# Article review on human resource management

Business, Management

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## Memorandum

This memorandum will examine a scholarly article that discusses organizational change and managerial sense-making. The article critique will be presented in this memo by focusing on the thesis, methods, evidence of thesis support, contribution to literature, recommendation and implication.

## Thesis

The strategic planners design change management programs, while the middle managers implement these initiatives by managing resistance and emotions of subordinates to ensure organizational transformation. The article, Organizational Change and Managerial Sense-making focuses on the critical aspect that managers must focus on ' sense-giving' to reduce skepticism and uncertainty among subordinates regarding the intent and dedication of their bosses about change management initiatives. Luscher and Lewis (221-222) have specifically conducted action research to gain

insights the about the development of interpretive frameworks by middle managers during a change management process and how these interpretations impact sense-making. The authors regard management challenges as paradoxes of change including performing, belonging and organizing (Luscher, Lewis & Ingram 491-495)

## Methods

Luscher and Lewis (221-223) adopted the action research methodology that refers to getting involved with organizational employees on a serious issue that requires any action and strategic decision-making by incorporating theory and practice. In addition, the researcher emphasize that action research is extremely valuable in gaining insights about managerial sense-making, sense-giving and the impact on decision-making in the midst of change interventions. The authors specifically carried out their research on Production Managers who were employed at the Billund manufacturing plant of Lego Company Denmark. The researcher collected data using Interviews and focus group techniques. Next, the authors made interactions with participants through ' sparring' sessions to highlight specific issues and their solutions during interviews, and ' review' sessions to communicate findings with focus groups for further discussions on change process. The sparring sessions also allowed managers to implement their understanding of new workplace management methods to foster change and sense-making at Lego and then discuss the evaluation and effectiveness of results in subsequent sessions.

The primary reason for selecting mid level production managers was the fact that Lego had initiated an extensive organizational restructuring program

that not only reduced management layers but also the middle manager count from 72 – 45. Secondly, the change initiators at Lego fostered the working culture of self-managed teams so that employees could develop strategic thinking and take decisions accordingly in a changing environment. One of the authors had also received extensive training at aforementioned production division of Lego; therefore, there were minimal accessibility and trust issues. Next, the division director also endorsed the importance of organizational change and managerial sense-making so that the production managers would become aware of new workplace management principles and thus transform Lego into a lean organization.

The research methodology is appropriate and makes absolute sense because there were evident problems regarding integration of middle- and first-line managers in a self-managed team culture. Secondly, there was an essential need to address decision-making issues among middle managers during organizational restructuring process as there was lack of clear understanding about lean principles and flexible practices. Thirdly, the researchers were previously involved in Danish Lego's divisional system; therefore, they had the opportunity to use periodic interventions and reflections to unfold underlying concerns, anxiety, perplexity and uncertainty among managers and to question their understanding and critical thinking patterns.

## Evidence of Thesis Support

The sparring sessions developed a foundation to enhance sense-making so that managers could interpret the events and occurrences within an organizational environment. These interpretations are extremely beneficial in developing middle managers' understanding of change and enhancing

collaboration that shape interpretational frameworks and purpose of organizational transformation. The research interactions incorporated reflexive questioning that in turn facilitated in double-loop learning among managers who then evaluated the workability, certainty and effectiveness of their existing frameworks and recommended substitute management approaches and strategic areas for personal development. The core objective of the researchers was to motivate middle managers to develop critical and constructive thinking about problems so that they could portray sense-giving and offer certainty to their subordinates. Absence of sense-making indeed paralyzes strategic decision-making among middle managers as well as reduces their ability of becoming effective change agents and catalysts.

The researchers highlighted that organizational change leads to paradoxes; therefore, they revealed managerial challenges as three core paradoxes of change such as performing, belonging, and organizing (Luscher and Lewis 227). The purpose of using paradoxical approach was to convert a mess into a dilemma and subsequently into a contradictory unsolvable element to spur exploration of change management issues and occurrences (Eisenhardt 703). Resultantly, the paradoxes of change enabled managers to contribute creative solutions that would resolve underlying concerns pertaining to managerial themes such as ' roles, relationship and organization' and would further ensure strategic transformation into a flexible lean organization.

In other words, the results and findings support the article thesis as the action research enabled managers to understand dynamics of change, to evaluate effectiveness of their existing frameworks and techniques, to

highlight underlying concerns / uncertainties and to develop creative new solutions in sparring and review sessions to facilitate organizational restructuring and transformation at Lego Company (Balogun & Johnson 524).

## Contribution to the Literature

The scholarly article by Luscher & Lewis contributes a paradoxical lens to enhance change management understanding and cope with numerous strategic challenges and performance in a new workplace. The action research develops a successful dimension of ' working through paradox' that could facilitate in implementation of theoretical underpinnings into practice through an integrative process. The research study contributes an extensive understanding of organizational sense-making during change management process. Luscher & Lewis (234-235) argue that " working through paradox" is not meant for eliminating any contradictory elements and conflicts but the approach is beneficial in spurring creativity and enabling managers to resolve issues of anxiety and uncertainty among subordinates that arise from change processes. The article also contributes the successful use of ' sparring' and ' review' sessions in ' paradoxical inquiry' of management challenges and development of modern frameworks among middle managers. For example, the paradox of ' performing' enable managers to cope with changing demands, the paradox of ' belonging' facilitates in relationship management and the paradox of ' organizing' assists in dealing with changing organizational objectives.

## Recommendation and Implications

The collaborative action research resolves the major problem of developing access and trust equation with organizational middle managers. In other words, the researchers also validate that action research methodology is effective in sense-making of change management challenges and managerial paradoxes that impact employee decision-making and problem-solving. In addition, the approach could enable researcher to developed shared understandings that lead to effective problem identification and implementation of solutions despite contradictory elements.

## References

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