Examining Organizational Change Capacity In Local Government

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Abstract: It is a cliché that change is inevitable but it is what it is. For many organization, change is a constant thing. If a leader's mandate is to prepare the organization for change in the future while delivering results in the present, then specific preparation is required. Recent studies on organizational change were done on private and big organizations but are limited on local governments where change is also a common thing. This study gave focus on the organizational change capacity of local government employees in one of the towns in Romblon, Philippines There are six dimensions of change capacity namely; facilitative culture, supportive infrastructure, different change approaches, ongoing strategizing, sufficient resources and willingness and ability to change that were the basis of this study. Based on the result of the study, the dimension that has the highest change capacity is the different change approaches which shows that these employees understood different approaches to change by using appropriate methods and strategy. They gave importance to expertise, accept coaching and consulting, share best practices and inform people of the changes to happen. There is a proper dissemination of information in the organization by debriefing people and giving importance to learning and experience. Overall, the organization is ready for any organization change in the future depending on the mandate of their leader.

Keywords: organizational leadership, adaptation to change, capacity, development

1. Introduction

One thing that is certain for organizations is the future and that organizations will need to change. A widely cited statistic is that "more than 70% of all organizational change initiatives fail [1]. Nonetheless, one of the arguments why senior executives are worthy of the lofty compensation packages that they currently commands based on the widely-held view that effective leaders and change agents are rare, but essential to cope with volatile and hypercompetitive environments that many organizations find themselves in today [2]. To make an organization change capable, authority is not enough. The leader is perceived to be competent and looks out for the well-being of the employees in the organization. Organizational capacity for change can be conceptualized as the overall capability of an organization to either effectively prepare for or respond to an increasingly unpredictable and volatile environment context. Organizational Change Capacity (OCC) or organization capacity to change is a combination of managerial and organizational capability of an organization to adapt more quickly and effectively than their competitors in changing circumstances [3]; [4]; [5]. In another study, the OCC is referred to as dynamic organizational capability to adapt old capability to new threats and opportunities as well as an organizations capability to create a new opportunity [6]. Peter Vail argued that organizations increasingly operate in "white water" where executives have only partial control, yet effective navigation of a boat on the rapids requires everyone in the boat to react efficiently and effectively to the white water all around them [7].

1.1 Dimensions of Change Capacity

In preparation to organizational change, there are factors to consider. These are the dimensions that were used in measuring the organizational capacity to change (Kerber/Buono organizational change capacity questionnaire 2009):

- Facilitative Culture – people-centered, quality results are driven process of developing and supporting culture in the workplace that facilities goal achievement through effective relational process.
- Supportive Infrastructure refers to built facilities that encourage regular and safe physical activity.
- Different Change Approaches understanding different approaches will be applied depending on the situation or scenario.
- Ongoing Strategizing refers to choice- in terms of what the organization will do and won't do to achieve specific goals and objectives.
- Sufficient Resources has to make sure resources is enough to support change
- Willingness and Ability to Change people have to be ready, willing and able to change.

2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine the readiness of the organization with regards to change in the following dimensions (a) facilitative culture, (b) supportive infrastructure, (c) different change approaches, (d) ongoing strategizing, (e) sufficient resources, and (f) willingness and ability to change. It aims to explore the possible relationship between the employees' readiness towards organizational change and their profile.

3. Methodology

The research study is descriptive in nature. Its aim is to describe accurately the characteristics of the group, community or people. Data were gathered and collected through a survey. A questionnaire adapted from Kerber/Buono (2009)[5] was used in collecting data. It is

composed of 36 items with 6 factors namely a) facilitative culture, (b) supportive infrastructure, (c) different change approaches, (d) ongoing strategizing, (e) sufficient resources, and (f) willingness and ability to change. No reliability test was conducted since the questionnaire's Data were analyzed using weighted mean and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient with the aid of the SPSS software.

3.1 Respondents and Characteristics
Total population of municipal employees is 42 but only 32 questionnaires were retrieved. Some declined to answer due to election period.

3.2 Respondents and Characteristics
This study focused only on one municipality in the province of Romblon, Philippines. A total of 42 municipal employees who served as respondent were given a questionnaire. Only 32 questionnaires were retrieved. The data analyzed in this study are based on a research instrument that was directly distributed to all respondents of 42 municipal employees of Calatrava. With regards to age, many of the surveyed employees belong to the age bracket of 40 to 59 years old and 25 to 39 years old obtaining a total frequency count of 15 (46.9%) and 13 (40.6%) respectively. Very few are in the age bracket of 60 years old and above garnering a distribution of 3 (9.4%). Only 1 (3.1%) belong to the age bracket of 24 years old and below. As to sex, the majority are males with a frequency distribution of 17 (53.1%). Females comprised only of 15 with a percentage of 46.9. When it comes to position, a lot are occupying contractual/project-based items having a total count of 10 (31.3%) followed by department heads and rank and files with 9 (28.1%) and 8 (25.0%) distribution respectively. The least are administrative support staff having only a count of 5 (15.6%). Concerning years in service, more than half or 19 (59.4%) have rendered short term of service ranging from below 5 years followed by those with long term ranging from more than 10 years with a frequency of 10 (31.3%). Only 3 (9.4%) have average term of service ranging from 5 years to 10 years.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Age	F	%
24 years old and below	1	3.1
25 years old to 39 years old	13	40.6
40 years old to 59 years old	15	46.9
60 years old and above	3	9.4
Sex	F	%
Male	17	53.1
Female	15	46.9
Position	F	%
Rank and File	8	25.0
Administrative Support	5	15.6
Department Head	9	28.1
Contractual/Project-based	10	31.3
Years in Service	F	%
Below 5 years (short term)	19	59.4
5 to 10 years (average term)	3	9.4
More than 10 years (long term)	10	31.3

The perception of the municipal employees when it comes to organizational change got a positive result. With a weighted mean of 4.2813, most of the employees agreed that organizational change is good for the organization.

4. Results

4.1 Municipal employees' perception towards organizational change
We asked the respondents on their perception regarding a change in their organization and based on the result, the weighted mean for the statement that state change is good (w=4.28) suggests that the respondents perceived that change is indeed good and that they care about changes.

Table 2. Perception towards organizational change

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Change is Good	4.2813	SA
Change is not good	2.0000	DA
I don't care with changes	1.7500	DA

4.2 Respondents' level of adaptive capacity to change
Shown in table 3 is the respondents' level of adaptive capacity to change in terms of facilitative culture, supportive infrastructure, different change approaches, ongoing strategizing, sufficient resources and willingness and ability to change. the average weighted mean result of the organizational change capacity when it comes to facilitative culture is 3.8853, supportive infrastructure, 3.9059, different change approaches, 4.0784, ongoing strategizing, 3.9581, sufficient resources, 3.8334 and willingness and ability to change, 3.9950 indicating that the municipal employees are ready with regards to organizational change in all six OCC dimensions. The overall result has a weighted mean of 3.9427 which is also a good thing and that the municipal employees are ready and prepared to any changes that will be implemented.

Table 3. Organizational Change Capacity

OCC	Mean	Interpretation
• Facilitative Culture	3.8853	Prepared
• Supportive Infrastructure	3.9059	Prepared
• Different Change Approaches	4.0784	Prepared
• Ongoing Strategizing	3.9581	Prepared
• Sufficient Resources	3.8334	Prepared
• Willingness and Ability to Change	3.9950	Prepared
• Average OCC	3.9427	Prepared

4.3 Relationship between the respondents' profile and level of adaptive capacity to change
Displayed in table 4 is the relationship between the respondents' profile namely age, sex, position, and number of years in service and their level of adaptive capacity to change. The resulting probability values generated from the statistical analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient suggest that there is no significant relationship between demographic profile and all the OCC dimensions. The p values are higher than the alpha value set at 0.05 level of significance. The study, therefore, failed to reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the profile and their level of OCC. This implies that the respondents' readiness for organizational change is not associated with their personal characteristics.

Table 4. Pearson's correlation between the respondents' profile and level of adaptive capacity to change

Demographic Profile		Dependent Variable					
		Adaptive Capacity to Change					
		A	B	C	D	E	F
Age	Pearson's r	-.157[NS]	-.226[NS]	-.183[NS]	-.180[NS]	-.043[NS]	.101[NS]
	Sig (2-tailed)	.390	.213	.316	.323	.814	.581
	N	32	32	32	32	32	32
Sex	Pearson's r	.173[NS]	.099[NS]	.199[NS]	.186[NS]	.205[NS]	.236[NS]
	Sig (2-tailed)	.344	.591	.275	.308	.260	.193
	N	32	32	32	32	32	32
Position	Pearson's r	.238[NS]	.184[NS]	-.043[NS]	.118[NS]	.101[NS]	-.006[NS]
	Sig (2-tailed)	.189	.312	.814	.521	.583	.973
	N	32	32	32	32	32	32
Number of years in service	Pearson's r	-.078[NS]	-.194[NS]	-.025[NS]	-.046[NS]	-.047[NS]	.052[NS]
	Sig (2-tailed)	.672	.288	.891	.803	.800	.779
	N	32	32	32	32	32	32

NS = Not Significant

Facilitative culture	:	A
Supportive infrastructure	:	B
Different change approaches	:	C
Ongoing strategizing	:	D
Sufficient resources	:	E
Willingness and ability to change	:	F

5. Discussion

Every organization must adapt to the changes brought about by external and internal forces. While change is inevitable, it carries a potential risk that may affect the organization's performance and its survival [8], [9], [10],[11]. For instance, [12] argued that the increase in the ability of an organization to change, the higher their relative performance will be. Any change in an organization whether private or public sector may affect its workforce either positively or negatively. It is therefore important that employees are prepared in whatever changes that may occur in their organization and that they must learn to accept new work routines, models, frameworks and values to guide their actions [13]. This study delved into the level of organizational change capacity (OCC) of employees in a local government unit in the Philippines. While most studies in OCC were focused on private organizations, researchers are now focusing on OCC in the public sector. The result of the survey regarding their level of agreement on the statement that change is good in the organization has been positive as most of the municipal employees favor the positive side of change. Although the question is general, it is worth noting that the employees tend to support change even if it is not clear what specific change the question is referring to. This study also explored their OCC preparedness level through a questionnaire with six dimensions. The high weighted mean score in each dimension of OCC clearly manifest that employees in the municipal government are indeed prepared in organizational change. This high level of change readiness can be considered beneficial to the local government unit as this would imply that employees tend to be flexible in whatever change that may happen in their organization. Normally, change is not uncommon in an organization like a municipal government since it is run by an elected official who will be replaced by a winning candidate after his/her term ends. Once a newly elected official is installed in the position, he/she might incorporate in his/her administration new system of managing of which employees are ready to accept. This study also explored the relationship of the respondents' personal characteristics and their level of OCC preparedness to possibly explain the source of their high OCC level. The result, however, failed to establish a link between the respondents' OCC preparedness and their sex, age, position, and number of years in service thereby supporting the null hypothesis. It can be inferred from this study which is limited only to certain municipal employees that their level of OCC preparedness is not dependent on the various personal characteristics covered in this study. The result may sound favorable on the part of the local government unit's chief executive as its employees' capacity for organizational change is not dependent with their sex, age, position, and number of years in service. The local chief executive can, therefore, expect that regardless of their sex, age, position, and number of years in service, the municipal employees are ready for any change to happen in the organization which will lead to better organizational performance.

6. Conclusion

Based on research findings that have been described, the results have provided baseline information to current and future local chief executive of a local government unit regarding the OCC preparedness of their employees. The results of this study provide practical implications with respect to OCC readiness which is critical to an organization's performance and survival. As Charles Darwin once stated "It is not the strongest of the species that will survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. Leaders are therefore encouraged to continue to provide a work environment that enhances employees' capacity to change regardless of their sex, age, position, and number of years in service

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