Does Employees' Resistance to Organizational Change have Positive Benefits? A Review

Aruoren, Emmanuel Ejiroghene
Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Management Sciences
Delta State University, Abraka
Email: aruorenemmanuel@gmail.com

Abstract
Resistance to change is known to undermine the successful implementation of any change initiative. It is therefore, very important for management to identify and address sources of resistance to change before, during and after change efforts are made. The paper begins by reviewing Lewin model, punctuated equilibrium and continuous transformation model of organizational change. This is followed by a critical examination of the various sources of resistance to change and some positive benefits of employees' resistance to organizational change as identified in the literature. The paper concludes by offering suggestion for future studies relating to resistance of employees to change initiative.

Keywords: Organizational change; Resistance to change

Introduction

The key ideas that influence the current global business scenario can be summed up simply in one phrase: "radical discontinuous change" (Jaitly & Kumar, 2012). In today's economy, change is all pervasive in organizations and it frequently occurs quickly and continuously. Moran and Avergun (1997) describe change as the process of continually renewing the organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever changing needs of the market place, the organization and employees. Employee resistance to change can seriously impair an organization, as it has become an inevitable aspect of organizational dynamics.

Any change initiative will inevitably encounter resistance. When someone feels threatened in their status or security, they will naturally want to protect the status quo. According to Folger and Sharlicki (1999), employees' resistance and cynicism about organizational change might make it difficult or impossible to execute organizational reforms. Even the most well-meaning and well-thought-out change initiatives may be undermined if management does not recognize, embrace, and attempt to deal with resistance. According to Coetsee (1999), a management's capacity to reap the greatest rewards from change rests in part, on how well they establish and preserve an environment that minimizes resistance and promotes acceptance and support.

Considering the importance of resistance to change (RTC) in the overall organizational change initiative, this paper aims to review the present nature of organizational change with particular reference to causes of employee RTC and to identify some positive benefits of such resistance as identified in the literature. Finally, the paper suggest future research agenda.

Nature of Organizational Change

Organizational life is characterized by ongoing change, and effective organizations are thought to possess a core competency in managing change (Burnes, 2004). There exist notable variations in the perceptions of it. Some individuals perceive it as continuous, punctuated, or gradual. Lewin (1947) is credited with developing the incremental approach to changing an organization (Burnes, 2004). He created a three-step model for organizational change. According to this researcher, a successful change effort consists of three steps: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. The process of unfreezing involves upsetting the quasi-stationary equilibrium of human behavior before successfully adopting new behaviors and discarding old ones. In the second stage, individuals and groups may move from a less acceptable to a more acceptable set of behaviors through an iterative process of research, action, and more research. Finally, in order to guarantee that the new behaviors are comparatively safe against regression, refreezing aims to stabilize the group at a new quasi-stationary equilibrium.

The planned or incremental approach to organizational change has been challenged by the emergence of two new viewpoints on change. These are the models of continuous transformation and punctuated equilibrium. Romanelli and Tushman (1994) claim that the earlier theory of change portrays organizations as developing through comparatively long stretches of stability (equilibrium periods) in their fundamental activity patterns, interspersed with comparatively brief bursts of fundamental change (revolutionary periods). New equilibrium periods are developed and established activity patterns are significantly disrupted during revolutionary periods.

The incrementalist and punctuated equilibrium models are rejected by proponents of the continuous transformation paradigm. They contend that organizations need to learn how to fundamentally change themselves on a regular basis in order to survive (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997). Similar to natural systems, organizations must establish rules that allow them to function "on the edge of chaos" in order to survive (Stacey et al, 2002). Organizations that are too stable will die because nothing will change, and if they are too chaotic, too much change will be forced upon it. In both cases, a new set of order-generating norms that enable the organization to thrive and endure, must be created by dramatic change (Macintosh and MacLean, 2001). Ultimately, Matthews (2002) contends that organizational life incorporates all three perspectives on change—incrementalism, punctuated equilibrium, and continuous change—and that none of them seem to be dominant.

Resistance to Change Defined

RTC can be described as any employee action attempting to stop, delay or alter change (Bemmels & Reshef, 1991) or any perceived behavior of organization members who seem unwilling to accept or help implement an organizational change initiative (Coghlan, 1993). In the view of Rumelt (1995), RTC is any conduct that tries to keep the status quo. This implies that resistance is equivalent to inertia, which is the persistence to avoid change. Finally, according to Ansoff (1990), RTC is a phenomenon that has an impact on the change process, slowing down or postponing its start, making it more difficult to implement, and raising its costs.

It is possible to conceive employee RTC as a cognitive state, an emotional state, or a behavior, according to Piderit's (2000) evaluation of previous empirical research. By combining these disparate emphases, we should be able to better understand how workers react to organizational change. All three of these conceptualizations of resistance are valid and contribute significantly to our understanding of how we respond to change. A definition that prioritizes one viewpoint above the others appears to be lacking as a result.

Sources of Resistance to Change

Oreg (2003) created individual differences assessment of RTC. It was discovered that there are six psychologically based factors of RTC. These include the following: (1) reluctance to losing control; (2) cognitive rigidity; (3) lack of psychological resilience; (4) intolerance for the duration of time needed for adjustment during change; (5) preference for low levels of novelty and stimulation; and (6) resistance to breaking old habits.

Unwillingness to give up control is among the reason why employees resist organizational change initiative. Some researchers have emphasized loss of control as the primary cause of resistance (Conner, 1998). Individuals may oppose changes if they believe that changes that are forced upon them rather than ones they self-initiate take away their control over their circumstances. Organizational studies have advocated employee involvement and participation in organizational decision-making (Coch & French, 1948) as a means of overcoming RTC. According to Fox (1999), a person's dogmatic tendencies may indicate how they will handle change. People that are dogmatic tend to be inflexible and narrow-minded, which makes them less adaptable to changing circumstances.

Inadequate psychological resilience is also a reason for employee RTC initiative. Since change is a stressor, resilience can be used to predict a person's capacity to adjust to change (Judge et al., 1999). In fact, resilient individuals were more open to taking part in an organizational change initiative (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Another reason for employees' RTC is intolerance for the time needed for adjustment during a change: According to Kanter (1985), people oppose change since it frequently requires more work up front. Some people are more willing and able to stick with this adjustment period than others. New tasks demand learning and adjustment. Furthermore, inclination toward less novelty and stimulation can also be a reason for employee RTC. According to Kirton (1989), there is a difference between innovators—who are more adept at coming up with creative ideas outside of preexisting frameworks—and adaptable people, who perform best inside clear, recognizable frameworks. Therefore, it makes sense to assume that those who are resistant to change would have a reduced need for novelty. Furthermore, people who prefer lower levels of stimulation may oppose change because it frequently entails an increase in stimulus. Finally, unwillingness to break old behaviors makes employees to also resist change. According to Harrison and Zajonc (1970), "familiarity breeds comfort." Individuals may experience stress when they are exposed to novel stimuli since their accustomed reactions may not be appropriate in the given circumstance. This stress is then linked to the novel stimulus. RTC results from this.

Cheng (2005) has proposed a theoretical model to explain how employees' RTC can be transformed into positive pursuit of organizational success. This model focus on the internal dynamics of the workplace, particularly on the conflict of interests and expectations between the employers and the employees, the gap between promises of effort and promises of reward, and the barriers resistance to change would pose to any transformational change. These individual responses to organizational change, are largely "unorganized" in the sense that rationally organized strategic planning and instrumental calculation (Collinson, 1994) is not involved. Diagrammatically, the model of shown in figure 1.0:

Figure 1.0: Transforming resistance to change to organizational success.
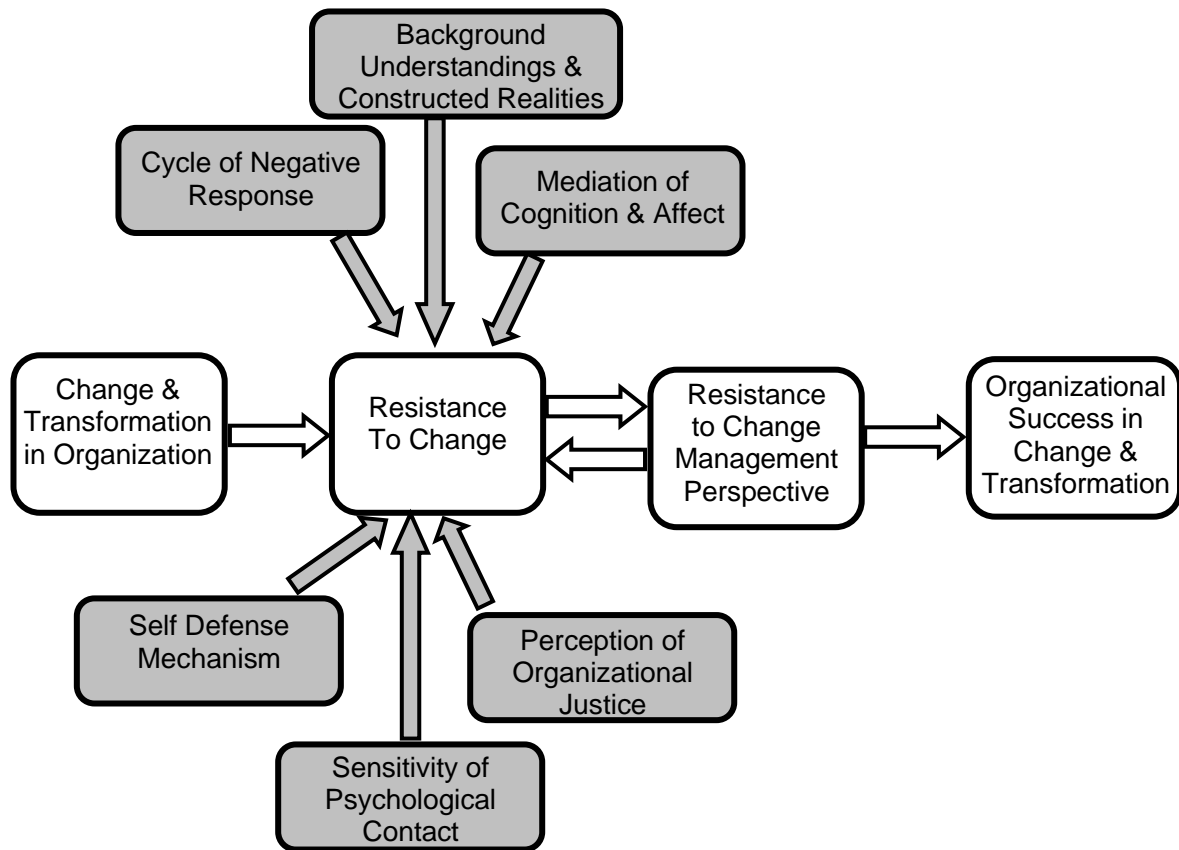
Source: Cheng (2005), p. 20

Cycle of Negative Response

Conner (1998) based and adapted Kubler-Ross (1969) "cycle of grief" to the corporate world in describing people's negative response to change. The emotional issues in questions are less intense when compared with the ones involved in grief, but the sequence of the stages is just as relevant in understanding any negative change that we face but cannot control. There are eight distinctive stages through which people pass whenever they feel trapped in a change that they do not want but cannot control (Conner, 1998). These stages are:

- ❖ Stability: This refers to the state prior to any announcement of change, i.e the present state, the status quo.
- ❖ Immobilization: Shock is considered the initial reaction which varies from the temporary confusion to complete disorientation. The perceived change is so alien to the person's frame of reference that the person is often unable to relate to what is happening.
- ❖ Denial: People at this stage are characterized by the inability to assimilate new information into the current frame of reference, and the reaction is one of rejection or ignorance.
- ❖ Anger: Frustration and feelings as being hurt come in at this phase, and these are often manifested through irrational, indiscriminate lashing out.
- ❖ Bargaining: People begin to try bargaining to avoid the negative impact of change. This indicates that people can no longer avoid confronting with the reality. All earlier phases involve different forms of denial; this signals the beginning of acceptance.
- ❖ Depression: People go through another phase of emotion, usually expressed in the

form of resignation to failure, feeling victimized, a lack of emotional and physical energy, and disengagement from one's work. Although depression is not a pleasant experience, it represents a positive step in the acceptance process – the full weight of the negative change is finally acknowledge.

❖ Testing: This refers to the finding of new ways to adapt to the new situation and to get on with the new framework. This signals the acknowledging of one's limitation, the attempt to regain control, and the freeing of oneself from the feelings of victimization and depression.

❖ Acceptance: At least people respond realistically, being more grounded and productive relative to the previous phases within the new context.

However, the acceptance of the change is not synonymous with liking it, and management would often find it time and energy consuming to provide support to troubled employees at each of the transitional phase. In addition, if the situation is left unattended or only haphazardly attended, the price of a valued employee not being able to complete the sequence can be even more costly, and there is no guarantee that people will move successfully through each of the phase on their own (Conner, 1998).

Role of Defense Mechanism

Bovey and Hede (2001) investigated the relationship between a person's internal defense mechanisms and their association with resistance to change. A person's internal defense mechanisms are developed from a psychological construct called unconscious processes to protect oneself from the unpleasant feelings of anxiety (de Broad, 1978). Unconscious processes are simply thoughts and desires that are below the level of conscious awareness (Matlin, 1995).

In Bovey and Hede's (2001) study, resistance is operationalized as behavioral intention to resist, and behaviour has been defined as physical actions that can be seen or heard and also includes mental processes which cannot be seen or heard (Matlin, 1995). Two "adaptive" defenses, i.e humor and anticipation, and five "maladaptive" defense, i.e denial, dissociation, isolation of affect, projection and acting out, are being investigated.

According to research by Bovey and Hede (2001), people who unintentionally employ maladaptive defenses are more likely to oppose organizational change than people who unintentionally employ adaptive ones. Bond (1995), referenced by Bovey and Hede, states that "humor" is significantly linked to effective coping and represents a person's ability to accept a difficult circumstance while lessening the intensity of its unpleasant features. As opposed to other maladaptive defenses under investigation, "projection" is found to have the strongest correlation with RTC. Instead of accepting their own impulses, a projecting person prefer to place blame and responsibility on others (Stuewig, Tangney, Heigel, Harty & McCloskey, 2010). Projecting also tends to make it more difficult for a person to discern between what is and is not inside of them, which distorts reality. The source of anxiety then becomes externalized and something objective to be resisted (de Board, 1978). This is considered an important source of RTC.

According to Bovey and Hede (2001), "people were more prone to use projection as a form of defense. These people tended to externalize their inner thoughts and emotions, viewing the change as the source of their anxiety and reacting with resistance.

Until the person comprehends the anxiety's fundamental cause, bringing the unconscious to the conscious and accept it, RTC will continue to manifest in a "projected" fashion. Therefore, RTC is not exactly, resistance to change per se at its start, it is more an inter-play of natural human response to negative change, one is being trapped in and cannot control.

Backgrounding Understanding and Constructed Realities

The post-modernist constructivist view of RTC is that realities are socially constructed and there is practically no exact, objective and homogenous reality as to what the same change means to different members of an organization (Cheng, 2005). Berger & Luckmann (1966) clearly states that the reality we know is interpreted, constructed, or enacted through social interactions.

Ford et al., (2002) seeks to locate RTC as a process and product of the background conversations that constitute the constructed reality in which members of an organization live. And via the talks and discourses that make up those realities, the realities we recognize as "organizations," "change," and "resistance" come into being (Ford et al., 2002). RTC therefore could be seen as a function of different background understandings which socially construct different realities. Three generic resistance – giving backgrounds are posited by Ford, et al., (2002): Complacent Background, Resigned Background, and Cynical Background.

The Complacent Background is constructed on the basis of historical success. People refer to past successes to justify that the current success will continue or that they can be easily repeated if we "just leave things as they are". Here, historical success becomes the "evidence" for people to avoid making "disruptive" changes. Any substantive change proposed and introduced in a complacent background engenders conversations that reinforce complacent resistance, i.e change is socially constructed as unnecessary. The Resigned Background is constructed from historical failure. The conversations that make up a resigned background at an organization where things have gone wrong have built up to create a theme of "this probably won't work either." This reflects that people have no hope of being able to change the situation. Understandings are dominated by self-blame, both on themselves and on the organization for the inability to succeed. Emotions like despair, apathy, hopelessness, depression, sadness abound. And introduction to change would engender resistance to change characterized by half-hearted actions, lack of motivation, and an apparent unwillingness to participation. Moreover, the Cynical Background like resigned background, this is constructed from historical failure. The difference lies in the assignment of failure. Here, the cause of failure is assigned to a "real" or fixed external reality or to other people and groups. In addition, when a change initiative does fail, it handily serve as a validation, further expanding the construction of this background. Under such background, references are likely to include that of being let down, deceived, betrayed, or misled by powerful others. Any introduction of change here would be greeted by overtly hostile and aggressive attacks on the inability or unwillingness to recognize that "nothing can right the wrongs".

It is quickly noted by Ford et al. (2002) that managers and staff members who have these kinds of interactions are reinforcing these realities and re-infecting others as well as themselves. Everyone participating in these conversation is responsible for the resistance to change created. The substance of RTC therefore, fails more on employee's background understanding and their socially constructed realities than on individual employees.

Mediation of Cognitive and Affect

The role of a person's cognition and affect has long been linked by researchers in organizational behaviour studies to a person's response to organizational change. People's affective dispositions could be categorized under negative affectivity or positive affectivity, "with individuals high in the former prone to experience a diverse array of negative mood states (e.g. anxiety, depression, hostility, and guilt) and individuals high in the latter prone to

describe themselves as cheerful, enthusiastic, confident, active, and energetic" (Brief and Weiss, 2002). Brief, Butcher and Roberson (1995) posited that people with high negative affectivity have the tendency to dwell on failures and shortcomings of both themselves and others and are also more sensitive to negative stimuli. Therefore, the threshold for their propensity to accept, adapt, and work with any negative change is understood to be lower than those high in positive affectivity. In the appraisal of Brief and Weiss (2002) on affect in the workplace, organizational research shows that affective states can influence a variety of performance – relevant outcomes including judgments, attitudinal responses, creativity, helping behavior, and risk taking. Affect therefore mediates cognition and the decision to resist change. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) supports this notion in their Affective Effects Theory which emphasizes "the role of events as proximal causes of affective reactions and then as more distal causes of behaviors and attitudes through affective mediation".

Piderit (2000) has synthesize past conceptualizations to a three dimensional view of resistance to change: cognitive, emotional, and intentional. The cognitive dimension refers to an individual's evaluations and consequent beliefs about the change and the effects of change. These evaluations and beliefs could be positive or negative, mild or extreme, or indeed neutral. The emotional or affective dimension refers to an individual's feelings in response to the change. These could be neutral or otherwise as mentioned above. The intentional dimension refers to the plan or resolution to take some action, i.e. to support or oppose. Piderit (2000) argued that ambivalent attitudes as whether to support (positive response) or to resist (negative response) could occur positively one dimension and negatively on another; or indeed negative and positive responses could even co-occur within one dimension simultaneously. Russell (1980) research report suggest that positive and negative affect can co-occur.

Paterson & Hartel, (2002) has developed a cognitive- affective model that integrates anxiety emotions and justice cognitions to explain the effects of change programme characteristics on employees' responses to downsizing. In their study, the cognitive appraisal theory is used to explain the anxiety created by change. An employee faced by a major organizational change would give the situation a "primary cognitive appraisal" to assess the impact the change will bring on their well being. If the outcome is negative, this gives rise to emotions such as anxiety. Then a "secondary cognitive appraisal" would follow which is a more specific assessment to comprehend and grasp hold of the attributions about the cause, the consequences that follow, and the options for dealing with it. According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), secondary appraisals have the greatest impact on emotions, and also influence the strategies individuals use to cope with the situation. Hence, employees' cognition and affect in regard to the impact of change mediates resistance to change.

Perception of Organizational Injustice

The organizational justice theory of Greenberg (1990) postulates that, employees' cognitive responses to explain and understand the effect of change on themselves, affect their acceptance of change, and thus exercising a mediating effect on resistance to change. Justice research has focused on four forms of justice, namely distributive, procedural, interactional and retributive justice.

Distributive and retributive justice are concerned with the fairness of allocation and outcomes. According to Hogan and Emler (1980), distributive justice focuses more on the positive side of allocation or what one has been given i.e. "did I receive my fair share?". Whilst retributive justice focuses more on the negative side of allocation or what one has taken away, i.e. "what can I take to even the score"? The power inequalities between the employer and employee affect the relative important of this respective form of justice in the

employment relationship. Distributive injustice through pay cuts has consistently been found to predict reductions in effort and employee theft (Greenberg, 1990), in attempts to restore fairness. McLean Parks and Kidder (1994) are of the view that when distributive justice is found to be lacking, employees would go and assess for retributive justice to even the score. This is where the mediating role comes on stage in change management and in RTC.

The other two forms of justice, i.e. procedural and interactional focus on the process of change rather than the outcome of it. According to Lind & Tyler (1988), procedural justice focuses on the procedure used to reach decisions about outcomes which is seen as fair. Therefore, the perceived fairness in the decision making process is what counts, and it could even override fairness of the outcomes. On the other hand, Interactional justice concerns more with the manner that the actual procedures are being implemented, i.e. whether the manner exhibited has shown due respect and protect the due dignity of the parties involved (Lind & Tyler, 1988). The administration of organizational justice in steering change would alleviate change survivors' RTC and even spur them to contribute their best.

Sensitivity of Psychological Contract

Levinson et al., (1962) posited that the psychological contract is an unwritten contract which is the sum of mutual expectations between the organization and the employee. Schein (1988) underpinned this early thinking in psychological contract by stating that the notion of a psychological contract implies that the individual has a variety of expectations of the organization and that the organization has a variety of expectations of him. These expectations include the entire range of rights, privileges, and responsibilities that exist between an organization and its employees in addition to the amount of labor that must be done for how much money. These kinds of expectations are not included in any official agreements between the business and its employees, yet they have a significant influence on behavior.

According to Rousseau and McLean Parks (1993), psychological contract violations occur when an employee perceived that the organization has failed to fulfill one or more of its obligation comprising the psychological contract. Reneging and incongruence are the two main sources of these violations (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). When a corporation intentionally or unintentionally breaches a promise made to an employee, this is known as reneging. Conversely, incongruence happens when there is a discrepancy between the employee's and the organization's perceptions of who has fulfilled their commitments. Consequently, when there is incongruence, the organization thinks it has fulfilled its obligations, but the individual thinks the organization has fallen short on one or more of its pledges.

Schein (1988) warned that violation of a psychological contract is likely to have profound repercussions. Employees would withdraw their work commitment and redefine the terms of the broken psychological contract. The early casualty would be organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1988). These are role expanding and enhancing behaviors which go beyond role requirements, expected only implicitly if at all, and sourced from a good employment relationship or the goodwill of the employees. These are discretionary behaviors and could be easily reduced or limited by the employees. Cheng (2005) concludes that RTC would become entrenched when violation of psychological contract is observed by employee.

Pardo Del Val and Martinez (2003) are of the view that sources of RTC can be organized in two stages within a change effort: the stage at which the change initiative is formulated and the stage at which the change initiative is implemented. During the strategy formulation stage, Pardo Del Val and Martinez (2003) recognized the following as sources of RTC (Table 1.0).

Table 1.0: Sources of RTC in the strategy formulation stage.

Source of RTC	Definition	References
Myopia	Participants inability to have a clear vision of the future	LaMarsh, (1997); Narine and Persaud, (2003); Pardo Del Val and Martinez; (2003); Kruger, (1996); Rumelt (1995).
Denial	Refusal to accept any information that is not expected or desired	Barr et al., (1992); Pardo Del Van and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995)
Perpetuation of ideas	Tendency to continue with present thought although situation has changed	Barr et al., (1992); Kruger, (1996); Pardo Del Van and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995); Zeffane, (1996).
Implicit assumptions	Conjectures that are not discussed due to their implicit character that can affect the way participants perceive reality	Pardo Del Van and Martinez (2003); Startbuck et al., (1978).
Communication barriers	Barriers that lead to information distortion or misinterpretation	Appelbaum and Wohl, (2000); Hutt et al., (1995); LaMarsh, (1997), Le Tourneau, (2004); Narine and Persand, (2003)
Organizational silence	Limitation on the information flow with individuals who do not express their thoughts, resulting in decisions that are made without all the necessary information	Morrison and Miliken, (2000); Nemeth, (1997); Pardo Del Van and Martinez, (2003).
Direct costs of change	Price to be paid for what needs to be given up or invested in a change that is perceived as too high	Carroll and Edmonson, (2002); Moran and Brightman, (1998); Le Tourneau, (2004); Pardon Del Van and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt, (1995).
Cannibalization cost	Costs resulting from a change that brings success to a product but at that same time brings losses to other products	Pardo Del Van and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt, (1995)
Cross subsidy comforts	Comforts that results from the need for a change that is compensated through the high costs obtained without changes in another unit, so that there is no real motivation for change	Pardo Del Van and Martinez (2003), Rumelt, (1995)

Past failures	Failures from previous experiences that provide guidance and/or impediments to a change effort	LaMarsh, (1997); Pardo Del Van and Martinez (2003).
Different interests among employees and management	Lack of motivation exhibited by employees who value change results less than managers value them	Pardo Del Van and Martinez, (2003); Waddel and Sohal, (1998)
Fast and complex environmental changes	Changes that result from lack of time, stress and several change initiatives being formulated at the same time that could overwhelm personnel and consequently do not allow a proper situation analysis	Ansoff, (1990); Appelbaum and Wohl, (2000); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt, (1995)
Reactive mind-set	Resignation or tendency to believe that obstacles are inevitable	Moran and Brigthman, (1998); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995)
Inadequate strategic vision	Lack of clear commitment of senior management to changes	Freer and Jackson (1998); Moran and Brightman (1998); Narine and Persaud, (2005); Pardo Del Val and Martinez (2003); Rumelt, (1995); Waddell and Sohal, (1998)

Source: Pardo Del Val, M. & Martinez, C. (2003), p.134

Between the choice to change and its regular application inside the company, implementation is a crucial stage (Klein & Sorra, 1996). The following are listed by Pardo Del Val and Martinez (2003) as sources of RTC at the strategy implementation stage (Table 2.0):

Table 2.0: Sources of RTC at the implementation stage.

Source of resistance to change	Definition	References
Relation between change values and organizational values	Gap between what is important for the individual and what is perceived important for the organization	Klein and Sorra, (1996); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Shalk et al., (1998)
Departmental politics	Change that can make entities loose power and some others gain power	Beer and Eisenstat, (1996); Beer et al; (1990); Le Tourneau, (2004); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995)
Incommensurable beliefs	Strong and definitive disagreement among groups about the nature of the problem and its consequent alternative solutions	Klein and Sorra, (1996); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995); Zeffane, (1996)

Deep rooted values	Importance of ethics and emotional loyalty	Appelbaum and Wohl, (2000); Broadbeut et al; (2001); Kruger (1996); LaMarsh, (1997); Naine and Persaud (2003); Nemeth (1997); Pardo Del Van and Martinez, (2003); Strebel, (1994).
Forgetfulness of the social dimension of changes	Changes in the psychological contract	Broadbeut et al; (2001); Lawrence (1989); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Shalk et al; (1998)
Leadership inaction	Lack of leadership or leaders apprehension to change due to uncertainty, sometimes for fear of changing the status quo	Beer and Eisenstat, (1996); Burdett, (1999); Hutt et al; (1995); Kanter, (1989); Kruger, (1996); Maurer (1996); Narine and Persaud, (2003); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995)
Embedded routines	Practices that become well-established over a long period of time	Hanna and Freeman, (1984); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt, (1995); Starbuck et al; (1978)
Collective action problems	Problems that result from lack of coordination and teamwork	Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995
Lack of necessary capabilities	Gap in capabilities resulting from lack of knowledge, skills, abilities, resources, norms, tools, processes, among others, which are necessary to implement the change	Appelbaum and Wohl, (2000); Carroll and Edmonson, (2002); Freer and Jackson, (1998); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Rumelt (1995)
Cynicism	Pessimism that the change effort will not succeed	Maurer, (1996); Pardo Del Val and Martinez, (2003); Reichers et al; (1997)

Source: Pardo Del Val, M. & Martinez, C. (2003), p. 155.

Constructive Benefits of Resistance to Change

Waddell and Sohal (1998) assert that there is utility to be gained from employees' RTC and that it should therefore not be avoided or quashed as suggested by classical management theory. RTC is an inevitable and natural aspect of human behavior, according to current research (Bovey & Hede, 2001), and it may even help with organizational change as a whole (Coetsee, 1999). Four primary kinds of RTC benefits are demonstrated in the literature:
   a.   Assessing the intrinsic merits of a suggested change. (Piderit, 2000),
   b.   Organizational stability (Coetsee, 1999),
   c.   Energy and commitment (Coetsee, 1999), and
   d.   Superior alternative (Piderit, 2000).

As stated by Waddell & Sohal (1998), it is erroneous to believe that all organizational changes are beneficial. The only way to assess change is to look at its long-term effects. RTC has the authority to point out flaws in a change proposal and then either modify it or support rejecting it. According to Pederit (2000), resistance indicates legitimate employee worries about suggested changes and could indicate that the change has not been well investigated.

Stability inside the company could also be aided by RTC. According to Coetsee (1999), well-managed RTC can really foster an atmosphere of candor, openness, and trust. As a result, Waddel & Sohal (1998) stated that resistance is essential to an organization's ability to survive, saying that "resistance is a factor that can balance these demands, against the need for constancy and stability, while pressure from external and internal environments continues to encourage change."

RTC also results in increased dedication and vigor. According to Coetsee (1999), passivity results in less commitment while RTC actually increases commitment. The individual needs to be somewhat dissatisfied with their present or future circumstances in order to become sufficiently motivated, according to Waddell & Sohal (1998). Resistance and conflict provide the energy or drive to take the issue at hand seriously. RTC has the potential to spur a stronger, final commitment to the same changes.

Lastly, RTC might result in a better option. Moving too quickly toward a congruent positive attitude toward a proposed change may cut off the discussion and creativity that may be necessary for revising the initial change proposal in an adoptive manner, according to Piderit (2000), who also notes that "divergent opinions about direction are necessary in order for groups to make wise decisions and for organizations to change effectively." RTC also "encourages the search for alternative methods and outcomes," according to Waddell & Sohal (1998). In this situation, RTC can offer substitutes that could be superior to the modification that was first suggested.

Future Research Agenda

Although research on employee's RTC could be dated as far back as 1940s (Coch & French, 1948), empirical evidence still have to be further documented to establish:

- ❖ The effect of various personality types on employee's RTC,
- ❖ The extent to which causes of RTC differ by level of management, education and years of experience,
- ❖ Whether RTC is higher in strategic than in evolutionary changes,
- ❖ The relationship between psychological contract violation and employee's RTC,
- ❖ The relationship between organizational justice and employee's RTC,
- ❖ Whether affective dispositions of employees is related to RTC.

Conclusion

Any change process must take RTC into account since how well opposition is managed will determine whether the change is successful or not. Any action that impedes the process from the start or during its progression with the intention of maintaining the status quo is considered RTC. The natural tendency of people to protect the status quo poses a number of obstacles that management needs to go beyond in order to implement the intended changes. The concerns that could arise from management's failure to respond to workplace resistance issues must also be carefully considered.

Effective change management skills are essential for organizations to enable a seamless shift from the old to the new. Getting people involved and affected to accept the changes that have been brought and handling any opposition to them are the two main tasks of the change management process.

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