AN EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRST-LINE MANAGERS TO DEAL WITH RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

Continuous changes in markets needs require effective and corresponding change management at all levels in organisations. First-line managers are directly responsible for meeting the demands of clients and resistance to change at this level could result in sub-standard outputs. The effectiveness of change interventions will be largely determined by the competence of first-line managers to facilitate the desired change taking into account resistance to change. The purpose of this article is to evaluate the competencies required by first-line managers to deal with resistance to change as identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003). The findings of this article are based on an empirical study.

OPSOMMING

Deurlopende verandering in die behoeftes van markte vereis effektiewe en ooreenstemmende bestuur van verandering op alle vlakke in organisasies. Eerstelyn bestuurders is primêr verantwoordelik om markverwagtinge te ewenaar en selfs te oorskry. Weerstand teen verandering op hierdie vlak kan tot sub-standaard uitsette aanleiding gee. Die sukses en effektiwiteit van veranderingsintervensies in organisasies sal grootliks afhang van die bevoegdheid van eerstelyn bestuurders om die verlangde verandering teweeg te bring met in agneming van weerstand teen verandering. Die oogmerk van hierdie artikel is om die bevoegdhede wat eerstelyn bestuurders sal benodig om weerstand te kan hanteer, soos geïdentifiseer deur Lombard en Crafford (2003), te evalueer. Die bevindinge van hierdie artikel is gebaseer op empiriese navorsing.

Change is a part of life (Szamosi & Duxbury, 2002, p. 184) and change is also viewed as the only constant (Corporate Executive Board, 2003, p. 2). Pritchett (1996) in Szamosi & Duxbury (2002, p. 184) suggests that in recent years the term "change" became synonymous with upheaval and chaos in the business context. Research (Buckingham & Coffman, 2001, p. 86; Muoio, 2000; Corporate Executive Board, 2003, p. 3; Handy, 2002; Bridges & Mitchell, 2000; Schiemann, 2004 online) suggests that change is a necessity for survival in this competitive era. This rationale results from view that there must be innovation and innovation means change. It could therefore be argued that it has become critical for companies to understand how to manage change effectively.

Irrespective of the type of change, which organisations go through, people are always affected the most by any change efforts (Kotter & Cohen, p. 11; 2002,Lombard & Crafford, 2003, p. 45, Coker, 2000, p. 24; Mabin, Forgeson & Green, 2001; Kets de Vries, 2002; Seely, 2000, p. 24; Pheng, 1999, p. 124). The view of Szamosi & Duxbury (2002, p. 184) compliments this view by stating that nearly all authors who have contributed to change literature have placed great importance on human factors as being critical to the ultimate success of an organisation's change efforts. Research (Drucker in Wind & Main, 1999, p. 50; Kotter & Cohen, 2002 pp. 103 – 104; Steiner, 2001, pp. 153 – 161; Zeffane, 1996, pp. 38 – 39; Clarke & Meldrum, 1999, pp. 70 – 71; French & Delahaye, 1996; pp. 24 – 27) suggests that it is the responsibility of managers to make change a success by growing the organisation one person at a time. A one-person-at-a-time strategy will enable managers to be in touch with the personal fears and concerns of employees. The researchers argued that first-line managers should be able to grow their areas of responsibility one person at a time by understanding each person's fears and concerns and helping them to deal with it on a personal level.

Research (Kent, 2003; Biegun, 2002, p. 542; Schiemann, 1992; Prosci, 2003; Archilles, Harris & Harris, 2002, p. 169) has indicated that resistance to change is one of the primary reasons why change interventions fail or why success is not achieved in the change process. More specific, the inability of first-line managers to deal with resistance to change has been cited by Pheng (1999, pp. 121–124) as a primary cause for change projects to fail.

What is Resistance to Change?

Resistance has been defined as employee behaviour that seeks to challenge, disrupt, or prevent change from taking place (Folger & Skarlicki, 1999, p. 36). Resistance to change can be caused by individual, group and organisational factors (Mabin et al, 2001, p. 169).

Resistance is a response to feeling threatened that with resultant anxiety. Resistance to change is closely associated "fear of loss" and "fear of the new" (Coker, 2000, p. 24; Mabin et al, 2001; Tichy, 1997, p. 78; Seely, 2000, p. 24; Pheng, 1999, p. 124). First-line managers can support individuals to overcome anxiety and fear of the new by creating an environment where learning is the norm and where people are allowed to learn from mistakes (Wilson & Wilson, 1998, p. 157).

The aspect of loss is particularly pertinent and the factors such as individual factors, economic loss, inconvenience, perceived threats, power, social disruption and loosing face can strengthen the fear of loss.

Resistance to change results in people that are complacent and do not function at their full potential (Lefton & Buzzota, 1980). Consulting experience of the researchers proved that resistant people are problem reporting versus problem solving and do not suggest ways to overcome obstacles. It can therefore be argued that first-line managers need to create and maintain an environment where people are empowered and accountable. Such an environment is characterised by team members that choose growth above fear. The environment that the first-line manager will have to create is one
- where team members can learn from their mistakes;
- where team members share their suggestions and opinions although it might not be accepted;

- where team members will confront the brutal facts irrespective if it means being unpopular with team members; and
- accepting that being emotionally uncomfortable is an opportunity to move outside of the comfort zone into the learning zone.

Resistance to change could manifest on three levels. The first two levels refer to the person, while the third level is associated with management and everything they represent (Mariotti, 1998, p. 140; Maurer, 2000, p. 47).

It could be deduced that the first-line manager can perform an integral role in minimising resistance to change by creating an environment where people share their fears openly and honestly.

First-Line Managers and Resistance to Change

Organisations are measured in terms of the quality of their products and services. First-line managers are directly responsible for operational employees who ensure the production and delivery of these products and services (Robbins, 1998, p. 6). The effectiveness of change interventions in organisations will largely be determined by the competence of first-line managers to facilitate the desired change through and with operational employees (Moran & Brightman, 2001, p. 111). Conversely, change interventions that fail might be the result of systems, processes and technology, but it is the human element in organisations that manifest the success or failure of the change.

If first-line managers are not able to deal with resistance to change proactively and effectively, the resistance to change can manifest in the form of sub-standard outputs. Customers and clients only measure organisations on the quality of their outputs (i.e. service and products). In a competitive business environment, organisations cannot afford to have dissatisfied customers and clients, because customers and clients will take their business elsewhere and it will also present opportunities for rival organisations in a particular industry. Considering this, it is evident that first-line managers have a wide array of responsibilities. These responsibilities include the following (Renfrow, 2000, p. 108; Appelbaum, St Pierre & Glavas, 1998, p. 281; Moran & Brightman, 2001, p. 111; Bittel (1987) in Frylink, 1998, p. 38):

- Facilitating effective change strategies that was formulated by top managers;
- Operationalising the change requirements for their specific areas of responsibility; and
- Ensuring that products and services are delivered according to customer and client standards through, and with operational employees that are or might resist the envisaged change.

Considering the above, a number of key variables need to be addressed in testing the competence requirements for first-line managers to deal with resistance to change. In the opinion of the researchers, first-line managers should be:

- instrumental in the facilitation of successful change;
- able to deal with resistance to change on an individual and team level;
- able to create an environment that is receptive for change where the team members become the custodians of the new changes to improve products or services; and
- able to cascade organisational strategies to his/her personal area of responsibility.

In a literature study of Lombard & Crafford (2003), the above key variables were used. In this study a functional analysis (Fletcher, 1997) was used to formulate the key roles and units of competence that first-line managers will require to deal with resistance to change. To answer the research questions the units of competence to deal with resistance to change identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003) will be tested empirically.

Motivation for the research

Although contemporary research cites resistance to change and the inability of managers to deal with resistance to change as the greatest change management obstacles, little research has been directed specifically at the role of the first-line manager to deal either with resistance to change, or with the competencies they require to effectively deal with resistance to change. However the competency framework developed by Lombard & Crafford (2003) based on a literature study provides a basis for further research.

Given the poor track record of change implementation, the absence of researched examples regarding the significance of resistance to change in track record, the pivotal role that the first-line manager plays in implementing and institutionalising change, any research which could fill this gap will be relevant to organisations world wide.

Problem statement and hypothesis

The primary research questions that this study envisages to answer, are as follows:

- Will the units of competence identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003, pp. 47–50) contribute to the personal levels of competence of first-line managers?
- Is the importance of the units of competence to deal with resistance to change equal to the contribution it can make to personal competence levels of first-line managers?
- Which units of competence are the most important to deal with resistance to change?

The hypotheses that were formulated for this research are as follows:

- H_1: The units of competence identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003) are important for first-line managers to deal effectively with resistance to change (where SSM, UCM and TDFS represents the organisations where the empirical research was conducted and who prefers to that the authors use the abbreviations only and not disclose the names).

  - H_0: Avg Imp_{SSM} = Avg Imp_{UCM} = Avg Imp_{TDFS}

  - H_a: At least one company has a mean which is significantly different from the other two companies

- H_2: The units of competence identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003) will make an important contribution to the personal competence levels of the first-line managers to deal effectively with resistance to change (where PC = Personal Level of Competence).

  - H_0: Avg PC_{SSM} = Avg PC_{UCM} = Avg PC_{TDFS}

  - H_a: At least one company has a mean which is significantly different from the other two companies

The research was designed to test the hypotheses empirically.

METHOD

Participants in this study

The research was conducted in a large organisation from the service industry with local and international involvement. At the time of the research the company employed 7500 people nationally and offer a diverse range of outsourced services to the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. The organisation has a client base that includes a large number of the blue-chip food manufacturers in the country and they are expanding rapidly into other areas such as general merchandise, pharmaceutical and liquor. The population chosen for research was all the first-line (Patterson C-Bands) managers from the three largest business units in the organisation. These first-line managers function in a high-pressure environment that is characterised by continuous change.

Of the 194 questionnaires sent out, 162 were returned. This results in a return rate of 83.5 percent. From the high response rate it appears that the focused approach that the researchers followed was successful. The biographical information of the respondents is tabled in Table 1. For the purposes of this article the abbreviations of the different business units will be used.

TABLE 1
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Business Unit	Frequency	Percentage
SSM	52	32
UCM	68	42
TDFS	43	26
TOTAL	162	100

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	129	80
Female	33	20
TOTAL	162	100

Age in complete years	Frequency	Percentage
30 years old and less	77	49
Older than 30 years	80	51
TOTAAL	157	100

Highest Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Senior High School	82	51
Certificate/Diploma	56	35
Degree/Post Degree	23	14
TOTAL	161	100

Length in Service in Current Position	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 years	53	33
2 Years	45	28
More than 2 years	61	39
TOTAL	159	100

Span of Control	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 11	33	20
Between 11 and 20	36	22
Between 21 and 30	59	37
More than 30	34	21
TOTAL	162	100

The biographical data in Table 1 indicates that the majority of the respondents represented UCM (42%); were male (80%); a good blend between maturity and youth; has a grade 12 qualification (51%); has two years and less experience in their current position (61%); has a span of control of between 21 and 30 people (37%).

Measuring Instrument
Since the researchers could not find an existing questionnaire that measured the competencies required to deal with resistance to change, a new questionnaire was constructed. The development of a new questionnaire is supported by Burton (2000, p. 344).

The questionnaire was based on the units of competence formulated by Lombard & Crafford (2003, pp. 46-51). These units of competence formed part of the suggested competence framework required by first-line managers to deal with resistance to change (Lombard & Crafford, 2003, pp. 46-51). These competencies were obtained by means of a literature study and the applications of a functional analysis as suggested by Fletcher (1997). The rationale for this approach was to obtain as much as possible data from secondary, documented historical sources (Burton, 2000, pp. 343–345).

The constructs that were identified from the work of Lombard & Crafford (2003, p. 46–51) that the researchers wanted to test are tabled below:

TABLE 2
COMPETENCIES FOR FIRST-LINE MANAGERS TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Key Roles	Units of Competence
✓ Align the change strategy of area of responsibility with that of the organisation	• Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the target state of change • Obtain an understanding of customer needs/potential target market • Conduct a strategic plan for personal area of responsibility • Facilitate planning to determine best-practice solutions
✓ Ensure a personal readiness for change	• Prepare self for change
✓ Minimise resistance to change	• Conduct an audit of individual strengths and weaknesses of team members by involving them in the process • Compile individual communication strategies • Compile team communication strategies • Conduct individual information sessions • Compile individual personal development plans • Facilitate development of team members • Agree on a code of conduct governing behaviour during change • Act as a continual catalyst for change • Understand the rationale for change • Develop a business case for bottom-up change

The questionnaire contained the biographical data required for the research, the instructions to complete the questionnaire, as well as 15 competencies which were simplified into 38 singular questions making use of a Likert-type, 5-point scale. All these questions required of the respondents to firstly, indicate the importance for dealing with resistance to change in a proactive manner and secondly, to what extent the unit of competence will contribute to the personal level of competence to deal with resistance to change in a proactive manner in the workplace. The Cronbach Coefficient Alpha of the questionnaires used for in this research is 0,9463 confirming the high reliability of the scale and that the researchers succeeded in measuring the construct in a reliable manner (Statsoft, 2003 online). The ratings that were used for the two Likert-type scales varied between one (totally unimportant) to five (of critical importance) for the questions pertaining to importance for dealing with resistance to change and one ("I strongly disagree that this competency will enable me to deal with resistance to change is a proactive manner") to five (I strongly agree that this competency will enable me to deal with resistance to change is a proactive manner") for the questions pertaining to the contribution of the competency to the personal level of competence in the workplace.

Procedure
As a new questionnaire was utilised for this research, a pilot study was conducted. The outcome of the pilot study indicated that the questionnaire does not require major redesign or question formulation. Due to the geographical spread of the Field Managers in the three organisations, the questionnaires were administered electronically and in supervised groups. To obtain a high response rate, the researchers followed this approach.

Electronic Administration
The body of the electronic mail (e-mail) message contained an introduction and an endorsement from the Chief Executive Office Officer (CEO) of the organisation as well as the Group Human Resources Manager from each business unit. E-mail messages were sent out in personalised batches of three or five. This was done so that those receiving the request did not see themselves as part of broad circulation groups and therefore perceive that their lack of response would go unnoticed. As

completed questionnaires were returned, questionnaires were checked for potential areas that could cause a spoilt questionnaire. Electronic backups were made of accurate and complete responses and the log sheet was updated to identify outstanding responses. Respondents were individually thanked for their contributions. Every third day individual reminders were sent out to all respondents who failed to submit questionnaires. These steps ensured a high response rate. A total of 59 electronic mail responses were administered.

Supervised groups

The majority of the questionnaires were administered in supervised groups. This was done during training interventions where the researcher or colleagues made 30 minutes available for the completion of the questionnaires. It was also administered at cycle planning meetings where all First-line Managers have to be present. The endorsement from the CEO was read to the respondents and the purpose of the research was explained to the respondents. The administrator facilitated questions from the respondents, reiterated the importance of their honest contributions, and contracted confidentiality of the responses with the groups. On completion each individual questionnaire was verified for accuracy to prevent spoilt questionnaires. This approach ensured accuracy of completion and a high response rate. In total 103 questionnaires were administered by means of supervised groups.

All statistical analyses were performed by Statistical Consultation Service (Statkon) of the RAU University

RESULTS

Statistical Analyses

For the purposes of this study the following statistical analyses were performed:

- Factor Analysis
- Analysis of variance (ANOVA)
- Paired samples t-test.
- Independent samples t-test.
- Multiple comparisons (Post Hoc tests)

A factor analysis was conducted to reduce the number of variables (38) into fewer meaningful factors. The results of the factor analysis will also be used in the determination of the reliability of the questionnaire. In this research a first levels as well as a second level factor analysis were conducted.

This study will employ an exploratory factor analysis, which seeks to uncover the underlying structure of a large set of variables. Although there are several types of factor analyses, the preferred type of factoring for this research is the Principle Access Factoring (PAF). This study will apply the Varimax rotation for the first level analysis, while a direct oblimum will be performed for the second level factor analysis. This type of rotation is called *variance maximizing* because the objective of the rotation is to maximize the variance (variability) of the "new" variable (factor), while minimizing the variance around the new variable.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling measure of adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied to predict if the data is likely to factor according to the suggested KMO value of higher that 0.5 to be acceptable. The results are documented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0,825
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3564,486
	Df	703
	Sig.	0,00

The results indicate that the data set complies with the requirements for factor analysis (KMO MSA > 0,6 and Bartlett's Test yields a significant p-value < 0.0005) (Kaiser, 1960 in Statsoft, 2003 online).

Principle Axis Factoring (PAF) was used to extract the factors. The Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues > 1) (Kaiser, 1960 in Statsoft, 2003 online) was used to determine the number of factors to be extracted. Nine factors were subsequently extracted explaining 70,85% of the variation.

To improve interpretation, the factor matrix was rotated using the orthogonal (Varimax) rotation. The results of the rotated factor matrix indicating the factors loading are documented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

Clustering	Item	Factor								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Factor 1 (UoC 8, 10, 11)	10,3	0,781	0,138		0,117			0,119		
	10,2	0,778	0,111	0,128		0,195	0,131	0,158	0,121	
	10,4	0,774	0,239					0,133	0,184	
	11,2	0,688	0,215	0,173			0,233	0,164	–0,138	0,242
	11,1	0,643	0,175	0,143			0,300	0,210	–0,105	0,332
	10,1	0,638		0,243		0,224	0,195		0,212	–0,141
	8	0,541	0,351	0,161	0,231		0,137	0,187	0,223	0,173
Factor 2 (UoC 5,6,7)	6,2	0,256	0,564				0,111			
	5,2	0,134	0,562	0,249	0,153	0,244	0,195	0,171	0,120	
	7,1	0,279	0,550	0,118		0,158		0,386		
	6,1	0,240	0,525	0,142	0,285	0,152	0,152			
	7,2	0,285	0,516		0,155		0,137		0,489	
	5,3		0,489	0,262			0,127	0,119	0,185	0,164
	5,1	0,175	0,400	0,205	0,218	0,259	0,292	0,219		
Factor 3 (UoC 15)	15,3	0,148	0,104	0,824	0,148	0,102		0,209		0,117
	15,2	0,103	0,212	0,804		0,124	0,126			
	15,4	0,182	0,122	0,668	0,124	0,235	0,153	0,356		
	15,1	0,289	0,261	0,607		0,203	0,211	0,177		
	1,2				0,770	0,176	0,109	0,138		
Factor 4 (UoC 1 & 4)	1,1		0,190		0,694			0,258	0,153	
	2,3	0,108	0,105		0,602	0,382	0,294	–0,185		0,195
	4,1	0,173	0,215	0,188	0,566	0,234		0,206		
	4,2	0,177	0,190	0,300	425		0,145	0,142	0,193	0,298
Factor 5 (UoC 2 & 3)	3,2		0,113	0,159		0,794		0,114		0,110
	3,1			0,132	0,189	0,600	0,122	0,272		
	3,3			0,225	0,260	0,582	0,125		0,283	
	2,2		0,199	0,145	0,438	0,496	0,130		–0,226	
	2,1		0,296		0,332	0,431				0,153
Factor 6 (UoC 14)	14,2	0,169	0,150	0,143	0,129	0,101	0,778	0,125		0,178
	14,3	0,204	0,104	0,138	0,106		0,759	0,145	0,139	
	14,1	0,178	0,374	0,195		0,114	0,578			
Factor 7 (UoC 12 & 13)	13,3	0,318	0,160	0,157	0,192	0,184		0,676		0,113
	13,2	0,234		0,293	0,130		0,112	0,607	0,241	
	12,1	0,264	0,210	0,117	0,239		0,325	0,548		0,141
	12,2	0,275	0,348	0,188	0,215	0,138	0,286	0,514	–0,170	
Factor 8 (UoC 7)	7,3	0,240	0,290		0,100	0,134	0,229	0,160	0,604	0,184
Factor 9 (UoC 9)	9	0,216	0,368		0,168	0,132	0,162	0,122		0,649
	13,1	0,159		0,207		0,311		0,309	0,179	0,436

Second Level Factor Analysis

Sub-scores were calculated on the nine principle components extracted in the first level factor analysis. The KMO of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied on the inter-correlation matrix of the nine sub-scores. The results of this analysis are reflected in Table 5.

TABLE 5
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0,897
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square		501,630
	Df	36
	Sig.	0,000

The results in Table 5 indicate that the data set complies with the requirements for factor analysis, as it is higher that 0.5 (Statcon online, 2003).

Principle Axis Factoring (PAF) was used to extract the factors. The Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues > 1) (Kaiser, 1960 in Statsoft, 2003 online) was used to determine the number of factors to be extracted. One factor was subsequently extracted explaining 50.93% of the variation. No further rotation was requires as only one factor was extracted.

Importance of Units of Competence

The results documented of the statistical analysis conducted, strives to test the research hypotheses (H_1 & H_2) and their related statistical hypotheses. The results documented in the next section reflects the results of the one-way Anova and the independent t-tests of the rankings of the importance of the units of competence as well as the contribution to personal competence of the units of competence between groups, within groups, and the total picture.

ANOVA Results

The statistical analysis performed by Statkon reported the central tendencies of the variables tested along with a confidence level of 95% (statistical significance value of 0,05). Statsoft (2003 online) are of the opinion that a sample size of a hundred or more can be classified as a large sample that will result in valid assumptions about the mean. It can therefore be deduced that the sample size used in this empirical research is sufficient to make valid assumptions based on the resultant mean scores. Table 6 reflects the Anova results of the importance of the units of competence between groups, within groups and the total.

The Anova results documented in Table 6 indicate that there are no statistical significant differences (p-values between groups, within groups and in the overall picture of the statistical analysis). It could therefore be argued that Ho is accepted for research hypothesis H_1 due to the fact that the p-values (sig) are all larger than 0,05.

The results in Table 6 suggest that an equal level of importance of the units of competence to deal with resistance to change is reflected within groups, between groups and in the overall statistical analysis.

Table 7 reflects the Anova results of the contribution of the units of competence to the personal competence levels between groups, within groups and the total.

The Anova results documented in Table 7 indicate that there are no statistical significant differences (p-values between groups, within groups and in the overall picture of the statistical

analysis). It could therefore be argued that Ho is accepted for research hypothesis H_2 due to the fact that the p-values (sig) are all larger than 0,05.

TABLE 6
ANOVA OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITS OF COMPETENCE (UOC) BETWEEN GROUPS (BG), WITHIN GROUPS (WIG) AND THE TOTAL

UoC Nr.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	BG	0,355	2	0,178	0,642	0,537
	WiG	41,813	147	0,284		
	Total	42,168	149			
2	BG	0,423	2	0,211	0,516	0,598
	WiG	59,822	146	0,410		
	Total	60,245	148			
3	BG	0,830	2	0,415		
	WiG	30,505	145	0,210	1,974	0,143
	Total	31,336	147			
4	BG	0,144	2	0,072	0,234	0,791
	WiG	45,617	148	0,308		
	Total	45,762	150			
5	BG	0,114	2	0,057	0,154	0,858
	WiG	54,019	146	0,370		
	Total	54,133	148			
6	BG	0,346	2	0,173	0,818	0,443
	WiG	30,915	146	0,212		
	Total	31,262	148			
7	BG	0,297	2	0,149	0,526	0,592
	WiG	41,020	145	0,283		
	Total	41,318	147			
8	BG	0,699	2	0,349	0,576	0,563
	WiG	84,910	140	0,606		
	Total	85,608	142			
9	BG	0,539	2	0,270	0,806	0,449
	WiG	48,883	146	0,335		
	Total	49,423	148			
10	BG	0,853	2	0,426	1,153	0,319
	WiG	54,012	146	0,370		
	Total	54,865	148			
11	BG	0,190	2	0,095	0,236	0,790
	WiG	59,143	147	0,402		
	Total	59,333	149			
12	BG	0,645	2	0,323	0,842	0,433
	WiG	56,348	147	0,383		
	Total	56,993	149			
13	BG	0,186	2	0,093	0,325	0,723
	WiG	41,582	145	0,287		
	Total	41,768	147			
14	BG	0,667	2	0,333	0,760	0,470
	WiG	63,640	145	0,439		
	Total	64,306	147	0,126		
15	BG	0,252	2	0,411	0,307	0,736
	WiG	59,585	145			
	Total	59,837	147			

TABLE 7
ANOVA OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITS OF COMPETENCE (UOC) TO PERSONAL COMPETENCE LEVELS BETWEEN GROUPS (BG), WITHIN GROUPS (WIG) AND THE TOTAL

UoC Nr.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	BG	1,228	2	0,614	1.120	0,329
	WiG	80,605	147	0,548		
	Total	81,833	149			
2	BG	1,120	2	0,560	0,721	0,488
	WiG	114,231	147	0,777		
	Total	115,351	149			
3	BG	0,738	2	0,369	0,486	
	WiG	112,392	148	0,759	0,616	
	Total	113,131	150			
4	BG	1,868	2	0,934	1,633	0,199
	WiG	84,080	147	0,572		
	Total	853948	149			
5	BG	0,328	2	0,164	0,233	0,793
	WiG	103,543	147	0,704		
	Total	103,870	149			
6	BG	1,196	2	0,598	0,862	0,424
	WiG	101,271	146	0,694		
	Total	102,466	148			
7	BG	2,038	2	1,019	1,773	0,173
	WiG	84,492	147	0,575		
	Total	86,530	149			
8	BG	5,099	2	2,550	2,675	0,072
	WiG	137,227	144	0,953		
	Total	142,327	146			
9	BG	1,661	2	0,830	1,006	0,368
	WiG	120,540	146	0,826		
	Total	122,201	148			
10	BG	0,947	2	0,474	0,838	0,435
	WiG	83,662	148	0,565		
	Total	84,609	150			
11	BG	1,918	2	0,959	1,942	0,147
	WiG	72,582	147	0,494		
	Total	74,500	149			
12	BG	2,463	2	1,232	1,904	0,153
	WiG	95,105	147	0,647		
	Total	97,568	149			
13	BG	2,527	2	1,263	2,050	0,132
	WiG	90,573	147	0,616		
	Total	93,099	149			
14	BG	1,414	2	0,707	0,865	0,423
	WiG	120,929	148	0,817		
	Total	122,343	150			
15	BG	2,887	2	1,443	2,466	0,088
	WiG	86,626	148	0,585		
	Total	89,512	150			

The results in Table 7 suggest that there is an equal reflection within groups, between groups and in the overall picture in the way that the units of competence contribute to the personal levels of competence to deal with resistance to change.

Group Results
The group results of the paired samples t-test are documented in Table 8.

TABLE 8
PAIRED RESULTS OF THE SAMPLES T-TEST FOR THE GROUP

Pair of UoC	Mean	t	df	Sig.
1	0,1500	2,199	159	0,029
2	0,1833	2,695	159	0,008
3	0,2746	4,072	158	0,000
4	0,2236	3,347	160	0,001
5	0,1094	1,698	159	0,091
6	0,2437	3,850	157	0,000
7	0,1488	2,628	158	0,009
8	0,1429	1,708	153	0,090
9	0,1772	2,476	157	0,014
10	0,0411	0,731	159	0,466
11	0,1313	2,162	159	0,032
12	0,1522	2,539	160	0,012
13	0,2044	3,118	158	0,002
14	0,1698	2,640	158	0,009
15	0,0807	1,364	158	0,175

The results in Table 8 indicates that with 4 of the 15 units of competence the respondents across the group had an equal rating of the importance of the units of competence to deal with resistance to change and the contribution of the units of competence to personal competence levels.

The results in Table 8 also indicate that, of the 15 units of competence tested, 11 had statistical significant differences. These 11 units of competence are listed below:
- 1 (p-value = 0,029): Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the target state of change.
- 2 (p-value = 0,008): Understand the rationale for change.
- 3 (p-value = 0,000): Obtain an understanding of the customers needs/potential target market.
- 4 (p-value = 0,001): Conduct a strategic plan for personal area of responsibility.
- 6 (p-value = 0,000): Prepare self for change.
- 7 (p-value = 0,009): Conduct an audit of individual strengths and weaknesses of team members by involving them in the process.
- 9 (p-value = 0,014): Compile team communication strategies
- 11 (p-value = 0,032): Determine changes in roles of subordinates due to change.
- 12 (p-value = 0,012): Compile individual personal development plans.
- 13 (p-value = 0,002): Facilitate development of team members.
- 14 (p-value = 0,009): Agree on a code of conduct governing behaviour during change.

Considering the statistical significances and the representation of UCM in this sample group, it evident that this group had a significant influence on the outcome of the empirical research.

The high occurrence of statistical significant differences could suggest that across the three organisations (SSM, UCM and TDFS), there was a lack of consensus between the importance of the units of competence and the contribution of the units of competence to personal competence levels to deal with resistance to change. This will be discussed later in this article.

Figure 1 below is a representation of the integrated group results of the mean scores of the importance of each unit of competence

to deal with resistance to change and the contribution that each unit of competence can make to the personal competence levels of the respondents.
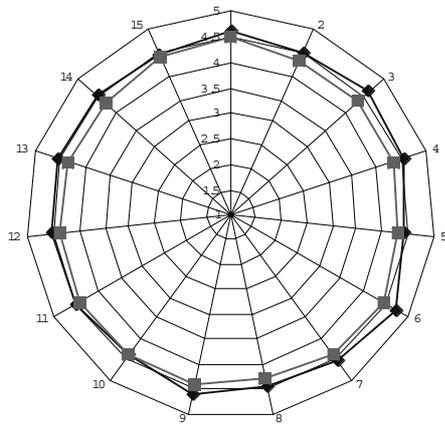

Figure 1: Average score for all three groups

The results presented in Figure 1 indicate that the responses are negatively skewed. The mean responses were assessed as being so important to the respondents that variances needed to be assessed to determine the differences in ranking and between units of competence. This could imply the following:

- The respondents considered all the units of competence as of real importance to deal with resistance to change and as contributing to their personal levels of competence to deal with resistance to change.
- The respondents considered it as socially acceptable to respond positively to the questions.
- The respondents did not pay real attention to the questions and completed the questionnaires just to get it done.

Although the mean scores do not reflect the results of a statistical hypothesis, it can be argued that the high mean scores contribute to the reliability that has been indicated earlier in the study.

DISCUSSION

One of the central premises of this research was that first-line managers leading others through their resistance to change do not only require a singular competence of dealing with resistance to change. Resistance to change requires a holistic and integrated approach which

- enables first-line managers to deal with their own resistance to change;
- enables first-line managers to clearly understand the rationale of the change and the end state thereof;
- focuses on the individual;
- be catalysts for bottom-up change; and
- contribute to organisational effectiveness and efficiencies by being proactive to resistance to change.

Importance of the Units of Competence
A comparison of the mean scores indicates that the all the units of competence are of significant importance to first-line managers to be able to deal with resistance to change. The empirical research proved that none of the units of competence of Lombard & Crafford are of limited importance or of no importance to enable first-line managers to deal with resistance to change. Table 9 reflects the mean scores of the units of competence from the highest to the lowest mean ranking.

Ranking	Mean Score	Unit of Competence
1	4,7089	6 - Prepare self for change.
2	4,6281	1 - Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the target state of change
3	4,6247	3 - Obtain an understanding of customer needs/ potential target market
4	4,6013	9 - Compile team communication strategies
5	4,5440	13 - Facilitate development of team members
6	4,5404	4 - Conduct a strategic plan for personal area of responsibility
7	4,5283	7 - Conduct an audit of individual strengths and weaknesses of team members by involving them in the process
8	4,5281	11 - Determine changes in roles of subordinates due to change
9	4,4876	12 - Compile individual personal development plans
10	4,4780	14 - Agree on a code of conduct governing behaviour during change
11	4,4729	2 - Understand the rationale for change
12	4,4523	15 - Develop a business case for bottom-up change
13	4,4416	8 - Compile individual communication strategies
14	4,4271	10 - Conduct individual information sessions
15	4,3677	5 - Facilitate planning to determine best-practice solutions

Considering the results in Table 9 highlighted, the following significant information regarding the suggested units of competence to deal with resistance to change:

- Four of the top ten units of competence (rankings 1,2, 3, and 6) refer to competencies that deal with personal mastery and personal understanding of the change.
- Three of the top ten units of competence (rankings 7,8, and 9) refer to competencies that deal with growing the area of responsibility "one person at a time".
- Three of the top ten units of competence (rankings 4,5, and 10) refer to competencies that deal with contributing to the team/organisational levels.

It could be inferred the units of competence identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003) reflect an integrated and holistic approach to enabling first-line managers to deal with resistance to change. First-line managers that are able to demonstrate the behaviours associated with the fifteen units of competence would be recognised by subordinates, peers and superiors as a good role models and effective manager of resistance to change.

The units of competence with the highest mean score (prepare self for change) proves that there is a correlation between international research regarding resistance to change (Kent, 2003; Biegun, 2002, p. 542; Schiemann, 1992; Prosci, 2003; Archilles et al, 2002, p. 169; Van Buren & Werner (1996), in Appelbaum, St-Pierre, Glavas, 1998, p. 293) and the South African scenario. A criteria for successful change required that managerial resistance to change need to be overcome before that of operational employees should be dealt with. The empirical research confirms this criterion for successful change.

Of value to this research is the fact that the personal resistance to change of first-line managers can be due to their lack of understanding of the envisaged change and not due to the fact that they are not receptive for change. Behaviour that manifests itself as resistance to change is therefore not always resistance against what people think, but also because of the feelings they experience during the change process. This research therefore confirms the view of Kotter & Cohen (2002, p. 11) and Kets de

Vries (2002) that change is an integration of what a person "sees, feels and thinks". The combination of these three elements result in resistance to change that can manifest or be associated with "fear of loss" and "fear of the new".

The empirical research challenges the traditional view that first-line managers are not expected to conduct strategic planning. Although not a strategic level, the high mean score for the unit of competence that refers to the ability of first-line managers to conduct strategic plans for their areas of responsibility indicates the importance of alignment and cascading organisational strategies to the lowest levels as criteria for successful change.

The integrated nature of dealing with resistance to change should focus on competencies for first-line managers, which will enable them to design and implement a behavioural, technical and structural strategy to support the achievement of successful change.

Considering the results documented in Table 9, it could be argued that the following hypothesis has been proved true: H1: There is a correlation between the units of competence identified by Lombard & Crafford and the importance for first-line managers to deal effectively with resistance to change.

Contribution to Personal Levels of Competence

The results of the samples t-tests indicate that the respondents were of the opinion that all the units of competence can contribute their personal levels of competence to deal with resistance to change. Comparing the mean scores indicates that all the units of competence are important to contribute to the personal competence levels of first-line managers to be able to deal with resistance to change.

It can be inferred that not one of the units of competence is viewed as of limited importance or of no importance to contribute to the personal competence levels of first-line managers.

Table 10 reflects the mean scores of the units of competence from the highest to the lowest mean ranking.

TABLE 10
MEAN SCORES OF UNITS OF COMPETENCE CONTRIBUTING TO PERSONAL LEVELS OF COMPETENCE TO DEAL WITH RESISTANCE TO CHANGE FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE LOWEST MEAN RANKING

Ranking	Mean Score	Unit of Competence
1	4,4781	1 - Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the target state of change
2	4,4652	6 - Prepare self for change
3	4,4241	9 - Compile team communication strategies
4	4,3969	11- Determine changes in roles of subordinates due to change
5	4,3859	10 - Conduct individual information sessions
6	4,3795	7 - Conduct an audit of individual strengths and weaknesses of team members by involving them in the process
7	4,3716	15 - Develop a business case for bottom-up change
8	4,3501	3 - Obtain an understanding of customer needs/ potential target market
9	4,3396	13 - Facilitate development of team members
10	4,3354	12 - Compile individual personal development plans
11	4,3168	4 - Conduct a strategic plan for personal area of responsibility
12	4,3082	14 - Agree on a code of conduct governing behaviour during change
13	4,2987	8 - Compile individual communication strategies
14	4,2896	2 - Understand the rationale for change
15	4,2583	5 - Facilitate planning to determine best-practice solutions

Considering the results documented in Table 10, it could be argued that the following hypothesis has been proved true: H2: There is a correlation between the units of competence identified by Lombard and Crafford and the contribution of the units of competence to the personal competence levels of first-line managers.

Ranking of the Units of Competence

The results of the research indicate that the six most important units of competence for first-line managers to deal with resistance to change are as follows:
- 6 – Prepare self for change.
- 1 – Obtain a comprehensive understanding of the target state of change.
- 3 – Obtain an understanding of customer needs/ potential target market.
- 2 – Understand the rationale for change.
- 4 – Conduct a strategic plan for personal area of responsibility.
- 15 – Develop a business case for bottom-up change.

Considering the most important units of competence it could be argued that first-line managers can benefit from the following elements of competence to deal with resistance to change:
- Analytical skills
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Business acumen
- Communication skills
- Problem solving and decision-making

It could be argued that the units of competence identified by Lombard & Crafford (2003) reflect an integrated and holistic approach to enabling first-line managers to deal with resistance to change.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has provided relevant and interesting insights into the roles of first-line managers in dealing with resistance to change and the units of competence required to deal with resistance to change. To motivate further research in this field of study, the following limitations of this specific study are recognised:
- The understanding of the term competence as well as the application thereof in organisational context is diverse. This study considered competence from a functional analysis approach as suggested by Fletcher (1997).
- The study did not attempt to develop measurable standards that are required if competence is to be assessed.
- The study was limited to the units of competence within the functional analysis framework as suggested by Fletcher (1997, p. 11) and the National Examining Board for Supervisors and Management (1998, p. 8) and did not identify the specific elements of competence (skills, knowledge, personal competencies, control guidelines, tools and equipment, and conditions and circumstances).
- The study is limited to the limitations of a survey.
- The Likert-type scale that was used in the questionnaire resulted in mean scores that represented values between the highest two scales.
- This study focused on the modern perceptions of the roles of first-line managers.
- This study assumed that organisations view the profile of a first-line manager as a management level that could be a catalyst for bottom-up change.
- This study did not investigate the possibility of whether it is practical to expect of one individual that to be able to apply all the required units of competence in the workplace.
- The test sample only comprised members of three organisations within one holding company representing one industry. The researcher is aware of the potential problems of over-generalisation when testing perceptions of localised samples.
- The sample sizes of the organisations in the study differ,

which have an influence on both the statistical analysis as well as the findings based on the analyses, despite statistical measures to counter for these effects.

Following are the recommendations for future research.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The above limitations of the research highlight the fact that the field of study can benefit from recommendations that focus on a practical, theoretical and methodological perspective. The following recommendations for future research are recommended:

Recommendations from a Theoretical Perspective
From a theoretical perspective it is recommended that further research be carried out in the following areas:
- The identification of specific elements of competence (for example skills and knowledge) for each unit of competence
- The entrepreneurial roles of first-line managers in organisations.
- The profile of the modern first-line manager.

Recommendations from a Practical Perspective
From a practical perspective it is recommended that an assessment instrument be designed with measurable standards to determine individual development needs of first-line managers to deal with resistance to change.

Recommendations from a Methodological Perspective
From a practical perspective the following recommendations are suggested:
- The design and development of a seven-point Likert-type scale with more specific options of selection on the importance and non-importance scales to facilitate a more exact reflection of mean scores.
- Qualitative approaches and methods, including the facilitation of focus groups and interviews should also be included to supplement questionnaire surveys.

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