Literature Review: Readiness to Change at the University

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: The study of readiness to change in the context of the University is needed in a situation to prepare for the 4.0 industrial revolution at the University which demands preparation in facing the VUCA era. The university is also in danger of being disrupted if it does not immediately make changes and adjustments to its role in the world of education. Therefore, readiness for change is the key for organizations to respond quickly and successfully to change.

METHODS: Review the literature with a literature search strategy through publish or perish (the keywords used are readiness to change, universities, tertiary institutions).

RESULTS: Ninety-six journal articles were found to publish or perish (step 1). The author manually screened the titles for inclusion and exclusion criteria to obtain 15 articles (step 2). All articles were subjected to an abstract review for screening according to criteria. From the results of the final selection, 11 reviewed journal articles were obtained.

CONCLUSION: Acceptance and readiness to change is an important part of the organization especially the University which requires immediate attention. Need to be open to changes made before preparing for change. Alignment of the organization’s vision and mission with employees’ personal needs to be created by communicating messages of change so that they tend to have a positive attitude towards organizational change. Besides, trust in management proved to be important in implementing strategic decisions and an important determinant of employee openness to change.

Introduction

The study of change and development is one of the major themes in social science [1], [2], and interest in these topics continues to grow as organizations struggle to cope with technological advances, global markets, and market denationalization and deregulation, resulting in an acceleration of environmental complexity. This complexity requires organizations to rapidly transform themselves to survive.

Change is not an extraordinary effect, which is produced only in certain circumstances by certain people [3]. Change is inherent in human activity and always occurs in the context of human social interaction [1]. Given that organizations are sites of evolving human action, it is no exaggeration to say that changes are ontologically prior to organization [3]. We must conclude that organizations are in a state of continuous change and, in order to survive, they must develop the ability to continue to change themselves gradually and, in most cases, fundamentally [4].

Various case studies, theoretical reviews, and applied articles have suggested factors that may be associated with readiness indicators but most readiness research has shifted to focus on leadership roles, commitment, general organizational context, and health organizations. There is still little literature that examines readiness for change in the university context. Even though the industrial revolution 4.0 at the University demands preparation in the face of the VUCA era which is volatile (fluctuating), uncertain (uncertain), complex (complex), and ambiguous (unclear). The university is also in danger of being disrupted if it does not immediately make changes and adjustments to its role in education.

Change presents a special challenge at the University because university culture is one of which is individualism and academic autonomy [5]. Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999 [6] suggest that structural and policy changes are needed to link staff aspirations with the strategic objectives of the institution. Khan, 2001 [7] argues that universities need to articulate a strong and unifying vision that will provide staff with a common sense of purpose, and suggests that they need to focus staff’s minds on context, customers, competition, and challenges.

Readiness for change is the key for an organization to respond quickly and successfully to change. If policies are seen as consistent with organizational values, it is likely that changes will be accepted and the organization is likely to change in the direction specified. Organizations must also ensure that when organizational changes occur, employee behavior
changes so as to achieve the desired results [8]. In the process of change, individuals make judgments and considerations about what they know, experience, and feel. Assessment is mainly influenced by cognitive and emotional so that changes in mindset that occur in organizational change must be supported regardless of various reasons and factors that are different from each individual. In addition, high employee morale, trust, appreciation, leadership, organizational climate as a support, the University’s commitment to providing easy access, and the use of technology for students are also determinants of change [5]. Individuals make assumptions about the change process, evaluate it, find its meaning, and develop feelings about it [9].

One study shows that a higher level of employee readiness for change predicts a higher successful implementation of change [10]. A longitudinal study conducted by Drzensky et al., 2012 [11] found readiness for change among employees at German universities was positively related to the successful implementation of organizational change. Meanwhile, effective organizational change is influenced by many factors. The accumulation of empirical and practice-derived evidence conclusively shows the readiness of employees to change is one of the main considerations. If employees play a central role in implementing change.

Methods

Search for literature

Two search strategies were undertaken to collect research relevant to the literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. First, an electronic database search was conducted using Publish or Perish (Google Scholar database, journal only) between early May and mid-September 2020, the search term reflects two aspects: The theory of readiness to change and the research context. Readiness to change. Second, we sorted references from each study that met the inclusion requirements of readiness to change at the University.

Literature screening

Review the literature with a literature search strategy through publish or perish (the keywords used are readiness for change, university and college). A total of 96 journal articles were found (step 1). The author manually filtered the title for inclusion and exclusion criteria in the context according to the keywords stated in the title so that there were 15 articles (step 2). All articles were subjected to an abstract review for screening according to criteria. From the results of the final selection, 11 reviewed journal articles were obtained (Figure 1).

Results

The selected studies were summarized based on the research context, research subjects, and findings regarding the Readiness to Change study at the University. The Table 1 summarizes the review findings.

Discussion

Readiness to change and openness to change

Longitudinal study conducted by Drzensky et al. 2012 [11] found readiness for change among employees in the pre-change implementation of German universities was positively related to the successful implementation of organizational change 1 year later. This study shows that encouraging employee change readiness is an essential prerequisite for successful organizational change. This section describes readiness to build on change and provides an overview and synthesis of several studies related to it. In general, readiness is essential for successful change in organizations. If employees are committed to their jobs but are maintained reluctant to accept organizational change, then top management cannot deliver results on time. Therefore, acceptance and readiness to change is an important part of an organization that requires immediate attention.

Openness to change is a construct introduced by Van den Berg et al., 2000 based on cognitive adaptation theory [2], which states that individuals with the highest levels of well-being during stressful life events are those who also have high levels of self-esteem, optimism, and perceived control [2]. Several authors have demonstrated also the usefulness of psychological resources in building personalities that are resilient and open to change [12].

In describing constructs of openness to change in a rearranging workplace, Van den Berg et al., 2000 [2] include several variables including acceptance of information about change, participation in the change process, self-efficacy in belief in change, social support, and personal impact of change. According to these authors, the variables mentioned are often more responsive to organizational intervention than other variables in cognitive adaptation theory (self-esteem, general perceived control, and optimism) [2].

Readiness for change and communication of change plans

Research has shown that when there is alignment between employees and organizations with
Readiness to Change and trust in management

The concept of trust - to some extent - has been explored in research into organizations as well as in other disciplines (eg sociology, psychology, philosophy and...
trust is built when others share common values and norms. Emotions - respect, compassion, empathy - are all important in the production of trust. From a business perspective, belief lowers transaction costs, fostering intra and inter-organizational relationships, and assisting with innovation and information sharing. In their examination of the concept of trust, Hohmann and Malieva, 2005 [14] establish three general elements of trust: reciprocity, hope and knowledge.

Trust in the top management literature, depicts trust as a concept that represents the degree to which employees trust the goodwill of their leaders, in particular the extent to which they believe that the leader is honest, sincere, and impartial when taking a position to take account of. Trust in top management is shown to be important in implementing strategic decisions and an important determinant of employee openness to change. One of the most difficult things that employees experience when faced with change is the uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity and stress associated with processes and outcomes. Trust can reduce these negative feelings, by giving others the resource for managing risk, spreading complexity, and explaining the unknown through help from others. Therefore, readiness for change will be greatly undermined if the behavior of important role models (i.e., leaders) is inconsistent with their words.

With regard to trust in top management literature, trust is described as a concept that represents the level of trust that employees have in their leader’s goodwill, specifically the extent to which they believe that the leader is honest, sincere, and impartial when considering their position. Trust in top management is very important in implementing strategic decisions and an important determinant of employee openness to change.

It was argued that leadership affects readiness to change and increases employee commitment. This is according to a study by Portoghese et al., 2012 [15] that mentioned that employees’ expectations of efforts to change are strongly influenced by their commitment to change, which results from leadership behavior and effective communication with all participants in the change implementation. Universities must realize the importance of lecturers’ readiness for change. This is because readiness for change is a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and commitment to teaching entrepreneurship [13]. Most of the free lecturers at Y University have a positive view of management support, with a high level of readiness to change, and a high level of interaction. This condition is related to external factors such as policy support, and intrinsic factors such as teaching experience. Perceptions of external factors, especially management support, cannot influence employee engagement [5]. This relationship actually exists in a person’s reality through the individual’s readiness to change [16].

Readiness to change and the perceived impact to change

Readiness is manifested through different channels (emotions, thoughts and intentions), indicating that employee readiness for change is the result of
a complex interaction between the three forces of psychological functioning. The relationship between the emotional and cognitive and emotional dimensions and the intentional dimension partly supports Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, 1991 [17]. It establishes that people develop feelings and cognitions about the benefits and disadvantages associated with whether or not they are involved in change.

Change needs to be refreshing, bringing a good feeling about change. Research on readiness to change, initially mostly derived from the opinion of Armenakis et al., 1993 [8], defines readiness to change as “individual beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which change is needed and the organizational capacity to successfully make changes.” These changes, individuals make assumptions about the change process, evaluate it, find its meaning, and develop feelings about it [9] organizational readiness to change [18].

Some employees welcome organizational change, viewing it as an opportunity to benefit and enhance their status, while others are distracted by change and tend to continue their work practices as before or perceive them as threats and formulate negative attitudes toward them [19]. According to Judge et al., 1999 [19], one of the strongest and most consistent disposition variables related to coping with change is positive effectiveness. Other authors also support a positive relationship between positive effectiveness and coping with stressful episodes in work settings [20]. Based on the above findings, core self-evaluation is a dispositional trait that defines how people evaluate themselves and their relationship to the environment [19]. This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies that show how important it is for an organization to create conditions conducive to change. When employees perceive their organization’s high priorities as aligned with change goals, they think the organization can implement change successfully, and they believe that there is effective communication on this issue; Their individual capacity for change is also enhanced, which contributes to the capacity of the organization to change.

Conclusion

Acceptance and readiness to change is an important part of the organization especially the University which requires immediate attention. Need to be open to changes made before preparing for change. Alignment of the organization’s vision and mission with employees' personal needs to be created by communicating messages of change so that they tend to have a positive attitude towards organizational change. Besides, trust in management proved to be important in implementing strategic decisions and an important determinant of employee openness to change. How important it is for an organization to create conditions conducive to change. When employees perceive their organization’s high priorities as aligned with the goals of change, they consider the organization to be able to implement change successfully, their individual capacity for change is also enhanced, which contributes to the organization’s capacity to change. Employees welcome organizational change, viewing it as an opportunity to benefit and enhance their status. Change needs to be refreshing, to bring good feelings about change, to develop feelings and cognitions about the benefits and disadvantages associated with being involved or not.

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