

Full Length Research Paper

Students' perceptions about institutional transformation at the University of the Free State

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The importance of managing transformational change led to the need to identify some critical issues in a university context. In view of the substantial transformational change that has already taken place at the University of the Free State, it is important to consider how the students perceive transformational change. In this quantitative study, a survey using a convenience sample of students residing in hostels showed that they were generally positive about the change taking place at the university. No significant difference was found with regard to differences in perception in terms of gender and race groups. Significant differences were however found with regard to the number of years studying at the University of the Free State. It is suggested that this study be followed up by a qualitative study to provide in-depth insight into students' attitudes and perceptions. Identification of student perceptions through research will help to guide management in transformational change processes.

Key words: Change management, institutional transformation, student perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

The University of the Free State (UFS) with its main campus in Bloemfontein is a multicultural, parallel-medium (English and Afrikaans) institution. The two other campuses are the Qwaqwa campus in the Eastern Free State and the smaller South campus in Bloemfontein.

With the appointment of Prof. Jonathan Jansen as Vice-Chancellor and Rector on 1 July 2009, the university entered a new, dynamic era. He is not only determined to lead the institution to become one of the best universities in the world; but he also wants to distinguish the university from other universities and to transform the university. In this regard is the creation of the International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice at the university an excellent example of the seriousness about the complex and challenging work of social transformation at the UFS (<http://www.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=97>).

On a question asked on why only some South African universities get globally ranked, it was answered that the colonial attitude adopted during the apartheid years plays

a role and that there is no doubt that South African higher education will face the same challenges that other African countries face (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2010-2011/africa.html>). Change is thus an important requirement for the UFS to achieve the dream of the UFS to become one of the best universities in the world and to be ranked as such.

The UFS has been lauded by the former South African president, Mr. Nelson Mandela, as the leader in the transformation process in higher education in South Africa (www.sastudy.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=81&Itemid=138). The UFS has also received international recognition for its efforts in institutional change. In 2005, the Council of the UFS appointed the Transformation Plan Task Team with the purpose of improving its performance and its reputation through adapting to a new culture or new ways of doing things. One of the areas targeted in this transformation plan is the institutional culture, which includes the institutional climate, the sense of belonging, student life, staff life and the language policy. The focus of this study was to determine how changes affect student life. Change at the university was evident in different areas and was especially emphasized after increasing pressure to speed up the transformation process after some racial

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incidents at the university. The challenge for the UFS is to make a meaningful contribution to the pursuit of greater social cohesion and equity not only for the university community, but also for the country. According to Wren and Dulewicz (2005), organizations around the world are undergoing significant changes that must be confronted in order to survive. This may be truer for South African universities, because the question on how institutions of higher education in South Africa should translate the broad policy guidelines into institutional transformation, remains one of the central themes within the debates on transformation in the higher education (Kulati, 2003). Creating readiness to change requires change managers or change agents to minimize resistance. Furthermore, change recipients need to be motivated to be change agents while delivering the change message that will facilitate the adoption of the relevant or appropriate behaviours. These behaviours are indispensable for the effective execution and implementation of the change initiative (Neves, 2009). For change in institutional culture to take place, the management of any institution should ensure that everyone in the organization understands his or her role – both during and after the change process (Holloway, 2002). Changing recipients' participation has become a fundamental aspect of organizational change and is central to increasing the likelihood of sustainable change (Armenakis and Harris, 2009). The announcement of the desired institutional change does not mean that all the organizational members (staff and students) will automatically be receptive to it or that they will be ready to move forward in implementing it. Senior management cannot necessarily direct employees and students to abandon the old ways and take up new ones. Therefore, they also cannot expect the required actions and changes to occur in a rapid fashion and lead to the desired outcomes (Hough et al., 2008). Some members and students of the organization may not be convinced of the merits of change. Students may perceive change as being contrary to the organization's best interest or as threatening student life as it was commonly accepted and perceived. Although, much change and transformation has already taken place, the question can still be asked: "How do the students of the UFS perceive transformational change?" The UFS students' perceptions about transformational change at the university need to be determined. Through identifying the students' perceptions, it will be possible to determine where to focus interventions to facilitate a change of perceptions so that transformation can continue. A positive perception would ensure that transformation can continue to be implemented successfully as far as student life is concerned, because it would indicate a level of readiness that is an important factor – one that can have a significant impact on the process and success of the implementation of cultural transformation. The purpose of this article is to explain the importance of institutional change and some issues that influence change. The students' perceptions of transformational change

at the UFS were determined through the use of various statistical analyses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's dynamic world, competition is harsh and little mercy is shown in the organizational environment. Consequently, institutional leaders are forced to constantly plan for the future so as to prepare their institutions for many unforeseen circumstances and the rapid change that might occur as a result of the competitive environment. A few negative incidents that necessitate transformation occurred at the university. To emerge as a market leader or to remain competitive depends on change efforts that drive organizational innovation. According to Armenakis and Harris (2009), the answer lies in the organizational leader's ability to be vigilant about the context in which their organizations are situated and being particularly attentive to the changes in the general and task environment. The emphasis on institutional change within the higher education dispensation has emphasised the role of leadership and particular that of the vice-chancellor and rector at the centre stage of institutional change agendas (Kulati, 2003).

To survive and prosper, institutional leaders must be knowledgeable about how to effectively implement appropriate organizational changes that will be adopted and embraced by all affected. An important aspect is to allow institutional members to participate in the change efforts, because that can enhance their sense of discrepancy and make it more likely for appropriate change to be selected (Armenakis and Harris, 2009). By enabling change recipients to participate in change efforts, valence is enhanced by allowing them to select the appropriate changes that they feel they will be able to accomplish. Generally speaking, change recipients' participation increases the likelihood that sustainable change management can be accomplished (De Caluwe and Vermaak, 2004).

The most significant aspect is that the survival of any change depends on the change recipients' ability to adapt and acknowledge the change that is likely to affect them. Change recipients' attitudes towards change play an important role. Since all change needs to be implemented by the recipients, understanding the underlying reasons behind their motivations to support change provides practical insights about how to lead change effectively (Armenakis and Harris, 2009). Students' understanding of the need and requirements for transformational change is fundamental in successful transformational change at any institution of higher education.

In response to the new culture, new strategies, changing labour forces, new technologies and changed organizational structure, most organizations and their members are finding it very applicable and acceptable to engage in a change initiative so as to remain competitive (Allen et al., 2007). Despite this, most organizations have

been found to struggle with the process of being more receptive to the process of change. According to Balogun and Hailey (2004), Burns (2004) and Higgs and Rowlands (2005), up to 70% of change initiatives often fail. These failures could be attributed to a number of factors, including the organizational members' tendency to display resistance or the fact that people are not even certain about the importance of and the requirements for change. Other factors that might influence the failure to effect change failures could be the managers' inability to understand the change process, their inability to motivate their organizational members to participate in the change process, their inability to create readiness for change, their inability to align all necessary organizational functions towards change objectives as well as the lack of appropriate approaches towards the change process (Allen et al., 2007).

People's reactions to change can differ significantly; that is, instead of recognizing change benefits, they might just change because they fear the costs of not doing so and as a consequence exhibit behaviours such as boycotting the change efforts (Neves, 2009). The more positive feelings people have towards their ability to cope with change, the more they will believe that change is beneficial to them as well as to the organization in general. Effective commitment is therefore a positive manifestation of organizational members' attitudes towards change and it can significantly influence the successful implementation of change at any level.

The truth is that even if the organization has change agents (or institutional leaders) who might possess every necessary competency or skill required to ensure the effective implementation of strategies, change recipients themselves may be the basic reason for change initiative failures, because of their response or reactions towards change initiatives (Fox et al., 2007). During organizational restructuring or change, organizational members are often faced with some unique workplace stressors coming from outside their roles and tasks. They may thus show affective, cognitive and behavioural reactions towards the change process (Allen et al., 2007). Constant monitoring of change recipients' attitudes during the implementation process remains an important requirement for institutional leaders, because it will have an effect on the way forward. The question may be: should implementation carry on in the same manner, or is change needed in the transformation plan?

Some recipients may be uncertain about the reasons for change, while others could significantly resist the process of change. Uncertainty refers to an individual's inability to predict a situation accurately. It can be attributed to a number of factors including ambiguous as well as contradictory information. Regardless of the nature of the situation, uncertainty has always been regarded as an undesirable situation by organizational members that encourage them to engage in coping strategies aimed at reducing negative perceptions to the situation. During the

process of change, when individuals experience uncertainty, they are therefore motivated to seek relevant information that will enable them to reduce this uncertainty (Brashers, 2001).

Uncertainty management can be proposed as the most relevant alternative for reducing uncertainty. According to Allen et al. (2007), uncertainty management theory does not only define uncertainty as a negative state, but also for some individuals, uncertainty may be seen as a positive state. This simply means that information-seeking behaviour can be used to reduce uncertainty behaviours or to increase hope or optimism (Brashers, 2001). Uncertainty can provide a sense of hope and optimism regarding the pending outcome, rather than the certainty of a negative outcome. In contrast, most of the researchers (Brashers, 2001; Bordia et al., 2004) have demonstrated that uncertainty seems to be the major consequence of change processes in organizations.

During the process of organizational transformation, members are more likely to experience uncertainty in relation to a range of different issues such as, the reasons behind change, the process of execution and implementation and the anticipated outcomes of change (Bordia et al., 2004). In addition, research has also demonstrated that organizational members could experience uncertainty with regard to the security of their position, their future responsibilities, as well as their roles. As a result, organizational change proves to be a major stress factor in terms of which organizational members will be seeking some prediction and understanding of the occurrence of the events so as to minimize their own uncertainty (Allen et al., 2007). The role of communication in ensuring that everyone understands the change process is therefore an important issue.

The success of any organizational change process depends largely on organizational leaders' ability to communicate the requirements, implications and the advantages of being adaptive as well as receptive to change (Fox et al., 2007). Even though there is a general agreement that communication provides a vital component of a successful implementation, some strategies formulated by management still seem to fail to achieve the organizational goals. Evidence has indicated that during most change processes employees are often left with uncertainty and consequently find themselves trying to alleviate this uncertainty by seeking information to reduce it. Several studies conducted by different researchers have illustrated that change communication can facilitate openness and a positive attitude towards the change initiative to the extent that the employees' uncertainty is addressed effectively (Bordia et al., 2004; Armenakis and Harris, 2009). If communication is seen to be the most powerful medium, the change recipients tend to develop trust in the change agents (Allen et al., 2007).

When organizations introduce or implement change, people usually respond at various levels, demonstrating cognitive, affective and/or emotional responses (Smollan,

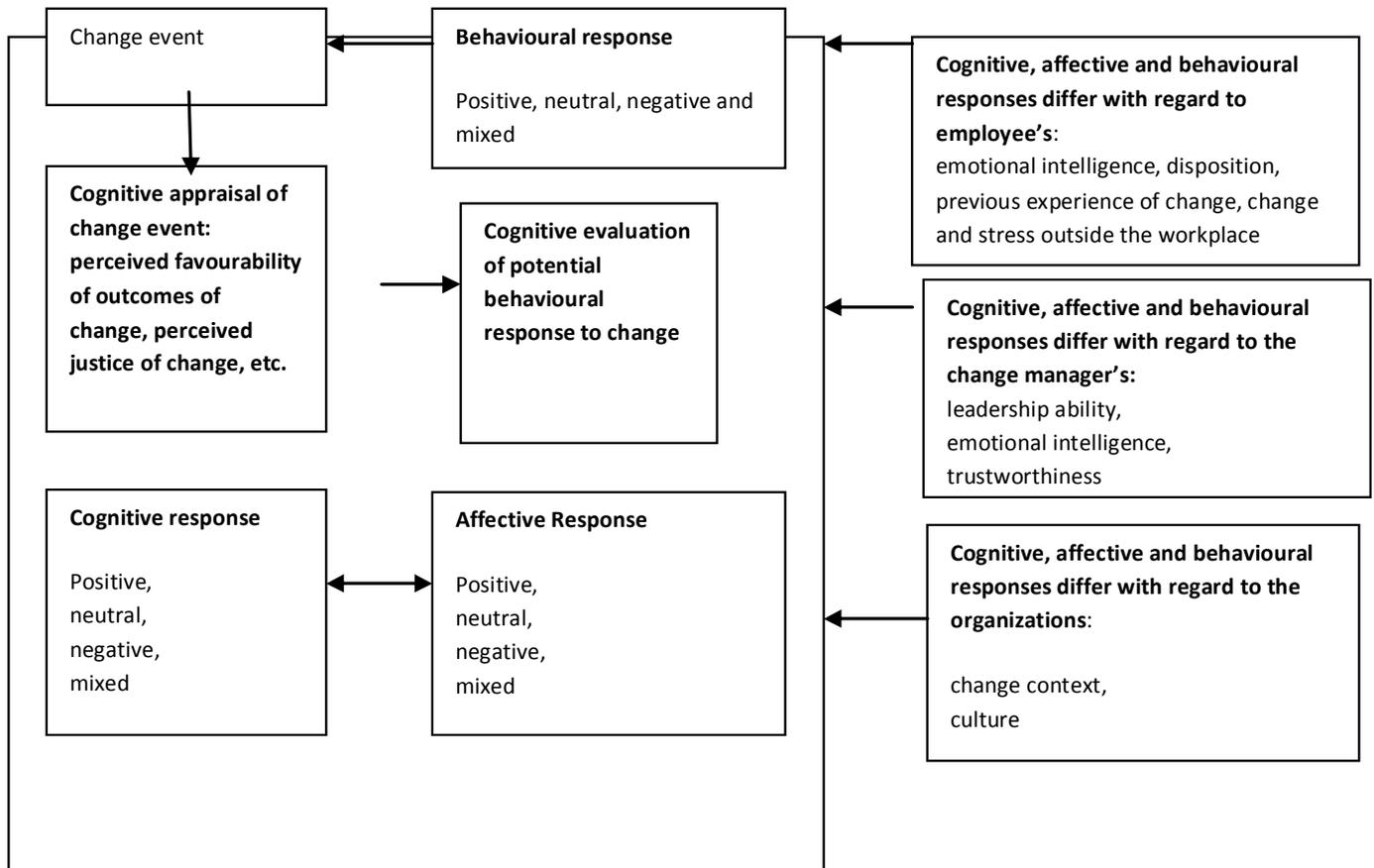


Figure 1. The model of response to organizational change (Smollan, 2006).

2006). During this process the organizational management will hope that all organizational members will comply with the efforts of change and passionately show support for change with appropriate actions (Piderit, 2000). According to Smollan (2006), when management introduce or communicate the need for change, they must make sure that they get the support of the hearts and minds of the change recipients to ensure successful implementation. According to Fisher and Ashkanasy (2000), a number of researchers in the field of organizational behaviour have criticized the neglect of emotion. The study of organizational change has also been criticized for excluding the affective domain and focusing on the cognitive and behavioural domains only (Basch and Fisher, 2000). That is why the emotional and personal impact of transformation is important in any analysis of the perception on transformational change and has been included in this research. The behavioural domain is however the function of cognitive and emotional processes. Figure 1 illustrates the nature of people's responses and the factors affecting those responses.

Figure 1 indicates that the process of change in an organization simply triggers cognitive responses that are affected by the perceptions of how favourable the change

outcomes are. Furthermore, cognitive responses are influenced by affective responses, whether positive, neutral, negative, or mixed (Piderit, 2000). In addition, before the behaviour could occur, people often consider the implications of behavioural choice. According to Piderit (2000), cognitive, affective and behavioural responses are triggered by individual factors within the person himself or herself, such as emotional intelligence, disposition, previous experience of change, change and stressors outside the workplace, factors in the change manager's leadership style, emotional intelligence and trustworthiness, and the factors within the organization such as the culture and the context of the organization. This model is regarded as the most applicable model for most change events, even though the nature of change processes will affect employees in different ways (Smollan, 2006).

The literature suggests that throughout the implementation process, it is important to have a good understanding of the organizational members' perceptions of the transformation process. Although no specific previous research could be found on what factors can influence the perceptions of students on transformation, it was assumed in this exploratory research that the perceptions

Table 1. Variables tested with regard to perception about transformation.

Requirement for transformation/change
1. Change brings about new challenges in the students' lives.
2. Students have the mental capacity to make the necessary changes in their lives as students.
3. The university authorities have the necessary skills to manage their students through the change initiatives
Motivation for transformation
1. Students are looking forward to the outcomes of change initiatives.
2. Students are committed to achieve the objectives of the change initiatives.
3. Students are of the opinion that the change will improve the university's performance.
4. Students perceive change as beneficial to them as students.
Personal impact of transformation
1. Students believe that the anticipated change will affect them as students.
2. Students believe that the anticipated change will have positive effects on their academic performance.
3. Students believe that they have the ability to cope with the change initiatives.
4. Students talk openly about their fears associated with the change initiatives.
Emotional impact of transformation
1. Students view change initiatives as being fair towards all students.
2. Students feel resentment towards the University for insisting on change initiatives.
3. Students feel that their loyalty towards the university is being considered in change initiatives.
4. Students believe that the change initiatives will be different from the previous unsuccessful efforts.
5. Students believe that some of the students are rejecting the change initiatives completely.
6. Students view the required changes as additional stress factors in their lives as students.
7. Students experience no problems to understand the required change.
8. Students feel that their fellow students react positively towards the anticipated change.

of students will primarily be influenced by their gender, race and different levels (years) of study. These are also determining factors in terms of social and educational stratification. Accordingly the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Students are positive about transformation.

H₂: There is a significant difference between male and female students with regard to their perception about transformation.

H₃: There is a significant difference between students of different races with regard to their perception about transformation.

H₄: There is a significant difference between students of different levels of study with regard to their perception about transformation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In June 2010, a survey was conducted among students residing in all the junior hostels on the campus of the UFS. In total, a convenience sample of 168 (5.67% of the sample frame population of 2960 students in junior residences) usable questionnaires, were collected. Since the hostels at the UFS are integrated, there was no fear that the respondents would not meet the criterion of diversity.

The survey items with regard to the perception about transformation were measured on a five-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). The four variables of this section measured the students' perception of; (1) requirements for transformation, (2) motivation for transformation, (3) personal impact of change and (4) emotional impact of change. Table 1 gives an indication of the various statements in terms of the four variables. The survey included 37% male and 63% female students. Black students represented 34%, coloured students 6%, white students 56% and Indian students 4% of the total sample. In terms of the students' level of years of study, first-years represented 50%, while second- (22%), third- (19%) and fourth-year (9%) students made up the remaining part of the study.

RESULTS AND TESTING OF THE HYPOTHESES

The overall score in terms of the attitude towards the four variables that determined the students' perception about the process of transformation and change at the UFS was 3.35. This is just above the average and is positive. With regard to the variable whether they do have the necessary requirements to change, the result was an average of 3.60. In terms of their motivation to change, they scored 3.31. The respondents' response with regard to their perception about the personal impact of transformation was an average of 3.55. The perception about

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for gender, race and year of study.

Variable	f	Variable	Transform	Motivation	Personal	Emotional	Total
Gender							
Male	62	Mean	3.5868	3.3120	3.4560	3.0178	3.2618
		Std deviation	0.5716	0.9488	0.4528	0.4078	0.4557
Female	106	Mean	3.6044	3.3116	3.6093	3.1886	3.3689
		Std deviation	0.5738	0.9261	0.5182	0.4572	0.4851
Race							
Black	57	Mean	3.7248	3.5043	3.6087	3.1498	3.4130
		Std deviation	0.6477	0.9758	0.5923	0.5471	0.5519
Coloured	10	Mean	3.8325	4.1500	3.6000	3.0556	3.5341
		Std deviation	0.6363	0.5972	0.3652	0.1434	0.3368
White	94	Mean	3.5261	3.1737	3.5368	3.1404	3.2907
		Std deviation	0.4884	0.8589	0.4676	0.4131	0.4316
Indian	7	Mean	3.5700	2.5000	3.2800	2.8533	2.9409
		Std deviation	0.9475	1.2728	0.1414	0.0786	0.4178
Year of study							
First	84	Mean	3.7838	3.5294	3.6882	3.2647	3.492
		Std deviation	0.4983	0.7861	0.5261	0.4360	0.4339
Second	37	Mean	3.512	3.3467	3.3333	3.1037	3.2667
		Std deviation	0.5756	0.9054	0.4761	0.4685	0.4931
Third	32	Mean	3.3331	3.1846	3.4308	2.9658	3.1713
		Std deviation	0.5445	0.8697	0.4231	0.3778	0.3968
Fourth	15	Mean	3.3333	2.2667	3.6000	2.7407	2.9091
		Std deviation	0.7303	1.2879	0.3347	0.2400	0.4904
Total		Mean	3.5979	3.3118	3.5529	3.1258	3.3295
		Std deviation	0.5688	0.9275	0.4973	0.4444	0.4740

the emotional impact of change received the lowest score, which is, 3.13.

H₁: Students are positive about transformation

No specific statistical analysis was used to verify Hypothesis 1. The fact that the average for each of the four categories as well as the overall average was above 3.00 (indication of neutrality) indicates that students were positive about the change and transformation that was taking place with regard to their student life. Table 2 shows the results in terms of gender, race groups and the different year groups.

It was evident from these results that first-year students were more positive than more advanced students.

Students in their fourth year of study were negative in terms of their overall perception. It is also clear that students' perception regarding their emotional readiness for transformation was lower than for the other issues.

H₂: There is a significant difference between male and female students with regard to their perception about transformation

A t-test was used to test Hypothesis 2. A t-test determines if two statistical variables are equal or not. The null hypothesis in terms of the second hypothesis is: "There is a no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their perception about transformation." Levene's test was used to test equality of

Table 3. Testing of hypothesis 2.

Statistics		Levene's test for equality of variances				
		F	Significance	t	P	Mean difference
Transform	Equal variances assumed	0.274	0.602	-0.122	0.903	-0.01762
Motivation	Equal variances assumed	0.078	0.781	0.002	0.999	0.00037
Personal	Equal variances assumed	1.159	0.286	-1.23	0.223	-0.1533
Emotional	Equal variances assumed	0.929	0.339	-1.544	0.127	-0.17085
Overall	Equal variances assumed	0.646	0.424	-0.897	0.373	-0.1071

Table 4. Testing of hypothesis 3.

Statistics		Sum of squares	Mean square	F-value	P
Transform	Between groups	1.507	0.377	1.177	0.330
	Within groups	20.168	0.320		
Motivation	Between groups	6.697	1.674	2.071	0.095
	Within groups	50.933	0.808		
Personal	Between groups	0.343	0.086	0.333	0.855
	Within groups	16.227	0.258		
Emotional	Between groups	0.268	0.067	0.326	0.860
	Within groups	12.964	0.206		
Overall	Between groups	0.943	0.236	1.053	0.387
	Within groups	14.108	0.224		

variances. This test helps to determine which t-test to use: the one that assumes equal variances or the one that does not assume equal variances for each category.

Levene's test identified the t-test with the equal variances assumed as the appropriate test to analyse the statistics. The statistic in terms of the difference between male and female is presented in Table 3.

The difference between male and female perception on all four variables individually as well as the overall perception about the process of transformation and change, is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis can be accepted that there is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their perception about transformation.

H₃: There is a significant difference between students of different race with regard to their perception about transformation

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the statistical method used for making the simultaneous comparison between two or more statistical variables, and helps in determining whether the equality exists between these variables. The ANOVA test was conducted to identify the equality between race (H₃) and years of study (H₄) as independent

variables and the students' perception about transformation at the UFS as dependent variable.

The null hypothesis for H₃ was: "There is no significant difference between students of different races with regard to their perception about transformation." The difference between the different race groups for all four categories individually, as well as the overall perception about the process of transformation and change, was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis for Hypothesis 3 was accepted. However, on a 90% significance level, there was a significant difference between the different race groups' perceptions with regard to the motivation for change (Table 4). The perception of the different races with regard to motivation for change is given thus: Blacks 3.50, Coloureds 4.15, Whites 3.17 and Indians 2.50. The difference between Coloureds and Indians is quite obvious. It is clear from this results that the Indian students experience a negative perception in this regard, while the other three groups are positive.

H₄: There is a significant difference between students of different levels of study with regard to their perception about transformation

The null hypothesis for H₄ was: "There is no significant

Table 5. Testing of hypothesis 4.

Statistics		Sum of squares	Mean square	F-value	P
Transform	Between groups	2.618	0.873	2.930	0.040
	Within groups	19.057	0.298		
Motivation	Between groups	8.392	2.797	3.636	0.017
	Within groups	49.238	0.769		
Personal	Between groups	1.553	0.518	2.206	0.096
	Within groups	15.016	0.235		
Emotional	Between groups	1.886	0.629	3.545	0.019
	Within groups	11.346	0.177		
Overall	Between groups	2.342	0.781	3.932	0.012
	Within groups	12.709	0.199		

difference between students of different levels of study with regard to their perception about transformation.” The difference between the different groups of students with regard to their years of study in terms of their overall perception about the process of transformation and change was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis for H_4 has been rejected (Table 5).

There was no statistical difference (on 95% significance level) between the different groups of students with regard to their years of study in terms of their perception about the personal impact of change ($p > 0.05$). On a 90% significance level, there was however, a difference ($p < 0.1$).

It is obvious that students in different years of studying experience significant differences in respect of their overall perception about transformation (Table 2). It is especially the fourth year students who were negative about the motivation for transformational change (2.27) and who experienced a negative emotional impact of change (2.74). It is also noteworthy that the other three year groups scored lower on the emotional impact of change in comparison with the other three variables. Third year students had a negative perception in terms of the emotional impact of change (2.97). This clearly calls for some intervention from student leadership to prepare students emotionally for transformational change.

Conclusions

The primary objective of this study was to determine the students' perceptions about the transformation process that is taking place at the University of the Free State (UFS) and to identify whether there are any significant differences between some independent variables and perception as dependent variable. Change was especially

emphasized after more and more pressure to speed up the transformation process after some racial incidents at the university. It was however stated that students might perceive change as contrary to the organization's best interest or threatening their student life as it was commonly accepted and perceived.

In this article, it was argued that transformation was essential at the UFS, especially after a few negative racial incidents took place at the university. It was also noted that it is difficult in any organization to manage and implement change. The successful implementation of change depends to a large extent on the perception of members of the organization. Failure to implement change strategies and transformation can be attributed to a number of factors. An important factor is organizational members' tendency to display resistance, or their uncertainty about the importance and requirements for change.

According to the data analysis and interpretation of results, it is clear that in general, the students of the University of the Free State are positive about transformation. The variables that were used to identify their perception about transformation were transformation requirement, motivation for transformation, personal impact of transformation and emotional impact of transformation. Furthermore, because lack of motivation towards transformation was assumed in this study to be caused by students' uncertainty about the advantages, implications or outcomes of transformation, it is recommended that a future study focus more specifically on students who are at second- to fourth-year level of studies. The reason is that, compared to the first-year students, these students have already experienced the university life and they are in a better position to understand what transformation entails.

It was evident from the data analysis that there were no significant differences between male and female students

and the different race groups with regard to their perceptions about transformation. It can be postulated that these students are positive about the continuation of transformation at the UFS. The lower results in terms of emotional impact of transformational change on students should however be addressed. All the race groups scored lower on this variable. Although students understand the need for change, the emotional impact of change is an area of concern and possible intervention.

Management needs to realize that in today's dynamic world, almost everyone in an organization can find solutions to the problems they and their organization encounter. In this respect management is encouraged to promote lateral leadership, which according to Kühl et al. (2005), entails a strategy to reach a shared understanding of what must happen. Leadership must instil trust in the students, since this will motivate them to take part in the process of transformation and to perceive transformational change as being positive.

The leadership, appointed by management, must be aware that the transformation process depends largely on their ability to communicate change requirements, implications and advantages. Management must also make sure that the leadership they appoint is equipped with the necessary resources so as to increase their ability to communicate and instil trust. Furthermore, management must ensure that all students understand the essence of transformation. This is only possible through effective communication.

While the authors are aware of their limited capacity to provide meaningful advice to institutional leaders about change and transformation, this article has highlighted the importance of students' perceptions as an important aspect in the implementation of transformation. Despite the positive view of leaders in South Africa, the younger generation argue that they were not part of past inequalities or the previous political dispensation, but they have to pay the bill for something they did not purchase. That might be why high positive perceptions were not found. This may perhaps also be the reason for the low scores on emotional impact of transformational change.

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