







The effect of applying change management strategies on job performance and empowering employees of the administrative department of Islamic Azad University

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ABSTRACT

As businesses evolve to outpace their competitors, so do their expectations of their employees' performance. An employee is a critical element of an organization, and their overall performance can determine its achievements or failures. Because of the constantly changing business environment, every business has its way of doing things. Therefore, these changes require the manager to adopt internal changes that affect employee performance, thus increasing organizational growth, etc. This study was conducted to investigate the effect of change management strategies on job performance and empower employees of electronics administrative department in the Islamic Azad University (IAU). The statistical population of the research included 200 administrative employees of electronics department of IAU (60 female and 140 male). Data analysis was done using SPSS software and regression coefficients. The results showed that the use of change management strategies has a positive and significant effect on the job performance and empowerment of the of the IAU administrative department's employees from Electronics Unit. For future studies, we suggest to increase the statistical population and perform the study on more diverse organizations.

Original Article

PII: S232247702300004-13

Rec. 14 July, 2023

Acc. 28 August, 2023

Pub. 25 September, 2023

Keywords

Strategy,
Empowerment,
Employee performance,
Change management

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations are social systems governed by the same rules as humans: grow, evolve, progress, face challenges, struggle, and adapt, so change becomes a natural phenomenon experienced by every organization. In recent decades, the speed of change and evolution in various aspects of human societies has increased significantly, so these rapid developments have entirely changed the foundations of many social values. Organizations must implement changes to stay competitive by adapting to the changing business environment (Balogun and Hailey, 2008; Miceli et al., 2021). The business environment is changing profoundly, and on the other hand, the imminent movement towards globalization has prompted organizations to cope with the rapid changes in the external environment (Meaney and Pung, 2008).

With the rapid progress of science and technology and the complexity of the political situation and social environment, the need to create and manage organizational change has become particularly

important (Tidd and Bessant, 2020). Today, change is standard in organizations, and it happens constantly and is often associated with high speed. Change, in its simplest form, means moving from the current state to a more efficient and effective future, so change is a process through which we continuously learn and discover things. Change management must be adequate (Ali and Anwar, 2021), i.e., can move freely, influence others, and lead the workforce in target systems and administrative units. Although change seems necessary for organizations to grow and progress in the current and future environment, effective change is not so simple. Understanding and managing change is the primary management theme in today's world. The goal of organizational change is adaptability to the environment and better performance; such a growing trend in the need for organizational change encourages sufficient knowledge and skills for organizational improvement and evolution (Balogun and Hailey, 2008).

The role of the manager or leader is essential as a facilitator of change, which improves organizational performance. Theories are the process of changing

patterns that identify the problem and act towards its solution. Managers must take necessary measures to implement each step of the change process. Ignorance in any of the steps and mistakes in them are likely to lead to the failure of this process (Levovnik and Gerbec, 2018).

Employees of the organization react to changes in different ways (Li et al., 2021). For some, change is pleasant, new and exciting. These people are the first adaptors and leaders of change and accept change with open arms. Another group is more cautious and tries to test it before changing it. For others, change may threaten their established values and perceptions, so change is more worrying for them. For the last group, change is a phenomenon that they resist since it brings instability; resistance to it is a natural thing and a part of the organizational change process. Therefore, to achieve a successful change, organizations should be careful, pay attention to the empowerment of employees, and provide the context for effective change by reacting appropriately to it (Potosky and Azan, 2023). Researchers have provided evidence that many change processes fail to achieve their intended goals.

Meaney and Pung (2008) estimated the failure rate to be in the region of 60%. Some researchers, such as Ford and Kiran (2008), have mentioned employee resistance to change as one of the essential reasons for the organization's failure to implement changes successfully. One of the famous researchers in change management is Lewin (1951), who presented a theoretical framework that managers can adopt when implementing change processes that minimize employee resistance. This employee resistance to change implies that managers should understand the importance of employee commitment to the change process to deal with potential resistance. Due to the rapid transformations of humanity's knowledge and information, everything is changing and evolving. Organizations interact as an open system and need to respond to environmental changes to survive. Since human resources are considered the most critical factor and axis of organizations, equipping and preparing said resources to face changes is of particular importance, and all organizations with any mission should invest the most capital, time and programs in cultivating human beings. Allocate in different dimensions (Levovnik and Gerbec, 2018).

Empowering employees is a new method that managers use to increase productivity by increasing employees' commitment to the organization and vice versa, and this is a valuable method that balances the complete control of management and the freedom of action of employees (Abdollahi and Navehebrahim, 2007). One of the consequences of being strong in the

work environment is job performance. Job performance is defined as the sum of the behaviors people show in relation to their job, or in other words, the amount of output, result or efficiency obtained due to a person's employment in his job (Robbins, 1991). Job performance in management is an essential factor in developing and promoting organizational goals, and it is knowledge that measures how to achieve an organization's or institution's goals (Zhao and Hou, 2009). The importance of job performance has made researchers research more and more about it (Shokrkon et al., 2002). Performance is defined by the overall values the organization expects from individual behavior that each individual performs during specific periods.

Considering the importance of the organization to have change management and job performance and empowerment, the employees of Islamic Azad University must pay more attention to this topic for the Development of change management and job performance and empowerment in this organization and following It is very important and influential to develop organizational goals and proper performance. Dealing with the importance of change management with job performance and empowerment is essential in several ways because no study has been done on this subject before. If it was done, it was not done regularly. The purpose of this research is to organize these studies and the use of them by managers and employees in the organization. It seems that change management can impact job performance and empower employees. Therefore, the present research with the primary purpose of investigating the effect of using change management strategies on job performance and empowering employees of the administrative department of Islamic Azad University, Electronics Unit, to answer the central question of the research about the effect of using change management strategies on job performance and empowerment How is the administrative department of the Islamic Azad University, Electronics Unit? Is.

■ METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive-correlational study of the applied purpose and research method. The statistical population of this research was made up of the administrative staff of the Islamic Azad University Electronics Department in Tehran. According to the information obtained from the recruitment department of the university, 200 employees are working in the administrative department of the university, of which 140 are men and 60 are women. Due to the limitedness of the statistical population,

the method of the total number of members has been used. Three standard questionnaires were used to collect the required data.

Job performance: The meaning of job performance in this research is a score obtained through the implementation of a 12-question questionnaire.

Empowerment: Employee Empowerment Questionnaire is a score in the 12-question standard questionnaire by Spreitzer (1996) is designed. The questionnaire measures the four dimensions of effectiveness (3 items), meaningfulness (3 items), sense of competence (3 items) and the right to choose (self-determination) (3 items). This questionnaire is based on a Likert scale (completely disagree, 1; disagree, 2; neutral, 3; agree, 4; agree, 5) (Spreitzer, 1996).

Change management: To operationalize organizational changes, a researcher-made questionnaire was used, which has components of pressure and coercion, transitional change, and the effect of shared power. The questionnaire designed for this research consists of two parts:

The first part contains the respondents' information, such as gender, age, education and work experience of managers and administrative experts of the Islamic Azad University of Electronics Unit. The second part of the survey is about the effect of the variables on each other using the Likert scale by the administrators and administrative experts of the Islamic Azad University of Electronics.

The content validity and expert judgment methods were used to determine the validity of the questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.82, 0.86 and 0.81, respectively. In this research, SPSS software and various descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used to analyze data and test hypotheses.

■ RESULTS

Descriptive results

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Parametric statistical tests aim to determine whether the data is standard. In this context, one of the essential prerequisites for choosing parametric statistical tests is the normality of data distribution based on the investigated variables. With this approach, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was first used to check the normality of data distribution. In this test, the null hypothesis showed the normality of the data distribution, and the counter hypothesis showed that they were not

expected. Based on the Table 2 results, the significance level of the leading research variables was more than 0.05. Therefore, the assumption of normality of data distribution indicating empowerment and job performance was confirmed, but the opposite assumption of non-normality of data distribution was rejected. Therefore, considering the normality of data distribution, parametric tests were used.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

		Abundance	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	140	70
	Female	60	30
Age	[20,30)	42	21
	[30,40)	64	32
	[40,50)	58	29
	≥50	36	18
Education	B.Sc.	82	41
	M.Sc.	76	38
	Ph.D.	42	21

Table 2. Normal distribution of variables

Significance Level	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Components
Change management	1.315	0.066
Empowerment	1.221	0.098
Job performance	1.267	0.082

Inferential results

Table 3 shows the hypotheses related to the impact of the use of change management strategies on job performance. According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient between the effect of pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and standard power on employees' job performance is 4.21, 0.204 and 0.469, respectively, and the determination coefficient is 0.189, 0.032 and it is 0.220. To determine the effect of each pressure and coercion variable, rational persuasion and standard power as predictive variables of job performance variable as criterion variable was analyzed by multivariate regression analysis using the entry method.

As can be seen in Table 4, the amount of p observed in all variables is significant, and the results show that the joint power variable with the highest beta of 0.167 and rational persuasion with the lowest beta of 0.079 predict job performance.

Table 6 shows the hypotheses related to the impact of change management strategies on employee empowerment. According to Table 5, the

correlation coefficient between the effect of pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and typical power on employee empowerment is 0.271, 0.519 and 0.72, respectively. To determine the effect of each variable of pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and typical power were used as predictive variables, and the employee empowerment variable as a criterion

variable was analyzed by multivariate regression analysis using the entry method. As can be seen in Table 5, the amount of p observed in all variables except rational persuasion is significant, and the results show that pressure and coercion variables with the highest beta (0.612) predict employee empowerment.

Table 3. The impact of the use of change management strategies on job performance

Correlation coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
Explaining the impact of pressure and coercion on the job performance of the employees of the administrative department of the Islamic Azad University of Electronics has a positive and significant effect	0.421	0.189	0.173
Explaining the impact of rational persuasion on the job performance of the employees of the administrative department of the Islamic Azad University of Electronics has a positive and significant effect.	0.204	0.032	0.035
Explaining the impact of joint power on the job performance of the administrative department employees of Islamic Azad University	0.469	0.220	0.214

Table 4. The results of regression analysis between dimensions of change management strategies and job performance

Components	Non-Standard Coefficient B	Standard Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	5.61	-	19.41	0.000
Pressure and coercion	0.141	0.122	1.15	0.021
Rational persuasion	0.318	0.079	3.72	0.00
Joint power	0.154	0.167	2.31	0.015

Table 5. The impact of using change management strategies on employee empowerment

Correlation coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination
Explaining the effect of pressure and coercion on empowering employees of the administrative department of Islamic Azad University of Electronics has a positive and significant effect	0.271	0.075	0.064
Explaining the effect of rational persuasion on empowering employees of the administrative department of Islamic Azad University of Electronics has a positive and significant effect.	0.519	0.259	0.261
Explaining the effect of common power on the empowerment of employees of the administrative department of Islamic Azad University of Electronics Unit has a positive and significant effect.	0.72	0.511	0.507

Table 6. The results of regression analysis between the dimensions of change management strategies and employee empowerment

Components	Non-Standard Coefficient B	Standard Coefficient Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.31	-	19.27	0.000
Pressure and coercion	0.051	0.612	0.821	0.004
Rational persuasion	0.152	0.31	2.25	0.061
Joint power	0.571	0.409	9.27	0.002

■ DISCUSSION

Change is a reality that individuals, groups, and organizations must constantly pay attention to and place at the top of their actions for survival. Today, the organization's internal and external factors have many dynamics that change the existing realities, forcing the organizations to move from the current situation to the desired situation. Sometimes, the change process in organizations faces resistance that some think should be removed immediately.

These resistances are sometimes harmful and have positive consequences for the organization because they strengthen functional contradictions and positive discourses, which in turn can promote change options with analyses of their consequences. But if the resistance is irrational and extreme, which endangers the plans or the organization's survival, it is necessary to use different methods to solve them (Jafarzadeh, 2008).

The primary purpose of the present research was to investigate the effect of using change management strategies on job performance and empowering employees of the Islamic Azad University of Electronics administrative department. For this purpose, three hypotheses were proposed. The independent variables of the hypotheses are the three dimensions of pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and joint power, and the dependent variable is job performance and employee empowerment. The results obtained in the present research while showing the significance of the relationship between pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and shared power with job performance and employee empowerment, the central hypothesis of the research that change management strategies on job performance and employee empowerment of the administrative department of Azad University Islamic electronic unit has an effect, it also confirms.

Today, all aspects of human life, including knowledge and technology, are evolving at an unprecedented speed. Organizations are forced to innovate for their survival and dynamism and continuous and permanent changes. The world is constantly changing and evolving; according to Drucker, the only constant in today's world is change (Self, 2007). If there was no need for change, transformation, and innovation, human beings would still remain in the lives of primitive humans and maybe even at the level of animal life, and there would be no change and transformation in their knowledge, attitude, and behavior. If humans could not change and improve, they would remain in their narrow-minded framework, and their way of progress would

be blocked. As a result, in today's competitive and fast-paced world, the necessity of rapid organizational changes and its management is one of the primary conditions for the success of organizations. According to the obtained results, the aspects of change management (pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and joint power) have a positive and significant effect on the job performance and empowerment of the employees of the administrative department of the Islamic Azad University, Electronics Unit.

According to the results of the present study, Daniel (2019) showed that employees are vital in carrying out the change process. The success and long-term sustainable performance of the organization depend on the employees. Also, these researchers showed that change management improves employees' job performance. Okoye and Ezejiofor (2013) also emphasize the role of human resources in the productivity of any organization, examining and determining the status of their job performance and recognizing the factors influencing them, an essential role in identifying the upcoming challenges and improving the organization's performance. Tazakkori and Rasouli (2015) also showed in their research that change management has a positive and significant effect on job performance and empowerment of social security workers in Ardabil province, which is in line with the results of the present study. He used pressure and coercion, common power and rational persuasion in his research, which resulted in a meaningful relationship between these factors and management styles. He introduced the components of pressure and coercion, rational persuasion and standard power as change management strategies.

Although some of the findings of this study confirm the results of other studies, the researcher has faced some limitations. The main limitation was the subjects' concern about the evaluation. Despite all the trust-building done before answering the questionnaires, people were still somewhat worried about their assessment. They tried to make the situation look better than what it is. Also, due to time constraints, in this study, only the employees of the administrative department of the Islamic Azad University of Electronics Unit were evaluated, which seems to complete the research results. Comparatively, it is also necessary to examine the members of other similar organizations.

According to the present study's findings, it is suggested that in the field of change management and issues related to the organization, such as pressure and coercion, they should receive training so that the

organization can tangibly examine the factors of pressure and coercion and study people with it. It is also suggested that managers bring about their desired changes in the organization by transferring specific information and data, scientific support or logical discussion.

■ DECLARATIONS

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Data availability

Not applicable.

Supplementary Information

Not applicable.

Authors' contribution

H. Ghaffarzadeh Aralooyekouchak contributes to the research, data analysis, and manuscript writing. M. Safaei contributes to the research and data analysis.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Consent to publish

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests in this research and publication.

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