Effect of transformational leadership on employee resistance to change at eThekwini automobiles: a perspective of leaders' inspirational motivation

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership and employee change resistance have been studied extensively. However, no systematic attempt has been made to reframe those findings in light of leaders' inspirational drive. The sample size of 170 participants from eThekwini automobile dealership organisations indicated that employees' intention to resist change was negatively associated with their managers' transformational leadership style focused on inspirational motivation. Transformational leadership's impact on employee resistance to change at eThewkini Automobiles in KwaZulu-Natal is examined through a leader's inspirational motivation. Inspirational motivation reduced staff resistance to change at these car companies, according to the transformational leadership tool multi-leadership questionnaire (MLQ). Various branches of 6 major automobile companies in eThekwini, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa were considered for this study. The study included 170 of 270 individuals. Both descriptive and correlational analysis were employed to test study objectives. The study found that inspirational motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee resistance to change because transformational leadership reduces resistance, improves commitment, and embraces change. Inspirational motivation mediates transformational leadership in organisational change management, according to the study. The study suggests that management use inspiring motivation to promote change management acceptability and commitment to change and reduce employee resistance to change.

Introduction

The study emphasizes the need to consider an aspect of transformational leadership style referred to as the "Leader's inspirational motivation in order to curb employee resistance to change. Studies in literature has pointed out that modern day organisations are facing significant challenges in dealing with process of change and development, which aims to enable and strengthen their ability of survival and growth (Powell, 2020Soeardi; Ilhami, & Achmad, 2023). The automobile organisations are considered as one of those that lead the change process and demands major innovations and by so doing, strongly demands ideas, ideologies and cultural value systems that needs a pattern of transformational leadership (Usman, 2020).

The major problem faced by these organizations is staff resistance to organisational change. This requires an administrative leadership system that is willing to keep up with a conventional method of leadership such as the transformational system of leadership with specific attention to the inspirational motivation perspective (Potosky & Azan 2023). In the context of eThekwini Automobiles, the orgaisations are renowned for their innovation and commitments to excellence in the automotive industry hence the organizational change has become a recurring theme (Hess, 2022). In response to evolving market trends, regulatory requirements, and customer preferences, the organisations have initiated a series of changes, including the implementation of cutting-edge technologies, shifts in

production processes, and adaptations to product offerings (Patra &Roy, 2023). While these changes are well-intentioned and geared towards maintaining a competitive edge, they have encountered varying degrees of resistance from employees at different levels of each organisation. Resistance to change within eThekwini Automobiles has been observed in the form of employee skepticism, reluctance to embrace new technologies, and concerns about job security and role changes (Patra &Roy, 2023; Potosky & Azan 2023). This resistance, if left unaddressed, has the potential to disrupt operations, delay the realisation of strategic objectives, and compromise oganisation's market positions. Recognizing the gravity of this challenge, eThekwini Automobiles acknowledges the need to investigate the dynamics of leadership within their organisations, with a specific focus on transformational leadership.

Peng, Li, Wang and Lin (2021), pointed out the main challenge as employee resistance to change and their lack of motivation to accept change which eventually leads to waste of energy and human resources. Since these organisations need transformational change to keep up with the rapid global development in the business environments, this prompts the need for renewed leaders with a transformational mindset to inspire and motivate the workers. Tan, VanDun and Wilderom (2023) further posited the need to enhance the workers' capabilities to re-organise the environment work and its relations based on interactive basis which demands cooperation and teamwork. Powell (2020), on the other hand, agrees that transformational leadership can encourage motivational systems based on the idealised influence, inspiration motivation, and intellectual stimulation and preserving personal consideration which ultimately promotes requirement for change. In other words, there is a notable consensus that transformational leadership raises the morale of employees, unifying the general spirit among them and promoting collaborative work environment by establishing trust amongst themselves and their superiors eventually leading to the achievement of the organisational goals (Saad, 202; Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022). Most of the studies aiming to explore successful organisational change have been given little attention to the employees' perspective of change (Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022). In order to achieve the aim of this study, questionairres were issues to various branches of 6 major automobile organisations in the eThekwini region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa which were considered. Out of the 270 participants considered, 170 participated in the study. Descriptive and correlational analysis were used to test the study objectives.

This paper is organized as follows: following the introduction part, a second part is the problem statement which is followed by the research objectives. Next, is the literature review with theoretical and empirical studies that shed light on linkage between theory and practice. Following afterwards, is the background information on research methodology. After analysis and findings of the study, result indicated that inspirational motivation of leaders play a significant role in reducing employee resistance. The study was concluded by recommending the practice of this aspect of transformational leadership.

 The automobile organisations are considered as one of those that lead the change process and demands major innovations and by so doing, strongly demands ideas, ideologies and cultural value systems that needs a pattern of transformational leadership (Usman, 2020). The major problem faced by these organizations is staff resistance to organisational change. This requires an administrative leadership system that is willing to keep up with a conventional method of leadership such as the transformational system of leadership with specific attention to the inspirational motivation perspective (Potosky & Azan 2023). In the context of eThekwini Automobiles, the orgaisations are renowned for their innovation and commitments to excellence in the automotive industry hence the organizational change has become a recurring theme (Hess, 2022). In response to evolving market trends, regulatory requirements, and customer preferences, the organisations have initiated a series of changes, including the implementation of cutting-edge technologies, shifts in production processes, and adaptations to product offerings (Patra &Roy, 2023). . While these changes are well-intentioned and geared towards maintaining a competitive edge, they have encountered varying degrees of resistance from employees at different levels of each organisation. Resistance to change within eThekwini Automobiles has been observed in the form of employee skepticism, reluctance to embrace new technologies, and concerns about job security and role changes (Patra &Roy, 2023; Potosky & Azan 2023). This resistance, if left unaddressed, has the potential to disrupt operations, delay the realisation of strategic objectives, and compromise oganisation's market positions. Recognising the gravity of this challenge, eThekwini Automobiles acknowledges the need to investigate the dynamics of leadership within their organisations, with a specific focus on transformational leadership. Within the broader context of leadership, leaders' inspirational motivation stands out as a critical component. It encompasses the ability of leaders to inspire and motivate their employees by articulating a compelling vision, instilling a sense of purpose, and communicating a genuine commitment to shared goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Hence, this study aims to address the following research problem:

    i.   How does a particular emphasis on leaders' inspirational motivation, influence employee resistance to change at the eThekwini Automobile organisations?

In order to address this question, the study will delve into the leadership practices, employee attitudes, and the dynamics of change management within the organization.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on employee resistance to change from the perspective of leaders' inspirational motivation at the eThekwini Automobiles in KwaZulu-Natal region. In order to achieve this overarching goal, the study aims to:

    i.   Assess the prevailing transformational leadership practices within the eThekwini Automobiles.

ii.   Explore the role of leaders' inspirational motivation in influencing employee attitudes and behaviors during organisational change.

iii.   Analyze the relationship between transformational leadership, leaders' inspirational motivation, and employee resistance to change.

iv.   Provide recommendations and insights for automobiles and organisations aimed at enhancing their change management strategies.

v.   In order to achieve the objective of this study, questionnairres were issues to various branches of 6 major automobile organisations in the eThekwini region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa which were considered. Out of the 270 participants considered, 170 participated in the study. Descriptive and correlational analysis were used to test the study objectives.

Having discussed the introduction of the study covering the problem statement and research objectives, the remaining main sections unpacks the literature reviews, methodology of the study, results, discussions, theoretical and practical implications, limitations of the study, conclusions as well as future study required.

Literature Review

This section presents an overview of the transformational leadership with particular emphasis on inspirational motivation and its impact on employee resistance to change. It further explores the theoretical framework linking the relationship between transformational leadership, leaders' inspirational motivation, and employee resistance to change.

Overview of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a prominent leadership paradigm introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and has widely been recognised for its capacity to inspire and motivate followers to transcend their self-interests in pursuit of higher-order collective goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation, strengthening the individuals' cooperative capacity of problem solving so as to attain organizational goals. Trofino (2020) defines transformational leaders as those that have the ability to develop a clear vision for the future. Transformational leaders tend to change individuals and organisations considering their values, ethics, standards as well as long term goals. Transformational leaders are characterised by their ability to create a compelling vision, stimulate intellectual growth, encourage creativity, and promote a sense of shared purpose and commitment among their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Juyumaya & Torres, 2023). According to Bass and Riggio (2006) the key components of transformational leadership include:

i.   Idealised Influence (Charisma): transformational leaders exhibit charisma and serve as role models, earning the admiration and trust of their followers.

ii.   Inspirational Motivation: they communicate a compelling vision, instill a sense of purpose, and inspire commitment.

iii.   Intellectual Stimulation: transformational leaders encourage innovation and intellectual growth, fostering a culture of continuous learning.

iv.   Individualised Consideration: they show genuine concern for the individual needs and development of their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Having briefly discussed the overview of transformational leadership, the next section elaborates on employee resistance to change.

Employee resistance to change: Dimensions, Causes and Consequences

Employee resistance to change is referred to as the feeling and sensation of employees as a result of a change process the organisation is undergoing as it undergone for organisational improvement Bagga, Gera & Haque, 2023). Resistance to change is the inability to accept change that threatens the interest of individuals which result to as an impediment to achieving organisational goals. For employees, it is a psychological state that affects the success of change initiatives in organisations (Choi & Ruona, 2011). As organizational change prompts resistance, it is essential that organisations understand this phenomenon. Several research studies on resistance to change dimensions considered the following dimensions to resistance to change as mentioned below:

i.   Cognitive rigidity:

Cogntive rigidity refers to how a person's thoughts and principles brings about change, once the individual is able to adjust his or her beliefs and principles in order to accept change. Rigid persons are naturally closed-minded and less likely to embrace innovative conditions- hence their resistance to change (Perrotta, 2020).

ii.   Short term focus:

Short –term focus implies that a person's focus at work wavers, thereby limiting a worker's capacity to accept innovative ways of working leading to unwillingness to take risks, exhibiting narrow mindedness towards change. Resistance can occur when employees' long-term benefits are at risk, and this highlights the period of deferment prior to a series of premeditated changes (Chukwuma, 2022).

  iii. Routine seeking:

Routine seeking is an interactive aspect involving an act, or reason for reacting to a change. This is a dimension of employee resistance which signifies an unwillingness to give up old practices resulting to discrepancies which eventually leads to lower inspiration and motivation (Chukwuma, 2022).

  iv. Emotional reaction:

Emotional reaction could result from high levels of stress and frustrations if the work environment is poorly organized and managed. This implies that control over one's circumstance is significantly connected with the capability to cope with managerial change. For people with stronger locus of control, change acceptability is apparently anticipated. On another note, workers with less control over their surroundings are vulnerable to fear and anxiety, or fear of success eventually leading to resistance to change towards change. As a result, employees experience high levels of stress and frustration causing interpersonal conflicts (Chukwuma, 2022).

According to Warrick (2023), the reasons for employee to resistance to change includes:

  i. Satisfaction with the familiar and fear of the unknown: people tend to love to maintain the familiar things, because they feel good and are fearful of the unknown which is associated with uncertainty about the future, leading to anxiety and resistance.
  ii. Habits: different levels of learning demonstrate that behavior patterns determine how people respond
  iii. Lack of understanding or confidence
  iv. Fear of the Unknown: change often brings uncertainty about the future, leading to anxiety and resistance.
  v. Perceived Loss: employees may perceive change as a threat to their job security, status, or familiarity with their work environment.
  vi. Lack of Trust: lack of trust in organizational leaders or the change process can lead to resistance.
  vii. Loss of Autonomy: employees may resist when they feel that their autonomy and control over their work are being reduced (Armenakis & Harris, 2002).

The consequences of unchecked employee resistance to change can be detrimental to organisations. These consequences may include reduced productivity, increased turnover, decreased morale, and the failure of change initiatives (Evans & Britt, 2023).

The Role of Transformational leadership on Employee resistance to change

Scholars allude that transformational leadership can be a potent antidote to employee resistance to change (Wang & Kim, 2023; Muchiri, 2022). Other studies investigating the impact of transformational leadership on employee resistance to change supported the link between transformational leadership and effective performance of employees based on the role of such leaders in motivating their followers when resistance to changes arises (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Evans & Britt, 2023). Wood (2019) identified the lack of success in organisations when there was an absence of effective leadership. Thus, it was found that transformational leadership, although proposed many decades ago, is critical in recent times due to its ability to improve change commitment and effective work performance through effective inspirational motivation.

Savovic (2017) also studied the impact of transformational leadership on change commitment and organisational behavior considering growth, innovation `and expansion activities. The result indicated that transformational leadership, in all its dimensions, has positive effect on job performance during organizational changes. They established that transformational leaders influence job positively through their charismatic behaviours, inspirations and optimism, employees find it easier to adapt to change. Gareth and Gill (2012) investigated transformational leadership across the hierarchical levels in manufacturing organisations in the United-Kingdom. The study sample was 367 managers. One of the most prominent results of the study was that the transformational leaders were the most productive. This leadership style was equally effective across all the hierarchical levels in the organisations that were studied. The transformational leader's ability to inspire and motivate employees aligns with the needs that arise during times of change. By fostering a shared vision and instilling a sense of purpose, transformational leaders can potentially reduce the psychological discomfort associated with change and mitigate resistance (Ngwama & Ogaga-Oghene, 2022). Moreover, within the framework of transformational leadership, leaders' inspirational motivation is of particular interest in the context of change management. Leaders who excel in inspirational motivation are adept at communicating a compelling vision, instilling a sense of purpose, and inspiring commitment (Musyoki, 2022). These qualities can be vital in addressing the emotional and motivational aspects of employee resistance to change, as employees are more likely to embrace change when they perceive it as meaningful and aligned with their values (Ouko, 2022).

Transformational leaders are often described as mentors or role models as they lead by example, encouraging an environment where innovative thinking is aligned with the values, beliefs and objectives of the organization. Individuals are openly recognised for their contributions in change commitment, thereby reducing resistance to change (Musyoki, 2022).

Bass and Avolio (1994) developed an entire model for dimensions and components of transformational leadership which helps in reducing employee resistance to change.

The dimensions include:

  i.   *Idealised Influence:*

This refers to the way in which transformational leaders exert their influence within a group. These leaders are deeply respected by their team and they provide a clear vision and sense of belonging which encourage individuals to buy into the long-term objectives of the organisation and drives them to achieve their goals. These transformational leaders' practice behaviours make them models for their followers. Emanating from their exemplary nature, followers are willing to accept and commit to change adaptation easily.

  ii. *Intellectual Stimulation:*

Such transformational leaders create a diverse and open environment within which they encourage others to innovate and form new ideas for the organisation and themselves. This type of leadership plays an influential role in reducing resistance to change as it encourages other paths to goals that stray from the norm, thereby encouraging creativity.

  iii. *Inspirational Motivation:*

These transformational leaders play an important role in improving performance, by raising the moral of team members and motivating them on a singular level to gain their commitment to change. This encourages team spirit through enthusiasm.

  iv. *Individualised Consideration:*

These transformational leaders actively work to create a diverse but supportive environment, where individual differences are respected and celebrated. They know each of their followers, individually, and will happily listen to any concerns or needs that their team members may have. In organisational context, managers of this nature tend to pay attention to their staff and respect their employees. They constantly invite employees to participate in decision making and other administrative affairs.

Leaders' Inspirational Motivation as a Key Component of Transformational Leadership

Leaders' inspirational motivation is one of the four key components of transformational leadership, alongside idealised influence (ie charisma), intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). It revolves around the leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision of the future, set high expectations, and motivate followers to strive toward achieving collective goals (Chukwuma, Govender & Onwubu, 2023). Research has suggested that leaders who excel in inspirational motivation can positively influence employee attitudes and behaviors, including reducing resistance to change (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Elsing, 2022). By instilling a sense of purpose and creating an emotionally engaging narrative around change, leaders can help employees overcome the psychological barriers associated with change, making them more receptive to new initiatives (Quenga, 2022).

A number of studies demonstrated the roles of transformational leadership traits, theories and behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 1993, Yukl, 2010; Cao & Li, 2022). Transformational leadership behaviors can influence employees' resistance to change through several ways. Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire followers by offering a compelling vision of future changes in the organisation (Alamri, 2023). They use intellectual stimulation to challenge employees in accepting innovative solutions to problems and challenge the statuquo. Transformational leaders are expected to curb their followers' resistance to change by means of the varying attributes (Puni, Hilton, Mohammed and Korankye, 2022).

A number of studies investigated constructs conceptually related to transformational leadership and linked them with employees' resistance to change (Islam, 2023). A couple of studies also examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee resistance to change. In one of such studies, transformational leadership behaviours were negatively associated employees' cynicism about organisational change (Boamah, 2022). Another study demonstrated the relationship between transformational leadership and the success of mergers (Puni, Hilton, Mohammed & Korankye, 2022). In that study, transformational leadership behaviours played a significant role in shaping a climate that reduced resistance to change. More specifically, transformational leadership was associated with a climate of creative thinking and an emphasis on goal clarity which is directly related to change acceptance (Mohammed & Al-Abrrow, 2022).

Leaders, through inspirational motivation are able to communicate vision to their followers with ultimate confidence and intimate them to focus upon their skills and efforts. In turn, followers, will show commitment, autonomy and assurance to achieve the assigned task (Morales, 2022). These leaders improve the follower's perception and interest to inspire them towards better performance and through their emotional backing, and support, then are able to motivate followers to enhance their potentials (Khan, Amin & Saif, 2022). The leaders with inspirational motivation articulate futuristic vision in the organisations. Such leaders build strong image among the followers which is essential for successful leadership (Em, 2023). These leaders are more effective in challenging situations where leaders raise team spirit, build enthusiasm and encourage creativity (Mumford, Fitchel, England & Newbold, 2023). All of these factors are relevant for the success of any organisational changes. In line with these findings, this study adds to previous knowledge by examining the role of leader's inspirational motivation as a key component to transformational leadership. Hence, the next session discusses the mediating role of leader's inspirational motivation on employee resistance to change.

The Mediating Role of Leader's Inspirational Motivation on Employee Resistance to Change

This study focuses on the role of inspirational motivation as an attribute of transformational leadership style and its influence on managing employee resistance to change, since organisational change is prone to increase employees' sensivity to fairness (Khan, Amin & Saif, 2022). Inspirational motivation is a key component of transformational leadership which entails encouragement of followers to raise consciousness about their commitment to the mission and vision (Sukotio, Palilati & Kamaluddin, 2023). Since employee resistance to change is significant deterrent to effective organisational change which makes it sometimes difficult or impossible to implement organisational improvements, it is important to consider the mediating role a leader's inspirational motivation. Even though it was once accepted that everyone resist change, researchers have proven that this can be prevented if the workers are treated right and change is effectively implemented through the effective role of leaders that inspire and motivate their subordinates (Morales, 2022; Boamah, 2022; Sukotio, Palilati & Kamaluddin, 2023). Research in organisational change has shown that when workers are treated fairly, they develop attitudes and behaviours required for successful change even under adverse conditions (Kebede & Wang, 2022). In contrast, when organisational decisions and managerial actions are deemed unfair, the affected employees experience feelings of anger, outrage and a desire for retribution (Washington, 2022).

Thanem and Elraz (2022) proposed that when individuals are less powerful than the source of perceived injustice from the management or leaders, resisting change will be one of the ways employees will exercise their power to restore the injustice. In order to achieve such needed justice for the subordinates, resistance to change scholars point out the devastating consequences resulting from mismanagement of change by leaders and the failure to achieve desired change objectives. Other challenges include wasted time, reduced productivity, slow commitments momentum amongat others (Thanem & Elraz, 2022; Evans & Britt, 2023; Sukotio, Palilati & Kamaluddin, 2023). Such challenges can further escalate to loss of confidence and trust in leaders as well as internal conflict and differences between leaders and their subordinates. As a result, contributions to manage resistance to change emerged in some of the earliest studies of resistance which found that participation, involvement, encouraging, inspiring and motivating subordinates reduced resistance and resulted in great commitment to change (Warrick, 2023).

The mediating role of a leader's inspirational motivation considered for this study emphasises on the need for communication,which is key to managing employee resistance. This also include planning and providing managerial support for change, outlining the expected results, and monitoring how such changes will affect employees (Khan, Amin & Saif, 2022). Researchers encouraged leaders' inspirational motivation as means to encourage supportive communication and listening to resistance. By so doing, it is important that such leaders start from the basic foundation of communicating the vision, ensure reward systems are aligned with desired change and train employees to adapt to changes (Brandes & Lai, 2022). Brown and Heitner (2023) further suggest numerous strategies leaders' inspirational motivation reduces resistance to change such educating the subordinates, discussing and supporting. It was agreed that such strategic moves reduces future problems that may arise. Scholars have concluded that resistance is a response to managerial control, responses to unfairness, which appear to be particularly acute with organisations change (Thanem & Elraz, 2022; Cameron & Rahman, 2022; Parker, 2022). This is not surprising given that under conditions of threats, people tend to engage in hypervigilance in which every social interaction becomes scrutinised for hidden meaning and sinister purpose (Brandes & Lai, 2022).

The Effect of Inspirational Motivation on Employee Resistance to Change

According to Islam (2023) resistance to change behaviours affects employees' emotionally and professionally, and it also influences the relationships between employees at the work place. In order to eliminate resistance to change, inspirational motivation as a change leadership style of management plays a crucial role. Studies show that inspirational motivation as a transformational leadership aspect relieves employees from anxiety provoking tendencies, providing a working process that creates a more conducive environment for employees (Thanem & Elraz, 2022; Cameron & Rahman, 2022; Parker, 2022).

For this reason, the study highlights the role of inspirational motivation in the various dimensions of employee resistance to change as discussed below:

Effect of Inspirational motivation on cognitive rigidity

Leaders with inspirational motivation are equipped to direct work-related behavior of their subordinates desired by the organisation (Baquero, 2022). Cognitive rigidity hinders the cognitive ability of employees to accept and commit to change which results to resistance to change (Jeong, Gong & Zhong, 2023). The essence of inspirational motivation displayed by the leaders or managers of the organisation stimulates the workers to step out of their comfort, be flexible enough to adapt to change and get more involved in the change management of the organisation (Dickson, 2022).

Effect of Inspirational motivation on routine seeking

Leaders with inspirational motivation produce incentives that encourages the need to be open minded to change, creating a more conducive environment for change to be acceptable rather than resisting change or sticking to the routine way of doing things. This is also achieved by providing motivational inspirations and personal attention (Potosky & Azan, 2023).

Effect of Inspirational motivation on short-term focus

Leaders with inspirational motivation increase the self-efficacy of their followers or subordinates, making them feel more confident and able to cope with demands of change for a longer duration of time, so long as the change process persist (Dewi & Fitrio, 2022). This further broadens their mindsets and positively affect their attitude towards change. Consequently, the next section presents the hypotheses for this study

Study Hypotheses

Based on the various variable relationships between inspirational motivation and the multi-dimensions of employee resistance to change, the following hypotheses and conceptual model can be formulated as seen in Figure 1. For the purpose of this study, three major hypotheses were considered so as to look into the statistically significant influence between inspirational motivation and the multi-dimensions of resistance to change. They are: cognitive rigidity, routine seeking and short-term focus.

To test these hypotheses, it has been fragmented into sub-hypotheses:

Hypothesis1: Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with routine seeking

Hypothesis 2: Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with cognitive rigidity

Hypothesis 3: Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with short term focus

Having discussed the theory considered for this study, the next section deliberates on the methodology employed.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Research and Methodology

The method for this study will be discussed under the following headings: The target population, sample size, data collection method, measurement analysis.

Target Population: The population of the study was based on the number of dealerships in the eThekwini region of KwaZulu-Natal through an acceptable percentage by the research formula applied (Meyer & Mayrhofer, 2022). Six major branch dealership organisations comprising of their main branches and sub-divisions situated in the eThekwini region were investigated upon.

Sample Size: Sample size selection was based on purposive method which enables the researcher identify organisations whose management approach were transformational in nature. This method of sampling narrows down the generalizability of a wider population (Meyer & Mayrhofer, 2022). On this basis, the sample size turned out to be 176 participants

Data collection: Data covered from the 6 automobile dealership organisations comprises 13 sub-divisions spread across the eThekwini region. The first organization consisted of 4 sub-divisions, the second organisations consisted of 3 subdivisions, the third organisation consisted of 2 sub-divisions, the fourth organization consisted of consisted of one, the fifth consisted of one sub-division, and finally, the sixth organization consisted of two sub-divisions.

Measurement and Data analysis: The study utilised the descriptive and multi-regression analysis which depends on the variables of the study as follows; A specific dimension of transformational leadership referred to as inspirational motivation and the varying dimensions of resistance to change. The analytical method has been utilized for the collection of data through the use of questionnaires developed for this purpose. Questionnaires were designed through the application of the Multi-Leadership Questionnaire instrument. The Likert scale has been adopted to answer the level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric agree-disagree scale for a series of statements.

Analysis

This section assesses the relationship between the role of inspirational motivation and the varying dimensions of employee resistance to change. These include routine seeking, cognitive rigidity, and short-term focus. The first sub-sections present the research variables and indicators. These are followed by empirical results of the study as well as the statistical analysis (that is, measurement and item loading for the constructs).

Research Variables and Indicators

Table 1 indicates the variables and items involved in the study. Inspirational motivation as an independent variable indicates three stated items. It is followed by routine seeking, which is a construct of the dependent variable (that is, resistance to change) consisting of five items. The next dimension of resistance to change, which is short term focus consisting of two items. While the third dimension which is cognitive rigidity consisting of seven items.

Table 1: Research Variables and Indicators of the Study

Research variables	Indicators
Inspirational motivation	IM1: My manager has enabled me to think about old problems in new ways/ dimensions. IM2: I am provided with new ways of looking at puzzling things. IM3: I am encouraged to rethink ideas that have never been questioned before
Routine seeking	RS1: I will take a routine day over a day full of unexpected events anytime. RS2: I like to do the same old things rather than try new and different ones. RS3: I sometimes find myself avoiding changes that I know will be good for me. RS4: If my boss changed the criteria for evaluating employees, it would probably make me feel uncomfortable even if I thought I would do just as well without having to do any extra work. RS5: I would rather be bored than surprised by new and different things.
Short term focus	STF1: Once I have concluded, I am not likely to change my mind. STF2: I do not change my mind easily. STF3: My views are consistent over time.
Cognitive rigidity	CR1: If I were to be informed that there is going to be a significant change regarding the way things are done at work, I would probably feel stressed. CR2: When I am informed of a change of plans, I tense up a bit. CR3: When things do not go according to plan, it stresses me out. CR4: I generally consider a change to be a negative thing. CR5: Changing plans seems like a real hassle to me. CR6: Often, I feel a bit uncomfortable, even about changes that may potentially improve my life. CR7: When someone pressures me to change something, I tend to resist it even if I think the change may ultimately benefit me.

IM represents Inspirational motivation; RS represents Routine seeking; STF represents Short term focus; CR represents Cognitive rigidity

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis is the science of designing, collecting of data, exploring and presenting large amounts of data to discover underlying patterns and trends, analysing drawing meaningful interpretations and reporting of the research findings. Statistical

analysis gives meaning to the meaningless number, thereby breathing life into a lifeless data. This study tries to acquaint the reader with the basic research tools utilised while conducting the research. The study covers a brief outline of the variables, an understanding of the quantitative variable.

The analysis below shows the extent of concentration and dispersion, that exists in the study's sample considering the dimensions of employee resistance to change as against inspirational motivation as the independent variable.

Factor analysis and reliability assessment of the constructs

Factor analysis is a statistical method used to describe variability among observed, correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved variables called "factors". The observed variables are modelled as linear combinations of the potential factors.

A common rationale behind factor analytic methods is that the information gained about the interdependencies between observed variables can be used later to reduce the set of variables in a dataset.

Table 2 below summarises the factor analysis and reliability of the items associated with each of the four constructs. Cognitive rigidity (CR) was measured using statements CR1-CR7 as seen in Table. The data indicates that 43.9% of the variance in these items can be attributed to this construct. This suggests that these items are strongly related to and representative of Cognitive rigidity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.907 indicates high internal reliability, suggesting that these items consistently measure Cognitive rigidity.

Routing seeking (RS) was measured using statements from the above table (i.e RS1-RS5). The results show that 13.4% of the variance in these items can be attributed to this construct. This suggests that these items are less strongly related to Routing seeking compared to other constructs. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.900, indicating high internal reliability, and that these items consistently measure Routing seeking.

Short-term focus (SF) was measured using statements from the above table (i.e STF 1- STF 3). The results show that 8.7% of the variance in these items can be attributed to this construct. This suggests that these items are moderately related to Short-term focus. The Cronbach's alpha value is .0.954, indicating good internal reliability, and that these items consistently measure Short-term focus.

Inspiration motivation (IM) was measured using statements from above table (i.e IM 1 to IM 3). The results show that 5.6% of the variance in these items can be attributed to this construct. This suggests that these items are moderately related to Inspiration motivation. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.922, indicating high internal reliability, and that these items consistently measure Inspiration motivation.

Table 2: Factor Analysis and Reliability of the Extracted Constructs

Factor	Construct	Number of items	Variance extracted	Cronbach's alpha
1	Cognitive rigidity	5	43.9	0.907
2	Routing seeking	7	13.4	0.900
3	Short-term focus	3	8.7	0.954
4	Inspiration motivation	3	5.6	0.922

Composite Analysis

Composite analysis is a commonly used statistical technique to determine some of the basic structural charactersitics of a meteorological or climatological phenomenon that are difficult to observe in totality (Miller, Harvey, Kane, Moskal & Alvarado, 2023).

For the purpose of this study composite analysis was sought in order to reduce multiple data points into a single data point. This is because a single variable is generally simpler to analyse than multiple variables, and the results of the analysis are easier to interpret.

Table 3: Composite Analysis of the Constructs

Construct	N	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Df	p-value
Cognitive rigidity(CR)	170	2.50	1.11	29,402	169	<.001
Routing seeking (RS)	170	2.63	1.05	32,594	169	<.001
Short-term focus (SF)	170	3.34	1.04	41,967	169	<.001
Inspiration motivation (IM)	170	4.11	0.96	55,663	169	<.001

N- represent number of participants; T- represent test; Df :respresent degree of freedom; p-value: represent

Table 3 shows the composite analysis of the constructs. The results suggest that on average, there was significant disagreement for the constructs cognitive rigidity (M=2.50), and routine seeking (M=2.63) while there was significant agreement for the constructs short-term focus (M=3.34) and inspiration motivation (M=4.11).

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a set of statistical processes for estimating the relationship between variables (dependent and independent variables). It is a reliable method of identifying which variables have impact on a topic of interest. The process of performing a regression allows the researcher determine which factor influences the other (Prasad, 2023).

This method of analysis was considered for the study as it saves the researcher additional effort in arranging several independent variables in tables and also to predict the value of the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 1: Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with routine seeking

Table 4: The effect of Inspirational motivation management on routine seeking in employee resistance to change

Hypothesis	DV	IV	R	R^2	F	df	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	T	p-value
H1	RS	IM	0.053	0.003	0.477	1; 168	0.491	-0.053	-0.691	0.491

DV represents dependent variable; IM represents inspirational motivation; R represents regression coefficient; R^2 represents regression square; F represents anova value; T represents test; p-value represents pvalue; df represents degree of freedom

As shown in Table 4, Inspirational motivation accounts for 0.3% (R^2 = 0.003) of the variance in RS, F (1, 168) = 0.477, P= 0.491. The data also shows that IM is not a significant predictor of RS and the relationship was negative (β = -0.053, P=0.491).

Hypothesis 2: Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with cognitive rigidity

As shown in Table 5, Inspirational motivation accounts for 0% (R^2 = 0.00) of the variance in CR, F (1, 168) = 0.00, P=0.995. The data also shows that inspirational motivation is not a significant predictor of Cognitive rigidity (P=0.995).

Table 5: The effect of Inspirational motivation management on cognitive rigidity in employee resistance to change

Hypothesis	DV	IV	R	R^2	F	Df	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	T	p-value
H2	CR	IM	0.000	0.000	0.00	1; 168	0.995	0.000	0.006	0.995

DV represents: dependent variable; IV represents: independent variable; R represents: regression coefficient; F represents: anova value; Df represents: degree of freedom; p-value represents; T represents: test

As shown in Table 6, Inspirational motivation accounts for 0.2% (R^2 = .002) of the variance in SF, F (1, 168) = 0.282, P=0.596. The data also shows that IM is not a significant predictor of SF (P=0.596).

Hypothesis 3: Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with short term focus

Table 6: The effect of Inspirational motivation management on short-term focus in employee resistance to change

Hypothesis	DV	IV	R	R^2	F	Df	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	T	p-value
H3	SF	IM	0.041	.002	0.282	1; 168	0.995	0.041	0.531	0.596

Discussions

This study examines the relationship between a leader's inspirational motivation and three major dimensions of employee resistance to change. Emanating from the analysis, the study has several significant outcomes. Firstly, the respondents believed that leaders who possessed inspirational motivation would be able to accept change and get committed easily. Consequently, they feel heard and involved in any change process which helps to curb employee resistance to change. This is confirmed by several related studies (Kouzes & Posner, 2023; Fowler, 2023; London, 2023). Leaders who possess inspirational motivation will contribute substantial benefits to an organisation (Khan, Rasheed, Rashid, Abbas & Mahboob, 2022; Soelton, 2023; Vuong, 2023).

In addition, it contributes to the building of trust and collaborative environment for the employees in the acceptance and commitment to changes introduced. According to Masenya (2022), leaders have a positive influence in preparing future leaders and facilitate change management implementations. Leaders and managers can curb resistance to change amongst staff in the organisation. This is supported by Jeong, Gong and Zhong, (2023) who alludes that transformational leadership attributes have an effective impact on employee resistance to change. They prepare employees to cope with change implementations. This indicates that inspirational motivation has no significant relationship on employee resistance to change, but instead, has a strong impact in impeding resistance and embracing commitment to change (Dickson, 2022). Transformational leaders would seek to improve lives of their employees and encourage them to make better decisions. These leaders would help build confidence and encourage individuals to make

decisions, individually. Hence, this study has explored the mediating role of a leader's inspirational motivation as an attribute of transformational leadership style and how it enhances change management implementation and curbing resistance to change through the aspect of job performance effectiveness and commitment to change (Dewi & Fitrio,2022; Baquero, 2022).This has been achieved through the hypotheses that inspirational motivation reduces routine seeking, short term focus and cognitive rigidity by exhibiting the appropriate transformational behaviours.

Another key outcome of this study is that workplace flexibility in implementing change management is a significant aspect among the employees towards their leaders. This flexibility helps employees with better organisation in both personal and social lives. As a result, more effective workers with a creative mind-set cooperate better with the leaders (Baquero, 2022). The results are coherent with assertions by Morales (2022) that employees who displayed greater job flexibility are more likely to respond when leaders encourage creativity and involvement of staff. Furthermore, this study explored the mediating role of a leader's inspirational motivation which appeared to be significant in curbing employee resistance to change as affirmed by the study's result from the stated hypotheses (that is, hypothesis 1 to 3). This implies that a leader's inspirational motivation can reduce employee resistance to change by curbing behaviours in relation to routine seeking, short term focus and cognitive rigidity.

Implications

Theoretical Implication

Although previous studies has vastly recognised the direct impact of transformational leadership on positive employee outcome, yet not all employees respond to transformational leadership optimistically (Hafeez & Bidari, 2022). This study makes a vital contribution to the available literature mainly focusing on the leaders or management inspirational motivation which is essential for employee motivation towards change management acceptance and commitment (Dewi & Fitrio, 2022; Baquero, 2022). This study provides a unique attempt to look at the relationship between the management's inspirational motivation and employees' resistance to change in the eThekwini automobile organisation. It contributes to the existing literature on transformational leadership since it is among the first to investigate the mediating role of a leaders' inspirational motivation on employee resistance to change. The empirical results provide support for the hypothesized model considering inspirational motivation, which is an element of transformational leadership indicating a very good reliability and consistency with the independent variables (that is, the resistance to change dimensions).

Practical Implications

This study has established a number of practical implications. Firstly, managers and leaders in organisations could support their subordinates or employees in change management acceptance and commitment to change implementations (Ouedraogo, Zaitouni & Ouakouak, 2023). Secondly, recognising the mediating role of a leader's inspirational motivation as a specific dimension of transformational leadership and its positive contributions, reduces employee resistance to change. According to Masenya (2022), targeted leadership development programmes should be focused on developing leaders' knowledge, skills and attitude to enhance the guidance of employees towards organisational goals, and most importantly, to render care and compassion to every employee in that organisation. Lastly, consideration of hiring professional staff to assist with the training of leaders would assist with the development of inspirational motivation leadership skills expected (Bagga, Gera & Haque, 2023).

Conclusion

The majority of the variables for leadership and resistance to change management practices have significant relationships with effective organisational management. This implies the need for efficient leadership skill acquisition for the smooth implementation and operation of change management in organisations. This study contributes insight into the rising importance of essential leadership skill development and management for not only the automobile industry, but the academicians and practioners. It could also serve as means to organise programs for educating employees and future leaders on ways of developing suitable leadership styles and good working culture in the work environment as well as easy adaptation to change. Third, the study could also present open new opportunities for the upcoming leaders to understand the need for effective change and provide the leaders training needed to guide employees of any organization, get ready for change.

Based on the study results, further research should be focused on other transformational leadership dimensions. Future study should explore the significance of these leadership dimensions in curbing employee resistance to change in other sectors of the South-African economy.

Future studies are suggested to coduct a considerable sample size of research investigations to obtain more generalizable results. Future research may do facet wise analysis, which will bring exciting findings in the future. Future research may consider face-to-face interviews so as to gain a holistic view of the research context.

The usefulness of the results is constrained by the limited sample size. However, the respondents were geographically dispersed within the eThekwini Region in KwaZulu-Natal and represented a wide range of automobile dealership organisations.

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