EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE IN KENYA

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Abstract: **Organization change is a vital process in the health and effectiveness of an organization. Despite the various studies done on strategic change management in organization, state corporations, health and education sector, there is little focus on security agencies. However, they are also prone to strategic change management adoption challenges. This study sought to investigate employee perception on strategic change management strategies adopted by National police service in Kenya. The study used cross sectional survey design involving a stratified sample of 1200 employees. Main tools for data collection were questionnaires, document analysis, and observation schedule. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25.0 was used to analyze quantitative date. The study revealed that change management practices at National police service were necessitated by legislation following changes in new constitution which demanded higher levels of accountability and professionalism. Employees indicated that major change practices adopted were vetting of staff, the development of a service charter and establishment of community policing initiative. However, the study also revealed that employee welfare and customer satisfaction were not taken keenly in the change process. Hence, the study concluded that change process was top-bottom approach and only selected few were actively participating.**

Keywords: **Employees, Organization, Management, Satisfaction, Performance, Strategy.**

I.   INTRODUCTION

Perception is a cognitive process that lets a person make sense of stimuli from the environment. These stimuli affect all senses: sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing. The stimuli can come from other people, events, physical objects or ideas. A person's perception process is a mechanism that helps her adapt to a changing environment (Dember, 1960). Attitudes have played a key role in social psychology because of the presumed connection between people's perception of their world and their behaviour in it. An attitude is "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object" (Fishbein and Ajzan, 1975).

People emerge with different perceptions of the same stimulus object because of three perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. Selective attention arises due to the fact that people are exposed to a tremendous number of daily stimuli. The consumers have a heightened awareness of stimuli that meet there needs or interests and minimal awareness of stimuli irrelevant to their needs. Selective distortion describes the tendency of people to twist information into personal meanings. Selective retention asserts that people will forget much of what they learn. They tend to retain information that supports the attitudes and beliefs for chosen alternatives (Kotler, 1988; Kibera and Waruingi, 1998). Change management practices in an organization are necessary in responses to changes in technology, the marketplace, information systems, the global economy, social values, workforce demographics and the political environment in which an organization operates (Hoque, 2004). In order to remain competitive in the long term, enterprises

are compelled to implement change management practices such as downsizing and acquiring new technology with increasing speed, efficiency and success (Chapman, 2005). Change management practices are adopted in order to achieve desired results within a specified time frame (Davis and Holland, 2002).

Existing body of grey lliterature contains numerous documentations of organization's failure while implementing change management programmes. For example, in the context of Business Process Re-engineering projects, 70% have been estimated to end in failure (Cafasso, 1993). Nevertheless, company ability to effectively manage change is widely proposed as essential for organizational competitiveness. Thus, the effectiveness in managing organizational change is directly related to its successful performance.

Many sstudies have been done on strategic change management practices for instance, Makau (2013) studied strategic change management practices in international Non-governmental organization, Ogaga (2015) did study on strategic change management practices and performance of companies in hospital industry in Kenya. Kiraithe (2011) carried out a study on management of strategic change at Kenya police, while Gitau (2011) studied strategic change management practices within state corporations and the findings of the study cannot be used to generalize other organizations like NPS as there are significant differences in the manner of their managerial operations. Mutwol (2009) carried out research on employee perception of people dimension of change at Kenya revenue authority. Marangu (2012) studied employee perception on strategic change management practices at KPLC, Nyandoro (2015) studied change management practices and performance of commercial banks in Kenya, while Nyogesa (2013) did challenges of strategy implementation at Kenya police service. In all the studies conducted, there is little focus on employee perception on change management strategies adopted by NPS in Kenya. It was on this background that this study was conducted to fill this gap.

II.   METHODOLOGY

This study used cross section survey design in collecting primary data. This   involve observation of all of a population, or a representative subset, at one specific point in time with an aim to provide data on the entire population under study. The study was done within the national police service. The target population   totaled to 42,000 police officers. These employees are spread across the country within the forty-seven counties and composed of various units within the National police service. National police service is structured into two main departments namely Kenya Police and Administration police and these are the two departments that formed the units of analysis. Kenya police has Air wing, Airport, Criminal investigation department, Dog unit, Diplomatic unit, General service unit, Kenya police college, Maritime police, Railway police, Tourism police unit and Traffic police unit. Administration police has Rapid deployment unit (RDU), Security of government buildings (SGB) and Rural and Border Patrol Unit (RBPU). Stratified sample of 1,200 employees was used as the representative sample then a simple random sampling was applied for each stratum. A 95% confidence level was used which gives a minimum sample size of 400 where nr= required population size, p=proportion of population having required characteristic, d=margin of error, therefore a sample size of 1200 was deemed sufficient. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires issued to the respondents. The method was chosen as it is a positivist research method. It includes the low level of involvement of the researcher and high number of respondents. Secondary data sources were employed through the use of previous documents or materials to supplement the data received from questionnaires and interviews. This research exercise   generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed as frequency, percentages, means, medium and standard deviations under the corresponding objectives. Quantitative data has been presented in form of the following outputs; bar graphs, and tables, among others. Qualitative data has been   presented as themes and sub-themes in cases where they are not used to explain quantitative findings.

III.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Kotter's 8-Step Change Process Model, this model was developed and popularized by Kotter in (1996). It examines the eight-stages change process which includes establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short term wins, consolidating the gains and creating more change and finally anchoring the new approaches into the organizational culture.

Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial because when urgency is low, it is difficult to put together a group with enough power and credibility to guide the effort or to convince key individuals to spend the time necessary to create and communicate a change vision. Creating the guiding coalition is necessary to mobilize and spearhead the desired change. Kotter (1996) recommends that the coalition must have the right composition, level of trust and shared objective he identifies

their key characteristics as position power, expertise, credibility and leadership. Building such a team is always an essential part of the early stages of any effort to restructure, reengineer, or retool a set of strategies.

The third step is developing a vision and strategy, this stage is concerned with the mental picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future. In a change process, a good vision serves in clarifying the general direction for change, it motivates people to take action in the right direction and it helps coordinate the actions of different people. A strategy provides both logic and a first level of detail to show how a vision can be accomplished.

The fourth step is communicating the change vision since the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have a common understanding of its goals and direction. That shared sense of a desirable future can help motivate and co-ordinate the kind of actions that create transformations. The fifth step is empowering broad-based action to develop action of the people by removing as many barriers to the implementation of the change vision as possible at this point in the process. The biggest obstacles that often need to be attacked are structures, skills, systems and supervisors.

Generating short terms wins is the sixth step, this is necessary as major change usually take a lot of time. There is need to have convincing evidence that all the effort is paying off especially to non-believers who require even higher standards of proof. They want to see clear data indicating that the changes are working and that the change process isn't absorbing so many resources in the short term as to endanger the organization. Running a transformation effort without serious attention to short-term wins is extremely risky. Seventh step is consolidating gains and producing more change since the first major performance improvement will probably come well before the halfway point, the guiding coalition should use the credibility afforded by the short-term win to push forward faster, tackling even more or bigger projects. The final step is anchoring new approaches. According to Kotter, culture changes after successfully altering people's actions and the new behavior produces some group benefit for a period of time, and after people see the connection between the new actions and the performance improvement.

IV.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Change management is an important undertaking for any manager. Whether change is introduced in the organization as a continuous process, or as transformation, it would affect organizational culture and in essence; the employees upon whom the organization depends to effectively manage the change process.

Change can be seen as developmental – meaning to make a successful situation more successful; for example, to expand the number of customers served. Different writers in organizational change management have used different terms to describe the notion of "continuous" change process. Armstrong (2005: 318) defines organizational development as a planned systematic process in which behavioural science principles and practices are introduced into an ongoing organization towards the goals of effecting organizational improvement, greater organizational competence, and greater organization effectiveness. It is concerned with the planning and implementation of programmes designed to enhance the effectiveness with which organizations function and respond to change. According to his framework change can be effectively and efficiently introduced if organizations plan for, divert resources to, and implement four sets of interlocking processes. The model implies managing the four "layers" of change – *trigger, vision, conversion* and *maintenance renewal*. In terms of the trigger layer it is necessary to understand what is causing a need for change in the organization. These triggers are expressed clearly and communicated throughout the organization. After the trigger has been clearly recognized and expressed, it is also a requirement that organization's management define the future. This is the vision layer – the expression of where the organization intends to go.

Organization transformation is the process of ensuring that an organization can develop and implement major change programmes by responding strategically to new demands and continue to function effectively in the dynamic environment in which it operates. It denotes fundamental change in organizational structure and nature of doing business. Most future growth in organizations will result from successful development projects that generate new products, services, or procedures. Such projects are also a principle way of creating organizational change.

Beckhards (1989) has identified four types of transformational change in organizations. These are first; change in what drives the organization - like change from being production-driven to being market driven, secondly a fundamental change in relationships such as decentralization; third - a major change of doing work like adopting computerized systems and

fourthly a basic change in culture for example developing a customer focused culture. Organizational transformation can be managed well if the process of change is introduced as a one-off project.

Pinkerton (2003) sees the process of introducing change in organizations as a re-engineering project that requires detailed planning to precede organizational redesigning and execution, just like any other project. But most organizations are structured according to rules, policies, and procedures along the Weberian "ideal" model resulting into highly specialized functional units. Change means adjusting the existing organizational patterns. This becomes difficult because the existing behaviour is institutionalized and adherence to it is rewarded. In addition, in a bureaucracy no one takes responsibility for the whole organization but only to assigned duties, yet change management demands process ownership.

People emerge with different perceptions of the same stimulus object because of three perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. Selective attention arises due to the fact that people are exposed to a tremendous number of daily stimuli. The consumers have a heightened awareness of stimuli that meet there needs or interests and minimal awareness of stimuli irrelevant to their needs. Selective distortion describes the tendency of people to twist information into personal meanings. Selective retention asserts that people will forget much of what they learn. They tend to retain information that supports the attitudes and beliefs for chosen alternatives (Kotler, 1988; Kibera and Waruingi, 1998).

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employees Perception on Change Management: The respondents were asked to describe the operating environment at NPS. Majority 60% of the employees felt that the operating environment was stable, 28% percent felt that it was turbulent while 12% felt that the situation in NPS is very turbulent (Table 1).

Table 1: NPS: Operating Environment

Description of National police service Operating environment in Kenya	Frequency	Percent
Stable	540	60
Turbulent	252	28
Very turbulent	108	12
Total	**900**	**100**

The way NPS react to operating environment: The respondents were further asked to describe how NPS reacts to the business environment, and the majority of National police service employees (45%) felt that NPS responds reactively to its business environment as opposed to proactive response (30%) (Table 2).

Table 2: The way NPS reacts to operating environment

How NPS reacts to operating Environment	Frequency	Percent
Proactive	270	30
Reactive	405	45
In-between	144	16
Others	81	9
Total	**900**	**100**

On forces that necessitated change in NPS: From the finding's majority, 55% of the employees believe that legislation was the major reason why National police service necessitated change while 23% of them believe that core operation inertia was the reason that led to it.

Table 3: Forces of change

Forces that necessitated change at NPS	Frequency	Percent
Change in customer needs and preference	108	12
Deregulation/Legislation	495	55
Core operation inertia	207	23
Globalization	90	10
Total	**900**	**100**

On change management practices that had been adopted by NPS: Mmajority of employees responded that change management practices adopted by National police service were mainly seen in vetting of staff (20%), coming up with charter for service delivery (17%) and community policing (15%) (Table 4).

Table 4: Stakeholders who initiated Change Management Practices

Change management practices adopted by NPS	Frequency	percent
Re-branding from police force to national police service	81	9
Vetting of staff	180	20
Coming up with charter for service delivery	153	17
Promotion based on merit	45	5
A belief in customer first	54	6
By training staff	99	11
Community policing	135	15
Establishment of internal affairs unit	27	3
Decentralization of operation	18	2
Suggestion box for customers for feedback	36	4
Installing emergency toll free numbers	72	8
Total	**900**	**100**

On stakeholders who had initiated the change management process: The respondent's opinion was sought on stakeholders they felt had initiated the change management efforts NPS and majority of the respondents 42%, felt National police service commission was the most vocal in the change management effort followed by the office of the inspector general 25%. 14% of the of the respondents also felt that there were other stakeholders involved such as the independent police oversight authority.

On the effects of Change Management Practices on Processes: In order to know what the change management process has affected at National police service; the respondents were asked to rate their opinions on the given sectors using a 5-point scale with 1 being most affected and 5 being least affected. The mean scores and standard deviation for each sector were computed and summarized as here below as Table 5

Table 5: Effect of Change Management Practices on Processes

Effects of change management process	Mean	Std. deviation
Structure	2.46	1.31
System	2.8	1.24
Behavior	2.44	1.44
Processes	3.06	1.34
Services	2.46	1.42

Level of employee's engagement in the change management process: The employee's perception in the change management practices was sought and the Majority, 57% of the employees felt that only a selected few were engaged in the change management practices while 9% felt that the employees were not engaged at all (Table 6).

Table 6: Level of Employee engagement in Change Process

Level of employee engagement	Frequency	Percent
Not engaged at all	36	9
Very engaged	306	34
Selected few engaged	513	57
Total	**900**	**100**

The communication of organization change vision to employees: The channels of communicating vision of NPS change management was sought from the employees and majority (65%) indicated that the vision was communicated to them through internal circulars (65%), (56%) indicated trainings and (48%) indicated seminars (48%) (Figure 1).
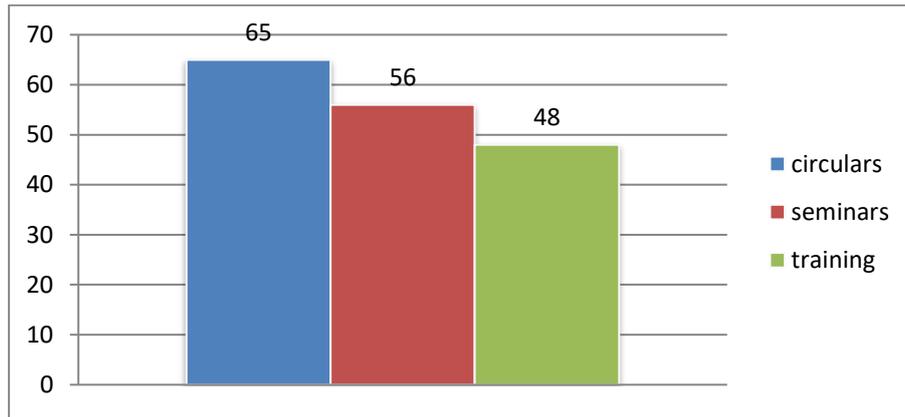
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Figure 1: Vision Communication Channels

On the major dividend has accrued from change managements: According to the employees" ratings (Table 7), the most visible benefit realized was reduced number of complaints against police officers followed by improved customer rating and lastly prestige.

Table 7: Major dividend accrued from Change Process

Benefits realized by NPS from change management Practices	Mean
Improved customer rating	2.96
Less complaints reported against police	2.46
Prestige	3.84

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study revealed that show employees felt that the change management process at National police service was mainly initiated by the National police service commission and the office of the Inspector general. This led to a key weakness being seen in the lack of inclusiveness by the other stakeholders of the organization especially officers in the lower cadre in their contributions to the change management process.

Like most organizations in the security sector charged with internal security of the state around the world, National police service in Kenya offers various services to its stakeholders within the republic of Kenya. The findings indicated that the features under study that were most positively affected by the process included improvement in response time and reduction in serious crimes. Those that were least affected included measurement of enforcement productivity and customer satisfaction.

This survey also revealed that the level of benefits gained from the change management practices as felt by its employees is average in almost all sectors. Training was perceived to be the most realized benefit by employees. It was followed by the benefit in allowances, then an increase in morale and finally in remuneration. Hence, the study recommends further research on the impact of the strategic change management practices on the different units within the National police service.

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