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Research Article

The Factors Affecting Strategic Change In The Ministry Of Labour, Industrial Relations And Employment Creation, Namibia

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Abstract	Manuscript Information
The Public Service of Namibia is currently experiencing challenges in implementing strategic changes. The purpose of the study was to examine the variables influencing the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation in Windhoek as it implements a strategic change. The study employed a qualitative method. The outcomes/findings demonstrated that the implementation of strategic change processes can be impacted by employee attitudes. This is due to the fact that each employee has a unique temperament, set of sentiments, and perspective on change, all of which affect how they feel about change and how change procedures affect them. The findings of this study also established the existence of significant influence of leadership visibility on and strategic change management within the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation in Windhoek. This implies that leadership is crucial for change projects within a company to be successful. The study has shown that organizational culture has a big impact on managing strategic change, which is especially true in a world in which there are several complex cultures and subcultures. It was believed that articulating the necessity and justification for the change was essential for its successful implementation. The study has shown that realistic goal-setting is crucial and must be based on striking a realistic balance between the project's strategic goals and the necessary resources that are within the Ministry's capacity. The Government of Namibia should conduct organizational diagnosis through the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation in order to institutionalize change techniques in the public sector, according to the findings. The public sector's organizational structure should be firmly rooted in strategic change management techniques. The public sector should treat each aspect influencing change management techniques as a temporary fix.	▪ **ISSN No:** 2583-7397 ▪ **Received:** 14-08-2024 ▪ **Accepted:** 23-09-2024 ▪ **Published:** 24-11-2024 ▪ **IJCRM:**3(6); 2024: 66-72 ▪ **©2024, All Rights Reserved** ▪ **Plagiarism Checked:** Yes ▪ **Peer Review Process:** Yes **How to Cite this Manuscript** Veneranda Kandekeleni Sheehama1, Nikodemus Angula. Investigating The Factors Affecting Strategic Change In The Ministry Of Labour, Industrial Relations And Employment Creation, Namibia. International Journal of Contemporary Research in Multidisciplinary.2024; 3(6):66-72.

KEYWORDS: Strategy, Strategy implementation, Variables influencing strategic change, challenges for implementing strategic change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public Sector Reforms (PSR) now focus more on improving performance. Numerous areas are being impacted in various ways by the significant changes and restructuring in the public sector. Private sector firms have historically been thought to depend on their ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances to survive (Amjad & Rehman, 2018). The sustainability of public organizations is now, however, also threatened by crucial public opinion and by budget cuts, necessitating quick and significant adjustments (Amjad & Rehman, 2018). It has been highlighted that there is a lot of resistance to change when managing change in a long-established public-sector organization with established routines and formal procedures (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). To improve the likelihood that various strategic change projects will be successful, such employee resistance in the public sector has become a crucial human resources management function and a top priority for senior management.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Namibian government has undertaken sizable strategic alterations over the years. The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation is a Ministry that implements strategic reform. The main strategic adjustment was the Human Capital Management System (HCMS). But this method couldn't work because of a lack of financing. The Human Capital Management System and the strategic plan of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation did not coincide. For the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation, implementing strategic transformation was difficult (Ministerial Strategic Plan, 2017, p. 5). Even though many firms go through strategic change, Ziemba and Oblak (2016) hypothesized that employees are frequently unhappy about it and lack the requisite knowledge and abilities to handle it successfully. Supervisors encounter specific challenges while making strategic changes since they work with people of different ethnic backgrounds. It can be challenging to modify ingrained attitudes or assumptions that lead people to resist change (Odera & Muendo, 2017). Employees at the Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation are resistant to the changes that were made since there was no mentoring, no effective communication, or change management training for self-awareness and self-motivation. To fill the research gap, this study assessed factors influencing strategic change management in Namibia's Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the current trends in the organizationn based on strategic change, this research intends to assess the factors affecting strategic change by soliciting answers on the follwing questions:

i.   What elements are influencing the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation's execution of strategic change?

ii.   What are the obstacles preventing the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation from implementing strategic change?

iii. What should be done to improve the way that strategic transformation is implemented in the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation?

4. TRENDS IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategy into perspective

Ogwenyo (2017) refers to strategy as planned and emergent, and dynamic and participatory is how the strategy works. Is a method of making rational decisions that match an institution's resources with possibilities in the outside world or as the main way to accomplish the main goal. Strategy implementation is a continual, never-ending process that calls for constant re-evaluation and reformation. Involves a complicated series of movements and responses. It is both planned and unplanned in certain ways (Wong *et al.,* 2017).

4.1 Variables Influencing Strategic Change

4.1.1 Change management

Managers and consultants frequently concentrate their emphasis on a small number of organizational change levers, which limits the practice of change management. They frequently use the same levers, regardless of the problem's nature. Some people always look to reorganize the company, while others constantly work on enhancing communication or changing production and control methods. Consequences that weren't foreseen can arise when the transformation process is viewed exclusively from one point of view. Thinking about organizations and the practice of transformation has been influenced by various prominent traditions. For managers to have access to the essential set of strategic tools, these traditions must be combined (Díaz-Fernández *et al.,* 2019). Managers must take into account the various interconnected systems of components in the organization if they want the transformation process to be successful (Díaz-Fernández *et al.,* 2019). The majority of change management scholars concur that understanding the various aspects that influence a change process occurs in a complicated setting. The process of change is simultaneously impacted by a number of elements. The corporate culture, national cultures, and people's resistance to changes are the only three components below that the researcher felt were crucial to take into account in the public sector before and during a process of strategic change because of the study's time constraints.

4.1.2 Corporate culture

Various viewpoints can be used to characterize the business culture. It is impossible to come up with a single, agreed-upon definition of corporate culture, although several authors have concurred on some traits. The culture is comprehensive, a group phenomenon that cannot be connected to particular people. The history of a corporation affects its culture, therefore it's important to emphasize habits, rituals, and codes while talking about the phenomena of culture (Doppelt, 2017). It is required to go more into the various layers that collectively form a corporate culture

in order to be able to comprehend it. The underlying presumptions held by a business are the foundation of its corporate culture. These presumptions are so firmly ingrained that no one will question them. In other words, they are taken for granted. Corporate cultures are frequently characterized by informal systems rather than regulations (Deutscher *et al.,* 2016). A culture must be created in a way that supports the organization's mission and strategy.

The business the organization is in and its plan for getting there must be supported by the company culture.

4.1.3 National cultures

National cultures also play a significant effect in the public sector. Standardized organizational systems are required by the growing globalization. Success as a public operator requires striking a balance between flexibility and consistency (Lines *et al.,* 2016). It is critical to comprehend how cultural factors influence how an organization and its members behave (Lines *et al.,* 2016). There are numerous organizational structures; some are more culturally acceptable than others. The company culture is influenced by many different people, including leaders and other workers. Parts of the various national cultures must be incorporated into one in order for the organization to be successful. The parent company culture frequently needs to be adjusted to local and national cultures in order to achieve desired results (Lines *et al.,* 2016).

According to Dirksen (2020), it is considerably simpler to manage an organization with a dominating culture than one without a shared frame of reference. Even those from other cultures who choose to pursue careers there are expected to uphold the national culture's values and beliefs, which act as a frame of reference for them (Dirksen, 2020).

4.2 The most contemporary challenges for implementing strategic change

4.2.1 Resistance towards changes

The ability and willingness of individuals to change greatly affect the feasibility of changing an organization. Speaking of organizations without referring to the people within them is absurd. Whatever the change's scope; it will nearly always encounter some sort of opposition. Resistance to change can be both beneficial and troublesome, and it's a normal and natural human reaction. Therefore, opposition to a change shouldn't be interpreted as a sign of people's complacency or determination to keep things as they are. It is a psychological response that is entirely reasonable to have when facing the abnormal or the unfamiliar (Lines *et al.,* 2016). On the other hand, most people have an innate willingness to modify their behavior, which is more essential than their aversion to change. Since changes happen constantly, whether we want them or not and whether we are aware of them or not, managers should be conscious of this power. According to this theory of resistance, everyone has the desire to grow, not to restrict their own or others' potential. Consequently, methods for improving and changing the working world become more important (Mwakisaghu, 2019).

4.2.2 Strategy formulation

This is a crucial topic since effective communication throughout the entire company depends on the message being clear. In addition, Doppelt (2017) notes that "internal partners' degree of involvement" is a factor that is cited in both of the aforementioned sources. This means that many diverse individuals inside businesses drive change, so it is crucial to include everyone in the process of developing a plan. These viewpoints must be included and coordinated because different people are experts in various areas of the business and there cannot be a single expert in everything. Last but not least, organizations need to establish priorities, explicates Doppelt (2017). It is crucial to prioritize the steps that need to be taken because a corporation won't be able to implement all parts of change at once.

4.2.3 Information Systems

Many companies experience problems with inadequate vertical communication. The primary implementation difficulties are related to various forms of communication challenges (Mwakisaghu, 2019). In a research article, Liao and Teo (2018) examine several businesses. They discover that the majority of them "failed to transmit downhill a coherent story indicating why the changing reality outside the firm necessitated new ways of functioning." The strategy's impact on priorities was never explained to the staff, nor were any rules provided. In addition, a lot of workers believe top management is not well informed about what goes on in lower levels of organizations.

4.2.4 Allocation of Resources

The distribution of resources is crucial since lacking resources makes it difficult to implement a strategy. Financial and human resources are the most important resources, according to Doppelt (2017). Financial resources facilitate strategic change and have an impact on how human resources are allocated (Mwakisaghu, 2019). Managerial resources need to be distributed based on their talents and what the companies need in terms of those skills. Depending on the strategy mode and the ability to customize human resource efforts to the strategic context, it is challenging to mobilize relevant teams behind ad hoc project plans (Lorange, 1998). This means that businesses must not only use their human resources where they would be most profitable but must also withhold them when confronted with strategic challenges to avoid wasting them (Mwakisaghu, 2019).

4.2.5 Organisational structure

According to Dirksen (2020), an organizational structure is characterized by three constructs: formalization, which refers to how much decisions and working relationships are governed by formal rules and procedures, centralization, which refers to how much decision-making authority is held by top managers or delegated to middle and lower-level managers, and specialization, which refers to how much the organization employs specialists or generalists. Companies' organizational structures can be divided into mechanistic and organic structures using these constructs. Companies with a mechanistic

organizational structure are centralized, adhere to formal rules and procedures, and strictly control the flow of work and information, whereas organizations with an organic organizational structure are decentralized, do not place a high value on formal rules, and engage in open communication and information exchange (Liao & Toe, 2018). As a result, one of the challenges facing businesses is matching organizational structure to the environment it operates in to promote plan implementation. On the one hand, firms that must adapt to and be flexible in a quickly changing environment should use organic architecture.

4.2.6 Personnel management
Kezar and Holcombe (2017) assert that businesses and their employees frequently depend on one another. Additionally, Doppelt (2017) notes that employees look to their employers to provide a variety of their economic, personal, and social requirements because their efforts and abilities are what make their organization run smoothly. This serves to demonstrate the critical role personnel plays in plan implementation. Most studies categorize "personnel" into staff and leadership categories. Leadership is the process of influencing an organization in its efforts to achieve a purpose or objective, according to Kezar and Holcombe (2017). Additionally, leadership for change must occur at various organizational levels (Mwakisaghu, 2019). Dirksen (2020), who asserts that consistent leadership from all organizational levels is necessary to enable transformation, also makes the same point.

4.2.7 Political factors
Providing authority to individuals in charge of carrying out various planned actions is another aspect of strategy implementation (Mwakisaghu, 2019). This means that employees, who will ultimately implement strategy, must acquire authority and influence, such as the capacity to allocate resources, communicate well, and other skills. The current literature suggests that in addition to a "reconfiguration of power systems" (Liao & Teo, 2018), coalitions should be formed and support should be obtained from powerful individuals. Findings from the Dirksen (2020) study confirm that the capacity to build alliances and win the support of key figures inside the organization will be very helpful in carrying out the developed goals. Along with securing the backing of powerful individuals, it is critical to minimize opposition to strategy execution. Hence, managers should choose a strategy that respects the personal interests of employees and does not clash with the corporate hierarchy (Liao & Teo, 2018).

4.3 Tactics for enhancing the execution of strategic change
4.3.1 The change process step-by-step as a tactic for enhancing the execution of strategic change
The significance of sound transformation processes is frequently emphasized by authors. In this section of the text, a step-by-step procedure is offered and is based on Kotter's eight-step model (Kotter, 1998). This study will also take into account the models and viewpoints of many other authors who have published

fascinating works. As a result, the researcher added these viewpoints and opinions to Kotter's model to create the model shown below.

4.3.1.1 Establishing a sense of urgency
A sense of urgency must be created throughout the organization as the first step in the change process. The improvements will not produce any results if there is too much self-righteousness. To raise the level of urgency, it is necessary to lower the factors that contribute to self-righteousness, such as the absence of a visible crisis, a dearth of feedback from outside sources, low-performance standards, an abundance of visible resources, excessively embellishing management talk, etc (Stouten *et al.,* 2018).

4.3.1.2 Creating a powerful guiding coalition
One person cannot alone develop a vision, communicate it to a large number of workers, remove all significant roadblocks, achieve quick achievement, etc. Therefore, it is crucial to forge a powerful coalition that can manage the transition process as a whole. As such, it is essential that the coalition's members actively support the reform. To acquire the trust of those who will be impacted by the change, they must possess powerful positions, extensive expertise, and high reliability (Kotter, 1998). Instead of resisting change, strengthen current resources. It is better to start by selecting pioneers from a variety of backgrounds, senior management, and other representatives of the original culture, as well as leaders who already uphold inclusive ideals. There will be need to strengthen their commitment and competences for supporting the change throughout the organization through coaching, education, networking and mentoring efforts (Stouten *et al.,* 2018).

4.3.1.3 Developing a vision and strategy
A clear and sensible vision should be developed for two key reasons. Firstly, a strong vision clarifies the overall course of the transformation process, which streamlines decision-making inside the organization. Secondly, it encourages people to act in ways that are consistent with the shift. The vision must convey a realistic and distinct picture of the future, be practical, simple to explain, and in the best interests of the stakeholders, including the employees, clients, suppliers, and customers. A general rule of thumb is that you have issues if you are unable to explain the vision that is the motivating factor for the significant change and receive a response that indicates understanding and interest. The change initiative has a significant risk of failing without a defined vision (Stouten *et al.,* 2018).

4.3.1.4 Communicate the change vision
Only until the people involved have a solid comprehension of the vision and its purpose can it truly inspire action. Therefore, for them to be motivated, they need to know why the change is necessary. They must comprehend the need for a change procedure as well as how the implementation will be done. It is crucial that the president directly explains to the staff why the change is important and what it is all about during the initial

conversation (Yunita *et al.,* 2020). The simplicity and clarity of the message directly affect how much time and effort is required to convey the idea. Concentrated information delivered without jargon can reach a huge audience for a fraction of the price of cumbersome, complex communication. Communication functions best when it is as straightforward and uncomplicated as feasible. The greatest way to convey a vision is through a variety of channels, such as group meetings, PMs, magazines, posters, and casual one-on-one encounters. It is more likely that the message will be comprehended and accepted when it is conveyed in several ways.

4.3.1.5 Empowering broad-based action

A transformation process must always overcome challenges in order to be successful. Four specific issues need to be taken into account: structures, skills, systems, and management. To support the transformation, the organizational structures must be compatible with the new vision; otherwise, they may prevent necessary action. It is crucial to provide the staff with the right training. The personnel will feel helpless if they lack the necessary information and abilities. It is necessary to adapt information and individual systems to the new vision. Managers who resist required changes should be challenged. A poor manager might make you feel quite helpless (Stouten *et al.,* 2018).

4.3.2 Trial-and-Error approach as a tactic for enhancing the execution of strategic change

According to this method, strategic change cannot be a logical, step-by-step procedure where organizations analyze the situation, create a new strategy, introduce particular processes, and then implement it. Doing so would make the company too slow and rigid. Companies need to be extremely flexible and quick in adapting their strategy due to a very complicated environment that is always changing. As a result, they are required to gradually adjust their strategy with the aid of a process of trial and error (Liao & Teo, 2018). This strategy involves testing various processes, and the successful experiments gradually coalesce into workable patterns that become strategies. This is the very foundation of developing strategies as a learning process. Internal politics and organizational culture are said to be the most crucial elements facilitating such a learning process (Mwakisaghu, 2019).

4.3.3 Behavioural change management approach as a tactic for enhancing the execution of strategic change

This strategy suggests three different tactics: making changes to the structure and personnel, putting support systems in place, and creating a culture that supports these strategic plans. A company must modify its organizational structure to fit the challenges it faces. For instance, a company that prioritizes cost-efficiency needs a centralized organizational structure. In addition, the business must hire, fire, or reassign workers in order to steer the organization in the appropriate direction (Doppelt, 2017). Information systems, which make it easier for employees to share information and communicate within the organization, as well as

incentive compensation plans, which match employees' interests with those of the business, are examples of supporting systems that a company should implement. The third crucial step in facilitating the implementation of a strategy is changing the culture. As a result, executives must communicate to staff the type of behaviour that is desired (Liao & Teo, 2018).

5. METHODOLOGY
Research Design and approaches

In this study, a case study research design was used. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) say that case study research design allows for increasing a greater understanding of the subject at hand and decreases the potential for any bias, by diluting the agenda of a particular individual. The case study research design was chosen because it fully captures a variety of viewpoints, allowing for a deeper knowledge of the topic at issue and lowering the likelihood of bias by muffling the agenda of one particular person.

The qualitative research method is used because it is suitable for sightseeing and understanding the meaning of individuals and groups (Bell, 2018). Qualitative research describes a phenomenon from the participants through interviews and semi-structured interviews because it's used to explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic. Qualitative research is concerned with an in-depth understanding of the issue under examination. It relies heavily on individuals who can provide rich accounts of the experience as cited in Matthews (2016, p.38). The benefits of qualitative data analysis: delivers comprehensive information, look profound than examining ranks and amounts by footage attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, constructs openness, boosts people to enlarge their responses can open to the topic (Matthews, 2016, p. 40).

Out of 65 targeted sample populations, ten (10) participants were chosen for this study using a purposeful sampling technique. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants who are most likely to be able to supply useful information and with whom to speak (Rahman, 2017). According to Creswell (2018), a sample size of 10 was deemed enough for the qualitative analysis. Semi-structured questionnaires were used in this sample which consisted of middle- and top-level management professionals, Administrative Officers, Accountants, Arbitrators, Labour Inspectors, and Human Resources Practitioners of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation, Windhoek.

Data collection was done by the research ethics. The raw data was analyzed using ATLAS.ti application software. This software was suitable since it helps to break down, reorganize and regroup data according to the themes, categories, and areas of interest to this study. ATLAS.ti will also enhance consistency in how data will be handled throughout the research (Ngalande & Mkwinda, 2016).

Internal consistency reliability was used in this study to assess the instruments consistently and ask questions about how a set of items gauges a particular quality of the others (Rahi, 2017). According to Middleton (2022) reliability tell how consistently a method measures something; when the same method is used on

the same sample under the same circumstances, the findings should be the same. In a qualitative study, the reliability is determined by whether or not, if the study were to be repeated, other researchers could draw comparable conclusions from the data.

SUMMARY
The outcomes demonstrated that the implementation of strategic change processes can be impacted by employee attitudes. The results of a study by Binci *et al.*, (2019), which stated that employees' roles and attitudes are crucial in creating and managing strategic change processes within a company, are supported by the findings of the current study. The study also found that because employees have varied attitudes about change, they have distinct significant influences on strategic change management, which is consistent with the findings of this study. Employees' attitudes affect how they manage change, which in turn affects employee belief in change. This is due to the fact that each employee has a unique temperament, set of sentiments, and perspective on change, all of which affect how they feel about change and how to change procedures affect them. The results of this study also revealed the significance of individual employee reasoning in change management procedures. If an organization wishes to succeed in the processes of strategic change, it cannot wish away the intelligence, competence, and ability of its people to reason and communication challenges. This is supported by the claim made by Faupel and Sub (2018), who claimed that the cognitive-affective makeup of specific employees has an impact on change management procedures. Additionally, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation in Windhoek was found to be significantly impacted by strategic change management and leadership visibility, according to the study's findings. According to Shash et al. (2020), all change projects require strong organizational leadership in order to succeed. This study supports their findings. Therefore, leadership is crucial for the success of change projects within an organization. This study discovered that creating a change-friendly environment, and in particular, documenting change processes within an organization, was crucial to change management. Another finding of this study was the need of change management understanding in guaranteeing the success of the strategic transformation. This is consistent with the claims made by Shash et al. (2020) that leadership creates an environment that is conducive to change and guides the organization toward desired objectives. The study also revealed that leaders enacting change must play a major role in developing strategic goals for change management. This suggests that when change management is based on strategic goals, it typically succeeds.

6. CONCLUSION
The study found that employee attitudes had a big impact on how change management was handled. The findings of this study suggest that employee attitudes can improve organizational strategic change management. A company's strategic change management approach depends on each employee's emotions,

cognition, and good communication skills. This study also demonstrated that leadership has a substantial impact on strategic change management. According to the study's findings, the ability of leaders to create an environment that supports change, set goals for change management, create change plans, and implement those plans, as well as their ability to do so, all help organizations undergo effective strategic change. This study has proven that organizational culture has a substantial impact on strategic change management

7. RECOMMENDATIONS
The Government of Namibia should conduct organizational diagnosis through the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation to institutionalize change techniques in the public sector, according to the findings. The public sector's organizational structure should be firmly rooted in strategic change management techniques. The public sector should treat each aspect influencing change management techniques as a temporary fix. Strategic change planning needs to be improved, as well as issues with employee motivation, change resistance, and public sector culture that obstruct the achievement of change goals. A rigorous annual strategic change management audit should be considered by the government as a way to improve their capabilities in managing change.
The Ministry should also improve departmental objectives, establish an efficient feedback mechanism, hold interactive forums, keep an eye on strategic change communication media, evaluate them, embrace technology, place a strong emphasis on time management and employee networks, and hold regular meetings to raise awareness of the issue. These actions will help improve communication. Effective communication, involving all relevant parties, providing resources to assist the process, creating a timely feedback period, monitoring the process, and evaluating it are all ways that the Ministry can improve tactical feedback. The study advises the use of additional strategies to reduce employee resistance, such as including every employee in the decision-making process to enable identification with the necessity of and knowledge of the strategy's objectives. If a few key resistors are identified, this would also help the negotiation process. Additionally, information gathered during implementation can be utilized to increase support for a strategy that is working or to redirect resources toward executing a strategy that is not performing as expected.

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