Strategies to Implement Organizational Changes in Middle East and North Africa

POSTER PRESENTATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies used by business leaders in the region of **Middle East and North Africa** to implement organizational change initiatives successfully. **Six themes** emerged: formal and informal **communication**, employees' **engagement**, the right **leadership** style, a cohesive **culture**, the proper **tools and training**, and the execution **speed**. Potential social change impact includes reduced employee job loss, more opportunities for increased employment, a potential increase of incomes, and local economic improvement.

Doctoral Capstone

Problem

Even though organizational change initiatives are important, **their implementation** has high **failure rates** ranging between **50% and 70%** (Brand, Croonen, & Welsh, 2016).

The general business problem is that organizational change implementation is often unsuccessful.

The specific business problem is some business leaders lack strategies to successfully implement organizational change initiatives.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to **explore strategies** that business leaders in the region of Middle East and North Africa have **used to successfully implement organizational change initiatives**.

Significance

Successful change management is necessary in any organization seeking to sustain its business and succeed in a highly competitive environment (Dobrovic & Timkova, 2017).

The very high implementation failure rates indicate a **continued need to investigate** factors and practices that foster successful organizational change initiatives and to determine the best model for the process.

This study could be used to improve the rate of successful organizational change initiatives implementation by helping:

- Develop winning strategies and processes
- Implement costs' reduction
- Decrease the reported high failure rates
- Become more competitive in the marketplace

Theory

Kotter Change Model (Kotter, 1996) was a suitable guide and relevant model. Kotter's theory is:

- *Known* as a reliable resource

- *An eight-step process* with a phase-driven strategic approach

- *A systematic framework* that can help leaders identify how to design, deploy, initiate, and integrate change strategies.

Relevant Scholarship

Change is inevitable because of the dynamic and shifting social, political, economic, and technological landscapes (Dobrovic & Timkova, 2017).

Change implementation failure is a *global challenge* (Monauni, 2017).

Organizational change initiatives failure in the implementation phase leads to a decreased productivity, *affecting the profitability* of the organization (Jones & Van de Ven, 2016)

Change agents can achieve tangible *positive* results during organizational change initiatives implementation *if* all *critical elements* implications are understood (Juliboni & Garibaldi de Hilal, 2018).

Organizations can increase their *competitive advantage* in the market and achieve financial success by successfully initiating and *managing change programs* (Akarsu, Gencer, & Yildirim, 2018).

Research Question

What strategies have some business leaders used to successfully implement organizational change initiatives?

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of **10 business leaders** in Middle East and North Africa region.

A **purposive random sampling** method was used to collect rich and deep information during the interview process.

Every participant was proficient and well informed in the successful implementation of organizational change initiatives.

Procedures

The primary source for data collection was one-hour **face to face** semistructured interviews.

An **interview protocol** with a preestablished standardized approach was used to ensure the data collection and data analysis process's reliability.

The main **secondary data** collection sources were strategic business plan presentations, change tracking tools, meeting minutes, financial statements, and archival records.

Analysis

Data was collected, recorded, and transcribed. Immediate data transcription and member checking ensured the findings' reliability.

Methodological triangulation, coding, and thematic analysis were used for data analysis.

Data was coded both manually and using NVivo software.

Findings

Six Primary Themes

Formal and informal communication

- **Dialogue is a must** and facilitates the creation of a winning partnership between all levels and all functions.

Employees' commitment and engagement

- The ability to engage people through motivation is one of the most important skills during the implementation of any organizational change initiative. **Employees are the heart** of the change implementation and the most important **assets.**

Leadership style

- The right leadership style leads to positive organizational change. **Effective leaders** provide followers with the necessary skills to **achieve** organizational **change initiatives' objectives**.

Cultural impact

- Culture is a critical contributor to implement and sustain change and can influence team behaviors, motivation, engagement, decision-making, and organizational outcomes. **Building a culture of change equals embracing change and succeeding in change.**

Training and tracking tools

- Performance metrics and training support are **key aspects and enablers** to successfully implement a change initiative.

Speed of execution

- Speed, focus, and **unstoppable momentum** can make organizational **change succeed and last**.

Interpretation

Organizational leaders need to **acknowledge** the **key enablers** to successfully implement sought-after change strategies.

Some degree of **flexibility** and willingness to pause, align, refine, and go back to execute is needed at all levels.

Speed of execution is a new major parameter that needs additional studies to better understand.

Limitations

The study's **focus** was mainly on the fast-moving **consumer goods** sector.

The study **excluded public sector** organizations and leaders, and focused on the private sector, which included a more diverse and multicultural workforce.

Recommendations

Business practice:

- Explore the relationship between the speed of execution and successful organizational change initiatives' implementation.

- Explore other external organizational parameters' effect on change initiatives' successful implementation.

Future research:

- Tackle different industries beyond consumer goods.

- Conduct further studies across all countries located in the MENA region.

- Conduct a similar research in the public industry to compare results.

Social Change Implications

The information from the study could:

- Help sustain employment practices

- Contribute to decrease the cycle of poverty

- Improve the living standards of the people in communities.

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