

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF KENYA PRISONS SERVICE

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Abstract

The study sought to understand the Impact of Change Management strategies based on Organizational Culture, Power and Politics and Managerial behavior at the Kenya Prisons Service. Using a descriptive study approach, a sample of 300 respondents were identified using purposive sampling from the four prisons in Nairobi County. The key findings were that gender insensitivity was noted as more male officers were hired in the institutions than female officers. Most officers had low levels of education. The main finding is that the impact of change on the aspects tested was generally low. The research concluded that changes initiated in the Correctional institutions Administration have not been effective since there are low impacts based on aspects of Organizational culture, Managerial behavior and Power and politics at the Kenya Prisons service. The study recommends that Change management implementation strategies need to be properly and adequately managed to successfully reap the benefits of change in a Public Sector setting in terms of Organizational culture, Organizational Power and Politics and Managerial behavior.

Keywords: Change management, Public sector, Organizational culture, Power and Politics

INTRODUCTION

Effects of Change Management Initiatives in Kenya are wide-ranging and depend on political goodwill, resource acquisition and resource utilization. Historically Managerial behavior especially as it pertains to ethics and specifically the unethical and corrupt practices have been a major negative factor affecting the successful implementation of plans in Kenya. (The Public Service Update Magazine volume 1 July December 2000)The establishments of an anti corruption commission (now Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission-EACC) and training programmes have in the past been setup to deal with the problem. Planning and strategy development in Kenya especially by Government organizations is done to international standards but strategies once developed are not successfully implemented on time and at times not completed at all. The result is that more often than not plans are implemented poorly and unsuccessfully leading to stalled projects unfinished constructions and abandoned change programmes. This phenomenon has resulted in poor infrastructure, low quality education systems, poor governance and general underdevelopment and high levels of poverty.

The Kenya Prisons Service

The Prisons system was introduced in Kenya by the British colonial administration following the enactment of the East Africa Prisons Regulations in April, 1902. Initially, the Prisons department was a part of the Police force under the Inspector General of Police. The Provincial and District Commissioners were appointed Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents of Prisons in their respective provinces and districts. The Prisons Board was responsible for the management of all Prisons. The post of Commissioner of Prisons was created in 1917. The colonial administration set up the first modern Prison at Fort Jesus in Mombasa and thereafter more Prisons were established across the country.

The Kenya Prisons is responsible for safe and humane custody of offenders, rehabilitation of such offenders, and community protection. Since inception the Prisons Service had laid greater emphasis on punishment rather than reform of offenders. However, the focus has shifted since 1980's in favor of integration of punishment and rehabilitation through training. The aim of the service is now to change the behaviour of the offenders' through counseling, education and training so as to prepare an offender for re-entry to the free society and begin to make meaningful contributions. The United Nations (UN) standard minimum rules on the treatment of offenders (Tokyo rules) have greatly influenced the continuous change in the practice of humanistic treatment of offenders at the Kenya prisons service.

The Kenya Prison Reforms of 2008

The Kenya Prisons service has today a total of slightly over 97 prisons and 2 Borstal Institutions for young offenders and one Youth Corrective Centre, that both cater exclusively for young male offenders. According to “Report of the High Level Committee on the Prisons Crisis (2008)” “There was a strike action by junior officers of the Kenya Prisons Service on 24th -29th April 2008 which was triggered by the nonpayment of risk and special allowances which other disciplined forces had started earning. The risk allowance of Kshs. 5,000/- was to cushion the disciplined services from the risks associated with their work. A special allowance of Kshs.10,000/- was part of the government’s appreciation for the role the disciplined services played in quelling the post election violence earlier in the year. Besides the nonpayment of risk allowance, the officers had a list of other longstanding perennial grievances ranging from poor working conditions, inadequate housing among others. Following the strike, His Excellency the then Vice President Hon. S. Kalonzo Musyoka established a High Level Committee (Madoka Committee) to look into the crisis. The committee in their quest to unearth the causes of the strike action interviewed a cross section of stakeholders, members of staff and extensively examined previous internal and external reports. The committee came up with a detailed report of its findings and recommendations on how reforms could be brought about in the Prison and correctional services in general. The problem in the Kenya Prisons Service can be traced back to many years of neglect. For example Kenya has over the last two decades invested heavily in the creation of new districts, police stations and courts. On the contrary, there has been little or no investment in the expansion or rehabilitation of prisons. As a result, we have overcrowded prisons where inmates live in horrifying and degrading conditions. The prisons’ staff had themselves been neglected in the provision of basic infrastructure and basic necessities. The committee established that, effective rehabilitation of inmates which is the core function of the department is unattainable with the current state of Kenya Prisons. The then Office of the Vice President & Ministry of Home Affairs has since established a committee to formulate and prioritize implementation modalities of recommendations of the Madoka report. The integrated approach is meant to bring together all other criminal justice agencies, relevant ministries and departments and development partners and stakeholders willing to support reforms. The committee in its endeavor to implement the recommended changes and guided by the Madoka report, came up with an action plan clustered around four thematic areas: Administration, Human Resources management and Development, Legal Issues, Security and Decongestion of Prisons, Rehabilitation of offenders and revitalization of Prisons enterprises, Infrastructure, Health and Safety and Development.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at determining the impact of Change Management strategies on the Administration of the Kenya Prison Service. The strategies are classified under Organizational culture, Power and politics and Managerial behavior. The general objective of this study is to establish impact of change management strategies introduced at the Kenya prisons Service from the year 2006 to 2010. The study sought to answer the following questions:-

What is the impact of Change Management initiatives on the Kenya Prisons service Administration? To what extent do the changes introduced influence Organizational Culture at the Kenya Prisons Service? What is the extent of the impact of Change on organizational Power and Politics at the Kenya Prisons service? Finally, how has Change affected Managerial behavior at the Kenya prisons service?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Change

Kanter et al (1983) while describing planned and transformational change states that transitional change seeks to achieve a known desired state that is different from the existing one. It is episodic, planned and second order, or radical. Tushman (1989) supports this and states, "It has its foundations in the work of Lewin (1951) who conceptualized change as a three-stage process involving: Unfreezing the existing organisational equilibrium; moving to a new position; and refreezing in a new equilibrium position. Schein (1987) further explored these three stages. He suggested that unfreezing involves: Disconfirmation of expectations, Creation of guilt or anxiety, and Provision of psychological safety that converts anxiety into motivation to change. Moving to a new position is achieved through cognitive restructuring, often through identifying with a new role model or mentor and Scanning the environment for new relevant information. Refreezing occurs when the new point of view is integrated into the total personality and concept of self and significant relationships. According to Mintzberg (1989) external factors (such as the economy, competitors' behaviour, and political climate, Natural calamity) or internal features (such as the relative power of different interest groups, distribution of knowledge, and uncertainty) influence the change in directions outside the control of managers. Even the most carefully planned and executed change programme will have some emergent impacts. "Understanding that organisational change is a process that can be facilitated by perceptive and insightful planning and analysis and well crafted, sensitive implementation phases, while acknowledging that it can never be fully isolated from the effects of serendipity, uncertainty and chance" (Dawson, 1996).

Organizational Power and Politics

Yabs (2010) while describing Organizational power and politics in Kenyan organizations states, "CEOS wield a lot of power in influencing the choice of strategy and its implementation. An influential CEO can convince the management to support a particular strategy that will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval" Yabs J.(2010) on resource allocation declares that "Without adequate resources the implementation of strategy is almost impossible. The success of a company, to a large extent depends on the availability of resources e.g. human and material which depend on power and politics which in turn influences the how resources are allocated". The Role of leaders and political elite and government officials includes: Resource allocation for maximum benefit, project prioritization, and ethical conduct leading to loss of resources through pilferage, corruption and theft. (John Yabs 2010). Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) Describes Richard Nixon who wrote, "The great leader needs the capacity to achieve. . . Power is the opportunity to build, to create, to nudge history in a different direction." Dahl writing about the pervasiveness of the concept of power states, "The concept of power is as ancient and ubiquitous as any that social theory can boast." He defined power "as a relation among social actors in which one actor A, can get another social actor B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done." Hence, power is recognized as "the ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire" The concept of organizational politics can be linked to Harold Lasswell's (1936) definition of politics as who gets what, when and how. If power involves the employment of stored influence by which events, actions and behaviors are affected, than politics involves the exercise of power to get something done, as well as to enhance and protect the vested interests of individuals or groups. Thus, the use of organizational politics suggests that political activity is used to overcome resistance and implies a conscious effort to organize activity to challenge opposition in a priority decision situation. Cole (1995) states, "power acts as the motive behind force for leadership and authority and has other useful characteristics". It is "the medium through which conflict of interest are ultimately resolved". Pearce et al (2009) describes sources of power and influence as "shaped by the nature of the task, project, urgency of an assignment, or the unique characteristics of specific personnel.....' According to Carnall (2007) there are five social bases of power: Legitimate power-from manager's position and therefore exercises formal authority, Expert power-deriving from the knowledge and experience of the individual e.g. Doctors, technicians and other specializations. Referent power from the charismatic nature of individuals and from the manner in which people identify with others; Reward power-derived from the individuals control over rewards such as pay, promotion and task assignments; Coercive power-deriving from the capacity to sanction individual behaviour. "Power is inherent in bargaining, negotiation and

political processes. The effective use of power is central to effective management and leadership” (Carnall, 2007).

Managerial Behavior

According to Mintzberg (1989) Managers make a number of decisions apparently unrelated to the change that emerges. The change is therefore not planned. However, these decisions may be based on unspoken, and sometimes unconscious, assumptions about the organisation, its environment and the future and are, therefore, not as unrelated as they first seem. Such implicit assumptions dictate the direction of the seemingly disparate and unrelated decisions, thereby shaping the change process by ‘drift’ rather than by design. According to Yabs J (2010)“ The management team must show the spirit of togetherness in “esprit de corps” as stated by Henri Fayol 1916.It requires hard work and dedication for the strategy to succeed”. On operationalization of strategy he explains “Once a strategy has been formulated and is ready for implementation, the firm’s management must operationalize the strategy, or must popularize or sell or convince all workers to accept the strategy. This can be done by including all important workers within the firm so that the end of the process, every represented group, feels that they are part and parcel of the whole strategy formulation exercise”. On leadership, Yabs (2010) explains it as “the ability possessed by some individuals to influence others to behave and do certain things as directed. It is the influence of people to behave in a certain manner in a firm leadership is provided by the chief Executive officer assisted by a team of managers. Leaders in industry and strategists in their own right and make decisions on behalf of the shareholders. CEOs and other industry leaders must possess certain characteristics such as leadership skills, appropriate character and relevant experience”

Options on the way Forward for the Prisons Crisis

While describing the way forward for the prisons crisis in 2008 the Madoka report states, “The successful implementation of this plan is largely dependent upon the structures and systems under which it will be managed. Such systems and structures must possess the capacity and robustness necessary to sustain a rigorous change management process that will tackle the long standing Financial, Political and Legal Lapses that have over time resulted in dysfunctional Correctional Service agency as depicted from the findings of the Madoka Report” undoubtedly the type of management put in place is likely to determine the outcome of the success of the change process. There is need to communicate the reform agenda to create awareness among civil society, development partners and all other stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The open door policy was one of the significant reforms initiatives in the history of the

Prisons Service. It opened a window of opportunity for expansion of human rights, accountability of the prisons Authority and participation by civil society and public in the reform process.

Organizational Culture

According to Ouchi (1981), Organizational culture is a key determinant of organizational effectiveness. Carnall (2007) noted that traditions are hard to overcome particularly when people do not reflect on their traditions and present problems and dilemmas together. We need tradition –it is our own tradition that much of our personal commitment and motivation is based. According to Carnall, changing the culture starts with an attitude. Jack Welch (CEO, General electric) is quoted as saying “I hope you won’t think I am being melodramatic if I say that the institution ought to stretch itself out to reach to a point where it almost becomes unglued”. While describing attempts to shape organizational culture at General electric, Carnall states, “Instead of pursuing pragmatic goals, the company focused on operations, process and continuous improvement, customer satisfaction and partnership”. Deal et al (1982) supports the idea that excellent companies tended to have strong cultures. A research study conducted by J.A. Chatman and K.A. Jehn in 1994, identified seven primary characteristics that define an organization's culture: innovation, stability (maintaining the status quo versus growth), people orientation, outcome orientation, easygoingness, detail orientation, and team orientation. A 1992 research study by J.P. Kotter and J.L. Heskett showed that long-term financial performance was highest for organizations with an adaptive culture. One example of when organizations must adapt their culture is when organizations become multinational. With the increase in global organizations, it has become clear that national cultures impinge on organizational cultures. Besides language differences, employees bring to the job many radically different assumptions about such aspects as the dignity of work, the proper relationship between employee and supervisor, the value of initiative, the treatment of unwelcome information, and the voicing of complaints. Organizations with international customers, and even more, those with global operations have needed to learn how to adapt to a multicultural environment. Failure to adapt jeopardizes an organization's chance of success abroad.

METHODOLOGY

The target population of the study was made up of Prisons officers of various ranks from prison warders (lowest rank), Sergeants, Corporals to the Chief Officers as shown on table 1 below. The study covered prison stations in Nairobi County namely; Nairobi Remand prison, Kamiti prison, Langata women prison and Nairobi west prisons were identified for coverage. The study

period was 5 years from 2006 to 2010. The study adopted a descriptive approach using questionnaires as the data collection tools.

Table 1: Target Population of Study

STATION	RANK/POSITION	NUMBER TARGETED
Nairobi Remand prison	Chief Officer I(COI),Chief officer,(COII)	15
	Senior Sergeant (SSGT), Sergeant,(SGT)Corporal,Warders	60
Langata prison	COI,COII	5
	SSGT,SGT,CPL,Warders	60
Nairobi west prison	COI,COII,	10
	SSGT,SGT,CPL,Warders	55
Kamiti prison	COI,COII,	15
	SGT,CPL,Warders	80
	TOTAL	300

The sampling procedure adopted was purposive sampling where all the available officers of a given rank were interviewed in a station. This is because the rest of the officers had been deployed away from the station. This was found to be appropriate because according to Mugenda et al (1999), purposive sampling is a technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study. Cases of subjects are handpicked because they are informative or they possess the required characteristics” The respondents were grouped according to ranks. Secondary data collection was done from previous studies in the area to form a basis for a clearer understanding of the subject under study. The officers present in the stations at the time of the visit were served with questionnaires. Data was analyzed and presented using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and analysis was made describing trends shown to prepare for conclusions and generalizations.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics in form of frequency tables and charts were used to analyze responses to various issues in the questionnaires. The responses contained in the questionnaires were interpreted for analysis based on the fundamental assumptions; responses of ‘High’ and ‘Medium’ were considered to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service in the last five years as effective while the responses of ‘Low’ and ‘No Effect’ were assumed to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as ‘Not effective’ or no impact.

Impact of Organizational Culture Initiatives

This study sought to establish the impact of the changes initiated at the Kenya Prisons service for the five year period between 2006 and 2010 last five years on the organizational culture at the Kenya Prisons Service. The study rated the change based organizational culture constructs of ethical conduct, shared attitudes, assumptions, values, beliefs, employee satisfaction, customer care, product quality and customs. The responses contained in the questionnaires were interpreted for analysis based on the fundamental assumptions:- responses of 'High' and 'Medium' were considered to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as effective while the responses of 'Low' and 'Not Effective' were denoted the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as 'Not effective'. The results were presented in table 2.

Table 2: The Effect of Change on Organizational Culture

Aspects of Organizational Culture	Effective			Not Effective		
	High	Medium	Total	Low	No Effect	Total
Ethical conduct	12	23	35	134	80	214
Shared attitudes	21	43	64	123	62	185
Assumptions	21	32	53	98	98	196
Values	19	28	47	102	100	202
Beliefs	15	31	46	87	116	203
Employee satisfaction	21	23	44	89	116	205
Customer care	24	41	65	180	4	184
Product quality	10	26	36	179	34	213
Customs	25	33	58	128	63	192
Total Average			49.7			199.3

From the table above a total average of 49.7 respondents rated changes initiated in the Kenya Prisons Service aspects of organizational as having been effective while a total average of 199.3 indicated that the change initiatives in Kenya Prisons Service had not been effective based on the underlined aspects of organizational culture. The interpretation is that the changes initiated in the rehabilitation institutions have not been effective since they have not improved aspects of Organizational Culture which plays an instrumental role in the attained of the set goals and objectives of any organization. There is therefore a need to reinvent them now and then through the wheel of change to make them relevant to ever changing global environments.

Based on the findings, 80% of the respondents stated that the effects of changes on the aspects of organizational culture were not effective while 20% of the respondents answered in the affirmative that the effects on the organizational culture had been effective. It can be concluded that the changes introduced at Kenya Prisons Service have not been effective. The

comments from the respondents attributed to the non-effectiveness of the changes to resistance from the Senior management, Low levels of education among the workers, Poor implementation strategy and failure to monitor and assess the implementation.

Impact of Organizational Power and Politics initiatives

The rated the impact of change based on the organizational power and politics constructs of resource allocation, staff recruitment, project prioritization, new products and innovations, information flow and adoption of new technology. The responses contained in the questionnaires were interpreted for analysis based on the fundamental assumptions:- responses of 'High' and 'Medium' were considered to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as 'effective' while the responses of 'Low' and 'Not Effective' were assumed to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as 'not effective.' The results were as presented in the chart below.

Table 3: Aspects of Organizational Power and Politics

Aspects of Organizational power and politics	Effective			Not Effective		
	High	Medium	Total	Low	No Effect	Total
Influence on resource allocation	24	35	59	114	76	190
Influence on issues of staff recruitment, posting and promotion	32	44	76	76	97	173
Influence on project management	15	27	42	83	124	207
Influence on new products and innovations	28	30	58	55	136	191
Influence on information flow	30	39	69	120	60	180
Ethical conduct	44	58	102	43	104	147
Total average			67.6			181.4

From the table above a total average of 67.6 respondents rated changes initiated at the Kenya Prisons Service aspects of Organizational power and politics as having been effective while a total average of 181.4 indicated that the changes initiated in Kenya Prisons Service had not been effective on the underlined aspects of organizational power and politics. The interpretation is that the changes initiated in the rehabilitation institutions have not been effective since they have not improved organizational power and politics aspects.

A higher rating (73%) of the respondents indicated that the effects of changes on the aspects of Organizational Power and Politics were not effective while 27% of the respondents

answered in the affirmative that the effects on the organizational culture had been effective. It can be concluded that the changes introduced at Kenya Prisons Service in the last 5years have not been effective. The comments from the respondents attributed to the non-effectiveness of the changes to resistance from the senior management, low levels of education among the workers, poor implementation strategy, and failure to monitor and assess the implementation.

Impact of Managerial Behaviour Initiatives

This part sought to establish the impact of change based on aspects of managerial behavior at the Kenya Prisons Service. The respondents were asked to rate the aspects of Managerial behavior of Motivation, Teamwork, Flexibility, Creativity, Decisiveness, Communication, Skills development and Ethical conduct. The responses contained in the questionnaires were interpreted for analysis based on the fundamental assumptions:- responses of 'High' and 'Medium' were consider to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as 'Effective' while the responses of 'Low' and 'Not Effective' were assumed to denote the changes introduced in the Kenya Prison Service as ' Not effective'. The results were as presented in the table 4.

Table 4: Effects of Change on the Aspects of Managerial Behaviour

Aspects of managerial behavior	Effective			Not Effective		
	High	Medium	Total	Low	No Effect	Total
Motivation	56	65	121	108	20	128
Teamwork	36	45	81	98	70	168
Flexibility	21	50	71	129	49	178
Creativity	53	49	102	38	109	147
Decisiveness	43	32	75	93	124	217
Skills development	24	32	56	110	83	193
Ethical conduct	18	22	40	98	111	209
Total Average			78			171

From the table above a total average of 78 respondents rated changes on aspects of Managerial behaviour initiated at the Kenya Police Service as having been effective while a total average of 171 respondents indicated that the changes initiated in Kenya Prisons Service had not been effective on the underlined aspects of Managerial behaviour. The interpretation is that the changes initiated in the rehabilitation institutions have not been effective since they have not improved managerial behaviour aspects. Managerial behaviour plays an instrumental role in the attainment of the set goals and objectives of any organization and hence the need to innovate and develop them continuously. From the figure above and, 69% of the respondents indicated

that the effects of changes on the aspects of organizational culture were not effective while 31% of the respondents answered in the affirmative that the effects on the organizational culture had been effective. It can be concluded that the the changes introduced at Kenya Prisons Service were not effective. The comments from the respondents attributed to the non-effectiveness of the changes to resistance to change from the Senior Management and Low levels of education among the workers.

CONCLUSION

The junior staff gave more response than the senior staff and younger officers responded better than the older officers who appeared desire to maintain the status quo pointing to the fact that younger officers embrace change more than the older officers. Gender insensitivity was rampant as more male officers were hired in the institutions than female officers. The interpretation was that the Organization is gender insensitive in terms of employment. The study also established that most officers had low levels of education which were reflected in the operations of the officers as they went about their duties. The low education levels were displayed when the respondents did not answer some questions not because they were not willing but could not make out the meaning of the questions. Some respondents were unwilling to take questionnaires and casually answering the questions because they never understood the significance of the research that it was partly aimed at improving their working conditions by improving their terms of service. The larger number of respondents who have done long service gave the information obtained conformity and reliability as employees' long stay indicates continuity and consistency. Fifty percent would give a researcher the best chance of getting the best information and number of years i.e. five to nine years is long enough for an employee to gain experience within an organization, enough to answer questions regarding daily running of the organization. Within five years, activities have become a routine and an employee can point out issues with ease without even doing more research and intense observation.

POLICY AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Top on the list is the need to for the Kenya Prisons Service to consider reviewing the general terms of service and conditions of working with the aim of motivating the workforce that appears demoralized and de-motivated.
2. The authorities should increase the number of officers through new hiring to ease the burden of the workforce.
3. There is need to consider gender balance in the force for very inclusive and representative decision making.

4. The low education levels of the officers which reverse any gains made by any changes introduced an organization need to be encouraged to pursue further studies. According them study-leave, sponsorships and rewarding those who have achieved academically will ameliorate the situation.
5. Also imperative to be considered are implementation strategies relevant to public sector settings which needs to be properly and adequately appropriated to successfully reap the benefits of change in terms of organizational culture, organizational power and politics and managerial behavior since all aspects of the core three variables were poorly rated by the respondents.

LIMITATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

The researcher dwelled broadly on impact of change in Kenya Prisons Service in Kenya. Other pointing issues that are dully affected by centralization and would require further specific research on an area like the impact of low levels of education on changes introduced in the Kenya Prisons Service. Studies are also proposed on the effects of change on Organizational Learning and organizational Structures. Further, studies can be carried out to establish challenges to the implementation of change especially having established that the changes instituted in the five years under study have not been effective. Additional studies need to be carried out to include more senior officers in the Kenya prisons service .This would include, Assistant Commissioners, Deputy commissioners, the Commissioner of Prisons, Deputy Permanent secretaries, Senior Ministry officials and the Permanent Secretary who is the Chief Executive of the Ministry in Charge of Prisons.

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