

The levels of organizational change readiness



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This chapter will show my devised framework of the transformation change model to assess the level of readiness for change at AFH, across departments and units; to answer the major and minor research questions; and to achieve the research objective. The devised framework will be examined and evaluated by the use of its different variables in this paper. This chapter will illustrate the research problem, sampling method, propositions and data analysis method.

3. 2 Problem Statement

Senior management decided to introduce new equipment into all departments across the hospital. This has been a major change project that started in 2007. The main advantages of this change include a reduction in the rate of human error and an increase in the production of patient reports. Despite the positive impact this change would have on the ways of working in the hospital, employees had not been informed of any change prior to it being introduced, and were therefore not ready to accept the new ways of working. Reasons for this lack of acceptance will be discussed later in this paper, including:

No communication between senior management and their staff. (Kotter, 2007).

Training not being made available to all staff. (Lehman et al, 2002).

People resisting change due to both lack of ability and knowledge, and their competing commitment of the ' big assumptions' they will have made regarding the change process. (Kegan and Lahey, 2001).

Weak management style, for example, not involving employees in the decision-making process. (Garvin and Roberto, 2001).

Weak leadership style such as not clearly explaining the new vision that would come from the change (Garvin and Roberto, 2001).

The level of readiness for change at AFH will be assessed and evaluated by applying the change readiness model from the literature so that the organization can achieve its goal of a completing a successful transformation process.

In addition, AFH is undergoing further organizational change – replacing existing managers with new managers and a new structure, based on the decision of the Ministry of Defense Headquarters in 2010. This change has been implemented in the administration department at AFH as well as across other departments and units. Some of the departments have increased in size and other departments have had to raise staffing levels due to the increased number of patients each year.

Goals of the Armed Forces Hospital (AFH):

To gain competitive advantage through improving the quality of work-flow by meeting the patients' needs through the use of highly specialized and up-to date equipment; to ensure the accuracy of results and to decrease the rate of human error; to produce an increased level of patient results more efficiently.

3. 3 Research Objective:

- The main objective of the thesis is to study the level of organizational change readiness in different departments of the hospital. Creating an acceptance for the need to implement change in the different departments of the hospital will result in the organization achieving its goal of improving the quality of work to treat more patients in less time. which in turn will lead to greater patient and employee satisfaction.

- To make useful recommendations.

- To learn more about readiness for change at AFH.

3. 4 Conceptual Framework

The devised framework is a combination of the ' Transformational Change Model', John P. Kotter (2007) and the ' Model of Change Program', Simpson (2002). The conceptual framework has six factors that affect the level of readiness for change in our case study organization (AFH) in Kuwait. We will be using both qualitative (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative (surveys) methods of research to collect our data.

Staff Empowerment

Leadership Skills

Communication

Computer availability & internet access

Adequate & qualified staff

Adequate Budget

Adequate space for each employee

Teamwork

Vision

Organizational Resources

Readiness for organizational change

Figure 3. 1 Conceptual Framework

3. 4. 1 Dependent Variable of the Model as the following

Ready for Organizational Change

Judge and Douglas (2009) have defined employee readiness for change as “the extent to which an individual or individuals are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status-quo”. (Judge and Douglas, 2009, P. 637).

Arlbjorn et al (2006) have defined “change readiness in an organization that the participant gains an understanding of the need to make change in the organization and display a willingness to take part in the change”. (Arlbjorn et al, 2006, P. 129).

He refers to the importance of “ staff involvement” in the whole journey of the change process (Arlbjorn et al, 2006). He also refers to the importance of “ organizational alignment” where employees from different departments of the organization participate in the change process and discuss shared problems and issues during group exercises”. (Arlbjorn et al, 2006, P. 133).

An organization that involves its employees at all levels and which has organizational alignment during the change process has an adequate level of organization readiness for change. Our research will assess the organizational readiness for change through a survey of 20 questions to assess employees’ overall readiness for change, and 26 interviews to find the effect and the relation of the 6 different independent variables of our model on the organizational readiness for change.

3. 4. 2 Independent Variables of the Model as the following

Empowerment:

Organizations are currently facing tough competition in a turbulent external environment. In order to ensure their survival they need to have sustained competitive advantage – perceived benefits and advantages over their competitors. Competitive advantage provides an organization with the ability to increase the value of the company for its stakeholders. There is a need to transform the way they function by moving away from the traditional hierarchal and bureaucratic model of organization to the delegation of responsibilities to employees and giving more accountability further down the hierarchy to the first-line employees (Beer et al, 1990). This is done by encouraging employees to make more independent decisions at work without the need to constantly refer to their supervisors.

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Menon (2001) defined employee empowerment as “ the transfer of organizational power, energizing followers through leadership, enhancing self-efficacy through reducing powerlessness and increasing intrinsic task motivation” (Menon, 2001, P. 154).

“ Empowerment” has been used to denote the act of empowering others and also to describe the internal process of the individual being empowered i. e. psychological empowerment. Empowerment means the delegating of responsibilities to other employees in decision making that will not only motivate them but make them more innovative towards the new change project which will increase job autonomy and cause job enrichment (Menon, 2001, P. 155). A good leader always empowers their staff in order to perform their work and make independent decisions.

Leadership:

Leadership is “ a relationship through which one person influences the behavior or actions of other people” (Crossman, 2007, P. 514).

Another definition is “ the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals” (Robbins, 2005, P. 332).

Burns (1978) has characterized transformational leadership through the following characteristics:

Changes the status-quo

Able to transform the organization

Based on creativity and innovation

Purpose to engender commitment of the leader and the staff as well to the change process

In a successful transformational process we need to acknowledge the importance of leadership skills, such as effective communication, delegation of responsibilities to other employees and commitment. Modern change theories have emphasized both the importance of and the role of a strategic change leader in an organization who enhances the participation and cooperation of their colleagues in the decision-making process. This is unlike the traditional change theories where the emphasis was on the manager for the day to day operation of the business (Almaraz, 1994).

In addition there is a need to have senior management support and commitment towards the change process to create the required level of readiness in an organization. In a successful transformation process it is important to establish a change project by having competent employees and by having participative leaders that encourage specialised training for their staff rather than directive managers to acquire change (Arlbjorn et al, 2006).

A change leader must know the process of transformation and know how to create and communicate a clear change message to employees. This message determines the nature of the change and shows how employees react differently to the transformation process (Armenakis and Harris. 2002). Change leaders must also know how to answer any questions or concerns staff have regarding the need for change in a proper, convincing way. They must be able to provide tangible evidence to gain the support of their

employees and their commitment to the change process (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

Communication:

Communication in an organization is the most effective source of learning and developing any transformation process. Regular meetings, conferences and educational programs can all facilitate learning and increase the competency levels of staffing in order to reach the organizational goal of having a successful transformation and adequate level of readiness for change (Beer et al, 1990).

A change leader must communicate the change message to employees on a regular basis. They must know how to introduce them to, and convince them of the new change vision through regular meetings to discuss work-related issues, the new change plan and strategies on how to achieve it.

Email is an effective communication tool - using the internet to send out the most recent and updated information. Use of an organization's intranet is another communication tool where reports can be circulated to employees on a regular basis. A skilled leader must establish a simple plan for change very early on in the change process that ensures employee acceptance, resulting in favourable outcomes and ensures employee involvement in the change process (Garvin and Roberto, 2005).

Having regular meetings ensures and enhances active participation from employees in the change process. Teleconferences of live presentations is another way of communicating the change vision and message to employees. Such a teleconference presentation is called "readiness speech"

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and so managers and their staff must use the change message component framework to guide the content of the speech. The change concept should be established by a need that is easily understood and circulated among the employees of an organization (Armenakis and Harris. 2002, P. 176).

A change leader manager must know how to introduce and regularly communicate the new change vision and the change message with employees through different communication channels such as meetings, speeches and newsletters. Kotter (2007). Leadership by example in different organizational departments/units is highly appreciated. A change leader must “ walk the talk” that is consistent with the organization goal in the workplace and provide support and commitment to the transformation process. Additionally a manager with an open management style provides staff with the opportunity of open discussion and criticism which will be of benefit to both employees as well as the organization.

Vision:

“ Leadership vision” is designed to mobilize an organization towards the attainment of some future state that is expressed in terms that generate enthusiasm” (Armenakis and Harris. 2002). It is important to have a new change vision in the organization and to find strategies to achieve it. “ Vision” is to gain insight into the purpose and objectives with the organization vision whether it is (differentiation, responsiveness and cost-optimization)” (Arlbjorn et al, 2006, P. 133).

In order to reach an organizational target it is important to develop a “ shared vision” of how to organize and manage for competitiveness” (Beer et

al, 1990, P. 162). A change leader manager must define and communicate the new change vision to employees and encourage everyone to work towards achieving this vision. The new change vision should define new roles and responsibilities and coordinate the flow of information and work across independent functions at all levels of the organization.

There is a need to have strategies to show everyone how to achieve the organization's goals, as well as how to achieve and accomplish the vision. For example, having a simple vision set out in a five year plan that is easy to understand, that is communicated by different stakeholders within the organization e. g. employees, clients and management, and clearly states how to reach the goals and clarifies the direction of the organization. Having a simple vision that is easily communicated and understood by the organization staff within 5 minutes or less is a useful rule of thumb (Kotter, 2007).

A successful leader must know how to achieve and accomplish the organization's goals by recognizing obstacles and removing them to overcome different forms of resistance to change such as:

Enhancing and increasing employee knowledge and competencies by providing training courses, lectures and workshops on a regular basis to overcome resistance to change.

Change and improve organization structure by improving staff performance appraisals to be able to assess change that is consistent with staff interests and develop a staff compensation system to achieve success in the transformation process.

Know how to deal with the more rigid management who are against organization development. In brief, leader managers need to treat their staff fairly, delegate accountable responsibilities, provide credibility and motivate them to become involved in the new change project.

Teamwork:

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable (Katzenbach, 1993).

A team is a formal primary group of co-acting individuals who are dedicated and committed toward a common purpose to achieve the organizational goals. It is important to have collaborative, dedicated and cohesive teamwork after the establishment of the change plan as this will ensure the continuing and the accomplishing of the change plan. It will build the sense of employees' ownership towards the change project to enhance their support and responsibilities towards the transformation process (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). In order to have effective teamwork throughout the departments and across the different organizational departments, senior management must enhance employees active participation which is involving employees in activities that are designed to have them learn directly and enjoy the implementation of new issues to add value that is consistent with both employees and organization goals. This will provide opportunities to demonstrate and understand the change message and build the confidence and trust in their managers, supervisors and team based approach taken by their executives (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

In brief, teamwork without strong line leader managers will never achieve the success of the change process, and efforts without powerful guiding teams can make minor progress but will soon stop the change progress (Kotter, 2007, P. 7).

Organizational Resources:

Having different and adequate organizational resources is an important factor to successfully create readiness in an organization. Change requires adequate resources in various forms such as: competent employees, availability of computers and internet access and covering budget, and requires staff commitment to see the change process through to completion. Employees also need to see support of the change process from their departments (Armenakis and Harris. 2002).

Organizational change might be highly desirable but unreachable due to the lack of the following resources: (Lehman et al, 2002)

Open budget: in order to support and enhance the change project an organization must have a dedicated budget supported by senior management. This should be spent on having the right offices, furniture and equipment such as computers i. e. components of a healthy working environment, and spent on different specialised training courses, lectures and workshops on a regular basis to facilitate learning and to increase and develop the knowledge, skills and performance of employees (Lehman et al, 2002).

Adequate and qualified staffing: an organization should have enough skilled employees to do the required job and must encourage learning to adopt the <https://assignbuster.com/the-levels-of-organizational-change-readiness/>

new ways of working in the transformation process. This is done by increasing the knowledge and competency levels of staff by having regular training courses, presentations and workshops to cope with change and to serve the increased number of patients at the hospital to serve more patients in less time.

Providing adequate space/employees: it is important to have the right number of employees in each department section to ensure effective and efficient work-flow and to ensure monitoring and observing of the work process.

Computer availability and internet access: an organization must ensure the availability of access to computers, to certain programs and e-communication between management and their staff via e-mails within departments and across departments to exchange useful information and share up to date knowledge regarding the change process. Having e-communication via e-mails and e-conferences is considered to be an effective and professional communication method.

In brief, an organization that provides a dedicated budget, reported higher levels of staffing, adequate space and a healthy working environment with more I. T. resources, and that is open to effective communication will be more open to change than those organizations than those that do not.

3. 4. 3 Major Research Questions:

To what extent are the different departments at the AFH ready for change?

3. 4. 4 Minor Research Questions:

1. Is the level of communication adequate in the different departments of AFH?
2. Is the level of empowerment adequate in the different departments of AFH?
3. Is the level of organizational resources appropriate in the different departments of AFH?
4. Is the level of leadership adequate in the different departments of AFH?
5. Is there a well known vision or strategic objective to the different departments of AFH?
6. Is the level of teamwork satisfactory in the different departments of AFH?

3. 4. 5 Propositions

1. It is proposed that management do not encourage open communication with their employees as they have seen no benefit from it during several meetings.
2. It is proposed that management do not consult other employees in the decision making process.
3. It is proposed that supervisors are unable to address issues from their staff due to low morale and a low work ethic.
4. It is proposed that management rarely communicate the new change vision during meetings, presentations or through the staff newsletters.

5. It is proposed that there is limited staff accountability and empowerment in the different AFH departments and units. The decision-making power is limited to management only.
6. It is proposed that there is are no risk taking as it is considered costly to both the organization and employees themselves.
7. It is proposed that employees did not receive the necessary training courses to improve their level of competence and readiness for change.
8. It is proposed that internet access is limited to those in more senior positions.
9. It is proposed that management did not fully involve their staff in the work produced. Only verbal guidance was given from behind their desks, showing lack of leadership by example.
10. It is proposed that management listened to employee suggestions and complaints but did not act on or implement them.
11. It is proposed that employees were not informed of the new change vision.
12. It is proposed that management in the different hospital departments did not develop strategies to meet the organization vision.
13. It is proposed that employees are not aware of teamwork.
14. It is proposed that employees lack the sense of ownership towards the change process.

Relationship of the Minor Research Questions to the Proposition:

Research minor questions

Propositions

Is the level of communication adequate in the different departments of AFH?

1. It is proposed that management do not encourage open communication with their employees because they have seen no benefit from it during several meetings.

2. It is proposed that management do not consult other employees before taking their decisions.

3. It is proposed that supervisors are unable to address issues from their staff due to low morale and a low work ethic.

4. It is proposed that management rarely communicate the new change vision during meetings, presentations or through staff newsletters.

Is the level of empowerment adequate in the different departments of AFH?

5. It is proposed that there is limited staff accountability and empowerment in the different AFH department/unit. The decision-making power is limited to the management only.

6. It is proposed that there is no risk taking as it is considered costly to both the organization and employees themselves.

Is the level of organizational resources adequate the different departments of AFH?

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7. It is proposed that employees did not receive the necessary training courses to improve their level of competence and readiness for change.

8. It is proposed that internet access is limited to those in higher positions only.

Is the level of leadership adequate in the different departments of AFH?

9. It is proposed that managers did not fully involve their staff in the work produced. Only verbal guidance was given from behind their desks, showing lack of leadership by example.

10. It is proposed that management listened to employee suggestions and complaints but did not act on them.

Is there a well known vision or strategic objective to the different departments of AFH?

11. It is proposed that employees were not informed of the new change vision.

12. It is proposed that management in the different hospital departments did not develop strategies to meet the organization vision.

Is the level of teamwork adequate in the different departments of AFH?

13. It is proposed that employees are not aware of teamwork.

14. It is proposed that employees lack the sense of ownership towards the change process.

3. 5 Research Design:

There are steps the researcher must follow to answer the research questions such as data collection, sampling, and analysis of interviews and the questionnaire. In order to be able as a researcher to examine the elements of the conceptual framework and how they impact the organizational readiness of change at AFH and to show how these elements can add value to the purpose of the research.

We chose to use the qualitative and quantitative (see Appendix A) method and analysis of the data collected from my personal observations and from in-depth interviews as the rigid statistical analysis from quantitative data lacks creativity from the researcher's perspective. By contrast, analysis of qualitative data deals with words and human expressions that will enrich the research paper with fewer standardized procedures and allows more creativity from the researcher.

The research will be based on using semi-structured interviews with a sample of 26 interviewees. The interview questions are based on the literature and the devised model of transformational process to assess the organization's level of readiness for change. Each interview will last between 8-28 minutes. As mentioned by Sanders et al (2007) either unstructured interviews or semi-structured interviews should be used for exploratory research. As a researcher I decided to use a semi-structured interview as it provides more flexibility and convenience during data collection, as well as allowing deeper exploration of data from the answers given that would add value and credibility to the researcher itself.

The research results will be supplemented by the quantitative research method, using a mini survey on a sample of 50 to measure the readiness for change level at AFH.

3. 5. 1 Research Sampling Methods:

Sampling of 26 interviews from different departments / units, different hierarchal positions ranging from managers to front line employees with different working experiences, and different nationalities, to gain feedback on the implementation of the new change project, the establishment of new departments / units, the increase in number of employees, and restructuring of departments to assess the level of readiness towards the major change project / renewal program and new equipment .

Mini survey sampling 50 employees (see Appendix B) to measure the readiness for change level at AFH.

Interview Questions:

For managers

For employees

1. Do you encourage your staff to take independent decisions in work related issues?

1. Did your manager encourage you to take independent decisions in work related issues?

2. Did you involve your staff in the new change vision?

3. Did you know/hear about the new change vision?

2. Did your manager mention to you the new change vision? What was it?
3. Did you know/hear about the new change vision?
4. As a manager do you encourage team-work?
5. Did your staff have a sense of ownership for their project?
4. Did your manager encourage you to work as a team?
5. Did you have any sense of ownership towards the new change project?
6. How often do you meet with your staff to discuss work related issues?
6. Did your manager ask you to attend meetings?
7. Did your manager use any speeches or information boards to inform you about new work issues?
8. How often does your manager communicate with you on work related issues?
7. Can you answer your staff on reasons for the need for change? What do you say?
8. Do you encourage open-criticism when you meet with your staff?
9. Do you listen to your staff when making decisions (individualism, collectivism)
10. What do you do in order to convince people regarding change?
9. Did you ask your manager why change is needed? What did they say?

10. Did your manager encourage you to criticize their working style to improve the quality of work?

11. Did your manager listen to you when you gave your opinion on work related issues?

12. What do you learn from your manager (leadership by example)?

11. Do you attend any special training courses/lectures nationally and/or internationally?

12. Is there is any dedicated budget for training courses?

13. How often do you attend training courses/lectures/workshops?

Organizational Change Readiness Assessment (Survey)

-3= strongly disagree +1= slightly agree

-2= disagree +2= agree

-1= slightly disagree +3= strongly agree

0= not sure/don't know Indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

Organizational Support:

Level of agreement

1. The organization's visions are truly a "shared" vision in that employees at all levels understand, value, and work toward accomplishing this vision through their daily work.

2. Decision making and authority are decentralized (there are multiple levels of decision makers throughout the organization-decision making is not centralized at the top).
3. Employees have, in the past, actively participated in organizational decision making, goal setting, and organizational change initiatives.
4. Employee ideas and suggestions for improving their work and the organization are listened to.
5. Employees view the organization's training and development programmes as effective and supportive of change-driven training needs.
6. The organization is effective at setting and achieving measurable performance goals and targets.
7. The organization effectively uses multiple communication channels to routinely and effectively communicate with employees.

Cultural:

Level of agreement

8. Real teamwork and collaboration exist within and between organizational works unit/departments.
9. There is a high level of trust between leaders and employees.
10. Employees generally feel encouraged to innovate, offer ideas and take risks.

11. People here generally feel that they personally responsible for their own success.

Change Environment:

Level of agreement

12. The proposed change and its effects on all organizational dimensions (e. g., structure, strategy, processes, workflow, systems, etc.) are clearly defined and understood by those leading the change.

13. When the change is completed, we will be able to gauge our success with the change effort (there are clear measures to evaluate the change results).

14. The organization has successfully implemented change initiatives in the past.

15. The reason or the “ why” of the coming change can easily be translated into tangible evidence that will get the attention of employees.

Employee Attitudes:

Level of agreement

16. Employees feel a sense of urgency- a felt need -for change.

17. Employees have a high level of job engagement (job engagement reflects employee commitment to their jobs and the organization).

18. Employees feel able to make decisions and act independently concerning their daily work.

19. Innovators and risk takers exist at all levels of the organization.

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20. Employees have confidence in their manager's ability to successfully guide them through the change.

Readiness component

Score

Organizational support

Cultural

Change environment

Employee attitudes

Total overall change readiness