Nature and Pattern of Workers' Reaction to Change in Nigeria: A Case Study of Beta Glass Plc, Ughelli, Delta State

Onoriode, O. H.
Egberi, A. K.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to examine the nature and patterns of workers reaction to change in an organization. It will also highlight the possible ways of overcoming resistance for change. A valid structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. A sample of 300 respondents was selected in the organizations. Data analysis was made using tables and the hypothesis formulated was tested using the Chi-square statistics. The study reveals that workers perception of the impact of change on their well being, influence the way they resist change. The study concluded that change in an organization is endemic and the reaction of workers could be seen as depending on workers perception of the change on their well being to the way they are consulted by management before the change is introduced. Based on this, the study recommends that management should seek the attention of workers union in an attempt to make change on an agreed issue made between the management and workers union. It is believed that except two agree, they cannot work together and as such, the only way to avoid chaos in organizations is through agreement. Cordial relationship between management and workers should exist so that there can always be success in the change that is being introduced into the organization.
Keywords: *workers reaction, change in organization,*

INTRODUCTION

Change is an inevitable phenomenon in modern day organization. Dealing with change is the essence of managers' job. The world over is a process of a constant and consistent change. Everything about early existence runs under the umbrella of the word "change". Although change is the nature of life for individuals, organizations and societies, change is defined in different ways at different periods in history. Change can be said to be necessary and continuous occurrence in an organization and life as a whole. The industry setting therefore needs change for an upward surge in the production, distribution and effective profit maximization. Some decades ago, many firms were concerned with organisational improvement and development while most organisations changed because of powerful forces which maybe social, economic or technological. Organisation respond to these factors or forces in order to survive this competition. The wellspring of our economic structure encourages us to seek an edge over our competitors which are

Onoriode, O. H. *and* ***Egberi, A. K.*** *are Lecturers in the Department of Business Administration and Management, Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro, Nigeria.*
E-mail: *onoriodehumphrey@yahoo.co.uk*

potent force for change. In addition, there is evidence that people seek change if they become bored with doing things the same way and with no varing experience. In recent times there have been fierce competition, globalization and fast spreading of technological innovation, which has radically transformed the sense of organisational changes. There is growing cynicism about and in most cases the development and improvement of existing resources is not sufficient to ensure survival of the organisation in the market. Large Corporations are going through massive rationalization of their operations, restructuring of their assets, major strategies reorientation, turning around mergers and acquisitions. They tend to improve some major dependent variables, such as performance efficiency, effectiveness and tend to change one or more independent variables in other to catch up with the race in technology. They enter joint venture and a variety of business partnership on a scale never before imaginable. The study is mainly concerned with major organisational change.

Organisational change comes from the conscious decision to alter the way an organisation does business or the very nature of the business itself. According to Griffin and Moorheads (1996), change is a planned effort, to alter one or more parts of an organisation in a systematic and logical fashion. They believe that change have two dimensions, namely: change focusing on altering one or more elements of the organisation, such as substituting one reward system for another and change enhancing the value of an existing elements or resources e.g. training to enable managers improve their problem solving ability. On his part, Morgan (1993) believes that organisational change can be seen as a simple shift in technology or in the internal hierarchy. In their own opinion, Mchoughlin and Clark (1992) argue that change is simply a rational commercial calculation in response to technological imperative or managerial decision. Also, French and Bell (2004) define change as product of complete process of strategic choice with an organisation. They believe that the availability of new computing and information technology was a trigger rather than determinant of process of managerial decision making. Thus, they identify the various dimension of change in the organisation as follows:-

Strategic change: This has to do with external market and customers oriented goals such as improved product quality.

Operational change: This has to do with the internal operational activities of an organisation.

Control change: This is as a result of reduction of uncertainty caused by reliance on informed human intervention in the control work.

Evans, Yues and Andre (1991) look at organisational change as the strategic process that takes different form ranging from radical, revolutionary or turn around change to what we might label "Evolutionary change". They went further to say that most organisations fall or fail to perceive the need for change until confronted with necessity in the form of a crisis which they believe acts as a trigger and often leading to a new leadership and political structure and the beginning of substantive change. David, Charles and Ross (1992) believe that organisational change is a situation whereby the individual

attitude or behaviour is being changed before introducing new role and job structure into the organisation. They went further to stress that there is confusion in dealing with the problem of individual and organisational change due to lack of precise terminology of distinguishing between behaviour determined largely by structured role within a system and behaviour determined by personality needs and values.

Resistance to Change and Causes

According to Robins (1996), the degree of people resistance to change depends on the kind of change involved and how it will be understood. What people resist is not change but loss or probability of loss. Generally, splitting individuals resist change because it scares them and they see it as threatening. Such resistance are associated with strike, short down, reduced productivity, poor quality workmanship and tardiness. On the other hand, organisation tends to resist change because of the effects it may have on the other and stability needed for maximum efficiency. Resistance to change may show itself in unexpected ways, for instance in aggression, regression and in all the negative reactions. It may appear as absenteeism, resignations, request for transfer and lowered productivity. It should be emphasized that not all change is resisted. Some forms of change are welcome (such as new type writers). The following are the possible causes of resistance to change:

Economic Factor: An obvious reaction for resistance is economic. Workers resist automation when they fear that they will lose their job. They are always unimpressed by the argument that in the long run there will be more jobs in other parts of the country. What concerns them most is their economic welfare. Craftsman may fear that new developments will reduce the economic value of their skills. Managers oppose a change that help the company as a whole but hunt their individual promotional opportunities.

Inconvenience: Equally understandable is the resistance to change that threatens to make life more difficult. A worker fights the assignment of extra duties; he has learnt his job so well that it requires no attention any more whereas the new job requires surface attention.
Similarly, executives dislike the inconveniences of being reassigned from one location to another even if the company pays their expenses; there is this problem of buying and selling houses, packaging and adjusting to new work and new environment.

Uncertainty: The new way is always strange, threatening and harden with uncertainties even if it is an improvement over the old. We have a change for a new job at higher pay. Should we take it? How had will it be? How long will it take to learn? Will one be able to meet the challenges? Who will our friend be? The opportunities may be very good indeed, yet there is a strong tendency to let well enough alone. One reason for this fear is the lack of factual information. We know our present circumstances; we don't know what the new one will be. Some people gamble by nature, but the average person hesitates to venture into uncharted water. The uncertain is always threatening.

Union Attitude: Union are also likely to resist change unless management consult with them either formally or informally, it is not enough to inform individuals. Every union has certain institutional needs that must be met, if it is to retain its members' loyalty. If management makes a promise of walking with the union, the union will co-operate in introducing the change but if management ignore the union, the only way the union can preserve the status is by opposing the management.

Commitment: Commitment makes change more difficult. Even though the old way is not working, we have invested much in it and to admit that we were wrong is humiliating. Thus, we defend and persist in our errors and the longer we persist, the greater our commitment.

Overcoming Resistance to Change

Resistance to change proposal is a signal to managers that something is wrong with the proposal or that mistakes have been made in its presentation. Managers therefore must determine the actual causes of resistance and be flexible enough to overcome them in an appropriate manner. Robert and Jerald offers four ways of overcoming resistance to change which are highly situation dependent. These techniques are discussed below:

a. ***Shape Political Dynamics:*** Political variables are when it comes to getting organisational change accepted. Political resistance to change can be overcome by winning the support of the most powerful and influential individuals. Doing so builds a critical internal mass for support for change. Demonstrating clearly that key organisational leaders, support the change is an effective way of getting others to do along with it either because they share the leaders' vision or because they fear the leader's retaliation. Either way, political support for change will facilitate acceptance of change.

b. ***Educate the work force:*** Sometimes, people are reluctant to change because they fear what the future has in store for them. Fear about economic security, for example may be easily put to rest by few reassuring words from organisational head holders. As part of educating employers about what organisational changes may mean for them, it is imperative of top management to show a considerable amount of emotional sensitivity communicating exactly what an organisational change means for the work force can help allay the fears that are a key source of resistance to change. Doing so makes it possible for the people affected by the change to become instrumental in making it work. This philosophy is educating employees providing them with information that help them better understand organisational goals as one of the element responsible for successfully implementing large scale organisational change.

c. ***Involve Employee in the Change Effort:*** It is well established that people whom participate in making decision tend to be more committed to the outcome of the decision than those who are not involved. Accordingly, employees who are involved in responding to unplanned change or who are made part of the

team changed with planning, a needed organisational change may be expected to have little resistance to change, organisational changes that are sprung on the work force with little or no warning might be a knee jerk reaction, until employees have a chance to assess how the change affect them. In contrast, employees who are involved in the change process are better positioned to understand the need for change and are therefore less likely to resist.

d.   *Reward Constructive Behaviour:* One rather obvious and quite successful, mechanism for facilitating organisational change is rewarding people for behaving in the desired fashion. Changing organisational operations may necessitate a change in the kind of behaviour that need to be rewarded by the organisations. This is especially critical when an organisation is in the transition period of introducing the change. For example, employees who are required to learn to use new equipment should be praised for their successful efforts. Feedback on how well they are doing not only provides a great deal of useful assurance to uncertain employee but also goes a long way in shaping the desired behaviour.

Change as pointed out earlier is a phenomenon that is inevitable in the life of an organisation. This is because modern day organisations operate in a dynamic environment and as a result of the dynamic nature of the environment, most organisations are in a state of perpetual flux that is always changing. As a result of this, the source of change, the introduction and the perception of the impact of change in an organisation are the major problems between the workers and the changing situations, the workers and management, management and its changing environment. The sources of change in the organisation takes the form of the change in the policy of the organisation which may be as a result of change in government policy, change in the method a worker use to do his job which is brought about by technological changes, change in the job a worker does, structure in the welfare scheme of the organisation. In an attempt to introduce this change caused by environmental forces, workers react in different ways to these underlisted ways:

i.   Nature and rate of changes being carried out.
ii.   Perception of the impact of the change on their well being.
iii.   Installation of changes without informing workers.
iv.   Strategies of introducing and implementing change
v.   Survival in the organisation (workers struggle for survival against change).
vi.   Effect of change and its result in the organisation

The main objective of the study is to determine the nature and patterns of workers reaction to change in an organization. Thus, the study is also set to assess whether workers perception of the impact of change on their well being in the organization will influence the way they react to change in the organization.

Statement of Hypothesis

$H_0 1$: Workers perception of the impact of change on their well being will not influence the way they resist change.

METHOD

The target population of the study were the different categories of workers in Beta Glass Plc, Ughelli, Delta State. The study adopted stratified random sampling technique and the Taro Yamen's formula was used to determine a sample size of 300. The data used for the study were primary data generated through questionnaire. The questions in the questionnaire were closed ended questions. Three hundred copies of structured questionnaire were administered to the different categories of staff in the organization. Two hundred and eighty six were filled and returned. Chi-square statistics was used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysed data from table 1 shows that workers perception of change on their well being might cause them to accept and resist change. In column 5, row 1, it is noted from 18 respondents that when the impact of change is seen to be very good, the extent of resistance will be very high and in column 5 row 4, response from 22 workers shows that when impact of change on well being is bad, the extent of resistance could be very low. Another could be seen in column 2, row 3 where impact of change on well being is perceived to be fairly good by 20 workers and the extent of its resistance is high.

Data analysis shows that the perseverance of the impact of change by workers varies in accordance to changes introduced by management. Change introduced by management could be resisted by workers when its impact on their well being is low and could be accepted when impact is high and vice versa. It is made known in the study that such change with very highly resistance from workers but yet perceived to be very good could be 1% change in an agreed increment rate. It was also found out in the study that change which is perceived to be bad and with a very low resistance is change from external forces, that is, technological changes.

From table 2, the critical value gotten from the table is 26.296 while the Chi-square calculated figure is 59.508. Since the value of the calculated chi-square is higher than the table value, the null hypothesis, which says that workers perception of the impact of change on their well being will not influence the way they resist change is rejected while the research hypothesis which says workers perception of the impact of change on their well being influence the way they resist change is accepted. Based on the presentation and analysis of data, the following findings were made in accordance with the research objectives:

·   It has been noted that change made by management on an agreed increment rate with or without the consent of workers and work union result to organisational chaos.

·   The researcher found out that training an employee on the job is a tool for efficiency, quality of work, achieving organisational objectives e.t.c.

·   The consultation of workers by management before introducing change, can affect the workers reactions to such change and the success of the change.

·   The perception of the impact of change in an organisation like Beta Glass Plc may either cause the workers to resist change or accept change.
·   At the introduction of change, the relationship between management and workers could cause workers to resist change or accept change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Change in organisation is endemic; it can be caused by several factors ranging from economic and social cultural changes in the environment, technologically chance etc. Workers react to change in different ways. Their reaction could be seen as depending on workers perception of the impact of proposal change on their well being to the way they are consulted by management before the change is introduced and the nature and pattern of the existing relationship between the management and workers in the organisation. Based on the analysis of data and findings of this study, the following recommendations were made as guidelines to follow by organisation in dealing with workers:

i   Management should seek the attention of workers union in an attempt to make change on an agreed issue made between the management and workers unions. It is believed that except two agree, they cannot work together and as such, the only way to avoid chaos in organisations is through agreement.

i   In an attempt to boost organisational ego, training should be the key to opening of employees' ability and capacity of performance.

iii   Satisfaction with training has been seen as it increases workers skills and knowledge.
        Management should be sure to give workers all the required tools for training and make them see the importance of every training programme.

iv   Before introducing change in the organisation especially the one that will directly affect the workers, they should be consulted. This is because consultation will enable them to react favourably to such change and it will also make them express their view and make contribution in respect of how to introduce change.

v   Management should carefully analyse the impact of change on workers well being. When these impacts are carefully analysed, there will be other chances of introducing and implementing changes, which cannot be perceived as danger by workers.

vi   There should be cordial relationship between management and workers so that there can always be success in the change that is being introduced into the organisation.

Table 1: Workers perception of the impact of change on their well being as a result of change

Impact of change on well being	Very Highly	Highly	Fairly Highly	Low	Very Low	Total
Very Good	16	8	14	20	18	76
Good	14	4	18	10	8	54
Fairly Good	10	20	16	2	4	52
Bad	14	14	10	10	22	70
Very Bad	8	6	16	4	0	34
Total	**62**	**52**	**74**	**46**	**52**	**286**

Source: Field Survey 2014

Table 2: Test of Hypothesis using Chi-Square

X^2 Calculated	=	59.508
Degree of Freedom	=	16
Level of Significance	=	5% or 0.05
Critical Value	=	26.296

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

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