

Change resistance in bureaucratic organizations in jordan management essay



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A method of appraising managerial employees that has received a great deal of attention in recent years is 360-degree appraisal (also known as multi-rater feedback), whereby ratings are given not just by the next manager up in the organisational hierarchy, but also by peers and subordinates.

Appropriate customer ratings are also included, along with an element of self-appraisal. Once gathered in, the assessment from the various quarters are compared with one another and the result communicated to the manager concerned. The idea itself is nothing new. Management writers, particularly in the United States, have long advocated the use of upward and peer appraisal as a means of evaluating management performance., but such views have taken a good deal of time to become generally acceptable. The past few years have seen the publication of the major studies of practice in this area, allowing us to reach judgement about the processes involved on the basis of solid evidence. Redman (2001, p65) quotes surveys that show around 40 per cent of major UK companies use it, and 75 per cent of companies in the United States. However, usage in smaller organisation appears to be less common. The recent CIPD survey into performance management practices found that only 14 per cent of respondents worked in organisation that used 360 degree approaches (Armstrong and Baron 2005, p65).

Change Resistance in Bureaucratic Organizations in Jordan

In this case writer tries to understand why employees resist to accept something new introduced to them, Khassawneh (2005) highlights the reasons and causes behind employees' resistance to administrative and hierarchal change in several bureaucratic organizations in Jordan.

There were eleven factors, were identified as being major causes of change resistance in bureaucratic agencies. These factors include: inadequate financial and non-financial incentives offered to government employees, lack of employees' participation and involvement in the change process, distrust between employees and higher management, expectation of more control and supervision from higher management, expectation of additional job demands and requirements, comfort with status quo, disruption of stable work standards and social relations, lack of goal clarity, lack of employees' conviction in the goals of change, fear of losing job and/or job prerogatives, and the sudden and confused manner in which change is introduced (Khassawneh, 2005)

According to Khassawneh (2005) the most significant reason of resistance to change was found out to be lack of employees' participation in the change process. This factor was assessed on the basis of two parameters: seniority in organization and number of training programs attended by employees. Senior employees who were part of the organization for five years or less resisted strongly due to lack of participation in the change process than their seniors who had served in the organization for periods ranging from 6-20 years. Employees who had served for five years or less in such government institutions made up 32% of the sample (133 respondents). These individuals were involved in activities concerning of an executive nature and therefore played a significant role in the running of the bureaucratic organizations.

Employees who had not attended any training program felt that lack of involvement led to resistance to adopt to new processes/ systems. Therefore this attitude goes to show what an important role the training programmes

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play, boosting employee morale and involvement as training enables individuals to discover their strengths and weaknesses and also instill in them a sense of belonging in their organization. Therefore the respondents who did not get an opportunity to participate in any training programs claimed to have low sense of involvement with the organization treated the management with greater suspicion, than those who took part in certain training programmes for their career development.

Another major cause of resistance to change was as found out by Khassawneh (2005) was lack of proper incentives. This lack of proper incentives was correlated to five of background characteristics of respondents which were namely; seniority, administrative rank, number of training programs attended, age and level of education (Khassawneh, 2005). Younger, low level ranking employees resisted more due to lack of proper incentives. Employees who have served for longer periods of time tend to receive greater incentives as the longer they remain in a government organization.

Resistance to adopt a new system also came about when the employees viewed the management with suspicion and distrust (Khassawneh, 2005). Younger employees working at a low level position who did not get adequate decision making authority or those who did not attend enough training programs were mainly the individuals who highly resisted any sort of newly introduced change.

Khassawneh (2005) states that if such low ranking employees are also not given enough information regarding the change process, then such employees would always create issues in the organization.

The IBM Making Change Work Global Study

IBM's (2008) research department addressed the issues as to why most organizations cannot bring about a change successfully in an organization. IBM's research was conducted using a sample size of more than 1, 500 key practitioners through surveys and detailed interviews. The purpose of the research was to find out why implementing a change program was met with resistance by the employees and why the program failed to be implemented in most organizations successfully.

The study revealed that 44% the projects failed to be completed on deadlines, or within budget or without decided quality of end goals, while 15 percent either ceased or failed to meet any of the objectives. The reasons cited for these failures range from lack of clarity of goals, failure to execute the project successfully from the perspective of the top management and lack of employee involvement, age factor, educational level and fear of new change from the perspective of the employees.

The major challenges to change were divided on two parameters; soft factors and hard factors. The soft factors of resistance to change included: changing mindsets and attitudes, corporate culture, complex nature of the change process, lack of dedication from the side of upper level management, and deficiency of motivation of employees involved. While the hard factors of resistance to change included: shortage of resources, lack of change

information, not much transparency because of incomplete or unreliable information, change of process change of IT systems, technology barriers. It is was found out from this study that while the hard factors play an important part in hindering the process of change, surprisingly it was the soft factors that was harder to get right. “ Altering thinking, behaviours and norms of an entity typically need different methods and skills that are applied time after time and over the time. Sometimes they require being applied over a series of consecutive assignments and even some of them often continue after the project has been finished formally”. (IBM, 2008).

In order to overcome these resistances, the study then focused on the parameters that made a change successful. While leadership, employee engagement and honest communication were cited as the major areas providing impetus for change; again the list was divided into hard and soft factors that made a change process successful. The soft factors comprised of: higher management’s commitment and support, employee motivation and participation, open and accurate communication on timely basis, organization environment and culture that motivates and promotes change. The hard factors included: efficient training programs, adjustment of performance measures, efficient organization structure and monetary and non-monetary incentives. The major responsibility of implementing the change was that of the top management. The results of the research revealed that “ Practitioners firmly place key responsibility for the fate of change projects in the executive suite, an overwhelming 92 percent named ‘ top management sponsorship’ as the most important factor for successful change” (IBM, 2008).

Therefore it can be concluded from this study that while employees would always be suspicious of any kind of change and would resist the efforts of the management out of this fear and suspicion. It depends upon the top management to ensure timely communication, encouragement of employee involvement and appointing of professional change agents would pave the way for a successful change processes for any organization.

Factors Affecting Resistance to Change: A Case Study of Two North Texas Police Departments

Gaylor (2001), tried to explore the issues that affect conflict with change. For this purpose a law enforcement agency was chosen as the case in point i. e. two North Texas Police departments where the police consequence of mature education and expectation on the police team's level of opposition to change and the results of contribution and mutual understanding on reliance were examined.

There were 5 factors that were identified as very influential on organizational change. These factors were:

- 1) Employee participation in resistance to change,
- 2) Trust in management,
- 3) Communication process,
- 4) Quality of information available and
- 5) Education (Kent, 2001)

Research resulted that factors that affect resistance from employee side are involvement in the process, believe in management, processes of communication within organization, and exchange of information.

The synopsis by Kent (2001) states that employee involvement in the process of change encourages him to feel to be owner for the new system and therefore, boosts the level of comfort and trust between employees and the management. Secondly, the organization needs to have a proper system of communication for employee remedy and support. This also increases the level of trust between the two stakeholders. Third, employees must be provided with accurate and timely information so as to reduce the level of chaos that is normally created at the time of change in any organization. And finally, to feel secure about their jobs and statuses and other issues of change process, employees have to have a high level of trust in management.

Leading and Coping with Change

Woodward & Hendry in 2004 undertook 2 surveys to look at different perspectives in research on how change is being managed in financial services institutions of London's. These involved representatives of senior management personnel who were responsible for initiation of change in the organizational and all other employees inclusive of managers experiencing change while serving at different levels.

The aims of the study were:

To define the skills and attitudes required to lead change and those needed effectively to cope with change and

To develop a model to show how change is absorbed within the organization

They organized their findings in five parts as described below, which have been arranged in the following manner. In the 1st section, as people keep on seeking to explore that what is going on in their organization, states what the employees and employers consider as the main pressures for change, their formal boss' responses, and in what ways these changes have impacted their careers. Then, as conventional ways of working are tempered, in parts two and three they show how people cope and what different resources are required in terms of skills and competencies to perform well in this new changed environment.

Then in part four they describe specific qualities required by the change managers to cultivate with respect to employee needs. Finally, they state what the organizations do in order to support their employees throughout the change process, and how senior management and employees perceive this. The results of this research provide the researchers with reasons behind the failure of many initiatives of change process and how failures may be managed successfully.

Woodward & Hendry (2004) then investigated what various employee coping strategies were adopted during the change process. They told employees to indicate the level of their readiness in responding to any further changes in their job or work. A considerably large fraction of those who were surveyed were seen to be ready for the change and considered it a part of life with a positive feel about it.

As coping is about creating a balance between demands and living within the limitation of the system, employees were told to specify main hindrances they had to handle with in the new environment.

Five factors that were extracted from this exercise were:

Increased accountability but reduced resources.

A focus on tasks with a corresponding neglect of employees.

Feelings of insecurity and uncertainty in roles and direction.

Other employees not coping and lacking skills to adapt.

Managers themselves failing to cope, and employing poor coping strategies.

On a question of most helpful personal coping strategies, employees listed several strategies, which included from proactive approach to denial or avoidance.

The researchers also studied the various competencies that are required for coping with the change. Adapting to negative or positive coping strategies is affected by the way in which employees perceive demands and resources balance in the new employee-to-work relationship in changed environment.

Hence, coping strategies are influenced by the availability of resources. Skills and competencies are a major personal resource. Employees specified a number of skills and competencies they found especially helpful in absorbing and coping with change:

Communicating with others holding different perspectives (since nowadays people work in teams for many activities).

Organizing work and managing time effectively (in response to increased job scope and the need to meet a variety of objectives).

Assimilating and interpreting information (to identify significant information and filter out irrelevancies).

Dealing with people (since financial and professional service organizations deliver many of their services through people).

Innovative problem solving.

Also specifying the above mentioned skills, employees rated many other personal abilities, skills and qualities as very important. These include motivation; judgment accuracy; customer need understanding; commercial awareness; ability of influencing and negotiation; lively mind; and positive attitude towards change.

Senior managers were of the view that key personal skills or capabilities of performing well in a dynamic environment should also contain a dedication to change, acceptance of the changing situation, an ability to gel in the changed environment, and a variety of personality traits.

Woodward & Hendry (2004) then go on to discuss how important is it to for the change managers to lead change in a competent manner. However, this important part is still overlooked by a considerable minority level, with 33 percent of senior managers claiming that human aspects were ignored in the

change initiatives. Only 20 percent employees rated the concerned management as very able enough to implement changes in the organization. Almost all the rest had equally divided responses, ranging from average to poor. In spite of the low rating, employees were observed have a sense of sympathy and appreciation for difficulties faced my management in leading and managing the change.

Employees were inquired as to when and how sometimes it becomes difficult or hard for employees to absorb change or adopt it. These key areas were classified into six categories, as follows:

Communicating (not being kept informed, receiving conflicting messages, wanting to understand but not being given explanations);

The change process itself (when change is perceived as happening too slowly or too fast, when leaders are seen to hold unrealistic expectations, or when change is managed with incorrect sequencing);

Relationships (including situations when change leaders seem remote and isolated from employees, do not exhibit constructive attitudes and behaviours, or behave in an autocratic fashion);

Consultation (when employees do not feel they are informed or consulted, and when staff needs and ideas are disregarded);

Skills and experience (when change leaders are seen as lacking the required skills, abilities and experience, and when the change leader lacks credibility);

Motivation for change (when there appears a lack of involvement or motivation for change at the top, or among senior managers elsewhere in the organization).

The employees were also inquired about how managers, actions could be was most helpful to them to cope with changes in the organization. Out of 19 objects gathered from the traditional change management literature, each except one was rated 'very helpful' or 'quite helpful'. Senior managers identified the competencies such as strong leadership, purpose/mission clarity, enthusiasm, participative employees, and improved communication. These were somehow similar with then ones identified by the employees.

Again this is not applicable to conventional behaviours and with 'top-down' attitude.

Finally, employees were told to express their feelings on the extent they received support while the implementation of change in the organization with the statement: 'employees are provided with adequate problem prevention and support to cope with organization changes.' While a majority of the senior management staff agreed with this statement, less than 25 percent of employees did. There is, therefore, a gap in how each looks at the quantity of support provided. For example, a majority of employees said that their employer entity 'let them have sufficient authority to get their work done in an effective manner', and hence, there existed 'better professional relationships' but for other factors, only a minority reported availability of support. On the other hand, the most common mechanisms of support that senior managers report included detailed career development counseling

with their employees so that they could be skilled enough to be ready their new job responsibilities; skills enhancement; telling them as to where the organization is heading, and what would be the roles and responsibilities of employees; measures to make sure that there is an alignment between structures and systems and improved salary and perks packages through career management programmes.

Comparing this with what employees report, Woodward & Hendry (2004) state that employees and managers do agree on some of the important points, but show disagreement on how adequately the provision of these is.

Managers also rely on comparatively few major sources of support.

Eventually, organization employees emphasize more or less entirely on those things that give them a sense of control and autonomy, while managers rely on the things which they control as managers. This then continues in the pattern where senior managers exhibit a traditional leadership model, while employees be able to get a wide variety of behaviours that are useful for them.