

**EXPLORING EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING IN ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE
CONTEXTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

by

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12 JANUARY 2021

DECLARATION

I, Dedrieka Magdalena Nel, student number 4419-313-0, and registered for the degree, Master of Commerce, declare that

“Exploring employees’ well-being in organisational change contexts: A Qualitative Study”

is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or from which I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I declare that ethical clearance was obtained from the College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee (see Annexure C) at the University of South Africa and that informed consent (see Annexure A) was provided by all the participants to conduct the research.

Furthermore, this is a dissertation of limited scope (50% of the total master’s degree) for which the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology prescribes an article format. This format comprises four chapters – a scientific orientation to the study, a literature review chapter, a research article chapter, and a conclusion/limitations and recommendations chapter. The department further recommends a page limit of approximately 80 pages (excluding cover pages, reference lists and annexures). This dissertation adopted the APA technical editing and referencing style while, for chapter three, the article, the publication guidelines of the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (SAJIP) was adopted.



SIGNATURE
(D.M. NEL)

12 January 2021

DATE

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SUMMARY

EXPLORING EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING IN ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE CONTEXTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

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Degree: Master of Commerce (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)

Supervisor: Dr A. Van Niekerk

The main purpose of this study was to explore the impact of organisational change on the lived experiences of employees' well-being. A sample of six employees participated in the study. The requisite data was obtained using semi-structured interviews. The literature review aimed to conceptualise organisational change and its related constructs, to explore employee well-being and its related constructs, and to understand the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being in organisational contexts. The specific aims of the empirical study were to explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, to provide a basic framework that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives directed at enhancing employee well-being, and to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

The findings of this study indicated that the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being is generally negative owing to the uncertainty of moving from the known to the unknown. All employees are impacted by organisational changes. The findings further indicated that the adverse impacts of organisational change may be moderated by communication, participation in the organisational change process and support.

KEY WORDS

Qualitative study; organisational change; employee well-being; interpretivist paradigm; semi-structured interviews; content analysis; survivor syndrome; ill-being; multidimensional; communication

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CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

In the prevailing world of work organisations are being challenged to continuously and constantly reinvent themselves in order to remain relevant. These changes may impact either positively or negatively on the well-being of employees. The aim of this qualitative interpretive study was to gain an in-depth understanding of employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being within the South African workplace context. It was anticipated that this understanding would provide insights into ways in which to effectively manage change initiatives and to enhance employee well-being. This chapter presented the background to and the motivation for conducting the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the research paradigm, the research design, as well as the limitations of the study, recommendations and, finally, an overview of the chapters comprising the dissertation.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Change is a regular occurrence in the workplace (Neves et al., 2018) and organisations must continuously reinvent themselves in order to remain relevant (Adeniji et al., 2018). These changes may potentially improve organisational performance, enhance an organisation's chances of survival and sustain business growth (Zhang et al., 2016). Constant changes also influence employee attitudes and behaviour (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). The impact of change on employees may be perceived either as a threat or as a challenge (Pahkin et al., 2014). Although some changes may have positive results for employees, such as the automation of routine tasks, opportunities to work from home and better access to information, change may also have the potential to impact adversely on employee well-being, thus harming the employee (Franco et al., 2015; Guest, 2017). Change may be unavoidable but it is possible to prevent its impacting negatively on employees (Day et al., 2017).

Previous research from a global body of research has found that organisational change often impact employee well-being negatively (Day et al., 2017; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). People experience significant disruption when major aspects of the workplace change and this often causes them to rethink their organisational position (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Employee well-being can potentially improve customer satisfaction, productivity, business unit profitability, employee health outcomes and physiological functioning, however, a lack of employee well-being can potentially lower productivity and increase turnover costs (Diener et al., 2017). Poor employee well-being is also linked to reduced organisational commitment, increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, reduced job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions (Roemer & Harris, 2018). Organisations should, therefore, focus on diminishing the negative impact of change on employees in order to both reduce employees' intentions to resist future change and also the possibility of failure (Neves et al., 2018).

Employee well-being has significant consequences for both individual and organisational outcomes (Winslow et al., 2017). The way in which organisations manage a change initiative will influence the employees' reactions to the change event and also inform how they will react to future change events (Neves et al., 2018). Since change is a constant factor in organisations, the management of such change is a strategic challenge for organisations (Chen et al., 2018; Lewis & Cooper, 2005; Neves et al., 2018) and it is vital that organisations pay attention to promoting employee well-being (Diener et al., 2017). Positive work environments that support employees and provide autonomy may potentially result in more positive employee experiences and also limit the negative outcomes of organisational change (Day et al., 2017). It is, therefore, important to explore the change experience of employees and its impact on their well-being because the insights gained could assist organisations both to manage change effectively and to ensure organisational performance and success.

Previous research has shown that individuals experience employee well-being differently in organisational change contexts (Cartwright et al., 2007; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Loretto et al., 2010; Rafferty & Restubog, 2016). Organisational change

initiatives may be understood by exploring the impact of such initiatives on individuals (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Accordingly, this study focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The most recent studies focus on the impact of organisational change on objective measures of organisational change initiatives by means of productivity and result indicators (De Jong et al., 2016; Franco et al., 2015; Jacobs & Keegan, 2018; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). However, there is an urgent need to explore the subjective lived experiences of employees and the impact of change on their well-being (De Jong et al., 2016; Franco et al., 2015; Jacobs & Keegan, 2018; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Franco et al. (2015) argue that objective measures of productivity and result indicators do not account for the human aspect of organisational change initiatives.

Various studies have been conducted on organisational change and change management (Jacobs & Keegan, 2018). However, there appears to be only a limited number of studies that focus on how employees experience organisational change and its impact on their well-being (Bamberger et al., 2012; Pahkin et al., 2014). In addition, based on the literature search conducted by the researcher on PsycINFO database, there also appear to be limited studies on this phenomenon within the South African context. Therefore, although research is present and have been addressed in the global context, this study explored how research can meet the challenge within the South African context.

While organisational change clearly has an impact on employee well-being, the subjective perceptions of employees in this respect are still unclear (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). This raises the following question: *What are employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being?* It was felt that answering this question would help organisations to effectively manage change

initiatives and, thus, to enhance employee well-being. It is incumbent on organisations to take care of their employees because, ultimately, it is these employees who implement the required change in the organisations (Swart, 2000). It is therefore important to understand how those who have been impacted by organisational change initiatives have experienced the change and its impact on their well-being.

In light of the above, this study explored the lived experiences of employees of organisational change and its impact on their well-being within the South African workplace context. The research design (see 1.5) selected was consistent with the problem statement cited above and it was felt that would assist the researcher in answering the literature and empirical questions presented below.

The research questions pertaining to the literature review explored how organisational change and employee well-being are conceptualised, as well as how employee well-being is conceptualised within organisational change contexts. The research questions pertaining to the empirical study explored how employees experience organisational change, how employees experience the impact of organisational change on their well-being, and what recommendation can be made to organisations to improve the impact of change on employee well-being.

1.3 AIMS

Research is “a process of discovering new knowledge” (Salkind, 2018, p. 14). The research aims are congruent with the research questions cited that included one general aim and several specific aims.

The general aim of this research was to explore the impact of organisational change on the lived experiences of employee well-being.

The specific literature review aims were to conceptualise organisational change and its related constructs, to explore employee well-being and its related constructs, and

to understand the impact of organisational change on employee well-being in organisational contexts.

The specific aims of the empirical study were to explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, to provide a basic framework that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives directed at enhancing employee well-being, and to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

1.4 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), a paradigm refers to interrelated systems that determine a researcher's nature of enquiry in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Industrial and organisational psychology is an applied field of psychology that focuses on organisations as systems comprising individual employees, work groups and the structure and dynamics of the organisation (Bergh, 2013a). Hence, this study was conducted within the field of industrial and organisational psychology, and more specifically, organisation development as an applied sub-field of industrial and organisational psychology.

Industrial and organisational psychology focus on human behaviour in the work context (Cascio, 2015). Industrial and organisational psychology use psychological principles, assumptions and methods to study and influence human behaviour in the work setting (Bergh, 2013a). Organisation development is a management process which facilitates change at all levels of an organisation in order to change behaviour and achieve overall organisational effectiveness (Botha, 2000). Change management is a key focus in industrial and organisational psychology (Cascio, 2015). I used an interpretivist research paradigm to explore the research topic both theoretically and empirically.

1.4.1 Theoretical paradigm

A theoretical paradigm refers to the overall perspective used to construct a scientific exploration (Krauss, 2005). The theoretical paradigm that underpinned this study was the interpretivist paradigm that is focused primarily on the understanding of experiences and knowledge (Lavery, 2003). In line with the interpretivist paradigm the data which was collected was linked to the theory through inductive thinking in order to build conceptualisations from the ground up (Barnes, 2012). It was anticipated that this would orientate the reader on the key issues that were addressed in the study and provide a theoretical background to the main research question, namely, *What are employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being?*

The literature review was done after the empirical study had been conducted in an effort to limit researcher bias and to ensure that relevant literature supported the findings of the empirical study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The literature review conceptualised and positioned the study in relation to previous studies conducted on organisational change and its related constructs, employee well-being and its related constructs, and the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being in organisational contexts.

1.4.2 Empirical paradigm

The empirical research was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm assumes that it is essential that research approaches respect the differences between people (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The purpose of the interpretivist paradigm is to gain both insight and in-depth information (Thanh & Thanh, 2015) by focusing on the human experiences and on subjectivity rather than objectivity (Racher & Robinson, 2003; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Table 1.1 depicts the dimensions of the interpretivist paradigm.

Table 1.1

Interpretivist paradigm (adapted from Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999, p. 6)

Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal reality of subjective experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathetic• Observer intersubjectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactional• Interpretive• Qualitative

Ontology refer to the philosophy of reality (Krauss, 2005). Based on the interpretive approach I assumed that the subjective experiences of people are real and that the ontological focus of the study was on the participants' internal reality of their subjective experiences (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999) of organisational change and its impact on their well-being.

Epistemology refer to how the reality becomes known, as well as “the relationship between the knower and what may be known” (Krauss, 2005, p. 759). Epistemology required me, as the researcher, to demonstrate empathy and observer intersubjectivity in order to understand the experiences of the participants by interacting with them and listening to what they were telling me (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). This led to the participants and I inferring an understanding (Featherston, 2008) of the impact of the change on their well-being at work.

Methodology describe the practices applied in order to attain knowledge (Krauss, 2005) and is, in essence, the study of lived experiences (Laverty, 2003). Aligned with my ontological and epistemological perspectives, I adopted an interpretive and qualitative methodological approach. The methodological approach to the study included the collection of data by conducting interviews so as to ascertain how the participants being interviewed experienced organisational change and its impact on their well-being (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Based on my reflections on my ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, as outlined above, I decided to use the interpretive research method because it was congruent with the assumptions underpinning the study (Racher & Robinson, 2003). I was able to view the world from the participants' experiences and perceptions to construct and interpret my understanding from the data gathered (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The interpretivist paradigm provided me with a context within which to gain an in-depth understanding of the employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a specific, purposeful and coherent strategic plan for a specific research project (Bergh, 2013b). Bryman and Bell (2014) describe a research design as the framework used for collecting and analysing data. It is concerned with making decisions about the research components, such as the research purpose, the research question(s), the scope of the conclusions drawn, sampling, data collection and data analysis (Schoonenboom, 2018). A qualitative research design was chosen for the purposes of this study. Qualitative research refers to "the study of phenomena within the social context in which they occur" (Salkind, 2018, p. 21). Thus, a qualitative inquiry directed by an interpretive research paradigm provided me with a depth of information that is not always attainable through quantitative research (Featherston, 2008; O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). The next section will discuss the research approach, research strategy and research method used in the study.

1.5.1 Research approach

The study followed a qualitative research approach as the study was focused on understanding and the making of meaning and, hence, the choice of an inductive research approach. Qualitative research is based on the assumption that there is no universal truth but, rather, that the knowledge gained and the process of gathering the required information are context specific (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Qualitative research

examines phenomena within the context in which they occur (Salkind, 2018). It is a meaning-making process (Lyons & Coyle, 2007) that provides rich and detailed accounts of the phenomena under exploration (Featherston, 2008). The aim of qualitative research is to develop theory that explains what was experienced (Newman et al., 1998). Descriptive research describe the characteristics of an existing phenomenon (Salkind, 2018). This study was descriptive in that the aim of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding, through the descriptions of employees' lived experiences, of organisational change and its impact on their well-being.

1.5.2 Research strategy

Research strategy refers to the overall approach adopted in a study and integrates the type and location of the research being conducted (Bergh, 2013b). The research strategy is determined by the purpose of the research as well as the research questions. Within the context of interpretivist paradigm mentioned above, I decided to use a hermeneutic phenomenological strategy to conduct the study which was aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon (Kafle, 2011). Phenomenology refers to the philosophical study of 'being' (Larkin & Thompson, 2012) and understand human phenomena as they are lived in context (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and is considered to be an appropriate qualitative method when the focus is on the making of meaning through the use of rich and descriptive language (Kafle, 2011). The study explored the lived experiences of the participants that may have been taken for granted in the hope of uncovering either new or forgotten meanings (Laverty, 2003).

1.5.3 Research method

A research method refers to the way the requisite data is collected (Bryman & Bell, 2014). There are several types of qualitative research, namely, naturalistic inquiries, ethnographies, hermeneutics, grounded theory, interview studies, and focus group

studies (Featherston, 2008). In this study semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data required. The next section explains the research methods which were utilised in this study in terms of the setting of the research, the entrée and establishment of the researcher's roles, sampling, data collection methods, the recording and analysis of the data as well as strategies adopted to ensure quality, ethics and accurate reporting.

1.5.3.1 Research setting

The research setting was the South African workplace context. Organisations are encountering significant pressures to change, for example mergers, debt restructuring, business restructures, technological changes and business acquisitions. These pressures compel organisations to undertake organisational change initiatives such as the leadership changes, policy and strategic changes, retrenchments and restructuring that are deemed to play an important role in the overall effectiveness and survival of organisations. The primary focus of this study was on a workplace context in which two distinct change initiatives had been implemented, namely, restructuring and system changes.

1.5.3.2 Entrée and establishing the researcher's roles

The individuals I invited to participate in the study formed part of my academic and professional networks. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research location was arranged online to ensure that the interviews happened timeously, safely and at the participants' convenience. It was made clear from the outset that participation in the study was voluntary and that confidentiality would be maintained (Bryman & Bell, 2014). I explained my role and built a rapport with the participants by creating a trustworthy environment that would encourage the participants to disclose information (Bryman & Bell, 2014).

An informed consent form (see Annexure A) was signed by all participants who had indicated their willingness to participate in the study. Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee of the University of South Africa (see Annexure C).

1.5.3.3 Sampling

The study population included employees who had similar exposure to and experiences of organisational change initiatives, such as leadership changes, policy and strategic changes, retrenchments and restructuring, in the South African workplace context. In line with the principles of qualitative research, purposeful sampling was used to identify information rich cases (Kafle, 2011). This involved the identification and selection of persons who are well-versed with the phenomenon the researcher seek to understand (Etikan et al., 2016). The researcher applied this technique to include participants who are relevant to the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2014) in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under exploration (Benoot et al., 2016).

The following selection criteria for purposeful sampling were applied in the study:

- individuals who had lived experiences of an organisational change initiative, such as leadership changes, policy and strategic changes, retrenchments and restructuring;
- individuals who had been permanently employed for the entire duration (before, during and after) of the organisational change initiative;
- proficient in English; and
- between 18 and 65 years of age.

A sample size of six participants was used to answer the research questions. The sample size was guided by data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). Data saturation is

achieved when no new information is emerging from the participants and no new themes are emerging from the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Guest et al., 2006).

1.5.3.4 Data collection methods

Data collection refer to the process of gathering information and the researcher then draws conclusions (Bryman & Bell, 2014). In line with the interpretive paradigm, researchers wish to understand phenomena in specific contexts (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Charmaz (2010) remarks that meaning matters and that, to understand what is happening in a specific context, we need to know the meaning which participants derive from phenomena. It was, therefore, decided to use semi-structured interviews as the data collection method.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in context (Kafle, 2011). In addition, the semi-structured interviews gave me the opportunity to become really well acquainted with participants, thus helping me to understand how they thought and what they feel (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Semi-structured interviews cover wide-ranging contexts with the interviewer using an interview guide that comprises of a series of questions but still being able to adjust the sequence of the questions and ask follow-up questions, if necessary (Bryman & Bell, 2014). Semi-structured interviews offer an ideal opportunity for the researcher to explore the complexities which are close to the lived experiences of the participants as thoroughly as possible (Laverty, 2003). An interview guide with a structured list of the main topics was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants (see Annexure B). I applied techniques such as summarising, paraphrasing, reflecting and clarifying with the participants to encourage conversation on their lived experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2014).

1.5.3.5 Recording of data

The study was conducted in line with the ethical standards as set out in the Ethical Rules of Conduct of the Professional Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974, 2006). Moral and ethical concerns were addressed by obtaining the informed consent (see Annexure A) of the participants who had indicated their willingness to participate in the interviews, ensuring anonymity by using pseudonyms, ensuring the confidentiality of the participants and the organisations by limiting access to the data which had been collected and sharing the research findings with the participants (Kafle, 2011). In addition, I obtained the participants' permission to take notes during the interviews and to record the interviews. The participants were treated in such a way that their dignity was maintained in spite of the research process or outcomes while they were also protected from physical and/or psychological harm (Salkind, 2018). The researcher ensured that the potential participants understand that participation is voluntary, that they may ask questions to ensure comprehension of the questions being asked, and that they may stop participating in the study at any time.

The data was recorded using digital recordings and I transcribed the recordings verbatim. The verbatim transcriptions were checked for reliability by my reading the transcriptions while listening to the recordings (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). The interview transcripts were de-identified by allocating pseudonyms to each participant to ensure the anonymity of the participants. For example, the first participant was referred to as 'Participant 1'.

1.5.3.6 Data analysis

It is important that the data analysis technique used should be appropriate to the research design, that it enable the researcher to answer the research questions and that is aligned with the research paradigm (Bergh, 2013b). The unique goal of qualitative data analyses is to facilitate a process of meaning-making (Krauss, 2005).

Qualitative data analysis techniques are concerned with the analysis and classification of recurring themes in the data collected, such as the spoken language that is generally used in interpretative research (Bergh, 2013b). Accordingly, the data collected from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using content analysis to distil the words into as few as possible content related categories describing the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Qualitative analysis use inductive logic to develop theory and describe meaning (Featherston, 2008).

Content analysis refer to the interpretation of latent content (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) and the analysis of text within the communication context (Mayring, 2000). Content analysis comprises the following three main phases, namely, preparation, organisation and the reporting of results (Elo et al., 2014). The preparation phase included the collection of suitable data for the content analysis, making sense of the data, and choosing the applicable unit of analysis (Elo et al., 2014). I familiarised myself with the body of material and classified the data into smaller, more manageable items for analysis (words or themes) (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The organisation phase consisted of open coding, creating categories, and abstraction (Elo et al., 2014). Notes and headings were added to the text while I read it, and the headings were subsequently transferred to coding sheets (see Annexure D), and categories were generated (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Finally, in the reporting phase, the results were reported in terms of the content related categories describing the phenomenon in question (Elo et al., 2014).

1.5.3.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Qualitative research should be evaluated in terms of its rigour, quality and usefulness (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). The integrity and rigour of this qualitative study was ensured by incorporating credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), and dependability (reliability) as alternatives to the concepts of reliability and validity applicable to quantitative research approaches (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The researcher continuously checked and adjusted the research

process to make sure the findings are robust (Spiers et al., 2018). In terms of credibility, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and then representative verbatim quotations were used when reporting on the findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Thus, the data was representative of the participants' true voices during the reporting on the findings. Transferability refers to the potential for transferring the study findings to other settings (Elo et al., 2014). Transferability were ensured through purposive sampling and by providing a detailed description of the research context. In addition, appropriate quotations were used to enhance the transferability of the findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) through better representation of extensive data and to give rise to the participant voices. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and in different settings. Accordingly, a detailed account and description of the research process was documented, from the process of data collection, data analysis, interpretation to the reporting of the findings using appropriate quotations (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Although a level of subjectivity was expected, I made every effort to be open, sensitive and empathetic to the participants (Krauss, 2005).

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology's Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa (see Annexure C). The anonymity of the participants was assured by giving each of them a pseudonym and not using their real names.

Copies of the research data will be stored electronically on my computer for a period of five years and is password protected while hard copies are kept in a secure and safe location. My supervisor and I are the only persons who have access to the material. I shall ensure that all material is safely discarded after five years. The hard copies will be shredded, and the electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer.

1.5.3.8 Reporting

The empirical aims of the study were to explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, to provide a basic framework that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives in the interests of enhancing employee well-being and to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

The research findings were reported using a qualitative writing style. The findings on the data which had been obtained from the semi-structured interviews were reported by making use of verbatim quotes and interpretations. The findings were reported in accordance with the requirements of an industrial and organisational psychology master's dissertation of limited scope and a research article. The findings were discussed in terms of the problem statement and the literature reviewed. The individual participants were not identifiable in reports as their names were not recorded anywhere and it was not possible to link them to their responses. The participants were given a pseudonym and were referred to by their pseudonyms in the data.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

Firstly, since the study was qualitative and explorative in nature, the sample used in the study may be considered as a limiting factor because the coverage of the research topic was not extensive.

Secondly, the issue of well-being is generally considered to be sensitive in nature. Accordingly, the participants tended to be emotional and subjective in their responses and this may have limited the validity and reliability of the study.

Thirdly, the study examined organisational change at one point in time only, offering a snapshot of the experiences and perceptions of change initiative which may change over time (Day et al., 2017).

1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was intended to contribute to the field of industrial and organisational psychology, more specifically, to organisation development as an applied sub-field of organisational psychology (Van Zyl et al., 2016). It is hoped that the study results may help the organisations, change agents and industrial and organisational psychologists that facilitate organisational change initiatives in the workplace to better understand the impact of organisational change on employee well-being and also to provide them with a basic framework that may assist them in managing change initiatives in such a way so as to enhance employee well-being. In addition, due to the exploratory nature of the study, future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies to expand the results to other organisational contexts and draw conclusions that allow for generalisation. In view of the fact that the study was conducted at one point in time only, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted that may generate a further understanding of the impact of the whole process of organisational change on employee well-being (Day et al., 2017).

1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters in this master's dissertation research are presented as follows:

Chapter One: Scientific orientation to the research

The first chapter presents the reasons for selecting the research problem, the rationale and motivation for conducting the research, the problem statement and the research questions. This is followed by a discussion on the research design and research methodology selected. Both were congruent with the problem statement.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Chapter two conceptualises the constructs of organisational change and employee well-being by exploring the theoretical foundations of these constructs, their development over time and related theories. The chapter then explores existing literature on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being in organisational contexts.

Chapter Three: Article

This chapter is presented in the form of an article and presents the theoretical background to the study, a discussion of the research design and the study results or findings. The chapter then discusses the main conclusions of the study, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research and practice and/or policy.

Chapter Four: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

The final chapter presents the main conclusions of the study, the study results, the limitations of the study and recommendation for future research and practice and/or policy.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter one discussed the background to the study, the motivation for conducting the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the research paradigm, the research design as well as the limitations, recommendations and chapter layout. As indicated above, the context of the study was employees within the South African workplace. It was hoped that the knowledge acquired on the lived experiences of these employees may provide insight into ways in which to improve the success of change implementation and to enhance both the employees' experiences and their well-being.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two presents a literature review in order to orientate the reader on key issues addressed in the study, provide a theoretical background to the specific aims of the literature review: conceptualise organisational change and its related constructs; explore employee well-being and its related constructs; and understand the impact of organisational change on employee well-being within organisational contexts.

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

In general terms, change refers to making something different (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013) and, in the organisational context, altering the prevailing conditions in an organisation (Gupta, 2016), and transforming an organisation from one state to another (Fløvik et al., 2019). Change is a source of uncertainty regarding the outcomes of such change (Nikolova et al., 2016) and which may disrupt existing organisational structures and processes (Fløvik et al., 2019). Organisational change, as an outcome, is defined as “the modification of an organisation’s core systems that include the organisation’s standard operating procedures, values, structure and strategy” (Bamberger et al., 2012, p. 593). In terms of scenario-based planning, organisational change relate to the organisation being changed so as to enable it to perform successfully in various possible futures (Geldenuys & Veldsman, 2011). Planned change within an organisation refer to changing individual and group behaviour within an organisation (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013) and may also refer to extensive restructuring of an entire organisation (Köper & Richter, 2014).

2.1.1 Dimensions of organisational change

The world of work is shaped by trends such as technological advances, environmental emergencies and the global economy (Schiro & Baker, 2009; Simuth, 2017). Thus, organisational change in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous global world of work is inevitable (Malatjie, 2019) and no organisation is immune to it (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Some of the main reasons for changes include declining profits, increased pressure from competitors, mergers and acquisitions, new and/or advanced technology, the need to reduce management levels and to get rid of unproductive employees (Simuth, 2017). Other driving forces for change includes political/regulatory factors, socio-cultural challenges, poor decision-making, limited resources and knowledge, and global competition (Schiro & Baker, 2009; Simuth, 2017). It is essential that organisations manage changes in technology, challenges to strategic capabilities, communication preferences of stakeholders and customers and market and competitor demands (Malatjie, 2019). External factors may also lead to changes with wanted, unwanted, or unexpected results (Maes & Van Hootegem, 2011).

The success of organisational change is dependent on the practicalities of implementing the change which are determined by the specific organisational context (Brough & Biggs, 2015). Planned or unplanned circumstances may compel organisations to implement deliberate changes (Malatjie, 2019) in order to achieve desired outcomes (Maes & Van Hootegem, 2011). It is, therefore, important that organisational change is studied in relation to its unique context (Maes & Van Hootegem, 2011).

Jimmieson et al. (2004) maintain that the aim of organisational change is to alter the organisational variables that impact employees and their behaviour in the workplace and which in turn impact several organisational outcomes. Organisational change also offer organisations the opportunity to optimise processes and/or improve work

situations, thus enhancing the prosperity of the organisation in question (Köper & Richter, 2014).

Maes and Van Hootehem (2011, p. 208-214) list and explain the following eight dimensions of organisational change: (1) *control* represents the distinction between emerging and planned change; (2) *scope* represents the intensity of change on a continuum representing the adaptation to transformation; (3) *frequency* represents the number of times organisational change takes place; (4) *stride* represents the number of successive stages required to implement the change; (5) *time* represents how long it takes to implement the organisational change; (6) *tempo* represents the speed with which the change actions follow one another; (7) *goal* represents the final state when the change is accomplished; and (8) *style* represents the degree of participation, ranging from participative to coercive.

The changing economic environment often compel organisations to undertake restructuring (Koukoulaki et al., 2017) in order to enhance both productivity and quality (Cascio, 2015) so as to survive and succeed (Pahkin et al., 2014). Restructuring refers to a more significant change rather than general changes within the organisation (Kieselbach & Triomphe, 2010), and also to changes to existing organisational structures (Köper & Richter, 2014). McKinley and Scherer (2000) define restructuring as changes to the internal administrative structure in relation to a planned change programme and characterised by the fact that existing structures and routines are questioned and changes implemented through interventions that are targeted and explicit (Köper & Richter, 2014). The word “restructuring” is used synonymously with other terms such as “termination”, “permanent layoffs”, “resource alignment”, “downsizing” and “rightsizing” (Schiro & Baker, 2009, p. 92). The changes impact entire organisational sectors or companies and do not constitute only minor changes in the work practices (Wiezer et al., 2011). According to Nikolova et al. (2016), restructuring also implies the need for employees to become competent in using new methods and meeting the requirements of new procedures.

The rapid changes in technological advances also compel organisations to implement changes whereby they create and appropriate value in order to sustain their competitive advantage (Correani et al., 2020). These changes may include updated and renewed systems (Werner, 2016a). Technology relates to the knowledge, tools, techniques and processes which are utilised by organisations to create products and services by using computers and machinery (Werner, 2016a). Companies also utilise various information systems in order to improve their performance (Jones, 2013). Information technology plays an important role in promoting creativity and innovation (Jones, 2013). However, important factors that should be considered in relation to these change initiatives include the fact that the employees and customers may need to adapt their ways of working and interacting with the organisation (Correani et al., 2020).

The forces influencing change may be internal and/or external to the organisation (Zoogah & Beurgre, 2013). External forces for change include the economy, government laws and regulations, technology, labour markets, competition, population demographics and globalisation while internal forces for change include strategic changes, changing workforces, using new equipment and changes in employee attitudes (Zoogah & Beurgre, 2013). Resistance to change is a natural occurrence that may impede change efforts and, therefore, it is vital that it is managed strategically (Werner, 2016b). The resistance to organisational change may be ascribed to the uncertainty and ambiguity (Zoogah & Beurgre, 2013) which may arise due to the threat of deteriorating status, possible job losses and/or reduced income (Dimitrova, 2019). Other reasons why individuals may resist change include fear of the unknown, peer influence, personality, low self-efficacy, external locus of control, inconvenience and distrust of management (Werner, 2016b, p. 445).

Jones (2013, p. 317) alluded to the fact that “education and communication, participation and empowerment, facilitation, bargaining and negotiation, manipulation and coercion” may be used to address resistance to change. In addition, Zoogah and Beurgre (2013) recommend that change should be implemented fairly by managers

and change agents. Thornton et al. (2019) suggest that managers should use effective and purposeful communication with all the relevant parties. They considered communication a critical component that speaks to the credibility of change initiatives. According to Armenakis and Harris (2009), employee participation is a fundamental aspect of organisational change. Jones (2013, p. 319) suggested “counselling, sensitivity training and process consultation” on the individual level; “team building and intergroup training” on the team level; and “confrontational meetings” on the organisational level in an effort to promote change.

2.1.2 Organisational development techniques

Organisational development refers to techniques and methods that are designed to make changes on the individual, group and organisational levels (Jones, 2013). The aim of organisational development is to improve organisational effectiveness through planned and systematic approaches to change (Brown, 2014). Organisational development techniques include “action research, survey feedback, interventions, process consultations, team building interventions, intergroup conflict interventions and personal interventions” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 341-342). Process consultation refers to the process whereby a facilitator work closely with a client to improve the client’s interactions with other members of a group (Jones, 2013). For example, the facilitator may make group members aware of how they communicate, work out problems, make decisions and/or resolve conflict (Werner, 2016b). During team building, facilitators observe the interactions between group members and then help them to find ways to improve their interactions (Jones, 2013) by setting a vision, goals and objectives for the team (Potgieter, 2016b). Intergroup interventions are a form of team building aimed at improving work interactions between different divisions or functions (Jones, 2013). Sensitivity training refer to intense counselling during which members of a group are facilitated to understand how others see them and how to conduct themselves in a more sensitive way towards others (Jones, 2013). On the other hand, empowerment is a process through which employees are given the authority to make decisions, are held accountable for the outcomes of such decisions,

accept responsibility for the outcomes and solve problems independently (Brown, 2014).

2.1.3 Organisational change theories

In general terms, organisational change may be classified into two categories, namely, evolutionary change and revolutionary change. The former refers to an ongoing process of upgrading and renewing, such as changes in reporting lines or procedures while the latter refers to drastic changes to the way in which things are done, such as new product lines or changing organisational structures (Aamodt, 2016). According to Jones (2013), managers face the challenges inherent in changing organisations, irrelevant of the type of evolutionary or revolutionary change taking place within an organisation.

According to Brown (2014), organisations are open, sociotechnical systems of coordinated social and technical activities that are interdependent and should be jointly optimised in order to achieve the best possible outcome for the organisation concerned. The institutional theory refers to how organisations in competitive environments may increase their ability to grow and survive by satisfying the needs of their stakeholders (Jones, 2013). The total management technique (TMT) refers to an ongoing effort that is customer centred and driven by the employees to improve an organisation's products and services (Werner, 2016b). According to Jones (2013), organisations experience an organisational life cycle that encompasses sequential stages of growth and development, namely, birth, growth, decline and death. Greiner's model of organisational growth identified the following five stages of organisational growth, namely, includes creativity, direction, delegation, coordination and collaboration with each ending with a crisis that the organisation must resolve before moving on to the next stage (Jones, 2013). Organisations enter the state of decline if they fail to take a proactive organisational approach to pressures that threaten their survival (Jones, 2013). Thus, organisational renewal is vital if organisations are to survive through a continuous process of innovation and adaptation (Brown, 2014).

The population ecology model of organisational growth refers to the theory that cites the factors that determine the birth rates of organisations (Jones, 2013). The pressures of the ecological factors may prompt organisations to select unsustainable practices and strategies that may result in a decline in population density, or mortality (Salimath & Jones, 2011). Therefore, as organisations grow they should enhance their labour and specialisation by developing the skills and abilities required to maintain a competitive advantage (Jones, 2013). The challenge and opportunity for action research is to find effective responses to the ecological factors facing the current workplace. Action research refers to a change process that is based on the systematic collection of data and then a decision on the change action that needs to be implemented based on the data that has been analysed (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013). This entails a five-step process comprising diagnosis, analysis, feedback, action and evaluation (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013). Action research is not a standalone approach to change but rather a key component of Lewin's three-step change process (Burnes, 2020).

2.1.4 Lewin's three-step change process

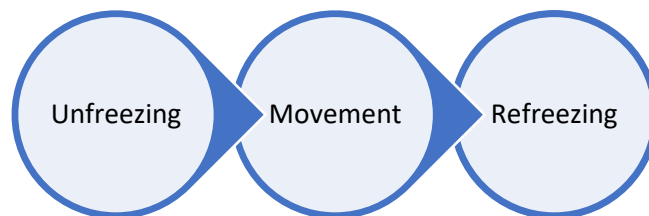
Organisational change models are simplistic presentations of complicated processes that help us to understand the components of change and also to illustrate that the change is a systematic and planned process (Werner, 2016b). This study used Lewin's force-field theory of change and alluded to the fact that organisations are balanced between forces for change and resistance to change (Jones, 2013, p. 302). The force-field theory of change is a tool for managers to determine the need for change (Smith et al., 2012). Kurt Lewin (as cited in Werner, 2016b) developed a three-step change model for managers to use when implementing change within their organisations, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

The first step, unfreezing, refers to the organisation's preparing for the change by becoming aware of or anticipating environmental changes that may impact on the organisation, evaluating the ability of the organisation to address these changes and

establishing the motivation for change (Werner, 2016b). In other words, the organisation acknowledges that the existing state is undesirable and that change is required (Zoogah & Beurgre, 2013), while ensuring that the forces pushing change are greater than the restraining and negative elements (Smith et al., 2012). The second step, movement, refers to moving the organisation to its desired position through the implementation of strategic plans while the third step, refreezing, involves reinforcing the new, desired position of the organisation through encouraging the desired behaviour, and identifying and correcting relapses (Werner, 2016b).

Figure 2.1

Lewin's three-step change model of organisational change (adapted from Werner, 2016b)



Organisational change may have a negative impact on employees in the form of, for example, increased job demands and a decrease of job control (Fløvik et al., 2019; Köper & Richter, 2014). Accordingly, the successful implementation of change processes is essential for the survival and prosperity of the organisation (Köper & Richter, 2014). For the purpose of this study organisational change may be understood in terms of the content of what is being changed (the “what”), the process by which the event occurs (the “how”) (Fløvik et al., 2019), and an understanding of the impact of the change process (the “why”) (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2015). In short, it refers to understanding how the context of the organisation and the change process and the content of the change and the implementation of the process interact with one another (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2015) and impact on employee well-being.

2.2 EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Well-being has been studied throughout history and several definitions of well-being have been proposed. In terms of general well-being, the World Health Organisation defined well-being in 1946 as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2006, p. 1), while the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines well-being as “good mental states, including all the various evaluations, positive and negative, that people make of their lives, and the affective reaction of people to their experiences” (as cited in Guest, 2017, p. 26). Well-being in an organisational context was defined by Grant et al. (2007, p. 52) as “the overall quality of an employee’s experience and functioning at work”. On the other hand, Diener et al. (2012, p. 63) define well-being as “a person’s cognitive and emotional evaluations of their lives”. Employee well-being is concerned with an employees’ attitudes and feelings about themselves in the work setting (May, 2013). Wellness refers to “an employee’s state of optimal health associated with feeling energetic, motivated and emotionally and mentally stimulated, the ability to foster good relationships and to show commitment to engaging with their work roles and the organisation’s goals” (Potgieter, 2016a, p. 262).

2.2.1 Dimensions of well-being

There are two main forms of well-being, namely, hedonic and eudemonic well-being (Athota, 2017). Hedonic well-being is based on a pleasure orientation while eudemonic well-being is based on Aristotle’s view of practising and acting with virtue (Athota, 2017) in an effort to fulfil and actualise human potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001). There is a conceptual overlap between Aristotle’s view of eudaimonia and more recent theories of psychological well-being (Athota, 2017).

Well-being is a multidimensional construct that refers to optimal functioning and experience (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It is a broad and encompassing concept that takes

into account the “whole person” (Danna, 1999). Well-being refers to the absence of negative mental states, diseases, or disorders, while also being referred to as health, having good mental states, or feeling well (Otto et al., 2018; Pahkin et al., 2014).

Subjective well-being refers to a broad concept that encompasses individuals’ emotional responses, domain satisfactions and the assessment of their life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999). It is a multidimensional concept that evaluates general happiness (Don Gottfredson & Duffy, 2008). Diener et al. (2017, p.87) also define subjective well-being as “people’s overall evaluations of their lives and their emotional experiences”. Thus, subjective well-being includes “positive and negative experiences that are represented by judgements and feelings in relation to life satisfaction, interest and engagement, affective reactions such as joy and sadness to life events, satisfaction with work, relationships, health, recreation, and meaning and purpose” (Diener & Ryan, 2009, p. 391).

Kaplan et al. (2017, p.4) define employee well-being as “the totality of one’s emotional experiences and subjective evaluations of one’s work and life circumstances” while Grant et al. (2007) argue that employee well-being encompasses three main dimensions of well-being, namely, psychological, physical, and social (Grant et al., 2007). On the other hand, according to Zheng et al. (2015), the dimensions of the employee well-being include life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being has been operationalised by Warr (1990, p. 195) as consisting of three dimensions: satisfaction-dissatisfaction, enthusiasm-depression and comfort-anxiety while, according to Grant et al. (2007), the dimensions of psychological well-being include agency, satisfaction, self-respect and capabilities. Ryff (2014) presents psychological well-being as containing the following six key components: autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Ryff (2014) also suggests definitions of

the key components of high and low scores. Table 2.1 presents the definitions of the dimensions of well-being and their scores.

Table 2.1

Definitions of dimensions of well-being (adapted from Ryff, 2014, p. 12)

<i>Autonomy</i>	High scorer	Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behaviour from within; evaluates self by personal standards
	Low scorer	Is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	High scorer	Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values
	Low scorer	Has difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world
<i>Personal growth</i>	High scorer	Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realising his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behaviour over time; is changing in ways that reflect greater self-knowledge and effectiveness

	Low scorer	Has a sense of personal stagnation; lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time; feels bored with and uninterested in life; feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviours
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	High scorer	Has warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection and intimacy; understands the give and take of human relationships
	Low scorer	Has few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others
<i>Purpose in life</i>	High scorer	Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to both present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living
	Low scorer	Lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose in past life; possesses no outlooks or beliefs that give life meaning
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	High scorer	Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self, including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life
	Low scorer	Feels dissatisfied with self; is disappointed with what has occurred in past life; is troubled about certain personal qualities; wishes to be different to the way he or she is

Physical well-being is represented by physiological indicators of either health or sickness in the workplace (Guest, 2017) and is defined in terms of bodily health and functioning (Grant et al., 2007). Physical well-being refers to employees' health and also includes work stressors and strain (Veld & Alfes, 2017). The dimensions of physical well-being include nourishment, shelter, health care, clothing, and mobility (Grant et al., 2007). Social well-being is represented by interpersonal relations, the level of social support, and the perception of trust and being treated fairly (Guest, 2017) and is defined in terms of relational experience and functioning (Grant et al., 2007). On the other hand, the dimensions of social well-being include social participation, social acceptance, and helping other people (Grant et al., 2007).

Employees evaluate their environment in relation to their well-being and as potentially harming or threatening their well-being, thus resulting in stress or as a challenge that may lead to more positive states of well-being such as enjoyment and/or job satisfaction (Pahkin et al., 2014). On the negative side, employee well-being refers to stress, emotional exhaustion, cynicism while on the positive side it refers to satisfaction and dedication (Wiezer et al., 2011).

Employee well-being may be enhanced by identifying work-related stress hazards and assessing the associated risk factors; using the information to assess organisational health and wellness performance; involving all role players in developing health and wellness solutions; formulating plans and standards and ensuring the governance thereof; ensuring that the necessary resources are made available to enable the health and wellness plan and, finally, implementing and evaluating the health and wellness plan (Potgieter, 2016a).

For the purpose of this study employee well-being may be understood, amongst others, in terms of the three dimensions of happiness, health and relationships (Grant et al., 2007).

2.2.2 Theories of well-being

The theory of authentic happiness includes three elements, namely, positive emotion, engagement and meaning (Seligman, 2011). Positive emotion relates to what we feel, for example, pleasure, rapture, ecstasy, warmth and comfort (Seligman, 2011) while engagement relates to flow, in other words, being one with music, time stopping and the sense of loss of self-consciousness when a person is experiencing an absorbing activity (Seligman, 2011). Meaning relates to the pursuit of meaning and purpose (Seligman, 2011).

The theory of well-being is founded on feeling good, but also on meaning, good relationships and accomplishments (Seligman, 2011). The aim of the theory of well-being is to maximise the five elements of positive-emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement (PERMA) (Seligman, 2011, p. 16). Table 2.2 present the happiness theory and the well-being theory.

Table 2.2

Happiness theory and well-being theory (adapted from Seligman, 2011)

	Happiness Theory	Well-being Theory
Topic	Happiness	Well-being
Measure	Life-satisfaction	Positive-emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement
Goal	Increase life satisfaction	Enhance flourishing by increasing positive-emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement

2.3 THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE ON EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Organisations are increasingly facing major organisational changes that have an impact on their employees (Adeniji et al., 2018; Gover & Duxbury, 2018; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017), and on employment relationships (Dencker & Fang, 2016). Employees experience both change and job insecurity as stressful (Potgieter, 2016b). Several studies agree that the impact of organisational change on employee well-being in an organisational context is primarily negative (Bamberger et al., 2012; Day et al., 2017; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Loretto et al., 2010). However, Rafferty and Jimmieson (2017) have proven that there is no significant relationship between employees' subjective perceptions of change and the measures of employee well-being while De Jong et al. (2016) have shown that not all employees experience the impact of change negatively but that positive trends have been found over time that suggest that employees' well-being had recovered. Although recovery in employee well-being was still low or not back to the baseline it was, in the majority of cases, present shortly after the change initiative had occurred (De Jong et al., 2016). It is, therefore, important to create working environments which enable employees to adapt to changes while maintaining their health and well-being (Van den Heuvel et al., 2013).

2.3.1 The impact of organisational change

Various studies have been conducted on the impact of organisational change that primarily focus on objective measures of organisational change initiatives such as productivity and result indicators (De Jong et al., 2016; Franco et al., 2015; Jacobs & Keegan, 2018; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). However, there appears to be only a limited number of studies that focus on the subjective lived experiences of employees and the impact of change on their well-being (De Jong et al., 2016; Franco et al., 2015; Jacobs & Keegan, 2018; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Therefore, it is important to focus on the human aspect of organisational change initiatives (Franco et al., 2015)

by exploring the subjective lived experiences of employees' well-being in organisational change contexts.

Employees may experience the impact of organisational change both as an opportunity to gain but to suffer the risk of loss due to changes of both the work content and the working context (Fløvik et al., 2019). Wiezer et al. (2011) found that restructuring has a profound impact on employee well-being before, during and after restructuring. According to McKinley and Scherer (2000), restructuring may have either good or bad outcomes although, in general, the literature indicates that restructuring has a negative impact on employee well-being (De Jong et al., 2016; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Westgaard & Winkel, 2011). Employees may experience the changes as a move from the known to the unknown which involves some ambiguity, thus increasing their sense of insecurity and uncertainty (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Fløvik et al., 2019; Gupta, 2016; Köper & Richter, 2014; Malatjie, 2019; Nikolova et al., 2016; Pahkin et al., 2014) that is generally associated with negative well-being (Burke et al., 2015; Harney et al., 2018; Virtanen et al., 2002) and increased stress levels (Schiro & Baker, 2009). This is consistent with Deci and Ryan's (2008) finding that the feeling of autonomy is vital for optimal functioning.

The impact of restructuring may be associated with issues of morale, reduced growth and productivity, compromised employee health and behavioural complications (Schiro & Baker, 2009). Low employee well-being may cost organisations billions in lost revenue, down time, and stress-related illnesses (Wallis & Livorsi, 2015). Organisations remain challenged in relation to ways to which to eradicate the extent of the negative impact of organisational change (Harney et al., 2018). It is therefore essential that employee well-being is given the priority it deserves (Wallis & Livorsi, 2015).

Wiezer et al. (2011) found that employees experienced, as a result of change, an increase in their workload and less support from their supervisors while tasks sometimes become unclear, thus impacting on job satisfaction, dedication, cynicism,

emotional exhaustion, feelings of stress, work ability, job insecurity, and even absence due to sickness. In a similar vein, Burke et al. (2015) found that restructuring is often associated with a higher level of threat to job security, reduced commitment, higher levels of burnout (more cynicism, and less efficacy), lower job satisfaction, increased intentions to resign and less life satisfaction. In addition, Otto et al. (2018) found that restructuring often depletes employees' resources, reduces job satisfaction, increases job insecurity, and diminishes well-being. Therefore, if the restructuring is associated with loss or potential loss, then the employees may perceive the change as stressful (Otto et al., 2018) and organisations may experience higher costs relating to absenteeism and illness due to stress (Burke et al., 2015).

However, contrary to the above findings, Wiezer et al. (2011) found that not all employees are negatively impacted upon by restructuring as it may lead to an improvement in an employee's position at work and/or create the opportunity to influence the future of the organisation, thus resulting in improved well-being. This may be due to employees' differing change appraisals regarding the impact of restructuring on their well-being (Pahkin et al., 2014). Findings by De Fátima Nery et al. (2016) do not support assertions that psychological uncertainty, risk and damages cause a perception of injustice, absence of employee well-being and illness while Rafferty and Jimmieson (2017) found that neither transformational change nor the frequency of change had direct associations with employee well-being. However, a high degree of transformational change or rapid change was associated with affective resistance to change which in turn was associated with insomnia and a lack of psychological well-being (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017).

According to Vermeulen and Wiesner (2000), over time the situation "cools down", employees adapt, and "grief" is resolved through acceptance. Fløvik et al. (2019) found that the adverse impact of organisational changes occurred shortly after the change process but decreased over time as employees became accustomed to their new roles and responsibilities with increased role clarity. It may therefore be concluded that organisational change has a profound impact on employee well-being (Schiro &

Baker, 2009) but that there are multiple factors involved and various different relationships and results (Koukoulaki et al., 2017).

2.3.2 Survivor syndrome

The literature indicates that all employees are impacted by changes (Koukoulaki et al., 2017), both survivors and victims (Schiro & Baker, 2009). Even if the employees themselves are not affected by the restructuring, they are still aware of the threats to others and their feelings of job insecurity may increase (Burke et al., 2015). These employees experience a form of organisational trauma that impacts on both productivity and profitability (Vermeulen & Wiesner, 2000). This phenomenon is referred to as survivor syndrome. Survivor syndrome encompasses a set of emotions and behaviours that employees who remain within the organisation after a restructuring process present (Wiesner et al., 1999). Westgaard and Winkel (2011) found that restructuring has a negative impact on the survivors' health and increase risk factors. The impact of restructuring on employees with survivor syndrome include a decline in organisational commitment, a decrease in moral, a lack of trust, and a focus on personal security rather than on organisational goals (Vermeulen & Wiesner, 2000). It must be borne in mind that the well-being of the total workforce has a significant impact on the bottom-line of organisations and the broader economy (Kaplan et al., 2017).

2.3.3 Factors that protect employees' well-being against the negative impact of restructuring

Although organisational change is unavoidable, it is possible to moderate the negative impact of organisational change on employee well-being (Day et al., 2017; Malatjie, 2019). Dimitrova (2019) highlighted that organisational trust plays a vital role in the implementation of successful change initiatives. Workplace resources are related to employee well-being (Nielsen et al., 2017). Wiezer et al. (2011) found that communication, participation and support all moderate the negative impact of

restructuring on employee well-being. Erciyas (2019) stressed that employees should be informed, consulted and supported throughout the implementation of change initiatives. In the same vein, Westgaard and Winkel (2011) found that the negative impact of restructuring on employees' well-being may be moderated through participation, information, group autonomy, inclusive management styles, organisational support, procedural justice, and social support while Van den Heuvel et al. (2013) found that change information facilitates the employees' adjustment to organisational change. Pahkin et al. (2014) also found that employee participation in the change initiative has a positive impact on employees, while Werner (2016b) also encourages genuine participation throughout the change process. Harney et al. (2018) propose the use of consultation through involving employees in the decision-making process in order to moderate the negative experiences associated with changes, purported that this may have a positive impact on both employee well-being and organisational behaviours (Harney et al., 2018). De Jong et al. (2016) recommend that the impact of new structures on the organisation should be studied carefully to facilitate the design of tasks in such a way so as to ensure role clarity and appropriate work load and tasks fairly so as to moderate the negative impact of organisational change on employee well-being. Werner (2016b) suggests that top management should establish an environment of trust and shared commitment through communicating relevant, timely and accurate information while Day et al. (2017) found that positive work environments that support employees and offer job control are associated with higher employee well-being and may also moderate the negative impact of organisational change. Abildgaard et al. (2018) found that employees can be assisted through planned efforts. Rahman et al. (2020) found that both organisational support and organisational empowerment are positively associated with employee well-being.

Ultimately, it is the manner in which organisations conduct their business (Schiro & Baker, 2009) and engage their employees that will determine the extent and success of organisational change (Malatjie, 2019). An organisation's management team play a vital role in the successful implementation of change initiatives while communication regarding objectives, implementation stages and the future of employees is key

(Dimitrova, 2019). Promoting well-being fosters positive work outcomes (Layous et al., 2014).

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented a literature review which focused on exploring employees' well-being in organisational change contexts. Organisational change and its related constructs were discussed. This was followed by a discussion on employee well-being and its related constructs. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being in organisational contexts. Chapter 3 is presented in the form of an article. The chapter discusses the theoretical background to the study, the research design and the results or findings of the study and then culminates in the main conclusions drawn in the study, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research and practice and/or policy.

CHAPTER 3

ARTICLE

EXPLORING EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING IN ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE CONTEXTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Orientation: As a background to this study it may be stated that organisational change is a regular occurrence in the world of work. Organisational change has a profoundly negative impact on employees' well-being. Therefore, an understanding of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being will inform organisations, change agents and industrial and organisational psychologists who facilitate organisational change initiatives in the workplace, thus enabling them to improve the chances of a successful change implementation while also enhancing employee experiences and well-being.

Research purpose: The main aim of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being.

Motivation for study: Organisational change is inevitable and no one organisation is immune. Organisations are constantly faced with the challenge of organisational change impacting on their employees' well-being. Thus, an understanding of employees' lived experience may inform change the implementation of practices aimed at enhancing employee well-being.

Research design, approach, and method: This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to capture the voices of the participants. Six participants were purposefully selected for inclusion in the study. Content analysis was used to extract themes from the data which had been collected.

Main findings/results: The findings of this study indicated that the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being is generally negative owing to ambiguity and an increased sense of insecurity. All employees are impacted by such changes, either directly or indirectly. However, the findings indicated that the adverse impact of organisational change may be moderated through organisational support.

Practical implications: The study highlighted the importance of organisational support to moderate the negative impact of organisational change initiatives on employees' well-being.

Contribution/value-add: The findings of this study may be used by organisations, change agents and industrial and organisational psychologists who facilitate organisational change initiatives in the workplace to improve the chances of a successful change implementation while also enhancing employee experiences and well-being.

Keywords: qualitative study; organisational change; employee well-being; interpretivist paradigm; semi-structured interviews; content analysis; survivor syndrome; ill-being; multidimensional; communication

INTRODUCTION

Key focus of the study

Organisations are being challenged to reinvent themselves on a regular basis if they are to remain relevant and survive. However, these changes are associated with both positive and negative impacts on employees' well-being. Therefore, the aim of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of employees' lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being within the South African workplace context. It was anticipated that this understanding would provide an insight into how change initiatives may be effectively managed in such a way so as to ensure that employees experiences organisational change more positively and to enhancing their well-being.

Background to the study

The existing workplace is influenced by factors such as advances in technology, market pressures and global competition (Maes & Van Hootegem, 2011; Malatjie, 2019; Schiro & Baker, 2009; Simuth, 2017). In the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous global world of work organisational change is inevitable (Malatjie, 2019) and there is no one organisation that is immune to it (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). However, changes may lead to wanted, unwanted or unexpected results (Maes & Van Hootegem, 2011). In this context change is a constant feature of organisations and their management and thus it becomes a strategic challenge for organisations (Chen et al., 2018; Lewis & Cooper, 2005; Neves et al., 2018). In addition, employee well-being is critical if organisations are to survive and develop (Spreitzer & Porath, 2012).

Research purpose

Research refers to the “process of uncovering new knowledge” (Salkind, 2018, p. 14). The general aim of this study was to explore the impact of organisational change on the lived experiences in relation to employee well-being.

The specific aims of the literature review were to conceptualise organisational change and its related constructs, to explore employee well-being and its related constructs, and to understand the impact of organisational change on employees’ well-being within organisational contexts.

The specific aims for the empirical study were to explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, to provide a basic framework (see Figure 3.1) that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives directed at enhancing employee well-being, and to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

TRENDS FROM LITERATURE

In general terms, change refer to creating something different (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013) and, in the organisational context, to changing the prevailing conditions in an organisation (Gupta, 2016) from one state to another (Fløvik et al., 2019). Change is a source of uncertainty (Nikolova et al., 2016), which may cause disruptions in organisational structures and processes (Fløvik et al., 2019). Organisational change may be described as the content of what is being changed, the change process itself (Fløvik et al., 2019) and the impact thereof (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2015). Thus, organisational change is about understanding the interaction between the organisational change context and the change process (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2015) and the impact on employee well-being.

Since the context in which one works is so different from general life situations, it is important to distinguish between general well-being and employee well-being (Zheng et al., 2015). Ryan and Deci (2001) found that there are two philosophical perspectives that explain well-being, namely, the subjective experience of happiness (hedonic) and achieving human potential (eudemonic). Grant et al. (2007, p. 52) define employee well-being as “the entire quality of an employee’s experience and functioning at the workplace” while Kaplan et al. (2017, p.4) define employee well-being as “the sum of a person’s emotional experiences and the subjective evaluations of their work and life situations”. For the purpose of this study employee well-being may be understood in terms of the three core dimensions of well-being, namely amongst others, happiness, health and relationships (Grant et al., 2007).

The impact of organisational change may be experienced by employees as an opportunity to gain or as a potential risk of loss (Fløvik et al., 2019). Existing studies on employees’ experiences and their well-being in organisational change contexts indicate that organisational change has a mainly negative impact on employees’ well-being (Burke et al., 2015; De Jong et al., 2016; Harney et al., 2018; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Otto et al., 2018; Virtanen et al., 2002; Westgaard & Winkel, 2011) with this being ascribed to a sense of uncertainty (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Fløvik et al., 2019; Gupta, 2016; Köper & Richter, 2014; Malatjie, 2019; Nikolova et al., 2016; Pahkin et al., 2014).

However, contrary to the findings discussed above, Loretto et al. (2010) found that change will not necessarily have a negative impact and there are certain circumstances under which a positive impact might be expected. Wiezer et al. (2011) also found that not all employees are adversely impacted by organisational change and that, for some, it may be a positive experience due to improved job positions and an opportunity to have an impact on the future of the organisation.

On the other hand, Rafferty and Jimmieson (2017) found that neither transformational change nor the frequency of change has a direct impact on employees’ well-being.

Further, McKinley and Scherer (2000) purported that organisational change may have either good or bad outcomes. Fløvik et al. (2019) found that the adverse impact occurred shortly after the change process has been implemented but decreased as time passed.

Literature indicates that all employees are either directly or indirectly impacted by restructuring (Burke et al., 2015; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Schiro & Baker, 2009). Westgaard and Winkel (2011) found that restructuring has an adverse impact on survivors' health and risk factors with survivors experiencing a form of organisational trauma (Vermeulen & Wiesner, 2000, p.399), referred to as the "survivor syndrome". Survivor syndrome refers to the emotions and behaviours presented by employees who continued working at the organisation after a restructuring (Wiesner et al., 1999). This survivor syndrome is associated with reduced organisational commitment and morale and a lack of trust with the employees focusing on their personal security rather than on the organisation's objectives (Vermeulen & Wiesner, 2000).

Organisational change poses a significant threat to employees' well-being (Kaltainen, 2020). Employee well-being has significant consequences for individuals (Winslow et al., 2017), the organisation in question and the broader economy (Kaplan et al., 2017). For example, insecurity and uncertainty, increased stress levels, reduced organisational growth and productivity, and organisational change failure. It is, therefore, vital that organisations pay attention to promoting employee well-being (Diener et al., 2017). Although change may be unavoidable, it is possible to prevent the adverse impact of change on employee well-being (Day et al., 2017).

Existing studies on the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being include explorations of the importance of communication, employee participation and organisational support (Cartwright et al., 2007; Erciyas, 2019; Van den Heuvel et al., 2013; Westgaard & Winkel, 2011; Wiezer et al., 2011); the suggestion that trust, transparency and care in respect of the employees may ensure a positive impact on their well-being (Franco et al., 2015); an exploration of engagement as mitigating

negative reactions (Kaltiainen et al., 2020); the important role of leaders during the implementation of organisational changes initiatives (Otto et al., 2018), and trust as a key requirement for the successful implementation of change initiatives (Dimitrova, 2019). Rahman et al. (2020) found that both organisational support and organisational empowerment are positively associated with employee well-being.

Ultimately, employees may be supported by organisations through planned efforts (Abildgaard et al., 2018) while the manner in which such organisations conduct business (Schiro & Baker, 2009) will determine the extent and success of the organisational change (Malatjie, 2019).

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design refers to the decision making process in relation to the research components, such as the research purpose, the research question(s), the scope of the conclusions, sampling, data collection and data analysis (Schoonenboom, 2018). This study adopted a qualitative research design as qualitative research enables “the study of phenomena within the social context in which they occur” (Salkind, 2018, p. 21). The study was underpinned by the interpretive research paradigm as this paradigm tends to provide a depth of information that are not always attainable through quantitative research (Featherston, 2008; O’Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). The next sections will discuss the research approach, research strategy and research method used in the study.

Research approach

This study followed a qualitative approach and focused on meaning making (Lyons & Coyle, 2007) through the examination of a research phenomenon within a specific context (Salkind, 2018). Accordingly, an inductive research approach was used to develop theory that would explain what had been experienced (Newman et al., 1998) by providing rich information about the phenomena under exploration (Featherston,

2008). Descriptive research depicts the properties of an existing phenomenon (Salkind, 2018). Thus, this study used the descriptions of employees' lived experiences to gain an in-depth understanding of the organisational change context and its impact on their well-being.

Research method

A research method describe the way in which data is collected and analysed (Bryman & Bell, 2014). This section presents the research methods used in the study in relation to the setting of the research, how entrance to the research setting was obtained and the researcher's roles. It further discusses the sampling process, data collection method and data analysis methods applied, how the data was recorded and the strategies which were employed to ensure quality and ethical practices. Finally, it explains the reporting of the study findings.

Research strategy

The research strategy refer to the overall research approach that integrates the type and location of the research being conducted (Bergh, 2013b). The study used a hermeneutic, phenomenological strategy to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of employees' well-being within an organisational change context by using rich and descriptive language (Kafle, 2011). This strategy aligned with the empirical interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative research methodology used in the study.

Research setting

The research was conducted within the South African workplace context. The primary focus of the study was on organisations that implemented restructuring and system change processes. Restructuring refer to changes to the existing structure of an organisation (McKinley & Scherer, 2000) and is characterised as targeted and explicit

interventions which are implemented (Köper & Richter, 2014). Advances in technology are compelling organisations to implement change if they are to sustain their competitive advantage (Correani et al., 2020) and may include updating and renewing systems (Werner, 2016a).

Entrée and establishing researcher roles

The participants were members of my academic and professional network. They were approached individually and invited to participate voluntarily in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The participants who had indicated that they were willing to participate in the study were requested to complete and sign an informed consent form (see Annexure A). Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee of the University of South Africa (see Annexure C). The research location was online to ensure the interviews were conducted timeously, safely and at the convenience of participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were also informed that the data collected would be consolidated within a conceptual framework and that the findings, discussions and recommendations would be made available to the participants on request.

Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used to identify information rich cases (Kafle, 2011) of employees who had been impacted by organisational change (Etikan et al., 2016). The participants were selected from within the South African workplace context and also within specific organisational change settings, namely, restructuring and system change processes. Six participants from my academic and professional network, were approached. They all fulfilled the following requirements:

- individuals who had lived experiences of organisational change initiatives, specifically restructuring and system change processes;

- individuals who had been permanently employed for the entire duration (before, during and after) of an organisational change initiative;
- proficient in English; and
- between 18 and 65 years of age.

The sample size of six participants was adequate as data saturation was achieved (Guest et al., 2006) with no new information emerging and no additional coding possible (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Guest et al., 2006).

Data collection methods

The data collection method used comprised semi-structured interviews. This enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of employees' lived experiences of organisational change and the impact on their well-being (Kafle, 2011). An interview guide (see Annexure B) was used to guide the interviews and gave me the opportunity to adjust the sequence of the questions and to ask follow-up questions (Bryman & Bell, 2014). By applying techniques such as reflecting on, paraphrasing, summarising and clarifying I was able to encourage the participants to elaborate on their lived experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2014). This helped me to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences.

Recording of data

I obtained informed consent (see Annexure A) from all the participants who had indicated their willingness to participate in the research. With the permission of the participants all the interviews were digitally recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. I transcribed the recordings verbatim and I checked their reliability by reading the transcriptions while listening to the recordings (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). These transcriptions were rendered anonymous by allocating pseudonyms to each participant. For example, the first participant was referred to as 'Participant 1'.

Analysing the data

The unique goal of qualitative data analyses is to facilitate a process of meaning-making (Krauss, 2005). Thus, qualitative analysis techniques related to the analysis and classification of recurring themes in data and aligned with interpretative research were used to analyse the data that had been collected (Bergh, 2013b). The data collected from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The latent content was interpreted (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) and the text analysed (Mayring, 2000).

Initially, the preparation phase included the collection of suitable data for content analysis, making sense of the data, and choosing an applicable unit of analysis (Elo et al., 2014). I familiarised myself with the body of material and classified the data into smaller, more manageable items for analysis (words or themes) (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The words or themes were added in the text as notes and headings while I read the interview transcripts. The headings were then transferred onto a coding sheet (see Annexure D). Categories were generated describing the research phenomenon by grouping the headings together based on their similarity and relatedness. I used a colour coding system by assigning different colours to the different groups. This process was followed repeatedly to make the necessary adjustments and refinements that led to the emergence of over-arching themes. Each of the themes were represented by several words and short phrases that served as sub-themes.

This process enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspective regarding the impact of organisational change on their well-being. In addition, I consulted with my research supervisor to ensure that the categories had been accurately generated, were aligned with the aims of the study and contextually substantiated.

Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Integrity and rigour were ensured by confirming that the data was credible, transferable and dependable (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In order to ensure credibility, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, word for word, and representative verbatim quotations used to report the findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The data reported in the findings were representative of the participants' true voices. Furthermore, the concept of transferability was addressed through the use of purposive sampling, providing a detailed description of the research context, and using appropriate quotations (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Finally, the concept of dependability was addressed by providing a detailed account and description of the research process, including the data collection, data analysis and data interpretation and by reporting on the findings using appropriate quotations (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

Methods to ensure ethical research principles

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology's Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa (see Annexure C). After ethical clearance had been obtained, all participants who had indicated their willingness to participate in the study voluntarily gave their informed consent to participate (see Annexure A).

The participants were given a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity. The research data will be stored electronically on my computer for a period of five years and is password protected. Hardcopies are kept in a secure and safe location. Access to the material for the duration of the research process was limited to my supervisor and myself. All material will be safely discarded after five years with the hard copies being shredded, and the electronic copies permanently deleted from the hard drive of my computer.

Reporting on the data

The findings were reported using a qualitative writing style and by making use of verbatim quotations to support the interpretations of the data. The findings were discussed in relation to the problem statement and the literature that had been reviewed.

FINDINGS

The specific aims of the empirical study were to explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, to provide a basic framework that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives aimed at enhancing employee well-being, and to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being. The next section presents the empirical results in the form of an in-depth discussion.

Sample material included transcripts of the interviews that were conducted with six employees on their experiences of the impact of organisational change on their well-being. The literature indicates that organisational change generally results in employees being confronted with changes that are more significant than general changes (Kieselbach & Triomphe, 2010). Organisational change is accompanied by experiences of changes as a move from the known to the unknown which involves a degree of ambiguity, thus increasing their sense of insecurity and uncertainty (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Fløvik et al., 2019; Gupta, 2016; Köper & Richter, 2014; Malatjie, 2019; Nikolova et al., 2016; Pahkin et al., 2014). These experiences are generally associated with negative well-being (Burke et al., 2015; Harney et al., 2018; Virtanen et al., 2002) and increased stress levels (Schiro & Baker, 2009).

It was deemed important to establish the impact of the organisational change on the participants' well-being and to formulate recommendations with the aim of developing

a basic framework that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives in such a way so as to enhance employee well-being.

The interview guide included the following main questions: (1) *What is your understanding of what constitutes well-being in the workplace,* (2) *What is your understanding of organisational change,* (3) *Describe how organisational change has impacted or is currently impacting on your well-being in the workplace,* and (4) *What recommendations would you make to the organisation on how they may improve your experience of organisational change so that it impacts more positively on your well-being.*

The following four themes emerged from the data: (1) well-being descriptors, (2) ill-being descriptors, (3) employee expectations, and (4) surviving. Table 3.1 presents the themes, sub-themes and properties of the perceived impact of organisational change on employee well-being and is followed by a discussion and a description of each theme to enhance understanding of the research topic.

Table 3.1

Themes, sub-themes and properties of the perceived impact of organisational change on employee well-being

Themes	Sub-themes	Properties
Well-being descriptors	Multidimensional	
	Sense of belonging	Appreciated/valued
	Happiness	Hope
		Optimism
		Positivity
Energised		
Ill-being descriptors	Personal ill-being	Financial
		Personal life imbalance

	Professional ill-being	Physical
		Mental and emotional
Employee expectations	Communication	Transparency
		Consultation
		Psychological contract
Surviving	Mixed emotions	Grateful
		Frustrated/annoyed
		Job security
	Burden carried	Sadness for others

The next section present an integration of the findings relating to the participants' perspectives and the researcher's understanding and interpretation thereof.

Theme 1: Well-being descriptors

All the participants were asked to describe their understanding of what constitutes well-being in the workplace. It became evident that well-being played a significant role in the way in which the participants experienced the impact of organisational change. The dimensions of well-being remained a central concept throughout the interviews.

The first theme that emerged was well-being descriptors and consisted of the following sub-themes: *multidimensional, sense of belonging and happiness*.

Multidimensional

The first sub-theme that emerged from the data spoke to well-being as a multidimensional concept that highlights how the workplace impacts on the conceptualisation and experience of employees' well-being.

Participant 3 and Participant 4 indicated that their understanding of employee well-being as a multidimensional concept that includes physical, mental and emotional well-being.

I think there are lots of elements to well-being – there is your physical well-being, like do you feel safe? Do you feel secure? Are your basic needs being met? Uhm, and then there's the mental well-being. Uhm, am I being stimulated? Do I feel happy? Do I feel content? Uhm, and then, yeah, I think that's kind of what I would think of well-being? Do you feel healthy? Like mentally and physically with regard to your work situation (Participant 3).

... well-being in the workplace would be like a healthy working environment. Um, so relationships with your colleagues, with your managers, um, just everyone in the environment, your working environment. Um, to be like a healthy, positive place, um and so. Yeah, I, I think that just like emotional and like mental, so, um. Mentally good place for someone to be in every day (Participant 4).

Sense of belonging

Another sub-theme that emerged from the data was a sense of belonging. A genuine sense of belonging enables employees to overcome obstacles, to grow, to excel in their work and to engage with organisations. This was described as remarkably similar to eudemonic well-being – practising and acting with virtue (Athota, 2017) to realise optimum human potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 3 indicated that a strong sense of well-being can be associated with a sense of belonging which in turn results in feelings of being appreciated and valued by your employer.

Positive. In my position. But, also me, as a human being, of where I belong and why I can add value (Participant 1).

The manager took over and said "I'm here, I'm positive and I can't wait for the future. But I need you. And I need you to be on the, you know, on board with all the changes'. It makes you turn, kind of turn around a 180. You, you feel like OK, now I know what I work for because if you don't know what you're working for, what are you doing?" (Participant 2).

... that you feel valued by your employer. That there is space for you to grow and, should you have any personal issues, that you have the freedom and you are comfortable enough to approach your place of work to ask them for assistance... (Participant 2).

Yes, you feel a little bit like the weight on your shoulders has lifted. You can breathe easy. And you are looking, you starting to read more research on your type of job and you want to find out what other people doing that we might not be doing ... when you're positive you're looking for new business or you're looking for new things that you can do to add value to your company for. So, I think when you when you've got that positive vibe going and you've got management backing you and you've got a hopeful future and you can see that there's a vision and you feel like you are valued. You want to go and look for opportunities. So, it is also like a tree sprouting. Your roots will just go everywhere (Participant 2).

... you feel like, if you had a concern about something, that someone would listen to you and action would be taken. Feeling as if there are resources available (Participant 3).

Happiness

The third sub-theme emerging from the data, as voiced by the participants, was happiness. This refers to the enjoyment of work tasks, increased productivity, feeling good about your colleagues and feeling included in the workplace. This was described as similar to hedonic well-being which has a strong pleasure orientation (Athota, 2017).

Participants 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 indicated that their well-being in the workplace was represented by happiness.

The big change was to hear a manager step in and, um, speak positively about the future of the business and not just about the future but being a new type of role player in the business that you're in. So that we can get to the forefront of what we are doing. Not just being another business doing the same thing as others in our area. But to be somebody that's going to stand out and they're going to need us to get to that point. Because it makes you feel as if immediately they are seeing a vision and they see you inside that vision and they need you (Participant 2).

... when you feel stimulated by the work that you're doing, you feel energised when you are at work doing the work and you feel happy entering your place of work and being in your place of work. Um, you feel appreciated (Participant 3).

I think it is massively important, um, because I think if you are in an environment where you feel happy and healthy and your well-being is taken seriously, then you are likely to want to spend time there. So, you'll spend, you will. You're likely to work harder and you'll be able to focus because your energy is not being drained by feelings of anxiety or feelings of depression. Hum, so you can. You can focus more on the work that you're doing. I think it definitely helps the relationships at work. Um, if you, if you are feeling happier and healthier in

yourself, you're likely to build better relationships and work better collaboratively. Um, and. I think we could build a culture so, if more people in the workplace are happy, then you people who come in are also likely to be happy and I think an environment of well-being will definitely increase productivity, it will, um, reduce the turnover of staff. Uhm. It will, yeah, people will work harder. They would be better, they would probably reduce errors in their work. Um, it'll create better channels of communication (Participant 3).

I think if people, uhm, are happy and it's a good environment, then it'll reflect in their work. Um, people would go above and beyond (Participant 4).

... you'll be very positive and, uh, give much more inputs (Participant 5).

... everyone participates ... It makes everyone happier. And, uh, everyone is much more positive and productive (Participant 5).

Then you will give your "uitest" [utmost] 100% and more for the company and look after the company. That you can just give your best for the company, you will walk the extra mile for the company if they look after you (Participant 6).

... your health will be OK. You won't be stressed, you would like going to work. You will always be happy (Participant 6).

In contrast to the other participants, Participant 3 also conceptualised well-being as the absence of ill-being alongside the positive descriptors.

'...when you on your drive to work you're not dreading it, you're looking forward to your day. Just a general sense of contentment and a positive feeling when you're at work.' (Participant 3).

Participant 6 referred to various experiences of ill-being. However, the following verbatim quotations reflect the presence of an overall sense of well-being in an organisational change context that was unique to this participant in relation to the other participants.

A change is very good. I'm very in favour of changes because we can't stay behind with technology (Participant 6).

... it's good to learn new things. It is very exciting ... Join in there, go and, go and, learn and just get it under your skin and that's it, it's genuinely enjoyable. Um, to learn all these new things, it's really nice is to go and learn it and the new management (Participant 6).

The moment you start learning that the new guys up there on the board really people who are genuinely nice, you learn from these new guys. It's new blood. It's new everything and, yeah, that's nice (Participant 6).

A positive. A big positive (Participant 6).

Theme 2: Ill-being descriptors

The second major theme that emerged from the data related to ill-being descriptors. This theme raised awareness about the experiences of the participants that had manifested in ill-being following organisational change. This theme consisted of the following sub-themes: *personal ill-being and professional ill-being*.

Personal ill-being

The first sub-theme that emerged was personal ill-being. Personal ill-being relates to how people think and feel about their own well-being.

Both Participant 1 and Participant 5 specifically referred to the impact of organisational change and how their experiences had manifested in their personal lives. The financial impact on their personal lives were reported as a major concern, especially the concomitant inability to plan for the future.

Uh, financially, it's a burden because you have to make hard decisions (Participant 1).

*I'm always tired. Uh. I did not get the sleep I need. I'm very uncertain about future prospects and that makes my personal life also, uh, short term. Only short-term plans and fixing it for now. I can't work on a long-term plan. I really want to settle down and make sure we, as a family, are alright for the future. Uh, but yeah. Currently with this ... Uh ... I struggle with words... I only now realised how it is f*****g me up, but yeah (Participant 1).*

It was quite negative because I mean, at home, you weren't very friendly to your wife ... And when I got home, I only wanted to sleep because I had only six hours and then I had to be back at the office. So, yeah, it was bad for my marriage ... it had, it had an impact. Definitely (Participant 5).

You've got payments to do. You've got vehicles to pay, which they forced you to buy actually. And then who's going to pay for those? (Participant 5).

But, not knowing, I mean you just can't run away because you've got pension money you're waiting for. So, if you go now, you lose money. So, yeah, it does have an impact, definitely (Participant 5).

Professional ill-being

The impact of organisational change on the participants' professional life, that is, professional ill-being, emerged as a further sub-theme. Professional ill-being, as a

dimension of subjective well-being, combines the properties of physical, mental and emotional ill-being and alludes to resistance to change. The participants stated that they tended to disengage from their work and productivity appeared to have decreased.

... if the well-being, if you're not balanced in your life or something is really wrong and it puts a lot of stress on you, you can't focus. And, if you can't focus, you'll make mistakes or, if you're under too much pressure, mistakes will be made and the company will suffer, and you, as a person, will suffer (Participant 2).

It kind of leaves you, you know, like on shifting ground, you're not really sure of what to do, how to do your job. You know, it messes a little bit with the security of the employees (Participant 2).

Where are we going to report to? Who's your boss? Are we in trouble? Are they going to close us? You know, those sorts of questions are always in the back of your mind, playing on your well-being (Participant 2).

You, first of all, you, uhm, you don't work as much overtime anymore. You stop doing that. You don't work as hard as you used to and it's not because you don't want to, it kind of just happens? You feel like you know that I'm working hard but I I'm not really sure if I should. I'm working hard, but I'm not really sure for whom. And that has a negative impact (Participant 2).

In that negative space you feel like you only want to do what your contract says. Nothing more, nothing less. That's the only thing you want to do...you're in this negative vibe and, it's, it's toxic and, if you don't have people around you who can lift you up, you get into that hole. I almost want to say , to call it, depressed because it feels like you become depressed (Participant 2).

Because, because it's so, um, close to home, I think I was just like really scared, uhm, of not having a job, so the first thing I did was to start to brush up my CV, start putting job applications (Participant 4).

'I think it's just someone who, uhm, is unmotivated, and probably because they're unhappy with the working environment and so, uhm, just very uninterested in the work and the people in situations. So, maybe they would not have a good relationship with their colleagues or with their managers. Or maybe they just unfulfilled in the work that they're doing that they just don't want to put in the effort that they need to because I know, uhm, sometimes doing it when you feel like you just have no interest in your work it. It, just, it places stress on everything and all the other avenues of the working environment as well (Participant 4).

'He'll just sit in a meeting and listen to everything and he won't give any input at the meeting... So, it will have a big negative impact on him and on the company' (Participant 5).

Another pressing issue was the impact of organisational change on employees' physical well-being. For Participant 4, the experience of physical well-being was threatened by colleagues.

... and then I've heard of other situations where people actually haven't felt, um, like their work environment is physically healthy, uhm? Like there's a lot of bullying, maybe, going on. I've seen scenarios of that. I've seen scenarios of where people don't feel safe walking from their car into the office. Um? Yeah, like being physically threatened by a colleague? (Participant 3).

Participant 6 also refer to physical well-being but referred to it as in terms of being physically ill.

You will always talk badly about the company. You will sit at your desk, you won't do anything good for the company. Your work will be not good and you won't feel good, you will be sick (Participant 6).

The ill-being descriptors theme was also evident in the participants' responses in relation to the mental and emotional impact of organisational change on employees' professional ill-being. The participants reported that there had been a notable decrease in their well-being.

I've worked in situations where I haven't felt a strong sense of well-being, and the way that it manifested was just really extreme anxiety. Uhm, and you can feel anxiety building on your drive to work, and you can feel your anxiety building even when you just think about work. Uhm, and then, when you're at work, you're really miserable. Uhm, and for me it was, I'm very quick to doubt myself. Um, I lack patience. Uhm, so I was very easily angered, and, um, I was often almost quite close to tears. Uhm, yeah, that wasn't a healthy mental environment. Uhm, I didn't feel good in that environment (Participant 3).

... my personal experiences of it was that it was, um, very traumatic. Uhm, it was a very traumatic, longwinded, exhausting process (Participant 3).

At first, I actually did see a therapist at one point because there were so many things going on ... there were just so many things going on in my life at one point and that I couldn't really compartmentalise or, uhm. How do I say it? Feel the emotions in relation to what was going on, I would just, like, be a bit numb to everything. So, I needed some sort of guidance or help just to compartmentalise what I was feeling and that it was OK to feel good emotionally (Participant 4).

I think it just impacts on you emotionally and mentally because you never know what's going to happen and it's so tough now to even get a job in anything,

Um, so, it's, it's really, it's really tough to face the possibility of not having a job and then all of the things that you've worked hard to build up over these past few years of working may basically not be there anymore because of the situation (Participant 4).

... you will be so unhappy (Participant 6).

It's not good for your health (Participant 6).

However, Participant 2 mentioned experiencing increasing well-being after the organisational change had been implemented and referred to getting used to the changes.

And then it takes a little while before you get used to who to report to (Participant 2).

And until they get used to the idea of the new structure. You know it, it ... jy moet bietjie skaaf en skuur [you have to work at it] ... I don't know how to say that in English. It takes a while and then you get used to it and then it's like it was never a problem to begin with (Participant 2).

In the beginning it was negative but, when you get a new manager you also have to get used to the person, not just the position? So, it takes a little while in the beginning and you might be a little bit negative because you're expecting bad changes. And then when it turns out to be a good one. You are kind of glad it happened (Participant 2).

Participant 4 indicated that although their well-being had been negatively impacted by organisational change, in line with the advice of Armstrong-Stassen (1993) they had focused on action coping by increasing their work effort to attempt to improve their chances of preserving their jobs.

It's not the best, uhm, working environment, uhm, you are always trying to push further or harder so that people notice that you're working. Um, so that when the time comes or if the time comes, then they'll say "No, OK, she did, she went above and beyond, uhm, in situations, so let's not", you know, uhm, so, yeah, it's a bit, it's a bit mentally draining as well, because, uhm, because you never know, especially now with Covid, we all have bills to pay and all this stuff to get through (Participant 4).

The uncertainty resulting from the organisational change had clearly impacted the participants. Moving from the known to the unknown had been a major contributory factor to the feelings of distress they had experienced and had also interfered with the development of appropriate coping mechanisms within the workplace. The majority of the participants also indicated that the uncertainty associated with the change had resulted in feelings of anxiety and frustration. Participant 4, in particular, described in length their feelings of anxiety and frustration due to the uncertainty associated with organisational change.

I'm was struggling to see where I fitted in without clear guidance and indication where you fit into their bigger plans for the future (Participant 1).

Um, it gives you a sense of un...you are a bit unsure when you hear the news that there's going to be a structural change because nobody really knows what to expect (Participant 2).

There was so much insecurity and so that makes you really nervous. That really builds anxiety. Uhm, and it's exhausting and you're wasting energy. Well, you're not wasting energy but you're expending energy on things that aren't your actual job. Also, when there's so much insecurity or the unknown, then a lot of people start talking and there's lots of secrets and theories, people making assumptions that go around, and that can be very damaging to your well-being as well because it can just really ramp up that anxiety or anger. A lot of people

got really angry. There were definite times that I was quite angry about it. And just frustrated (Participant 3).

To be honest, at the moment, because of the restructuring and all the uncertainty going on in the company, I'm not really very confident about my future at the company because of the job security situation (Participant 4).

... it was just so, so, um, unexpected that many people were just so scared as to what was going on. They could ... we just like saw our department was being targeted and then we didn't know if it was one of us or not. So, we were just sitting ducks basically and didn't really know what to do (Participant 4).

No one really knew what was going on ... not knowing what going to happen makes you more nervous ... Are we going to survive? Do we have jobs? (Participant 5).

Well, obviously it will have an impact because you don't know. Today you've got a job, tomorrow you don't have a job. What do you do? So, yeah you're nervous because it happens all of a sudden (Participant 5).

And yeah, it does have an impact, not knowing what's happening (Participant 5).

Theme 3: Employee expectations

The third major theme that emerged was that of employee expectations. This theme highlighted an awareness of the employees' primary expectations of the organisations and consisted of the sub-theme communication.

The participants described both their positive and negative experiences in relation to communication. They specifically indicated that they had not received adequate

communication from the organisations, indicating that the communication could have been better and alluding to the fact that the communication was not successful in meeting their expectations.

If they do the communication well. The employees will feel secure that I can trust this HR person. I can go to him and ask him questions. So, they will feel you know it's an open, two-way communication... But you need to feel comfortable enough to be able to do that (Participant 2).

So, good communication may take away the uncertainty that you might feel at the beginning of structural change. But, if you don't get any communication, you, yeah, that doesn't work (Participant 2).

... the manager stepped in and he did it the right way. Calming everybody down and getting to know us and saying "OK, communication is key from now on". So, you went through that uncertainty and then it kind of calmed it down and then you can work better because this isn't on your mind, playing the whole time in the background (Participant 2).

Um, beforehand, before the change happened, they could have handled their communication a lot better. Not just, you know, I know there are some stages in structural changeovers where they kind of keep their cards close to their chest, where they don't, you know, give out all the information because nothing is set in stone. But there are certain points where they can say "OK, this is what we're going to deal with now" and then communication will go out and then we'll go and tackle the next big thing (Participant 2).

So, some line of communication would have been nice (Participant 4).

Communication appears to be heavily dependent on transparency, consultation and the psychological contract. These factors were explored and reported as properties of communication.

Transparency, as a property of communication, emerged from the data with Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 3 all expressing the view that, in relation to communicating, they expected transparency from the organisations.

Transparency. Getting us together in one room, explaining what the future holds and what responsibilities we need to take care of and where we fit into their plans for the future, and that will help us also plan our future s... If they can be open and transparent about the plans for the future, Uh, and ask what we feel and see and experience in the field. Yeah, then I think it will be easier for us also to understand their thinking (Participant 1).

I feel a lot more comfortable going to my manager and asking him because he's being open to us. What you give is what you get (Participant 2).

And we, uhm, weren't really sure of ... the communication wasn't dealt with the best it could have been done because I heard about it elsewhere. I didn't hear it from my boss first. And that made me feel uneasy and unsure. And then we got a new structure of who we would be reporting to and it was people we didn't know (Participant 2).

Uhm, and he was also really transparent with information that was provided to the managers and would say this is the information that all these managers have gotten (Participant 3).

'We didn't have any support... And then it very much became like a us and them scenario because they were being seen as the people responsible for this

horrible stuff that was going on and they were seen as having all this information and knowing more than us and not sharing it.' (Participant 3).

... there wasn't any, it was just honestly it was like a blindsided email. No one saw it coming because it was during Covid or a month or two months into Covid. Most other companies were, uhm, slashing salaries by a percentage or something that something small to allow the company to to survive. But with us he paid all our salaries full salaries. There was no indication. If anything he was saying that everything was going well. The company was doing well. We can pay our employees like there's no, there's no issues and all of a sudden its restructuring. It's like surely maybe you could have cut salaries instead of, you couldn't pay everyone now (Participant 4).

... open the lines of communication. Uhm, give us more information as to why they were restructuring or what was this process was in aid of. Obviously, the bottom line was they were trying to cost save (Participant 4).

Maybe they could have, uhm, they could have just given us more information, like I said, with the target department they could have like sit us down and said OK, listen this is going on in in this Department and you know, like we're sorry this is, but this has to happen and this is the process (Participant 4).

On the basis that transparency was a key employee expectation, further exploration led to a second property emerging, namely consultation, which highlighted the participants' views that, although communication is important, they also saw consultation as a key consideration. It was clearly important for the participants to feel included and part of the organisation.

I've mentioned the input from the employees, better communication. They can maybe do a feedback session after appointing a new manager. So that when that new manager is appointed, let's say after four months. Get the feedback

from the employee so that the manager knows where he is on the right track or does he need to approach some of the people in his organisation a little bit differently so that if he is a part or of the uhm employees life or the work place that isn't being dealt with correctly, that the manager knows about this on the on onset, rather than after a year or after two years. So that people don't have something to complain about. If there's an issue, let them know about it, deal with it and get on with life (Participant 2)

... 'cause you want answers and no one's giving you answers and then also feelings like you're not being heard ... it's so frustrating when you've got questions and they're not being addressed or they just be like you, just being given some like generalised answer. Instead of someone actually looking to listening to you so (Participant 3)

I think, uhm, I think if it's gonna be like a report structure change then it would, I would say like have just more open communication and maybe ask us for our input into into the whole process or if you have any ideas or you know things that they could have done differently in in how they carried out the process (Participant 4)

I think it's very important that you get input of everyone involved ... I think that makes your employees happier and more productive if they feel they're part of the system (Participant 5).

... recognition for good work at your workplace and if I, as an employee, can have some input in some of the decisions made by our seniors (Participant 5).

I think new managements must chat to the employees. Brief them and bring them into the system. And try and explain what the goal, what their goals are and how they gonna reach it, and they must do it in such a way that the employees buy into it (Participant 5).

Yeah, they could have planned better and brought uh the employees into the planning. And sat down and we plan the whole thing through from the beginning. Then I think it would have been easier and we would have reached the goal in any case with less pressure and less arguments and late nights (Participant 5).

Just speak to them before you take that decision (Participant 6).

The third property emerging from communication was the psychological contract. A psychological contract refers to an unwritten agreement between employees and organisations (Brown, 2014). The findings suggest a strong need for communication, however, there was no support for supervisor communication as perceived by the participants. Therefore, the findings suggest that communication is an antecedent to psychological contracts.

The experiences of the participants indicated that poor communication resulted in the employees stating they felt less inclined to make an effort and seems to be less engaged with their respective organisations than may otherwise have been the case. In addition, it also makes employees question their job security.

Personally, I'm in, uh, let's say midlife, where I really want to know what the future holds and maybe plan to the extent that I can see where I'm heading. This should be my most impactful and the best years of my career path within an organisation or any part of my life and the contributions I can make to a company (Participant 1).

And, for an employee, it's a quite a big change in your life. I mean, you don't want to feel unsure and uncertain, so I just feel the way that they do their communication could be done better. It's not perfect. And I don't wanna hear after the fact this is what we did two months ago. Why didn't you tell me a month ago about this? I could have prepared myself because that also hasn't, if you

know change is coming, you mentally prepare for it. But if you didn't know it was coming and it's on you like a ton of bricks, it kind of feels like you're under pressure for no good reason and it's unnecessary. Unnecessary pressure (Participant 2).

So yeah, it's to do with performance and, in the end a business is there to make money. You will make less money So, I think it's very important to have a good, balanced life, and if your well-being isn't looked after by the employer and by yourself you will impact on everybody around you, not just your own personal space in your workplace (Participant 2).

Because why do you want to work hard for a company who doesn't even give you the time of day? (Participant 2).

*I think they play a big role. And they have to actually ask us for input. And even though it might only be a low level employee, they might come to the table with great ideas and maybe you know an innovative way of restructuring a business because they are on the ground floor they can see what's necessary and what's not. So managers have a big role to play there by not just looking at the bottom line, but looking at what what can my employees bring to the table? What sort of solutions have they got? That management may not have thought about. So, I think that the managers are not only supposed to do their job, they are supposed to include the people around them. If they don't do that and they don't communicate. You know? *Pap val op die grond [dropping the ball]* (Participant 2).*

You know, so that all of that pressure and then hearing that the change has already happened from people outside your business. Yeah, that was all negative and then, you know, it kind of just went like a knife through butter (Participant 2).

... after the change calming the people down and reassuring them that there are plans for the future. And uhm, that everybody's effort will be seen and people are welcome to, you know, come and knock on the door, give ideas, give input (Participant 2).

So, structural changes, it's not a bad thing but you have to approach it a little bit more. I don't know. Personally, you have to personally get to know each and everybody in the structure. Otherwise it, uhm, it makes the people feel alienated (Participant 2).

I think they were trying to bring people on board earlier but that's not what happened at all. Nobody was on board because the minute you mentioned "restructuring", people think about job losses and the minute you think about job losses then South African people just get terrified... There was just this feeling of "Oh they, they're going to get rid of some of us." And even at the end of the day, there weren't that many job losses (Participant 3).

I think they must be more forthcoming telling us where we going, where we heading and just so that the guys are satisfied and happy to know that they have a job because if you not sure you can't really perform that well' (Participant 5).

... if what they're doing is being seen and not just overlooked. I think when people get people get disinterested in their jobs or feel like they aren't appreciated, then that reflects in their work. You just get complacent and we're doing stuff for the sake of doing it, not because we like to do it or because you want to do it or do it differently or faster (Participant 4).

Theme 4: Surviving

The last theme that emerged from the data was that of surviving. All the participants clearly felt that they had been impacted upon by the organisational change. This theme highlighted that all employees are impacted by organisational change, both the survivors and the victims. This theme consisted of the following sub-themes: *mixed emotions and the burden carried*.

Mixed emotions

The first sub-theme that emerged was that of the mixed emotions experienced by those who survived the organisational changes. Mixed emotions refer to the intense and relatively enduring positive and negative feelings that employees experience in relation to the change event (Zoogah & Beugré, 2013) with the participants reporting mixed emotions following the organisational change event.

... it's just for now doing what we can to survive and make sure you take care of your current job and your current responsibilities. It's not ideal place to be, but for the time being, it's the only ... only ... rational ... or ... yeah ... It's the only thing we can do for now (Participant 1).

... the process was so traumatic (Participant 3).

Um of how scary and traumatic it can be for the individuals that are affected and also just think about the individuals that aren't affected (Participant 3).

Uhm, I was in a very weird position for that for that change because I was one of two people in my team that was told that our positions were unaffected. So we were told right from the beginning that we're safe. Was the terminology that they were trying not to get us to use, but everybody was using. So there were people that were safe and people that were unsafe. And then most people were

unsafe and then I was told I was safe. But in my team there were only two of us, so we were watching this change almost from the outside. Um, and it was, uh, it was. I don't know if it. I don't know. It was very confusing position to be in because you're incredibly grateful that you your job is secure. Where's all your colleagues are facing massive employment insecurity, but in the same breath you your feeling for your colleagues and your heart is breaking for them and the trauma that they're going through. But because we're in a position that seemingly unaffected, it means that. The change, although the change is happening to us, they haven't deemed it. Um, enough change happening to us or to warrant. I don't know changing. So even though our roles did change incredibly, just our job titles stayed the same, so therefore we were deemed unaffected, but you definitely were effected and I think, uhm, with regard to your well-being. Uhm, seeing your colleagues go, well firstly going through a process like that is exhausting (Participant 3).

I think, I mean, we just, they just need to heed the fact that, at the end of the day, we are all just individuals trying to protect our livelihoods (Participant 4).

I'm not sure if the support was given to the employees directly affected by it. Uhm, so I can't even, I don't even know how empathetic they were in that situation, but with the people that didn't, there was no communication and there was nothing done. But I think even with that being said, we also were affected like mentally by everything. So I think they could have reached out and just, you know, just said, like listen, if you guys are having a tough time with anything or need to talk to talk to your managers or you can talk to us if you have any questions or anything like that, but there was no communication to say that (Participant 4).

Burden carried

The last sub-theme that emerged from the data was that of the burden carried. The participants expressions indicated that they were/had been carrying the burden of the impact of organisational change on their well-being as well as the burden they were carrying on behalf of the victims who had not survived the organisational changes.

It's still impacting me. It's now been two years since we've lost the majority of the team members we had (Participant 1)

My big boss and she was like yeah someone said that they saw you really upset last night like I don't understand why you're upset because your position's safe. And I was like, do you not think that I'm hurting? Like that I would rather I would prefer to give my little safe letter to my colleague who's got three children and I no husband like. It's even though you are seen even though there are people that are unaffected. There's no ways to be unaffected when they're such big change happening around you (Participant 3).

That's really hard. 'Cause you get used to the people you get very used to your management. You get used to everything (Participant 6)

DISCUSSION

Main objective of the study

The general aim of the research was to explore the impact of organisational change on the lived experiences in relation to employee well-being.

The specific literature review aims were to conceptualise organisational change and its related constructs, to explore employee well-being and its related constructs, and

to understand the impact of organisational change on employee well-being in organisational contexts.

The specific aims for the empirical study were to explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, to provide a basic framework (see Figure 3.1) which may assist organisations in managing change initiatives directed to enhancing employee well-being, and to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

Main contributions of this study

The world of work is shaped by trends such as technological advances, environmental emergencies and the global economy that is compelling organisations to change (Schiro & Baker, 2009; Simuth, 2017). It is important to understand that organisational change in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global world of work is inevitable (Malatjie, 2019) and no one organisation is immune (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). However, organisational change may be a source of stress for employees (Stouten, et al., 2018; Wisse & Sleebos, 2016).

Studies have found the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being to be mostly negative (Burke et al., 2015; De Jong et al., 2016; Harney et al., 2018; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Otto et al., 2018; Virtanen et al., 2002; Westgaard & Winkel, 2011) with negative reactions to organisational change threatening the successful implementation of organisational change initiatives (Sparr, 2019). This study contributed to the field of industrial and organisational psychology by developing a framework (see Figure 3.1) that depicts the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being and which may assist organisations in managing change initiatives in a manner which enhances employee well-being.

Integration of findings with literature

The qualitative, semi-structured interviews revealed 4 themes which represented the participants' perspectives on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being. The themes included well-being descriptors, ill-being descriptors, employee expectations and surviving.

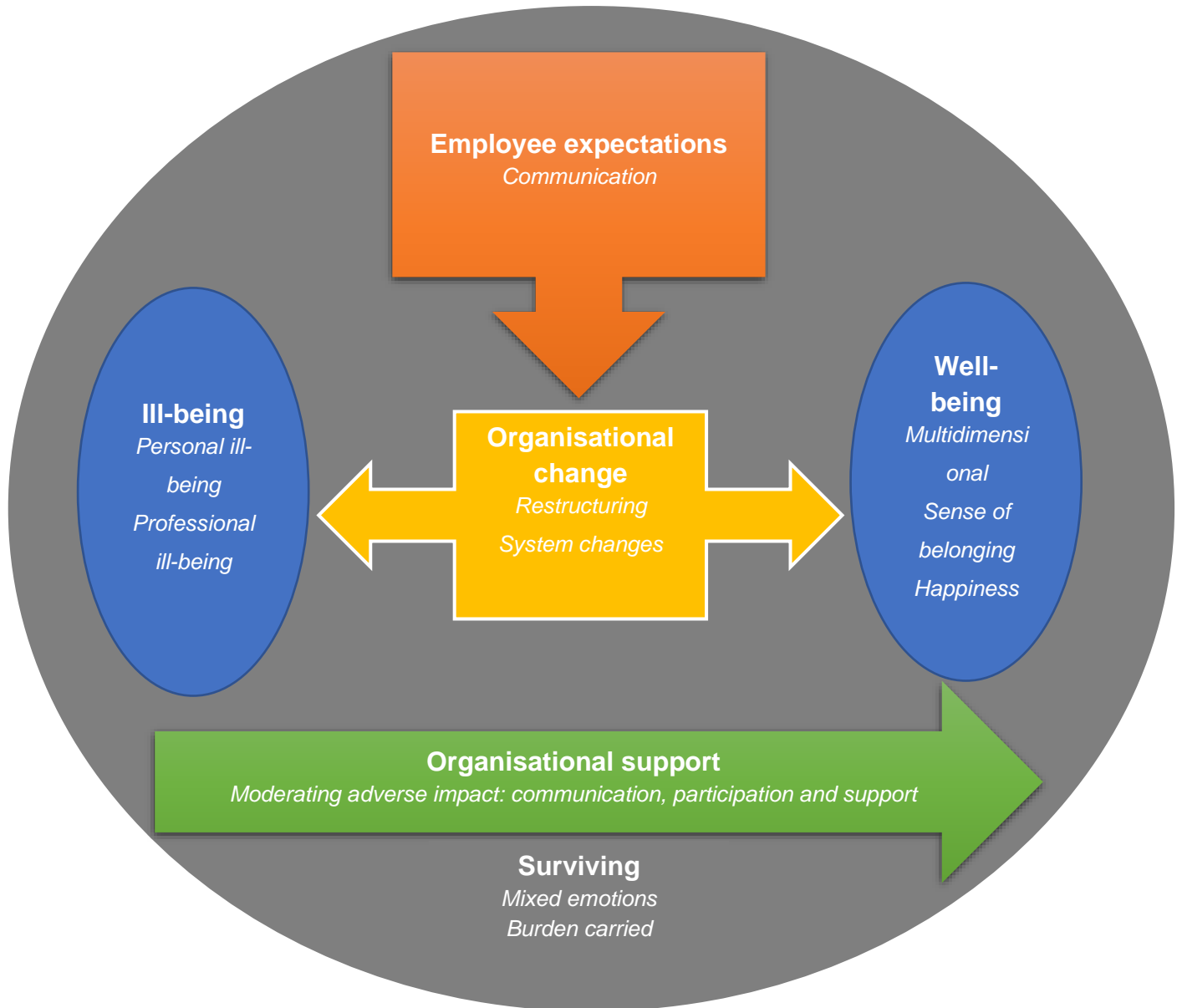
The conceptual framework (see Figure 3.1) presented below depicts the way in which organisational change, such as restructuring or systems changes, may impact employee well-being. The impact of organisational change on employee well-being has been found to be primarily negative impact (ill-being descriptors) although it has also been found to be positive (well-being descriptors).

Employee expectations influence the extent of the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being. For instance, effective communication practices enhance employee well-being, but poor communication causes employees to give less effort and less engagement with their work activities that could result in ill-being.

Surviving was found to be a shared experience perceived by all participants and a key role player in understanding how employees' well-being manifested in organisational change contexts. In view of the fact that all employees are impacted by change, both victims and survivors, it is only fitting that the theme surviving incapsulates all the other themes. Survivors feel mixed emotions and carry burdens of their own, as well as the burdens of others. However, organisational support may moderate the adverse impact of organisational change on employees' well-being through communication and participation in the organisational change process.

Figure 3.1

Conceptual framework for managing change initiatives directed at enhancing employee well-being



The world of work is characterised by continuous change which is caused by several factors (Wee & Taylor, 2018). However, it would appear that organisations are complacent about recognising and meeting employee expectations in support of their well-being in the workplace. The main aim of the study was to explore the impact of organisational change on lived experiences in relation to employee well-being. It was, therefore, important to explore what constitutes well-being in the workplace and how the impact of organisational change is experienced.

The findings suggest that well-being plays a significant role in the way the participants experienced organisational change. In alignment with the literature, well-being was found to be a multidimensional concept (Marsh et al., 2020; Ruggeri et al., 2020) that takes into account the “whole person” (Butler et al., 2019) and highlights how the workplace, specifically organisational change, influences the conceptualisation and employees’ experiences of well-being. The participants in the study indicated that well-being in the workplace encompassed physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Well-being consists of happiness, health and relationships (Grant et al., 2007; Ponting, 2020; Tuzovic & Kabadayi, 2020). It was found that happiness underpins well-being in the workplace. The findings indicate that happiness at work encompassed more than just job satisfaction and may also include work engagement and organisational commitment (Awada & Ismail, 2019). The findings suggest that employees who feel happy in the workplace tend to feel more energetic, more productive and more committed. These positive feelings are then an incentive to increase performance (Kidd, 2008; Zito et al., 2019) and, hence, organisational profitability (Awada & Ismail, 2019).

The findings suggest that the golden thread running through all the themes was that they all revolve around the need for a sense of belonging and being included by those around you for well-being and having interpersonal relationships that are warm, trusting and supportive (Marsh et al., 2020; Ruggeri et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Finding a sense of belonging is not always related to the impact of organisational

change on employee well-being only but rather to several other factors such as transparency, communication and participation.

The findings, therefore, suggest that, within the contextual framework, employees' multidimensional well-being is exposed to the impact of organisational change. The findings of the study support the literature, which indicates that organisational change has a generally negative impact on employee well-being (Day et al., 2017; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017) that manifested in the presence of ill-being. The experiences of ill-being presented in the participants' personal and professional lives and it affects them financially, emotionally and psychologically (Schiro & Baker, 2009). The findings of the study found that organisational change also reduces well-being and increases job insecurity (Otto et al., 2018). In line with the findings, ill-being, as a dimension of employee well-being, includes life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-being (Ruggeri et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2015). Well-being in the workplace refers to an ongoing state rather than a definitive outcome (Kidd, 2008). It is not surprising that professional well-being may be affected when there are job losses or changes to job roles (Kidd, 2008).

It is interesting to note that the study found that not all the participants experienced the impact of organisational change in the same way (Cartwright et al., 2007; Koukoulaki et al., 2017; Loretto et al., 2010; Rafferty & Restubog, 2016). Some experienced increasing well-being after a while (De Jong et al., 2016; Fløvik et al., 2019; Vermeulen & Wiesner, 2000) while others even reported positive experiences (Wiezer et al., 2011). Nevertheless, positive associations with organisational change were mentioned less frequently.

In addition, the study findings suggested that disregarding employees' expectations may have an adverse impact on employees' well-being. Poor communication was found to be a significant role player in understanding how ill-being manifests for employees in organisational change contexts (Smollan, 2017). In alignment with the literature, the study also found that effective communication may reduce employee

anxiety (Smollan, 2017) and moderate the negative impact of organisational change on employee well-being (Erciyas, 2019; Westgaard & Winkel, 2011; Wiezer et al., 2011).

The uncertainty associated with organisational change was cited by several of the participants with the findings of the study indicating that uncertainty was major contributing factor to ill-being (Smollan, 2017) and affecting employee well-being (Burke et al., 2015; Harney et al., 2018; Virtanen et al., 2002). Uncertainty was also found to be associated with feelings of distress, anxiety and frustration.

There is evidence that everyone is affected by organisational change – both victims and survivors (Simuth, 2017) with both the former and the latter being prone to mental health problems in relation to organisational change (Fløvik et al., 2019; Schiro & Baker, 2009). The findings suggest that the participants found it exceedingly difficult to cope with organisational change or even to survive (Dlouhy & Casper, 2020; Kidd, 2008). Surviving was experienced in terms of reduced organisational commitment, reduced morale, a lack of trust and a shift in focus towards personal security rather than organisational goals (Vermeulen & Wiesner, 2000).

The findings of the study indicate that specific emotions were linked with the experiences of organisational change. The positive experiences reported included happiness, joy, excitement, feeling energised, stimulated, feeling valued and feeling content while the negative experiences reported included anger, sad, depression, anxiety, feeling nervous, feeling stressed, fear, feeling scared and unhappiness. These findings suggest that subjective well-being includes diverse experiences ranging from joy to anger (Diener & Chan, 2011; Sirgy, 2019). The findings of the study indicate that emotions play a fundamental role in the workplace in that they mirror affective judgements in relation to the state of the employee-organisation relationship (Kidd, 2008; Turner, 2020). In addition, the findings of the study suggest that survivors carry the burden of their own emotional reactions (Brown & Abuatiq, 2020; Worrall et al., 2000), as well as those of the victims.

The last section of the findings moves outside of the social experiences of the participants and focused on the participants' recommendation to the organisation as to how the organisation may improve employee experience of organisational change so that it impacts more positively on employee well-being. The research findings suggest the need for clear, actionable paths to enhance employee well-being in organisational change contexts. All the participants mentioned the importance of communication before, during and after organisational change with the findings highlighting that organisational support is of immense benefit in relation to employee well-being, particularly in the context of organisation change (Alfes et al., 2019; Smollan, 2017).

The general finding of the study indicated that the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being is based on the employees' expectations. Both personal ill-being and professional ill-being is caused by the employees' expectations being overlooked and by poor communication. However, the adverse impact of organisational change on employees' well-being may be moderated by organisational support, especially in stressful circumstances (Alfes et al., 2019; Smollan, 2017).

Recommendations

The study findings indicate that although organisational change is a well-researched topic, it remains relevant in the ever-evolving world of work and also that the successful implementation of organisational change processes remains a challenge for organisations, managers and change agents. Thus, the following recommendations were made:

First, it is essential that organisations, managers, change agents, and industrial and organisational psychologists involved in change management understand that communication is an issue of immense concern for employees. Thus, they should invite employee participation in the organisational change process and adopt effective communication strategies which are the cornerstone of how employees experience

organisational change (Fløvik et al., 2019). Employees feel more reassured if they are kept informed of any decisions that may have an impact on them.

The second recommendation speaks to cultivating a sense of belonging that will motivate employees to feel present and involved, thus enabling employees to be more productive and more committed. Accordingly, it is incumbent on organisations, managers, change agents, and industrial and organisational psychologists to pay attention to employee participation in the organisational change process and consultation.

The third recommendation relates to the apparent primarily negative experiences of organisational change, thus highlighting the need for change agents heed the fact that there are moderating factors which may alleviate the negative impact of organisational change and even enhance employee well-being (Day et al., 2017).

The final recommendation is for industrial and organisational psychologist to acknowledge and appreciate the impact of organisational change on employee well-being. It must be recognised that change is inevitable and unavoidable. Thus, ongoing research should be conducted to improve organisational development techniques and models to enhance employee well-being and ensure a more positive experience of organisational change.

Conclusion

The premise of this study was to understand the impact of organisational change on employee well-being. Although, the participants' experiences of organisational change differed, the participants generally emphasised the negative impacts of organisational change. Four themes emerged from the data, namely, well-being descriptors, ill-being descriptors, employee expectations and surviving. The participants highlighted the extent to which the implementation of adequate communication strategies appears to be problematic. However, Figure 3.1 illustrated that recognising and meeting on

employees' expectations and providing the appropriate organisational support, the adverse impact of organisational change can be overcome.

Limitations

It was not possible to generalise the findings of this study to the entire South African context due to the limitations resulting from the study's qualitative nature and the fact that the findings were highly contextual with regard to the experiences of the participants (Abildgaard et al., 2018). Due to sensitive nature of well-being, the participants tended to become emotional and subjective in their responses in this type of research. However, the researcher's academic and professional network gave the participants the opportunity to share intimate details based on a trust relationship. The researcher acknowledges her bias based on her own experience of organisational change and how this may have limited the exploration of the participants' experiences of the research topic (Fløvik et al., 2019). A further limitation of the study may relate to the researcher's objectivity towards the participants' experiences through her bias in relation to the impact of organisational change on well-being and her own negative experiences.

Future research

Since the organisational change is both dynamic and complex in nature and, given that this study examined employees' perceptions and experiences at one point in time, this leaves open the possibility for both a replication and a longitudinal study in order to come to a better understanding of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being (Day et al., 2017). Future research may also look to conducting similar studies but studies which differentiate between the experiences of the victims and the survivors of change. In addition, future research could focus on the managers who have to enact the change in order to gain insights into their experiences.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the main conclusions of the study, as well as its limitations, contributions, and recommendations. Chapter 1 outlined the importance of managing change effectively to ensure a more positive impact on both employees' well-being as well as on organisational performance and success. The conclusions are presented in conjunction with the aims of the study.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

This section presents an assessment of the aims of this study in terms of the literature review and the empirical findings.

4.1.1 Conclusions drawn from the literature review

The aim of this research was to explore the impact of organisational change on the lived experiences in relation to employees' well-being.

The specific literature review aims were to:

- conceptualise organisational change and its related constructs;
- to explore employee well-being and its related constructs; and
- to understand the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being in organisational contexts.

The following section include a detailed discussion of the aims of the literature review.

4.1.1.1 Conceptualising organisational change

In terms of a definition of the broad term of organisational change, it was understood from the literature that the term must be contextualised to the specific setting of the study in question – in this instance, the South African workplace (Maes & Van Hootegeem, 2011; Ostroff, 2019). In general terms, change refers to moving from one position to another (Zoogah & Beugré, 2013) or from the known (current state) to the unknown (desired state) (Hussain et al., 2018). Organisational change relates to changes in people, structure or technology within the context of an organisation (Millar et al., 2017; Zoogah & Beugré, 2013). These changes are characteristic of the workplace of today (Gallego, 2017; Werner, 2016b). The complex and dynamic nature of the workplace (Brown, 2014; Malatjie, 2019) is compelling organisations to change if they are to improve their chances of success and meet customer demands (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Smith et al., 2012). Organisational change is essential for innovation and survival (Bligh et al., 2018). It is often said that the only constant is change (Brown, 2014; Burk, 2019).

Forces that drive change include external factors, such as advances in technology, environmental circumstances and the global economy (Simuth, 2017), as well as internal factors, such as structure, people and performance (Gupta, 2016). Organisational change is synonymous with terms such as downsizing, restructuring, strategic alignment, reengineering and cultural realignment (Gallego, 2017). However, many of these changes fail due to employee resistance to change. Sources of resistance to change include individual sources (human characteristics, for example, perceptions, personalities and needs) and organisational sources (organisational structure) (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017).

Lewin's three-step model may be used to manage organisational change (Jones, 2013). The model comprises the following three steps, namely, unfreezing (getting ready for change), movement (of the organisation to its desired position) and refreezing (reinforcing the desired position) (Werner, 2016b). Organisational

development refers to planned change interventions designed both to improve the effectiveness of organisations and to enhance employee well-being (Brijball-Parumasur, 2013; Ertosun, 2020). In addition, it may also provide organisations with the opportunity to improve their functioning, development and overall performance (Doroshuk, 2019). Organisational development techniques that promote change include “counselling, sensitivity training, survey feedback, process consultation, team building and intergroup development” (Jones, 2013, p. 319).

4.1.1.2 Conceptualising employee well-being

Wellness in the context of employees relates to the optimal health of employees and their feeling energetic, motivated and stimulated, as well as their ability to foster positive relationships and display commitment to engaging with work and organisational goals (Potgieter, 2016a). However, the World Health Organisation defined well-being as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2006, p. 1).

It emerged from the literature review that employee well-being is a multidimensional concept (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Veld & Alfes, 2017; Ruggeri et al., 2020). The literature also indicate that employee well-being constitutes the overall quality of employees’ personal and work-related experiences and functioning (Grant et al., 2007; Maher et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2015). Well-being comprises three components, namely, psychological well-being (subjective well-being and happiness), physical well-being (physiological measures of bodily health), and social well-being (positive relationships) (Grant et al., 2007; Ponting, 2020). In the same vein, employee well-being may also be described in terms of happiness, health and relationship (Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019; Van De Voorde et al., 2012). Zheng et al. (2015) assert that it is important to differentiate between general well-being and employee-well-being because the work context differ drastically from the general life context. Accordingly, employee well-being may be defined as life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-

being (Zheng et al., 2015, p.621). The concept of well-being in the workplace includes life satisfaction, job satisfaction and general health (Wardani, 2020).

According to theory, well-being is based on not only good feelings but also refers to deriving meaning, good relationships and accomplishments (Gander et al., 2016; Seligman, 2011). Seligman (2011) suggests that well-being theory refer to a plural method and substance that include positive emotion and what a person thinks and feels. He proposed that well-being consists of five elements that contribute to it: positive-emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement (PERMA) (Seligman, 2011, p. 16). The PERMA model explains the elements that contribute to well-being and how well-being can be optimised (Bențea, 2019).

4.1.1.3 Contextualising the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being

Many management teams do not grasp the impact that change can have on organisations' performance and effectiveness (Jones, 2013). The literature review found that organisational change creates major challenges for both organisations and their employees (Gupta, 2016). Organisational change may result in increased job demands and decreased job control (Fløvik et al., 2019), which create stressors (Coetzee & Chetty, 2015) that cause reduced health (Bamberger et al., 2012), burnout (Day et al., 2017) and diminished well-being (Koukoulaki et al., 2017). Organisational change affects employees' attitudes and behaviours (Gupta, 2016) due to the uncertainty and ambiguity which usually accompanying the change (Gallego, 2017; Malatjie, 2019). This uncertainty then translates to feelings of anxiety and strain (Gupta, 2016).

It is vital that organisations make every effort to maintain the health and well-being of their employees throughout organisational change (Paškvan et al., 2016; Van den Heuvel et al., 2013). Gupta (2016) suggest that organisations should allow employees to actively participate in the change process. Positive work environments and organisational support may result in employees having more positive experiences of

organisational change or at least alleviate some of the negative outcomes of the change (Day et al., 2017) while organisational support may increase performance and enhance organisational commitment (Malatjie, 2019).

In terms of the theoretical relationships established above, the study found that organisational change has a significant impact on employees' well-being experiences and also that organisational support can help employees to have a more positive experience in relation to their well-being during organisational change.

4.1.2 Conclusions drawn from the empirical study

The specific aims for the empirical study included the following:

- explore the impact of organisational change on employee well-being;
- to provide a basic framework that may assist organisations in managing change initiatives directed at enhancing employee well-being; and
- to formulate recommendations for possible future research on the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

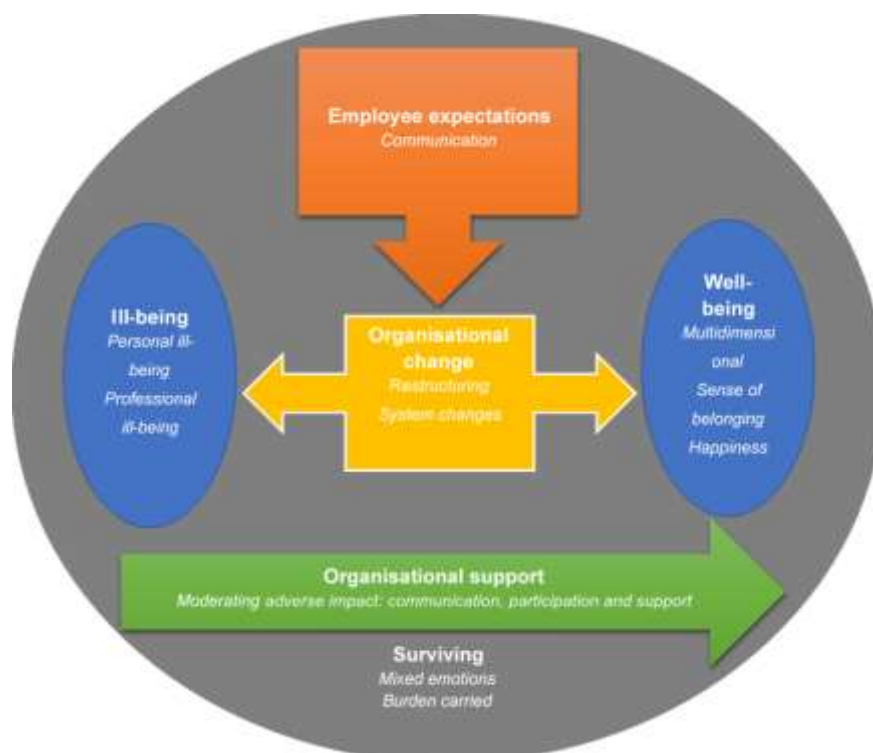
The empirical study enabled the researcher to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being, thus allowing the researcher to develop a conceptual framework (see Figure 4.1) of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being. This framework may assist organisations in managing change initiatives so that employees have a more positive experience in relation to their well-being during organisational change. In addition, recommendations for possible future research were made based on the study finding included. The next section presents a discussion on the framework that was developed.

The conceptual framework (see Figure 4.1) illustrates the impact of organisational change, for example restructuring or systems changes, on employee well-being.

Organisational change generally has a negative impact on employee well-being (ill-being descriptors) although organisational change may also have a positive impact on it (well-being descriptors). The impact of organisational change on employees' well-being is affected by the employees' expectations. Employee well-being may be enhanced by effective communication practices. However, employees tend to expend less effort and are less engaged in their work activities in the event of poor communication, thus resulting in ill-being. All employees, both victims and survivors, are impacted upon by change. Thus, surviving encapsulated all the other major themes that emerged from the study findings. Survivors of organisational change feel mixed emotions and carry the burdens of others and their own burdens. Nevertheless, the adverse impact of organisational change on employee well-being may be moderated through organisational support such as communication and participation.

Figure 4.1

Conceptual framework for managing change initiatives directed at enhancing employee well-being



4.1.2.1 Well-being descriptors

Well-being played an important role in the way in which the participants perceived their experiences of organisational change. Well-being has been seen to be a multidimensional concept (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Veld & Alfes, 2017; Ruggeri et al., 2020). This is congruent with the conclusion of Zheng et al. (2015, p.621) that employee well-being comprises life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-being. In fact, it was defined by what the participants thought and felt (Seligman, 2011).

Ryan and Deci (2001) concluded that well-being is founded on two philosophical perspectives with the first relating to the subjective experiences of happiness (hedonism) and the second relating to the achievement of optimum human potential (eudaimonism). This is similar to the participants' experience of well-being as happiness and a sense of belonging. These two are interrelated and are part of overall well-being (Lorente et al., 2019). Happiness relates to the good state of psychological functions and underpinned the participants' experiences of well-being in the workplace, thus implying that the participants often perceived the presence of well-being as their feeling good. This in turn resulted in participants feeling more energetic, productive and committed in the workplace. Furthermore, the golden thread running through the themes revolved around the participants' experiences of a sense of belonging or the feeling of being included.

4.1.2.2 Ill-being descriptors

The impact of organisational change was also perceived to impede on the participants' personal and professional lives with the organisational change affecting several elements of the participants' psychosocial workplace and, hence, impacting negatively on their well-being (Fløvik et al., 2019). The participants mainly reported a decrease in their well-being that manifested as the presence of ill-being. This in turn often

resulted in the participants disengaging from their work activities and reduced productivity on their part.

4.1.2.3 Employee expectations

The psychological contract refers to the unwritten agreement between employees and organisations that defines the interdependence and shared responsibility between the parties (Brown, 2014; Low et al., 2016). It is perceived by employees as favourable conditions during their employment and founded on the promises, statements and/or attitudes of management (Abela & Debono, 2019). Thus, employees have certain expectation of organisations in terms of the psychological contract and, if those expectations are not satisfied, this may result in friction and difficulties (Brown, 2014). This study suggests that the participants' key expectation, namely communication from their organisations, was not adequately satisfied with this resulting in participants' having negative experiences of organisational change. These negative experiences manifested in feelings of apprehension and in reduced productivity (Magano & Thomas, 2017). Providing organisational support, specifically participation in the organisational change process and consultation, may potentially moderate the adverse impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

4.1.2.4 Surviving

The final theme which emerged in this study was that of surviving. The study found that the participants generally found it extremely difficult to survive the organisational change (Harney et al., 2018). This in turn resulted in their expending less effort on their work activities and reduced organisational commitment. Their focus shifted from the organisations' goals towards their own personal security and they experienced mixed emotions toward the organisational change. The participants also acknowledged that they had experienced mixed emotions, ranging from joy to anger (Diener & Chan, 2011; Sirgy, 2019). Furthermore, the participants reported that they

had carried the burden of their own emotional reactions and those of the victims of the organisational change.

4.1.3 Suppositions resulting from the empirical study

The following suppositions was derived from the study:

The study indicated that well-being in the workplace is a multidimensional concept comprising life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-being that manifested as feelings of happiness and a sense of belonging.

The study indicated that organisational change has a profoundly impact on employees and often relates to the presence of ill-being which manifests in their personal and professional lives.

The findings are grounded in one common factor that were present in the empirical study and supported by literature, namely, poor communication and lack of consultation which had left the employees a feeling that their expectations of the organisation had not been satisfied. This, then, had resulted in their expending less effort on their work activities and reducing their commitment to their organisations.

The study further indicated that the 'survivors' of organisational change carry the burden of their own emotional reactions, as well as their emotional reactions towards others and they therefore find it extremely difficult to survive.

The secondary supposition, resulting from the data analysis and the subsequent conceptual framework that depicts the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being, reveals that organisational change has a profound impact on employees' well-being but that this may be moderated through organisational support.

The final four suppositions from the findings, in support of both the first and secondary suppositions, is as follows:

- Organisational change is a social construct that influences the well-being of the majority of employees in the South African workplace.
- The impact of organisational change on employees' well-being is primarily negative due to organisations not meeting their employees' expectations, specifically with regard to communication and consultation.
- All employees are impacted by organisational change, both as victims and survivors.
- To enable employees to move from a state of ill-being to well-being, organisational support in the form of participation in the organisational change process and consultation should be provided for employees to moderate the adverse impact of organisational change.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

This section discusses the limitations of the literature review and the empirical study.

4.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

Although organisational change and employees' well-being have been extensively researched, research into the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being in the South African context is limited.

4.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The general limitation of the empirical study arose from the use of a qualitative approach. Thus, it was not possible to generalise the findings to the South African

context as a whole as the findings were highly contextual to the participants' experiences.

Since well-being research is by its very nature sensitive, it is possible that the participants' responses may have been emotional and subjective. In addition, although the bias of the researcher is acknowledged, it may, nevertheless, still have influenced the interpretation of the study as the researcher may have been overly sensitive and subjective in her interpretations of the findings.

Based on the fact that the study applied purposeful sampling, the study sample was limited because it did not differentiate between the experiences of various role players, for example employees in comparison to managers enacting the change.

4.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

This section presents the contributions of this study to the researcher, organisations, managers, wellness officers and industrial and organisational psychologists.

4.3.1 Contributions of the findings to the researcher

The study offered the researcher the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the impact of organisational change on employees' well-being experiences. This made the researcher aware of her own bias towards organisational change experiences and the possible role she could play in applying better practices in addressing the issue in her own context.

The researcher also realised the importance of employee well-being and how adverse impacts may manifest in the personal and professional lives of employees. Thus, it is her duty, as a prospective industrial and organisational psychologist, to give due consideration of employees' well-being when implementing organisational development interventions.

4.3.2 Contribution of the findings to organisations

The findings of the study may assist organisations and managers in recognising the possible adverse impact of organisational change on employee well-being. In addition, the value of a better understanding of the importance of the psychological contract between organisations and employees may assist South African organisations in realising their role and their social responsibility in relation to employee well-being.

4.3.3 Contribution of the findings to wellness officers

The findings of the study may help wellness officers to understand well-being as a multidimensional construct and to recognise the possible adverse impact that organisational change may have on employee well-being. This could help them to understand the critical role of considering and meeting employee expectations, thus enabling them to act as facilitators in change processes. The findings of the study may also help wellness officers to give due consideration of and attention to the victims and survivors of organisational change as both are important.

4.3.4 Contribution of the findings to industrial and organisational psychologists

Finally, it is of critical importance that industrial and organisational psychologist, as possible facilitators of organisational change, understand their role in protecting the well-being of employees experiencing organisational change. Industrial and organisational psychologists may act as catalysts to ensure that a framework of participation in the organisational change process and inclusion is established between organisations and employees during organisational change.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the recommendations derived from the study findings.

4.4.1 Application of the findings to organisational practice

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are presented for future research and organisational practice:

- Organisations should ensure that they understand the social context and the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.
- Organisations should take heed of all employees during organisational change, both the victims and the survivors of organisational change are important.
- Any organisational change undertaken should be informed contextually to ensure that a systematic and inclusive approach is followed.
- The findings of the study may be used to help organisations realise that communication is vitally important during the implementation of organisational change (Magano & Thomas, 2017) so as to provide employees with more positive experiences, thus ensuring their well-being.
- Longitudinal studies could be undertaken so that the findings of this study could be researched during the various stages of organisational change, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being (Neves et al., 2018).

4.4.2 Recommendation for future literature reviews and empirical studies

The following section provides recommendations for future research:

- Since the study examined the perceptions and experience of employees at one point in time only, it would be possible to replicate the study in order to gain a better understanding of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.
- Further research is required to explore the differences between the experiences of the victims and survivors of change.

- Further research could be conducted to gain a better understanding of the experiences of managers who are responsible for enacting the organisational change.
- Finally, further research could be conducted among organisational development specialists and/or human resource practitioners to broaden the understanding of the impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the main conclusions drawn from the study results, as well as the limitations of the study and recommendation for future research. The aim of this study was to understand the impact of organisational change on employee well-being. Initially, it was argued that employee well-being is a multidimensional concept comprising life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-being (Zheng et al. 2015). Intricately linked with this, it was found that employees are generally negatively impacted by organisational change that causes ill-being in their personal and professional lives. One critical contributor was explored, namely, employee expectations. Specifically, it was argued that poor communication leads to employees expending less effort on their work activities and becoming less engaged with the organisation. The chapter also explored the factors that may moderate the adverse impact of organisational change, for example participation in the organisational change process, consultation and the preservation of the psychological contract. It was asserted that appropriate organisational support may moderate the adverse impact of organisational change on employee well-being.

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ANNEXURE A: INFORMED CONSENT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: NeIMD_2020_CEMS_IOP_004

08 July 2020

Title: “Exploring employees’ well-being in an organisational change context: A qualitative study”

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Dedrie Nel and I am doing research with Dr Annelize van Niekerk, a senior lecturer in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, towards a Master of Commerce (Industrial and Organisational Psychology) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled “Exploring employees’ well-being in organisational change contexts: A qualitative study”.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to gain an in-depth understanding of employees’ lived experience of organisational change and its impact on their well-being.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

I obtained the participants’ contact details through my academic and professional networks. The participants were chosen by purposeful sampling of information rich cases that include any individual who has lived experiences of an organisational change initiative, such as leadership changes, policy and strategic changes, retrenchments and restructuring, and who are willing to participant in an interview. The sample will include approximately 10 participants or until data saturation is reached.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study will involve the *recording of semi-structured interviews*. The following questions will be asked:

- What is your understanding of what constitutes well-being in the workplace?
- What is your understanding of organisational change?
- Describe how organisational change has impacted or is currently impacting on your well-being in the workplace.
- What recommendations would you make to the organisation on how it could improve your experience of organisational change so that it impacts more positively on your well-being?

The semi-structured interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

MAY I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The study is important from an organisational perspective for both organisations and employees to improve the success of change implementations and the experiences of employees, and to enhance employee wellness during organisational change. The study may assist in both contributing to the existing body of knowledge on employee experiences and well-being in relation to organisational change initiatives in South African organisations and be used by organisations, change agents, industrial and organisational psychologists who facilitate organisational change initiatives in the

workplace and to improve the chances of successful change implementations while enhancing employee experiences and well-being.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

I do not foresee that you and/or the organisation will experience any negative consequences. The researcher undertakes to keep any information provided herein confidential and not to let it out of my possession. The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes whereafter they will be permanently destroyed with hard copies being shredded, and electronic versions permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a locked cupboard at her home for future research or academic purposes and electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to a further research ethics review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No payment or reward will be offered, financial or otherwise, for participating in the study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the *UNISA IOP Ethics Review Committee*. A copy of the approval letter may be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Dedrie Nel on 082 889 5318 or dedrie@live.co.za. The findings will be accessible for a period of one year.

Should you require any further information or wish to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dedrie Nel on 082 889 5318 or dedrie@live.co.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Annelize van Niekerk on 012 429 8231 or vnieka2@unisa.ac.za. You may also contact the research ethics chairperson of the UNISA IOP Ethics Review Committee, Prof BH Olivier on (012) 429-8801 or olivibh@unisa.ac.za, if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

DM Nel

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has informed me of the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & surname..... (please print)

Participant's signature.....Date.....

Researcher's name & surname: Dedrie Nel

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

ANNEXURE B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

The semi-structured interview schedule includes an initial stage during which the participant is prepared for the interview, the interview, and a final stage during which the interview is concluded:

1. INITIAL STAGE

In the initial stage the participants are prepared for the interview by the researcher building rapport with the participants and setting the participants' minds at ease, as well as informing the participants of the following:

- 1.1. Their rights as participants in the research.
- 1.2. The purpose of the interview.
- 1.3. The reason for their selection.
- 1.4. The anticipated duration of the interview.
- 1.5. Consent to participate in the study must be of their own free will.
- 1.6. Covid-19 considerations
 - 1.6.1. Respect for the participant's right of self-determination, the participant's right to decline to participate in the study or to withdraw from the study at any time.
 - 1.6.2. Confirm that the participant had received a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.
 - 1.6.3. Do you have any questions at this moment? May we proceed with the interview?

2. INTERVIEW

In this section the following open-ended questions were posed to the participants:

- 2.1. What is your understanding of what constitutes well-being in the workplace?
- 2.2. What is your understanding of organisational change?

2.3. Describe how organisational change has impacted or is currently impacting upon your well-being in the workplace.

2.4. What recommendations would you make to the organisation as to how the organisation may improve your experience of organisational change so that it impacts more positively on your well-being?

3. FINAL STAGE

In the final stage the interviews were concluded by asking the participants if they would like to add anything.

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA IOP ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

07 June 2020

Dear Mrs., Dedrieka Magdalena Nel

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference : **2020_CEMS_IOP_004**
Name : Mrs. Dedrieka Magdalena Nel
Student # : 44193130
Staff # : NA

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
07 June 2020 to 07 June 2023**

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs. Dedrieka Magdalena Nel
Address: 244 Honeysuckle Street; Magalieskruin; Pretoria; 0150
E-mail address, telephone: dedria@live.co.za, 082 889 5318

Supervisor (s): Name: Dr Annelize van Niekerk
E-mail address, telephone: ynieka2@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 8231

"Exploring employees' well-being in organisational change contexts: A Qualitative Study".

Qualification: Masters (MCom) – Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance to the Unisa IOP Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for a period of **Three (3) years**.

The low risk application was reviewed by the IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on 25th May 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The Ethics Application was approved on 7th June 2020.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

- 1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 9 April 2020 which is attached.***



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2. **All data-gathering must adhere to and be aligned with restrictions applicable to the Government's current Lockdown Alert Levels.**
 3. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
 4. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.
 5. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
 6. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
 7. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
 8. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
 9. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **(07 June 2023)**. Submission of a complete research ethics progress report will constitute an application for the renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.
- Note:*
The reference number **NeIMD_2020_CEMS_IOP_004** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of IOP ERC

E-mail: vnleka2@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-8231



Prof RT Mpotu

Signature Deputy Executive Dean (CEMS)

Executive Dean : CEMS

E-mail: mogalmb@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-4805

ANNEXURE D: CODING SHEET

AutoSave On Coding Sheets.xlsx - Last Modified: 31 October

File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help Easy Document Creator

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles

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1 Q1 What is your understanding of what constitutes well-being in the workplace?
 2 Q2 What is your understanding of organisational change?
 3 Q3 Describe for me how organisational change have impacted or are currently impacting on your well-being in the workplace.
 4 Q4 What recommendations can you make to the organisation on how they can improve your experience of organisational change so that it impacts more positively on your well-being?

Q	Codes	Participa	Pg & Line	Theme
33	Q3	P1	p1 line 52	Well-being descriptor
34	Q3	P1	p1 line 53	Well-being descriptor
35	Q3	P1	p1 line 54	Well-being descriptor
36	Q3	P1	p1 line 54	Well-being descriptor
37	Q3	P1	p1 line 55	Well-being descriptor
38	Q3	P1	p1 line 57	Well-being descriptor
39	Q4	P1	p1 line 63	Employee Expectations
40	Q4	P1	p1 line 63	Employee Expectations
41	Q4	P1	p1 line 64	Employee Expectations
42	Q4	P1	p1 line 66	Employee Expectations
43	Q1	P2	p1 line 9	Employee Expectations
44	Q1	P2	p1 line 10	Employee Expectations
45	Q1	P2	p1 line 10-11	Employee Expectations
46	Q1	P2	p1 line 11-16	Employee Expectations
47	Q1	P2	p1 line 17-18	Employee Expectations
48	Q1	P2	p1 line 18	Well-being descriptor
49	Q1	P2	p1 line 18-19	Well-being descriptor
50	Q1	P2	p1 line 22-24	Well-being descriptor
51	Q1	P2	p1 line 24-27	Well-being descriptor
52	Q1	P2	p1 line 30-32	Well-being descriptor
53	Q1	P2	p1 line 32	Well-being descriptor
54	Q1	P2	p2 line 37	Well-being descriptor
55	Q1	P2	p2 line 37	Well-being descriptor
56	Q1	P2	p2 line 38	Well-being descriptor
57	Q1	P2	p2 line 38-45	Well-being descriptor
58	Q1	P2	p2 line 45-46	Well-being descriptor
59	Q1	P2	p2 line 51-53	Well-being descriptor

Filter Mode

MEMORANDUM

TO	Examiners
CC	Dr Annelize van Niekerk
FROM	Dedrie Nel, Student Number 44193130
DATE	12 January 2021
SUBJECT	Turn-It-In Report

Submission date: 24-Nov-2020 03:54AM (UTC+0200)

Submission ID: 1455613842

File name: Dissertation_Draft_3_DM_Nel_44193130_Til.docx (409.41K)

Word count: 25158

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