ICT development and usage: managing change in organizations

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has now been used in all walks of lives and the introduction of this technology outside of Malaysia, especially in the developed countries has matured far more. Leaping towards this gap has made Malaysian leaders in the past saw the potential of ICT and the MSC project was the stepping stone to ensure that Malaysia will not be left out in this area with potential possibilities of changing the country's economy. This viewpoint paper will discuss mostly on the human behavior and acceptance towards change to fulfill human capital. The importance of change is to ensure the organizational development is coping to business goal and competition. Challenges of human resource acceptance or rejections toward technology in general is somehow related to business goal, thus this paper will discuss the views from many research and articles related to the subject matter.

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Introduction

E-government implementation in Malaysia promotes major innovations in the way in which ICTs are used in government as well as in how government activities are organized. The Multimedia Superhighway Corridor (MSC) Malaysia was created as a gateway to growing profits. In the process of going through such evolution the human capital is one of the important but changing the way they work is a great challenge. Thus this article discussed other research in identify the effectiveness of managing change business activities using technology and ICT. Policies administered by Malaysian government guided the e-government development and implementation.

Changing the way business activity with the support of human capital is a challenge. Three levels can be identified. The first level is the relationship (transaction) between the administration and the citizen (customer) and the related re-engineering of the activities internal to the administration (Bellamy & Taylor, 1998). A second level regards the way in which the boundaries between the state and the market are redrawn by the creation of an electronic, minimal state, more transparent, agile, and accountable (Heeks, 1999; Stiglitz, Orszag, & Orszag, 2000). A third level deals with the purpose of aid policies aimed at introducing e-government into developing countries.

As stated by Gareth et al. (2010, p.292) whereby planned organizational change is normally targeted at improving effectiveness at one or more of four different levels: human resource, functional resource, technological capabilities, and organizational capabilities.

Human resource in this context is people manning the organization. They must also be equip with knowledge and can adapt to new work culture, to be able to compete with the demands in the course of fulfilling organizational goals. Therefore this article will discuss base on the scope of human resource as the focus or target of change.

Human resource as target of change

As stated by Gareth et al. (2010, p.292) "Human resources are an organization's most important asset". The author also refers to how their skills and abilities will portray an organization's distinctive competences. The need for successful change, mention by Gareth (et. El 2010) may also involve the change that directly related to human resource includes:

- Training investment to upgrade skills
- Grooming employees in accepting new work culture adoption
- Introducing the new values to motivate diverse workforce
- Consistent evaluation process to identify promotion and reward systems
- Composition change in the top-management team to improve learning and decision making.

Current trends of change may involve the discussion of how technology impact an organizational design is currently unavoidable. A good example of this factual statement can be backed with the statement of Terry Bynum's quotation, "Computer technology is the most powerful and the most flexible technology ever developed," says Terry Bynum, who chairs the American Philosophical Association's Committee on Philosophy and Computing (Williams et al. 1999). The point here is just to discuss the importance of human resource to acquire new skills especially technological based and to realize where technology can have impact on all of the above change related to human resource.

Discussions on change management

As stated by Saka et al. (2001, p.280) "The need for successful change management is intensively proclaimed by "expert" consultants, the response for some time has been regarded as falling short of what is required. The heavy emphasis in the literature on a rational-linear approach to understanding organizational change overlooks the significance of the cultural and political dimensions of organizational life".

The discussion on change management here seems to stress just about fulfilling the goals for profit that often overlook the culture of the organization involving human behavior conditions

and the side effect it may bring to the organization. The statement on which "One can understand how emotion influences various aspects of a change process by collecting stories throughout an organization" (Van Buskirk and McGrath, 1992), shows that human behavior with emotional issues has some impact towards the change process.

In definition change management means to plan, initiate, realize, control, and finally stabilize change processes on both, corporate and personal level. In the article on the definition and phases of change in an organization from TheManager.org by Oliver Recklies, stated that change may cover such diverse problems as for example strategic direction or personal development programs for employees.

Human behavior in accepting change

The technology may come in handy for organizational effectiveness and most certainly will change how businesses are run including how employee works with changing environment. Nonetheless, human resource consists of, a group of people with different behavioral patterns. Patterns seen that may include connections towards resistance to change and unethical work behavior are basically one of the silent problem behind the success of organizational change development.

In this viewpoint discussion, an organizational change may involve specifically adaptive change of the technological kind involves transformation at several levels, organizationally and individually, Law et al. (2008, p.384). One organization in particular creates a curiosity on the facts and issues bring forward in this viewpoint. In relation to the individual-level, occurrences of such resistance to change in human behavior are basically may result or include :

• Feeling of uncertainty and insecure which definitely may trigger organizational inertia (the inability to change)

• Work absenteeism is obvious after the change are announced

• High rate of turnover may rise due to various reason which includes change factors

• Being uncooperative in work which resulted in low output or profits

• Selectively perceiving information for own or divisional only benefit only, and potential to reject the purpose of change if he/she fail to perceive information as open as possible (Gareth et. el 2010, p.299).

Identifying issues that can be seen in the statement above is useful thus this viewpoint article may show that the awareness of the human factors and knowledge plus awareness of the changing environment.

Human are part of the resource in the operations of these important tools and since so far, based on twelve years of working in an environment where change can never be avoided, I have observed that attempt has put forth the idea of change management surfaced but did not materialized due to a number of reason including the human behavioral as identified in the previous paragraph.

In my opinion these happened due to the lack of awareness or knowledge among the employees and managers handling change involving the targets of human resource must identify and understand the phases of change in human behavior. Basically there are seven phases of change that are involved here and the description is adapted from the book of Colin Carnall: Managing Change in Organizations and Claudia Kostka & Annette Moench: Change Management.

Based on the references above, normally, people perceive change processes in seven typical stages as seen in illustration

below taken from the article by Recklies. The illustrations describe plotted data on the fluctuation of behavior studied by Recklies in the published article in the website of TheManager.org published. This charts an easier understanding of human behavior level of resistance and how gradually the acceptance took place after going through phases of endearment (refer to figure 1).

The figure illustrated the seven phases in a graphical plot using line analysis dimension showing the perceived competence versus time. The graph describe how long the resistance phase forms to finally being accepted by people.
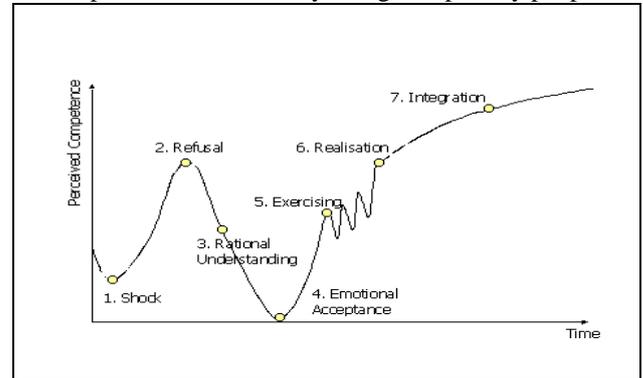
Source : (Recklies, O.2010)

Fig. 1 . The Seven Phases of People Acceptance in Change

Understanding and evaluating the above figure, clearly seen there on how fluctuations of emotions perceive in human behavior patterns of acceptance and it is easier to understand where are the flaws are located. Based on these data plotted here action to counter the issue can be justified and let us understand the seven phases illustrated here further. The seven phases can be described as follows seen in table 1, in elaborate explanation.

Adaptation of the seven phases of change is from Colin Carnall: Managing Change in Organizations and Claudia Kostka & Annette Moench: Change Management by Recklies.

The adaption shows clearly the phsyicological path ways that inserts in the human behavior patterns and clear description of each of this phase make it easier for those interested in diversifying the factual aspect to elaborate into different other research dimension. These different dimension can be analyzed and introduce more huma behavior study and research toward how true the phase has effect in the change management then, now and in the future.

The importance of human resource management

Human resource in this viewpoint discussion must be realized as the heart and soul of practically every organization. Managers who are challenged with managing change must foresee the human resource as one of the target of change and must identify ways to tackle such targets that involve human behavior factors.

Based on the data discussed on the human behavior on the resistance to change managers must act and counter these behavioral patterns towards their advantage and for the organization's benefit, action must be taken seriously not lightly.

Techniques to resolving the change resistance

As human themselves, managers who has the responsibility of coaching people in their organization towards change must identify the ways and techniques to tackle this matter so that the syndrome of inertia will not take place in their organization which may result in a low progression on organizational development. Organizational development (OD) is a series of techniques and methods that managers can use in their action

research program to increase the adaptability of their organization (Gareth et. el 2010, p.315).

Based on the book by Gareth , tactics that managers can use to reduce resistance to change can include education and communication, participation and empowerment, facilitation, bargaining and negotiation, manipulation, and coercion. The general techniques to promote change are generally introduced in three general level such as counseling, sensitivity training and process consultation. These techniques are basically targets the change of attitudes and behavior of individual. Nonetheless, techniques varied in its adaptation and are effective at the group and organizational levels.

Conclusions

After reviewing article, journals and books as the point of reference on this viewpoint discussion, one conclusion can be stipulated at this point. Human behavior patterns, actions and perceptions are one of the core issues in the matter of organizational development towards change for the betterment of organizational future success.

Even though technology has come in handy as tools towards the development and success of an organization, but human resource remain the key elements in the succession of development. Converting human resource to be skillful and adaptable to change is a great challenge and those who manage to successfully encounter this may become the champion. Resulting in productive organization and future progressive can be seen as seamlessly smooth and will be the pillars to more successful road to change for the benefit of stake holders in general.

That is why human resource and human behavior must be nominated as the important part of the success of an organization and be the key element in the design of it in the areas of managing change especially.

Challenge of managing change is also one skill that needs to be point out especially in relation of managing human resource coupled with human behavior it carries. Future discussions on the topic of managing change and its challengers shall be highlighted and touch upon for further investigation.

The article review are mainly focused on one main topic on human behavior which is not a research base discussion but a conceptual viewpoint of focus that could be elaborated to a more extensive findings. It may be an eye opener or starting point of a

better profound base research on human behavior with relation to change in an organization in conjunction to ICT development and usage throughout the world.

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Table 1. The Description of Seven Phases

Phase	Description
Shock and Surprise	Confrontation with unexpected situations. This can happen 'by accident' (e.g. losses in particular business units) or planned events (e.g. workshops for personal development and team performance improvement). These situations make people realize that their own patterns of doing things are not suitable for new conditions any more. Thus, their perceived own competence decreases.
Denial and Refusal	People activate values as support for their conviction that change is not necessary. Hence, they believe there is no need for change; their perceived competency increases again.
Rational Understanding	People realize the need for change. According to this insight, their perceived competence decreases again. People focus on finding short term solutions, thus they only cure symptoms. There is no willingness to change own patterns of behavior.
Emotional Acceptance	This phase, which is also called 'crisis' is the most important one. Only if management succeeds to create a willingness for changing values, beliefs, and behaviors, the organization will be able to exploit their real potentials. In the worst case, however, change processes will be stopped or slowed down here.
Exercising and Learning	The new acceptance of change creates a new willingness for learning. People start to try new behaviors and processes. They will experience success and failure during this phase. It is the change managers task to create some early wins (e.g. by starting with easier projects). This will lead to an increase in peoples perceived own competence.
Realization.	People gather more information by learning and exercising. This knowledge has a feedback-effect. People understand which behavior is effective in which situation. This, in turn, opens up their minds for new experiences. These extended patterns of behavior increase organizational flexibility. Perceived competency has reached a higher level than prior to change.
Integration	People totally integrate their newly acquired patterns of thinking and acting. The new behaviors become routine.

Source : (Recklies, O.2010)