CHALLENGES FACING MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN PUBLIC SECTOR:

(The Case of Tanzania)

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the challenges facing management of change in public sectors. It discusses the forces which necessitate changes in Tanzania like technology, globalization, new policies, legislations, economic problems, political changes, to mention a few.

The major findings of this study towards the challenges for managing change were as follows:- Managing change proved that the adoption of reforms to a government structure was done without enough information and many people were ignorant on what might be their roles to support change. Secondly most of employees in public sectors were not able to adopt a new way of doing job and were comfortable with the old way of doing work (rule of thumb). Thirdly the introduction of E-Government to the public sector was also a challenge in term of substantial technological costs involved and limited technical capacities and skills. Generally the introduction of reforms to the government structure was not done perfectly.

Keywords:

Change Management; Independence; Public Service Reforms. Force field Analysis Model

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1.1   Introduction

In a very normal way which associates ordinary life, human beings tend to undergo changes in their daily routines, especially in the business they are running. Van de Ven and Poole (1995) define change as the observation of difference over time in one or more dimension of an entity. Reference can also be made from Encarta dictionary (2007) which define change as the shift from one state, stage, or phase to another. The same meaning can be used to any kind of change but author's concern is on the changes that are taking place in public sector. According to Burnes (1996) organizational change is the understanding, alterations within the organizations at the broadest level among individual, groups and at the collective level across the entire organization. These alterations can be of organization structure, culture, management philosophy, employee behaviors and technology as a whole. Changes in public sector have to be well managed because the process passes into very complicated aspects which have to be taken care.

Nickols, (2010) described four aspects of change which should be observed when implementing change. He mentioned them as first; the task of managing change from reactive or proactive posture which mainly has to deal with the responses over; actions of competitor's legislation, social and political disturbances, economic tides and also impacts on people. The second aspect of change is variations in competence and skills levels among practitioners which consider change as an area of professional practices (Nickols, 2010). The third one is managing change which also considers the use of different models, techniques, and methods which can be considered as the body of knowledge. The last discussed aspect of change management is the control mechanism which requires consideration of standards, processes, and procedures (*ibid*).

Taking a serious picture generated from these four aspects, managers have to be very keen in introducing changes in public sector they operate. They have to draw reasons for imposing change, establish the needs for change; also they have to clearly explain what will be the impact of change and elaborate on how change will be implemented. That will complete the meaning of change management in public sector.

This paper therefore is aiming at discussing the challenges facing management of changes in public sector and examines managerial implications on the failure. It is organized into the following sections:- The introduction, statement of the problem regarding Tanzania as a case study, Importance of undergoing economic, political and administrative changes in relation to the

problem, Managerial implications of failure to manage the imposed changes. Review of literatures of change basing on public sector- Tanzania experience. The discussion is focused on forces for change, individual and organizational factors for resistance to change, and methods of managing change. This paper also discusses the methodology used to obtain data, it analyses, findings of the study, and lastly provides recommendation and conclusion.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

Most African countries secured their independences from colonial rules about half a century around 1960's. Since that time of independence countries experienced political instability, violence, economic stagnation and civil wars. These weakened general way of living, in terms of productions, service delivery, business, agriculture activities and other developmental activities (Bate, Coastsworth, & Williamson, 2007).

Tanzania amongst other African countries, suffered the same fate after her independence in 1961. Since 1970's to 1980 the Tanzanian government experienced poor economic conditions due to the negative balance of payment, poor agricultural and industrial production, larger scale of public sector recurrent spending, high domestic and external dept and poor service delivery. This period of bad deterioration of national economy was called "A lost decade" and it was mainly caused by the war Tanzania fought against Uganda which mounted Tanzania into a very big war debt (Andrew & Schofield, 2007). During the "lost decade" period the International Monetary Fund and World Bank intervened most of African countries administrative systems. They convinced African countries, including Tanzania to administer reforms in the administrative, economic, and political structures as a response to financial assistance. Most of the reforms that have taken place in these countries were introduced as part of the structural adjustment programmes (SAP's) and the performance of such reforms remains hindered (ECA, 2004). Countries still experience the same problems, corruption is increasing day after day, poor economic conditions prevails, political instability has never stopped, and bad luck enough the remedy proposed by donor countries achieved the opposite and contributed to worsening the external debt and exacerbating the overall economic and social crisis (Pambazuka news, 2004).

The gist of the paper therefore is to find out whether the change of political, economic and administrative structures from lost decade period to date was well introduced, practiced and well

managed. The focal point will be the situation in Tanzania between 1980 and 2010 i.e. 30 years of change and response to changes.

1.3   Importance of Change In Relation To the Problem

Change is pervasive and there is no way that public sector can resist change. It can be considered as a problem solving in a very critical situation. An example can be drawn from Tanzania during 1982 the statistics indicated that Gross Domestic Product fell by 3% compared with a fall of 0.8% in 1981.this resulted to the decline of agricultural produce for exportation and industrial production which have fallen by 25% (Singh,1982). The deterioration of national economy was a very serious problem that needed attention and the solution was for the country to adopt change by reforming political, economic and administrative structures (*ibid*). Change helps public sectors to be capable of giving reactive or proactive responses to the change that happen internally or externally. It also gives new skills to the people, like political, analytical and business skills (Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, 2011). The last important aspect of change which is very useful is that change affects multiple users because it involves operational and process modifications. Whatever that is implemented as change affects the interest of many like the reforms introduced by the Washington Consensus brought effects to many African countries.

1.4   Managerial implications towards the management of change in Tanzania

The introduction of change within the country especially to the public sector goes hand to hand with a lot of managerial implications. Change needs new skills, office equipment; new professions, new offices, procedures, new legislations laws, and structures. Therefore managers would need money to provide these requirements and many others. Apart from that managers have to be responsible for the outcome of change they have introduced. Sometimes change bring negative results not as expected .i.e. back to the reforms Tanzanian has to downsize and rightsizing employees so as to do away red tapes and delays in public service delivery. Many employees were retrenched and confronted to redundancy which resulted into the growing number of unemployed population (Sharma, 2007).

Another managerial implication of change in reforms was that of introducing e- government. The information technology created a very big gap from those who can access the internet and those people who are in the village, Hughes (2003) added that while people connected to the internet shows remarkable growth, there are still many in society who are not connected and never will be

(Hughes, 2003). That could be one side but the other side is the security of government information is questioned. Hackers have been able to find their way into government computers and hack valuable information which later could be used to temper with the government. It is a managerial challenge again to make sure that the system is safe.

The last example of reform which bears the managerial implication was that of contracting out and outsourcing. This administrative reform created a big chance for corruption, conflict of interests, and nepotism. Sharma (2007) argued that many contracts were given to the wrong parties as a result of corruption, or due to the inadequate machinery and procedures within the public service to process competently awards of contracts to other companies. The companies given contracts have also needed to be monitored to make sure that they meet satisfactory service delivery. Tanzania experienced a very serious case of corruption by contracting out the services to the companies which are incapable of performing. It was 2006 when the government confirmed payments to the Richmond Company for the purpose of supplying electricity and later on 2007 it was discovered that Richmond has never existed before, it is just a mere briefcase company and unable to manufacture even a bulb (TZaffairs, 2010).

1.5   Tanzania experience towards the challenges of managing change

Managing change within the public sector is a very complicated task for managers who have not acquired skills on how to manage change. In this concept of change what is important for managers to understand and manage is the people's behavior and fear. The reactions from people are unknown and irrational, so manager's wisdom is needed the most to calm down the situation. Change is natural, endless process and unavoidable. It is as old as human society and not just emanated from this 21th century. It had been there for so many years. In the early 1990s change become greater in size due to the rapid growth of markets, stiff competition in a global economy, and advanced technology which together brought new way of doing business and management of public sector (Marko, 2011).

1.5.1   Forces for change and managerial implications

The public sector subjected into many pressures that forces it to adopt change. Complexities of events make change to assume the position of blood into the life of public sector. Organizations now have left with no options but either change or die. Moorhead & Griffin (2008) came up with

four forces which put much pressure to public sector to adopt change. They have mentioned them as; technology, people, information processing and communication, and competition.

Technology affects public sector in so many ways, i.e. change in organizational structure, marketing, change the objectives of the organization, recruitment process and operational costs. It replaces manpower by performing jobs that previously were done by humans. The use of machine necessitated downsizing process and requires training to workers at all levels towards new systems. More new products and the ever changing innovations complicate the predictions on what products or service will dominate after ten years from now. This speed up public sector reactions towards change and as the change occur rapidly, results more rapid responses (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008).

People are the major change aspect within public sector. They hold different expectations, value systems, norms, and educational levels. Generations also differ from this aspect and we may get aged or senior citizens, middle age and young generations. Younger generation is less intimidated by status and celebrates diversity (*ibid*). They are very eager; assimilate technology quickly and they take a hopeful and positive view of future outcomes. The combination of different employees cultures, values, norms, and behaviors' which increases the diversity of the workforce will never stop uttering change to the organizations. Failure to control diversity is failure to manage organization development, which amounts into poor performance and conflicts.

The information processing and communication has made Tanzanian public sector to own a lot of useful information. They have started receiving mail in the 1970s, use online applications for recruitment process, lodge complaints and complete registrations online. Communication has become very fast, computers, laptops, cameras, internet access, and fax machines have increased efficiency, improved social networking, do away delays in service delivery and improved procurement processes (Sharma, 2007). In this case therefore public sector compete one another to immediately adapt to the changes that's brought by information advancement to outfit competitors. Public sector is now obliged to incur costs to change the operational systems by replacing the outdated devices, with new to cope with the changing technology. Competition and globalization is also among the factor for change. The globalization has decreased the communication and transportation costs and increase export orientation of business (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008). The trade agreements signed by different counties like North American Free Trade

Agreement and the existence of World Trade Organization have completely changed the way business operates (*ibid*). Most organizations strategize on using this opportunity of globalization to sell higher quality products, with expense of protections from the signed agreements. Competitions is much speeded by technology, the internet is creating new competitors everyday in ways that could not have been imagined before. As globalization grows and competition persists, it is as difficult as the organizations to run away from change.

1.5.2   Resistance to change

As change considered being inevitable to the public sector's life so do resistance. Whenever change is introduced it triggers emotional reactions of employees because of the uncertainty. Specifically resistance grouped into two; individual and organizational sources for resistance.

1.5.2.1   Individual sources of resistance

Fear of unknown: many organizations introduce change without disseminating enough information on why and what organization expects from it to the implementers. This creates fear and anxiety to employees who have gain confidence to the systems, structures, and relationship. Any disruption of familiar patterns may cause fear and resistance (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008).Tanzania as a case study has not accepted an IFM policy programme of adopting reforms and conditions for financial assistance for three years just because of the fear of the unknown. Tanzania doubted the nature and the appropriate adjustment policies if they could be the solution to the economic crisis (Singh, 1985).

Economic factor: people may fear change will affect their opportunities for future pay increase as it will make their job obsolete or reduce their importance at work. Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2011) added that in public sectors there are employees who operate in comfort positions who cannot easily welcome change to take place avoiding of losing their potential positions and have limited access to the resources. The reforms Tanzania adopted especially that one of rightsizing and downsizing with the aim of reducing huge structure of public service through retrenchment and redundancy resulted to the increase number of unemployed population which again could be the reason why Tanzania resisted at first (Kiragu & Mutahaba, 2006).

Social factor: Employees tends to believe that, change will affect their image, prestige and respects from others. This always result to them resist change to protect their status, prestige and image

gained from the society, they may react that just because of the fear of what others will think (Smit, et al, 2011)

Security: Some change accompanied with retrenchment and redundancies. Security of tenure is what matters and very important to the employees. If change seems to be threat to their job there is no way they can allow it to take place smoothly (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008). Different government departments encountered resistance from employees because of the fear of losing their jobs. Performance of the installed reforms becomes poor as people were not able to adopt a new system of work hence affect the whole plan of change in ensuring quality service delivery to the public (Singh, 1985) .

Habit: in this factor people may not be able to adopt a new way of doing job and seem to be comfortable with the old way of doing work. The introduction of new set of steps may make job more difficult hence resistance can be seen as the only solution (*ibid*). Smit, et al (2011) called it inertia meaning that employees enjoys the old way of doing things and they do not want to change their status quo.

1.5.2.2   Organizational sources of resistance

Over determination: Any change involves costs, so change in organizational performance systems, structure, rewards systems, recruitment, and others like organizational culture needs resources especially financial resource. Moorhead & Griffin (2008) called it structural inertia which acts as a threat to the organization due to the overlying costs. The organization therefore may opt to withdraw from change to avoid sunk costs. Tanzania public sectors had no money and experienced a high rate of inflation due to the economic disequilibrium. It had reached a point of being not able to import industrial raw materials and agricultural product was handicapped directly as well as indirectly by the non availability of foreign and domestic industrial inputs (Singh, 1985). Financial assistance from IFM and World Bank was also involved a lot of conditions like privatization, the use of private companies which again threatened the well being of the country.

Threatened inertia: apart from other factors change introduces new expertise within the public sector. This may threaten the current specialized expertise that organizations developed to its employees over the years (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008). Public sector may find itself into dilemma

of introducing change as it may transfer responsibility for a specialized task from the current expertise to another.

Poor timing: Smit et al (2011) mentioned timing as a factor for resistance to change. The change must have specific time limit to be initiated, take over, and stabilize. If otherwise change may not in a position to bring what might be expected to bring. Tanzania face the same problem by introducing reforms late as it was planned. Taking an example of Public service reform programe has three phases and Tanzania is now installing the second phase while people are struggling and completely know nothing about the previous phase. This hinders the progress on employees to adopt what required from both phases just because of poor timing (PO-PSM 2010).

Resources allocation: this means anything like money, human resources, and equipment like; computer, printers and stationeries. The poor misallocation and inadequate resources may take a face of obstacle towards the implementation of change (Moorhead& griffin, 2008).

Unclear and obstacles to the new vision: The vision always sketches the perfect future of the public sector. The unclear and incompatible vision may affect change completely. This is because the organizational structure, pay structure, culture and mindset of employees tend to support the existence vision and act into contrary with the new vision and change expectations. Such structures may give negative results as they are inconsistent with the new vision (Smit, et al.2011). Tanzanian employees were reluctant to change the way they used to do their job. The government again failed to hundred per cent to adopt the new system of working.

There are so many forces that may resist the implementation of change in public sector, i.e. a surprise change to employees may not be easily accepted as they are not aware of what will be the outcome of it. Smit et al. (2011) thought that if change is sudden, unexpected or extreme, resistance may be almost a reflect action.

1.5.3   Managing change in Public Sector -Tanzania

In whatever way the public sector changes must encounter resistance. Smit et al (2011) put forward that, resistance to change is a human response and organization should take necessary and useful measures to manage change. The techniques for managing change differ depending on

the type of change, nature of business and the environment in which the organization operates. The most useful measures which cut across all situations are explained here under:

1.5.3.1   Education and communication:

Change needs awareness, so before anything managers should educate employees about the importance of having change and what objectives are going to be achieved. This helps to clear doubt about change and make employee to relax. Moorhead & Griffin (2008) see the absence of communication as the problem because the gap can be filled with false information which might again cause ambiguity during the transition. Communication can be the major tool here in educating employees on the change. Smit et at (2011) suggested that the one to one discussion or groups presentations can be useful in creating awareness, educate employees and clear whatever ambiguity arises. The President Office-public service management (2010) admitted that ministries, departments and agencies lacks education and awareness on the ongoing reforms in Tanzania which resulted most of the installed reforms to fail.

1.5.3.2   **Participation and involvement:**

Tanzania's public sector should involve its employees in planning change as they are the ones who are expected to implement change. Participation creates unity, togetherness, and builds sense of belonging. This helps employee to control change as they are taking it as their own destiny (Moorhead & Griffin 2008).In implementing reforms in Tanzania employees were not involved in planning any change rather than been asked to just adopt change . This hindered the implementation of reforms in Tanzania (PO-PSM, 2010).

1.5.3.3   Facilitation and Support:

Managers should solicit top management support to gain control and power. Facilitation also can be done by decentralizing authority to employees to implement change. This always makes them feel part of the management decision makers. (Smit et al 2011).Apart from that the psychological support also may be needed when employees fear and anxiety become high towards change.
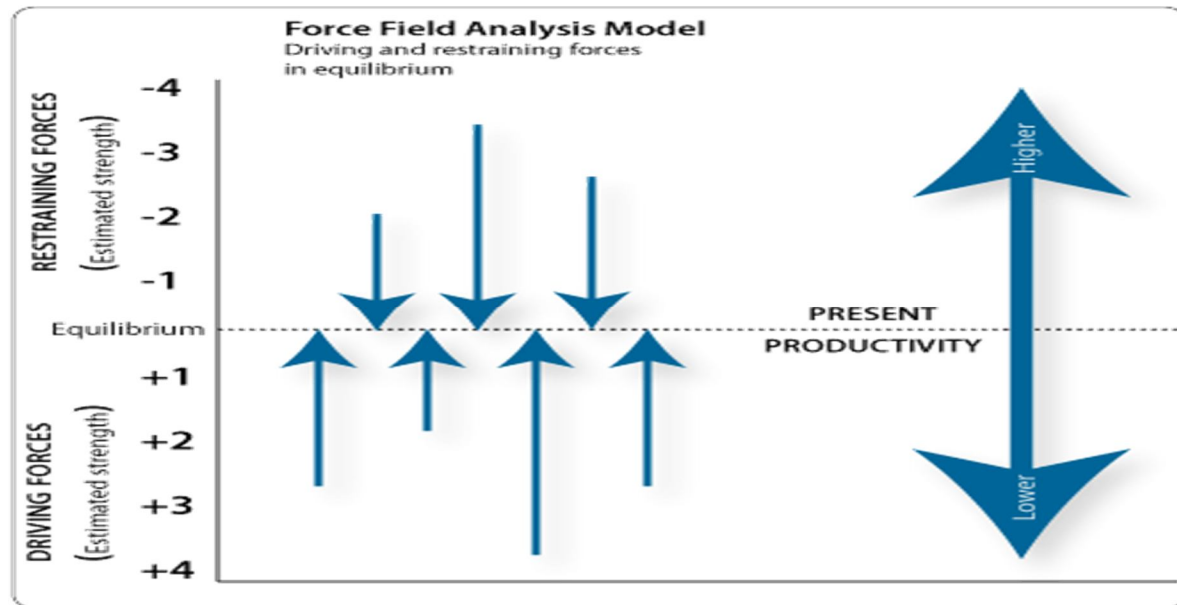
1.5.3.4   **Negotiation and Rewards:**

Negotiation can be made over how change can be implemented and both parties have to reach agreement before implementation. This helps to solve differences and make people treat each

other as one group with mutual understanding. Also the good way of managing change is to reward employees who contributed and made change possible (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008).

1.5.3.5   Force field analysis model:

Varieties of tactics can be used to sustain and make change successful; the most useful way of managing resistance to change is the application of force field analysis. This is a model which developed by kurt Lewin (1951) explaining two forces of change which are going opposite directions. He assumed that in planning and managing change there is driving forces and restraining forces. The former tend to initiate change and support and the latter restrain change to take place. The driving forces involve so many factors like change in technology which force the country to adopt the new technology so as to do away obsolete system of performing tasks (Moorhead & Griffin, 2008). Business competition, political changes e.g. the coming of the new regime bring about change in ideology and governance, amendment of laws and procedures of operation, people also are the source for a country to adopt changes because they hold different expectations, educational levels, norms and values systems(*ibid*). On the other hand the restraining force goes in a different direction opposing the change by competing with the driving forces of change. These restraining forces involve lack of trust, and misunderstanding, self interests, different perceptions, low tolerance for change and uncertainty (Smit, et al.2011). If employees knows nothing pertaining the change that is about to take place they obvious tend to resists because of the fear, fear of unknown, losing their status and jobs (*ibid*). The model suggests that in order for managers to well manage change the sum of the driving forces must be equal to the sum of restraining forces to achieve what is called equilibrium. Equilibrium point occurs when these two forces driving forces and retraining forces are balanced.

Force field analysis diagram showing equilibrium point

Source; adopted from Accel-Team (2013)

The present level of productivity from the diagram can be raised or lowered depends on the relationship between the driving and restraining forces. So the challenge here is for manager to maintain equilibrium.

1.6   Methodology used in obtaining data

This paper used documentary review as the data collection instrument to supplement the existence knowledge from the literature. This method includes policies, journals, reports, articles, and other related books concerning the topic. The paper also used virtual outputs like internet sources to make the research successful.

1.7   What went wrong in Public sector towards Managing Changes

The changes that took place in Public Sector, around 1980's in Tanzania were inevitable due to the long term structural imbalances of economy. The country does not have available adequate foreign exchange, industrial production suffered heavily. The disequilibrium in agricultural and industrial production in turn generated inflation and disequilibrium in government finances (1985). Tanzania had no options but to adopt new ways of performing tasks and do business. It was in this time when the structural adjustment programmes (SAP's) which was introduced by

Word bank and International monetary fund (IMF) came into existence. The programme suggested that, Tanzania should restructure her, administrative, political, and economic structures and come up with the new systems of operating those structures (ECA, 2004).

Administrative reforms aimed at enhancing productivity by putting much emphasis on result oriented instead of process orientation to boost up economy. It also aimed at reducing the huge government machinery by downsize and right size the government structure to do away unnecessary long procedures, excessive paperwork, rigidity, and inflexibilities in service delivery (Sharma, 2007). Economic reforms were also adopted, in making effort of reviving deteriorated economy. Privatization was emphasized and economic liberalization to allow free market trade which was believed that could foster the exportation and importation (Kiragu & Mutahaba, 2006).

The analysis of what went wrong to Public sector in managing change proved that reforms adopted by Tanzania was not well introduced to the employees because people were not aware of what was going on the information concerning reforms was limited. This resulted to the resistance of change and failure to achieve effectively the reforms targets.

The Tanzania Presidents Office Public Service Management (PO-PSM) revealed the reasons for the failures of the implementation of phase one reform as follows: first the reforms were less publicity that means the changes were less known and clear to many employees. It was also very difficult for Public service to establish better and more constructive partnership with nongovernmental organizations as what contracting out and outsourcing reform suggests. Leaders themselves who were supposed to be at the front line supporting reforms were the ones who resisted so the challenge was to sustain top leadership commitment to the reforms. (PO-PSM, 2010)

Adoption of reforms to the government structures was done without enough information and many people were ignorant on what might be their roles to support change. Change was not negotiated; there was no enough education to the employees about reforms and also poor involvement. All these resulted to the failure of effective implementation of some of reforms (PO-PSM, 2010).

The paper also found out that most of employees in public sector were not able to adopt a new way of doing job and seemed to be comfortable with the old way of doing work. The introduction

of privatizations, de-bureaucratization, democratization, decentralization and contracting out made their job more difficult hence resistance was the only solution (*ibid*).

The introduction of ICT to the government for improving service delivery was also a challenge to the government. First there were substantial technological costs involved. Second ICT required specific management capacities and skills and third there was a tendency for technology to take over their underlying processes and to become an end itself (op. ct).

Generally the introduction of reforms to the government structures was not followed the good way of initiating change, people were blind and know nothing about what they were supposed to do to support change. The government of Tanzania still involves itself in reforms and there are some successes though not much as expected because of the poor timing and lack of education to the employees concerning change.

1.8   Conclusion and Recommendations

Managing change in public sector is the most important activity if done well, because it determines the organization life. Change modifies all organizational structures by adjusting department's tasks to fit the needs of the society. This paper examined the challenges facing public sector in managing change the case of Tanzania. It started by giving definitions of change and organizational change. It went on revealing that deterioration of national economy where by it shows disequilibrium and long term structural imbalance of economy which resulted Tanzania to adopt reforms to rectify the situation. The discussion proceeded to the identification of managerial implications that Tanzania faced during the change process, and theoretical review about the Tanzania experience towards change management. The paper comes up with the analysis of what went wrong in public sector towards change and recommendation on what could have been done to make the change successful.

The paper recommends that before leaders decided to adopt any kind of change like reforms into public sectors they have to conduct pilot study to some of the departments to measure reliability of the change, the change also supposed to be publicized to the employees so as to make them aware with what is about to take place. Managers have to win support from the top management to make it successful; Labor unions must also be involved because they are the ones who can smoothly speak with employees to accept change. The last recommendation is of pilot program

whereby people will be moving around during the implementation of change, this helps to know if the change is taking place or not .At the end the paper concludes the discussion over the managing change within the organization.

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