

Mining industry composite performance framework



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The objective of this research dissertation is to provide useful and well-researched data as well as a substantial volume of heuristic information to develop a framework that will assist change managers to effectively apply and implement change in the mining and related industries.

Chapter 2 introduces the research framework, research assumptions and the use and justification of case study methodologies.

5. 2 Research framework.

This chapter will state the research assumptions and the methodologies used in this research. Case studies as a methodology will be considered and justified.

This research has embraced a qualitative phenomenological paradigm or an approach that concentrates on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience. This was undertaken by using case studies together with this researcher's heuristic experience.

Ontology is the philosophical field around (the study of) the nature of reality (all that is or exists, the reality), and the different entities and categories within reality.

Epistemology is the philosophical field around (the study of) knowledge and how to reach it. One might say that it includes the ontology of knowledge.

The difference between ontology and epistemology is that ontology is what reality actually is, whilst epistemology is what we perceive and describe reality to be.

By making use of case studies both the ontological as well as the epistemological assumptions are fulfilled.

It is the experience of this researcher that by having an articulated vision for change, team members can prepare themselves for accepting the change as well as understanding and accepting their involvement and contribution to future change. Well-managed change is the continuum to success. The new direction and vision must be defined in clear concise terms, to allow everyone concerned to be able to accept and even look forward to the change. All levels within the organisation should have an input relevant to their experience; this creates a sense of ownership. In fact, all employees should be encouraged to provide their input.

The two paradigms generally used for research are quantitative and qualitative research. The available literature on change management relating to the mining and associated industries is limited. Qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. The quantitative research was not deemed suitable for this research because statistical measurement of outcomes were not deemed suitable, since the only measure would have been fiscal in nature and not suitable for publication. Qualitative research is also used to reveal trends in thought and opinions, and delve deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include teams (team

information dissemination meetings), individual interviews, and observations.

This researcher has used qualitative data for the case studies in order to demonstrate a practical clear and unbiased approach to implementing change management into the mining industry.

Quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating data that can be transformed into useable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables - and generalise results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research.

The first part of this section provides an overview of the case study methodology, and this is followed by a justification for the use of the case studies as the research method for this research.

Case study research brings us to an understanding of a complex issue or range of issues and can add substance to what is already known through previous research. For some years, researchers have made use of the case study research method, across a variety of disciplines. Scientists, have made wide use of this qualitative research method to examine current real-life circumstances and provide the basis for the claim of ideas and extension of methods. The well-known researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

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Case study research, through reports of past studies, or even diary notes as is the case in this dissertation, demonstrates the identification, resolution and implementation of solutions to problems and issues. It can be a reliable research methodology if utilised correctly. A reason for the acceptance of case study as a research method, is that researchers in general, were becoming more anxious about the confines of quantitative methods in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioural problems in question. By using case study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioural conditions. By including both quantitative and qualitative data, the case study will help to explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis, 1997). Past literature reveals the application of the case study method in many areas and disciplines. Among them include natural examples in the fields of Sociology (Grassel & Schirmer, 2006), law (Lovell, 2006) and medicine (Taylor & Berridge, 2006). There are also other areas that have used case study methods widely, particularly in government, management and in education. As an example, there were studies conducted to determine whether specific government programmes were efficient or whether the goals of a particular programme were reached.

In many cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and case study as a research method to investigate contemporary real-life situation through detailed relative analysis. Yin (1984: 23) defines the case study research method “ as an

empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”

Case studies observe the specific data at the minute stages.

In this research, the researcher has consulted to numerous mining companies whilst implementing change within their organisations. During these projects this researcher kept diary notes for future reference.

Strategies were used that were successful in previous projects that were similar, and the culmination of the total of these is what gave rise to the CPF.

Where implementation of an objective did not go according to plan, the execution methodologies were reworked to suit the particular needs of that company.

The research design is more than a work standard plan. The main purpose of the design is to help to avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions. In this sense, a research design deals with a logical problem and not a logistical problem. As a simple example, suppose you want to study a single organisation. The research questions, however, have to do with the mining organisation’s relationships with other organisations or divisions as well as their competitive or collaborative nature.

Only three cases studies were adopted for this dissertation in order to show that the CPF can work in varied environments, in different countries with success. In these case studies a sample of mining operations were taken from a broad spectrum of mines, countries and stages of development as detailed in section 5. 6.

The objective of this research is to identify issues within the greater mining industry and then offer plausible and workable solutions to implementing change in the industry that will be sustainable, and facilitate productivity in the process. Much of the solutions are derived from this researcher's own experience in implementing change in mining companies.

There is a gap in the literature with regard to what has been researched in this dissertation, and this dissertation will partially fill that gap.

This researcher is of the considered opinion that the Composite Performance Framework which he developed over many years is far more suited and adaptable to the mining industry. It is correct to assume that the Kotter 8 step process will work well in many situations, as can be seen above.

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