

MANAGING CHANGE RESISTANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Change resistance among employees is a common phenomenon that can't be avoid in any industry. Most of the employees, against organizational change because of many reasons. Some of the reasons are misunderstanding about the change, feeling uncertain with the change result, feel that the organizational change can threaten their status quo, hard to adapt with any changes, not ready to face change process, and dislike the change. In order to handle this resistance problem, management need to practice a good approach, so that, the employees will not continuously against the change. There are six situational approaches that can be practice by management in order to solve this problem. The six approaches are as follow; (1) education and communication approach, (2) participation and involvement approach, (3) facilitation and support approach, (4) negotiation and agreement approach, (5) manipulation and cooptation approach, and the last one is (6) explicit and implicit coercion approach.

ABSTRAK

Tentangan terhadap perubahan dalam kalangan pekerja ialah satu fenomena biasa yang tidak boleh dielak dalam setiap industri. Kebanyakan pekerja menentang perubahan kerana banyak faktor. Antara faktor-faktor tersebut adalah, salah faham terhadap perubahan tersebut, merasakan tidak pasti dengan keputusan perubahan organisasi tersebut, merasakan perubahan organisasi tersebut akan mengancam kedudukan selamat mereka, susah untuk berhadapan dengan sebarang perubahan, tidak bersedia untuk menghadapi proses perubahan, dan juga tidak menyukai sebarang perubahan. Dalam usaha untuk mengawal masalah tentangan ini, pihak pengurusan perlu mengamalkan cara pendekatan yang bijak, jaid, para pekerja tidak akan menentang perubahan dalam organisasi secara berterusan. Terdapat enam cara pendekatan yang boleh dipraktikkan oleh pihak pengurusan, bagi menyelesaikan masalah ini. Enam pendekatan tersebut adalah seperti berikut; (1) Pendekatan pembelajaran dan komunikasi, (2) pendekatan penyertaan dan penglibatan, (3) pendekatan pemuliharaan dan sokongan, (4) pendekatan perundingan dan persetujuan, (5) pendekatan manipulasi dan penyesuaian, dan yang terakhir adalah, (6) pendekatan paksaan luar dan dalam.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 TITLE

Managing change resistance among employees.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study includes several crucial parts that will provide information about change management. It extends to explain the phenomena of organizational change especially in construction companies. This study will also reveal the reasons and factors why employees that work in this field always resist change rather than embrace it. The factors that cause the resistance will be jot down and will be described and explained in this research. Besides that, this study also provides good approaches or good methods that are suitable to be practiced by management team or person in construction area in order to handle all of the resistance that exist.

1.2 PROBLEM BACKGROUND

Organizational change always occurs in every single organization. No matter whether the organizational change are in the form of technological change, organizational structure change, downsizing, merger and acquisition or others. All of these are known as organizational change. Organizational change is an unavoidable situation.

Nowadays, change seems to have become one of the few stable factors in the contemporary organization, especially in construction area. Purdue University stated in one of their research that change management is a deliberate process that helps organizations to succeed (2008).

Organizations need to change in order to adapt to external or internal developments. However, process of realizing effective change is very hard and problematical. Since change is an inevitable and unavoidable part of organizational life, so it can be concluded that resistance also is correspondingly inherent align with the change process. Change should not be eradicated or terminated, but it must be reframed, explored and worked by controlling and handling the resistances.

Resistance is commonly considered to be a standard or even natural reaction to organizational change. Change and resistance go hand in hand and alongside, change indicates and demonstrates resistance and vice versa, the present of resistance means that change is taking place (Gravenhorst, 2003).

Resistance can be shown by employees in several ways which are their thinking way, speech and conversations, and the last one is behavior. This signs of resistance can be classified into two main groups, whether it is positive response of resistance or negative response of resistance. Positive response of resistance means the resistance is in the active forms. While, negative response of resistance means the resistance towards change is slowly and passively. Both of these types of resistance always occurs in construction companies.

There are many reasons why employees resist and against change. According to several past researcher, most of employees resist change because of the normal human nature which is dislike of change and hard to adapt with the change, (Palmer et al, 2008). Usually, changes that occurs in construction companies are secondary change. This type of change is harder to adapt compare to primary change. Change means we

need to learn something new. Peoples hate to learn because it takes time. Besides that, employees also discomfort with uncertainty of the change and also afraid that the change will give they negative impacts such as decreasing their power and increasing their job burden. This is why most of peoples and employees resist change that want to take place in their organization.

On top of that, this study will deeper investigate about the reasons why employees especially in construction companies, did not embrace change. Maybe they have some reasonable factors that render them to do like that whether individual factors or external factors.

Other than that, this study also will be conducted in order to identify the best approaches on how to manage those resistances. There are many ways on how to manage employees' resistance that can be practiced by management. Dealing, facing and discussing resistance is a part of the learning process that all organization must do to make sure their company can survive. Without good strategy, all of those resistance cannot be prevented and reduce.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Change always occurs in an organization or project because change is necessary and inevitable. Almost all of construction companies experience organizational change. Most of the change could bring many benefits to the organization. It can improve the organization to be better and more competitive. However, there are some organizational changes that can give drawback and bad impacts to the organization if it takes place. The examples of disadvantages of organizational change are increasing turnover rate and encourage rebellion of workers. Several sample types of change are advanced technology, new operational methodologies, downsizing, organizational structure changing, mergers and acquisition. All organizations need change in order to improve their performance; either it is transformational or radical change.

Unfortunately, as change is inevitable, so the tendency for employees to feel that the change as a burden, threat and unnecessary is high. Most of the construction companies face this type of problems. Adenle (2011) proves that, how many hard and

effective organization tries to manage change, there are about twenty percent of the people are always against the change. Most of them feel discomfort with the uncertainty of the change and afraid that the change will bring negative effects on their career and position. Then, employees quickly move to blame management for the change and automatically start to resist rather than embrace it.

However, in construction companies, there are lack of management persons that have good ability and technique to manage employee's resistance. As activators of change, management should have good initiatives in finding ways to manage the change effectively and finding techniques to encourage the employees to undertake the change as possible. Thus, there is a need to conduct this study because it can help management team in all fields especially construction field, to get details information about several best approaches that can be practice by management in order to surpass employees' resistance towards change.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To classify the types of change resistance that familiar in construction companies.
- 2) To determine and rank the reasons of employees' resistance toward change.
- 3) To identify the best approaches to manage change resistance.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

- 1) What are the types of change resistance that familiar in construction companies?
- 2) What are the main underlying factors that cause employees to resists the change?
- 3) What are the best approaches to manage change resistance?

1.6 RESEARCH SCOPE

The scope of this research is all construction companies from Class A or Grade 7 in Pahang state, Malaysia. There are about 111 Grade 7 construction companies exist in Pahang that are registered under Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB).

But, only 81 out of 111 construction companies that are located in Kuantan area will be chosen to be representatives of respondents for this study. The entire companies are chosen by using random selected sampling method. Even though, the representatives companies are not exactly same with the rest companies, but as is well known, all of the construction companies faced the same problems and types of resistance. So, the results of this study can be generalized for the use of the other companies.

This study will involve participation of 5 head Quarter employees from 81 different construction companies. That means each company will be given 5 questionnaires to be answer by 5 different respondents. The respondents will be pick up randomly without considering what is their position, gender or age.

Pahang is chosen as location of this study because Pahang is one of the countries that involve in East Coast Economic Region (ECER) plan. ECER is an economic plan that aims to eradicate poverty and also improve incomes and distribution in a sustainable manner. This shows that, Pahang is a developing and emerging state that has a stable economic structure and good competitive strategy. Other than that, Pahang also is the largest state in Peninsular Malaysia, which covers an area of 35,960 sq. Therefore, all of those reasons show that Pahang state is very suitable to be used as a strategic location for this study.

This study is focuses in Kuantan area because Kuantan is the capital city of Pahang. Therefore, Kuantan is more develop compare to the other region or district such as Bentong, Muadzam, Raub and so on. Other than that, Kuantan also is chosen because most of the Grade 7 companies are located at Kuantan.

1.7 SIGNIFICANT OF STUDY

The study of managing change resistance among employees can give advantages to all organizations especially construction companies in this world. This study can develop better understanding about change management and organizational change in construction companies. It will explain in more details about what is change management, organizational change and change resistance.

Besides that, this study also is intended in undertaking a more extensive study to investigate about what are the types of change resistance that familiar among employees in construction companies. This research will also identify what is the sign of each types of change resistance. So, employees and management team in construction companies and also the other companies can know in details what is exactly happen in their organization, even though they did not see any resistance avowedly. Another one of the contribution of this study is, to investigate whether employees' attitudes towards change can affect the probability of resistance towards organizational change or not. There are lacks of past study that investigate in details whether attitudes towards change can increase probability of change resistance among employees in constructions companies and the other companies or not.

In addition, this study also will give information about the best solutions to manage the employees' resistance in construction companies. Thus, management can avoid any problems that have potential to occur in their companies, reduce employees' turnover rate and also deflate employees' absenteeism and so on.

Other than that, the significance of this study is also to provide the best approaches or techniques that can be practiced by construction companies' management on how to manage the resistance among their employees. It provides methods to be employed and approaches on managing change resistance in construction companies.

This study is more detail compares to the other study that only list down the suitable ways to manage those resistances. This study will help in rank and prioritize which method is the best and most suitable to be applied by construction companies in order to manage the employees' entire resistance. This purpose can help construction

companies to reduce employees' change resistance and improve the skills of managing the resistance.

Therefore, this study will be very useful to the construction company. It provides many benefits and important elements for handling problems that always occur during implementing changes. It also can be used as a guideline for the other types of companies that face the same situation and problems.

1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

The operational term that is being used in this research is equation to calculate mean. This equation will be use to determine the average of respondents answer during data analysis process. According to Misni et al (2012) the statistical formula below can be use to calculate mean:

Mean = Sum of all the observed values ÷ number of observations

OR

$$\mu = \frac{\Sigma x}{n}$$

μ = the mean value of x

n = the number of observations in the data set

Σx = the sum of all observed values

1.9 EXPECTED RESULTS

It is highly expected that the methods that are suitable for managing employees' change resistance in construction companies, will be identified from this research. Other than that, the best methods or approaches can also be determined among all of the listed methods.

One of the methods that are expected to be the most familiar and the most desired method to be practiced in construction companies is negotiation and agreement. This method is about giving and offering incentives or award to potential resisters. Besides that, negotiation and agreement also is about tolerances among persons that manage the change and employees. Employees are expected to love these types of approach because they will get benefit if they embrace the change.

Another method that is expected to be the best one for this type of company is communication and education method. This method good in helping construction companies employees' to understand the objectives of the change and the logic of the organizational change to occur. Thus, misunderstanding about the change can be reduce and avoid. This situation can lead employees to embrace the change.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss in more details about the opinion and view from many others researcher that do past study which is almost similar with this study. Beside that, this chapter will also include the argument from different trustable researcher about organizational change. There are seven sub-topics that are contained in this chapter. This chapter investigates from the general information about what is change management and organizational change, followed with the scenario of change in construction companies, types of the organizational change in construction companies, types of change resistance in construction companies, pressure that cause organizational change to occurs, and reasons of employees' resistance in constructions companies. Lastly, this chapter talks about the most details and paramount sub-topic which, is the best approaches that can be used by management team of construction companies to manage resistance among that occur among their employees.

Organizational change management is a process that is very important to each organization. Many organizations as well as construction companies, try to practice change in order to be more successful. This new phenomenon becomes more familiar from day to day. It can act as an asset for that company because it can be an effective

company's business strategy and competitive advantage. However, typically, human always against something that is new to them, because they are afraid of uncertainty and ambiguity.

2.1 DEFINITION OF CHANGE, ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change is a modification and alteration process for something so that it will be differ from its original condition. Change is also about moving to a future state with hope that it will be better and more advantageous. In the other words, change means a motion process out of current condition or state. This process will through the transition state in order to achieve the future better state.

Changing organizations is a petty and messy process. However, it can bring many benefits to the organizations (Palmer et al, 2008). Organizational change can be explained as reviewing and modifying organizational structures and business processes. Organizational change is important as a competitive advantage for a company in order to survive and compete with others company. To stay a step ahead of the competition, companies need to look for ways to do things more efficiently and cost effectively. Each organization should embrace change as a way to lay the foundations for enduring success and there is no need to fear change.

According to a researcher, organizational change is the evolution of the change management field stems from psychology, business and engineering (Sundararajan, 2009). On top of that, organizational changes also can be better understood as human being or individual changes. For example, an individual try to adjust itself to adopt with the changes.

Conelly (2008) said that, change management is a term that can be used to describe the introduction of new processes in an organization, or the management of people who are experiencing change. Besides that, change management process also is known as the sequence of steps or activities that a change management team or project leader would follow to apply change management to a project or change. Nevertheless,

Purdue University (2008), pointed that, change management is a deliberate process that helps organizations to succeed. Nowadays, change is very pervasive in organizations. It happens continuously, and often at rapid speed.

Change management is about dealing with changes in external conditions and the business environment, by defining and adopting corporate strategies, structures, procedures and technologies. Change management is different with change. As pointed by Connelly (2011), change management is the process, tools and techniques on how to manage the people-side of change processes in order to achieve the necessary outcomes, and also to realize the change effectively within individuals, teams, and the wider systems.

However, according to Nickols (2010), there are four basic definitions that are related to change management, which are: - (1) the task of managing change. (2) an area of professional practice. (3) a body of knowledge. (4) a control mechanism. This shows that, change management is an area that is related to handling and arranging change with the best tools and methods.

On the other hand, change management also can be explained as a structured approach to transforming individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. Change Management includes two important parts that are used to manage the people side of change. Both of them are organizational change management processes and individual change management models.

In the other opinion, Nickols (2010) pointed that change management is a body of knowledge because it consists of models, methods and techniques, skills, tools and others form of knowledge that go into making up any practice. All of these components of knowledge are linked and integrated together.

2.2 WHAT IS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY?

Nowadays, the existence of construction companies is very emerging in each country in this world, as well as Malaysia. Construction industry is a sector of national economy that involves in process of preparation of land and development, modification

and renovation of buildings, structures and other real property. According to Behm (2008), construction is a big, dynamic and complicated industry that have significant role in country's economy. Australian Bureau of Statistic (2010) defined construction industry as businesses that have high engagement with constructions of residential and non-residential buildings, engineering structure and related commerce services.

Construction companies are responsible in doing all construction works. Construction works includes maintenance and repair of buildings or other types of engineering project, renovation process and also alteration process (Behm, 2008). Peoples that work and registered in construction companies is called contractor. According to Musu (2008), contractor is a person that performs and manages work likes carry out and conducting construction works, managing buildings materials and preparing construction resources.

There are several associations that have been established to manage and monitor all construction companies that exist in Malaysia. For examples, Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB), Pusat Khidmat Kontraktor (PKK) and Persatuan Kontraktor Melayu Malaysia (PKMM) and others. All of these association is functions to create and develop contractor community that creative, innovative and have competitive strategy in developing construction industry in Malaysia (PKMM, 2008).

During year 2013, there are about 148,728 constructions companies that have been registered under Construction Industry Development Board in Malaysia (CIDB, 2013). All of these construction companies are certified and legitimate. Construction companies in Malaysia are classified into different class or grade, and the classification process is done by CIDB and PKK according to their companies' criteria (Musu, 2008). The class is consists of class A until class F, while the grade is consist of grade 1 until grade 7.

2.3 SCENARIO OF CHANGE IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

Change management is a hot topic now that is familiar in all types of organizations as well as construction companies. However, not all people know about

change management in detail. Change is changing management process in order to get better benefits for company improvement. But not all change is good. Some of them can give drawback whether to company, customers, stakeholders, top management team or employees. Each people have their own definition about change management. According to Sundararajan (2009), organizational change management includes process, tools and technique for managing the people side of the change at an organizational level.

Nowadays, change is an ordinary situation that always occurs in each organizations, includes construction companies. Change management is too familiar, but nevertheless this scenario isn't working as it should and the success rate is always low (Strebel, 1996).

Even though, many people resist and dislike change, but there is no excuse for changes to occur because changes can bring advantages to the organizations. Normally, in constructions companies employees always resist change process that implemented by their management team. However, according to Palmer et al (2008), sometimes management person also did not embrace change, not only employees who like to resist that process.

Not all top management person act as the advocates of change. Sometimes, they also resist the change for some reasons. It is necessary not to predict that the only person who will respond negatively to the ideas and recommendations for change are 'the managed' not managers (Palmer et al, 2008). Sometimes, the change is managed by common workers, not management person. In this case, there are logic reasons why some management people resist change. It is because they did not manage the change, it is being manages by the other persons.

Workers including common employees and management person support or resist the change according to situation. They will support the change if the change will bring better benefits to their own self and their company. But, if the change will bring more disadvantages, they will act as a resistor. Mainly, in construction companies change is about improvement to become better and new benefits that can be obtain. As have been said before, changes can reduce cost, saved time and also can help to maintain the project quality in order to tackle market strategy. Since commonly it is decided by the