

Leading Organisational Change: The influence of Middle Management

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Abstract

Given the current economic climate organisations are continually being forced to change to compete, succeed and survive. There is a need now, more than ever, for effective leaders that can successfully guide and oversee the change process. The need for leadership at middle management level is a key requirement as personnel at this level are seen as the link between senior management and lower level employees.

The purpose of this research study is to analyse the influence of middle management when leading organisational change.

The research methodology for this study consisted of both primary and secondary research. The primary research included five face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The research study was conducted in five organisations in the south-east of Ireland. The secondary research included an analysis and a review of the relevant available literature.

The majority of primary research findings were consistent with the literature accessed. The findings show that each middle manager was aware of the importance of leadership in their organisation and also in their own particular department. Furthermore, the role of middle manager was recognised by the interviewees and the relevant literature accessed as an influential role in the change process as it provides the link between senior management and lower level management.

The dissertation concluded with the role of middle manager being recognised as hugely influential on the change process. Communication and interpersonal skills were also recognised as important attributes for leaders at middle management level to possess. Different methods and strategies were highlighted as effective in helping employees through the change process. Recommendations were provided with the hiring of employees as middle managers being advised as a choice requiring time and consideration as it is a significantly important decision. It was also recommended that organisations put programs in place to develop leaders internally and also that organisations make the best use of methods and strategies available to improve communication during the change process. Furthermore, limitations for the study

were outlined which included time constraints which is seen as a barrier to a more in-depth study.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother Kathleen McHugh.

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There are a number of people whom the author would like to thank for their support and assistance throughout the process of completing this dissertation. Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. James Redmond for his guidance, support and encouragement throughout the past ten or so months.

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Ethical Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is wholly my own work except where I have made explicit references to the work of others. I have read the Structured Masters Programs Research Policy, Procedures and Guidelines (October, 2009) and hereby declare that this dissertation is in line with these requirements. I have discussed, agreed and complied with whatever confidentiality or anonymity terms of reference were deemed appropriate by those participating in the research.

I have uploaded the entire dissertation to Turnitin®, examined my 'Originality Report' by viewing the detail behind the overall 'Similarity Index', and have addressed any matches that exceed 3% when quotations and bibliography are excluded. Any unaddressed matches in excess of 3% are explained by way of additional note submitted separately with the dissertation. I have made every effort to minimise my overall 'Similarity Index' score and the number of matches occurring.

Michael McHugh

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic by justifying the selection of this study. The research objectives are then outlined. This chapter describes the methodology used in this study, gives an overview of the dissertation structure and also identifies the importance of the research topic.

Leadership is an integral part of every successful organisation that benefit from those who have the ability to guide their followers to achieve their goals. Providing leadership that can get the most out of employees can be testing at the best of times but can prove even more difficult in times of organisational change. Effective leadership can be the deciding factor between success and failure in an organisation which shows the sheer importance of it in an organisational context.

With competition fierce among organisations it is vital that they have a 'special ingredient' that sets them apart and in some cases this 'special ingredient' is effective leadership. Given its importance to the organisational context and its significance to current circumstances it was felt that it was necessary to further analyse the subject area of leadership during organisational change with the influence of middle managers being examined.

Given the current economic climate, more and more organisations find themselves in periods of organisational change which means that now, more than ever, there is the need for strong vibrant leaders to come to the fore and successfully lead their organisations through such times. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to analyse how effective leaders lead at middle management level in times of organisational change. It is hoped that the study will provide a detailed insight into the subject area of leadership during organisational change.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

For the purpose of this particular study the research question is: How do effective leaders lead at middle management level in times of organisational change?

As a result of the research question, four research objectives were outlined;

1. (i) To explain the nature of leadership

(ii) To gauge how effective leaders performance impacts upon the organisational department.
2. To evaluate the significance of change leaders at middle management level.
3. To establish the skills and characteristics necessary to lead change at middle management level.
4. To explore the methods and strategies employed by middle managers to facilitate change effectively in their organisational departments.

1.3 Research Methodology

The research question and objectives that followed will be investigated by the use of a combination of primary and secondary research. The secondary research will consist of a study of all relevant literature available while the primary research will take a qualitative approach.

A qualitative approach was chosen as it was deemed the most suitable to achieve the objectives of this particular study with semi-structured interviews been chosen as the most suitable form of qualitative research. Interviews were conducted with five middle managers in organisations that have been in a period of change in recent times in the South-east of Ireland.

1.4 Structure of the Study

The dissertation takes a structure consisting of seven chapters. This chapter provides an overview of the study and outlines the research objectives being undertaken. It also identifies the research methodology and also the contribution of the research.

Chapter two and three consists of relevant literature relating to the research objectives. Chapter two explains leadership. It defines leadership and analyses its

importance to organisations. Also, the characteristics and skills of leaders are explored and the difference between leading and managing is established.

Chapter three takes an in-depth look at leading change at middle management level. It identifies the importance of leadership at middle management level during organisational change. Furthermore, it highlights the skills of a change leader at middle management level. It also looks at the challenges faced by middle managers during organisational change and also how these challenges can be overcome.

Chapter four describes the research methodology used in this dissertation. The research objectives and methods of data collection are outlined. The chapter also consists of the rationale and justification for the methodology used and also identifies limitations of this approach. The chapter concludes by illustrating how the research methods used will help to achieve the research objectives.

Chapter five identifies the key findings which were collected from the interviews with the five middle managers during the primary research phase of this study.

Chapter six consists of a discussion of what emerged from the primary research findings which are then compared and contrasted to that of the reviewed literature.

Chapter seven will summarise the conclusions of the study. Discussed in this chapter are the limitations of the study, recommendations and possible areas of future research.

1.5 Contribution of the study

The research has benefited the author personally in that it is the first experience of completing a dissertation. This dissertation has enabled the author to research an area that is of keen interest and gives an enhanced insight into how leaders at middle management level cope in times of organisational change.

From a more practical level the completed study will give an up to date insight into leadership during organisational change with the views obtained from the middle managers compared to that of the reviewed literature.

From an academic perspective it is hoped that this dissertation will provide a useful tool guide for future middle managers and also give existing middle managers and leaders a modernised take on leadership during organisational change.

The study also adds as a basis for further possible research by the author or another researcher.

1.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to provide a brief synopsis of the dissertation. Firstly, the overview of the dissertation is outlined along with the justification of the study. The research question and objectives are then outlined and the research methodology is then presented. The structure of the dissertation is then outlined and the contribution of the study is then discussed. The following chapter will begin to identify the relevant areas of literature that are deemed most suitable to the research topic in question.

Chapter Two

THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

2.1 Introduction

"We need authentic leaders, people of the highest integrity, committed to building enduring organizations. We need leaders who have a deep sense of purpose and are true to their core values. We need leaders with the courage to build their companies to meet the needs of all their stakeholders and who recognize the importance of their service to society". (George 2003, p. 5)

The quality of leadership at the top of and throughout an organisation is a key contributor to its success or failure. According to theorists such as Bass (1990) leadership is often looked upon as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of an institution. Similarly, Dangelmayer (2001) believes that the leadership team is one of the critical factors in the success or failure of an organisation as the team's unified effort helps to solve problems more efficiently.

The purpose of this chapter is to define leadership in an organisational setting, explain the importance of leadership to organisations, demonstrate the different styles of leadership that exist, describe the different skills and characteristics that effective leaders require and finally examine the difference between leadership and management as two separate entities.

2.2 Leadership Explained

Most theorists agree that leadership is the ability to influence a process toward the accomplishment of a goal. Krass (1998) views leadership as the ability to inspire people to work together on a team and follow the path shown by the leader in order to achieve a common objective. House et al. (1999) similarly views leadership as the ability of an individual to influence and motivate others to have a positive impact toward the effectiveness and success of the organisation.

According to Yukl (2002) the distinction between leader and follower does not necessarily mean that the person in question cannot perform both as a leader and follower at the same time. Yukl gives the example of the department manager who is the leader of department employees but is also the follower of different higher-level

managers in the organisation. Kouzes and Posner (2006) assert that leaders are followers too and that intelligent leaders know their boundaries and are able to accept advice from their followers. This has led to a change in how people define leadership with more theorists viewing leadership as a shared process rather than an individual role. Hughes and Hoffman (2002, p. 28) define leadership as "an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members".

Podsakoff and Mackenzie (2001) view the effective leader as someone who articulates a vision, fosters the acceptance of group objectives and provides continual support which can change the basic beliefs and values of the followers so that they are able to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by the organisation. Similarly, Bass and Riggio (2006) state that effective leaders can have a significant impact on organisational members commitment levels. The effective leader has the ability to have a positive effect on the commitment levels of followers enabling the goals and values of the follower, the group, the leader and the organisation to be on the same level as each other.

The author has chosen the above definitions as they eradicate the notion that leadership is the work of an individual. Instead the literature provides evidence that leadership is moving towards the attainment of a goal as a group and not an individual. While the leader is an integral part of any organisation, there would be no chance of the leader having any kind of positive impact without followers.

2.3 Importance of Leadership to Organisations

Leadership from an organisational perspective becomes increasingly complex as it moves up the authority chain from one level to another. There is much more responsibility placed on the shoulders of the person in question, problems are larger and issues more complex.

Kouzes and Posner (2003) believe that successful organisations should be built on the solid foundation of good leadership and direction. They identify five benefits that exemplary leaders bring to organisations.

Firstly, effective leaders can model the way. According to Northouse and Northouse (2010) leaders need to have a clear idea of their own values and philosophy. The

exemplary leader sets an example for others by their own behaviours such as following through on promises and commitments. Sims and Quatro (2005) support this by stating that exemplary leaders should model the behaviour they envision and expect from others.

Secondly, effective leaders can inspire a shared vision. Kouzes and Posner (2003) argue that leaders cannot command commitment from employees but they can inspire it. A leader can inspire a shared vision through the portrayal of images of attractive opportunities that may be in store should they and their followers arrive at a certain destination. According to Northouse and Northouse (2010) leaders themselves listen to the dreams of others and show them how they can realise these dreams. An effective vision has the ability to be communicated throughout an organisation and enables staff to envisage exciting possibilities for the future. Kouzes and Posner (2006) state that people in an organisation do not want to hear about the leader's vision. Instead they want to hear about their own aspirations. They want to see themselves in the future the leader is building. The best leaders understand that when they are inspiring a shared vision they do so by not selling their own idiosyncratic view of the world.

Thirdly, effective Leaders can challenge the process. Northouse and Northouse (2010) state that challenging the process means having a willingness to change the status quo and step into the unknown entering areas that may see some out of their comfort zone. Kouzes and Posner (2003) give examples of leaders challenging the process such as developing an innovative product, providing a new cutting edge service, shaping a ground-breaking piece of legislation, leading a revolutionary turnaround or starting up a new plant or business. Northouse and Northouse (2010) further state that exemplary leaders can be compared to pioneers. They want to try new things and are willing to take risks to make things better. According to the authors when exemplary leaders take risks they do it one step at a time and learn from their mistakes at each stage.

Fourthly, effective Leaders enable others to act. Sims and Quatro (2005) identify that enabling others to act involves empowering employees to help create a collective vision. By empowering your employees you are giving them a greater sense of involvement and feeling of importance within the organisation. This in turn promotes better quality performance. Northouse and Northouse (2010), state that outstanding

leaders are extremely effective at working with people. They build trust with employees and create environments where these employees can feel good about their work and get a sense for how it impacts on the greater community.

Finally, effective Leaders can also encourage the heart. Northouse and Northouse (2010) point out the fact that it is natural for employees to want support and be encouraged. Effective leaders are aware of this fact and are willing to give praise to workers for jobs well done. The outcome of such support is a greater collective spirit within the organisation. Kouzes and Posner (2003) that effective leaders have the ability to pick employees from the ground when they are in an exhausted and frustrated frame of mind. They do this through encouragement which provides motivation for the employees to go on to achieve positive results.

There is no doubting that strong and effective leaders can sometimes be the difference between success and failure in an organisation. The importance of the effective leader cannot be underestimated and Burdett (1999, p. 7) supports this view as he states; "no matter how the challenge is sliced and diced there is no substitute for good leadership".

2.4 Characteristics and Skills of Effective Leaders

Effective leaders require a special set of skills and characteristics that set them apart from the ordinary leader. These characteristics and skills are something that can be developed and improved upon. According to Hacker and Washington (2007), the best way to improve leadership skills is to focus on weaknesses and skills that are missing. Often leaders overplay their strengths which can be a fundamental mistake in thinking that past methods will work in the future.

Philip (2008), states that a leader must have several basic leadership attributes, which are developed through experience. These include courage, diligence, dignity, discretion and confidence. However the effective leader displays a broader set of skills and characteristics that set them apart from the ordinary leader.

Firstly, effective leaders are visionary and idea-oriented. According to DuBrin (2009) effective leaders are visionary because they offer an exciting image of where the organisation is heading and creates a vision of how they will get there. Providing a vision for employees is vital in giving them a sense of direction and according to

Kouzes and Posner (2003) identify this attribute as the most charismatic of all and has allowed people in various organisations to make dreams realities.

Secondly, effective leaders also display masterful communication skills. According to DuBrin (2009), leaders use exciting analogies and colourful language that can inspire employees. It is essential that the leader has the ability to consistently transmit clear communication to employees. A good way of inspiring others is to articulate a highly emotional message. DuBrin (2009) goes on to state that leaders sometimes communicate effectively through storytelling which is a technique of inspiring and instructing team members by informing them of old stories gained from personal experience.

Thirdly, effective leaders also display integrity. Jones (2008), states that integrity is the quality of being worthy and honourable and that the leader with integrity must display honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, ethics and high moral standards. Leaders are always at the forefront of operations and forever in the spotlight so it is vital that they behave in a way that sets an example for followers.

Finally, effective leaders must be decisive and responsible. Jones (2008), states that leaders gain respect from being decisive in decision-making and even more so in being responsible for their actions. To be innovative and execute a decision effectively a leader must make decisions that often no one else is prepared to make.

Huber (2006), states that leaders must also possess self-awareness which is the leader's ability to read his/her emotional state and how it impacts on staff relationships. Leaders must also possess self-management ability which is the ability of the leader to take corrective action and not transfer any negative moods to staff. Leaders must also have a great sense of social awareness which is the ability of the leader to show empathy in being sensitive and having a general awareness of the emotional state of others. Leaders must also be able to effectively manage relationships which are the ability to effectively communicate with others to prevent conflict and also develop emotional maturity of staff and team members.

Similarly to previous theorists, Yukl (2002) identifies three key skill-sets that effective leaders possess. The author states that effective leaders display technical skills. These include knowledge about methods, strategies, procedures and techniques

for conducting the different specialised activities of the leader's organisational unit. The effective leader also displays strong interpersonal skills and it is often the downfall of the weaker leader. Interpersonal skills include knowledge about human behaviour and interpersonal processes; while also having the ability to understand how others feel and being able to communicate clearly and effectively to establish effective relationships. The leader must also have the ability to develop the interpersonal skills of those in the organisation. Effective leaders also possess conceptual skills which include the ability to think logically, to be analytical and also have the ability to assess the internal and external factors affecting an organisation.

Bussiere (2003), points out an alternative type of skill which may be required by a leader which are action skills. These are skills that allow the leader to intervene and alter a situation if needs be. They involve such abilities as developing a particular strategy and manipulating the conditions to benefit the organisational structure.

To be successful a leader must display the characteristics and skills discussed in this section. According to Bussiere (2003), effective leadership requires the flexibility to take action and the intuition to choose the most appropriate alternative from a range of alternatives that will most benefit the organisation as it strives for success.

2.5 Leadership Styles

There are different types of leadership styles that see different leaders vary from one another. The different styles of leadership include autocratic leadership which according to Daniels (2004) is a style which is leader-focused where the leader maintains control, making all the decisions and solving all the problems. The leader dominates the group by making commands rather than being suggestive and seeking input from followers. Goethals et al. (2004) describe the military as being a good example of autocratic leadership. The military while in combat requires quick decision-making and also requires putting people's lives at risk. The autocratic leader has a high degree of dependency on their shoulders. The autocratic leader can be useful in areas where decisions need to be made quickly and decisively.

Another style of leadership is consultative leadership which Daniels (2004) goes on to describe as being based on the notion that leaders 'sell' their decisions to subordinates. Consultation takes place and the leader explains carefully the rationale for a decision

and its effect on followers. The overall goal of consultation is to inform members allowing them to ask questions and hence getting an all round greater understanding. McConnell (2003, p. 151) describes consultative leadership as a style that is; "exhibited when the leader remains open to input from members of the group but, through pronouncement, attitude or practice, retains full decision-making authority."

An additional style of leadership is democratic leadership which according to Woods (2005) aims to establish an environment which encourages decision-making from different perspectives where leadership may be emphasized throughout the organisation. Democratic Leadership can give workers a sense of ownership of the firm and make them feel more included in idea generation.

A further style of leadership is Laissez-Faire Leadership and Bass and Riggio (2006) describe laissez-faire leaders as those who tend to avoid taking stands on issues, do not emphasize results, and tend not to intervene and also fail to follow-up on issues. The Laissez-Faire style of leader tends to depend upon good team work and good interpersonal relations. Hill and Howlett (2005) describe the Laissez-Faire leader as a leader who gives away responsibility and authority to employees. They also state that the Laissez-Faire leader is one that tries to please everyone which in some cases can prove tricky.

2.5.1 Transformational Leadership

Other theorists classify leadership styles as being transformational or transactional. Mullins (2007) suggests that transformational leaders transmit a sense of mission and are concerned with long-term objectives. According to Mullins (2007) these leaders are usually concerned with the Four "I"s which includes idealised influence which is the charisma of the leader and the respect and admiration of the followers. This is also where they transmit their values and ethical principles. The second 'I' described by Mullins is inspirational motivation which is the behaviour of the leader which provides challenging goals and communicates a vision of the future for followers. Also discussed is intellectual stimulation which encourages innovative ways of problem-solving. The final 'I' discussed is individual consideration which involves leaders who listen and give special concern to the growth and development needs of the followers. They treat each worker as an individual.

Yukl (2002), identified leaders by their actions and the impact these actions have on other people. He went on to state that transformational leaders are usually identified in terms of providing a strong image and strong sense of mission arousing strong emotions in followers and a sense of identification with the leader.

According to Gadot and Drory (2006) transformational leadership is based on a relationship between the leader and his employees that is inspirational and breaks the cycle of subordinates' basic expectations. They state that this type of leadership raises the employees' awareness of their need to grow, validates their self-expression and motivates them to perform at new and higher levels.

2.5.2 Transactional Leadership

Avolio and Bass (2002) describe transactional leadership as leadership that occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines followers based on the adequacy of the follower's performance. Similarly George and Jones (2008) suggest that transactional leadership is leadership that motivates followers by exchanging rewards for high performance and noticing and reprimanding subordinates for mistakes and standard performance.

Avolio and Bass (2002) also go on to state that transactional leadership depends upon contingent reinforcement, either positive contingent reward or the more negative active or passive forms of management-by-exception. With contingent reward, the leader assigns or gets agreement on what needs to be done and rewards others in exchange for a job completed in a satisfactory manner. This particular method has been found to be reasonably effective although not as much as any of the transformational components in motivating others to achieve higher levels of development and performance.

The method of management-by-exception may be active or passive. When active, the leader arranges to actively monitor deviances from standards, mistakes, and errors in the follower's assignments and to take corrective action as necessary. When passive, the leader tends to wait for deviances, mistakes and errors to occur and then takes corrective action.

According to Boerner et al. (2007) the relationship between transactional leaders and their followers are mainly regarded as an economic exchange. A follower that does

more than is required or achieves a higher quality than is required will not be recognised by the leader. As a result, the authors note that followers act rationally by only committing to as much as will be rewarded.

2.6 Manager vs. Leader

The distinctions between management and leadership are very evident from a theoretical aspect. According to Mason and Wetherbee (2004) management is about what gets done and involves accomplishing tasks whereas leadership is how things get done and involves influencing and guiding a course of action. There are many distinctions that can be made between the two. Robinson Hickman (1999) looks at some of the differences between leadership and management and states that leadership is more of an influence relationship while management is a more authority dominated relationship.

Despite there being differences between the two there is a consensus that both are hugely important to the organisation. Hacker and Washington (2004) state that organisations require both management and leadership if they are to be successful. Leadership is required to facilitate change and management is important in achieving orderly results.

According to Kotter (1999) leadership and management complement each other. In some cases one can be a good manager but not necessarily a good leader. However one can probably not be an effective leader in a lot of organisations without being an effective manager also. From this it can be said that management is inbuilt in leadership.

Table 2.1: Complementary Strengths: Management vs. Leadership

Management	Leadership
Processes	People
Facts	Feelings
Intellectual	Emotional
Head	Heart
Position Power	Persuasion Power
Control	Commitment
Problem Solving	Possibility Thinking
Reactive	Proactive
Doing things right	Doing the right things
Rules	Values
Goals	Vision
Light a fire under people	Stoke the fire within people
Written communications	Verbal Communications

(Adapted from Clemmer, 2003)

According to Clemmer (2003), the leader is concerned with what direction the company is going in and guides employees along this path by motivation using feelings and emotions. Leaders stoke a fire within people with the aim of getting employees to raise their game accordingly.

The managers, despite planning are not as focused as on long term objectives as leaders are. Managers tend to manage and organise people rather than empowerment which leaders tend to utilise.

2.7 Conclusion

Leadership is a key determinant of success in organisations worldwide. It can be seen as the ability of a person to influence individuals or a number of individuals towards the accomplishment of a goal or goals. Leaders influence their followers through a combination of different methods. It is achieved through motivation and inspiration of employees in the direction of the organisations goals. Leaders have different styles and approaches to leadership. Effective leaders provide motivation for employees in organisations through passion, drive and commitment. It is clear that these effective leaders need to possess a wide range of skills and characteristics including self awareness, self management, technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills. Finally research has shown that leadership and management are not to be confused. In the past they were believed to be very similar, however, research shows that both are separate, but complementary entities.

The following chapter will analyse leadership in more depth by evaluating the influence of middle managers during organisational change.

Chapter Three

LEADING CHANGE AT MIDDLE MANAGEMENT LEVEL

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the importance of leading change at middle management level, to look at the skills required to lead at middle management level during organisational change, to explore the challenges such leaders face and also look at the methods by which these leaders overcome such challenges.

Spafford (2005) states that in the world of business one of the few constants is change. Change can occur for a number of reasons both internally and externally. The environment in which organisations operate is changing enormously and what was once taken as a given may not be any more. Organisations are in an era of great change. With the global economy changing at such unprecedented levels nobody really knows what tomorrow holds. According to Remenyi (2005) businesses surviving in the coming decades will be those who are able to rapidly respond to changing environmental conditions. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that organisations have effective leaders in place that can help their organisation adapt and change if they want to be able to survive, let alone prosper in an ever-changing environment.

Burnes (2002), reports that the failure rate of large-scale change efforts is as high as 70%. With such a high failure rate the onus is on the leader to perform in a manner that sees the effective facilitation of the change initiative.

3.2 Importance of Leading Change at middle management level

According to Herzig and Jimmieson (2006) middle management can be broadly defined as managers holding positions that are situated between the first-level supervisor and the level of executives. They are situated below those who acquire company-wide responsibilities. During a change process those at middle management are the key link between lower level employees and senior management in terms of communicating the change effectively. According to Roth (1998), when middle management is approached in the right way it can become the strongest advocate of the change process and it's most productive participant. Roth goes on to state that

senior executives are aware that middle managers spend most their time solving their problems and making decisions. There is no doubting the middle manager's role as they provide a significant link between senior figures and lower level employees. However, their role is not an easy one and according to McKenna (1999) middle managers need to be flexible and adaptable to be able to cope with the ever changing environment. Roth (1998) also states that sometimes there is a certain level of ambiguity on the part of middle managers as to what their role actually entails. They sometimes become frustrated as their responsibilities and authority are not clearly defined as decisions that are seemingly their responsibility are sometimes taken from their clutches by their bosses.

Change cannot be achieved without the commitment of organisation's leaders including middle managers. Suresh (2001) identifies the role that needs to be played by such leaders in the change process. He asserts that leaders should have a way of thinking about change, in that they should have a model which would help them formulate the process of change that is due to be implemented. He goes on to state that leaders should have clear goals in that they must have a good idea of what results the change process will generate. It is also stated that leaders should initiate change at the point where they acquire the most control and are able to make reliable predictions about the consequences of their actions. Also leaders require the awareness that change in any one part of the situation can affect the whole. In this case leaders must be ready for consequences that they may not have been anticipating from different areas in the organisation. Roth (1998, p. 9) speaking on middle managers states; "they are the puzzle piece that ties everything else together and integrates the whole".

Similarly, Johnson et. al (2008) identifies five roles middle managers play during organisational change. The first role is identified as the implementation and control role which involves making sure all resources are in place and controlled appropriately, monitoring behaviour and performance of staff and also explaining the change when required to do so. The second role is identified as the sense making role where the middle manager is required to understand the change being communicated by senior management. The third role is identified as the reinterpretation and adjustment role which involves the middle manager responding to events as they unfold in relation to relationships with suppliers, customers and the workforce. The fourth role is the role of relevance bridge where middle managers are a link between

top management and members at lower levels. The final role is the advisor role where the middle managers report to senior management on what are likely to be the requirements and blockages to change.

3.3 Characteristics and skills of a change leader at middle management level

According to Kanter (2007) the most valuable things that a leader can bring to a change organisation are conviction, passion and confidence in others. While these are good starting points it is vital that leaders at middle management level have a certain type of skills that positively affect on the change process. Zenger and Folkman (2007) identify certain skills that are required to succeed when leading change at middle management level.

The first can be described as anticipatory skills which are the ability of the leader to anticipate the response to change and how it will impact on the organisation. By using knowledge of the external environment such leaders can stay involved in the making of critical decisions

Secondly, leaders at middle management level need to display empowerment skills which involve building support for your particular vision by involving others. By sharing the power in this way the middle manager increases the likelihood of a satisfied department who feel more part of the process.

Finally, Zenger and Folkman (2007) state it is of the utmost importance that leaders at this level display good communication skills. While it is important that senior managers display clear and concise communication in portraying their vision of change to middle managers it is just as important that middle managers portray the vision in the exact same way to lower level employees.

Similarly, Yukl (2002) states that middle-level managers will require an almost equal mix of technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills to be an effective leader in the change process.

3.4 Challenges of leading change at Middle management Level

Leading change is not straight forward at any level and one challenge that middle managers face is uncertainty about how to approach the change process. According to McKinley and Scherer (2000) middle managers are sometimes left with feelings of

uncertainty in the change process and are not sure of what course of action to change. Employees at lower level may also feel the same level of ambiguity about the change process as the middle manager does.

Another challenge faced by middle managers during organisational change is resistance. According to Tiernan et al. (2001) any organisation facing change will inevitably encounter a degree of resistance even if there is significant planning in place. They identify reasons for resistance to change such as staff fearing for their job security, decisions being sprung out of the blue, lack of involvement in decision making, experienced workers being sceptical of change and fear that change may result in employees being taken out of their comfort zone.

3.5 Overcoming challenges of leading change at middle management level

Goldsmith (2001) state that when it comes to managing uncertainty communication can be utilised to reduce sometimes increase and also maintain uncertainty. While there is the potential for uncertainty to be increased a lack of communication would mean middle managers would struggle to eradicate uncertainty. Support is critical and Herzig and Jimmieson (2006) state that support from senior management is vital in managing uncertainty. The same applies for uncertainty with employees with effective communication being seen as the most viable response Herzig and Jimmieson (2006) also state that interaction with other middle managers can also help them to better understand the change.

With regards to resistance to change, middle managers can take measures to overcome such issues. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) identify methods of dealing with resistance to change and also ways in which leaders can have a positive influence on different individuals and groups during change. Firstly they state that education and communication can be used. The idea of education and communication is to educate people about the change before hand and communicate the ideas to help people understand the need for change. An education and communication program can be an ideal form of overcoming resistance which requires significant time and effort. Secondly they state that participation and involvement can be utilised to benefit the organisation and that research has shown that participation leads to commitment and not merely compliance. Commitment is required for the change to be successful. Thirdly facilitation and support are identified as methods to combat resistance. This

method can include being supportive, providing training, giving employees time off after tough periods or just simply listening and giving emotional support. Fourthly they identify negotiation and agreement as another method of overcoming resistance. This involves offering incentives such as higher wage rates or an alternative reward system that would motivate employees. Fifthly they recognise manipulation and co-optation as a further way of helping employees through the change process. This involves giving different personnel key roles in the change process which in turn encourages them to commit to the change process. Lastly managers often deal with resistance through explicit and implicit coercion. This is where they basically force people to accept a change through threatening the security of their jobs, possibly offering enticing job promotions to get employees supporting the change or transferring or firing of individuals. Similarly, Johnson et. al (2008) identifies education, participation, intervention, direction and coercion as styles of managing change.

Kotter (1996) identifies an eight step plan that can be used when approaching change. Such steps can combat the threat of resistance to change. While the steps are used primarily by senior managers, middle managers can be involved in steps such as communicating the change vision and also being part of the guiding coalition.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides an insight into leadership of change at middle management level looking at the skills of the change leader at middle management level as well as the challenges faced by such a leader and how the leader can overcome such challenges. The next chapter provides details of the methodology utilised to undertake the primary research.

The following chapter will outline the research methods used for the purpose of this particular study.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The literature review presented in the previous chapters gives an insight into findings based on secondary research. However, in order to investigate an issue thoroughly it is necessary to engage in primary research. This chapter informs the reader of the research methods used for the purpose of this particular study. Sekaran (2003) identifies research as a systematic and organised effort to examine a specific problem or issue that requires a particular solution.

This chapter begins with the research problem being outlined whilst the research question and objectives of the study are also presented. A description of the research design is included. This describes the methodology chosen and the rationale for choosing these specific methods are justified. In conclusion, the benefits and limitations associated with each method of the research are presented.

4.2 Research Problem

Creswell (2003), states that a research problem is an issue that exists in the literature, in theory or in practice which subsequently leads to the need for the study. The research problem in a study becomes more apparent when the researcher asks; "What problem influenced the need to undertake this study?"

Influenced by the economic conditions both domestically and globally, the process for this study began with the general observation that many leading organisations were in the process of organisational change. There was an eagerness to investigate the level of influence leaders could have in such organisations.

In such economic conditions one of the main drivers of organisational change is the large degree of competition. From the literature review it is apparent that for modern organisations to be successful, they require that special 'something' or 'someone' that can make all the difference and set them apart from their competitors. Organisations realise that highly skilled and motivated people are crucial to their operations if they hope to prosper in the current climate. Therefore, it is now apparent that people are the key strategic resource. Directing and leading staff within an organisation to work

to the best of their ability is one thing, but trying to lead them while their organisation is undergoing a change initiative is difficult to achieve. Further research on the subject matter was required.

4.3 Research Question

The research question is borne directly from the identification of a research problem and is of the utmost importance to the research study. Yin (2003) believes that the most important part of a research study is defining a research project. By having a clearly defined research question in place there is then the basis to allow the study to continue in a structured and efficient manner. Emroy and Cooper (1991) affirmed that the research question gives clarity to the research study and allows for the precise formulation of a single question which best outlines the objectives of the study at hand.

Sekaran (2003) declared that once the literature review is complete the researcher is in a position to narrow down the problem from its original broad base and define the issues of concern in a clearer manner. Sekaran goes on to state that it is critical that the research question be unambiguously identified and defined.

The objectives of this research are driven by the following key research question:

How do effective leaders lead at middle management level in times of organisational change?

There is a growing need for effective leaders in organisations especially during times of change with middle management being a vital position in the change process.

Saunders et. al (2003) believe that the research question is one of a number of questions that the research process will address and feel that the statement of the research question is often the precursor of a study's research objectives.

4.4 Research Objectives

Zigmund (2000) suggests that a decision to should be made from the outset as to precisely what should be researched. Subsequent to identifying and clarifying the research problem and stating the research question the researcher should then proceed to outline the research objectives.

The research objectives of the current study are;

1. To explain the nature of leadership and to gauge how effective leaders performance impacts upon the organisational department.

This objective relates to gain a better understanding of the nature of leadership and also the impact effective leaders can have on their organisational department. The researcher aims to distinguish between the impact of an effective leader and the impact of the non-effective leader.

2. To evaluate the significance of change leaders at middle management level.

This objective relates to the importance of effective leaders at a middle management level in times of organisational change. While leading and directing staff in a department is a significant task in itself it can become more of a challenge when trying to lead in times of organisational change. The researcher hopes to evaluate the role of the middle manager during organisational change.

3. To establish the leadership skills and characteristics necessary to lead change at middle management level.

Here, the researcher attempts to determine which leadership skills, characteristics and styles are required to effectively lead at middle management level in times of organisational change. It is hoped that objective can be achieved through the theory outlined in chapter two compared to that of the reality that exists from the leaders in the semi-structured interviews.

4. To explore the methods and strategies employed by middle managers to facilitate change effectively in their organisational departments.

This objective aims to look at the different tactics, methods and strategies used by those at middle management when facilitating change in their organisational

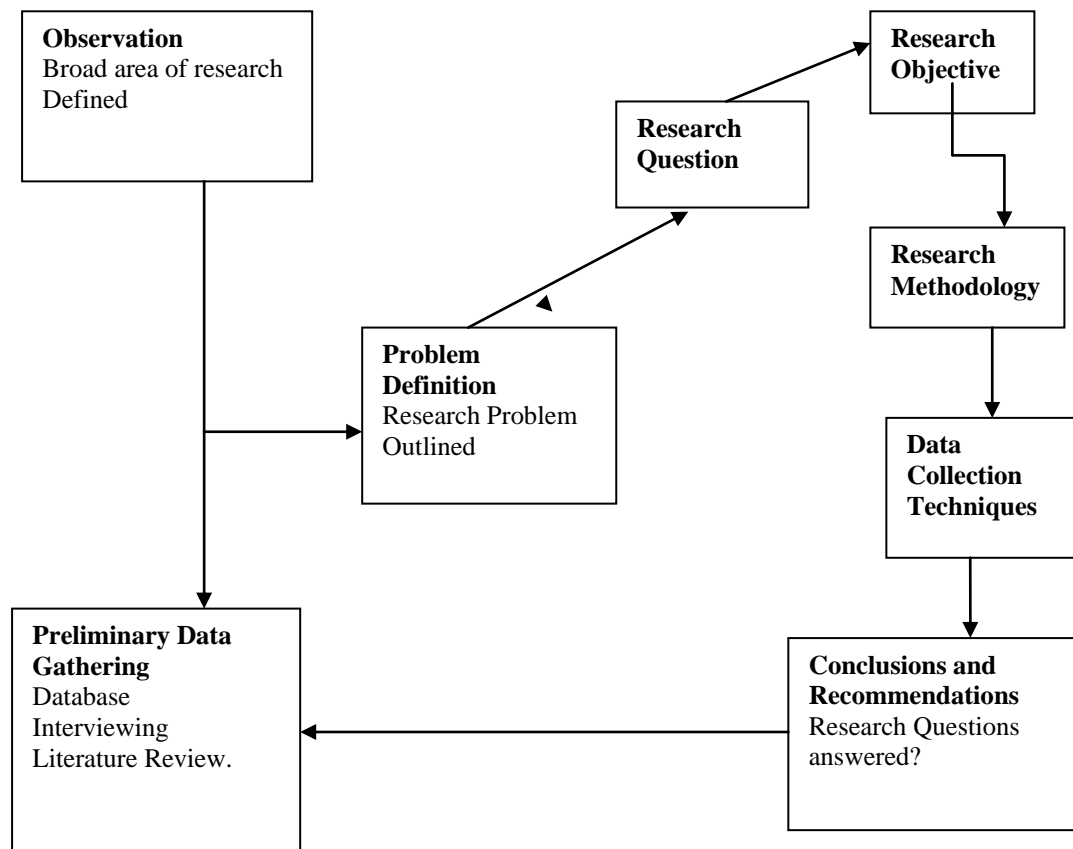
departments. It is hoped the objective can be achieved through the theory outlined in chapter two while also looking at the responses of the interviewees as to what methods and strategies they tend to use in their organisational departments.

4.5 Research Design

From the outset, it became apparent that one of the most important factors when completing such a project, in fact any project, would be to have a clear and well planned out process. Herbst and Coldwell (2004) state that the research design can be described as the 'glue' that holds the research project together. It can also be described as a journey which is made up of a number of stages or steps. Sekaran (2003) views the research process as a number of steps designed and followed with the goal of finding answers to the issues that are of concern and the addressing of the research problem and research objectives.

The research design outlines the approach that one has taken to the study. Each stage or step are dependent on each other and are all vital cogs in the overall research study. The diagram overleaf illustrates the diagrammatically the different stages in the research design.

Figure 4.1 Research Design illustrated diagrammatically



Adapted from Sekaran (2003)

4.6 Secondary Research

Brannick and Roche (1997) argue that secondary research plays a key role in providing a much broader understanding of the research topic to the researcher. Prior to completing primary research the author appreciates that a thorough investigation in terms of secondary research needs to be conducted. Secondary research can be both advantageous and have drawbacks according to Boslaugh (2007) who further states that secondary research can be advantageous in terms of time as the data has already been collected. It is also time efficient as the researcher can devote their time to analysing the data as the data which has been already collected is usually stored in electronic format which also makes access to data much more efficient. He also goes on to state that secondary research can also have its drawbacks. The researcher does not know how well the secondary research was done as they were not present. This means that information can be sometimes inaccurate and unreliable.

Domegan and Fleming (1999) state that when researching one must explore all secondary sources before setting off on the journey of collecting primary data. The author began by conducting secondary research in the form of the literature review in chapters two and three. Information for the literature review was collected in the form of academic and media sources such as books, academic articles, journals and cases in the specific subject area.

4.7 Primary Research

Only when secondary research is complete can one begin to undertake primary data collection. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) feel that while secondary research provides a good starting point for research, primary research is essential to take the study to the next level. Primary research can be time consuming and sometimes difficult to interpret but it is the opportunity of getting new unfound material that makes this form of research essential to any study.

Primary research has been gathered on the subject of leadership in times of organisational change. This has done this by using one-to-one interviews with key heads of department in different organisations that are currently experiencing organisational change in the South east.

4.8 Quantitative versus Qualitative

Research methods are divided into two distinct groups namely quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative methods are designed to collect information for statistical analysis and Locke (1998) identifies that quantitative research deals with things that can be counted using statistical manipulation of numbers which are used to process data and summarise results. Qualitative research, on the other hand is based on meanings articulated through words and analysis is conducted by interpreting the information gathered as documented by Saunders et al (2003).

Brannick and Roche (1997) state that quantitative research deals with numbers or clearly defined measurable attitudes while qualitative research tends to deal with experience and meanings described in words. While neither can be described as better than the other it is appreciated that one will be more suited to the particular study being conducted. When choosing what approach to adopt, it may be useful to look at the characteristics of the two research approaches as highlighted by Sekaran (2003).

Table 4.1 Characteristics of Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Quantitative	Qualitative
Casual and Predictive	Exploratory and descriptive studies
Researcher uninvolved	Varying degrees of researcher involvement
Large Sample	Small Sample
Verifying Theory	Discovery Theory
Questions Preset	Questions open ended
Positivist	Positivist to phenomenological

Adapted from Sekaran (2003)

As seen in the table adapted from Sekaran (2003) qualitative research allows for more open-ended questions which may be required when trying to analyse issues more in-depth. Qualitative deals with smaller samples than quantitative does. Qualitative is also deals with more exploratory and descriptive studies while quantitative research is more casual and predictive.

4.9 Research Approach

As stated earlier, theorists have stated that neither approach to primary research is superior to the other but one may be more suitable than the other. De Ruyter and Scholl (1998) believe that "*qualitative research offers an insight into questions that address the way people think about a certain subject and why they think that*". In looking at leaders in different organisations that are experiencing organisational change it is vital to draw on the experiences and opinions of those in these organisations. The best way of gathering a better understanding of the experiences of these people is learning about these experiences from the people themselves. Due to

the fact that experiences are both complicated, it was felt that experiences would be most effectively shared through the use of interviews.

4.9.1 Benefits of Personal Interviews

For the purpose of this particular study personal interviews were found to be the most appropriate method for gathering the necessary information. Sekaran (2003) declares that the main benefit of face-to-face interviews is that the interviewer has the ability to adapt and change questions when necessary, clarify any doubts and ensure that answers are properly understood through the rephrasing or repeating of questions and also the flexibility to ask probing questions. This form of research provides reliability in that the researcher can seek out the specific information they require for their study rather than other methods which may result in a broader range of results which may be difficult to interpret. It was felt that semi-structured interviews would be best suited to this study as unstructured interviews can be too informal while structured interviews can be very formal and make the interviewee somewhat uncomfortable. Semi-structured interviews can put the participant at ease and also has the potential to get the best and most accurate results. Saunders et al (2003) believe that semi-structured interviews are most suitable as the interview can consist of both closed and open ended questions and have the ability for questions to vary from one interview to the next.

Hill (2000) believes that it is easier to build up a relationship with the respondent in a one-to-one situation such as a personal interview. Also things can be explained properly but also with personal interviews it is usually possible to see if the respondent is having difficulty answering or interpreting the question.

4.9.2 Limitations of Personal Interviews

Like all methods of primary research, interviews can also have drawbacks. Yin (2003) state that interviews can be problematic as there is a poor response from those requested to participate and that information gathered can easily be inaccurate. Yeung (1995) feels that problems may lie in the fact that the interviewees may feel embarrassed or feel that they have a lack of knowledge on the topic which could lead to nervousness which in turn may lead to answers becoming somewhat inaccurate.

Sekaran (2003) highlight a number of drawbacks to personal interviews such as;

- The conducting of face-to-face interviews is time consuming
- Costs more when a wide geographic region is covered.
- Respondents may be concerned about confidentiality of information given.
- Can introduce interviewer biases.

There is evidence that some of these drawbacks were experienced in the research process with the interview process being extremely time consuming.

Participants were guaranteed confidentiality by the researcher due to requests from some of the sample. However, it was evident that this still would not guarantee that they would contribute as openly as others would in other methods of primary research.

4.10 Approach to Interviews

A total of five interviews took place for this dissertation. For confidentiality reasons the interviewees were named using letters rather than their actual names. Initial contact was made with the interviewees by phone and through e-mail. Prior to each interview a certain degree of research was carried out on the particular organisations involved. Also an e-mail was sent out in advance of the interview so that participants would be more comfortable with the interview and also have time to deal with any questions that would seem unclear to them. All interviewees agreed to the interviews being recorded and this was done by the interviewer using a dictaphone. The following table outlines the interview schedule;

Table 4.2 Interview Schedule

Organisation	Interviewee	Position	Date	Length
Bio- Pharmaceutical Production company	Respondent A	Line Manager	July 1 st 2010	38 minutes
Packaging Company	Respondent B	Production Manager	July 5 th 2010	45 minutes
Pharmaceutical Production Company	Respondent C	Supervisor	July 9 th 2010	32 minutes
Business Representative Organisation	Respondent D	Department Manager	July 9 th 2010	44 minutes
Drinks Company	Respondent E	Production Manager	July 12 th 2010	55 minutes

4.11 Data Analysis

Thomas (2003) views data analysis as being a tool that is available to assist the researchers understanding of complex data through the development of hypothesis or conclusions. For the purpose of this study qualitative data analysis software was not used as it was felt that it would be too time consuming. Tesch (1990) states that qualitative researchers would gain substantial benefits in terms of time through analysis by adopting qualitative data analysis software because computer use can overcome the mechanical difficulties inherent in working with paper-based qualitative data. However there was a lack of experience in the use of data analysis software which meant that using it would be too time consuming. Transcribing the interviews from the Dictaphone used was seen as the most viable option.

4.12 Limitations of the Research

One of the main constraints of the interview methodology for this research is the number of people that were interviewed. Due to time and resource constraints it proved impossible to interview all the people who may have been relevant. However the limitations of this particular study meant that this was not possible. In saying that, the researcher still felt that while the sample may have been small there still was a varied response that made the overall findings interesting.

As this was the first experience of the interviewing process for the researcher it meant that compared to more regular and experienced researchers the outcome would not be as effective.

4.13 Conclusion

It is felt that the chapter has achieved its aim by presenting the reader with the background, justification and selection of research methods. The research problem was identified from which the research question and their objectives were derived. The author felt that semi-structured interviews were the most viable option for this particular study. While there are limitations to the study the author is of the opinion that these limitations had little impact in the overall outcome of the dissertation. The next chapter will detail the major findings from these interviews.

Chapter Five

Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this particular chapter is to present the main findings from the interviews conducted. The findings are taken from the semi-structured interviews conducted with five middle managers representing five different organisations going through periods of organisational change. Each organisation is located within the south east of Ireland. The varied nature of the organisations used should give a more accurate account of the role that leaders play in the sample organisations during organisational change.

Some of the sample in question requested anonymity so for that purpose it has been decided that each interviewee will not be referred to using their proper title, instead they will be referred to by letters in the alphabet. The following table outlines the different respondent's backgrounds.

Table 5.1 Interviewee Profiles

Name	Organisation	Position	Length at Organisation	Length of Position
Respondent A	Bio-Pharmaceutical Production company	Line Manager	Seven Years	Three Years
Respondent B	Packaging Company	Production Manager	Fifteen Years	Five Years
Respondent C	Pharmaceutical Production Company	Supervisor	Eight Years	Four Years
Respondent D	Business Representative Organisation	Department Manager	Four Years	Four Years
Respondent E	Drinks Company	Production Manager	Eight Years	Two Years

5.2 Leadership Explained

Each respondent verified that they understood the meaning of leadership. Each gave a different account of what they felt leadership meant but all agreed that leadership involved having an influence on others. All respondents agreed that leadership was more of a shared process than an individual process. Respondent B and D stated that leadership could not be effective if it was not a shared process as there would be too many requirements placed on the shoulders of the individual leader. Respondent C and E similarly stated that leadership simply had to be a shared process as there was simply no alternative. However, Respondent A was the exception expressing the opinion that leadership as a shared process would mean that there would be too many people with a certain amount of authority and there may be confusion as to who in fact is the real leader. Respondent A felt that leadership being shared among employees may have the potential to lead to conflict.

When commenting on what leadership meant to them, respondent A commented that leadership involves motivating employees to perform at the highest possible standard. This respondent also states that the onus is on the leader to have the ability to influence employees positively giving them the best chance possible to succeed. Respondent B similarly stated that leadership meant having the ability to motivate employees through inspiration. Respondent D echoed the sentiments of previous respondents when describing leadership as the ability to motivate, to provide guidance and be responsible in terms of behaviour. Respondent E was not too dissimilar in their response describing leadership as providing motivation not through fear and intimidation but through providing guidance and direction.

Respondent C stated that leadership is the ability of a figure or figures to behave in a manner that inspires influences and motivates employees to work to the highest possible standard. However in describing leadership Respondent C went a step further and gave an insightful image of leadership from their perspective; 'leadership is similar to a guide dog for blind citizens. The guide dog directs the person in the way they want to go, however it is still up to the person to take the steps as shown by the dog (the leader) to arrive at their destination'.

5.3 Importance of Leadership in the organisational department

All of the respondents agreed that leadership was a key element of their organisation's drive for success. There was a general consensus from each respondent that leadership was of the utmost importance to the respondents' departments and organisations as a whole. All respondents were probed on the benefits outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2003) in particular which would be most beneficial. Each respondent stated that each benefit would bring something to the organisation that would improve employee's performance. The majority stated, however that inspiring a shared vision would be most beneficial as it would enable employees to be on the same wave length as the leader enabling both to be aware of what direction they are heading.

Respondent A stated that leadership is critical to the organisation. The respondent stated that there a number of targets that need to be hit and goals that need to be achieved and that without effective leadership they may not meet these goals. This respondent felt that without a strong leadership figure workers will lack a vision that can act as a guiding influence. Respondent B similarly stated that leadership is vital in the organisation as a whole but there is a huge onus on effective leadership in the respondent's particular department. Their organisation's philosophy is based on creating high quality products with the minimum error which means the production department demands high performance.

Respondent C and D similarly described leadership as critically important to the organisation but both also gave insightful images of their view on the importance of leadership. Respondent C described leadership as the 'glue' that holds an organisation and its employees together and also describes it as having the potential to be the difference between success and failure. Respondent D described an organisation without leadership as being similar to a 'ship without a captain'.

Respondent E reiterated the view of the previous respondents claiming that effective leadership is vital in organisations but also put forward the view that effective leaders can provide stability and security for employees. Respondent E felt that staff can benefit from having someone they can identify as a leader who can act as a role model and mentor and be available in times of crisis and change.

5.4 Importance of Leading Change at middle management level

Each respondent felt that in their respective departments that effective leadership was of the utmost importance and was essential to ensuring that whatever change took place would be a successful one. Also when each respondent was questioned about the importance of interpersonal skills each responded that they were of vital necessity for the middle manager. The majority of respondents identified communication as an integral part of the middle manager's role during organisational change.

Respondent A spoke about the importance of effective leadership during organisational change stating that to make a smooth transition from one way of doing things to another there needed to be the right personnel in place to ensure that employees at lower levels were aware of the changes being made and what these changes meant for them and the organisation as a whole. Respondent A felt that middle management level in particular required effective leadership as it is a link between senior managers and lower level employees as they deal with both on a regular basis.

Respondent B, C, D and E stated that effective leadership was critical throughout the process of change and identified communication as a key element of leading effectively. Respondent B stated that the middle managers need to communicate the change vision to lower level employees. Being a supervisor, Respondent C declared that it was his duty to observe how employees were reacting to the change throughout the process and act as a guiding influence that could communicate effectively when problems arose but also acknowledge employees who were adapting admirably giving them encouragement to continue progressing and also to help those around them who may be struggling. Respondent D describes leadership during organisational change as the time when it is most required to be an effective leader. Respondent D states that during organisational change there is anxiety and tension among those who are unsure of what the change actually entails and that the responsibility lies with those at middle management to effectively communicate the change. Respondent E similarly describes effective leadership at middle management level during organisational change as an 'absolute must'. As the organisation in which respondent E is working is going through a technological change, it was felt that effective communication and

understanding was vital in ensuring that staff made the transition to working with the new technology as effortless as possible.

5.5 Characteristics and skills of a change leader at middle management level

Each respondent gave a varied account of what they felt were the necessary skills and characteristic required to lead at middle management level during organisational change. Respondents identified decisiveness, confidence, passion and awareness as characteristics required while communication skills, anticipatory skills and empowerment skills were also mentioned.

Respondent A felt that it was vital that during organisational change middle managers show decisiveness and confidence in their own actions. Respondent B also stated that confidence was something that was certainly required on the part of the middle manager. Respondent B further stated that the middle manager must have an approachable personality which would enable and encourage employees to enquire about any issues they may have about the change process.

Respondent C stated that a middle manager needs to display passion about the change process. According to this respondent it is vital that the middle manager is passionate in how they approach the change themselves and in how they communicate the change, making the change seem more attractive to reluctant employees through passion. If the leader is not passionate about the change then it is hard to expect the lower level employees to be.

Respondent D felt that it was vital that the middle manager has a good awareness of what the change entails and also have the skill to anticipate how employees may react to change and be able to combat this. Respondent D also claims that communication skills are of the utmost importance. According to respondent D communication skills are important but are even more so important in times of change.

Respondent E stated that middle managers need to show empathy for employees and show understanding and have a realisation that employees need to be guided through change which can negatively affect a lot of employees. Respondent E suggest empowerment as an effective way of getting employees to understand the change that is taking place and feels that middle managers must empower employees accordingly.

5.6 Challenges faced during change process

Each respondent agreed that there are always challenges faced during the change process. All respondents also highlighted that there is always a certain element of resistance to change. Each respondent gave a varying account of challenges faced in times of change. However, the majority of respondents felt that fear on the part of employees can be a major obstacle.

Respondent A identified fear as a challenge faced during the change process and stated that one of the big challenges during change is assuring older staff that their job is safe and that change can be good. Similarly respondent B stated that fear on the part of employees can be an obstacle that can require further attention. Respondent B feels that it is vital to rid employees of the fear as soon as possible, thus enabling the change to be embedded into the social fabric of the organisation. Respondent D also echoed the view of previous respondents and stated that fear is a severe obstacle in the change process. According to this respondent employees have a fear of job security, fear that changes will see them surplus to requirements.

Respondent C took a similar view to that of respondent A, B and D stating that fear was a huge problem. However respondent C also stated that the fear that is not only felt by lower level employees but felt by middle managers also. According to respondent C; 'fear comes from a lack of knowledge as to where the change is taking us. If change was communicated more clearly and everyone knew fully where they stood I feel fear would be significantly reduced'.

Respondent E was the exception recognising conflict as the biggest challenge during the change process. However, similar to other respondents, respondent E states that there is frustration during the change when there is an uncertainty and confusion as to what is taking place. When the frustration becomes too much there is a real threat of conflict which can in turn have an adverse affect on the change process.

5.7 Overcoming challenges during change process

The majority of respondents agree that communication is vital in overcoming challenges. However there was a split between respondents with some feeling that reward and recognition may be a good strategy while the other respondents felt that this would be a poor tactic to use.

Respondent A, B, D and E felt that clear communication is vital. Respondent A emphasised that a crucial element of the communication is the ability of the middle manager to listen to employees and appreciate exactly what their issues are with the change. Respondent B similarly stresses the importance of communication stating that enough care cannot be taken with how a leader communicates such important information. Respondent D echoes the view of respondent A and B stating that the most effective way of combating any problems during the change process is by using clear and effective communication. Respondent E also identified communication but unlike the other respondents identified collaboration as a key method that can overcome problems during the change process. Respondent E felt that collaboration and support between senior managers, middle managers and also lower level employees is vital in overcoming possible problems during the change process.

Respondent C stated that awareness is vital in overcoming problems during the change process. The respondent claimed that as a supervisor it is vital that there is an awareness shown in terms of what is going on with employees, what their mindset is like and how they are feeling about the change.

5.8 Methods and Strategies used at middle management in times of change

For this particular section each respondent gave different insights into the types of methods and strategies they would use to lead effectively during organisational change. Employee involvement schemes, social gatherings and employee assistant programmes were some of the methods identified by participating respondents. When probed on whether reward schemes were a viable option respondent A and E state that rewards should be utilised, respondent B and D stated there should be no need for the use of reward schemes during organisational change while respondent C stated that they would be unsure of its success but would not rule out trying it.

Respondent A stated that when implementing change it is vital to sit down workers and ask them what their goals are for the foreseeable future. Furthermore according to respondent A management should ideally tell employees what is expected of them for the foreseeable future in terms of the change. By communicating in such a way respondent A feels that both parties feel empowered and it is a good starting point. During times of change the organisation in which respondent A works in provides a few more social outings as it is felt that morale needs to be increased when facing into

the change process. The events are paid for by the company and respondent A feels that this makes the employees feel more appreciated and this can be vital for many employees morale according to respondent A. Similarly to respondent A, respondent C points to social gatherings which can increase bonds and friendships in the group and can vitally increase morale. Respondent C also identifies informal gatherings such as breakfast and lunch as vital ways of communicating with staff.

Respondent B stated that quality circles once or twice a week are a good way of keeping employees informed and up to date on the changes taking place. This is similar to respondent E who identifies employee involvement schemes as effective stating; 'in our company we involve employees as much as possible. For example during the change process there might be days where I give a certain member of staff my responsibilities as leader for the day under my guidance. It gives the employee in question a better chance to understand the change and also make them feel more valued and empowered. I tend to involve each employee in some shape or form so all will feel the same importance'. Respondent B also feels strongly about having an open door policy where employees can feel free to approach with regards any matter that may be an issue.

Respondent D identifies the use of an Employee Assistance Program (E.A.P.), mediators and facilitators that can be effective making a smooth transition. Respondent D recognises that all these steps are vital in helping employees in getting over the fears associated with change. However respondent D, similarly to respondent A, also claims that listening on the part of the leader is essential too, and that it is vital in gaining an understanding of where the employees are coming from so to speak.

The following table gives a guide to the response of the interviewees to the critical issues on this study.

Table 5.2 Interview Response Overview

Questions	Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C	Respondent D	Respondent E
1. Meaning of Leadership	Motivation	Motivation and Inspiration	Inspirational, Influential and Motivation	Motivation, Guidance and Responsibility	Motivation, Guidance and Direction
2. Importance of Effective Leadership in organisation	Critical to organisation	Vital to organisation	Difference between success and failure	Without leadership: organisation like <i>'ship without captain'</i>	Vital to organisation
3. Importance of leadership at middle management during organisational change	Hugely important especially at middle management level	Critical as communication vital at such a level	Important as leader acts as guiding influence during change through communication	Important as communication is needed from middle manager especially during change	An absolute must: middle manager needed to communicate change to employees
4. Skills and Characteristics	Confidence and Decisiveness	Approachable and confidence	Passion	Anticipation, communication	Empowerment and empathy
5. Challenges faced during change	Employee fear	Employee fear	Employee fear and management uncertainty	Employee fear	Uncertainty and confusion leading to conflict
6. Overcoming Challenges faced during change	Clear communication and recognition for performance	Clear communication and recognition for performance	Middle manager awareness of employees mind-set on change process	Clear communication and no reward or recognition scheme	Clear communication and no reward or recognition scheme
7. Methods and strategies used to lead during change	Empowerment and social gatherings	Quality circles and open-door policy	Social and informal gatherings	Use of E.A.P. and facilitators and mediators	Employee involvement schemes

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the main primary research findings. The findings detailed the opinions of five leaders representing five separate organisations in the south-east of Ireland that find themselves in a period of change. Among the major findings was the opinion from the respondents that communication is of vital importance during organisational change. There are many more themes which have emerged from this study which will be discussed in the next chapter. The key areas of the literature reviewed and primary research findings will be compared, contrasted and interpreted accordingly.

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse in greater depth the significant findings while also presenting an overview of the literature in chapter Two. It will identify key themes from the study in relation to the research objectives. The key areas of importance will be outlined and recommendations will be presented accordingly.

The meaning and importance of leadership to organisations will be discussed followed by the importance of leadership at middle management during organisational change. The characteristics and skills of a leader at middle management level during organisational change will be examined. Then the challenges faced during the change process will be outlined followed by a look at the methods and strategies used for overcoming such problems.

6.2 Objective One:

6.2.1 Leadership Explained

House et. al (1999) view leadership as the ability to influence and motivate others to have a positive impact toward the effectiveness and success of an organisation. Similarly, the five respondents each identified leadership as the ability of a person to motivate others. Respondent C also stated that leadership is the ability to influence employees to work to the highest possible standards.

It is clear from this evidence that the role of leader is understood to be one which can negatively or positively impact on followers. The ability to motivate and influence is a powerful position which means that the role of leader is one that takes on significant importance.

Recent literature has seen theorists move away from the idea that leadership is an individual process to a view that it is more of a shared process. Hughes and Hoffman (2002) describe leadership as more of a shared process stating that it is an interaction between two or more members of a group. Four of the respondents stated that they

believe that the role of leader is a shared one. However in contrast respondent A felt that by empowering others to lead there may be too many 'leaders' which may lead to conflict. Respondent B and D stated that effective leadership could not be achieved if it was not a shared process as there would be too many requirements placed on the shoulders of an individual.

It is apparent that leadership nowadays is more of a shared process. While there may always be those that feel that the role of leader is best kept within the boundaries of the person in power there is growing evidence from the literature and the research conducted that leadership is best utilised by sharing the power among employees thus involving followers. While the role of leader is one that comes with significant importance it is apparent that the role of the follower is significantly important also as leaders can emerge within a group adding to the view of leadership as a shared process.

6.2.2 Importance of effective leadership in the organisation

Kouzes and Posner (2003) believe that successful organisations should be built on the solid foundation of good leadership and direction. Burdett (1999, p. 7) supports this by stating that; "no matter how the challenge is sliced and diced there is no substitute for good leadership".

Each respondent stated that they felt leadership was critically important to the organisation. Respondent C stated that it can be the difference between success and failure in an organisation while respondent D stated that an organisation without leadership would be similar to a ship without a captain.

It is clear that leadership is significantly important in an organisation and in competitive times such as the present it is vital that organisations have the right personnel leading as they could make the difference in terms of competitive advantage. A lot of time needs to be taken when hiring those for positions that require leadership qualities.

Kouzes and Posner (2003) also identify five benefits that exemplary leaders bring to organisations. The benefits include inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, to model the way and to encourage the heart.

Each respondent stated that each benefit would bring something to the organisation that would improve employee's performance. The majority stated that inspiring a shared vision would be most beneficial as it would enable employees to be on the same wave length as the leader enabling both to be aware of what direction they are heading.

It is obvious that each benefit can have a positive effect on the organisation and its employees. Effective leaders have the ability to bring such benefits to organisations further enhancing their importance in the organisational setting. None of the respondents highlighted the encouraging the heart as a key benefit. There are times when employees need such a lift and having the ability to effectively encourage employees is one that can really increase morale and spirit throughout the organisation.

6.3 Objective Two

6.3.1 Importance of Leading Change at middle management level

Roth (1998, p. 9) states that when middle management is approached in the right way it can become the strongest advocate of the change process and it's most productive participant. The author also speaks about middle managers stating; "they are the puzzle piece that ties everything else together and integrates the whole".

Each respondent felt that at middle management level effective leadership was of the utmost importance and was an essential requirement to the success of the change process. Respondent A stated that middle management level in particular required effective leadership as it is a link between senior managers and lower level employees as they deal with both on a regular basis. Respondent D also describes leadership during organisational change as the time when leadership is most required.

During times of change it is clear that there needs to be right personnel in place that can communicate the change effectively. Middle managers have a hugely significant role as they have to understand what the change entails from senior managers and then communicate their understanding of the change to lower level employees. Middle managers are the link between senior managers and lower level employees meaning the role they play is hugely significant and as identified by the respondents from the semi-structured interviews communication plays a hugely significant role

also. Respondent D makes the point that when a change is taking place there is confusion and fear and it is vital that at this time there is a leader that can calm fears and eliminate confusion. It is certainly clear that it is a time when leadership is needed most.

6.4 Objective Three

6.4.1 Characteristics and skills of a change leader at middle management level

According to Kanter (2007) the most valuable qualities a leader can bring to a change organisation are conviction, passion and confidence in others. Zenger and Folkman (2007) identify skills that are required to lead when leading change at middle management level including; anticipatory skills, visionary skills, empowerment skills and communication skills.

There was a varied response from respondents with different respondents recognising passion and confidence as characteristics required while other individuals highlighted anticipatory, empowerment and communication skills as skills that are required to lead effectively.

Without passion and confidence it may be hard to get people excited about change which means it is understandable that many view these as characteristics that are required at middle management level. Each of the four skills mentioned are important skills that need to be possessed with communication being the link for the other three also. Without communication there is no chance to show passion or display confidence. Communication is increasingly significant at middle management level during organisational change given the back and forth communication that is required between the middle manager and both senior management and lower level employees.

6.5 Objective Four

6.5.1 Challenges faced during change process

According to McKinley and Scherer (2000) middle managers are sometimes left with feelings of uncertainty in the change process and are not sure of what course of action to change. Employees at lower level may also feel the same level of ambiguity about the change process as the middle manager does. According to Tiernan et al. (2001) any organisation facing change will inevitably encounter a degree of resistance even if

there is significant planning in place. The author identifies reasons for resistance to change such as staff fearing for their job security, decisions being sprung out of the blue, lack of involvement in decision making, experienced workers being sceptical of change and fear that change may result in employees being taken out of their comfort zone.

Each respondent agreed that there are always challenges faced during the change process. Each respondent also highlighted that there is always a certain element of resistance to change. All of the respondents gave a varying account of challenges faced in times of change. However, the majority of respondents felt that fear on the part of employees can be a major obstacle. Respondent C also highlighted that fact that fear may enter the middle managers minds due to uncertainty of what the change entails.

It is obvious from the literature and findings that change can unsettle many employees in an organisation. The evidence shows that fear can unsettle middle managers as well as lower level employees. Fear of the unknown can stem from a lack of communication or ineffective communication. Fear about job security and other issues will continue until employees are reassured through effective communication which again furthers the view that communication is hugely important at such a level.

6.5.2 Overcoming challenges of leading change at middle management level

Goldsmith (2001) state that when it comes to managing uncertainty communication can be utilised to reduce sometimes increase and also maintain uncertainty. While there is the potential for uncertainty to be increased a lack of communication would mean middle managers would struggle to eradicate uncertainty. Herzig and Jimmieson (2006) state that support from senior management is vital in managing uncertainty. The same authors also state that interaction with other middle managers can also help them to better understand the change.

The majority of respondents agree that communication is vital in overcoming challenges. Respondent A felt that clear communication is vital. This respondent emphasised that a crucial element of the communication is the ability of the middle manager to listen to employees and appreciate exactly what their issues are with the change. Respondent D echoes the view of respondent A stating that the most effective

way of combating any problems during the change process is by using clear and effective communication. Respondent C highlighted communication and collaboration as effective ways of overcoming problems during the change process.

There is no doubting the important role communication has to play in the change process. It seems from the evidence gathered that the success of a change initiative can hinge on whether there is effective communication being used or not. Therefore it is vital that when organisations are hiring middle managers they do so by looking for those who have exceptional communication skills as there is no doubt that they will be required and can make all the difference. Also support from other managers seems like another viable way of overcoming problems and can potentially help the middle manager better understand the change and also gain an insight into how others might approach the change in their position.

Regarding resistance to change, middle managers can take measures to overcome such issues. Kotter (1996) identifies an eight step plan that can be used when approaching change. Such steps can combat the threat of resistance to change and include establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based actions, generating short-term wins including rewarding those responsible, consolidating gains and producing more change and anchoring new approaches in the culture. Similarly, Kotter and Schlesinger identify methods in dealing with resistance such as education and communication, participation and involvement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, manipulation and co-optation and explicit and implicit coercion.

Respondent A states that communicating a vision to employees is important and that when change is being implemented that it is vital to sit down workers and ask them what their goals are for the foreseeable future and then tell them what the goals of the management are for the foreseeable future. By communicating in such a way respondent A feels that both parties feel empowered and it is a good starting point. Respondent B and E identify employee involvement schemes such as quality circles and empowering employees by giving them different responsibilities as a good method of getting employees to be more aware of the change taking place. Respondent D identified an Employee Assistance Programme as a good method of

assisting employees in understanding the change by offering expert support. Social gatherings were also identified as a way of improving communications among the workforce. There was a split among respondents, however, when probed on the idea of rewarding staff.

It is clear that there is a range of methods and strategies that can be used to lead effectively at middle management during organisational change. Given the small sample size of those interviewed it is felt that there may be significantly more methods and strategies used that may warrant further investigation. Also the literature states that those responsible for short-term wins during the change process should be rewarded while the respondents were split over this issue with some feeling that employees should be awarded accordingly and others feeling that reward systems should not be used during a change process. Again this is an issue that might require further investigation. That said, it is obvious that the use of different methods and strategies will benefit organisations differently. It is vital that organisations use methods and strategies that best suit their organisation and employees.

6.6 Conclusion

Given the current environment, it is vital that organisations are doing everything they can to flexible and adaptable. In doing so many organisations are forced to go through periods of change. During these periods of change the onus is on these organisations to have the correct personnel at their disposal to lead their change effectively. The guidelines in this chapter give organisations a platform on which they can build their long-term success.

The next chapter will highlight the main conclusions of the study and also provide necessary recommendations.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of the final chapter is to summarise and outline the conclusions which emerged from the research undertaken. In this final chapter of the dissertation the main conclusions will be outlined and recommendations will be provided accordingly. Limitations that were encountered during the process of the study will also be discussed.

7.2 Conclusions of key research findings

The conclusions of key research findings are focused on the main research objectives of this particular dissertation which are;

1. (i) To explain the nature of leadership
(ii) To gauge how effective leaders performance impacts upon the organisational department.
2. To evaluate the significance of change leaders at middle management level.
3. To establish the skills and characteristics necessary to lead change at middle management level.
4. To explore the methods and strategies employed by middle managers to facilitate change effectively in their organisational departments.

7.2.1 Explaining Leadership and gauging its importance in the organisation

Overall each of the respondents was aware of what leadership entailed. There was a good understanding from each as to what it meant. From the research conducted it is clear that leadership is the ability of two or more people to motivate and influence followers to behave and perform in a certain manner. In years gone by it seems that many viewed leadership as an individual motivating followers. However, recent literature and the views of the different respondents support the view that leadership is now much more of a shared process rather than an individual process.

The importance of leadership in an organisation cannot be under-estimated. It is a hugely significant part of the organisational structure. Research shows that effective leadership can be the difference between success and failure in an organisation. Employees look for guidance and direction and it is up to leaders to provide this guidance and direction. Poor leadership has the potential to have a hugely negative effect on the organisation. Leadership is a powerful role with huge responsibility and given the impact it can potentially have on lower level employees its role in the organisation is significantly important. It is vital that organizations are aware of the sheer importance of leadership. It is vital that a lot of time, energy and thought are put into getting the right people for leadership roles as the effects of leadership can be significant for the overall organisation.

7.2.2 Importance of leading change at middle management level

The findings suggest that middle management is probably the most important level in an organisation when it comes to organisational change. There is a huge responsibility placed on the shoulders of middle management as they are required to understand the change being communicated by senior management and try and effectively duplicate this to lower level employees. Middle management is the link between senior and lower level which means that the role is extremely important to the organisation and the change taking place. Also leadership is required most during change as many as many employees feel isolated and unsure of what is going on. A guiding influential figure is a must in such times

It is vital that leaders at middle management level are good communicators as there is constant communication required with senior managers and lower level employees. Those without good interpersonal skills will struggle to be an effective leader so it is vital that organisations have personnel in positions such as middle management that possess interpersonal skills that can positively impact on the organisations workforce.

7.2.3 Skills and Characteristics of a change leader at middle management level

It is clear from the research conducted that those leading during change need to be passionate and have confidence in themselves. When a leader has confidence employees respond positively. Employees also start to believe in the change taking place when a leader is passionate about the change taking place. When leaders bring

passion to their work employees can start to get excited about the change taking place rather than the fear that some employees tend to feel.

Communication skills are recognised as one of the most important skills required for a middle manager during organisational change. Both the literature and the views of respondents supported this. Middle managers are required to communicate with senior managers and lower level employees. Many employees and even managers alike recognise uncertainty and fear as problems during change. The onus is on leaders to effectively communicate the change that is taking place as well as having the skill of listening which is also vital in gaining an insight into how employees are feeling about the change. It is therefore vital that those in middle management pay special attention to how they communicate. Those at middle management level need to pay special attention to how they communicate as the power of communication is so strong in this situation.

7.2.4 Methods and strategies used by middle managers leading change

There are a number of methods and strategies that can be used by middle managers during organisational change. Once more communication plays a significant role with employee involvement schemes such as quality circles being recognised a way of keeping employees informed of how the change is taking shape. Employee assistant programmes are also identified by one organisation as a way of helping employees adapt to the changes occurring. Social gatherings and informal events are also identified as avenues for communication channels to be improved.

It is imperative to involve employees and make them feel part of the change that is taking place. It can lead to those involved feeling more valued and hence more willing to understand the change taking place. However different methods and strategies will work well for different organisations. It is vital that the correct methods are used to suit the organisation and the type of change it is experiencing. The use of different methods and strategies can make the difference in an organisation experiencing change which means a lot of thought must go into how middle managers approach such a situation.

7.3 Recommendations

Based on the research conducted in the literature review and the primary research findings the following recommendations are given in relation to middle managers in organisations undergoing change.

- Senior managers need to be aware of the importance of leaders within their organisation. It is vital that organisations put time and money into recruiting staff with the required interpersonal skills that are so vital when leading. Having some sort of leadership development programme or training in place may give those in such a position the chance to develop the vital skills for leading including communicating and listening.
- During organisational change, those in senior management need to be in constant contact with middle managers. Due to the importance of the middle manager during organisational change it is vital that senior managers make sure middle managers are sure of the change taking place rather than presuming so. This could be achieved by having regular meetings at different stages during the change.
- As communication is vital at middle management level it would be advised that the organisation use every opportunity possible to encourage communication. The organisation could improve communication through informal meetings, social events and employee involvement schemes which all can help the middle manager and employees alike understand the change that is taking place.

7.4 Limitations of the study

Like many studies a significant limitation was that of time. The time allocated for the completion of the dissertation meant that a broader sample size for secondary research could not be accessed meaning that a comprehensive study could not be complete. Financial constraints and the lack of access to a car meant that interviews had to be conducted within close proximity to each other in the south-east of Ireland. A study which used a national sample would have enabled a more in-depth study. The fact that interviews were conducted in different types of organisations means that the different

types of organisations may have different styles of leadership embedded in their culture which may serve as an influence.

7.5 Future Research Opportunities

In terms of future research it would be interesting to get a broader sample on a national level leading to a more comprehensive study. It would also be interesting to also get the responses of the leader's followers which could be a fascinating study. Also it may be interesting to look at leaders at senior management and compare and contrast the findings to that of the middle manager. It would also be interesting to tackle issues such as comparing organisations under leadership of males and females which could also be an interesting study as presently more women are in leadership roles than ever before. Furthermore, it may be advisable to research organisations in a similar industry leading to a more in-depth study.

7.6 Concluding Comment

With the research concluded this chapter provided a summary of the main conclusions derived from the research conducted. Recommendations were made for organisations and opportunities for future research.

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Appendix A: Reflection

Introduction

From the outset I was anxious about completing a dissertation as the requirements of my undergraduate degree meant that this would be the first time I would complete such a study.

Key Learning

Choosing a topic was the first goal I was faced with achieving. I learned pretty quickly that picking a topic was hugely important as the topic would become part of your life for the best part of a year and being stuck with a topic with little literature available or of little interest could make the process extremely frustrating. Extensive research was needed from an early stage to find a topic that would be of interest to me but also a topic that required substantial research and brought something new to the table so to speak. As it turned out I picked a topic in which I had dealt with at undergraduate level in leadership and chose a current issue in modern society in change. What emerged was my dissertation which looked at the influence of middle management when leading organisational change.

Through consultation with my peers and tutor I discovered that the literature review would be one of the most tedious and testing chapters of the dissertation. What followed was exactly that. However, through perseverance and hard work I felt that I had achieved a good end product as a result. I feel that the hours spent looking for articles and books increased my skills in the area of research.

Also as it was my first time completing a dissertation it was also my first time participating in interviews in which I was the interviewer and not the interviewee. I found that research and substantial planning was needed in anticipation of the interviews. While it was a daunting experience I felt that after each interview I gained more confidence and I was more effective as an interviewer towards the end of my five scheduled interviews. What followed subsequent to the interviews was the tedious operation of transcribing the interviews, again a new experience to me. Listening back to the interviews wasn't the greatest experience but was vital for the upcoming findings and discussion chapters.

The findings and discussion chapter was the first stage in which I felt my dissertation was finally coming together. The input of the interviewees was vital and an interesting study was beginning to take shape. I felt that at this stage I was finally coming to terms with the dissertation and was starting to lose the anxiety and fear I had given that it was my first time completing such a study.

A huge part of concluding the dissertation was staying focused and not getting sloppy towards the end of the study. With many finishing their dissertations early there would be a temptation to get dis-heartened and lose focus. However, like so many other areas of the dissertation putting the head down and doing the hard work got me through. My overall key learning experience was that when completing such a study it is vital to have the commitment to put in the hard work and stay focused and positive even through the tough periods.

What I would do differently

Given the pressure associated with completing a dissertation I would do some things differently to benefit the quality of the finished product. I would certainly manage my time better. Subsequent to exams, similar to some of my colleagues, an extended break was taken. I feel now that a two week break would have been sufficient keeping the working mentality intact rather than getting lazy for a month and then finding it extremely hard to get back into the whole process. Also better time management would have allowed for more interviews to be completed which would have allowed for a better more in-depth study and maybe completing the interviews during the academic year rather than the summer may have allowed for this. Apart from that I was generally happy with how I approached the completion of the dissertation.

How I will use learning and skills in the future

I feel the completion of this dissertation has brought me on enormously both personally and academically. I feel that I could use my improved research skills in the future workplace should I take that path. I also feel that I am now more comfortable in an interview situation even if I was the interviewer. I am sure that my future will involve numerous interviews and I feel that I am more comfortable and confident in such an environment now which can give me an advantage when getting interviewed for a job.

I feel that leadership is something which I will have to have when entering the workplace and also in everyday life and by having a greater understanding and knowledge of the topic I feel I am now better equipped to be effective from a personal perspective and a working perspective.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

General

1. What is your current position within the organisation?
2. How long have you been in the company?
3. How long have you held your current position?
4. What does the term 'leadership' mean to you?
5. Do you feel that the role of leader should be your sole responsibility or should it be shared among the members of your department and not just rest on your shoulders?

Importance of Leadership

6. How important is effective leadership in your department and also in the organisation as a whole?
7. What do you feel would be the consequences of poor leadership for the employees and organisation as a whole?
8. Kouzes and Posner (2003) identified five benefits that leaders bring to organisations. These are to inspire a shared vision, to enable others to act, to model the way, to challenge the process and to encourage the heart. Which of these do you feel is the most important benefit that you as a leader bring to your particular department?

Importance of effective leadership during organisational change

9. How important is effective leadership in your department during organisational change?
10. How would poor leadership in your department affect the process of change in the organisation?
11. What role do you feel you need to play when leading during organisational change?

Characteristics, Skills and Styles

12. What characteristics do you feel a leader such as yourself needs to possess when leading during organisational change?

13. What do you feel are the necessary skills needed to be an effective leader during organisational change?
14. Which style of leadership do you feel is most effective transformational or transactional? **Note:** Transformational leadership is described as being concerned with long term objectives and is identified in terms of providing a strong image and a strong sense of mission arousing emotions in followers. Transactional leadership is described as leadership that occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines followers based on the adequacy of the follower's performance.
15. Do you think a leader can change their style of leading and if so how has your style altered over time?
16. Relevant literature states that interpersonal skills now appear integral to effective leadership. What is your viewpoint on this?

Leading Change

17. What are the main challenges in your opinion when faced with organisational change in your own department?
18. What strategies and methods do you feel should be employed when leading during organisational change?
19. How have/would you deal with resistance to change? (Are there mechanisms in place to help resolve conflict due to ambiguity and uncertainty, improve morale etc?)
20. Leading change has been described as an ongoing process. What initiatives do you feel a leader needs to employ to continually lead the change effectively?
21. To what extent were you involved in designing the change?
22. What forms of communication were used?

Note: The questions highlighted give an overview of the questions used in each interview and does not include different probing questions that were used at different times in each of the five interviews.

Appendix C: Interview Cover Letter

Dear _____

Re: Research Study of Leadership in times of organisational change

With regard to the academic study above I would like to meet with relevant personnel in your firm. I am presently undertaking a Masters degree in Business Management in Waterford Institute of Technology and this research represents part of that academic research process.

The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of leadership at middle management level in times of organisational change.

To gain adequate insights on the subject matter I wish to meet with at least one head of department (e.g., in production, marketing or sales, logistical functions). Typically a meeting will take less than an hour and will be arranged at the most convenient time for those participating.

All information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence and complete anonymity is guaranteed should you require it. If you volunteer to participate in the research the findings and conclusions of the study will be made available to you.

Your contribution to this research will be immensely valuable to understanding the subject matter at hand and will be much appreciated. My telephone number at Waterford Institute of Technology is 086-xxxxxxx and my email address is xxxxxxx@gmail.com. Thank you for your time in considering this request and I will be in touch within a few days of your receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Michael McHugh