**Resistance to Organizational Change**

**Case study of Africa Community Technical Service**

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# ABSTRACT

Organizations frequently need to introduce changes in anticipation of future problems. Though a change process may be vital there often will be resistance to change processes from the individuals and organizations. Even though resistance to change is common, change initiators generally do not consider managing it effectively in order to make their efforts a success. Poorly managed resistance ruins an organization. Accordingly, this study was aimed to explore the nature of resistance when implementing a strategic change at ACTS organization. Case study approach was used to investigate the research question. The selection of the study targeted ACTS organization to understand the nature of resistance because it has been operation for many years and so believed to be the best source for research information. Data collection techniques were semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant-observation. The primary data were analyzed by using content analysis techniques. The case study findings revealed significant reasons for the resistance to change in ACTS organization and how these were handled. The results and findings reported from this study will enable organizations and managers to understand the nature of resistance and manage it effectively for successful strategic change implementation. Change is normal and is good for organizations to grow but it was discussed that it meets resistance because of fear of job loss, responsibility and power, lack of clear reason for change, lack of commitment and support from the leaders, ignorance about what is in the future and lack of confidence for competitive skills and capabilities by the employees. Resistance to change can be minimized through good communication about change, participation in changes processes by all stakeholders, telling the stakeholders about the vision of change, implementing change following change steps, supporting the effected employees and using skilled change managers. Resistance to change affects employees productivity, brings discomfort, fear and lack of concentration hence organizations suffer the effect of time overrun and budget overrun. The findings also revealed that for change to be successful, leaders and management must fully involve and engaged all stakeholders in the change process, carry out awareness programs and staff training where necessary.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# 1.0 Introduction

Globally we are living in a changing world and so survival for the fittest. Therefore, competition is pushing many organizations to become better and more streamlined with their programming processes and of which Africa Community Technical Service (ACTS) is among. Change has become important and inevitable in today’s business environment. Today’s dynamic business environment requires organizations like ACTS to be continuously changing their program systems and structures for survival and to remain relevant and up to date in the competitive world so that they can serve their customers better. Change has become a fundamental factor because of fierce business competition, new technologies, new techniques to business development and mostly globalization. Organizations are fast realizing the need to position themselves as regional and global players in a world that national and geographic boundaries are crumbling through globalization. It has become important for managers to be proactive and react quickly to changes taking place in the world. Cummings and Worley (2009) indicate that the pace of global, economic and technological development makes change an inevitable feature of organizational life. This has put a lot of pressure on organizations However, many change proposals have continued to face big challenges and have a low success rate. The general objective of this study is to identify the main causes of resistance to change, its effects on employees and organizational goals and as well as possible strategies to mitigate future resistance to change. The study targeted ACTS because it’s been in existence for over 35 years partnering with communities in delivering clean water services and promoting improved sanitation to communities in Western Uganda. So, it is thought to be a source for reliable research information. Furthermore, ACTS being within proximity distance it is economically favorable to this case study.

To remain competitive, companies have no choice but to change systems either restructuring, re-organizing and reengineering systems to improve competitiveness and the end result being a positive change in productivity leading to increase in the bottom-line being profits. For this to happen successfully, in the ever-changing environment, organizations need to improve their performance by improving their quality and productivity. Organizations need to be flexible to cope with the change. The current environment requires organizations to adapt or else fail (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, 2009). However, change is not always smooth and welcomed by everyone. Resistance comes with the pressures of change. Most well planned restructuring efforts seem to die a natural death when faced with stern resistance.

In 2012 ACTS attempted restructuring of staff and technologies like the use of Mwater application for data collection but met resistance from employees. ACTS had 50 employees who were expensive to maintain with better remuneration compared to when the number was reduced to 20 employees. The smaller number of employees is easily managed for improved quality products. Public sector organizations are usually seen as being slow, inefficient and less effective compared to private sector organizations which are innovative and are keen on satisfying their customer’s needs. This is because public owned companies have realized that for them to survive they cannot wait but to restructure, reposition and reorganize systems to fight competition. Bradley (2010), states that avoiding change is not a feasible option. The Challenge is to develop an effective and timely method of determining the optimum set of proactive changes and to manage them so that stakeholder resistance is overcome, and defined performance goals are achieved. There is need for organizations to internally continue making changes because the external environment continues to change every day. Without the change, organizations will not survive. The study evaluates the main sources for resistance to change, the management response and its effect on productivity.

## 1.1 Statement of the problem

Need for change has become important and unavoidable in the business world. Companies now appreciate the need to remain competitive because they have no choice but to change systems to ensure survival. However, some of these change initiatives have been met with strong resistance by employees of the companies. Paul R. Lawrence (1969) said that most change initiatives fail on encountering resistance and that resistance to change can cause high costs and delays to the change process which are difficult to anticipate so managers must put it into considerations.

Burnes (2009) realized that organizational transformation is a complex process which requires continuous work of coordinating and struggling through resistance to change as a key ingredient for the success of the change initiative. Change in any organization is implemented to make a good impact and benefit the organization, but why is it that change comes with resistance. The research will attempt to answer this question.

Resistance should be considered an important issue in change management as it can be an obstacle to a successful change process. This study investigates this issue and comes up with ideas to help change managers to better manage future changes without distracting positive employee productivity patterns (Robbins & Judge, 2011). With the data presented above, this study aims to find out why organizations show resistance to organizational change and will take a case study of Community Technical Service

## 1.2.1 Main Research Objective

The main aim of the study is to assess the sources and nature of resistance to change at ACTS organization and proposed the way forward.

## 1.2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To establish the causes of resistance to change in an organization
2. To know the effects of resistance to change on both employees and organizational goals
3. To establish ways in which resistance to change can be minimized in work environment

## 1.3 Research questions

What were the causes of resistance to change you experienced?

How did resistance to change affect you as an employee and as an organization and what is your attitude to change?

How has your organization been mitigating resistance to change?

## 1.4 Scope of the Study

The study targets to interview sampled employees of ACTS organization. This will reveal whether the organization or its individual employees have ever experienced any resistance to change in their work environment and if yes what impacts did it cause, whether positive or negative? To what extent were these effects? These could be minor or more serious effects on the individual employees or the entire organization.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The key findings and recommendations of the study will facilitate managers of private and government institutions to design suitable tools to implement change with minimized resistance. The study will provide a learning base for students studying leadership and management course to reference from. The study will give an approach for leaders and managers to build on their knowledge of program implementation and research.

# CHAPTER TWO

# ITERATURE REVIEW

## 2. 1 Introduction

The main aim of this study is to assess resistance to organizational change and its effect on employee productivity. This chapter will provide in detail the organizational change and view the different characteristics of organizational change such as the change management approaches when implementing change, contributions of resistance to change, sources of resistance to change, academic views and previous research on resistance to change and strategies to overcome it. Furthermore, this chapter will look at employee productivity, its importance and its relationship with organizational change process. This section will also look at organizational development and the relationship between leadership and resistance to change.

## 2.2 Change in Organization

Change means moving from the current state or ways of doing things to new ways basing on one’s desire. Change can also mean different things to different people or organizations basing on available situations Amber Raiken  Feb 8, 2017

Organizational change can be a well-planned change of the organizational systems, structures, people, and technology in order to improve the operations effectiveness of the organization in the interest of achieving goals. (Cawsey et al, 2012). However, change can be unplanned (Hartel and Fujimoto (2006, p. 351). There are a lot of forces driving change internally and externally and these influence managers to change their systems and ways of doing things. Some of these forces include technological changes, change in demographic patterns, social responsibilities, the change in economy and globalization.

An organizational structure defines how job tasks are formally divided, grouped and coordinated (Robbins & Judge, 2011,p.522). The form of organizational change that took place at ACTS was structural and technological change. Top management restructured the structure of the organization and major changes involved the hierarchy of authority.

Three managerial positions were cut down to one now called programs manager. Other areas of change included cutting down of other departments which included department of Mutual Benefit Society (MBS), Discipleship training, Vehicle mechanics and Agriculture. This left only two departments in existence and these are Water construction, Sanitation and Hygiene education. The number of employees were reduced from 50 to 20. This definitely reduced the chain of command since there were less managers and it eased communication. The main reason for the changes was to become more competitive and proficient in production. The retained two departments have immediate supervisors who were given the tittle of Coordinators.

Some organizations do introduce change not necessarily to improve on efficiency and effectiveness but also when there are troubles within the organization which are business related or misunderstanding because of culture differences. Managing organizational problems may require introducing change which may affect everyone in the organization. Change is therefore not easy to implement. Paula Alsher (2018) said that for organizational change to be successful it requires the change agents and facilitators to have the necessary skills and expertise to carry out the change process. It is vital therefore, that there is high levels of employee involvement especially where change is focused mainly on restructuring the organizations to avoid resistance.

ACTS organization as a whole worked together to avoid failure. The management played an important role in achieving successful changes. ACTS management arranged the severance package equivalent to four month’s salary for each affected employees who lost their jobs. The employees who stayed were given training under the educational development fund created by ACTS management to support staff. Employees who were retained were those who lacked specific skills like technology skills for using mWater apps, leadership and management skills.

Cawsey et al (2012) said that one of the difficulties mangers face in handling change is assuming that they have power and influence to carry out changes and underestimate the power and influence of other stakeholders. Managers lack capacity to manage complex changes that involve people. For this case the ACTS employees and management were all involved in change processes whereby the employees were first sensitized about the change, sharing with them why there was need for change, who was going to be affected and how they will be supported. Mr. Edward Batuze one of the Coordinators said that ideas from employees helped the management to plan well for change which minimized resistance.

## 2.3. Approaches to managing change

**2.3.1. Change processes were purposely made to turn employees bad feeling about change into hopes**. The management saved funds for severance package and prizes to present to those employees whose positions were going to be affected. No employee was told that his position was cut down because of his personal performance but because there was need to change so that the organization can be well transformed to meet the world demands. Sensitization meetings about the need for change were also conducted. This was aimed at motivating the employees so that they appreciate and are comfortable with the change, looking at it as the way of bringing great opportunities. This approach employs the basics of Lewin’s three step model of unfreezing , movement and refreezing.

Robbins and Judge (2011) said that successful change in organizations should follow three steps: unfreezing the status quo, movement to a desired end state, and refreezing the new change to make it permanent .

**2.3.2. There was resistance force from the employees side after being told that change would occur.** The employees feared losing their job as well as comfortable positions and because of this stressing factor employees lost moral and two of the employees resigned immediately and joined Millennium goals project in Isingiri District. However, this resistance was minimized by the manager through involving some stakeholders in early planning of chance hence balancing the forces between change and resistance from employees. This is a Lewin’s force field model approach (Martin, 2005). He stated that before change the force field is at the equilibrium and that for any change to occur the state of equilibrium must change first. There two forces, driving forces are positive forces to change and there are always factors which attract people to accept change while restraining forces are negative forces which result in people resisting change

2.4. Organizational resistance to change: Resistance towards change includes behaviors of change recipients by slowing down or terminate an intended organizational change (Hughes2006). It can be refusal to participate in problem solving, refusal to seek common ground, sabotage, and a general lack of cooperation. Resistance hinders effective planning so it is therefore a barrier of organizational change. Managers often bring in change without seriously considering the psychological effect it may have on the other stakeholders of the organization especially those who have not been part of the decision to make the change. This therefore means that success or failure of the change programme dependents on good organizational management . Employee resistance should not simply be treated as an obstacle to be overcome but as a valuable source of knowledge and critique of change programme Andiopoulos & Dawson (2009). Resistance is a very important concept which must be given full attention during organizational change programmes. Resistance can therefore be said to be a reaction or response to change initiatives which is normal and is possible to be managed effectively.

The resistance that ACTS organization met was due to employees thinking that the change was not going to bring positive results, some were used to their way of doing things, so they looked at change as the way to bring displeasure and problems. The coordinators said there was some anxiety and stress before on knowing that change is come but was soon reduced by communicating to all the employees. It was found that during change time, employees become frustrated and stressed and it was that stress and fear of the unknown that led to resistance, (Yue 2008).

It should be noted that change managers can also make use of that resistance in a positive way to

help them be aware that there is a problem and therefore opens up room for discussions and debate. This allows them to explain the change effort and improve on the change process through listening to the views of the other members.

## 2.4.1. Sources of resistance to change

There are several reasons why individuals resist organizational change. For example, employees usually feel endangered when they hear of change. Robbins & Judge (2009) puts the sources of resistance to change into two groups: individual sources and organizational sources. However, the sources of resistance to change in ACTS organization were mostly individual sources where by there were employees with high need for job security, change in job task resulted in economic fears for some employees who felt they may fail to perform new tasks because pay was closely tied to production, others feared lowering of their status and disruption of social arrangements.

Pardo del val & Feuntes (2003) divided sources of resistance to change into five groups as indicated below:

1. Resistance to change is a psychological concept- suggesting that individuals by

nature challenge any type of change.

2. Resistance to change is a systems concept- reflecting organizational members

discomfort with process modification that may disadvantage them

3. Institutionalized resistance- organizational members resist change when they do

not believe it is necessary.

4. Organizational culture- organizational members resist change that is contrary to

their beliefs and attitudes. People believe that their decisions are based on free will, and having more options gives them a sense of freedom. Yet when it comes time to make a decision, people will hesitate because it means reducing their options.

5. Lack of capacity whereby the leadership is strong enough to deal with change. Most people are followers, so they need a “role model” to follow. If none exists, they won’t have behavior to copy

## 2.4.2. Different views to resistance to change

Karen Ferris (2015) argues that resistance to change is not always bad; in fact he says that resistance to change can be a positive to the change program: Resistance has in fact been re framed by some as both a positive and necessary force that can inform change efforts through providing alternative ideas, harnessing people into the problem solving process and aiding the consideration of alternatives. Waddell & Sohal (1998) argued that if resistance is managed well and understood, managers may greatly benefit by looking at the ways of utilizing resistance to change rather than overcoming it.

## 2.5 . Overcoming Resistance to change

There are ways that can be applied to help change agents deal with resistance to change:

**Education:** Communicating within the organization to everyone about change and the logic of change reduced employee resistance significant levels . This was done by the skilled change agent who worked as a volunteer for ACTS assisting the programs manager. Educating staff reduced effects of misinformation and poor communication and issues are able to be discussed and misunderstanding cleared up thereby destroying resistance. Robbins and Judge (2009.

**Participation:** Participation and involvement of everyone in the organization can reduce resistance, obtain commitment and increase the quality of change decisions. Manager and change leaders often make a huge mistake of not involving the other staff members who are key to making the change initiative a success and this leads to failure. This can only work if the participants are giving meaningful contributions. Participation also has a disadvantage that through the discussions the group can come up with poor contributions which do not help in achieving success and at the same time-wasting time.

**Building support and commitment:** If managers or employees fear change and lack motivation to change they resist change. There is need for the change leaders to build support for the employees and help them emotionally commit to change.

**Develop positive relationships**: It is important for everyone in the organization to maintain good relations. Managers must always try to ensure that they have good relations with lower level employed. If there are good relations, when there is need for change there is a good chance that employees will not resist change because they have good relations and there is trust.

**Implementing changes fairly:** To avoid resistance managers must make sure that change is implemented fairly. It is important that employees see the reason for the change and perceive its implementation as consistent and fair.

## 2.6. Employee Productivity and resistance to change

Usually the vital goal for ACTS like any other organization is maximizing profits by becoming efficient in operations and the way to measure efficiency is by looking at productivity. One needs to excel to survive in this competitive world, said Harrington (2005). To excel an organization needs to focus on all parts

of the organization, optimizing the use and effectiveness of all its resources. In ACTS, change came with corrections of the company’s strategy, structure, processes, systems and people to improve productivity, that is efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. One of the most important inputs to the productivity is the human aspect which is the employees. The research findings indicate that ACTS reduced its employees from fifty to twenty. The twenty employees were trained in various skills which included the use of GPS, water quality testing, mWater for surveys, WASH, approaches like CLTS, PHAST, CHEST, car driving and computer.

The research findings further indicate that these skills have equipped employees with vast knowledge to carry on and complete the same tasks in time which were previously done by fifty employees. In fact, the ACTS manager said the former team completed these tasks but with time and budget overrun. The ACTS manager also revealed that actually the same size project which would fail to be completed by a former team of fifty members has just been completed this year within the schedule by the current small team in Kicuzi Sub County Ibanda District.

Greater benefits are now maximized at ACTS because the organization has a small team which is managed with the ease, there is less expenditure on salaries but greater production. The team is well looked after and in fact their salaries were increased. The employees with the lowest salary was increased from 400,000 to 660,000 UGX while the highest from 1,800,000 to 2,250,000 UGX. The team now gets benefits like coverall covers, transport, meals, accommodation and there is an open-door policy for them to express their fillings. This has not only motivated the team but boosted production and achieving results that exceed the previous norms, Goodman et al (2007).

The findings also indicated that there was significant negative effect on productivity at the beginning of change. The ACTS manager said low production was observed for the first few months of the change. Employees were somehow not comfortable with the new changes but after receiving training support they gained momentum and now every employee is comfortable contributing their shares.

According to the research findings, all the positive change did not happen out of nothing but through the leadership that demonstrated energizing and mobilizing the workforce into a state of readiness for change, defining the future direction in a way that appeals to, and inspires all stakeholders on a personal level, showing commitment and involvement by consistently and relentlessly communicating and modeling the new behaviors and providing enabling systems and structures that will sustain the momentum for change.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# 3.0 Overview

This chapter covers the methodology applied to obtain information and come up with conclusions about resistance to change in organizations and its impact.

## 3.1 Research Design

The researcher used the qualitative design to be able to understand exactly what problems behind resistance to change as well as attitudes from the sampled population. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to obtain data from ACTS by sharing from knowledge and experience of each member of the sampled population. A research design means a conceptual structure within which a research is conducted and adopted to understand a situation in greater depth, Paliwal (2009). Also, the qualitative method can reveal nature of certain situations, settings, processes, Leedey and Ormrod (2005).

## 3. 2 Research Population

ACTS organization is composed of 20 employees. These are both managerial and non-managerial employees. Two out of twenty employees are not fulltime, so the research only considered fulltime workers as they were believed to have enough information. Ten employees were sampled at random and interviewed individually and in a group discussion. The accessible group of people on which the researcher applies his conclusions in the research is the study Population, (EA Kazerooni 2001).

## 3. 3 Sample and Sampling Method

The sampling targeted 10 out 20 employees only. The employees of ACTS are in two categories which include 15 field staff and 5 office staff. The office staff will be interviewed alone at their office premises while it is proposed that the interview for field staff be done onsite in the field.

## 3. 4 Procedure

The semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face with the aid of the interview guide to help the researcher obtain clarification on issues and to facilitate a more investigative process. The interview was not only be designed to enable the researcher to establish the change initiative process and clearly know how the resistance to change came about but to find out if there was any effect on the staff and productivity levels at ACTS during periods of resistance .

## 3.5 Data analysis:

Data analysis is a process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information for business decision-making. This included data entering, analyze it and come to conclusion. Gray (2009) states that data analysis includes identifying key subject matter, trends, ideas and arguments, The data analysis approach that was adopted by the researcher for analyzing the data collected through the interviews was transcription, coding and thematic analysis. Data was listened and re-read by the researcher to be familiar with it. The researcher carefully coded words and phrases that may be of use to the study and grouped together the different parts of data relevant to some category (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Coding process made it easier for the researcher to get a clear understanding of the interview data. The recorded data was examined to identify any similarities or differences between views of the individual employees. These employees were further examined to see if there were any patterns of meaning, themes and trends which could be identified and grouped according to frequency of occurrence. The themes were further defined to see how they related to the study and then conclusions were drawn. This helped in building explanations on the findings and explain theories that may emerge from the data in relation to existing literature. Results were put in a table, flow chart diagrams and data interpreted in a narrative form.

## 3.6 Coding System

Codes were developed from each interview question that was asked by the interviewer to

get a clearer view of the data collected. Below is an example of the coding done by the

researcher:

**Table 1 Coding system**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **O C** | **PI** | **R** | **EP** |
| Level One | Organizational Change | Participation and Involvement | Resistance to change | Employee Productivity |
| Initial Concept | Change initiatives in the organization | Importance of teamwork, support and participation of employees | Problems encountered during change process | Effects of change initiative on employee productivity |
| Level 2 category development using questions | What benefits would be brought about by the change | Were you involved in the change process from the beginning | Were there any problems encountered during the change | Were there any changes in employee productivity at this time |

According to the table 1 above, the first level coding was used to code the participants’ responses. The second level allowed the researcher to categorize and abstracts the data and put into themes for thematic analysis.

## 3. 6 Reliability of the Study

Careful precautions were taken by the researcher in obtaining and handling all the data collected, recording and analyzing it.Colin Phelan and Julie Wren, (2005-06) stated that reliability is the degree to which an assessment produces stable and consistent results. It is important for the researcher therefore, to make sure he obtains the right data by sharing with the respondents what he has understood from the response of the respondents for verification and clarification purposes to avoid bias.

## 3. 7 Ethical consideration

This research considered ethical measures whereby the researcher respected issues of privacy, anonymity and informed consent. The researcher got consent of the respondents before publishing the results of the research. Permission to conduct research was got before beginning the study and all the respondents were given a homogenous treatment. Ethical consideration helped the researcher to get the truth and avoid errors, (David B. Resnik, 2015).

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

## 4.1. Introduction

The former chapter looked at the research methodology that was use to conduct the study. The purpose of this chapter now is to present the findings and analysis of the data collected at ACTS through identifying and analysing the sources and nature of resistance to change, evaluating the relationship between the change implementation approaches and the sources of resistance to change by measuring them against source of resistance to change and evaluating the approaches adopted to counter and manage resistance to change and its effectiveness on employee productivity

The analysis and data presentation will be done in two sections. Section 1 will be for non-managerial responses and section 2 will discuss responses from the managerial participants. The discussion will follow after the presentation of findings.

## 4.2. Sample Analysis

**Table 2: Sample Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Size of the sample** | **Category** | **Male** | **Female** | **Number of respondents** | **Rate of response** |
| 10 | All employees | 6 | 4 | 9 | 80% |
| 3 | Managerial | 2 | 1 | 3 | 100% |
| 7 | No managerial | 4 | 3 | 6 | 86% |

The research targeted 10 respondents to be interviewed for this study but only 9 respondents managed to participate in the interviews presenting to a rate 90%. All three managerial employees participated rating to 100% and 6 out of 7 non managerial employees participated and rated at 86%. A response rate that is below 50% constitutes a minority which signifies that an incorrect generality of population may be obtained (Wolman et al, 2005). This therefore was thought to be adequate to continue with the analysis of the data collected.

## 4.2.1. Demographic Characteristics

Fig 1 showing the gender distribution of the respondents.

## Table 3 Age Distribution

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AGE OF RESPNDENTS** | **MANAGERIAL** | **%** | **NON- MANAGERIAL** | **%** |
| 20-25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26-31 | 2 | 67 | 0 | 0 |
| 32-36 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 |
| 37-45 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 50 |
| 46-55 | 1 | 33 | 2 | 33 |

According to age distribution table, the biggest percentage of 67 of managerial respondents lies between the age 25-30 while for non managerial respondents is between the age of 36-45.

**Table 4. Number of years working with ACTS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MANAGERIAL** | | | **NON-MANAGERIAL** |
| <5 | | **0** | **0** | |
| 5-8 | | **2** |  | |
| **9-12** | |  | **2** | |
| **13-15** | |  | **4** | |
| **16-19** | | **1** |  | |
| **20+** | |  |  | |

Table above shows the number of years respondents have worked at ACTS. The findings from this table show that the highest number of the participants for non-managerial have worked for more than 13 years and for managerial between 5-8 years.

## 4.3. ANALYSIS OF DATA: NON-MANAGERIAL

Organisational change, communication of change initiatives, awareness vision and participation and involvement, leadership and management, resistance to change, overcoming and countering resistance to change were the subject discussed in the interviews with non-managerial employees.

**4.3.1. Organisational change**

Now the researcher sought to find out the views of the non-managerial participants towards organisational change. All respondents agreed that change initiatives are necessary. They all had a positive perception towards organisational change. They all said the fact that the business world is rapidly changing and there is need to also change systems and structures for survival. It was observed in their responses that they have no problems with change and look forward to new ways of doing things. All 6 participants did highlight that they experienced negative effects with change initiatives. They all mentioned that if change is done the right way it would bring better benefits and opportunities to the organisation and the individuals.

The comments from the respondents were as indicated in the table 5 below

**Table 5: Comment on organisationnel change**

|  |
| --- |
| * I have no any problem towards change and i believe it is needed for any organizations if they are to grow. I feel positive and because of change, things change for the better. * I like change. It is good if it is communicated through the right channels in the right way. It is good to change systems though at times it can disrupt the routine workers are familiar with. * Organisational change is good, and we welcome it. I personally enjoy new challenges and new systems; it makes it more interesting. If done the right way, am sure people will kike it. * I value change and believe it is vital for the organizations to develop. Again, change is good on the side of employees if the change managers always involve us in planning for change. I have experienced change, but it has not been good. |

The findings from the interviews generally indicated that employees are open to change if the right approaches are employed in implementing the change. 4 respondents indicated that most of the time change upsets their usual way of doing things until they are familiar with it. Two respondents also said in most cases they are reluctant to be moved rom their comfort positions and therefore view change as a program to bring disruption.

**4.3.2. Communication of change and vision for awareness**

**Below are the comments made by the respondents:**

* Changes have made our wok simpler and we complete tasks in time, but many employees whom we were familiar with lost their positions in different departments and to greater extent others completely lost their jobs which makes it stressful for them and worries us.
* My work became easier and there was improved communication between me and my manager because we are few in numbers so information gets easily passed on from one person to another.
* There was no good communication about the change. We were not told of the benefits of the change and because of that restructuring, many people lost hopes. Some people resigned because their positions were taken away from them.” Madam Rose Mugabi resigned after she was moved from the WASH coordinator to sanitation officer position.

The interviews revealed that only 2 respondents (33%) were aware of the change initiatives because they were involved from the start planning of change. The other 4 respondents actually complained that they were not made aware of any change initiatives and that they later found out when the process was at an advanced stage close to implementation. The respondents all agreed that the change was not clearly communicated to everyone which made it slightly difficult for the employees to understand the vision and purpose of the change initiatives. All interviewed participants were aware of the benefits the change would bring to the organisation and some of the responses given include improved communication and decision making, promoting growth of the organisation, skills growth and better service delivery.

**4.3.3. Participation and Involvement**

All the interviewed participants indicated that they were not adequately involved in the change process. They all complained it was not good for the management not to engage them from the start and allow them to participate in all stages of the change initiatives. They said it was wrong because they are part of the organisation and have their concerns to contribute in the decision-making process and not just to get involved when implementing structures and systems. Every respondent indicated they would loved to be fully involved in important programmes.

**4.3.4. Leadership and Management support**

The highest number of respondents 5 (83%) indicated that change managers and the entire management demonstrated commitment and support to the employees during the implementation of the change. The respondents said they were all worried about their job security because change was a new program of which everyone was curious about what the consequences of it. One respondent (17%) highlighted that ACTS did not provide enough support to him and that management did not show transparency in displaying clear vision on the goals for change. He felt that lack of communication made him feel powerless.

**Table 6: Leadership and management support comments**

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| * Many people lost their positions because of change. Management was supposed to ensure that all employees in their departments had the right skills to cope with the changes and would not be affected negatively by the change. |
| * Management did not give us enough time to understand the changes before they were implemented. The leadership involved the wrong people to make the change understood. |
| * Management showed support by having an open-door policy where we could go and talk to the manager about our concerns and problems. Departmental meetings also helped us understand and we were able to take part in the meetings. |
| * To some extent management showed that they care little about us. If they valued us most they would have involved and trained us so that we can cope with the changes. |

Two of the respondents (33%) mentioned that their manager was caring and encouraged them to develop themselves and enhance their careers. While 4 respondents (67%) said that their manager did not encourage and motivate them to develop themselves.

**4.3.5. Resistance to change**

All the participants 100% agreed that there was resistance to the change. 5 respondents (83%) self-confessed that they resisted change and 1 participant (17%) indicated that despite the fact that there was resistance within the organisation from other employees, he welcomed the change because for him change made his work simpler and it improved communication with the leaders. They argued that vision and reasons for the change were not clearly spelt out and this caused the employees to resist change.

**Below are verbatim comments from some of the respondents:**

* “I think the problem was caused by lack of communication from our management as to why we needed change. That is the only mistake they made.”
* “The resistance was caused by unclear reasons and this made employees fear that they would lose their jobs. Change means new ways so we might not be qualified enough to continue on our current positions.”
* “Yes, we had to resist the change because non of us understood the purpose of the change. For me personally things were fine as they were, so to just change without a clear reason is a problem. Change usually means someone will lose their job.”

The main sources of resistance to change that were noted by the participants during interview include:

* Ignorance about what is in the future
* Lack of clarity of the reasons for change
* Fearing of losing comfortable jobs and power for the case of leaders
* Not feeling confident due to lack of skills and capabilities
* Lack of commitment and support from the leaders

The participants said that they showed their resistance by showing some anger to their manager because of the lack of communication. However, the interviews revealed that their attitude towards their work was not that much affected.

**4.3.6. Managing resistance and Change**

The participants interviewed noted that the resistance to change could have been avoided if management had communicated the change initiatives from the beginning.

Areas for improvement were suggested by the participants to manage resistance and change in the future:

* + They said there should be improvement in communication and information dissemination
  + They suggested that workshops on change management should be conducted for change managers and subordinates to be sensitized
  + They said there is need to carry out training for employees to improve their skills
  + They said there should be transparency and clear explanations of reasons for change before changing structures
  + Training the leaders and managers so that they understand the changes first. It makes it easier for them when they are disseminating information to their subordinates.

# MANAGERIAL RESPONSES

**4.4. Data Analysis**

The main topics that were discussed in the interviews with managerial respondents are: organisational change, participation and involvement, leadership and management role, resistance to change, employee productivity, overcoming and countering resistance to change as shown below:

**4.4.1. Organisational Change**

All the 3 participants (100%) highlighted that change is important considering the business environment which is rapidly changing and to be able to cope with world competition. They mentioned that there are new technologies everyday so for growth and survival there is need to change their structures and systems. They all indicated that they like new ways of doing things. All the 3 respondents highlighted that they had negative experiences with change. Interviews revealed that they all agree team spirit is a challenge when implementing change programmes because not everyone feels positive about the change. They all felt that change benefits the organisation when well implemented. Changes are meant to make work simpler, divide work and improved work processes. They said change put pressure on the employees on the issue of skills and capabilities. 67% of the respondents indicated that they welcomed change and had positive feelings about it. Their comments were as indicated below:

* Feel positive because restructuring has made the workflow smoother and simpler. All related work assignments are summed under one position where they have strategic relevance.
* Since the changes are sometimes not consulted with some people, it leaves many with mixed feelings as they will not know where they are standing with the company especially those who lack adequate skills and capabilities in the company.
* Change has brought good things to the organisation because the roles and responsibilities are clearer, and everyone knows his share and tasks are accomplished in time.

**Some of the reasons why participants said change is needed**

* + Change brings about better service delivery because ACTS is a service provider.
  + Change opens doors for competing with other organizations on the world market so as to remain up to date.
  + Change facilitates higher profits hence achieving target goals
  + Change enables the organization to adapt to rapid change in technology.

**4.4.2. Communication, Participation and Involvement**

Two participants indicated that communication was done to lower level employees about the change initiatives. They highlighted that some of the methods used to ensure that all stakeholders were informed and always in constant communication about the change process include departmental meetings, circulars through emails, written memorandum and forums. All the participants noted that employees were not involved in the change initiatives from the beginning as they feel that some strategies and discussions must be kept confidential. One respondent highlighted that only workers’ representatives were involved at a later stage, but it was just communication of the progress of the change initiatives. The interview revealed that the lower level employees were only informed at a later stage when the change process was at an advanced stage. The participants indicated that they ensured that employees were engaged in the change process. Below are some of the ways that were noted about the different ways to be used to engage employees during this time:

* + Continuously communicating a clear vision.
  + Creating confidence by leading by example by showing strong commitment to the change process
  + Clarifying issues to employees and giving assurances that whatever is happening is being done for good cause and not to be negative about it.

**4.4.3. Leadership and Management Role**

All the interviewed participants noted that management and leadership role was played to ensure smooth running of the change process. The interview revealed that the roles played by leadership and management include:

* + Showing commitment and involvement through continuous communication of change.
  + Defining roles and process designs
  + Ensuring that employees are motivated and excited about the change process by being there to listen to their concerns and encouraging them to have a positive attitude
  + Ensuring communication of all new developments is effected in order to enhance acceptance and minimize resistance associated with change.

The interviews revealed that all participants agreed that for the change process to be successful leaders must lead by example and play a leading role for employees to buy into the idea of change and avoid problems.

**4.4.4. Resistance to Change**

All participants interviewed (100%) noted that there was resistance from the lower and high-level employees. All participants indicated that resistance occurred at the implementation stage when everyone was now aware of the change process but also resistance was felt from the formulation stage of the

change initiatives when asked about the nature of the resistance, the participants noted that the form and nature of resistance felt was mainly low production, hostility and quarrelling and unhappiness.

The following responses were noted as the sources of resistance:

* + All respondents said that fear of moving from their comfort zone and trying new things was the main cause.
* Fear of job loss, responsibility and power
* Lack of clear reason for change. People see there is no reason for change
* Lack of confidence for competitive skills and capabilities.

**Below are some of comments from respondents:**

* Resistance arose because people do not like change. They wanted to keep on doing things the old way.
* Resistance was caused by the fact that workers representatives did not understand the new structures and its impact on the bargaining unit. They feared their fellow employees would lose their jobs.
* Employees resisted because of fear that they may not have the required skills and qualifications to do the job and hence lose their jobs.

All the respondents said that resistance affected the organization in the following ways:

* There was missing of beating the deadlines because of delays in executing tasks since people were not motivated and stressed up.
* Employees did not own their responsibilities and they developed negative behaviour towards work because of feeling insecure.
* There was time overrun hence increased labour costs due to delays

**4.4.5. Employee Productivity**

The interview indicated that ACTS measures general employee’s productivity using Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) with reports submitted Monthly and Quarterly. Below are verbatim comments from some of the respondents:

**Table 7: Participants’ Comments**

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| --- |
| “Submission of Monthly written reports to see the tasks performed by the individual subordinate for the month and to see if they managed to meet the set monthly set targets |
| “Yes, we do measure employee productivity. We set timelines for execution of certain tasks and after the set time lapses we see quality of outcomes.” |
| Annually and Quarterly reports are submitted for each task and this reveals whether the set targets have been reached. |

All the participants indicated that there was low change in employees productivity levels during the resistance, there were faults and slow service delivery during this period. All the respondents however, noted that when the change process was implemented, operation progress reports showed that there was a change in employee productivity. All 3 respondents indicated that the change was for the better

**Some of the Participants’ Comments**

* “Efficiency has increased, and we are beginning to realize the increase in productivity with the same resources; human, financial and time.”
* “Yes, change for the better. The processes have been redesigned so obviously things have improved.”
* “I personally feel that employees are just motivated to work hard to get a good rating during performance appraisals for bonus purposes.

All respondents indicated that in future they would do things differently to avoid resistance and manage change. Below are the suggestions by the participants to overcome resistance and manage future change initiatives:

* Intensive involvement of all levels of employees to share their views and own change processes.
* Carry out faster implementation of change initiatives but not all at the same time. Tackle one initiative at a time implement it successfully then move to the next.
* To engage workers representatives and employees with influence on others at an earlier stage and orientate them on the changes about to happen before it is rolled out organisation wide.
* Giving people assurance in any change process that it is for a good cause
* Giving clear objectives and vision for the change prior to the changes. However, some elements of change and decisions may be confidential to share with lower level employees.
* Conduct out effective communication and motivation of the employees
* Respect of steps of change processes.
* In case of making mistakes, go back and retrace the steps, revisit system, improve on them and move on.

# 4.5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Results got from the interviews were earlier presented in this chapter. Now the researcher was interested in knowing whether the objectives of this study were met.

## 4.5.1. Organisational Change at ACTS

The interviews established the feelings and perceptions of the employees both managerial and non-managerial towards organisational change. According to the findings, there is a strong positive perception about organisational change. Everyone believes change is important and good for the organisation if done right. Therefore, it can be concluded that employees of ACTS welcome change as long as it is done the right way. The interviews revealed that a number of changes have taken place some of which include: restructuring, use of technology and tools.

Some of the responses included observing change steps in change initiatives, faster implementation of change initiatives not all at the same time and when successful move on to the next initiative. Communication and participation and involvement were major themes which came out of the interview. The presentation of results shows that there was poor communication in the whole change process. Communication is key to the success of change initiatives. Communication clears any concerns and problems which may arise about the change initiatives and all stakeholders will gain understanding of the vision for the change. If everything is communicated and made clear, it allows for good team spirit and everyone is engaged in the whole process. It allows for everyone in the organisation to work towards one common goal. This is one problem that affected the smooth running of the change process at ACTS. It is evident that because there was no communication, therefore lower level employees did not take part or were not fully involved in decision making. It is evident from the results that when problems started coming up that is when the leadership and management came up with a strategy of getting the workers representatives on board. It was merely communicating to them what is happening so that they can communicate with other employees. They were not involved in important decision making. All in all participation and involvement was only at departmental level during the implementation stage when employees were now being informed and managers giving them the opportunity to raise their concerns in departmental meetings.

In terms of the leadership and management role played by the managers at ACTS from the results the general feeling is that leaders and management could have done more to make it easier for the employees to deal with the issues of the change initiatives. According to the employees, managers did play a role of listening to their concerns and also involving them in departmental meetings. However, the majority felt that the leadership and management could have given them more time to understand the changes. They felt strongly that the Management showed that they do not care about the employees because they failed to communicate and involve them and they could have also trained them so that they could cope with the changes. The management however believes they played their part in showing strong commitment and support during this period. Graetz et al (2006) said that for a change programme to be successful the leader has to perform the following four roles:

* Demonstrate energising and mobilizing the workforce into a state of readiness for change
* Envisioning the future ideal and defining the direction in a way that appeals to, and inspires all stakeholders on a personal level
* Demonstrating personal commitment and involvement by consistently and relentlessly communicating and modeling the new behaviours.
* Providing enabling systems and structures that will sustain the momentum for change.

# CHAPTER FIVE:

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

## 5.1. Introduction

The study served as a guide to evaluate resistance to organisational change and its effect on employee productivity at ACTS. The researcher presented background information about organisational resistance to change and the problem statement. There were 3 objectives for this research and these were to identify the nature and sources of resistance to change, to establish the effects of resistance to change and to evaluate the approaches adopted to counter and manage resistance to change. The study used a qualitative research design in the form of a case study. The research instrument used was the interviews and the sampling method used was stratified random sampling. In chapter 4 results of the data collected were presented and discussions and interpretations were presented in line with the three objectives of the research. In this chapter conclusions will be drawn from the research and recommendations will be presented.

## 5.2. Conclusions

The study was carried out to evaluate resistance to organisational change and its effect on employee productivity. The conclusions of findings are presented below:

* The findings show that communication is vital for the success of change programmes to minimize resistance to change. No change will be successful is not properly communicated to all stakeholders. Communication and educating employees about the change initiatives are important and they will help minimize resistance to change and motivate and encourage the employees to get involved in the changes.

* The study also revealed that resistance to change can be minimized if there is awareness, participation and involvement of every stakeholder in the organisation about the change from the initial stages. Resistance to change is very intense and powerful in strategic changes. Findings show that resistance at ACTS was all about lack of communication by management, lack of participation and involvement of lower level employees. This raised concerns about their job security and skills capabilities. The findings also show that there is a relationship between the change implementation approach and resistance to change. Resistance is normal in organisational change processes and it can be minimized.

* Findings show that at ACTS the resistance felt did not cause major change to employee productivity levels. Successful change processes mean the organisation is able to yield good results. However, if there is resistance then productivity may be affected. Where there is resistance employees are insecure, unhappy, negative attitudes and it affects their concentration. This has the potential to reduce output and increase costs due to delays. It is important to minimize resistance to change. In conclusion there is a relationship between resistance to change and employee productivity.
* The findings also revealed that for change to be successful, leaders and management must fully involve and engaged all stakeholders in the change process. It emerged that at ACTS the leaders and managers played supporting roles by continuously communicating at the implementation stage, ensuring that employees are motivated and excited about the change by listening to their concerns and encouraging them to have positive attitudes towards the change. However, some of lower level employees indicated that they felt the support and commitment was not enough for them to be more interested in the change programme.

* The findings indicated that employees felt that leaders and management did not care about them. They failed to show full support and commitment which raised doubts as to whether some of the leaders did not understand the change process. Leaders must show that they have knowledge of the change processes to make it easy for the lower level employees to be motivated and encouraged to get interested in the change process. They must show that they understand the vision behind the change and show commitment.
* The findings also show that strategies were employed to overcome and manage the resistance to change at ACTS. They took a step back retraced their steps and tried to correct the problems. From the results it shows that it worked.

## 5.3. Recommendations

Resistance is normal. However, in some cases the power of the resistance may be very strong resulting in failure of change programmes. To avoid this, management must come up with strategies:

* There should be commitment to change from the side of the leaders and management. It is important for everyone to be committed and work together as a team. Leaders must be fully committed and show support from the start to the end for successful implementation.
* Training is an important aspect of change initiatives. Before change initiatives are put into action training must be conducted for all leaders and managers to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully manage change programmes.
* Communication is vital in every organisation and it must be a two-way communication especially when there are change programmes in the pipeline. Everyone must be informed throughout the change process so that there is clarity and understanding.
* Everyone who will be affected by the changes should be involved in the plans and decision making of changes. ACTS can start by involving workers representatives since it is a unionised organisation then all the other employees through departmental meetings from the initial stages.
* Managers should motivate employees for successful implementation. Employees’ attitudes towards the change can be changed for the positive by offering rewards and praise to those employees who play a role and assist in ensuring the success of the change.
* It is important for employees to be given a chance to participate and get involved in decision making which may affect them. Leaders and managers should always know that the human aspect is the most important resource and must therefore be handled with care and respect and allow them to say out their views and also be given power to be innovative. This gives them a sense of belonging and they feel they are important to the organisation.
* ACTS leaders and management should know that resistance is normal. It is evident that all non-managerial employees understand the importance of change and are willing to change. However, resistance is always there. To minimize resistance the right steps must be followed thoroughly when implementing change, communication must be made the key to success and avoid imposing decisions on employees.
* The leaders and management of ACTS must apply the theories suggested in the literature review into practice. These include Lewin’s three step change model for implementing change and techniques of organisational development for bringing about change and the proposed tactics to help change agents deal with resistance to change suggested by Robbins and Judge (2009).

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# Appendices

**Interview schedule**

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| --- |
| 1. What is resistance to change? |
| 2, What are the causes of resistance to change |
| 3. How did resistance to change affect you as an employee? How did it affect your organization? |
| 4. Explain how resistance to change affected employees’ productivity |
| 5. What feelings do you have towards resistance to change? |
| 6. Change is believed to be vital for organizational development. Why do people resist change? |
| 7. How can resistance to organizational change be minimized? |
| 8. In your own opinion give reasons why you think change is important for organizational development |
| 9. How best do you think change can be well implemented to avoid resistance? |