



Qualitative Study on ... Saidu, B. & Ekpa, F. (2025)

Qualitative Study on Changes, Development and Behavior of Organization in Nigeria: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Change is an inevitable fact of life from birth to death, affecting cultures, countries, and societies. Especially today, change is happening faster than in the past, and this causes societies and organizations to face much more change than they need to keep up with. Organizations can only survive if they change themselves by adapting to these rapid changes. In this study, definitions of organizational change were given, and the factors that cause organizational change were described. Then, the theories of change were mentioned depending on the reason for the change and the changes it brings about in the organization. Then, resistance to change, management of organizational change, organizational development and organizational behavior were examined.

Keywords: Change, Development, Behavior, Organisation

Introduction

In today's dynamic and competitive business landscape, organisations constantly face pressures to adapt, evolve, and improve. The ability to navigate change effectively, foster growth, and understand human behaviour within the organisational context has become paramount for sustained success. An organization can be defined as a social unit of people, within a structure, with varied and various roles, personalities, needs, wants, anticipations but with a common goal (manifest or latent) which cannot be achieved by one single individual among the people. No adult has attained the current status without having to have undergone change. Otherwise, the adults remain babies in all ramifications. This is the metamorphosis principle applicable to humans. As it is with humans, so it is with organisations. For organisations to be productive, they must undertake and undergo some fundamental changes. This undertaking is a process with thorns of roses.

It is true that what is constant is change. Further, what is constant about change is lack of change- change will not change; and that change will continue to be the desired effort of successful managers of organizations. Indeed, organisations cannot sustain the achievement of their goals without changes in both human and nonhuman resources. Administrators and or managers cannot continue to do the same thing and expect to change the status of their organisations. The process of introducing the new way of doing things is what is referred to as change process. Ironically, man is always aspiring for different better situation which can only result from change, but the same man is often scared stiff to face, effect and or embrace change. We should also note that attempts to introduce a new way of doing things will receive some resistance especially by those benefitting from the current status quo. It is the resolve of the change agent that makes the differences in the level of success. Indeed, the process of introducing change can find the resolute change agent in a lonely path. Organizations can only survive if they change themselves by adapting to these rapid changes (Erdoğan, 2012). Change involves recognizing the current situation, determining the desired results, initiating an action plan and implementing the plan in line with a purpose (Calabrese & Shoho, 2000). According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, change is simply described as alteration from one working system to another. This is the view on organisational change; change is any alteration from one form or system to another.

Change is hereby conceptualised as a coping process of moving from the present state to another state that individuals, groups and organisations undertake in response to dynamic internal and external factors that alter current realities. This definition is very apt because change is one reality with which individuals, groups and organisations must learn to cope



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with in order to survive. There's no fallacy to remind us that people, including employees, struggle to change situations they do not accept, and struggle to accept situations they cannot change. Consequently, change is a recurrent decimal in the lives of humans (Maicibi, 2016). In a related view, Greenberg (1997) defines organizational change as planned or unplanned transformations in an organization structure, technology and / or people. The nature of business in today's environment is complex and increasingly difficult to navigate, thus all organisations must respond to a varying level of strategic and operational pressures which may be from within the organization such as aspirations to improve efficiency, increase effectiveness and strengthen competitiveness; but many are externally generated in the form of increased competition, speed of change, technology, customer expectations and others. The simplest definition of organizational development is to change the organization in order to achieve its objectives because competitive conditions require organizations to protect themselves and survive under these conditions. Organizational development affects change through learning processes. In the learning process, new ideas and attitudes emerge that change the behavior and culture of the organization (Ellis & Dick, 2003). In essence, organizational change brings about organizational development which in turn affects organizational behavior.

Organisational Change (OC) In Nigeria

Organizational change can be defined as changes caused by an “environmental shift that, once sensed by the organization, leads to an intentionally generated response” (Porrás, Silver 1999). In the Nigerian context, organisational change has become increasingly necessary due to economic fluctuations, technological advancements, policy reforms, and globalization pressures. What Porrás and Silver are explaining to the reader is that for an organization to experience change, it first needs a reason to change due to outside factors. Organizational change is a simple cause and effect scenario, where a cause of some sort, either internal or external, ultimately creates an effect of the organization needing to change. According to some researchers, organizational change is an extremely complex dynamic of time, processes, and contexts that are incorporated into an organization (Cameron, Pettigrew, Woodman 2001). Organizational change OC is the process by which organizations move from their present state to the desired state to increase their effectiveness.

Types of Organisational Change in Nigeria

Organizational change can be categorized into several types, including strategic, structural, technological, people-centric, and transformational changes. These changes can be planned or unplanned, and they can be incremental or radical in nature. Understanding these different types is crucial for effective change management.

1. **Strategic Change:** This involves shifts in the organization's overall direction, market positioning, or business objectives. It often stems from a need to improve competitive advantage or respond to market opportunities and threats.
2. **Structural Change:** This type of change focuses on modifying the organization's internal structure, such as team configurations, reporting lines, or departmental setups. It can involve creating new departments, merging existing ones, or altering leadership roles. (E.g. the consolidation of Nigerian banks)
3. **Technological or Process-Oriented Change:** This refers to the adoption of new technologies or the redesign of processes to improve efficiency, productivity, or quality. Examples include implementing new software, automating tasks, or streamlining workflows.
4. **People-Centric Change:** This type of change addresses the impact of change on employees, including their attitudes, behaviors, and skills. It may involve training programs, communication strategies, or initiatives to manage resistance to change.
5. **Transformational Change:** This is a large-scale, fundamental shift that redefines the organization's core identity, mission, or business model. It often involves significant disruption and requires strong leadership and vision.
6. **Incremental Change:** These are small, gradual improvements made over time to existing processes, systems, or practices.



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7. **Adaptive Change:** This involves making adjustments to existing structures or processes in response to changing circumstances or external pressures.
8. **Remedial Change:** This type of change focuses on rectifying past errors or inefficiencies, such as addressing post-merger integration problems or sales declines.
9. **Planned Change:** This refers to changes that are deliberately initiated and systematically implemented through a structured process with defined goals and timelines.
10. **Unplanned Change:** These are changes that are forced by unexpected events or circumstances, requiring rapid adaptation without extensive preparation.

By understanding these different types of organizational change, leaders can better anticipate the challenges and opportunities associated with each, develop appropriate change management strategies, and improve the likelihood of successful implementation.

Challenges of Organisational Change in Nigeria

1. **Resistance to Change:** Employees often fear job loss or uncertainty, leading to low morale or sabotage.
2. **Poor Leadership and Communication:** Ineffective management of the change process causes confusion and mistrust.
3. **Inadequate Resources:** Many organisations lack the funds and expertise needed to implement large-scale transformation.
4. **Political and Bureaucratic Constraints:** In public institutions, rigid structures and political interference hinder change initiatives.
5. **Cultural Rigidity:** Traditional beliefs and hierarchical relationships can slow acceptance of modern management practices.

Resistance to Change

The main strategy of change is to overcome the resistance to change. It is very difficult to anticipate all problems in the process of organizational change. Using both reward and punishment methods together in the change process will be very effective (Johns, 1973). There is always an obstacle to change and these obstacles consist of various elements. For example, the tension between “doing business as usual” and “creating the future and change” is one of the first tensions (Floyd, 2002). Reactions to change in organizations can occur at any stage of the change process, including planning, initiation and implementation. The sources of reactions to change in organizations can be very different. If the change affects the status of individuals and is imposed from the top management, and if there is a lack of information and skills, more resistance is encountered (Willower, 1963). Since change involves many unknowns about the future, individuals may resist change because they are afraid of losing things such as their position and salary at the end of the change. Individual resistance to change can be caused by differences in personal perceptions, personality traits, habits, threats to power and influence, and fear of the unknown (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2011). Individuals are generally against change for fear of losing their current status and power. If the organizational management has a hierarchical structure, change will be more difficult in this organization than in a horizontally structured organization. In addition, if the existing rules and values in the organization will be affected by change, this situation also makes change difficult (George & Gareth, 2002).

It has been stated by many researchers that there is a connection between the organization and its environment. Organizations resist change because they have technical and institutional connections with their environment. The internal and external environment of the organization expects the organization to work efficiently at a certain standard. If an organization fulfills what is expected of it and achieves certain standards in its activities, the need for change may not be felt because it is thought that internal routines and external connections may be damaged by change (Amburgey et al., 1993). When the reasons why individuals resist change are understood, it becomes easier for change to occur. The reasons why individuals resist change are as follows (Ellis & Dick, 2003):



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1. Loss of control: Change is acceptable for the individual bringing about the change, but not for others.
2. Uncertainty: Any change involves uncertainty and this causes individuals to be hesitant.
3. Surprise: It is normal for individuals to resist a new situation.
4. Future anxiety: Individuals have many concerns about the new situations that will arise with changes.
5. Chain effect: The change may cause a chain reaction by affecting other areas.
6. More workload: Change involves more time, effort and energy.
7. The threat is real: The threat perceived by individuals is real because change often creates two groups, winners and losers.
8. Job Security: people fear losing their jobs due to change. This is especially true in the recent times when downsizing the organization as a measure of cost cutting is the trend.
9. Lack of Communication: Different people will see perceive proposed change in different ways and resist it. Therefore, management must communicate in advance the need for change, process to adopt for implementation of change. Employees should be the participants right from the beginning of change process.
10. Rapidity and Extent of Change: If the change is of a minor nature and involves routine operations, the resistance would be minimal. If on the contrary the change is major and involves large number of employees there could be tremendous resistance to it.
11. Group Phenomenon: Individual resist change because group wants it that way. Importance of group cohesion, group norms, code of conduct and the group security play a dominant role in individual behavior that makes them to resist change.
12. Emotions: If the experience of a past change has been pleasant, the resistance would be negligible. Technical change is accepted willingly if it does not have adverse effect on social fiber of the group. Resistance may be faced if the change ignores already established institutions in the group with particular reference to customs and group norms.
13. Loss of Power: Downsizing of department or posting of an executive to different department, where there is a reduction of power base will be resisted by the affected individuals.
14. Technology: Introduction of technology that causes economic loss and disturbs social relationship is generally resisted.
15. New Practices: Certain practices like women domination at the top and strategy of acquisitions and mergers is also resisted by the employees.

Managing Organizational Change in Nigeria

Managing organizational change in Nigeria involves a multi-faceted approach that prioritizes open communication, stakeholder engagement, and addressing cultural nuances to minimize resistance and maximize buy-in. Organizational change is a difficult process for managers to implement because there will be a lot of resistance to change from inside and outside the organization. Managers who want to manage change effectively and create a culture of change within the organization should ensure change by creating a collaborative culture and mutual understanding. The reason for this situation is that among the reasons for the resistance to change is the criticism that other individuals in the organization are not sufficiently involved in the process, are not represented or consulted (Floyd, 2002).

One of the most important skills of a leader is to make the organization accept change with the least resistance. Even if the organization is instinctively opposed to change, it must react to the actions of its social and economic environment in order



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to exist (Johns, 1973). For change to be successful, the management team and employees need to cooperate. Training, performance and organizational development are effective in the success of change. Change is both inevitable and permanent. Successful organizations not only respond to change, but also drive it (Lee & Kraye, 2004). Change practices take a long time and when the change process is completed, the factors that initiated this process may have changed. For this reason, it is necessary to initiate a change initiative again (Johns, 1973). In order to carry out an effective change program, it is important that all organizational members support and are willing to change. Some characteristics of successful change processes are as follows (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2011):

1. Overcome resistance to change and motivate leaders and employees to be ready for change.
2. Create a shared vision for the desired future state of the organization.
3. Develop political support for needed changes.
4. Manage the transition from the current state to the expected state.
5. Change should be at a certain pace.
6. Organizational employees need to feel threat-free in order to sustain change because individuals who feel threatened immediately become defensive.
7. The organizational structure must support change.
8. Members must work together to perceive reality.
9. Real change occurs and develops simultaneously at different levels. Organizational change occurs at the conscious, subconscious and behavioural levels of members.
10. Awareness of the current situation is key feature of change. Effective change occurs when individuals are aware of the current situation and the consequences.
11. Dialogue is necessary to develop a sense of responsibility. Dialogue is fundamental in learning organizations as it fosters honesty, trust and perception.
12. Need or hunger is necessary for change. Individuals must be hungry for learning. Hunger occurs when there is a realization of the need for change.

Lewin's Model of Organizational Change

Kurt Lewin developed the Force Field Theory, which explains that when a decision to implement change is taken, it becomes important to identify as to what forces are likely to push the change and what forces are likely to restrain it. The process of identifying the number and strength of driving and restraining force is called the force field analysis. If the analysis indicates that the restraining force is strong, steps may be required to reduce their strength or increase the strength of the driving force. This may be carried out by briefing sessions, meetings and conveying a point informally. This is an important action to overcome resistance to change exhibited by people. Kurt Lewin proposed Three Stage Model of the change process for moving the organization from present position to the changed position. This is done by unfreezing the current situation, bringing the desired change and then refreezing the system so that it continues to stay in desired state.

Unfreezing: It involves encouraging employees to discard old behavior by shaking equilibrium state. A proactive problem is presented so that people recognize the need for change. Practice of elimination of rewards for current practices is followed. This encourages people to adopt new ways.

Moving: Alter the behavior of individuals of the department in which the changes are to occur. Moving employees developing new behaviors through structural changes or organizational development.

Refreezing:



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1. Change becomes permanent, new behaviors are established as new status quo.
2. The new ways of operating are cemented and reinforced.
3. Manager, at this stage ensure that organizational culture and reward system encourage new behavior and stabilize it rather than falling back on old practices.
4. Becoming aware of the pressure of the change
5. Recognizing the need for change
6. Diagnosing the problem
7. Planning the change
8. Implementing the change
9. Follow up on the change

The organizational change model created by Lewin (1958) includes the stages of “unfreezing”, “change” and “refreezing”. The unfreezing phase is the realization of the need for change in the organization, making the necessary preparations and the beginning phase. It is the end of the stagnation period in the organization and the completion of preparations for action. The stage of change is the stage of taking action and sustaining it. The important point at this stage is timing. Mistakes made by the manager in timing can lead to problems. When the intended change is achieved, the organization is refrozen. Leaders as change agents should make change a culture in the organization (Örücü, 2013).

Employees' Behavior (Reactions) to Organisational Change in Nigeria

Organizational change and development affect all aspects of a company and employees are a major aspect. They impact the company as much as the company impacts the employees. So, if the company must go through a change to improve, then the employees will experience a change as well. Whether this process of change is done correctly or not, the impact organizational change and development have on employees has a great significance. One of the most key things one must prepare for are the employees’ emotions, but first the leader or leaders must deal with the employees’ reactions.

Employees’ reactions to change are influenced by a number of factors. It is reasonable to expect employees to react since the process of change involves going from the known to the unknown, and when employees react, it is important to distinguish between the symptoms of their reactions and the causes behind them (Bovey & Hede, 2001b). Three factors that research strongly identifies as influencing employees’ reactions to change: employees’ emotions and cognitions, communication, and employees’ participation in decision making (Wittig, 2012).

Organisational Development (OD) In Nigeria

Organizational Development (OD) in Nigeria is a planned process to improve performance and effectiveness, focusing on adapting to a dynamic environment through strategic change, leadership, and human resource practices. Organizational development is different from organizational change. Change is related to the response of outside environments, while development pertains to the values, strategies, and techniques that organizations use to manage change. Development also promotes change that helps the organization fit the surrounding environment better (Porras, Silver 1999). The changes that an organization is faced with are what directly causes organizational development to occur.

Five Key Benefits of Organizational Development to Nigeria

Organizational Development is the practice of planned, systemic change in the beliefs, attitudes and values of employees for individual and company growth. The purpose of OD is to enable an organization to better respond and adapt to industry/market changes and technological advances (Hadi, 2014). So these five benefits list of a company experiencing organizational development is: (1) Continuous Improvement (2) Increased Communication (3) Employee Development (4) Product & Service Enhancement and (5) Increased Profit.

1. Continuous improvement; in this it creates a continuous cycle of improvement whereby strategies are planned, implemented, evaluated, improved and monitored. Organizational development is a proactive approach that embraces change (internal and external) and leverages it for renewal (Hadi, 2014).
2. Increased communication; it is a goal of improving communication to align all employees with shared company goals and values. Candid communication also leads to increased understanding of the need for change within the organization. Communication is open across all levels of the organization and relevant feedback is recurrently shared for improvement (Hadi, 2014).



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3. Employee development; the need for employee development stems from constant industry and market changes. This causes an organization to regularly enhance employee skills to meet evolving market requirements. This is achieved through a program of learning, training, skills/competency enhancement and work process improvements (Hadi, 2014).
4. A major benefit of OD is innovation, which leads to product and service enhancement. Innovation is achieved through employee development, which focuses on rewarding successes and boosting motivation and morale. In this scenario, employee engagement is high leading to increased creativity and innovation. Organizational development also increases product innovation by using competitive analysis, market research and consumer expectations and preferences (Hadi, 2014).
5. Finally, through raised innovation and productivity, efficiency and profits are increased. Costs are also reduced by minimizing employee turnover and absenteeism. As OD aligns objectives and focuses on development, product/service quality and employee satisfaction are increased. The culture shift to one of continuous improvement gives the company a distinct advantage in the competitive marketplace (Hadi, 2014)

Organizational Behavior in Nigeria

Organizational behavior (OB) on the other hand is the study of human behavior within an organization, examining how individuals, groups, and the organization itself interact and influence each other. OB aims to understand why people behave the way they do in a workplace and how these behaviors impact the organization's effectiveness. The study of organizational behaviour is one of the most important elements in the management. Organizational behaviour aims at helping managers and supervisors in different ways. It plays an important role in all facets of managing an organization. OB is related with the identification, analysis and applying the knowledge regarding how individuals behave individually and in a group. In addition to this it also aim at analyzing how individuals as well as groups influence the organizational systems. The prime objective of OB is to maintain healthy and sound interpersonal relationships in the organizations. OB focuses on all those factors which have bearing on the individuals and group dynamics in the organization. Organizational behavior (OB) is typically studied at three levels: individual, group, and organizational. These levels represent distinct yet interconnected perspectives on how individuals and groups behave within an organization and how the organization itself functions.

1. Individual Level:

This level focuses on the psychological and behavioral characteristics of individual employees, such as their personalities, perceptions, attitudes, motivation, and learning.

It explores how these individual factors influence their behavior in the workplace and their contributions to the organization.

Key concepts at this level include perception, motivation, personality, learning, and attitudes.

2. Group Level:

This level examines the dynamics within groups and teams, including how individuals interact, communicate, and work together.

It explores factors like group size, structure, roles, leadership, and communication patterns, and how these influence group performance and effectiveness.

Areas of focus include group dynamics, leadership, and communication.

3. Organizational Level:

This level takes a broader perspective, examining the organization as a whole, including its structure, culture, systems, and environment.

It explores how organizational design, culture, and strategy influence individual and group behavior.

Key concepts include organizational structure, culture, change, and the organization's relationship with its external environment.

These three levels are interconnected, and changes at one level can affect the others. Understanding OB at all three levels provides a comprehensive view of how organizations function and how to manage and improve them.



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Models of Organisational Behaviour (OB) in Nigeria

Various models have been developed to study the behaviour of people at work. The organizational behaviour models were developed on the basis of the approach of management and various assumptions. The selection of any model to be practiced in the organisation depends on the prevailing situation and practices used by management because models constitute the beliefs and value system which affects the management actions directly. It is the duty of a manager to make the management aware regarding which model is more suitable for the organisation. Managers also make them aware about nature, significance and effectiveness of the model. Douglas McGregor was the first person to give attention to managerial models. He gave two theories: theory X and theory Y about human behaviour. Later, majority of the models were developed on the basis of the assumptions of theory X and theory Y.

Theory X stated that human beings usually dislike to work and they tend to avoid work as much as they can. They also avoid taking responsibilities. Human beings are ambitious about their career. They only want security in job without putting much effort. Managers need to control, threaten and give them punishment to get work done through them. In opposite to this theory Y stated that, people are not lazy but they become lazy with time. This theory suggested that human beings will exercise self-direction and self-control only if they commit the service of objective. According to this theory, people have potential to work, ability to learn. They accept the responsibilities and can apply their creativeness on work, if they are creative.

Conclusion

Organizations affect other organizations around them and cause change on them, and at the same time, they are affected by the changes that occur in their environment. Organizational change is necessary for organizations to develop and keep pace with changing conditions. Today, change continues at a dizzying pace. The information produced and the news received by individuals are consumed in a very short period of time. It is difficult for individuals and organizations to keep up with this speed. However, catching up with change is one of the most important requirements of today. Some factors that cause change are globalization, gaining competitive power, survival.

Change is a necessity, but individuals do not favor change when they are not complaining about the current situation. For change to occur there must be a disturbing situation or a problem in the environment. Effective change must solve a problem. In cases where individuals do not see a problem in the environment, resistance to change emerges. In fact, the reasons for resistance to change include individuals' desire to maintain their current situation, the idea that change will bring uncertainty and concerns about the new situation that will arise as a result of change.

The success of the changes to be realized at the school level mostly depends on the success of the leaders. For this reason, school principals should assume a leadership role. School principals can effectively manage change by giving importance to communication with teachers, creating a collaborative culture and making themselves a part of the change (Taş, 2009). Leaders as organizational change agents should create a sustainable culture of change. In order to achieve change at today's pace, leaders need to constantly examine their environment, make change plans and guide individuals. If there is a culture of consensus, tolerance and trust in the organization and the need for change is felt by all employees, resistance to change will be low.

Recommendations

1. Leadership Commitment: Strong, visionary leadership that communicates and models the desired change.
2. Employee Involvement: Participation of staff in planning and decision-making enhances ownership.
3. Capacity Building: Training and development to build skills needed for the new system.
4. Effective Communication: Clear, consistent, and transparent information sharing.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous assessment to track progress and make adjustments.



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