

**CHANGE READINESS AMONG UCU STAFF WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO
EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I, Nakikonyongo Grace, 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.....*Grace*.....

Date.....*4th Sep / 2024*.....

APPROVAL

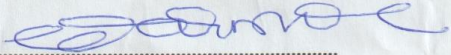
APPROVAL

I, as the undersigned, declare that I have been one of the supervisors of the student in this study titled, 'EMPLOYEE CHANGE READINESS WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION ON EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION'

SUPERVISOR'S NAME

WAWERU ABRAHAM

Sign.....



Date.....

04 September 2024

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to the department of Human Resource Management of Uganda Christian University and to my parents and guardians for the support they provided to me throughout my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First, I would like to show my sincere gratitude to God who has enabled me move through life the way I have up to where I am right now and for the continuous blessings. Also to send my gratitude to my supervisor who has helped me since I started my research, I am really grateful and may your work be helpful to my fellow researchers.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the strategies to enhance employee change readiness on promoting active participation among employees. The research data was collected from Uganda Christian University, Mukono. This study was guided by three main objectives namely, to assess the perceived level of employee readiness for change among non-teaching staff of Uganda Christian University, to examine the level of employee participation during changes in Uganda Christian University, explore the possible contribution of employee participation in fostering employee change readiness. A qualitative approach was employed to collect data from the representatives of 12 respondents from the teaching staff of UCU. These respondents have been at UCU for five years and above. The data collection was done through semi- structured interviews and was done inductively.

The results indicated that openness and embrace to change, adaptability, dedication and commitment, sense of control and confidence were considered to be instrumental that influenced employee readiness to change. Other factors that emerged as important included, support from the management, provision of incentives, open communication, training and employee empowerment.

The study can be said to have identified some of the successful factors that can identify the readiness of UCU employees from the results.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter contained the introduction of the topic, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, and research questions, scope of the study, significances, justification, Conceptual framework and the conclusion.

The topic of this study aims to show how employees are ready to participate in the organizational change and how the changes in the organization influence the employees to involve in it.

1.1 Background

Change, these days, is inevitable. In turn, organizations must adapt to the constantly shifting business environment by making changes to achieve competitive advantage, survival, and existence. Contemporary companies are faced with growing changes in the business environment, which require adaptability and flexibility as the crucial characteristics of modern management (Tomljenovi, 2020). It can be stated that almost every company operates in a state of continuous change because they are on a daily basis faced with both numerous threats and opportunities which require a quick response (Tarry, 2022).

In order to achieve the earmarked objectives of a change, employee readiness for change is considered essential. Employee readiness for change refers to the extent to which employees are ready or willing to attend and participate in the change processes (Sany, 2021).

The centrality and urgency of fostering the change readiness is amplified on the fact that, worldwide, for the last forty years, only between 25% and 30% of change initiated have been successful and high failure rates are largely attributed to employee resistance to change (Nitin, 2020).

Uganda Christian University, the institution of interest in this study, has witnessed delays in change initiatives which have been attributed to deficiency in readiness for change. Notably, the University has undergone numerous changes over the years. In the said decade one of the notable changes was when the university transitioned to the use of Moodle and Alpha systems. The Moodle

was for the students but also the lecturers had to know how to use it because they had to upload work on Moodle for the students to access it, this system was introduced in 2020. In 2021, Uganda Christian University introduced Alpha and this is a system where students access their marks that is to say course work and their results. While the change was eventually effected, there was evidence of employees that resisted the change claiming that they did not have adequate knowledge on how to use these systems. The main reason for the resistance was because the University unilaterally introduced the change without wide consultation and involvement of the employees. (Administrator, 2024). In order to minimize the evidence resistance, the University tried to train the employees, this took half of the semester, a full semester and some of are still learning on how to use them. During COVID 19, Uganda Christian university used to track the activities that is to say it tracked the activities which were to be done in 2021 and they brought them to 2020 but this made some of the employees to be confused since they were running on the school program of the year hence some resisting to the change saying when the situation stabilizes, they will continue with the program (Personal Interview with an administrator, 2023).

There have been equally come changes that have taken longer to implement due to inadequate employee readiness. This provides an opportunity to undertake a study that can promote employee change readiness.

As to how employees change readiness can be fostered, the management principle of employee participation in change management could be explored. Organizational change literature generally recommends and stresses the application of employee participation during change, which allows employees to get involved in the change process and makes an impact on change (Tahir, 2022). Again, underlined that a successful organizational change plan highly depends on the participation of employees in the change process. There is evidence that when employees are involved in the change management, they develop employees' positive attitudes towards change, take ownership of the change and demonstrate supportive behaviors, willingness to sacrifice, and dedication to change and this enhances change success, (Tahir, 2022).

Given the need to foster employee readiness for change in Uganda Christian University, this study sought to explore the possible contribution of employee participation in enhancing employee readiness for change.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The success of change depends on the organization's ability to make all their employees participate in the change process (Olive, 2020). The dynamic work environment today requires frequent changes both in the way organizations operate and in the organizational structure. Organizations today operate under increasing demands for change. However, some of the Uganda Christian University's employees were ready and others were not ready for any changes initiated in the last decade. For example, the change entitled technological advancement like the use of Moodle and alpha systems, tracking of activities before engaging in them during COVID 19 period face resistance from some employees. The change was mainly directed by the university management with little involvement of the lecturers. As a result of low degree of employee readiness for change, there was passive resistance leading to delays in the processing of students' results, producing wrong results for students and also bringing confusion among the lecturers. This led to many complaints from the students and the team had to be well trained about the systems. Therefore, it is important to identify the factors that can enhance employee participation in the change processes of the organization.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study ought to explore the strategies to enhance employee change readiness on promoting active participation among employees.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to;

- i) Assess the perceived level of employee readiness for change among non-teaching staff of Uganda Christian University
- ii) Examine the level of employee participation during changes in Uganda Christian University.
- iii) Explore the possible contribution of employee participation in fostering employee change readiness.

1.5 Research Questions

- i) What is the level of employee readiness for change among the non-teaching staff of UCU?
- ii) What is the level of employee participation during change in UCU?
- iii) What are the possible contributions of employee participation in fostering employee change readiness?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study gave insights on the strategies Uganda Christian University can employ to bring positive outcomes on the employee change readiness in nearby future changes.

The results of the study were of use to the managers of other organizations during change processes to improve change readiness among the employees.

It was ought that the findings of the study were of great use to the scholarly works that have examined the concept of change readiness.

1.7 The Scope of the Study

Geographical Scope

The study was conducted among the non- teaching staff of Uganda Christian University within Mukono Metropolitan. 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.

Time Scope

This study took a period of 4 months which was long enough to allow the researcher to obtain and analyse the data he or she collected.

Subject scope

This study concentrated on the readiness of the employees to participate in the change of the organisation.

1.8 Justifications

The justification behind selecting the topic was an expansion in various areas including new work innovations in the context of Ugandan Universities which is commenced two decades ago; Uganda Christian University is not an exception of the change initiatives. But what initiated the investigator of this study to date was that there was limited investigation carried out so far related to employees' readiness for change and their perception on the overall work efficiency particularly in Uganda Christian University. Investigating this problem provided knowledge on how employees perceive readiness to change so as be familiar with the change and attain to its realization and this in turn lead to understand the benefit of change that would promote worker efficiency and support the newly launched change initiatives and find out the main determinants employee ascribe for the readiness of change. This study explored employee readiness to change and employee participation with particular reference to the teaching staff of the Uganda Christian University.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contained 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.

2.2 Employee change readiness

Employee change readiness is a key factor that influences the success or failure of any change initiative. It reflects how much your employees understand, support, and commit to the change and how confident they are in their ability to adopt and perform (Moric, 2022). The commitment and ability of an organization's member to implement organizational changes is referred to as readiness. Employee readiness is the change recipient's ability and capability to adopt the actions and behaviors needed to realize the outcome of the change event. Employee readiness for change refers to the degree to which employees are willing and able to adopt and support the desired changes in the organization (Shofiya, 2023). Employee change readiness is influenced by various psychological, behavioral, and contextual factors, such as employees' attitudes, beliefs, emotions, skills, knowledge, motivation, trust, communication, participation, and support. Employee readiness for change is not a fixed or static state, but rather a dynamic and ongoing process that can vary across individuals, groups, and stages of change. Employee readiness for change is important because it affects the outcomes and effectiveness of change initiatives. When employees are ready for change, they are more likely to embrace, adopt, and sustain the new behaviors, processes, and systems that you want to implement (Hizam, 2021) they are also more likely to perform better, be more engaged, and have higher levels of satisfaction and well-being. According to (Pahwa, 2023), when the employees are not ready for change, they are more likely to resist, reject, or sabotage the change efforts. They are also more likely to experience lower performance, higher turnover, increased stress, and reduced morale. Organizations have to know how to engage their employees in the change process that to take place, (Triuspita, 2023) and to do so, organizations have to assess the impact of the change on its objectives and goals. In this, organizations need to identify the scope, scale, and complexity of the change, as well as the

benefits, risks, and challenges involved. It's also the role of the management to consider how the change will affect the roles, responsibilities, processes, systems and the culture of the employees.

All in all, employees develop the feeling of being part in the organization activities and they get the responsibilities or even being dissatisfied with their organization when they perceive favorable or unfavorable treatment. In this, positive work experiences shape employees' perceptions of organizational support. The fairness heuristic theory's central premise is that people use their perceptions of justice to determine whether they cooperate with authority over them. It's very reasonable to believe that when employees are treated fairly, they will develop a positive attitude and behavior. Employees will accept change if they are treated fairly and given appropriate methods, mechanisms, end procedures for achieving the results of change.

For the purpose of this work, employee change readiness is viewed as; managerial support, self-efficiency, and personal benefit dimensions (Senay, 2022)

2.3 Employee participation in change

One of the key ingredients in successful change management strategy is employee participation. (Tahir, 2022) defined employee participation in change as when leaders and managers decide to provide opportunities to employees to have a greater voice and their input in the organizational change process. Engaging employees in the process by involving them in decision making and seeking their input creates a sense of accountability. When employees feel that their opinions matter and that they have a hand in shaping the change, they are more likely to be personally committed to and engaged (Kailash, 2023). Kailash also defined change as lifeblood of progress, infusing organizations and businesses with the vitality to thrive in a dynamic and ever-evolving world. (Tahir, 2022) includes that when employees take part in change management, they are more than just passively accepting of the changes happening in their workplace. Instead, they are actively involved in the process by providing input and feedback at every stage. (Robertson and Cooper, 2010) said that employee's engagement is more likely to be sustained when employee well-being is also high. According to Heidi (2023) employee participation is very crucial for organizations seeking to maintain productivity and drive business success. Remote work challenges, mental health considerations, work-life balance challenges, communication and feedback, professional growth opportunities were some of the factors that influenced employee

participation in the change management according to (Heidi, 2023). Whereas, holding consultation meetings, organizing focus group discussions, conducting surveys, setting up employee committees and others are ways employees can be participated in the change process according to (Tahir, 2022). (Tahir, 2022) suggests the reasons to why employee participation is needed and they include; employee retention, increased productivity, improvements in quality, and increase employee morale. Therefore, it's very crucial to allow employees to participate in the change processes of the organization for quick and easy flow of the organization's activities.

For the purpose of this work, employee participation will be as viewed as an important aspect where by big organization transitions result in better outcomes. In this, individuals who are engaged and involved in the change process are more likely to understand the rationale behind the changes and are therefore more likely to accept and implement them successfully with longevity

2.4 Employee participation and employee readiness to change

Employee involvement is a key contributing factor for the success of the change (Horlick, 2021). In this, employees impacted by change often say that they have no control over the changes happening to them. When employees have no ability to influence a change, the likelihood that they will resist that change increases. Involving employees in the change that impacts them directly hence providing them with increased sense of control, build their commitment to the change and reduce the amount of resistance that may likely occur (Andrew, 2021). (Abbas, 2022) stated that employees who are involved in change are more likely to be engaged and motivated by the process because they feel that their voices are being heard and that their input is valued. Employees who are used to being involved in change are more likely to be open to new ideas and willing to try new things hence creating adaptability and flexibility among employees in the long term (Tahir, 2022). Employees who are involved in the change process are more likely to understand the rationale behind the changes and are therefore more likely to accept and implement them successfully with longevity hence increases the likelihood that employees will pay closer attention to new processes and expectations, even being more likely to identify potential challenges or obstacles and offer creative solutions to overcome them. (Jasiska, 2023) on the other hand, employees who are not included in the decisions to change and the design to solutions often resist change (Creasey, 2022). Employee resistance to change is one of the most baffling and recalcitrant of the problems which business executives face (Paul, 2020). Resistance to change refers to the

reluctance of people to adopt to change (Ceschel, 2022). According to (Ceschel, 2022), employees can be covert about their unwillingness to adapt to organizational changes. And this opposition can range from expressing their resistance publicly to unknowingly resisting change through micro-resistance, language, or general actions. Such resistance may take a number of forms- persistent reduction in output, increase in the number of quit and requests for transfer (Paul, 2020). According (Pedersen, 2023) most employee resistance is driven by fear. Pedersen defined fear as an emotional and physiological response to a perceived threat, danger, or potentially harmful situation. Therefore, lack of employee participation in the change for example trying to outlast the change until it goes away, or attempts to be exempted from the change (Creasey, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contained the research design, Study population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods, data management and analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design which is defined as a type of research methodology that focuses on exploring and understanding complex phenomena and the meaning attributed to them by individuals or groups (Nick, 2023). According to Nick, qualitative research is commonly used in social sciences, psychology, anthropology and other fields where subjective experiences and interpretations are of interest. Qualitative research involves gathering data through different methods that is to say interviews, focus groups, and analysis of documents and this allows researchers to collect detailed, descriptive information about the participants' perspectives, experiences and context. Qualitative research often begins with an open-ended approach to allow for the discovery of new insights and patterns. And also, the approach emphasizes the understanding of phenomena within their social, cultural and historical contexts, (Nick, 2023). Qualitative data takes the form of texts, photos, videos, and audio (Pritha, 2020). The study also concentrated on the psychological research that seeks the in-depth understanding of people and their social worlds (Jeanne, & Magnusson, 2020).

The study concentrated on a constructivist paradigm, which is a combination of positivist and post positivist paradigm. Constructivist contends that individuals' views are directly influenced by their experiences, and it is these individuals' experiences and views that sharp their perspectives of reality. Tenny et al. (2022). According to this paradigm, it focuses on the how reality is not a fixed certainty and how experiences, interactions, and backgrounds give people a unique view of the world and so data under this approach has to be inductive as well as deductive (Tenny, 2022). This means that people's views were taken as relevant to enable the study to be successful.

3.3 Study Population

The study population consists of the entire group of individuals, objectives or events that share a common characteristic and are the focus of the study. The study population represents the complete set of elements that the researcher aims to study and draw conclusion about (Jilcha, 2020). The study comprised of 12 respondents whereby 10 of them had a face-to-face interview while 2 of them were on-line. These gave the researcher on the changes which were brought in Uganda Christian University and how they were ready to participate in those changes.

3.4 Sample Size

While using the qualitative approach of research, the sample size can't be determined since the researcher need to collect data from different respondents. In this the researcher has to collect in-depth information from various people. Size determination is a matter of consideration, as the researcher follows various guidelines in order to assess whether the research sample is proper or not.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques are defined as the process by which specific individuals are chosen from a larger pool to represent a broader phenomenon (Gill, 2020). Therefore, this study employed both purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Where by while using the purposive method, the researcher got participants who provided in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation. And while using the convenience method, the researcher was able to access the participants easily.

As such the participants that were selected were the ones who were very easily to be reached to give the in-depth information about the investigations and this enabled the researcher to obtain data easily.

3.6 Research Participants

An invitation to participate in this study was made personally and physically though two of them were conducted on-line due to the fact that the respondents had no time to meet physically. while identifying the first respondent, the researcher first talked to him since he had a lecture with her.

All the subsequent respondents were thus recruited. The researcher then agreed with the respondents on the dates and times for interviews. In total, twelve respondents participated as guided by the principle of data saturation where upon undertaking interviews, whereby two of them were conducted on-line. The two interviews which were conducted on-line added no new information since the network interrupted us and the respondents were giving me the same information. The researcher thus stopped the interviews.

Table 3.1 Below shows a summary of the interviewees and the nature of the ventures.

NB: The names presented are pseudo and therefore not the real names of the participants.

Number	Gender of the respondent	Gender	Location of operation
1	Ivan	Male	M block (lecture room)
2	Sumaiyah	Female	M block (lecture room)
3	Hannifah	Female	Online
4	Jacky	Female	Ankrah (LR1 room)
5	Flavia	Female	K block (lecture room)
7	Isamail	Male	Ebenezer restaurant
8	Annet	Female	Nkoyoyo hall
9	Gecellah	Female	Nkoyoyo hall
10	Sharon	Female	Ankrah
11	Peter	Male	Online
12	Lillian	Female	Ankrah

Incomplete: two which were online

3.7 Data Collection Methods

During this research, I employed the semi-structured interview which is a one-to-one method. This method enabled me to have interactions with the respondents which were a face-to-face period. The method gave space to the respondents to answer to various questions from an interviewer directly. The method allowed me to ask for more questions which were not on the interview guide and also allowed the respondents to give information which was valid for the session. I placed these interviews considering the availability and convince of the respondents and all the interviews were conducted at the respondent's offices since they were quite for the interviews to be successful. I conducted 12 interviews which were scheduled on the respondent's availability at the agreed time and date.

3.8 Data Analysis

In a qualitative research approach, data analysis refers to the systematic process used to interpret and make sense of non-numerical data, focusing on the exploration of meanings, patterns, and themes (Trymata, 2023).

In this approach, data has to be analyzed before and after collecting data and this strategy helped me to analyze both verbal and non-verbal ideas to ensure that I capture what exactly the respondents meant. After the interview, I took about one – two hours of reviewing and reading through what I got from the interview and identified the key points the respondents tried to mean during the process. I also re-read the notes I made and identified the themes and key points that were widely used by the respondents and I considered all the themes that the respondents meant to get a detailed and elaborated responses.

The above process is a content analysis that involves identifying themes and re-reading the summaries to write a final piece of work.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in the qualitative research are the set of principles that guide the research designs and practices. It's always a must for researchers to adhere to a certain code of conduct when collecting data from the respondents, (Paritha, 2021). While conducting this, I informed all my respondents that their participation was confidential and voluntary. I informed the respondents

that they were supposed to give me the information about the phenomenon but not about themselves to keep those knowing that their life style wasn't my intention and this made them free to provide to me the information I needed about the venture. While giving me the information, I explained to them that there was no financial compensation to be provided to them in return for their participation. In addition, I explained to them that they had their rights for example not providing to me the information when they were not willing to do so, leaving the interviews when they felt like without my consent. I ensured that no part of this study has a description that can identify the actual respondent thus ensuring that all these other forms are other requirements are outlined in the UCU guidelines.

CHATER FOUR

RESULT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists 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.

4.2 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 affected the teaching staff. The changes included the introduction of the learning management systems (Moodle and Alpha systems) and the expansion of the faculty of business into school of business.

4.2.1 The introduction of Moodle and Alpha systems

From the findings, Moodle and Alpha system is one of the radical changes that were introduced in UCU as a response to the COVID 19 pandemic that affected the globe. Notably, the pandemic started in March 2019 and the world governments including Uganda, responded by taking measures like lockdown. Uganda happened to be the country that had the longest lockdown of the learning institutions in the world from 2019-2022. In the process, higher learning institutions like UCU were allowed to explore the possibility of engaging students through online platform. In the process, UCU management introduced the Moodle and Alpha system as the learning management system. These systems were introduced in 2020. The Moodle was for the students but also the lecturers had to know how to use it because they had to upload work on Moodle for the students to access it, UCU introduced Alpha and this is a system where students access their marks that is to say course work and their results. (Interviewed by an administrator).

4.2.2 The expansion of the business faculty

The business faculty was expanded in 2023, where it was extended at the Ankrah hill. For all the last years, the business faculty was located in the university but it was in 2022 were the idea of extending it to another place came in due to the fact that the university had bought another place. The faculty was open in 2023 and the business students started to have their lectures from there. In this, all the students with a business course that is to say the bachelors of human resource management, bachelors of business administration and other business courses had to get their lectures from Ankrah. The opening or expanding of the faculty was not only based on having the lectures only from there but all the offices concerning the business issues were sorted from there due to the fact that all the related resource for business course were transferred to Ankrah. The expansion of this faculty provided space in the University for other Activities to take place and the place where the business faculty was, its reserved for another function. (Respondent).

4.3 The level of employee readiness for change in Uganda Christian University

The second objective of the study was to collect information from the respondents as on their view on the level of employee readiness for the earmarked changes. From the findings, it was noted that, to a larger extent, many of the employees were ready for the above-mentioned changes based on the facts they mentioned in this, there were factors that showered their readiness for change. From the findings, many of the staff were open to ideas and embraced it well, adapted well and were flexible, showed commitment to change, and had a sense of control as elaborated hereafter.

4.3.1 Openness and embracing the changes

From the findings, one of the indicators that showed that employees were ready for the change is the enthusiasm shown by their openness to the changes and embracing the change. It emerged that once the idea of introducing the Alpha and Moodle, which was to meet the threshold of the facilities required for learning institutions to commence online studies (as they awaited official physical opening of the institutions) the teaching staff of UCU embraced it well. Equally, the expansion of Faculty to transition into the School of Business was welcomed by majority of the staff. The above views were supported in the following responses;

Yes, many of my fellow employees were ready for these changes like the transition of Moodle and Alpha systems; in this many were open to new ideas whereby they were

receptive to fresh perspectives and willing to consider alternative solutions. And also, they were ready to learn and develop their skills through the training, monitoring and opportunities to grow their abilities and skills. This positive response showed the management that its employees were ready for the changes (**Interview extract, UCU lecturer**)

Another one noted

One of the factors that showed that I and my fellow employees were ready to embrace and accept the change was our acknowledgment and celebrations for the process UCU. We were part of the celebrations during the opening of the school of business and this showed our readiness for this change. (*Interview extract, lecturer*)

4.4.2 Adaptability

The findings show that the UCU staff easily adapted to the new changes and were mentally, emotionally and physically ready for change. In this regard, the employees were swift to move in into the call to action which included learning how to use the Moodle, trying out how to do various tasks which included loading of the materials among others. To this view one of the respondents noted;

True, we were ready for the changes that were brought in. this was because those changes helped us to be part of the organization processes and our adaptability to these changes while demonstrating our flexibility and willingness to pivot, when necessary, in the changes gave the management hope that we were ready for the changes. Also, our trust in the leadership especially on their communication and the decisions that they made in the organization with confidence that whatever the leaders brought on the table was right made the leaders to be courageous on the changes to take place. (*Interview extract, UCU lecturer*)

Another one noted

Our quick adjustments to the new processes that ensured minimal disruption at the workplace showed our readiness to readiness. In this, when they brought in the change of transferring the faulty of business to Ankrah, we adjusted very fast and started lecturing from there, this gave the

management hope and courage that we were ready for that change. Also, our positive attitudes towards this change gave the management hope that were ready, in this I mean, I and my colleagues remained optimistic and resilient even in the face of uncertainties like difficulties to move up to Ankrah to have the lectures, this made the management believe that we were ready for the change. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

4.3.3 Dedication and Commitment to change

There was also evidence that employees were ready for change as demonstrated by their dedication and commitment to ensure that the change was successful. In this regard, the employees showed total commitment and dedication to ensure that the change was successful and the set objectives were realized. In this regard one of the respondents noted;

Relating to what employee readiness means, our increased engagement in the change processes at UCU showed our readiness to every change that was brought in. our engaging in the organizational meetings, offering suggestions in the meetings and taking ownership of the change that was given to us. In this there were many meetings that held at Ankrah where the business faculty was extended and we were able to move up to there to attend the meetings. **(Interview extract, lecturer).**

Another ne noted;

Unwavering enthusiasm towards the organizational changes also showed that I was ready for the change whereby I showed my excitement for the expansion of the business faculty since it was small to accommodate all business courses. Also, the willingness I had to adopt new skills like the ICT skills also showed that I was ready for the change like that of Moodle and Alpha system. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

4.3.4 Sense of control and confidence

In another demonstration of change readiness, the respondents noted that UCU staff demonstrated a sense of control and confidence that the earmarked changes were beneficial and manageable. As such, they were largely at ease with whatever was introduced and supported it. This is an indicator of employee readiness for change. In support of this view, one of the respondents observed;

There was a sense of control among us as employees during these changes, in this I mean, we felt that we had control over the change process and its outcomes and this showed the management that we were interested in the change that was brought at UCU especially the transition of Moodle and Alpha systems whereby we handled the machines as ours with care. And this showed our readiness to the change before the management. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

Another one noted;

Our positive attitude towards the expansion of the business faculty and the willingness we had to have the lectures from there showed our readiness to the change. In this I mean, we were ready to meet with the students for class at Ankrah since it was the newly mentioned place for all business course and due to the fact that all the timetables were showing Ankrah, therefore, we had no option apart from transferring to the place and we were used with the place because all issues concerning business courses are settled at Ankrah. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

The summary of the above finding showing that employees were ready for change is demonstrated in the following illustration.



4.4 The level of employee participation in the change

In this objective, the aim was to establish whether, according to the staff views, there was employee participation in the different process of change which may include initiation of change, identifying means of undertaking the change, whether their ideas were incorporated and other related aspects of change management.

From the findings, the staff members acknowledged that UCU largely involved them in the different phases of change management. For instance, the respondents were given opportunities to provide their ideas in the inception of change, clear orientation where employees are briefed of what will happen, opportunity to pose questions and receive answers etc. (lecturers were involved in the business workshops which held at Ankrah and also some were allowed to use the Moodle system to upload the tests for the students.)

4.4.1 Participation in providing ideas

From the findings, the respondents of the study indicated that UCU management reached on the staff members urging them to give their ideas on both the learning management system and the things they would have wanted to see as the Faculty of Business Transformed into the School of Business. Some of the staff members gave their views and the views were acknowledged. In this regard, one of the respondents noted,

Yeah, one of the things that i have loved in UCU, whenever they plan for a change, they mainly invite ideas and views from us. I remember for example, when the idea of transforming Faculty of business to school of business, the university sent emails and other communication for the staff members to give their ideas on what they want to see. So, I feel that we as staff are accorded opportunity to participate in change. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

Another one;

When UCU was to introduce the Moodle and Alpha systems, the management first held a meeting and this meeting was about our view on these systems like what were our ideas about this system and I was one of the participates who gave in their ideas and mine was that it was a great idea of introducing these forums especially to some of the lecturers who may want to share their notes to students. This was one of the ways how students would access their notes easily. And this idea gave a go ahead to the management because I provided an importance for the need of these systems which was not part of the reasons for the introduction of the systems. And when they agreed with my idea, I was very excited and I felt valued in the organization. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

4.4.2 Orientations on the changes

From the findings, the respondents noted that the University through different means of communication proactively orients the employees whenever a new change is introduced. The orientation is participatory in nature in that the employees are introduced to change, the objectives of the change and proposed mode of implementation. This also accords the employees an opportunity to give their views and also propose the areas of improvement as to enhance change success. On this of the respondents noted;

One thing I like in this institution is that, when a change is to be introduced, the staff members are informed of it well in advance, we are introduced to the change, provided with the objectives of the change and provided an opportunity to offer our input. I remember when the Moodle was being introduced; it was participatory affair which involved orientation, in that the university let us know well in advance we would be using Moodle. This gave an opportunity of some of us to families ourselves with how Moodle works in other universities that had gone ahead especially ones in Europe and South Africa. So, thanks to orientation, the change was not surprise to us. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

Another one noted;

Basing on the fact that its a culture at UCU to take through its employees on the changes that are being brought forth at the organization, it was also the case when they expanded the business faculty to Ankrah. I was part of the team that was oriented and we were showed all the lecturer rooms, the main hall where the business workshops were to take place, the

head of department's office and other offices where the concerns were to be taken for solutions. This smoothed our work at place and also made us to comply with the change. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

4.4.3 Participation in giving inputs and ask question

From the findings, the respondents noted that UCU, during the said changes, allowed employee to participate by giving their own inputs and asking questions to which responses were given. This is another indicator that employee participation was promoted. In response to this, one of the respondents noted;

I would want to say that indeed employee participate during changes is crucial. This is through being given an opportunity to give our inputs and ask questions. For example, during the expansion of the faculty of business, we were accorded opportunity to give our views in regard to the department composition, the organizational structure and also given an opportunity to ask questions. In the process we would seek clarifications. So, to that level, I would say that UCU involves employees during change. **(Interview extract, Lecturer)**

Another one noted;

Having employees participate in the change process is very interesting. This is because, it helps to bring in new ideas (innovation and creativity) and also it promotes open communication among the employees. For example, during the transformation of the Moodle and Alpha systems at UCU, many of my fellow employees were encouraged to be open to each other like to ask questions where needed and also to bring in their ideas like they would want the systems to run. Many who had challenges were able to ask questions on how to use the Alpha system when uploading the student's marks and also how to upload the student's tests on the Moodle system. This created a relationship between the employees and their supervisors hence participating in the change process. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

The above findings can be summarized in the following diagram



4.5 The possible contribution of employee participation in fostering employee readiness for change

In this objective, the aim was to examine the possible contribution of employee participation (or lack of it) in fostering employee change readiness in UCU. From the findings, it was found that employee participation was central in fostering employee change readiness. This was shown by the effect which included creating a sense of ownership to the change, creating a rationale for change, increased commitment to change, empowered employees for change, and a sense of satisfaction with change.

4.5.1 Sense of ownership for change

The finding indicates that by involving employees in the different aspects of change, which is an indicator of change participation, employees developed a sense of ownership and this was an indication of employee readiness for change. From the finding it was noted,

I believe that allowing employees to participate in change, enables employee to actually be ready for change since it provides an employee feel they are part of it (sense of ownership). I will give an example, when I was provided an opportunity to share my idea on the faculty change to school of business. I felt like, so the university can actually consult me. I got encouraged (*Interview extract, lecturer*).

Another one note

Providing employees a chance to be part of the change process like goal setting and planning processes of the organization, this allows them to understand how their contributions align with the organization's overall objectives. And this alignment gives them a sense of purpose and responsibility. Let me give you an example, when I was asked to show the plans I had when they were forming the Moodle and Alpha systems, this made me feel that my contribution towards the organization can align with the organizational goals and objectives and this kept me focused and motivated. (*Interview extract, lecturer*)

4.5.2 Created a rationale /justification for change

From the findings, employee participation was viewed as an important means towards employee readiness for change as it creates a justification for change. It is a process which provides sense to

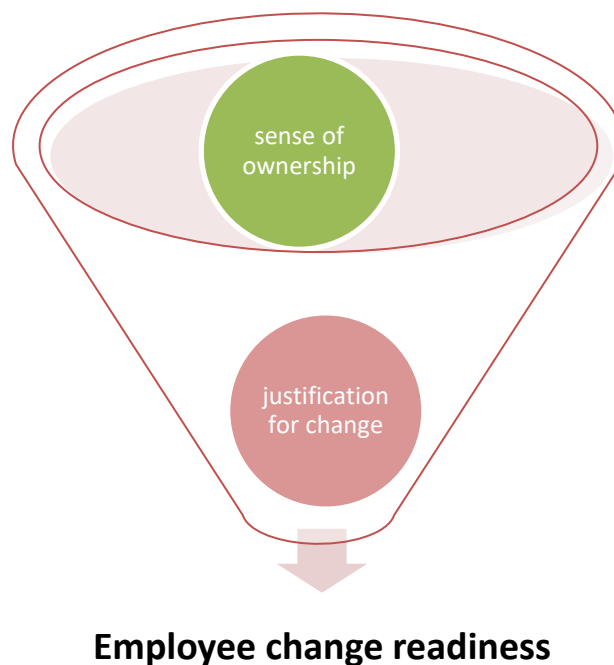
employees of the need for change and why the employees should accept the change. To this one of the respondents noted:

This helped the organization to build a strong foundation for successful transformation. In this there were clear articulating the reasons for change and this enabled to inspire and motivate our team to embrace the change and work towards common goals. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

Another one noted

I realized that creating a clear rationale was crucial and I help to develop a compelling narrative that explained why change was necessary, what benefits it would bring, and how it would impact our team and organization. In this, identifying the key drivers for change, like students' needs and then I worked together with the team to gather data insights that supported the need for change. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

The summary of the above results can be demonstrated in the following illustration



4.6 Other factors

This work adopted a semi-structured interview whereby apart from posing the questions from the interview guide, the researcher had a chance to ask other questions and this gave her a chance to identify other factors for change readiness in the organization and so the respondents had an opportunity to add any other information that they deemed useful to foster readiness for change.

4.6.1 Support from the management

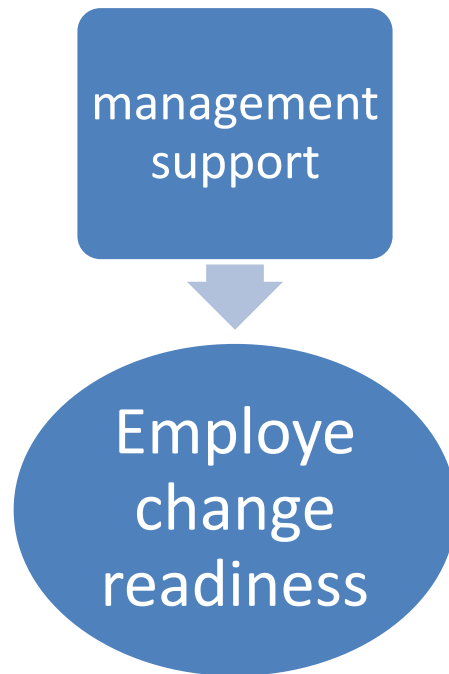
The respondents acknowledged the support from their management through the provision of resources that could help them be ready for the changes. This support gave the employees the morale to be ready for any change which was brought in the organization. In this, different respondents replied in the different way,

One noted

Yeah, the readiness I had to be able to participate the change process based on the support and the courage I got from the management, in this, the active monitoring and the courageous words which I received from the top management made me to face any change that was in the organization. **(Interview extract, lecturer)**

Another one replied

Having a supportive management is one of the best factors in the organization due to the fact it encourages its employees to engage in everything that could take place like being part of the decisions that are to be made in the organization and being on the side of those that have fear among themselves to pick interest and avoid fearing, this made many employees to start practicing their abilities on certain changes.

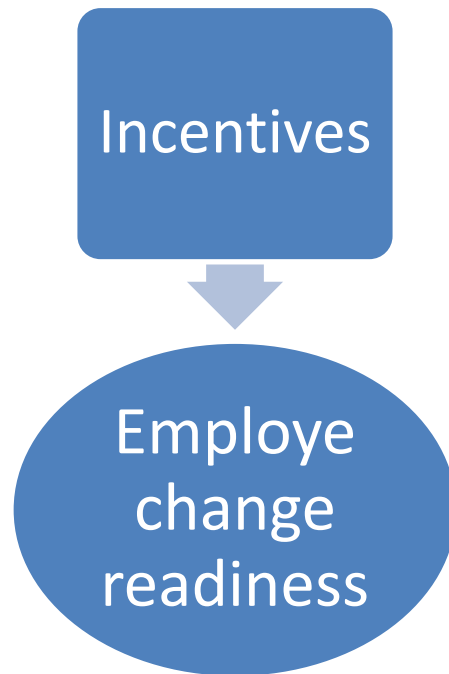


4.6.2 Provision of incentives

This is a very crucial factor whereby employees have to be provided with the incentives to keep them focused on their work for the success of the organization, these incentives can be both monetary and non-monetary. Different respondents gave their view on the incentives that were given to make them ready for the changes.

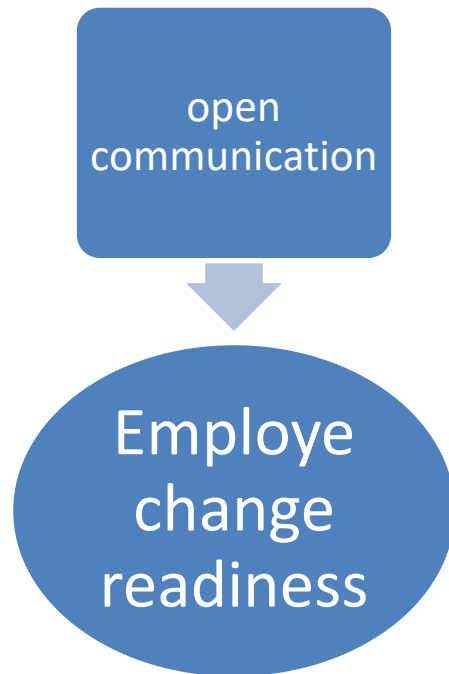
One respondent noted

True one of the things that made me ready was the increase on my salary, in this the management agreed to increase on everyone's salary and the addition of our benefits also made us to be ready.



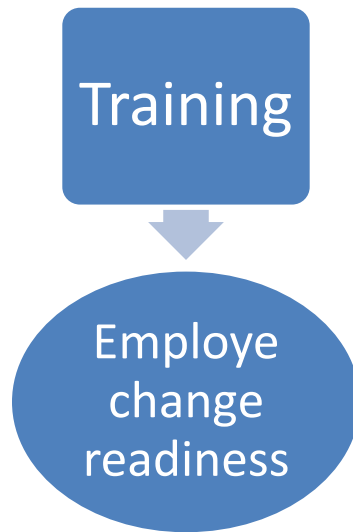
4.6.3 Open communication

Being aware about the changes that were to be brought in the organization also made the UCU employees to be ready for the changes. In this, the management communicated to the employees about the change to be implemented in the organization and this made every step of the change run smooth. These early communications made at least half of the organization's employees to be aware and to make choices on either to engage in the change process or not to engage in the process, in other words it gave them room to make their own decisions without being forced by the management. This means that open communication is a very key factor or aspect for every organization to participate for its achievements to be successful. **(interview extract lecturer)**



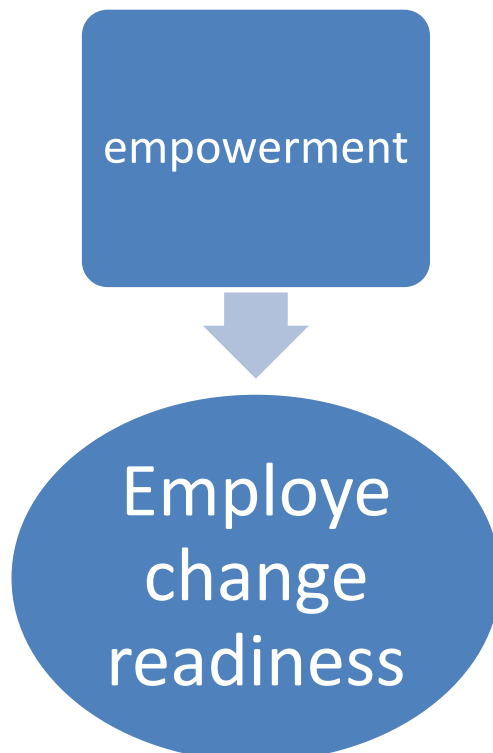
4.6.4 Training

For every organization to be successful there has to be a provision of training to its employees. This not only benefits the organization alone but also the employees themselves whereby they gain the skills they didn't have at the start also acquiring knowledge about the change that has been brought in place. The training that the organization (UCU) gave to its employees enabled them to acquire the knowledge about the use of Moodle and Alpha systems, this was not only being done to the lecturers but also to all the people who were to use those systems. According to the respondents, these trainings took a full semester, a half a semester and some of the employees took like two – three semesters to acquire the knowledge on how to use the systems. **(Interview extract, UCU lecturer)**

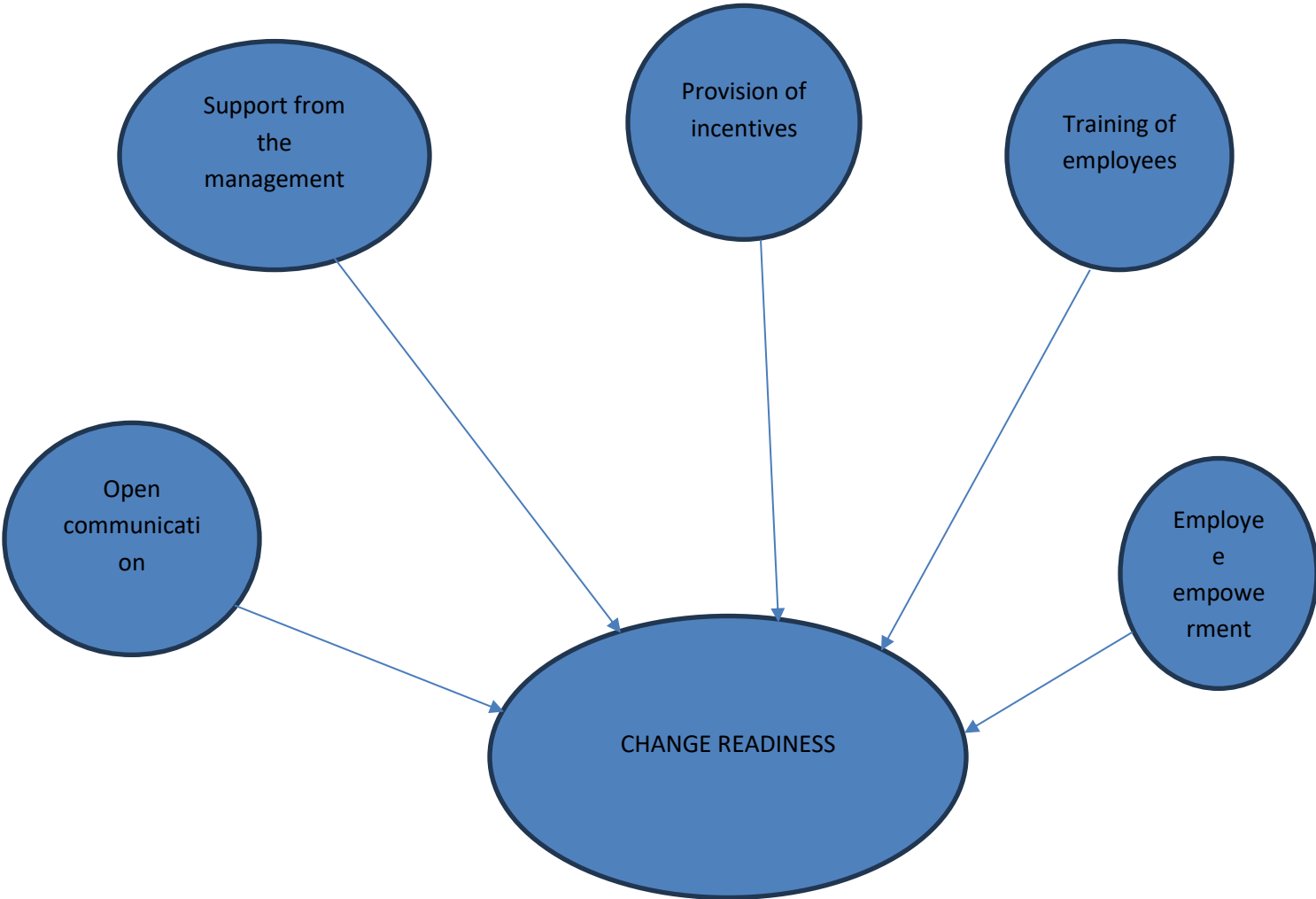


4.6.5 Employee empowerment

Making employees feel the owner of the changes also make the employees to be ready, in this UCU made their employees to be the owner of the changes and this gave them courage to be part of the organizational changes. It's very crucial to these employees to be the owner of the change and this make them own the change in their own hands hence doing their best for the change to be successful. **(Interview extract lecturer)**



Extracted framework



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion on the finding comparing it with other findings in the literature and the discussion of findings is based on the objectives and research questions of the study in change one. It also has the implications of the results, and also provides conclusions. Limitations to the study are also raised and the future research opportunities.

5.1 Changes Witnessed in UCU

The results indicated that there were two major changes that the respondents witnessed in the last five decade and these changes had their importance in the organization in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

5.1.1 The introduction of Moodle and Alpha systems

From the findings, Moodle and Alpha systems are one of the radical changes that were introduced in UCU as a response to the COVID 19 pandemic that affected the globe. Notably, the pandemic started in March 2019 and the world governments including Uganda, responded by taking measures like lock down. Uganda happened to be the country that had the longest lockdown of the learning institutions in the world from 2019-2022. In the process, higher learning institutions like UCU were allowed to explore the possibility of engaging students through online platform. In the process, UCU management introduced the Moodle and Alpha system as the learning management system. These systems were introduced in 2020. The Moodle was for the students but also the lecturers had to know how to use it because they had to upload work on Moodle for the students to access it, UCU introduced Alpha and this is a system where students access their marks that is to say course work and their results. (Interviewed by an administrator).

From the results, the respondent noted that these systems were introduced to perform certain activities. For example, the Moodle system was introduced to enable students to access their work easily. Moodle was also introduced to enable the students to do their tests via online. This system enable the lecturers to provide to students all the necessary notes needed by them for their performance. Moodle system also softens the activities of the lecturers whereby where a lecturer

would come to the lecture room to give a test to students, he just up load it on Moodle and the students do it. Additionally, the introduction of the Alpha system was developed to enable students to access their results easily, Alpha also enable students to know their curriculum (student get to know there course units for the next semester). Alpha also provides a time table for classes for the semester to the students.

Accordingly, these systems are very important for Uganda Christian University due to the fact that they foster change in the organization. In this, this technology require UCU to change through different ways like, embracing digital transformation, developing new skills, improve student's experiences, and fostering collaboration and communication. However, if Uganda Christian University had not adapted to this change, there would be dis-organizations in the releasing of the students results, diffulties in formulating the time tables for all the courses, dissatisfaction among students on their students and this would affect UCU's effectiveness and efficiency hence being one among the poor performers among all the universities in Uganda.

5.1.2 The expansion of the business faculty

The business faculty was expanded in 2023, where it was extended at the Ankrah hill. For all the last years, the business faculty was located in the university but it was in 2022 were the idea of extending it to another place came in due to the fact that the university had bought another place. The faculty was open in 2023 and the business students started to have their lectures from there. In this, all the students with a business course that is to say the bachelors of human resource management, bachelors of business administration and other business courses had to get their lectures from Ankrah. The opening or expanding of the faculty was not only based on having the lectures only from there but all the offices concerning the business issues were sorted from there due to the fact that all the related resource for business course were transferred to Ankrah. The expansion of this faculty provided space in the University for other Activities to take place and the place where the business faculty was, it's reserved for another function. (Respondent).

Basing on the results from the respondents, one of the benefits for the expansion was to enlarge on the school of business. This change gave space to the school of business students to get a comfortable and enough places to have their lectures from. According to the respondents, UCU would have faced some challenges if the faulty of business wasn't expanded. Among these

challenges include, congestion at the campus, limited class rooms due to many courses at UCU, limited offices for business faculty and among others and this would limit UCU's effectiveness.

In respect to the above changes from the respondents and their benefits, Uganda Christian University needs to focus more on the above mentioned changes and also to introduce more changes in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

5.2 Employee change Readiness

The results indicate that the respondents believed that there was a large level of readiness among them. From the results, it was clear that to a large extent, the employees were ready for the changes that were brought in UCU that is to say the introduction of Moodle and Alpha systems and the expansion of the business faculty to a school of business. In this, there were many factors that showed that the employees were ready for the change that is say, their commitment to change, and their innovative ideas that were brought in during decision making. According to Wanberg and Banas, (2020), having a high self-efficiency is associated with being open to change. According to Wanberg, self-efficiency is defined as the employee's perceptions of their ability to implement the proposed change. Employees who are confident in their ability to understand and improve can perceive the organizational change as an opportunity to improve their skills and abilities but employees who are uncertain about their ability to learn and improve may perceive organizational change as a threat. (Vithessonthi and Schwaninger, 2020). On the other hand, the management must treat their employees fairly (Lee et al., 2021). Therefore, to ensure the success of the organizational change, UCU leaders and managers must focus on how to support their employees by providing employee comfort, respecting employee's opinions, motivating and assisting them in achieving their goals. In this, employees must believe in the importance of change and should have confidence in their ability to adapt to the change, (Wanberg and Banas, 2020). According to the above, the employees of UCU showed their readiness towards the changes that were brought in the organization. In many were committed to move to Ankrah where the school of business was re-allocated to lecture the students. In this, their commitment towards that change was described by Wanberg and Banas (2020) where he said that "commitment among the employees at the organization shows their readiness on the changes that happens in the organization" therefore, according to the above, if Uganda Christian University did not develop the Moodle and alpha systems, the expansion of the faculty of business, it wouldn't have performed efficiently. This is

because, the expansion of the above system soften the flow of learning among student whereby they access all the materials via the system and also they access their marks or results via the alpha system and this makes the work move smoothly. For the expansion of the school of business, it gave space for other activities to take place which were limited because of the small space. Therefore UCU has to focus more on the use of the above systems to make their work fast.

5.3 Employee Participation

The results indicates that a large number from the respondents that participated in the organizational change. In particular, the respondents indicated that providing ideas in the change meetings, orientation in the change, and giving inputs and asking questions were some of the factors that showed that they participated in the change process. There are a number of reasons that can be advanced to explain the results as elaborated thereafter.

In response of the provisions of ideas by the employees during the UCU's meeting as a factor that explains that the employees participated in the change process, this is important since it promotes inclusion, in this, it brings in diverse ideas since people from different cultures, families, and language bring different ideas and this reduces on the barriers to speaking up among employees, (Richard, 2022). Allowing employees to give in their ideas is one of the best ways to show that the employees have really participated in the change. This can be backed up by its advantages which include, bring up insights, lead to better ideas and collaborative results and others, (Richard, 2022) and the respondents added that giving in their ideas during the meetings that were held at UCU concerning the identified changes was the most thing done by every employee to show their participation.

The findings also showed that the orientation activities they engaged in also showed their participation. This is a very important factor whereby employees are oriented on the changes that are being brought in the orangainsation.in this case, the UCU lecturers and the stuff at large were oriented on the use of Moodle and Alpha systems and this was done by the supervisor who helped the employees to get familiarized with the change, (Mrinmoy, 2024). Mrinmoy also suggested the importance of orienting employees on the change in the organization which includes, getting familiar with the organizational change, building relationships and others.

The above results support the previous studies that have shown that employees' readiness to change is important for the employees to participate in the organizational changes. Studies by (Moric, 2022), (Robertson and Cooper, 2020) and (Kailash, 2023). Which were undertaken to examine the factors that showed the level of employee participation in the organizational change?

5.4 Employee Participation and Employee Readiness to Change

The results showed the interaction between employee participation and employee readiness to change. Participation in the organizational activities can be considered as a response to the high demand for implementing democratic norms in the workplace, (Haqq, 2022). In this vein, the participatory decision style provides a democratic and humanistic value in implementing the organizational changes and creates the possibility of making better decisions. Furthermore, through participation in the change process, employees are not only passively provided room to receive and assess the information related –change but also allowed to actively convey their voices in response and influence the change, (Bah, 2021) Also participation assists organizational sense-making of change by encouraging employees to change their existing attitudes and beliefs into appropriate behaviors related to change initiatives, (Zulkarnain, 2020)

In addition, employee participation in the change process facilitates employees to access change related information and, sequentially, increase employees' understanding of the fundamental reasons for the change and its objectives, (Engida, 2022).

The above results are supportive of other scholarly findings that have shown that both employee participation and employee readiness are essential in the organizational change. Studies by (Andrew, 2021), (Abbas, 2022), (Jasiska, 2023) and (Paul, 2020) which covered organizational change over the last five decades found that commitment, managerial support and others ranked among the top factors that influenced employee readiness to change.

5.5 Other Factors

5.5.1 Support from the management

The results showed that the support from the management like provision of resources to use, training especially when using the Moodle and Alpha systems were instrumental in determining the level of employee readiness among the UCU employees. In this none of the employees from the organization used their resources; instead they mainly used the organizational resources that were provided by the organization. And the reason for this is that capital outlay is important in determining what a business entity can do (Hutajulu et al, 2020), (Mohd et al, 2020)

5.5.2 Provision of incentives

The results revealed that the respondents were sensitive about the incentives that were being provided to them by the organization. Such incentives include bonuses, rewards and recognition, health insurance and leaves. In this respect, the respondents opines that they were ready for the changes due to the incentives which were given to them and these influenced them to be ready for the changes.

5.5.3 Training

The respondents in this study indicated that their readiness to the change in the organization was also based on the training that was provided to them and this eased everything that was about the changes. For example, there was a training session to all employees on how to use Moodle and Alpha systems and this made their operations while using these systems to be easy. In this regard, the respondents mainly noted that the systems were easily managed due to the training that was provided to them. According to Thompson (2023), training is a tactical approach to help employees learn skills that directly impacts their job performance and compliance obligation.

5.6 Implications

The study suggests that UCU should encourage its employees to contribute ideas for organizational change. As many studies stated, most organizational change initiatives are initiated by leaders/ managers. Employees, for the most part, did not contribute ideas for change, which led to employee dissatisfaction and lack of trust in the change that the organization deserved. According to the study, this approach is ineffective for successfully implementing organizational change because

employees from various departments are the most important performers in any activity, the organization should motivate them to generate or share ideas for improving their organization. This decision encourages employees to own the change while motivating and holding them accountable for their changing activities. Furthermore, before implementing the change, Uganda Christian University to understand what it is and how to implement it, as well as share lessons learned from institutions that have successfully implemented organizational changes. This will assist leaders and managers in Uganda Christian University in understanding the factors influencing employee readiness for change.

5.7 Limitations and Recommendations

This research, like any other study, has limitations. One of them is time; the researcher had a limited to collect all data related to employee readiness and employee participation in change. Experience is another limitation whereby the researcher lacked experience in holding this research especially in collecting data and reviewing the literature. In addition, the survey included only respondents from UCU main branch rather than from all the branches of UCU across the country. However, the goal is to make all employees to participate in the organizational changes.

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AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

Kindly share with me some of the changes that you have witnessed in the five years at Uganda Christian University

Which of the said changes can you consider to be more successful?

Which of the said changes can you consider were less successful?

How do you think the change will affect the employees and your role or department in the organization?

Kindly share with me on the above changes that ones you consider the employees were well prepared for change? What are the characteristics/ responses that showed they were ready?

Kindly share with me on the changes that you consider the employees were not well prepared for? What characteristics /responses showed that they were not ready?

What strategies motivated those employees who weren't ready for change to embrace it into the organization?

What barriers might prevent you and the employees at large from adapting to the changes (especially to those who were not ready?)

Let's turn on employee participation during change, what were the employee concerns during the changes?

How do you think the organization handled the employee concerns?

What was the impact of addressing/ failure to address the employee's concerns on their degree of readiness to change?

If you were given a chance to improve employee readiness for change, what factors would you consider important?

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

12th Aug, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Name: **NAKIKONYOGO GRACE**

Reg. No **S21B42/019**

A bachelor's student who is seeking permission from your office to collect data for her dissertation titled

Change Readiness among UCU Staff with Special Attention to Employee Participation.

We shall be grateful if you could render assistance to her in collecting the necessary data for her dissertation

The Uganda Christian University School of Business thanks you in advance

.....
Mukisa Simon Peter
Research coordinator