

Rethinking the Individual–Organization Relationship in the Public Sector: A Literature Review on the Impact of Organizational Change

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Abstract: Face within a rapidly changing world and fierce competition between companies, organisational change is becoming a source of stability and a key to adapting to external constraints, also it is part of organisational life, since it has become a central issue for organisations (Latortue, 2017). The methodology followed in this study is positivism adapted with a deductive hypothesis, in order to discover the renewal of the individual/organisation relationship in the context of organisational change within the public sector. We will begin by studying the key concepts of the article, then the description, and finally definition of the fundamentals of organisational change and the individual/organisation relationship. The results of our study show that the public sector lacks internal communication, whereas organisational change in this sector requires a strong individual/organisation relationship based on communication and information sharing.

Keywords: Organisational change, public sector, the individual/organisation relationship.

1. Introduction

Organisations need to rethink and redefine their strategies and structures, and rethink their market orientation in order to maintain their competitiveness and avoid the risk of decline (Zid, 2006). Faced with the constant transformation of the world in these different areas, change is seen as the rule, while stability is seen as the exception (Vandangeon, 1998).

Similarly, change in the public sector is now a daily reality, and has become one of the major problems facing managers today. It occurs within public organisations when certain public policies are implemented and readapted in the face of internal and external constraints. And so, public organisations include public administrations, local authorities, public and semi-public establishments and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Organisational change is a managerial practice that requires a distinction to be made between voluntary or imposed change and its impact on the organisational process (Soparnot, R, 2005).

In this article, we look at the public sector to analyse the impact of organisational change on the renewal of the individual/organisation relationship. One problem is obvious: “How does organizational change impact the renewal of the

individual–organization relationship in the public sector?” it is in this context that we are interested in these two concepts organisational change and the individual/organisational relationship in order to study our problem.

To achieve this, our work is spread over two theoretical chapters. The first chapter deals with the literature review and the key concepts of the article, namely organisational change in the public sector and the individual/organisation relationship. Then the second chapter is devoted to a basic description of the impact of organisational change on the individual/organisation relationship.

2. Organisational Change and the Individual–Organisation Relationship: Effective Key Concepts and Classifications of Organisational Change

Organisational change in the public sector is the result of a series of mutations requiring the adoption of new problem-solving management practices Chanut, 2020). Organisations develop and change over time (Van De Ven et Poole, 1995 ; Van De Ven et Huber, 1990).

The table 1 lists all the definitions identified as part of the process approach. The essence of these definitions lies in the way in which the organisation moves from point A to point B (Bernoux, 2004).

The definitions proposed by the authors discuss change in its temporal dimension of moving from one situation to another. However, they do not provide any information about the type(s) of change studied in particular by the authors.

Since Lewin’s first studies of change (1947), practitioners and academics have continued to take an interest in this aspect (Namrata Malhotra and Hining, 2015). While everything is change (Pesqueux, 2004), the conclusion can be drawn that there can never be a universal definition or model of organisational change, because it involves a transition to a future state whose context and timing remain unknown (Dawson, 2003).

The evolution of concept of organisational change develops types of change classified along two axes, a first axis representing the nature of the change, and a second axis

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Table 1
Definitions of the concept of organisational change within the framework of the process approach

Authors	Proposed Definitions
Lewin (1951)	Change is a sequence of three phases corresponding to a decrystallisation, a movement and a recrystallisation of social relations.
Van De Ven et Poole (1988)	Organisational change is an empirical observation of differences over time in a social system.
Bériot (1992)	A dynamic process that creates a difference in a system between an instant (t) and an instant (t+1).
David (1998)	Change is the result of a difference between an experienced state and a desired state.
Nurcan et al. (2002)	Organisational change is a process that takes an organisation from a current state to a future state.
Thiéart (2003)	Change is defined as a process that takes a physical, human, social or moral system from an initial state A to a final state B.
Paton et McCalman (2008)	Change is a continuous process of confrontation, identification, evaluation and action.
Yatchinovsky (2018)	Organisational change is the process of moving from a state of departure to a state of arrival.

Source: Pr. Fikri Khalid, Azzarradi Otman, the concept of organisational change: State of the art and proposal for a consensual definition, XXXth AIMS conference, 2021

representing the extent of the change.

In management science, change encompasses becoming, adjusting, adapting and transforming (Beaudoin, 1990). Some authors have defined change as a relatively long-lasting character observed in the environment, signifying the passage from one state to another (Collerette et al.1997). For his part, Belanger (1994) gives a definition of change very close to that of Beaudoin (1990), and which better meets the requirements of the environment or the new aspirations of the people concerned: change is the passage from a current state to a desire state, from a current original situation, judged to be inadequate, to another considered to be more suitable. In this way, change represents a kind of disruption of equilibrium (Belanger, 1994). It can therefore play an important role in creating a situation that is more or less uncomfortable or similar to the search for a new equilibrium. In the same sense, Grouard and Meston (1998), see change as a state that evolves and changes.

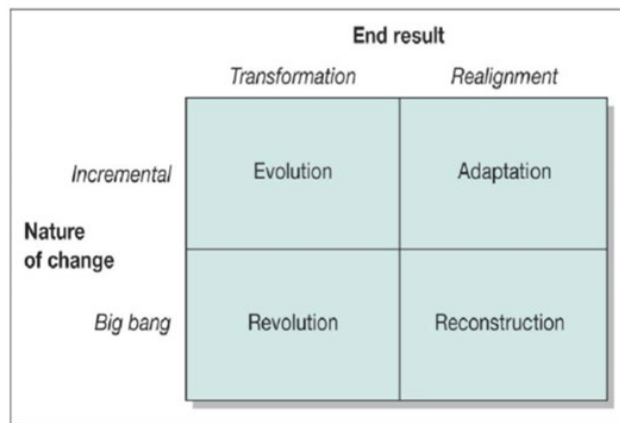


Fig. 1. Types of change

Source: adapted from Balogun et Hope Hailey (2008, p. 21)

Organisational change cannot be implemented by a single person, it requires the presence of more than one individual, particularly in the case of strategic change, given its level of complexity and the multiplicity of tasks that need to be carried out by supporting other players (Balogun et Hailey, 2005).

Adaptation: This type of change can be implemented progressively without changing the paradigm. This form of strategic change is the most common and the easiest to manage.

Reconstruction: It is a rapid change that can cause upheaval in the company, but without changing its paradigm.

Evolution: It's a change that can be planned. It requires a

paradigm shift, but a gradual one, especially for companies with skilled employees and knowledge management.

Revolution: It involves a rapid and radical transformation of the paradigm, when the company is unable to adapt to environmental or competitive pressures. This can even lead to serious crises that threaten the company's survival.

Progressive (incremental) step-by-step change is generally preferred by employees, and the most desirable for the company. However, in certain situations, such as a crisis, radical change, although more difficult, may become unavoidable.

The individual/organisation relationship in the public sector The world of productive work is also a world of relationships, according to the school; of human relations and Maya (1933), the members of the organisation play a crucial role in bringing about change: they are the ones who see it and implement it (Collerette, 1997).

Faced with various changes - economic, technological, socio-demographic, political and legal, etc. - the players in the organisation have to review their ways of doing things and thinking in order to adapt to the new organisational reality. Adaptation then consists of returning to a certain state of equilibrium. Morin (1996) distinguishes and contrasts two types of adjustment, namely adaptation to a situation and coping. Adaptation to a situation implies that the event is beyond the individuals control; his or her behaviour must adjust to the circumstances, whereas coping implies that the consequences of the action depend on the individuals decisions. According to Luminet (2002), coping strategies are the responses put in place by an individual to deal with a stressful event and the emotions associated with it. Adapting to a situation involves making cognitive and behavioural efforts to meet external and internal demands perceived by the individual as testing or exceeding his or her abilities (Lazarus, 1991).

However, each change made to the organisation does not affect all categories of workforce at the same time or in the same way, since individuals are not all affected in the same way, or at the same time, by change (Bareil, C et Savoie, A, 1999). Organisational change, as a managerial practice, is both voluntary and imposed. It can have variable effects on the development of change skills and its impact on the organisation and on processes (Soparnot, R, 2005).

Change in the public sector requires clear leadership (Hafsi, 2020), which involves not only precisely defining the objectives of the change, but also identifying the stakeholders involved

and actively involving them throughout the process, which may require open and frequent communication with employees, citizens and other stakeholder.

Next, the public services directly affect the lives of individuals and communities, which makes it all the more crucial that any changes are well planned and communicated.

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3. The Impact of Organisational Change on the Renewal of the Individual/Organisation Relationship in the Public Sector

The organisational change process Before initiating any change, it is crucial to carry out an analysis to identify what the organisation needs in order to remain competitive. The organisational change process aims to determine the various stage leading to the objective to be achieved.

Firstly, the author show that any change must be adapted to the organisation's competitive context. However, the person responsible for the change must be able to manage and analyse

the capacity to implement the change in order to be able to identify the desired future state.

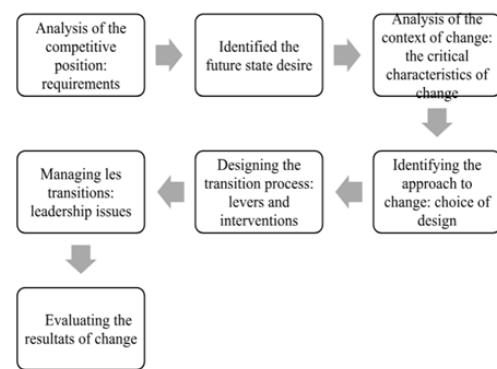


Fig. 2. The process of implementing change
Source: Balogun et Hope Hailey (2008, p. 16)

Thus, the first two stages depicted in the diagram describe the reason for the change and the identification of the desired outcome. The following stages determine the approach developed to implement and manage the change. The third stage analyses the critical elements of the change, while stages four and five introduce the transition approaches and programmes that will enable the obstacles associated with the change to be anticipated. The authors state that transition is a very important stage in the change process, both in terms of its design and its management. Personal skills, such as leadership and communication, play an essential role in the transition process. Finally, evaluating the results of the change is the last step in monitoring the success of a change process.

The Importance of Communication in Shaping the Individual-Organization Relationship and Facilitating Organisational Change. One of the objectives of staff is to understand the need for change (Balogun et Hope Hailey,

Schneider, 2005). In addition, it is important to keep employees informed at all stages of the change process, highlighting the importance of communication between stakeholders and those responsible for change at every level of the organisation.

Nowadays, individuals are becoming increasingly individualistic and different (Garner-Moyer, 2009), human resource management (HRM) is focused on the individual, we are talking about an individualised exchange relationship between the employee and the organisation (Bookcolloque RH, 2016). The communication is seen as a means of organisational change, stimulating employee agreement and coordinating the efforts of the members of the organisation (Armenakis et al., 2007).

Communication is divided into three phases: mobilisation, movement and maintenance of change (John P. Kotter, 1996), (Leslie Brinkman et David Ketchen, 2019). In the mobilisation phase, the authors state that employees need to be aware of the change as soon as possible, it is better for them to learn about the transformation from management than from any other source in the organisation, which results in employees being motivated and willing to change.

Then, in the movement phase, on order to implement the change, employees must receive the support they need, as well as the information to do so. This reduces uncertainty and encourages employees to carry out the change. Finally, in the maintenance phase, updating information on the progress of the change is of great importance, the aim being to keep employees informed throughout the change process. However, communication is the business of the people organising the workshops, and not just of the organisation's management (Balogun et Hope Hailey, Schnider, 2005).

Internal communication can initially be defined as all communication actions aimed at the employees of a company or organisation. Using media such as the company newsletter, notice boards, letters to staff and teleconferences, as well as websites, blogs and social networks, internal communication is now seen as a means of promoting internal support for the company's values and philosophy, and as a means of building solidarity and involvement between employees and their employer.

Likert and Schuler (1995) explain that organisational communication enables employees to identify the employer's expectations of them, to understand how their work is to be done and to pay attention to what others think of their work. More recently, Duguay and Schmait (2003) have clarified the importance of communication in teamwork. These authors state that organisational communication represents the ability of people involved in joint projects to adjust and exchange ideas in order to find the best way of working together.

Internal communication has a range of tools at its disposal, including written media, which are one of the central elements of the difficulties of internal communication and at the same time one of the factors of success, and oral media. Communication cannot be successful without listening to and analysing the views of the target audience. This is the basis for all message development and serious evaluation of communication actions, and is the essential tool for checking the extent to which objectives have been achieved. Oral communication is the simplest and most effective means of exchanging information through immediate direct contact. Oral communication can be informal or more structured and formalised, through individual interviews, meeting or electronic communication.

4. Conclusion

The conceptualisation of change during the work, and the mobilisation of theories of change, should lead to a focus on the different aspects of change (Pettigrew, 2007).

Change is seen as a source of stability and resistance to the uncertainty and complexity of the organisation's internal and external environment. In addition, pressure from the external environment is the main driver of organisational change (Aldrich, 1979). The aim of this article is therefore to study the impact of organisational change on the renewal of the individual/organisation relationship within the public sector.

The diversity of approaches and definitions of change leads us to conclude that we know very little about it (Pesqueux, 2004). According to Pettigrew (1995), the meaning of change

depends on the definition formulated by researchers according to the appropriate theoretical framework.

In addition, managing organisational change in the public sector requires clear direction, including a precise definition of objectives, the commitment of stakeholders and transparent communication.

According to Giangreco and Peccei (2005), involving workers in the change process can reduce resistance to transformation, particularly by fostering a degree of trust between the workers and giving employees the opportunity to act and provide feedback to the change agent.

This position is also supported by Coch and French (1948), who recommend organising group meeting to communicate the reasons for the change, while encouraging employee participation. This critical factor is addressed in a similar way throughout the change management literature, which particular emphasis on the fact that the company must encourage stakeholder interaction to mobilise and involve them so that they actively participate in the change (Langfield-Smith, 1997). By examining participation as a function of the type of change, the timeframe, and the differentiation in communication.

Our conclusions reinforce and confirm the findings of our literature review. The latter highlighted that procedures and communication within an organisation can serve several purposes. According to the work of d'Almeida & Libaert (2018), they not only allow an entity to situate itself in its changing environment and adapt accordingly, but they also ensure that messages are sent, listened to and exchanged with the aim of influencing the various actors.

What's more, communication takes on particular importance at times of change within an organisation. As Rondeau (2008) points out, in the context of organisational change, communication is the tool that makes it possible to visualise the objective and make it one's own for the people involved. He believes that the true legitimacy of change is built through communication that can be measured by the degree of by-in from organisational players, with the aim of strengthening the individual/organisation relationship.

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