

INFORMAL GROUPS' ACTION: A PLANK FOR ORGANISATION CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT**Dr Nwakaego Chukuigwe****Department of Management, Faculty of Business Studies****Ignatious Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

Change is inevitable in the life of an organization. Change is humanistic in nature too, thus it is predicated by actions of individuals in the organization. Individuals find themselves in groups as they work for organizations. Their actions in the group particularly informal group could make or mar organisation's change and development. Thus, it is necessary to have an understanding of informal groups' actions in order to manage them individuals for a better organization's change and development. This chapter thus concluded that a well-established principles need to be followed for managing creative work organizations so as to promote effective operations and performance.

INTRODUCTION

An organization changes and develops just like human beings (Ford et al., 2008). Explaining the difficulties associated with organizational change and development, Machiavelli in Zoltan (2012) noted that, there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things, for the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who profit by the new order. This lukewarmness seem to arise partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favour, and partly from incredibility of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have actual experience of it. However, looking at the usefulness of the informal groups existing in Nigerian Work Organizations in their role towards work control and co-ordination which we believe is likely to contribute to organization growth and development, we do informal group work control and co-ordination pattern.

It is pertinent to point out, and quickly too that since informal groups existing in Nigerian work organizations are formed on different basis, though all centering on what is obtained in the wider African society, as Baridam (1993) pointed out, knowing in advance the exact state of organizational change and development is full with uncertainty. The situation is even more confusing, if one remembers that most human beings are resistant to change because of : (1) the fear of failure in the new situation; (2) the fear of breaking established socialities or the new social relationships may not be as rewarding as former ones; (3) the fear that the change may lead to a reduction in pay or permanent unemployment; and (4) the fear of ignorance of the need for the change.

Similarly, organizational change may be resisted because of poor planning, poor communication, knowledge of adverse consequences of previous changes and personality factors. Glueck in Zoltan and Vancea (2015) have emphasized on the last factor. While Pym (1966) cited in Sheard and Kakabadse (2004) noted that; "there are certain types of individuals who are particularly likely to resist change, quite apart from other considerations". These are people who rely heavily on their own personal

experience in making decisions, who assume that prior conditions will continue to prevail, who take the position that there is always one best way of doing things. This lend support to Nedd's (1977) argument that, the foregoing class of persons have little general propensity to take risks. Notwithstanding their shaky stand, those who are resistance to change tend to be more anxious and worried about their jobs. Trumbo in Millward et al. (2010) noted that this class of workers tends to be more of those who are less well educated and less intelligent. In Nigerian work organizations, it seems females are represented with a disproportionately high frequency.

PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The question we are interested in here is, how informal group serves as a plank' or link for organizational change and development Is it revolutionary, evolutionary? Or is it on a continuum of evolutional-evolutionary dimension? or worker's acculturation-encultural dimension or both?

In order to answer these questions, and since human action and relationship are involved in making contribution to organizational change and development by informal groups possible, researchers must acquaint themselves with three basic assumptions about people as individuals. Firstly, as Tannenbaum and Davis in Chukuigwe (1996) noted, "the traditional view of individuals is that they can be defined in terms of given interests, acquire additional skills, or changed interest".

The second is, assumption about people in groups. It is well known that the human being derive some feelings of satisfaction and competence from their work groups. They therefore wish to be accepted and to interact with their reference groups; and can greatly increase their effectiveness in attaining individual needs as well as organizational needs by working together collaboratively (Baridam 1993; Reisman 1954).

The third is, assumptions about people in organizational systems. Here, Likert (1961) notes that organizations tend to be characterized by overlapping interdependent work groups, and the 'linking pin' function of supervisors and others needs to be understood and facilitated. Baridam (1993) points out here that:

The culture in most work organizations tend to suppress the expression of feelings which people have about each other and about where they and their work organizations are communications; increased ability to intervene in interpersonal situations so as to increase satisfaction and performance; and learning how to learn by mine increasing abilities to analyze the individual's own interpersonal behaviours.

Informal groups existing in Nigerian work organizations are increasingly using comprehensive audits of employees opinion as an ice roach to organizational change and development. As French and Bell (1978) noted, such survey feedback is the process of systematically collecting data about work organizational system and feeding back the data for individual members and groups at all levels of work organization to analyze, interpret the meaning of, and design corrective action steps upon. This sort of informal group seems to provide the following benefits:

1. It gives an objective and factual basis to problems that might otherwise be dismissed as ill-informed opinion or complaints by an insignificant disgruntled minority.
2. It includes the opinion of many participants who might otherwise feel inhibited from openly voicing criticisms of current policies and procedures.

3. The members of an organizational family are able to see data about the issues with which they are most familiar and which are most relevant to them.
4. The group members become the immediate agents for putting into effect any major changes.
5. The approach utilizes existences organizational structure.

This lend support to Cole's in Ingram et al. (1999) observation that organizational development: (1) enables work organization to adapt to change in a way that obtains the full commitment of organizational members concerned; (2) produces new work organization structure that facilitate expressions in themselves and others. **(3)** Increasing the ability of participants to perceive, and to learn from, the consequences of their actions through attention to their own and others feelings.

However, among others the following are strategies to enhance organizational development.:

1. Stimulate the clarification and development of personal values and goals consonant with a democratic and scientific approach to problems of social and personal decisions and actions.
2. Develop concepts and theoretical insights which will serve as tools in linking personal values, goals and intentions to actions consistent with these inner factors and with the requirements of the situation.
3. Foster the achievement of behavioural effectiveness in transactions with the participants' environments.

Further, in a comparative study of 68 rural work organizations, Kottak (1985) found that culturally compatible innovational and change projects were twice as successful in financial terms as incompatible ones. Regular use of sociological expertise such as those of informal groups in innovation and change moves in work organizations, to ensure cultural compatibility, is therefore demonstrably cost- effective. It is acceptable that social and economic benefits follow when innovation and change programmes are culturally compatible, harness locally perceived change objectives and traditional organization, and have proper and flexible social designs for implementation (Kottak 1987; Šumanski et al., 2007). This implies that informal groups should not just carry out development policies; they are as qualified as 'organizational' decision makers to make policy as well through their input in the decision making process.

There is a shared belief among researchers that all work organizations are social products because they operate together as members of societal work community. This implies that all work organizations of such society do certain things mostly as a result of influence of various social forces or institutions. Madge (1962) observed that:

to a large extent the cultural norms and values or beliefs of the society have a lot to do with the processes in work organization". For instance, if the society in which an organization operates in is highly religious, religion becomes the dominate social factor influencing the pattern of work organizational processes.

We are aware that, like society, work organizations are always changing due to improvements in man's awareness and understanding of his environment. As Jaques in Kusaka and Hirasaka (2016) noted, consequently, new ways of doing things are discovered. One of the new ways of doing things which we discovered is the role of informal groups in moulding or changing the work attitude or consciousness of workers in work organizations. In searching for the importance of the function of informal groups

in work organizations, a researcher need to recall the statement of Miner (1973) in which the author remarked that, in every society, whether traditional or modern, unless work organizations change along with the demands of society its effort to innovate will become useless. Hence, a knowledge of the dynamics or nature of the society is needed for the management of work organizations. The author concluded by noting that man as a social and political animal seeks power, recognition and representation. We therefore accept Tullock in Hirasaka et al. (2021) views that since man are the life blood of work organizations, and work organizations is part of the body politics of the society, work organizations must innovations. Three issues are therefore basic to social changes in work organization. First is innovation or inventions which imply new ways of doing things or solving problems. Second is diffusion which is the process by which the inventions or innovations or the new ideas developed are communicated to work organization members. The third issue is consequences brought about by social changes in work organization.

We are aware that there are some changes that occur in work organizations as a result of the adoption or rejection of innovation. As Hornstein et al. in Fujishin (2013) posited; it should be noted that social change in work organizations could lead to stability or instability or confusion depending on whether the change is desirable or not. It also depends on whether or not the social change puts the characteristics of the work organization into consideration. This is worst when innovation was not diffused through communication to organization members.

CONCLUSION

It is our belief that the dimension of social change in work organization brought about by the informal groups range from; firstly, structural change which refer to changes in the structural forms of work organization, for instance changes in instruction or work practices. Secondly, changes in organizational culture. For instance, innovations or inventions may give rise to new elements in the culture of work organization or bring about integration of new elements into existing organizational culture. Thirdly, changes in interactional dimension. It must be pointed out here that changes in interactional dimensions focuses on changes in social relationship in work organizations. At one time, the tendency is for organizational members of the same status or organizational level to associate. At other organizations, since the borrower is spared the cost of invention and testing and is protected to a considerable extent from the errors of trial-and-error experimentation.

It is well known that, under primitive conditions, creative innovation is the exclusive prerogative of a few individuals who have the rare talent of perceiving connections and possibilities to which their fellows are blind. However, in modern work organizations though an optimum design for a creative organization is likely not to be completely specified, it seems there are few well-established principles to be followed for managing creative work organizations. It is therefore suggested that management should: (1) identify creative individuals and groups on whom the success of their organizations depend, on the basis of their demonstrated performance; (2) make sure that management and the individuals or groups share a common view of the organization's purposes, whether broadly or narrowly defined; (3) provide the individuals and groups with all the support the organization can muster; (4) protect them from bureaucratic interference; and (5) reward them as much as possible.

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