Perceptions: A Critical Factor in Transformational Change Management – Lessons from the Department of Correctional Services of South Africa

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Abstract

There is growing recognition globally that the current organisational change management methodologies and practices are ineffective. This admission is based on the fact that change efforts implemented in organisations do not produce the desired results in terms of set change objectives. This assertion is evidenced by the dismal success rate in the implementation of organisational change initiatives. Empirical studies conducted previously by authors such as Hattingh (2004), Balogun and Hope Hailey (2004), Bregman (2009), Lotich (2011), and Choi and Ruona (2011) have confirmed that there is indeed a high failure rate in the implementation of organisational change efforts. The high failure rate that organisations record is attributed to managers' neglect of the elements and dynamics of change, which constitute the human dimension of change. People's perceptions of change form part of the dynamics of change which need to be seriously addressed if success in the implementation of organisational change efforts is to be attained. Empirical studies that seek to validate the claim that perceptions play a critical role in shaping people's attitudes towards change and consequently their responses to change in terms of their reactions and resistance to change, have somehow been very limited. This is what this study sought to do – to investigate, establish, explore and understand the role that perceptions play in influencing people's attitudes towards change, thereby influencing the status of change in terms of success or failure. The undertaking of the study on perceptions was to ensure that managers understand the influence that perceptions have on people's attitudes towards change. The researcher conducted a literature study in order to contextualise the role of perceptions in influencing people's attitudes within the offender correctional environment in the Department of Correctional Services of South Africa. Two survey questionnaires, one for correctional officials and the other for offenders, were utilised for purposes of collecting data. The results of the study revealed that perceptions play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes towards change and consequently their reactions to and experiences of change.

Keywords: *Change, organisational change, transformation, organisational transformation, transformational change, change management, change leadership, perceptions, emotional reaction, experiences, resistance*

1. Introduction and Background

South Africa's post-apartheid period has been characterised by a strong focus on reconstructing and developing the South African society in all facets of life. This has meant the implementation of transformational change initiatives at a fast and ever-increasing rate. This has been the case due to the fact that transformational change holds the key to the achievement of organisational goals in terms of enhancing organisational effectiveness and efficiency. However, organisational goals are achieved with and through people and as such, no organisational goals, including change, can be achieved without the involvement of people and without due regard to their needs, expectations and aspirations.

Despite growing consensus that employees' acceptance of change holds the key to the success of transformational change initiatives, managers still do not make any meaningful efforts to manage people's perceptions of change, which unfortunately influence people's emotional reactions to and experiences of change and which, in turn, exert a profound influence on change implementation in terms of the support for or opposition to change. This determines whether the transformational change effort being implemented will be a success or failure. Ignoring people's perceptions of change, particularly negative perceptions of change, is a recipe for disaster because, as indicated in the foregoing paragraph, people are instrumental in the attainment of organisational goals.

Given the above, brushing people's perceptions aside is no panacea to the high failure rate in organisational change implementation. This is also backed by Nickols (2010) who emphasises that organisations cannot exist without the people. Therefore, transformational change efforts that are implemented to enhance the achievement of organisational goals also need people for their success to be ensured and attained. For this reason, ignoring people's negative perceptions of any transformational change implemented will undoubtedly harden people's negative attitudes towards change, thereby influencing people's reactions to and experiences of change in a negative sense. Weick (1995) describes perception as how people perceive the world they live in or events around them. In order to be able to perceive events or phenomena, people select certain information to pay particular attention to in terms of interpretation. For this reason, one may argue that selective perception plays a role in how people interpret organisational change events, so as to create their own understanding of change events. Because people select certain information to pay particular attention to in their perception and interpretation of organisational change events, their perception, evaluation and interpretation of organisational change events come to be based on assumptions and probabilities rather than on realities and accuracies.

It is important to note that it is at the level of the individual that responses to organisational change are formed, based on the individual's perception of change. Understanding people's perceptions of organisational change is critical if people's active and meaningful participation in organisational change efforts is to be ensured and sustained (Walston & Chadwick, 2003). Perceptions do and can influence the direction of organisational change efforts. People's perceptions can lead to the success or failure of change efforts. The differences in people's perceptions as a result of dynamics referred to above give rise to differences in interpretations (i.e. different meanings), which, in turn, lead to differences in people's experiences of events or phenomena. It is these differences in perceptions and experiences that give rise to different actions being taken to deal with diverse situations emanating from these differences. It is on the basis of these differences in people's perceptions that it is important to look at the nature of perceptions, whether they are positive or negative.

With the exception of a few studies conducted by researchers such as Walston and Chadwick (2003); Worral and Cooper (2004); Van Tonder (2005); Watad and Perez-Alvarez (2006); and Vithessonthi (2007), very little research has been conducted on how employees (managerial and non-managerial) perceive organisational change. And yet, employees' perceptions play a critical role in shaping their attitudes, positive or negative, towards organisational change efforts (Van Tonder, 2004b, 2005 & 2006). Lastly, one critical point needs to be emphasized here that the importance of dealing with the human dimension of transformational change insofar as people's perceptions seems to elude both organisational change researchers (if one looks at the limited literature available on the influence of the human factor on change implementation) and organisational managers at change strategic and change implementation levels (if one looks at managers' bias towards the technical aspects of change to the total neglect of people issues).

1.1 Problem statement

Most organisations the world over appear to be in a state of uncertainty insofar as change implementation and management is concerned due to dismal results in the implementation of organisational change initiatives. Several organisations have not accomplished much in terms of ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of organisational change efforts. The dismal change implementation outcomes may be due to the neglect, by managers at different levels of the organisational hierarchy, of the human dimension of organisational change. The human dimension of organisational change incorporates the dynamic of perception, which plays a significant role in shaping people's attitudes towards change and which is neglected by managers. This neglect of people's perceptions of change may be attributed to managers' lack of knowledge and understanding of the critical role that perceptions play in influencing people's attitudes towards change and which, in turn, determine people's reactions to and experiences of change.

The lack of knowledge on the influence of perceptions on change implementation prevents managers from intervening at individual, team and organisational levels through decisive managerial action. The lack of decisive managerial intervention with a view to managing people's perceptions, particularly negative perceptions, leads to increase in negative emotional reactions to and experiences of change, thereby contributing to the increase in resistance to change and subsequently the high failure rate in the implementation of organisational change efforts. The dismal success rate is indicative of the magnitude of challenges facing managers within the realm of organisational change implementation and management. The role that employee perceptions play in influencing the direction of organisational change interventions is not yet fully appreciated (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). It is on the basis of this assertion that this study focuses on the role that employees' perceptions play in the definition, interpretation, and experiences of, and responses to, organisational change events.

1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are:

- To address the critical issue of the significant role that perceptions of change play in change implementation, particularly in terms of influencing people's attitudes towards change. This will be done with reference to employees (correctional officials) and offenders in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS);
- To highlight the importance of managerial intervention in order to mitigate the impact of perceptions, especially on employees' attitudes towards change;
- To emphasize the importance of managing people's perceptions as part of giving recognition to the human dimension of transformational change not only in the DCS, but across all organizations; and
- To equip managers with the relevant knowledge that is needed in order to understand the impact that people's perceptions may have on change implementation if and when not properly managed.

1.3 Significance and contributions of the study

The findings of the study will add empirical value to the existing literature on transformational change management, particularly when it comes to the understanding and management of the human element of transformational change. The outcome of this empirical study will certainly be of great interest to change strategists, change implementers, change agents, change recipients, and organization development practitioners in both the public and private sectors in South Africa, who are charged with the enormous and challenging responsibility of initiating, implementing, institutionalising, and sustaining transformation change interventions as part of the South African government's agenda of reconstructing and developing the South African society. This treatise will also be of great benefit to managers in the Department of Correctional Services who are the initiators and implementers of transformational change efforts that form part of the shift from the punitive to the rehabilitative philosophy in terms of the treatment of sentenced offenders.

The value that this article will add to organisational change literature will be its emphasis on the significance of the human dimension of organisational change, particularly when it comes to people's perceptions of change. The paper validates the theoretical foundations of the dynamic perceptions of transformational change within the context of the offender correctional environment. This paper also highlights the importance of managerial intervention in mitigating the impact of people's perceptions on transformational change implementation.

1.4 Literature study on the perceptions of transformational change

Organisational change is one of the most critical challenges that leaders and managers in organisations have to contend with. There is an urgent need for change strategists, change implementers, and change recipients to be assisted with new or updated knowledge on change and organisational change. The high failure rate in the implementation of organisational change interventions points to the fact that there is a problem with the current organisational change management approach. Puplampu (2005), Smollan (2006), and Van Tonder (2004b, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) suggest that the starting point in reversing the trend of high failure rate in the implementation of organisational change interventions lies in the creation of a deeper understanding of organisational change. This new understanding should focus, amongst other things, on how change is perceived and experienced at individual employee level, and how this informs organisation-wide changes in terms of success or failure, that is, the status of organisational change (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne, 1999; George & Jones, 2001; Van Tonder, 2004b, 2005, 2006, 2009). This is the focus of this study and importantly, organisational change scholars agree that organisational change is firmly grounded at individual level (George & Jones, 2001; Van Tonder, 2004b, 2006, 2009; Puplampu, 2005; Devos, Beulens & Bouckenooghe, 2007).

It is at the level of the individual employee that individual responses to organisational change are formed, based on individual employee's perception of change, as well as experience of change (past experiences of change as well). Therefore, understanding employees' perceptions of organisational change is critical if employees' active and meaningful participation in organisational change efforts is to be sustained (Walston & Chadwick, 2003). Perceptions do and can influence the direction of organisational change efforts. Employees' perceptions may lead to the success or failure of change efforts. Due to a variety of factors that are personal, demographic, organisational and otherwise, which underpin individual differences, employees perceive and attribute meaning (characterisation) to change events and processes differently (Eby & Adam, 2000; Worrall & Cooper, 2004; Vithessonthi, 2007).

Perception is a cognitive and psychological process by which people as individuals select, organise, interpret, and respond to information in order to give meaning to certain things, including their environment (McCuddy, 2003). This is what sense-making is all about. In the realm of change, selecting, organising, and interpreting information enables people as individuals to make sense of change initiatives being implemented so as to attribute their own meanings to the change initiatives (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Brignall (2001) takes the issue of perception further by arguing that interpretations of what people perceive become subjective because people's perceptions are influenced by their individual or group values, needs, beliefs, experiences, expectations, involvement, self-concept, and other personal factors. This goes for the phenomenon of change as well. For this reason, perceptions play a critical role in shaping people's attitudes, positive or negative, towards organisational change efforts (Van Tonder, 2004b, 2005 & 2006).

Because perceptions shape people's behaviours and attitudes towards organisational change, perceptions play a role in evoking behavioural responses to organisational change. On the side of negative attitudes towards organisational change, negative perceptions of organisational change serve to fuel people's resistance to change. This may lead to the failure of organisational change efforts. On the side of positive attitudes towards organisational change, positive perceptions of organisational change serve to promote and facilitate the implementation of change initiatives. This may lead to the success of organisational change efforts.

The critical role that perceptions play in influencing people's attitudes towards change shows that people are not spectators in the change process. Imberman (2009) emphasises that people, as members of organisations, are not passive to organisational change initiatives.

2. Methodology

This study utilised a two-pronged research approach, which encompassed a literature study and a quantitative empirical study. Methodologically, the study applied a mixed approach in that three types of research designs, namely the exploratory design, the survey design, and descriptive design were utilised.

2.1 Sample, sampling method and population

A random, purposive and probability samples of 1000 and 500 out of 7593 correctional officials and 13 520 offenders respectively in the KwaZulu-Natal Region of the Department of Correctional Services of South Africa were utilised.

2.2 Research procedure

The procedure followed in the execution of this empirical study entailed conducting a pilot study, administering the research instruments, and scoring the responses. The empirical data was collected by means of two survey questionnaires, one for correctional officials and the other for offenders. Five-point, six-point, and eight-point Likert type response scales were utilised in the two questionnaires to measure correctional officials' and offenders' perceptions of the DCS transformational change.

2.3 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 focused on descriptive statistics with a view to providing proof that the two questionnaires used as measuring instruments were reliable and valid for the purpose of this study. In terms of sample statistics, frequency analysis was utilised to describe the sample obtained, as suggested by Kerlinger (1992). The responses on both questionnaires were subjected to factor analysis in order to determine the factor structure of the two measuring instruments. To determine the adequacy and sphericity of the intercorrelation matrix, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted. A reliability analysis was also conducted on the measuring instruments with the purpose of calculating a reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha). Phase 2 dealt with inferential statistics through the utilisation of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which was employed to measure the existence of relationships between variables.

2.4 Response rate

The return rate of 71.3% and the frequency rate of 98.2% for valid responses were recorded for correctional officials. For

the offenders' sample, the return rate of 58.2% and the frequency rate of 97.6 for valid responses were recorded (See Table 1 below).

Table 1: Frequency Table of Participating Management Areas/Regional Office of the Obtained Sample

Management Areas	Correctional Officials			Offenders		
	Frequency	%age	Cum. %age	Frequency	%age	Cum. %age
Durban	113	15.3	15.3	79	27.1	27.1
Glencoe	51	7.1	22.4	21	7.0	34.1
Ncome	86	12.0	34.4	71	25.9	60.0
Waterval	144	19.7	54.1	90	29.3	89.3
Kokstad	101	13.8	67.9	30	10.0	99.3
Empangeni	17	2.4	70.3	-	-	-
Pietermaritzburg	196	27.2	97.5	-	-	-
Regional Office	5	0.7		-	-	
Valid	700	98.2	98.2	284	97.6	-
Missing	13	1.8		7	2.4	
Total	713	100.0		291	100.0	

Source: Author's Fieldwork

2.5 Structural integrity of measuring instruments

Face validity, which denotes the inspection of the individual items on both questionnaires, reveals high face validity. Content validity, which refers to the relevance of the contents of the questionnaires to the research questions dealing with correctional officials' and offenders' perception of the DCS transformational change intervention, was also established. Construct validity was also determined based on results of face validity and content validity and as such, it can be concluded that the two questionnaires utilized in the study measured what they were designed to measure in terms of the perception of the DCS transformational change.

2.6 Reliability analysis

Two statistical techniques are most commonly used to help assess the appropriateness of data for factorability, namely, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1970) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954). Therefore, in the case of this study, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed using the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and the Barlett's test for sphericity. The results of the assessment of the suitability of data for factor analysis are captured in Tables 2 (for correctional officials) and 3 (for offenders).

From Table 2, it is clear that the data sets in respect of correctional officials complied with the requirements of sampling adequacy and sphericity and could thus be subjected to factor analysis. A result of 0.6 and higher is always required from the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) for it to be acceptable for factor analysis purposes (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2003; Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The KMO MSA value for the perception of DCS change variable in respect of correctional officials was .939, which is highly significant because it is well above 0.6 recommended value.

For the offender variables, it is evident from interrogating Table 5 that the data sets complied with the requirements of sampling adequacy and sphericity. The KMO MSA value obtained for the experience of DCS change variable was .876, which indicates high significance. The KMO value exceeded the recommended cut-off value of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). Lastly, the Bartlett's test of sphericity values (that is, Sig. values) should be .05 or smaller. Therefore, it is significant to note that the Bartlett's test values for both correctional officials and offenders reached statistical significance (p=0.000), thereby supporting the factorability of the correlation matrices. Therefore, based on the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Barlett's sphericity test values, it is concluded that the data gathered were found suitable for factoring.

Table 2: KMO MSA and Barlett's Sphericity Test Results: Correctional Officials

Factor	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Barlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-square	df	Sig. p-value
Perception of DCS Change	..942	11494.969	903	.000

Note: 1. p = .000, 2. KMO MSA > .6
Source: Author's Fieldwork

Table 3: KMO MSA and Barlett's Sphericity Test Results: Offenders

Factor	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Barlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-square	df	Sig. p-value
Perception of DCS Change	.855	1039.279	153	.000

Source: Author's Fieldwork

Using these KMO MSA and Barlett's sphericity test results, it is further concluded that both questionnaires used in the study had a good content validity because they covered all the major aspects of the content that are relevant. Since the data sets were found to be suitable for factoring, factor analysis was conducted through exploratory factor analysis techniques. The extraction method utilised was the Principal Component Analysis (PCA), and the rotation method used was the Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. Tables 4 and 5 give reliability statistics from reliability analysis. The statistics reflects a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .950 from 32 items for the perception and experience of the DCS change; .854 from 11 items for the perceived nature of the DCS change (type if change); and .893 from 18 items for the perceived impact of the DCS change on the DCS as an organisation from the perspective of correctional officials. For the offenders, Table 5 shows a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .815 from 10 items for the perception and experience of the DCS change; .774 from 8 items for the perceived nature of the DCS change (type if change); and .842 from 13 items for the perceived impact of the DCS change on the DCS as an organization. From Tables 4 and 5, it is significant to note that the Cronbach alpha coefficients indicate that the two measuring instruments have acceptable reliability and consistency in terms of measuring the perceptions of the DCS change that they were designed to measure.

Table 4: Internal Consistencies of Extracted Factors: Correctional Officials

Factor (scale) and Description	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Perception of the DCS Change		
Factor 5.1.1: Perception and experience of the DCS change	32	.950
Factor 5.1.2: Perceived nature of the DCS change (type of change)	11	.854
Factor 5.1.3: Perceived impact of the DCS change on the DCS as an organization	18	.893

Note: All relevant factors presented with an eigenvalue≥ 1. Factors 5.1.1 to 5.1.3 accounted for 38.31%.
Source: Own Construction

Table 5: Internal Consistencies of Extracted Factors: Offenders

Factor (scale) and Description	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Perception of the DCS Change		
Factor 4.1.1: Perception and experience of the DCS change	10	.815
Factor 4.1.2: Perceived nature of the DCS change (type of change)	8	.774
Factor 4.1.3: Perceived impact of the DCS change on the DCS as an organization	13	.842

Note: All relevant factors presented with an eigenvalue≥ 1. Factors 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 account for 39.8%.
Source: Own Construction

3. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

3.1 The nature of transformational change in the South African Department of Correctional Services

The first major finding of the study regarding the perception of the DCS change relates to the nature of the change from the punitive to the rehabilitative philosophy. The majority of respondents in terms of the perception of the nature of the

change factor described the DCS change as a transformation effort that was generally orderly, comprehensive, real and material in appearance and effect, and which changed almost everything, thereby ensuring a lasting impact on everything. It is significant to note that in terms of this finding, the DCS transformational change affected all levels and parts of the department as an organisation.

The above finding suggests that the DCS change was an organisational transformation effort that denoted a fundamental and radical reorientation in the way the Department of Correctional Services operated as an organisation at correctional centre level. The finding, which highlights the orderliness, comprehensiveness, and alteration-effect of the DCS change, corresponds with Leslie and Leslie's (2005) and Flack's (2008) definition of transformational change as a planned, systemic, revolutionary, fundamental, and substantial overhaul of the entire organisation.

As opposed to an incremental kind of change that is characterised by a slow and gradual change process that is evolutionary, the DCS change was a planned, transformational, radical, fundamental, revolutionary, systematic, systemic and organisation-wide change effort which changed almost everything, particularly at correctional centre level in terms of treating and dealing with offenders. In line with Nickols' (2010) description of transformational change as profound change, it can be concluded, from the above finding, that the DCS transformational change was a profound change which sought to alter all levels and parts of the department in terms of both human and technical aspects. This systemic nature of the DCS transformational change can be equated to Gass's (2012) reference to transformational change as a systems approach to changing organisations.

3.2 Perception of transformational change in the Department of Correctional Services of South Africa

The perception of the DCS transformational change and how it is perceived by people within the Department of Correctional Services is presented and discussed here from the perspective of both correctional officials and offenders as the two important internal stakeholders within the Department of Correctional Services, herein regarded as DCS change recipients. This presentation and discussion begins with the correctional officials' perspective, which is captured below.

3.2.1 Perception of transformational change from the perspective of correctional officials

Table 6, constructed out of the final structural model (SEM) for correctional officials, gives standardised coefficients and R^2 values for individual variables (items) that make up the two factors constituting the perception of the DCS change by correctional officials.

Table 6: Standardised Solution: Indicators of Perception of DCS Change: Correctional Officials

F3 = Perception and Experience of Change			F4 = Perceived Nature of Change (Type of Change)		
Item	Standardized Coefficient	R^2 - Value	Item	Standardized Coefficient	R^2 - Value
S5.1.26 = V62	.554	.307	S5.1.21 = 59	.689	.475
S5.1.27 = V63	.617	.380	S5.1.22 = 60	.617	.381
S5.1.31 = V66	.643	.414	S5.1.25 = 61	.595	.353
S5.1.35 = V69	.583	.340	S5.1.30 = V65	.600	.360
S5.1.41 = V71	.663	.439	S5.1.32 = V67	.603	.363
S5.1.45 = V73	.572	.327	S5.1.42 = V72	.713	.508
S5.1.46 = V74	.635	.403	S5.1.68 = V88	.610	..373
S5.1.47 = V75	..660	.435			
S5.1.48 = V76	.660	.435			
S5.1.50 = V77	.729	.531			
S5.1.51 = V78	.509	.259			
S5.1.52 = V79	.588	.346			
S5.1.54 = V80	.779	.607			
S5.1.55 = V81	.604	.365			
S5.1.57 = V82	.625	.391			
S5.1.59 = V83	.622	.387			
S5.1.61 = V84	.631	.398			
S5.1.62 = V85	.660	.436			
S5.1.65 = V86	.634	.402			

S5.1.67 = V87	.711	.506
S5.1.73 = V89	.619	.383
S5.1.75 = V90	.694	.481
S5.1.76 = V91	.628	.395

Source: Own Construction

The standardised coefficients for the perception and experience of change factor items (variables) point to a positive relationship between the factor and items constituting it which ranges from moderately strong [.554 (0.4 – 0.6)] to substantially/highly strong [.779 (0.6 – 0.8)]. The true variance reflected by each item ranges from 25% (.259) to 60% (.607). These coefficients indicate that the transformation to rehabilitation is perceived positively by correctional officials.

The coefficients for the perceived nature of the DCS change factor items (variables) reflect a positive relationship between the factor and items constituting it which ranges from moderately strong [.595 (0.4 – 0.6)] to substantially strong [.713 (0.6 – 0.8)] (Guilford (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002; Saurina & Coenders, 2002). The true variance reflected by each item ranges from 35% (.353) to 50% (.508). These coefficients, coupled with frequencies, indicate that the transformation to rehabilitation is perceived positively by correctional officials. Therefore, the coefficients suggest that correctional officials perceive the DCS change positively. The perception of the DCS transformational change by offenders is presented and discussed below.

3.2.2 Perception of transformational change from the viewpoint of offenders

The results of structural equation modeling also point to a positive relationship between the factors and the items constituting them. Table 7 , constructed out of the final structural model for offenders, gives standardised coefficients and R^2 values for individual variables (items) that make up the two factors constituting the perception of the DCS change by offenders.

Table 7: Standardised Solution: Indicators of Perception of DCS Change: Offenders

F4 = Perception and Experience of Change			F5 = Perceived Nature of Change (Type of Change)		
Item	**Standardized Coefficient**	**R² - Value**	**Item**	**Standardized Coefficient**	**R² - Value**
S4.1.6 = V60	.615	.378	**S4.1.1 = V58**	.479	.230
S4.1.14 = V64	.472	.223	**S4.1.2 = V59**	.537	.289
S4.1.15 = V65	.640	.409	**S4.1.9 = V61**	.465	.216
S4.1.23 = V66	.455	.207	**S4.1.10 = V62**	.585	.342
S4.1.29 = V68	.495	.245	**S4.1.12 = V63**	.522	.272
S4.1.30 = V69	.629	.396	**S4.1.25 = V67**	.492	.243
S4.1.35 = V72	-.479	.229	**S4.1.33 = V70**	.585	.342
S4.1.41 = V73	.613	.376	**S4.1.34 = V71**	-.541	.293

Source: Own Construction

When one interrogates the coefficients, one notes that all the standardized coefficients for the perception and experience of change factor items (variables) point to a positive relationship between the factor and its items which ranges from moderately strong [.455 (0.4 – 0.6)] to substantially strong [.640 (0.6 – 0.8)] (Guilford in Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002; Saurina & Coenders, 2002). The true variance reflected by each item ranges between 22% (.223) and 40% (.409). These coefficients indicate that the transformation to rehabilitation is perceived positively by the offenders.

The coefficients for the perceived nature of the DCS change factor items (variables) reflect a positive relationship between the factor and items constituting it which ranges from moderately strong [.595 (0.4 – 0.6)] to substantially strong [.713 (0.6 – 0.8)] (Guilford in Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002; Saurina & Coenders, 2002). The true variance reflected by each item ranges from 35% (.353) to 50% (.508). These coefficients, coupled with frequencies, indicate that the DCS change is perceived positively by positively, although there are areas of concern to the offenders (such as poor management of the DCS change process, longer period in terms of implementation, and lack of noticeable change impact. All of the above point to the fact that offenders perceive the DCS change positively. Where there are negative viewpoints, these are caused by concerns emanating from perceived poor management of the change process. It is important to note that people's perceptions of change do shape their emotional reactions to, and experiences of, change.

3.2.3 Comparison between correctional officials' and offenders' perspectives on perception of transformational change

The study established that correctional officials and offenders perceived the DCS transformational change positively. This suggests that both correctional officials and offenders perceived the DCS transformational change as being desirable and necessary for the good of the Department of Correctional Services in terms of the enhancement of organizational performance. It is significant to note that this positive perception of the DCS change is in line with earlier findings by Macri, Tagliaventi and Bertolotti (2002) and Self, Armenakis and Schraeder (2007) that organisational change efforts are perceived positively because they are seen as desirable and necessary. This suggests that positive perceptions contribute to the acceptance of change initiatives, while negative perceptions lead to the non-acceptance of change efforts.

It is on the basis of the above that the issue of perceptions becomes critical in the implementation of transformational change initiatives and management thereof in that perceptions play a significant role in shaping people's behavior. The assertion by Macri, Tagliaventi and Bertolotti (2002)'s that people who perceive the change positively view it as desirable and necessary, while those who perceive the change negatively view it as undesirable and unnecessary suggests that people who perceive change as desirable and necessary will adopt positive behaviors that support change. On the other hand, people who perceive change as undesirable and unnecessary will adopt negative behaviors that oppose and resist change.

Based on the foregoing, it is significant to note Van Tonder (2004a)'s argument that resistance to change is unavoidably mediated by perceptions. Employees create their own understandings, perspectives and interpretations of what is likely to happen to them and their organisation as a result of organisational change through perception. Van Tonder (2004a)'s perspective implies that employees' perceptions that mediate resistance to change may either be positive or negative, thereby creating either positive or negative understandings, perspectives and interpretations of what is likely to happen to them as a result of the change. Given this, it is important to note that negative perceptions of change lead to negative reactions to change. Negative reactions, in turn, lead to opposition to change which manifest itself in resistance to change. As Turner, Hallencreutz and Haley (2009) put it, individual resistance to change can be traced back to basic human characteristics such as perceptions. This is in line with Agboola and Salawu (2011)'s view that negative perception of change generates resistance to change.

It is significant to note that the important role that employee perceptions of change play in the success or failure of organisational change initiatives is also echoed and emphasised by Rodda (2007) who argues that employee perceptions of change are the critical drivers of success in the implementation of organisational change initiatives. The Social Media Directory (2011) concurs with Rodda (2007) by putting an argument forward that employee perceptions hold the key to the successful implementation of organizational change efforts. Despite these arguments and empirical evidence, it needs to be highlighted that this study has found no overwhelming empirical evidence relating to the fact that employees perceive the change negatively. The establishment of the nature of offenders' perceptions of the DCS change is an important discovery. Other than employees as members of organisations, no study has ever focused on studying offenders' perceptions of any type of change. This focus on offenders was of critical importance, given the fact that offenders are the primary recipients of the advantages of the transformational change from punishment to rehabilitation. All the programmes associated with the new philosophy of rehabilitation are directed at offenders in terms of correcting the offending behavior, enhancing their human development, as well as facilitating their reintegration into their communities. The above finding is important in that there is agreement between correctional officials as deliverers of the DCS change and offenders as recipients of the DCS change that the DCS change effort was a necessity. This suggests that both correctional officials and offenders perceive the DCS change in a positive manner.

3.2.4 Implications for organisations

In the light of the above empirical findings, one may conclude, first, that it is not only employees but people in general in organisations whose perceptions play a significant role in facilitating or hindering the implementation of transformational change efforts. Second, that no matter what position or status people hold within an organisation, people in general do perceive change efforts and they do so differently because people do not come into organisations as neutral observers, but as unique people who perceive organisational change efforts in a unique personal manner as a result of unique needs, wishes and expectations. It is these needs, wishes and expectations which influence and shape people's perceptions and interpretations of situations that people are confronted with, no matter what their status or role is within an organisational setting.

Third, that the significance or insignificance of transformational change is determined by organisational members through their perceptions. By engaging in perceptions, organisational members are able to establish the meaning of organisational change (that is, what the change means to them). In this case both correctional officials and offenders perceived the DCS change as an opportunity designed to make the Department of Correctional Services function better as an organisation.

Fourth, that people are not spectators within an organisational change setting. They are not neutral observers at all. As Imberman (2009) puts it, people are not at all passive to transformational change efforts. They perceive the change either positively or negatively in relation to their needs, wishes, aspirations, and expectations. It is through these perceptions that people, as organisational members, attribute meanings to organisational change efforts, that is, what each organisational change effort means to them as individuals. It is through these different meanings that people as individuals are able to interpret and characterize organisational change efforts in a personally unique manner in line with their needs, wishes and expectations.

Fifth, that the people, irrespective of their position or status in organisations, are affected by the change (Van Tonder, 2004a). And because they are affected by the change, they perceive the change differently in terms of their needs, wishes and expectations. It is these perceptions that shape the direction of the change – success or failure of the change. According to Agboola and Salawu (2011), positive perception of change based on the perceived positive benefits of change promotes commitment to, and support for, the change. Negative perceptions of change as informed by the perceived negative effects of change generate opposition to change, which ultimately lead to resistance to change (Agboola & Salawu, 2011).

Sixth, that the effective implementation of organisational change efforts depends on the thorough understanding of how organisational members as individuals perceive a particular organisational change effort (Van Tonder, 2004a).

Seventh, that members of one organisation will perceive various aspects of the change process differently based on their different needs, wishes and expectations (Van Tonder, 2004a; 2006). The issue of the different perceptions about the management of the DCS change between correctional officials and offenders is a case in point.

As a last point under perceptions, it is significant to note that perception, as a psychological phenomenon, plays a significant role in people's experience of change. According to Vithessonthi (2007), people's perceptions of change do exert an influence on how people experience change. Everyone responds to change differently and these different responses are influenced by different perceptions of change. These different perceptions of change may be either positive or negative. This suggests that the varying perceptions of organisational change lead to different experiences of organisational change which, in turn, lead to different change outcomes – success or failure (Refferty & Griffin, 2006; Ursiny & Kay, 2007). It is for this reason that Van Tonder (2004a) emphasises that the perception of, and the meaning attributed to, change should be the key consideration in the experience of change.

4. Research Limitations

The following are the limitations of this study:

- Time constraints was one of the limitation of the study, which is why the study was also restricted to only one of the six regions constituting the Department of Correctional Services in the Republic of South Africa, namely the KwaZulu-Natal Region. Even in KwaZulu-Natal, not all correctional centers/institutions were included as part of the sample for the study. This would surely affect the generalisation of the findings, though the sample was considered adequate and representative within the context of the KwaZulu-Natal Region.
- Limited resources made it impossible for the researchers to conduct a comprehensive empirical study which included other regions of the Department of Correctional services. Due to this constraint, the target population utilised for the study was quite small, considering the size of the Department of Correctional Services as an organisation. Incorporating a broader sample could have been advantageous from the perspective of sample representativity and generalization of findings.
- Another limitation of the study relates to responses given by the research participants in terms of their responses to the various questionnaire items. The respondents may not have given their true views and perspectives on their perception of the DCS change due to various reasons, including the fact that anything that is said to be official is sometimes treated with skepticism. This may have affected reliability.
- Another limitation was that the questionnaire for the offenders was written in English. Considering the fact that a majority of the offenders in the KwaZulu-Natal Region are IsiZulu speakers, who may likely misunderstand the English language that was used in the questionnaire items. This may have possibly affected their

responses to questionnaire items. It is as well likely that some respondents from both samples might have misinterpreted and misconstrued certain questionnaire items while completing the questionnaires

- Another limitation relates to bias because of the fact that one of the researchers is a senior manager of the Department of Correctional Services in KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, the correctional officials, as research participants, might have consciously or subconsciously concealed their true views and perspectives regarding their perceptions of the DCS change efforts, for fear of being viewed as generally anti-transformation or specifically anti-DCS change. This may affect the reliability of their responses.

5. Conclusion

The findings presented in this paper point to the fact that the success of transformational change initiatives hinges on successful management of perceptions at individual level. Successful management of perceptions of change means that managers should focus on transformation at individual level (personal transformation). Without people, change is meaningless and not sustainable because change is perceived by people. It is for this reason that the alteration of the beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and mindsets of those affected by the change, through being informed by people's perceptions of the change, holds the key to the successful implementation of change. This suggests that managers should strike a balance between personal transformation and organisational transformation.

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