change initiatives are likely to be closely related to individual levels of self-esteem. Research in the last twenty years has increasingly focused on organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) (Pierce & Gardener, 2008). OBSE is defined as the extent to which an employee develops a sense of competence, capability and worthiness within their job (Pierce, Dunham, & Cummings, 1989). Campbell (1990) explains that increases in tenure and organisational responsibilities are likely to increase employee worthiness, responsibility and identification with the organisation. This would in turn result in an increase in OBSE. The enhanced levels of self-esteem may result in employees experiencing an increased sense of affiliation and commitment to the organisation, which would make them less resistance to change. This positive orientation may stimulate employee productivity and organisational resilience.

Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, and Welbourne (1999) state that self-esteem is a relevant predictor of workplace behaviour and attitude. Self-esteem manifests in high levels of personal value and self-confidence and possessing the ability to control one's destiny (McCrimmon, 1997). Various factors influence self-esteem. In the organisational context, Callan, Terry, and Schweitzer (1994) suggest that self-esteem is negatively associated with stress, depression and anxiety. These affective conditions are likely to result in employees' blaming themselves, as opposed to external factors, for their inability to cope efficiently with change. Judge et al. (1999) indicate that a positive relationship is present between self-esteem and effective coping with organisational change. Effective coping encourages competence, self-awareness and self-determination in employees.

Employees' self-perception of their level of self-esteem significantly impacts their degree of motivation and commitment to the organisation (Coetzee, Martins, Basson, & Muller, 2006). These factors also have an impact on employees' ability to adapt to

the change process. In order to ensure that individuals' perceptions of the change do not result in negative consequences, supervisors must communicate with their employees and continuously monitor and manage the relationship between commitment and performance to assist in regulating employee self-esteem (Newstrom et al., 2004). A lack of change management combined with a low sense of self-esteem may inhibit performance and productivity at work.

Low self-esteem (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003) is linked to poor self-image, lack of self-confidence (Coetzee et al., 2006) and difficulty coping with the change process. Similarly, the more intense and negative the affective response, the greater the likelihood that it will impact on a person's self-esteem (Landry et al., 2010). The relationship between affective response and self-esteem is often associated with both success and failure. Self-esteem is likely to increase when positive affective responses are linked to winning, solving a problem or accomplishing a task. In contrast, low self-esteem often elicits denial, avoidance (Abraham, 1998), anxiety, neuroticism and vulnerability (Abraham, 1999). Individuals with low self-esteem have an alliance with negative events and are often negatively predisposed to life (Campbell, Chew, & Scratchley, 1991). Baumeister et al. (2003) explain that previous research suggests that self-esteem is predominantly associated with performance, happiness and healthy lifestyles. Happiness has the most significant relationship to high levels of self-esteem, while depression is commonly linked to low self-esteem.

Research informs that there has been very little focus on the relationship between self-esteem and organisational change which indicates the need for the second proposition laid out by the objectives of this study. Therefore, by conducting this research, it will be possible to develop a greater understanding and enhance scientific literature on the nature of the relationship which exists between organisational change and employee self-esteem.

In order to identify the link between organisational change and self-esteem the relationships between the underlying constructs must be determined. The defining feature of organisational change is the alteration of key organisational processes, which inevitably impacts on the members of an organisation and their subsequent levels of affective well-being (Jimmieson, 2005). Svensen, Neset, and Eriksen (2007) and Tehrani, Humpage, Willmott, and Haslam (2007) explain that organisational

change elicits negative reactions in terms of employee well-being, and has a direct effect on employee well-being (Westerlund et al., 2004). Pessimistic responses to the change process lower an employee's morale, confidence and ambition to achieve (Grossi, Theorell, Juriso, & Setterlind, 1999). Hewitt (2002) explains that self-esteem is a reflective characteristic of well-being. Employee well-being is also closely related to positive and negative levels of self-esteem. Self-esteem, described by Rosenberg (1989) and Albo, Nunez, Naverro, and Grijalvo (2007) as an appraisal of one's self-worth and self-confidence, is often used as an indicator of psychological well-being.

Self-esteem and well-being thus seem to share common features and seem to be closely related. Employees who experience high levels of well-being seem to function better than employees who experience low affective well-being (Carmeli, Yitzhak-Halevy, & Weisberg, 2007). Given this relationship it seems plausible that changes that occur within an organisation influence employees' affective responses, which in turn influence employees' self-esteem. Affective responses are thus the vehicles through which self-esteem is brought into action (Oreg, 2006). The research presented in this section strongly suggests that organisational change impacts on employee well-being. The literature further suggests that self-esteem and well-being are linked. These two findings make it possible to construct a tentative hypothesis regarding the existence of a relationship between organisational change and self-esteem, whereby affective response is regarded as the mediating variable, supporting proposition three of the objectives of the study.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3. Research approach

The research involved the use of a quantitative cross-sectional correlational study. A quantitative approach was selected because the research question called for a systematic, empirical investigation of phenomena and their relationships. The research process made use of a field study in order for participants to participate in their natural environment. Questionnaires, which are regarded as a cost-efficient and quick means of data-collection (Oppenheim, 1998), were used to gain primary data.

Correlations were investigated using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients and preliminary analyses were performed to ensure that the data did not violate the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Standard multiple regression was used to assess the causality of the relationships between the significant factors.

3.1 Research Setting

The sample was drawn from a telecommunications organisation that had undergone a particular change event. The change event involved a merge with another smaller telecommunications organisation and did not intend to bring about detrimental consequences for the employees. Rather, it led to the undertaking of an expansion for the organisation and an increase in employee chores and responsibilities.

3.2 Research participants

The study made use of a convenience sample and participants were selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the study. All employees were invited to complete the questionnaire. Ultimately 42 of the organisation's 46 employees participated in the study, indicating a participation rate of 91%. The average age of participants ranged between 26-35 years. Level of employment ranged from non-management to executive management, where 45.2% of the employees held a non-management position. The majority of the participants were permanent employees who had been working for the organisation for 2-5 years. Married, English speaking females with a Grade 12/Matric or N3/T1 qualification comprised the

majority of the population. The study therefore included participants from various organisational divisions, who had differing experiences of the change process.

3.3 Measuring instruments

An experimental change questionnaire developed by Van Tonder (2009) was used to assess organisational change. Although several psychometric properties are partially indicated in a few studies, these are not consistent because of changes to the instrument. This questionnaire included a series of short measures, as well as the addition of the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale. Tables 1, 2, and 3 which follow provide an indication and description of the scales yielded for each measure comprising the experimental change questionnaire.

Table 1 *Scales Measuring the Affective Experience of Change*

Factor No	Factor Name	No of Items	Sample items	Description
1	Positive Affect	7	"The change process makes me feel happy"	Excited, happy, thrilled
2	Anxious-introspection	8	"The change process makes me feel confused"	Confused, think a lot, fearful
3	Negative Affect	6	"The change process makes me feel angry"	Angry, sad, depressed

Table 2 Scales Measuring the Perception of Change

Factor No	Factor Name	No of Items	Sample items	Description
1	Change Management	13	"The change process/event is achieving its change objectives"	The way in which the change was designed and carried out
2	Intensity of Change	5	"The change process/event is/was disruptive"	The degree to which the change process was experienced
3	Impact of Change	4	"The change impacted my department only"	Perceived impact of change on the organisation
4	Change Preparation	4	"Employees are/were prepared for the change"	The initial perception/experience of the change process
5	Change type	4	"The change process/event is/was unfolding very slowly"	The difference between incremental and abrupt change

Table 3 Scales Measuring the Experienced Impact of Change

Factor No	Factor Name	No of Items	Sample items	Description
1	Psycho-social Impact	10	"During the change I experienced difficulty to relax"	Personal impact brought about change
2	Work relations	4	"During the change I experienced strained relationships at work"	Influence of change on work relations/processes

The experimental change questionnaire consists of three measures. The first measure assesses the affective experience of the change and consists of 21 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'slightly/not at all' (1) to 'extremely/very large extent' (5). Table 1 presents a description of scales drawn from this measure. The second measure describes the change (see Table 2) and consists of 29 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5). The last measure considers the experience of the change (see Table 3) and consists of 14 items

rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'slightly/not at all' (1) to 'extremely/very large extent' (5). Sample items for each measure are included in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 4 provides sample items as represented by the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale.

Table 4 *Sample Items for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*

Measure	Sample items
Rosenberg Self-esteem scale	"On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" "At times, I think I am no good at all"

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). This measure consists of 10 items and has an internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) of 0.77 (Rosenberg, 1965). The items are answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5).

3.5 Research procedure

The organisation's management were approached for permission to conduct the research. Once permission was received a detailed briefing was provided and the administrative and operational challenges were discussed. All ethical guidelines relating to the treatment of human subjects in research were adhered to in all steps of the study. The questionnaires were collected directly after they had been completed and the participants were informed that their involvement in the study would remain anonymous and confidential.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4. Results

In order to address the relationships between the constructs, obtained factors scores were subjected to correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation. Next, standard multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine whether cause-and-effect relationships existed among the key constructs. Factor scores for the population (N = 42) were calculated. Due to the fact that the sample size was small, factor analysis was unable to be performed on the given sample, however a reliability analysis was done. The descriptive data is provided in Table 5.

Table 5 *Minimum, Maximum, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Cronbach alpha for the Scales*

Scale	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach alpha
Positive affect	39	8,00	35,00	18,62	7,59	0,91
Anxious-introspection	39	8,00	35,00	16,15	6,47	0,87
Negative affect	38	6,00	25,00	8,00	4,01	0,80
Change management	41	9,00	39,00	22,10	7,22	0,90
Change experience	41	5,00	21,00	12,66	3,81	0,72
Change impact	41	4,00	20,00	14,32	3,33	0,58
Change preparation	41	5,00	17,00	10,95	3,04	0,61
Change type	41	4,00	20,00	11,95	3,62	0,59
Psycho-social impact	40	10,00	36,00	15,13	5,89	0,93
Work relations	40	4,00	11,00	5,90	2,23	0,87

From Table 5 it is evident that each of the scales derived from the three measures are reliable ($p > 0,05$) which allows for further analyses to be conducted.

In the sections below the correlations between change perception and affective response, change perception and self-esteem and self-esteem and affective response are presented first. This is followed by the presentation of the regression analyses

conducted for these three relationships. Table 6 provides an indication of the correlations between change perception and affective response.

Table 6 *Correlation between Change Perception and Affective Response*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Change management								
Change intensity	0,24							
Change impact	0,36*+	-0,38*+						
Change preparation	0,65**++	-0,51**++	-0,07					
Change type	0,22	0,87**++	-0,31*	0,45**+				
Positive affect	0,48**+	0,43**+	-0,01	0,52++	0,41**+			
Anxious-introspection	-0,10	-0,20	0,07	-0,13	0,18	-0,15		
Negative affect	-0,24	0,36*+	-0,20	-0,09	0,25	0,02	0,67**++	

*Statistically significant $p < 0.05$

** Statistically significant $p < 0.01$

+ Practically significant $r > 0,30$ (medium effect)

++ Practically significant $r > 0,50$ (large effect)

The relationships between change management, intensity of change, impact of change, change preparation and change type (as measured by the change perception measure) and positive affect, anxious-introspection and negative affect (as measured by the affective experience measure) were investigated. The correlation scores in Table 6 indicate that a positively significant relationship exists between change perception and affective response. Positive affect and change preparation report the largest positive correlation ($r = 0,52$, $N = 42$, $p < 0,005$). Cohen's (1988) indicator of effect size suggests that a large positive correlation is present between perceived organisational change and employee affective response to change. This finding implies that this correlation has practical significance for the population.

Table 7 outlines the correlations between change perception and self-esteem.

Table 7 *Correlation between Change Perception and Self-Esteem*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Self-esteem						
Change management	0,13					
Change intensity	0,57 ^{**} ++	0,24				
Change impact	-0,42 ^{**}	0,36 ^{**} +	-0,38 ^{**}			
Change preparation	0,36 [*] +	0,65 ^{**} ++	0,51 ^{**} ++	-0,07		
Change type	0,41 ^{**} +	0,22	0,87 ^{**} ++	-0,31 [*]	0,45 ^{**} +	

*Statistically significant $p < 0.05$

**Statistically significant $p < 0.01$

+ Practically significant $r > 0,30$ (medium effect)

++ Practically significant $r > 0,50$ (large effect)

Table 7 presents the relationships present between change management, intensity of change, impact of change, change preparation and change type (as measured by the change perception measure) and self-esteem (as measured by the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale). Significant positive relationships were present between self-esteem, intensity of change, change preparation and change type. Intensity of change had the largest positive correlation ($r = 0,57$, $N = 42$, $p < 0,005$.), while self-esteem and change impact ($r = -0,42$, $N = 42$, $p < 0,005$) had a medium negative correlation. Therefore, Cohen's (1988) indicator of effect size suggests that this correlation is of practical significance for the population.

The correlations between self-esteem and effective response are portrayed in Table 8.

Table 8 *Correlations between Self-Esteem and Affective Response*

	1	2	3	4
Self-esteem				
Positive affect	0,10			
Anxious-introspection	0,13	-0,15		
Negative affect	0,31+	0,02	0,67 ^{**} ++	

*Statistically significant $p < 0.05$

**Statistically significant $p < 0.01$

+ Practically significant $r > 0,30$ (medium effect)

++ Practically significant $r > 0,50$ (large effect)

Table 8 indicates that the relationships between self-esteem (as measured by the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale) and positive affect, anxious-introspection and negative affect (as measured by the affective experience measure) were non-significant. This means that these correlations are not of any practical significance (Cohen, 1988).

The regression analysis, which was conducted for the constructs change perception, affective response and self-esteem, is represented in Table 9.



Table 9 Multiple Regression Analyses for Change Perception and Affective Response, Change Perception and Self-Esteem and Self-Esteem and Affective Response

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	UNSTANDARDISED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDISED COEFFICIENTS	t	p	F	R2	Adjusted R ²
		B	SE						
Positive Affect	1(Constant)	-0,27	7,80		-0,03	0,97	3,70	0,36	0,26
	Change management	0,30	0,23	0,29	1,31	0,20			
	Change intensity	0,22	0,62	0,11	0,36	0,72			
	Change impact	-0,01	0,41	-0,01	-0,03	0,98			
	Change preparation	0,52	0,54	0,21	0,96	0,35			
	Change type	0,33	0,60	0,16	0,55	0,59			
Self-esteem	1(Constant)	16,34	6,23		2,63	0,01	4,95	0,42	0,34
	Change management	0,09	0,18	0,10	0,50	0,62			
	Change intensity	1,24	0,49	0,73	2,51	0,02			
	Change impact	-0,56	0,33	-0,29	-1,73	0,09			
	Change preparation	0,14	0,43	0,07	0,33	0,75			
	Change type	-0,67	0,48	-0,37	-1,39	0,17			
Self-esteem	1(Constant)	15,07	4,15		3,63	0,00	1,41	0,11	0,03
	Positive emotions	-0,07	0,14	-0,08	0,47	0,64			
	Anxious-introspective	-0,11	0,22	-0,11	-0,49	0,63			
	Negative emotions	0,62	0,36	0,39	1,73	0,09			

Table 9 provides an indication of the causal relationships between the key variables. Measure 1 in Table 9 shows that change management is a predictor of positive affect ($b_{\text{standardised}} = 0,29, p < 0,005$). This finding provides support for the existence of a relationship between change perception and affective response. A similar relationship is observed in measure 2 of Table 9 when the correlate of intensity of change is regressed on self-esteem ($b_{\text{standardised}} = 0,73, p < 0,005$). This finding suggests that a relationship exists between change perception and self-esteem. Measure 3 of Table 9 shows that negative affect is the largest contributor to self-esteem ($b_{\text{standardised}} = 0,36, p < 0,005$). Furthermore, only 3.3% of the variance in self-esteem is explained by the predictor variables. This suggests that in this study the employees' affective responses to the perceived change were not directly related to self-esteem.

4.1 Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between organisational change and employee self-esteem. In order to meet this aim data was collected from 42 employees within a single organisation with the aid of a survey measuring organisational change, affective response and self-esteem. The analysis of the relationship between change perception and the affective response to the change yielded significant results. The relationship between change perception and self-esteem was also found to be significant. However, the relationship between affective response and self-esteem was not significant.

The first proposition of this study aimed to explore the relationship between change perception and affective response. Once the analysis was conducted, the research yielded statistically significant results. The results showed that change management was the largest contributor to positive affect, one of the dimensions of affective response. This result confirms the findings of George and Jones (2009) and Haslebo and Nielson (2000) and suggests that adapting to and accepting change elicits a range of affective responses that consequently influence the way in which employees conduct their behaviour. In order to determine the effectiveness of the change initiative the relationship between perception of change and affective response was investigated. Pearson's correlations showed that there were positively significant relationships between the various dimensions of change perception (change management, intensity of change, change preparation and change type) and positive

affect. Most of the relationships between the dimension of change perception and negative affect were found to be non-significant. The only exception to this finding was intensity of change, which indicated a significant positive correlation. There were also no significant correlations between change perception and anxious-introspection. In this regard De Klerk and Mostert (2010) state that employees are not always clear on the effects of change on their affective response. According to Lazarus's (1993) Stress Theory, negative affective responses are likely to occur when change is perceived as harmful to the employee. However, when the change is perceived as more favourable and is viewed as an opportunity, positive affective responses are elicited, which cause the employee to become more receptive to the change event.

The results of the study therefore confirm the theoretical proposition that suggests that change perception has a significant influence on affect response. The standard multiple regression analysis showed that change perception explains a small proportion of positive affect, negative affect and anxious introspection. This finding suggests that additional variables, such as anxiety, uncertainty, job satisfaction and commitment, may have strong causal relationships with affective response (Fineman, 1997).

The second proposition of this study intended to understand the nature of the relationship between change perception and self-esteem. According to the results, a statistical significant relationship is present. Judge et al. (1999) explain that self-esteem contributes to employees' workplace behaviour and attitude. Self-esteem therefore needs to be maintained at high levels, in order to ensure effective functioning within an organisation. This study found that change has a significant influence on employee self-esteem. The finding suggests that the change process needs to be well managed, in order to ensure that employee commitment and motivation remains high (Newstrom et al., 2004). The results of this study show that intensity of the change was the largest contributor to self-esteem. Therefore, the more disruptive, chaotic and traumatising the change event, the greater the impact it will have on employee self-esteem. Pearson's correlations showed that there were positively significant relationships between self-esteem, intensity of change, change preparation and change type. A significant negative relationship was reported between self-esteem and change impact. No significant relationship was reported between change management and self-esteem. These findings support McCrimmon's (1997)

findings, which suggest that self-esteem is connected to high levels of confidence and having a sense of control. The greater the understanding, preparation, acceptance and support for the change initiative, the greater the levels of self-esteem. Alternatively, a change initiative that has severe consequences and impact will result in lower levels of employee self-esteem.

It is important to bear in mind that different researchers have different concepts of change, and these differences necessarily influence the interpretation of results. Canfield and Miller (1996) interpret the results of their study to mean that change should be regarded as a critical factor influencing self-esteem. However, the results of this study suggest that a slight of amount change perception is related to self-esteem, therefore supporting the second proposition of the objectives. When other variables are considered, the findings suggest that a causal relationship with self-esteem may include self-worth, self-confidence, psychological well-being (Rosenberg, 1965) and organisational identity (Branden, 1998).

In understanding the relationship between affective response and self-esteem, it was found that affective response predicted self-esteem in a non-significant way. The results elicited through standard multiple regression analysis imply that an insignificant portion of affective responses are related to employee self-esteem, therefore disproving the third proposition of the study. This consequently infers that affective response is not considered to be a mediating variable between organisational change and self-esteem. According to Pierce and Gardner (2004, 2008) factors such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, ability to perform effectively, personality characteristics and job characteristics contribute significantly to self-esteem. However, the results of this study suggest that negative affect makes the largest contributor towards self-esteem. This concurs with Landry et al.'s (2010) findings, which suggest that high levels of negative affect impact negatively on employee self-esteem.

The research conducted found that a statistically significant relationship is present between perceived organisational change and the employee's affective response to the change event. Furthermore, in trying to understand the relationship between organisational change and self-esteem, a direct significant correlation was found between organisational change and self-esteem. However, a non-significant indirect

relationship was also found between the employees' affective response to the change and their levels of self-esteem. Thus, no support was found for the third objective of the study (see figure 2).

4.2 Implications of the findings

The practical implications of this study for the workplace should be considered. The finding that the perception of organisational change is likely to influence the employees' affective response suggests that the change process needs to be accurately and adequately managed at all times. Change management contributes in a meaningful way to positive affective responses and it is therefore important to ensure that this relationship is sustained in order to maintain productivity and efficiency within the workplace. Affective responses and self-esteem should be sustained at high levels in order to prevent a negative impact on performance. In addition, the relationship between the perception of change (specifically regarding the intensity of change) and self-esteem means that perception of change should be constantly monitored in order to ensure that employees are healthy, happy and functioning well (Miller & Monge, 1985). Managing change thus leads to enhanced workplace behaviour and ultimately organisational success (Mostert, 2006). Employees are a vital component of any organisation and failure to manage the relationship between change and employee perceptions of change can have devastating results for individuals and organisations (Martin, 2005).

4.3 Limitations of the study

In addition to the research contributions outlined above, this study had limitations. As with all studies, circumstances and design parameters were not completely optimal, thus leading to several limitations. The results should therefore be viewed as tentative and interpreted with caution until they are replicated in other studies. Firstly, the results were obtained from a sample of participants within a single telecommunications organisation. The study therefore has little nomothetic value, as it was limited to a single organisation. This limits the generalisability of the findings. Secondly, the sample size ($N = 42$) was small. Although the study yielded satisfactory results a larger sample size would have yielded more significant results. Thirdly, majority of employees within the organisation held a non-management position which could influence the findings of the study due to the employee's lack of involvement in

the planning and execution of the change event. Lastly, affective response and self-esteem were analysed only in terms of the effects brought about by organisational change. The small percentage of variance explained by the influence of the perception of change (change management, intensity of change, impact of change, change preparation and change type) on employees' positive affective response, negative affective response and anxiety levels as well as the influence of change (change management, intensity of change, impact of change, change preparation and change type) on self-esteem indicates that other factors may play a role in the relationships between affective response, self-esteem and organisational change. Further research is required in this area.



5. CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1 Opportunities for future research

This study yields several possible avenues for further research. For example, the impact of demographic variables including job level, employment type, tenure, age, gender, martial status, home language and highest formal educational qualification could be investigated in relation to change and self-esteem. Furthermore, additional research could be conducted across similar organisations and in similar contexts to establish the external validity of the findings.

5.2 Conclusion

From this study it is possible to conclude that a relationship was found supporting the first and second propositions as described by the research objectives. That is, a significant relationship exists between organisational change and employee affective response as well as between organisational change and employee self-esteem. In understanding the prevalence of organisational change in today's marketplace and the impact it may elicit on employee health and well-being, it is fundamental to ensure that organisational change is effectively implemented and managed in order to maintain sufficient levels of affective response and self-esteem. This consequently assists employees in performing optimally, ultimately working towards enhanced organisational success.

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