

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION QUALITY ON EMPLOYEE CHANGE READINESS

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I, IGOE DAPHINE, hereby declare that the contents of this dissertation report are my original work, and that it has not been submitted in any other University for an award of similar type. I have also acknowledged all the referenced work that I referred to while undertaking my study.

Sign.....

Date...10th Sept, 2024...

APPROVAL

I, as the undersigned, declare that I have been one of the supervisors of the student in this study titled, 'EMPLOYEES' CHANGE READINESS.'

WAWERU ABRAHAM

Sign.....

Date.....10 September 2024

DEDICATION

To my parents, siblings, and lecturers.

Anything that good that has come to my life and during my study has been because of your guidance, support and love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to thank and praise God for faithfully leading me through this journey.

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ABSTRACT

The role of communication quality on employees' change readiness is a topic of growing interest in organizational research. Effective communication plays a crucial role in facilitating successful change initiatives within organizations. However, there is a gap in research that specifically examines the impact of communication quality on employees' readiness to embrace and adapt to change. This article aims to address this gap by exploring the relationship between communication quality and employees' change readiness. Studies have shown that high-quality communication during change initiatives enhances employees' understanding of the rationale behind the change, the intended outcomes, and their role in the process (de Chernatony, et al., 2006, p.820) and (Sandhu, 2009, p.81). Clear and transparent communication fosters trust, reduces uncertainty, and creates a sense of psychological safety among employees. This, in turn, positively influences employees' change readiness by increasing their willingness to engage in the change process and their confidence in their ability to adapt. Furthermore, effective communication provides employees with the necessary information and resources to navigate the change successfully. It enables open dialogue, encourages feedback, and creates opportunities for employees to voice their concerns and contribute their ideas. When employees feel heard and valued, they are more likely to embrace change and actively participate in its implementation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the background to the study, the statement of research problem and the purpose of the study. It also has the research objectives and research questions. The chapter also contains the conceptual framework, the scope of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Employee readiness to change plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of any intended change. This is because the effective implementation of change heavily relies on active participation and contribution of employees (McKay et al., 2013; Edwards et al., 2020). Employee readiness for change encompasses both cognitive and affective aspects, meaning that employees need to be mentally and emotionally prepared for the upcoming changes (Alqudah et al., 2022.). This level of readiness is considered the threshold required for change to be successful (Visagie, & Steyn, 2011).

The importance of change readiness is supported by research evidence, which highlights that employee resistance to change significantly contributes to the high failure rate of change initiatives (Errida, & Lotfi, 2021). For instance, a recent study conducted by Errida shows that most organizational change initiatives fail, with an estimated failure rate of 60-70%.() Most of the failure cases reported are attributed to employees resistance to change, which is an indicator of employee unreadiness for change().

In Africa, there are many studies that have shown a high rate of failure. For instance, a study by Olayinka and Omololu()found that the evaluation of SDG disclosure by the 80 listed firms in Africa is still at a very low level. Also, the findings of the Business reporting indicators for each SDG target shows that most firms show little or no interest to report on SDG activities.

In the Ugandan context, especially in high institutions of learning, which happens to be the focus of this study, many earmarked changes have been frustrated mainly due to resistance from employees. For example, over the years, Kyambogo University have had earmarked changes being resisted. The lecturers for instance, forced out a Vice Chancellor who had initiated changes that aimed at reducing dishonesty and corruption. (“I’m not going anywhere, those fighting me are wasting time” VC Katunguka tells Kyambogo University staff in May

2022.) Again, Makerere University Business School have attempted to gain autonomy and be independent university since 2005 and up to date the change has failed due to resistance from lecturers (MUBS to wait at least two years to become independent-Educ. Minister, Jessica Alupo in 2021).

In Uganda Christian University, when staff restructuring and introduction of Alpha and Moodle systems were brought into places, some of the employees, most of who were older, could not adjust to the new system of digital work and also increased workload as a result of laying of some staff, hence opted to leave the job, as a resistance to the change.

As regards to how the required readiness amongst the employees media richness theory can be persuasive. The theory purports that, effective communication can be a tool to inspire employees into action. For example, face-to-face communication is considered a rich medium as it allows for immediate feedback, while emails are considered less rich due to the lack of non-verbal cues.

Given the centrality of employee change readiness, and there being persuasive theory, this study attempts to examine the contribution of communication quality in fostering change readiness among employees in UCU.

1.2 Statement of the problem/ Opportunity

Employee change readiness is a key factor that determines the degree to which a contemplated change will be successful. The problem is the lack of understanding regarding the role of communication quality in influencing employee change readiness. This means that there is need to explore how communication quality specifically affects employees' readiness to embrace and adapt to specific changes. What is known about the problem is that effective communication plays a crucial role in organizational change initiatives (Sandhu, 2009, p.81). However, there is a gap in research that focuses on the quality of communication and its impact on employee change readiness. To address this, some studies have examined the general importance of communication in change management (de Chernatony et al., 2006, p.820). However, there is still a need for research that specifically investigates the relationship between communication quality and employee change readiness. What is not known about the problem is how different aspects of communication quality, such as clarity, communication channels, and timeliness, influence employees' readiness to embrace and adapt to organizational changes. To address this, further research is needed to understand the specific role of communication quality in shaping employee change readiness. This research could involve examining the

impact of different communication channels, strategies, and behaviors during organizational change. By gaining a deeper understanding of this relationship, organizations can develop more effective communication strategies to enhance employee change readiness.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study will be to examine the role of communication channels, Timeliness, Clarity, on Change readiness in Uganda Christian University teaching staff.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To explore the perceived change communication quality in UCU in the recently proposed changes.
2. To explore the degree of employee change readiness among UCU employees.
3. To explore the possible contribution of communication quality in fostering employee change readiness.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the perceived change communication quality in UCU in the recently proposed changes?
2. What is the degree of employee change readiness among UCU employees?
3. What is the possible contribution of communication quality in fostering employee change readiness?

1.6 Significance of the study

The result of this study gives an insight on the strategies Uganda Christian University can employ to realize positive results on employee change readiness in proposed future changes.

The results of this study can be employed as a model by managers of other organizations during a change process to enhance change readiness among the employees.

The study adds to the scholarly works that have examined the concept of employees' change readiness.

1.7 Scope of the study

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Uganda Christian University. This is an institution that recently tried to effect changes but the employee readiness was an issue that they were at an instance had to be coerced to achieve the intended aim.

1.7.2Time scope

The research was recorded between March 2024 and June 2024.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature on the variables under investigation. It provides the definitions of the various variables examined in this study. It also provides a discussion from the previous studies and theories that build a relationship between the variables in question.

2.1 Employee Change Readiness

Change is inevitable in the dynamic environment of today's workplaces. Organizations constantly evolve to stay competitive and relevant in the market, hence the phrase 'the only thing that is constant in an organization is change (Gleeson 2017).

Organizational change encompasses the process through which an organization transitions from its current state to a desired future state to enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness (Lunenburg, 2010). In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations must proactively adapt to remain competitive and meet the demands of the dynamic environment they operate in (Creemers, 2011). This highlights the fundamental nature of change within the fabric of organizational operations.

The drivers of organizational change can be categorized into internal and external forces, each playing a pivotal role in shaping the need for change (Ashkenas, 2013). Internally, factors such as the need for increased productivity and structural challenges can compel both management and employees to initiate and embrace organizational transformations. Externally, influences like evolving government regulations, shifting customer preferences, technological advancements, fluctuations in labor markets, and economic trends can act as catalysts for organizational change (Duke, 2011). Recognizing and responding effectively to these multifaceted forces is essential for organizations seeking to thrive in a constantly changing business environment.

Concerning the objectives of organizational change, it has been argued that changes within an organization are diverse in nature. For instance, a change initiative may aim to enhance the long-term health of the organization by improving capabilities, strengthening customer and supplier relationships, fostering a positive work culture, and minimizing costs (Chen et al., 2012). Additionally, organizational change goals could encompass activities such as organizational mergers, crisis management, and competitive positioning. A comprehensive

evaluation of these identified goals underscores the necessity for organizations to be responsive to the demands imposed by external environmental factors.

Despite the compelling rationale supporting the inevitability of organizational change, the concept of change readiness has emerged as a critical concern. This is primarily due to the pivotal role readiness plays in determining the success of planned changes. Change readiness encompasses both organizational preparedness and employee readiness (Bennett & Bush, 2014). This dual focus on organizational and individual readiness is essential for ensuring the effective implementation of organizational changes.

When considering organizational readiness, it has been emphasized that the significance of the planned change would be diminished if the organization is not adequately prepared (Blackman, O'Flynn, & Ugyel, 2013). Organizational readiness for change is contingent upon the organization possessing the necessary capacity and structures to effectively navigate the intended change (Blackman, 2014). Furthermore, readiness for change in an organization is contingent upon the presence of a genuine necessity for change and the organization's ability to execute the change (Choi & Rouna, 2010). This underscores the importance of ensuring that organizational change is driven by a genuine need and that the organization possesses the essential infrastructure and resources required for successful implementation.

Regarding employee readiness for change, various perspectives have been put forth by scholars. One viewpoint frames change readiness as a continuum, where one end signifies readiness while the other denotes resistance (Eby et al., 2000). This perspective suggests that individuals within an organization may exhibit varying degrees of readiness or resistance to change. However, critics have challenged this notion by arguing that readiness and resistance are distinct variables that should not be viewed as opposite ends of a single spectrum.

In a previous discussion, the concept of change readiness was depicted as a process in which employees perceive the change as both necessary and achievable, leading them to show willingness to support the change efforts (Reese, 2009). In this light, employees, driven by their own evaluation of the potential success of the proposed change, offer their backing to the initiative.

Another perspective posits that change readiness reflects employees' belief that a proposed change is advantageous and has a high probability of successful implementation (Ford & Ford, 2010). According to this viewpoint, this psychological aspect suggests that employees are

prepared for an upcoming change if they believe that the change positively impacts their organization or work and is therefore valuable and feasible, representing a state of mind.

In exploring the readiness for change, it has been posited that there are four key components involved, namely appropriateness, managerial support, self-efficacy, and personal valence (Howley, 2012). Appropriateness pertains to how employees perceive the change as essential for the organization. Managerial support involves the evaluation and belief that managers are in favour of the proposed change, while self-efficacy relates to employees' confidence in possessing the necessary skills and abilities to manage the change. Lastly, personal valence concerns the belief that the change would personally benefit the employee, leading to their readiness for the change.

Additionally, the concept of employee readiness for change has been delineated into two dimensions: cognitive and affective. Cognitive readiness revolves around the belief that the planned change is necessary and that the employee is capable of effectively navigating the change. On the other hand, affective readiness pertains to the emotions and optimism employees hold regarding the positive outcomes of the change on their job/role, their current and future prospects, and their positive sentiments toward the planned change (Rafferty, Jimmieson, & Armenakis, 2013). This distinction highlights the cognitive and emotional aspects that contribute to employees' readiness for change.

2.2 Employee Change Communication

When considering communication within organizations, scholars have emphasized its pivotal role, often likening effective communication to the lifeblood of an organization (Sethi & Seth, 2009). The absence of effective communication has been linked to various organizational challenges. Drawing a parallel to the human body, communication is depicted as vital for determining an organization's efficiency, much like blood is to the human body. Effective communication is believed to support key organizational functions such as unity of command, delegation of authority and responsibility, teamwork and leadership, as well as facilitating organizational changes. This metaphor underscores the critical nature of communication in ensuring the smooth operation and success of an organization.

When it comes to assessing communication effectiveness, various criteria have been established to gauge its achievement. According to the media richness theory proposed by Daft and Lengel (1986), communication effectiveness hinges on meeting specific conditions. For

instance, the frequency of communication exchanges between management and employees serves as a yardstick to evaluate whether the intended information will be clearly understood by the target audience (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). When there is regular communication, especially when crucial information is sought or needed, involving requests for and providing clarifications, the potential for enhancing communication effectiveness is heightened compared to scenarios where communication is sporadic within an organization. This underscores the significance of consistent and interactive communication channels in fostering effective organizational communication practices.

In examining communication effectiveness within organizations, the flow of communication has emerged as a critical factor. Communication that encompasses various directions such as top-down, bottom-up, lateral, and zigzag enables all parties, irrespective of their position, to actively participate and be heard, fostering a culture of open dialogue and enhancing effectiveness (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). This inclusive communication approach allows individuals to freely share information, seek clarification, receive feedback, and offer suggestions without being hindered by hierarchical barriers.

Additionally, evaluating the sensitivity of the information shared to the diversity present within an organization is deemed crucial in determining communication effectiveness (Bisel, Messersmith, & Keyton, 2010). Organizations consist of individuals with varied emotional strengths, cultural perspectives, and expectations. Therefore, recognizing and addressing these diverse aspects is essential to enhancing communication effectiveness, as it ensures that communication strategies are tailored to resonate with the multifaceted nature of organizational members (Summers, Humphrey, & Ferris, 2012). Achieving a balance that acknowledges and respects the diversity within an organization is key to strengthening communication effectiveness and promoting a harmonious and inclusive work environment.

In connection to the earlier discussion, the timing of a message and the choice of communication channels play a pivotal role in determining the effectiveness of communication within organizations (Jansson, 2013). Scholars have contended that the impact of a message can be significantly heightened by delivering it at the right time and through an appropriate channel. This has led to the assertion that certain rich channels, such as face-to-face interactions and meetings allowing for immediate feedback, may be more effective than other forms of communication (Batra et al., 2016). Moreover, some scholars have raised concerns regarding the increasing reliance on information and communication technologies by organizational

leaders, driven by perceived time and cost benefits (Barachini, 2009). However, it is noted that while these technologies offer advantages, they may not always serve as a complete substitute, particularly in situations where other communication channels are essential. Hence, there is a consensus among scholars that varying circumstances necessitate different timing and communication channels to optimize the effectiveness of organizational communication practices.

The effectiveness of communication within organizations is heavily influenced by the communication skills of key parties involved. Scholars argue that adapting different approaches to communication based on varying situations is achievable when key communicators possess adequate skills (Zafar & Neveed, 2014). It has been suggested that traditional skills like sociability, extraversion, and assertiveness may not suffice, but can be enhanced by incorporating nonverbal capabilities and storytelling skills to bolster communication effectiveness (Deng & Gill, 2011).

Focusing on change communication for this study, the primary emphasis will be on evaluating how employees perceive such information in terms of being informative, sufficient, and accurate regarding the proposed change (Ranta, 2011). This assessment aims to gauge the effectiveness of communication strategies in conveying change-related messages within the organizational context.

2.3 Change communication quality and employee change readiness

The significance of change communication in predicting employees' readiness for organizational change is strongly supported by both empirical and theoretical evidence (Katsaros, Tsirikas, & Bani, 2014). Evidence consistently indicates that employees who are well-informed about all aspects of a proposed change are more likely to be mentally and psychologically prepared for the change compared to those with limited information.

An important recurring theme in the evidence is the crucial role of honest and trustful communication between employees and management, who are often the drivers of change, in enhancing employees' readiness for change (Samaranayake & Takemura, 2017). It is argued that effective communication can evoke positive emotions among employees regarding a proposed change and help dispel uncertainties and ambiguities that may otherwise lead to reluctance in supporting the change. Therefore, effective communication is deemed essential for achieving employees' readiness for change.

Furthermore, a model proposed by Oreg, Vakola & Armenakis (2011) suggests that organizations can navigate through various levels of organizational change successfully by implementing strategic communication. The scholars highlight that strategic communication, encompassing the use of appropriate channels, timing, and values of safety, serves to motivate, alleviate fear, and clarify the necessity of the proposed change, thereby influencing employees' readiness for the change. Moreover, the scholars argue that effective communication acts as a crucial bargaining tool for both the sponsors and implementers of change, particularly the employees. This bargaining aspect, as indicated by the scholars, enhances employees' readiness for change by facilitating understanding and negotiation between all parties involved in the change process.

It has also been argued that the success of a change is partly dependent on whether the change is acceptable to key stakeholders, including employees of the organization (Khan, Raza & George, 2017). This acceptability reflects the cognitive aspect of employees' readiness for change. The effectiveness of change communication plays a vital role in achieving such acceptability. Therefore, it can be inferred that the quality of change communication is a crucial determinant of employees' readiness for change.

Moreover, additional empirical evidence supporting the link between change communication and change receptivity, which reflects how communication influences readiness for change, was presented in a comprehensive study by Rafferty et al. (2013) in the USA. This longitudinal study, involving two organizations and utilizing mixed methods of data collection, demonstrated that change communication significantly impacted receptivity. As a result, the study concluded that effective change communication fosters readiness for change.

The study by Barbra (2010) highlighted that communication was a significant predictor of employees' readiness for change. Participants in the study recognized the importance of communication in enhancing their preparedness for change. A successful change, involving the implementation of new software to alter workflow, was attributed to effective communication among other factors, which adequately prepared the employees. This underscores the notion that communication plays a pivotal role in determining employees' readiness for organizational change.

Additionally, a recent study by Nordin (2014) emphasized the substantial impact of communication quality on readiness for change. In a case study within a university setting involving faculty staff, respondents highlighted the importance of effective communication,

measured by communication modality, frequency, and alignment with mission and values, particularly through face-to-face interactions with leaders. This personal approach reduced fear and resistance to the proposed change. The study also indicated that email communication was preferred for less critical information. Therefore, communication emerges as a crucial factor in shaping employees' readiness for change.

Hence, based on the literature examined, there is sufficient evidence to affirm that the quality of change communication plays a crucial role in influencing employees' preparedness for organizational change. The studies reviewed consistently emphasize the significance of effective communication in shaping employees' readiness for change. This indicates that communication acts as a key determinant in determining how well employees adapt to and embrace organizational changes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in executing the study. It includes the research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, instruments of data collection, validity and reliability of data collection instruments as well as data analysis.

3.1 Research design

In this research, the foundation was based on a constructive philosophy, suggesting that reality is shaped through social interactions as outlined by Creswell in 2014. Consequently, in conducting this study, the perspectives of the participants were analyzed to form the reality and provide insights to address the research inquiries.

In particular, a methodology known as appreciative inquiry was utilized to gather the perspectives of the participants in an inductive manner.

The questions were framed in a way that encouraged the respondents to reflect on instances when their business successfully utilized networking or absorptive capacity, express their ideal scenarios, and suggest how to achieve them. This approach focuses on positive inquiries, even when addressing areas for improvement. Instead of dwelling on past failures, the questions were redirected to elicit suggestions for enhancement. The AI methodology is advocated for its potential to elicit more candid responses by alleviating guilt-inducing circumstances, particularly in situations involving setbacks.

The selected design guides the suitable methodology for this study. Hence, a qualitative approach was deemed most fitting and subsequently implemented. The study utilized an inductive method to gather information with the goal of developing a model on leveraging networking and absorptive capacity to enhance venture performance, as highlighted by Kivunja & Kiyini in 2017.

3.2 Study population

The study population includes all individuals within a defined or theoretical collection of groups, events, or objects from which a researcher aims to extrapolate the results of their research, as explained by Gall, Gall, & Borg in 2014. The current study targeted all the teaching staff within UCU that have been active in service for atleast 3 years.

In qualitative research, the sample size is typically not predetermined. The primary objective of such studies is to delve deeply into a phenomenon, allowing researchers to conduct interviews until each subsequent one no longer reveals new insights. In this study, the concept of data saturation was applied, concluding data collection after the 13th interview failed to provide additional information.

The technique a researcher employs to choose individuals or objects from a population for a study is known as sampling (Kombo & Tromp 2006). In this study, both purposive and snowball sampling methods were utilized to identify the participants for the research. The respondents that were selected are the ones that had been in active service at UCU for over 3 years. As such it is believed that a venture that had already celebrated its third year still operating, had registered a degree of success that is worth to offer their experience. The respondents needed to be active members deeply engaged in the daily operations of the venture, possessing substantial knowledge of the factors contributing to its success. Once the initial beneficiaries were identified, the snowballing technique would be employed to choose the following participants.

3.3 Research participants

I personally extended invitations to participate in the study through face-to-face interactions and phone calls. After identifying the initial respondent from UCU, they were asked to nominate another individual, leading to the recruitment of subsequent participants. These selected respondents were authorized representatives of their ventures. We mutually agreed on interview dates and times. A total of thirteen respondents took part in the study, following the data saturation principle, where the thirteenth interview did not yield new information, prompting the conclusion of the interviews.

3.4 Data collection and transcription

In this study, I utilized a qualitative approach and conducted semi-structured one-on-one interviews to gather data. Each participant responded to a predetermined set of questions focusing on networking and absorptive capacity's role in explaining the venture's success. This format allowed for additional probing questions and gave participants the opportunity to share any other relevant information. Interviews were scheduled based on the respondents' availability and convenience, taking place at their premises in quieter settings. Four interviews were rescheduled due to the unavailability of the respondents at the initially agreed-upon dates and times.

Each interview took approximately one and a half hours where i allowed the respondents to choose the language that they well understood and were comfortable with. They all chose English, save for a few interjections in Luganda, most of the respondents stayed focused to the end of the interview. I conducted the Interviews for two weeks in the month of July 2024. I kept recording key points during the interviews and after, noted down the key phrases from each interviewer. I used this information for analysis.

3.5 Researcher's role

In a qualitative study, the researcher acts as a research instrument, interpreting the respondents' perspectives, while acknowledging that they may hold different views (Maxwell, 2014). This situation can lead to the researcher's values and biases influencing the interpretation due to their background and experiences. Therefore, researchers are expected to take steps to reduce bias and openly address any potential biases. In this study, I personally conducted all the interview and interpretation processes. I am pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management. So, before diving into this study, I already had insights into the critical success factors that I had observed and studied in class. During the study, I made a conscious effort to prevent my biases from influencing the results by allowing the respondents to freely share their opinions, which I recorded accurately. Additionally, I made sure to review the key points raised by each respondent after every interview.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness is crucial in qualitative research to ensure rigor. To achieve this, I followed established strategies to enhance the quality of my study, focusing on credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability as key elements of rigor (Maxwell, 2014).

Credibility in a qualitative study is akin to internal validity in a quantitative study, indicating the reader's confidence in the truthfulness of the findings and conclusions (Bowen, 2005). To enhance credibility, I implemented various measures. Firstly, I engaged extensively with each interviewee to build rapport and create an environment conducive to honest responses. I introduced myself clearly, explained the study's purpose, and ensured the respondents felt comfortable. After each interview, I reviewed the key points summary with the interviewee for confirmation, a process known as member checking, ensuring triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 2009). This practice facilitated a shared understanding of the respondent's intended meaning.

I also made sure to guarantee dependability, which is equivalent to reliability in quantitative studies (Yin, 2011). This involves ensuring that the study's results are consistent over time and

among different researchers so that if another researcher were to conduct the same study in the same conditions, they would arrive at the same conclusions (Merriam, 2009). To ensure this, I provided a detailed explanation of the entire research and analysis process.

Confirmability, another crucial aspect of rigor, focuses on ensuring that the research findings reflect the participants' perspectives rather than the researcher's (Loh, 2013). This helps in maintaining objectivity and minimizing the risk of the researcher's bias influencing the results. To achieve this, I maintained a neutral stance during the interviews, allowing the respondents to share their narratives. Additionally, I conducted member checking by reviewing the interview points. I also included excerpts from the interviews to support the results. Lastly, I openly addressed any potential biases that could have arisen from my role as the researcher.

Lastly, transferability in qualitative research, akin to external validity in quantitative research, pertains to the potential for the findings to be applied to other settings or contexts (Maxwell 2014). In this particular study, similar to many qualitative inquiries, the goal wasn't to generalize the results. Instead, the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding from the respondents themselves regarding the impact of networking and absorptive capacity on a venture's success. I have provided a detailed description of the methodology used in this study. Therefore, it is up to the readers to determine if the findings can be extrapolated to other contexts.

3.7 Data analysis

In a qualitative study, it's recommended to analyze data both during data collection and after its completion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I precisely followed this approach in my work. While conducting interviews, I analyzed verbal and nonverbal cues simultaneously to ensure I captured the respondents' intended meanings. After each interview, I spent around an hour reviewing the content to pinpoint the underlying themes. Subsequently, once data collection was finished, I revisited all notes to identify common themes shared by the respondents, noting both similarities and differences. Themes shared by six or more respondents were given particular consideration.

The process described aligns with thematic content analysis, where summaries are reviewed to identify emerging themes. The study's results were then organized based on these themes, with excerpts from the discussions supporting each theme presented later.

3.8 Manual data analysis

To facilitate qualitative data analysis, software tools like Atlas.ti and NVIVO have been created. While researchers have the choice to use these software options, the responsibility of analyzing the data still rests with the researcher, with the software primarily aiding in organizing the work for analysis. Notably, there is no mandate for a researcher to analyze their data using any specific software (Creswell, 2014). In this study, I opted not to utilize any software tools and instead conducted a manual analysis. I dedicated approximately one week to this process, spending a whole afternoon in a quiet setting to finalize my analysis.

3.9 Ethical considerations

In conducting a study, it is essential for a researcher to adhere to ethical principles (Collis & Hussey, 2013), especially in qualitative research like the one being discussed. Throughout this study, I made sure to uphold these principles. I invited all participants and clearly communicated that their involvement was voluntary. I provided a detailed explanation of the study's purpose, emphasizing its academic nature. Participants were instructed to focus on their ventures rather than personal details to ensure they represented their businesses. It was made clear that there was no financial compensation for participation. Additionally, participants were informed of their rights, including the option to withdraw from the interviews at any point without needing to provide a reason. Anonymity was guaranteed, with only the general trade of each venture being disclosed, ensuring no identifying information was included in the study. I ensured compliance with all the necessary requirements outlined in the UCU guidelines.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consist of the findings of the study. specifically, the chapter presents the results in line with the objectives namely, the changes that were brought in Uganda Christian University, level of employee readiness, the level of employee participation, and the possible contribution of employee participation in fostering employee readiness for change. the respondents were the UCU teaching staff.

4.1 CHANGES THAT WERE INTRODUCED

One of the objectives of the study is to establish the major changes that the respondents of this study had witnessed in UCU for the last five years. These are considered to be still relevant to guide for the recommendations to improve the change effectiveness. From the findings of the study, Uganda Christian University introduced two main radical changes in the last five years that effected the teaching staff. The changes included the Restructuring of staff and the introduction of the learning management systems (Moodle and Alpha systems).

4.1.1 Restructuring of Employees

When covid-19 hit in 2019 to 2021, a restructuring of staff took place in UCU. Following this direction, a number of staff were laid off by telling them that their contracts would not be renewed and those that stayed were added more tasks. This was communicated by the Human resource but was not easy to put across because of the resistance it would attract. Basing on the fact that when an employee's responsibilities are increased the salary ought to be increased as well. This was done, however, it was not as significant as the employees expected in comparison to the added roles. This has been a major concern of the employees but the student numbers are what determine the happening of some things. That is to say, when the student numbers are less, the salary may not be as much while if the student numbers increase, there is a likelihood for a salary increment. (Noted by an administrator). This compelled UCU as an organisation to opt for outsourced services who actually performed better compared to the staff that were on full-time. The change came as a shocker but the staff readily adapted. The employees had to make sure they adapted in order to stay relevant to the job considering that they had not been laid-off as some others. Some of those that stayed but could still not adapt went ahead to leave the job and find greener pastures.

4.1.2 Introduction of Alpha and Moodle systems.

According to the findings, Moodle and Alpha system emerged as significant changes implemented at UCU in response to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, the pandemic began in March 2019, prompting various countries, including Uganda, to enforce measures such as lockdowns. Uganda notably enforced one of the lengthiest lockdowns for educational institutions worldwide from 2019 to 2022. During this period, higher education institutions like UCU were permitted to explore online engagement with students. Consequently, UCU management introduced the Moodle and Alpha systems as part of the learning management infrastructure in 2020. While Moodle served as the platform for students, lecturers also needed to familiarize themselves with its usage to upload course materials for student access. Additionally, UCU introduced the Alpha system, enabling students to access their coursework and results effectively. (Shared by an administrator)

4.2 The level of Employee readiness for Change in Uganda Christian University

The second objective of the study was to collect information from the respondents on the level of employee readiness for the implemented changes. From the findings, it was noted that, to a greater extent the employees were not prepared for the above mentioned changes but were open to adjust accordingly as shown in their feedback. The factors include failure to adapt, added responsibilities and work overload, less pay.

4.3.1 Failure to adapt.

The findings show that the UCU staff did not easily adapt to the new changes more so the restructuring of staff because most of the staff then were old and were not that dynamic, therefore were slow to adjust. Some were even forced to quit the job because they weren't able to follow suit. One of the respondents noted;

For example, I replaced a person that had been in service for over 23 years because I was active and they were not effective anymore. Some were not dynamic to the change on-going and couldn't handle the pressure and all that, so they opted to move out. So being ready? No we were not. Then with the systems (Alpha and moodle) because we were a young workforce, we became flexible and that is how we were able to adjust. If you looked around the school keenly you can see a lot of young people, most of the old faces left. **(Interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

4.2.2 Added Responsibilities

From the findings, when restructuring was done during the covid-19 pandemic period, some staff were laid-off and for those that remained, more tasks were added to them. This laid a

burden on some who were not able to handle the pressure hence leaving the job. One respondent noted;

People didn't welcome the change. Others didn't take it well. The those that stayed were added on responsibilities which didn't go down well with them as well because when you're adding someone responsibilities, you have to accompany it with a salary increment. So, the salary increment was there but was not as significant as they expected it to be compared to the added roles they were taking on. **(Interview extract, administrator)**

Another noted; some of the old staff couldn't handle the pressure of the new systems so they opted to move out.

The summary of the above findings showing that employees were not ready for change is demonstrated in the following illustration.

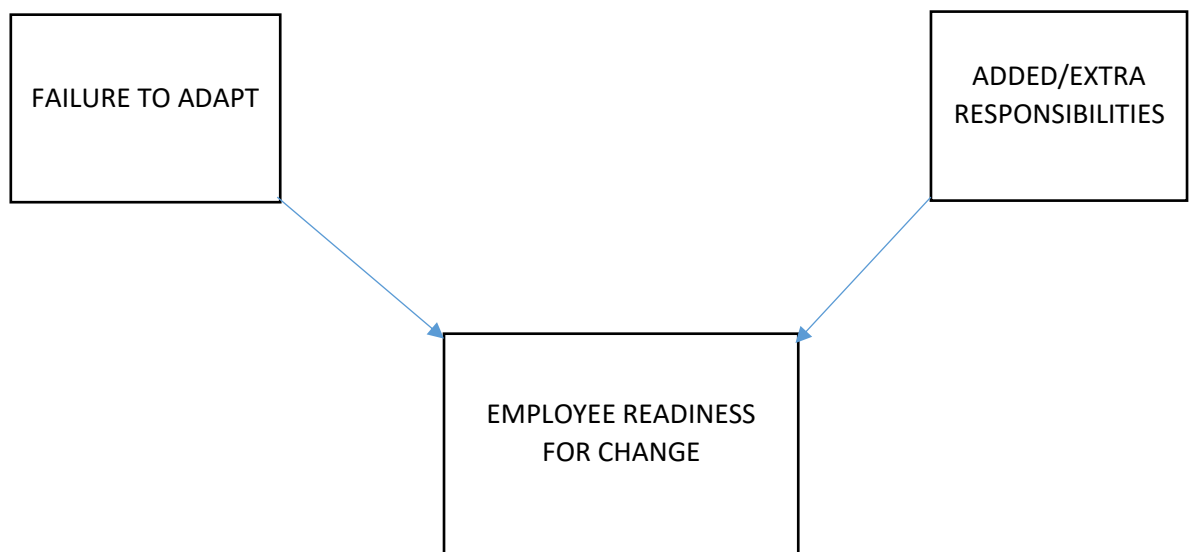


Figure 1: The summary of the above findings showing that employees were not ready for change is demonstrated in the following illustration.

4.3 The level of Employee participation in the change

The objective was to determine if the staff at UCU believed they had actively participated in various stages of the change process, such as initiating change, identifying methods to implement change, the integration of their ideas, and other relevant aspects of managing change.

The findings acknowledge that staff engagement by the administration was evident through various channels. For instance, involving the staff in decision-making processes meant that the administration sought their input and opinions on important matters related to the university like discussions on academic policies, curriculum changes, or strategic planning where staff members' perspectives were valued. Also, actively taking part in team meetings and discussions, and volunteering for projects and initiatives.

4.3.1 Involving staff in decision-making processes

Encouraging staff to contribute ideas for improvement was another way the UCU administration engaged its employees. This involved, feedback sessions, or formal mechanisms like meetings where staff could share their innovative ideas to enhance processes, teaching methods, or campus life. One of the respondents noted that;

When UCU decided to introduce the Moodle and Alpha systems, the management organized a meeting to gather our thoughts on these systems. I actively participated in this meeting and shared my idea that introducing these platforms, especially for lecturers sharing notes with students, was a fantastic initiative. I highlighted how this would make it easier for students to access their notes. My suggestion resonated with the management as it brought a new perspective on the importance of these systems. **(Interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

4.3.2 Actively taking part in team meetings and discussions

Active participation in team meetings and discussions was also fostered by the administration at UCU. Staff members were encouraged to actively engage in meetings, share their insights, and collaborate with colleagues to address challenges or work towards common objectives. This promoted a sense of teamwork and collective responsibility among the staff. One respondent noted;

What I can say, also basing on my department, the communication is good enough to have us all engaged. We have an online group where all communication about meetings is passed so that no one misses out, even those that may be physically absent. In instances where a physical

interaction is not possible, we can do zoom or google meet and still have our plans running as a department. So yes, I would to a greater extent, we have been involved. **(Interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

4.3.3 Volunteering for projects or initiatives

Volunteering for projects or initiatives was another avenue through which the UCU staff were engaged. The administration provided opportunities for staff members to get involved in various projects, committees, allowing them to contribute their skills and expertise beyond their regular roles. One respondent noted that sometimes they are asked to move distances to administer services to the other UCU branches around the country such as Mbale, Kampala and Arua. This boosts my flexibility as a lecturer and administrator because I can easily relate to all our campuses around the country. **(interview extract)**

4.3.4 Collaborating with other employees

Collaborating with colleagues to achieve common goals was a key aspect of staff engagement at UCU. The administration promoted a culture of collaboration and teamwork, where staff members worked together towards shared objectives, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among the staff. From an interview with one of the respondents they noted;

The staff have been very adaptive, since they were a young workforce, and they were willing to learn and were very flexible, navigating activities as fast as we could. Also, every organisation's agenda is to do capacity building every time they are introducing something new. But since we are young people, they would introduce something new and you just ask a friend who knows better, how it's done, so you don't waste time waiting for the administration to teach you. And by the time they come to tell us about it we are already well versed and will simply be polishing up. So working together with our colleagues is what has helped build this skill and ability. **(Interview extract)**

The diagram below represents a summary of the above findings.

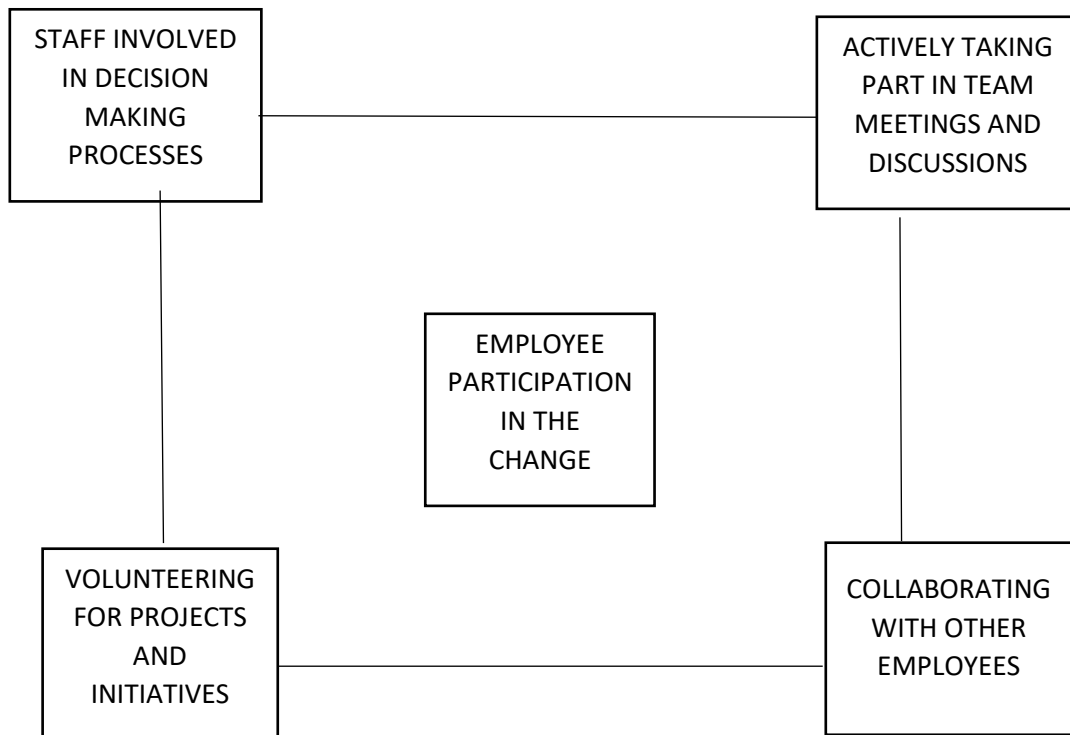


Figure 2: represents a summary of the above findings.

4.4 The possible contribution of Employee participation in fostering employee change readiness

In this goal, the focus was on investigating how employee involvement (or the absence of it) impacts the development of employee readiness for change at UCU.

Ensuring that employees actively participate in fostering readiness for change has several positive effects on the organization. When employees are involved in the change process, they tend to feel more invested and engaged in the transition. This involvement can lead to increased motivation and commitment to the changes being implemented. Additionally, when employees have a say in the change process, they are more likely to understand the reasons behind the change and the expected outcomes, and also a sense of accountability for the change, which can reduce resistance and increase acceptance of the new initiatives.

4.4.1 Generation of innovative ideas

The findings showed that employee participation in change initiatives resulted in the generation of innovative ideas and solutions. By tapping into the diverse perspectives and experiences of the workforce, UCU benefited from creative input that may not have been considered otherwise hence leading to more effective and sustainable change outcomes. An example of this instance

is where a respondent noted that it was during the meetings where they were engaged, that the point of the Moodle system being used to provide students with notes for their revision was raised and actually considered. And today, the system has enabled smooth learning for students as the notes are readily available.

4.4.2 Development of new skills and capabilities

When employees actively participated in change initiatives, they most likely developed new skills and capabilities that are essential for adapting to the changing environment. This continuous learning and development did not only benefit the employees individually but also contribute to the organization's agility and ability to thrive in dynamic business landscapes. For instance, from the findings, one respondent noted that sometimes they are asked to move distances to administer services to the other UCU branches around the country such as Mbale, Kampala and Arua. For example, assist in administrative tasks like registration and clearance. This has boosted their flexibility as a lecturer and administrator because they can easily relate to all our campuses around the country and also have their skills polished. **(interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

4.4.3 Sense of ownership and Accountability.

Employee participation fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among the workforce. When the employees were actively involved in shaping the changes, they took more responsibility for the outcomes. This sense of ownership can drive them to proactively seek solutions, collaborate effectively, and take initiative in implementing the changes. Ultimately, this ownership mentality led to higher levels of motivation and a more positive organizational culture in UCU, conducive to successful change implementation. This is seen in the findings where one respondent noted that as much as they generally were not ready for the changes, that's to say some were abrupt like the restructuring of staff, the communication was clearly made to them helping them understand the reasons for it (Covid-19 pandemic), so they took it upon themselves to be accountable and learn the necessary skills. The respondent noted;

But since we are young people, they would introduce something new and you just ask a friend who knows better, how it's done, so you don't waste time waiting for the administration to teach you. And by the time they come to tell us about it we are already well versed and will simply be polishing up. So working together with our colleagues is what has helped build this skill and ability. **(Interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

Overall, ensuring employee participation in fostering readiness for change leads to increased engagement, motivation, innovation, trust, skill development, and ultimately, successful implementation of organizational changes.

The summary of the above results is demonstrated in the following illustration

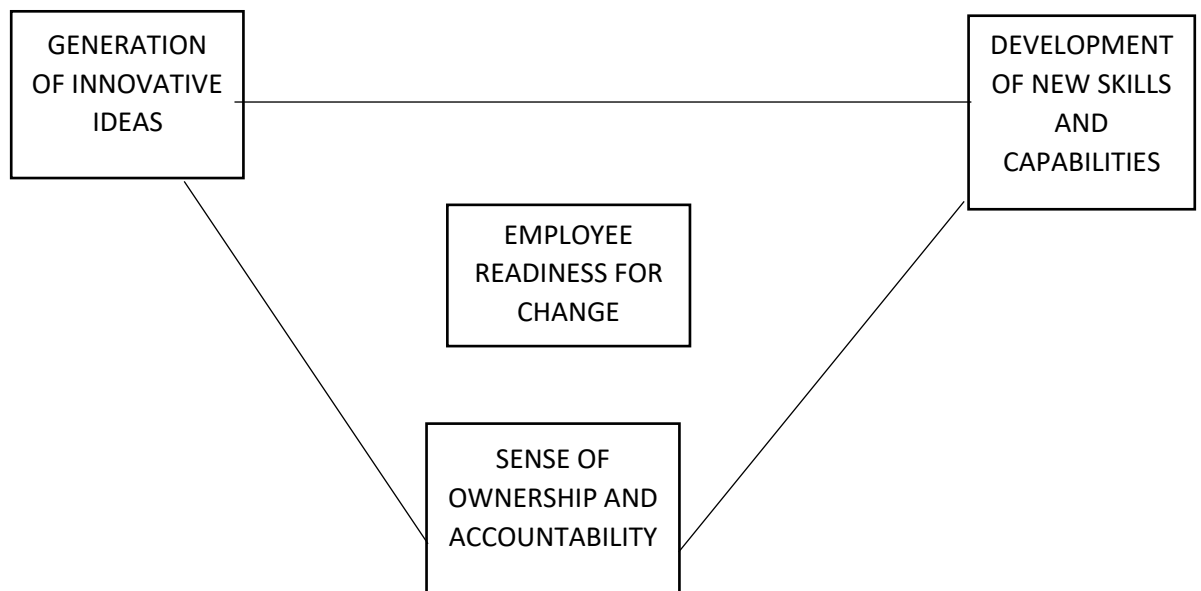


Figure 4: results is demonstrated in the following illustration

4.5 Other factors

This study used a semi-structured interview approach where, in addition to asking questions from the interview guide, the researcher could ask additional questions. This flexibility allowed the researcher to uncover additional factors influencing change readiness in the organization. Consequently, the participants had the opportunity to share any other insights they believed would be beneficial in promoting readiness for change.

4.5.1 Effective communication and Strong leadership.

A respondent noted that clear and transparent communication about the reasons for change, the expected outcomes, and the steps involved can help employees understand and accept the upcoming changes. When communication is open and consistent, it builds trust and reduces uncertainty, fostering a positive environment for change. Strong leadership that is actively involved in the change process, provides guidance, and demonstrates commitment to the proposed changes can motivate employees to embrace the transition. Leaders who lead by example, communicate effectively, and address concerns can inspire confidence and create a sense of direction during times of change. From the findings, one of the respondents noted;

The reason as to why adapting to the Alpha systems proved to be a challenge was because some of the supervisors in who were supposed to let us know of the Alpha system coming into place did not do as expected. They would take their time to communicate and when it was finally introduced some of our departments struggled with acquainting ourselves with it. So, it would be of great help if their communication is improved so that we are informed in time. **(Interview extract, administrator)**

4.5.2 Providing adequate resources and Training

Providing adequate resources and training is essential for preparing employees for change. Ensuring that employees have the necessary tools, knowledge, and skills to navigate the changes effectively can alleviate anxiety and build confidence. Investing in training programs, workshops, and support mechanisms can empower employees to embrace change positively and contribute meaningfully to the organizational transition. A respondent noted;

We were engaged in workshops to encourage the learning of the new digital system in place. Some took a whole semester to get well acquainted with the system. For example, departments like Finance picked up faster than some of who are still learning to use some features till date. So the workshops were of help.

4.5.3 Raise more awareness

In addition to providing adequate resources and training, organizations have also focused on raising awareness as another crucial factor to enhance employee readiness for change. By increasing awareness about the reasons behind the change, the expected outcomes, and the support available, employees can better understand and embrace the upcoming transitions. This proactive communication has helped in minimizing resistance and building a positive attitude towards change within the workforce.

For instance, employees have responded positively to this approach, applauding the organization for their transparent communication and efforts in keeping everyone informed and engaged throughout the change process. Employees have expressed appreciation for the clear and timely updates, regular feedback sessions, that allowed them to voice concerns and suggestions. This inclusive approach has fostered a sense of ownership and unity among employees, making them feel valued and part of the change journey. One respondent noted;

I must commend UCU for not only providing us with the necessary resources and training but also for their proactive approach in raising awareness about the upcoming changes like Alpha system. The regular updates, open communication channels, and inclusive feedback sessions have truly made us feel like valued in this transformation journey. **(Interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

4.5.4 Salary Increments

From the findings, UCU has also utilized increased incentives as a motivating factor to enhance employee readiness for change. By offering rewards such as bonuses, recognition, or career advancement opportunities tied to successful adaptation to change, employees have been further encouraged to actively engage in the transition process. This approach has boosted morale, increased motivation, and driven a positive attitude towards change within the institution. Employees have responded positively to these increased incentives, applauding the organization for recognizing and rewarding their efforts in embracing change and contributing to the organization's success. One respondent noted;

I really appreciate how UCU has not only provided us offered increased incentives to motivate us during this period of change in order to compensate the added tasks and responsibilities following the recent restructuring of staff. As much as it may not be what we expected, it is

better than where we would be without the increment. It inspires my efforts of adapting to change and to give my best and be an active participant in this transformation process.

An extracted Framework

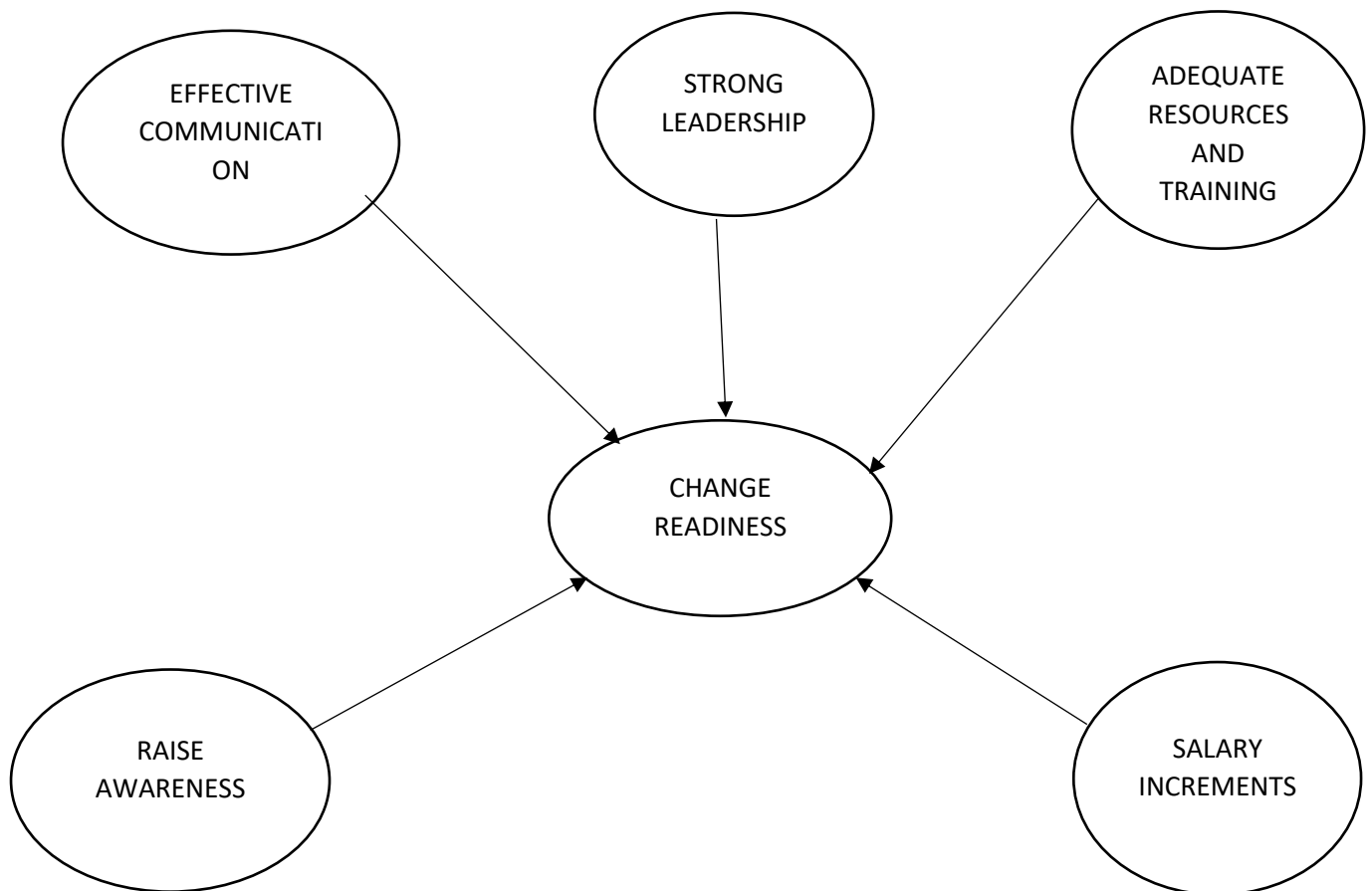


Figure 5: An extracted Framework

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a discussion on the findings comparing it with other findings in the literature and the discussion of findings is based on the objectives and research questions in Chapter One. It also entails the limitations to the study, the recommendations and conclusion.

5.1 THE CHANGES IMPLEMENTED

5.2. Restructuring of UCU staff

When covid-19 hit in 2019 to 2021, a restructuring of staff took place in UCU. Following this direction, a number of staffs were laid off by telling them that their contracts would not be renewed and those that stayed were added more tasks. The University of Manchester (UK) underwent a staff restructuring process in 2023 to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and align staffing levels with changing academic priorities. (Eurofound (2017), The University of Manchester, Internal restructuring in United Kingdom, factsheet number 90986, European Restructuring Monitor. Dublin, <https://restructuringeventsprod.azurewebsites.net/restructuring-events/detail/90986>.) (10 May 2017: BBC Website)

This restructuring involved reorganizing departments, reallocating resources, and potentially reducing workforce size in certain areas.

5.2.1 Manual to Digital operations

Moodle and Alpha system emerged as significant changes implemented at UCU in response to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, the pandemic began in March 2019, prompting various countries, including Uganda, to enforce measures such as lockdowns. Uganda notably enforced one of the lengthiest longest lockdowns for educational institutions worldwide from 2019 to 2022. One relevant example of a Ugandan university adapting to change is Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU). UTAMU has embraced technological advancements by integrating online learning platforms and tools into its academic programs. This shift has allowed UTAMU to offer more flexible learning options, reach a broader student base, and enhance the overall educational experience. By incorporating these changes, UTAMU has demonstrated a commitment to evolving with the times such as

the Covid-19 pandemic and meeting the diverse needs of students in a rapidly changing educational landscape. During this period, higher education institutions like UCU were permitted to explore online engagement with students. Consequently, UCU management introduced the Moodle and Alpha systems as part of the learning management infrastructure in 2020.

Change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented to transitioning individuals, teams, and organisations to a desired future state by focusing on the wider impacts of change, particularly on people, where change does not happen in isolation and it impacts the whole organisation. (Ahmad et al., Mohd Hafis, Ismail, Syuhaida 2017). Universities, as institutions of higher education, are deeply influenced by the factor of change in various aspects of their operations and environments.

Change in universities can be observed in their academic programs, research focus, student demographics, and technological advancements. Adapting to these changes is crucial for universities to remain relevant, competitive, and effective in fulfilling their educational missions. One significant area where change is evident in universities is the evolution of academic programs. Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) has been proactive in updating its academic offerings to align with emerging trends and industry demands. For instance, the university has introduced new programs in fields such as data science, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy to equip students with skills that are in high demand in the current job market. By evolving its academic programs, MUST ensures that its graduates are well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of the workforce and contribute meaningfully to society. Universities regularly update their curricula to incorporate new knowledge, emerging trends, and advancements in various fields. For example, universities may introduce new majors or specializations in response to industry demands or societal needs. Additionally, universities may revise existing courses to align with changing academic standards, technological developments, or interdisciplinary approaches.

Moreover, universities need to adapt to changes in student demographics and preferences. As student populations become more diverse in terms of backgrounds, interests, and learning styles, universities must adjust their support services, teaching methods, and campus environments to cater to a broader range of students effectively. This may involve implementing inclusive practices, offering flexible learning options, or providing support for international students and underrepresented groups. An example is University of Cape Town (South Africa). The University of Cape Town has made efforts to decolonize its curriculum by incorporating diverse perspectives, promoting African scholarship, and enhancing inclusivity

in its academic programs. They have also focused on sustainability and environmental initiatives in response to climate change concerns.

5.3 EMPLOYEE CHANGE READINESS

It is found that current practice of organisation and employees in the organisation towards change management involved in three main factors, namely trust in management, communication and organisational commitment. (Abstract from author) Ahmad, Mohd Hafis, Ismail, Syuhaida 2017. From the findings, it was noted that, to a greater extent the employees were not prepared for the above mentioned changes but were open to adjust accordingly as shown in their feedback. The staff were not ready due to reasons like failure to adapt, added responsibilities, work overload and fear of the unknown as elaborated below.

5.3.1 Failure to adapt.

Respondents with more years of service, more time working for their current supervisors, and greater resistance to change reported lower levels of readiness for change. (Abstract from Author) Bloir, Kirk, Scheer, Scott D 2017. The findings show that the UCU staff did not easily adapt to the new changes more so the restructuring of staff because most of the staff then were old and were not that dynamic, therefore were slow to adjust. Some were even forced to quit the job because they weren't able to follow suit. Such a situation has been observed in other studies that have examined change readiness in other parts of the world like in a study conducted in a multinational corporation in South Africa in June 2023. The research revealed that employees with longer tenures and entrenched work habits displayed higher resistance to organizational changes, particularly when it involved restructuring or role realignment. This resistance stemmed from a combination of factors, including comfort with the status quo, fear of the unknown, and a lack of readiness to embrace new ways of working. Consequently, some long-serving employees found it challenging to adjust to the evolving demands of their roles and the organization, leading to difficulties in the change implementation process.

5.3.2 Increased Responsibilities and fear of the unknown

A successful change implementation has to start with the employees, which is why organizations need to find ways to motivate and prepare them for the change (Madsen et al. 2005). Many studies have shown that most change implementation processes fail in organizations, with a percentage as high as 70% (Dobrovič and Loumova 2017). Change

resistance manifests primarily because of the fear of the unknown (Repovš et al. 2019) and it represents one of the main reasons why change implementation fails, mostly because people are “creatures of habit” and prefer routine; therefore, change can cause them stress and insecurity (extract from author). From the findings, when restructuring was done during the covid-19 pandemic period, some staff were laid-off and for those that remained, more tasks were added to them. This laid a burden on some who were not able to handle the pressure hence leaving the job.

5.4 COMMUNICATION QUALITY

Meanwhile for communication, it is found that there is good communication between supervisors and employees about the organisation's policy toward the changes. (Abstract from author) Ahmad, Mohd Hafis, Ismail, Syuhaida 2017. From the findings, the communication quality of UCU during the implementation of the above-mentioned changes was good enough to have the message efficiently conveyed. For example, the use of emails, meetings, online groups and reminders from the supervisors. Therefore, it appears that a high communication quality is a quality of UCU. From the available literature these channels of communication are considered important in change management. For example a study that highlights the importance of communication quality in change management is a research conducted by Smith et al. (2018) in a large healthcare organization. The study demonstrated that clear and consistent communication through various channels significantly improved employees' understanding of organizational changes, reduced resistance, and enhanced overall change readiness.

Similarly, a study by Johnson and Lee (2019) in a technology company emphasized the impact of effective communication strategies, including regular updates, interactive sessions, and feedback mechanisms, in facilitating smooth transitions during organizational change initiatives. These studies underscore the significance of high-quality communication channels in driving successful change management processes.

5.5 OTHER FACTORS

The other factors that contribute to easy employee change readiness in UCU as shared by the respondents include;

5.5.1 Compensation

By offering rewards such as bonuses, recognition, or career advancement opportunities tied to successful adaptation to change, employees are further encouraged to actively engage in the

transition process. (interview extract). This approach boosts morale, increases motivation, and drives a positive attitude towards change within the institution.

For some employees, salary and rewards motivate further work, affect their job satisfaction, and, ultimately, their long-term stay in the company (Iqbal et al. 2017). Salary and special bonuses are important to employees because they represent the tangible value they receive for the effort and work they invest. When the employees believe they are adequately paid and rewarded for their efforts, they feel valued and appreciated and devote extra effort into every new task and assignment. It is essential to respect equality, i.e., equal treatment of all employees when determining job systematizations. Job satisfaction decreases sharply if employees believe there is an unfair distribution of wages among colleagues (Mahmood et al. 2019). The salary level affects approximately 31% of all employment decisions regarding leaving the company (Iqbal et al. 2017). The salary is also one of the most important reasons employees accept specific job positions, and it directly affects long-term job satisfaction. Moreover, high-paid employees do not leave their jobs so quickly.

5.5.2 Training

Training and skills development are key elements for preparing the employees for new assignments and obligations that arrive with every more extensive change implementation. Training and education help employees reach various goals faster, contribute to their self-esteem, provide a sense of security, increase employee engagement, and enhance their abilities and skills needed to perform a particular assignment (Rodriguez and Walters 2017). Given that modern companies face dynamic and complex business situations, training and education often occur in sub-optimal conditions during the change implementation, which can provoke feelings of confusion among employees and result in change resistance (Narayan et al. 2007). Therefore, training and education should be considered as a step that precedes the change implementation process to better prepare employees for the new situation. Bojan, Zoran, and Matea (2022). From the findings, one of the respondents noted that this would be a good other way to boost their knowledge of the Alpha and Moodle system.

5.6 COMMUNICATION QUALITY AND CHANGE READINESS

Communication quality refers to the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of information exchanged within an organization while Change readiness is the extent to which individuals and organizations are prepared to accept and implement change. It encompasses attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that facilitate or hinder the change process. Research indicates that high-

quality communication significantly impacts change readiness. Organizations that prioritize effective communication are more likely to experience smoother transitions during change initiatives.

Internal communication is the process of conveying information employees of an organisation to promote organisational commitment, create awareness about changes in the environment, and create a sense of belonging (Cole et al., 2017). Managers use different use different internal communication methods like team meetings, emails, and Memos to communicate the objectives, vision and mission of the organisation (Ewing et al.,2019).

Supervisor and peer relations are often accentuated as one of the most important factors contributing to the acceptance of change. Managers, or supervisors, are the ones who communicate the change, assign responsibilities, communicate vision, measure success, and help employees to individually adapt to change (Mangundjaya 2013). A well-established leadership system such as mentoring and a transformational approach motivates employees' personal growth and is vital during the change implementation (Avolio et al. 1999). In other words, through a personalized approach, intellectual encouragement, and inspiring motivation, transformational leaders promote a culture of involving every employee in the change implementation process, which can result in better job performance (Guerrero and Kim 2013).

In addition, studies conducted by Nkomo and Takawira (2016) in Africa, in a banking institution in Zimbabwe emphasized the crucial role of transparent and consistent communication in preparing employees for organizational changes. The research revealed that employees who received regular updates, clear explanations of the reasons behind the changes, and opportunities to provide feedback exhibited higher levels of readiness and willingness to adapt to new circumstances, hence important in fostering employee change readiness.

5.7 LIMITATIONS

The researcher used only qualitative research methods, which were limiting because qualitative research focuses on exploring in-depth insights and understanding phenomena from a subjective standpoint, relying on methods like interviews, observations, and open-ended surveys. This approach also led to limitations such as reduced generalizability, potential bias, time-intensive data analysis, difficulty in quantifying results, and limited comparability with other studies. The researcher faced challenges in making broad claims, introducing biases,

prolonging data analysis, quantifying findings, and comparing results with existing literature, highlighting the constraints of solely focusing on this approach of data collection.

The researcher being part of the research instruments opened grounds to bias creeping into the study. This situation occurs when the researcher's involvement, whether through interactions with participants, data collection methods, or data analysis, starts to influence the outcomes in a subjective manner. Essentially, the researcher's personal beliefs, experiences, or expectations could inadvertently seep into the research process, potentially leading to skewed results that align more with the researcher's viewpoints rather than reflecting the true nature of the data. This bias can compromise the objectivity and credibility of the study, emphasizing the importance of researchers acknowledging and mitigating their influence to uphold the research's validity and impartiality.

The study being posed in only one branch of the University posed significant drawbacks which include a lack of diversity in perspectives, experiences, and resources, potentially leading to results that are not representative of a broader population or context. This limitation restricted the study's ability to capture a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, hindering the generalizability and applicability of the findings beyond the specific branch of UCU main campus where the research was conducted. In essence, conducting research solely within one university branch limits the study's external validity and may narrow the scope of insights gained from the research.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

When future researchers embark on their studies, it's highly recommended to consider employing a mixed-methods approach. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers can harness the strengths of both approaches to enhance the depth and breadth of their investigations. This strategy allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, enabling researchers to confirm data, validate findings, and gain a richer insight into the complexities of the subject matter. Ultimately, utilizing a mixed-methods approach can lead to more robust research outcomes, offering a detailed perspective that can better inform decision-making and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in various fields.

To future researchers, it's essential to gather data from all branches of the university to ensure a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the research topic. By including data from

various branches, researchers can capture a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and resources, leading to more robust and generalizable findings. This approach enhances the validity and reliability of the research outcomes, allowing for a broader applicability of the results beyond a singular branch. Embracing data collection from all the University branches fosters a richer and more inclusive research environment, enabling researchers to explore the complexities of the subject matter from multiple angles.

It's crucial to establish a set of detailed guidelines and procedures that outline how the research will be conducted. They should clearly define the research objectives, methodology, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures. This clarity helps researchers stay focused and ensures that everyone involved in the study understands their roles and responsibilities. Also, training sessions can cover various aspects such as the research protocol, data collection tools, ethical considerations, and any specific skills or knowledge required for the study. Training helps researchers familiarize themselves with the research protocols, standardizes data collection procedures, and minimizes errors or biases that may arise due to lack of understanding.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The research sought to explore the factors that can foster change readiness among employees in UCU. The findings show that, communication quality, compensation, and training are vital in fostering employee change readiness. The study was successfully conducted and completed.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview guide

1. Kindly share with me some of the changes that you have witnessed in the last five years in the communication of policies, procedures and any changes in Uganda Christian University.
2. Which of the said changes do you consider were less successful in the communication system?
3. Kindly share with me on the above changes, the ones you consider the teaching staff were well prepared for change? What are the characteristics/responses that showed they were ready?
4. Kindly share with me on the above changes the ones you consider the staff not prepared for change? What are the Characteristics/responses that showed they were not ready?
5. When it comes to the staff's interests/ needs/ concerns/ for instance their job security, what were the staff concerned with during the changes?
6. How do you think the organisation handled the staff's concerns in relation to how they communicated changes?
7. What was the impact of addressing/failure to address the staff's concerns on their degree of readiness to change?
8. If you were given an opportunity to improve employee readiness for change, what factors would you consider important?
9. If you were given the opportunity to improve employee readiness for change, what would you avoid doing?

Thank you.