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CHANGE LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TOWARDS PLANNED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN DELTA STATE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ASABA, NIGERIA

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Abstract. This study examines the influence of change leadership on employee support for an intentional organizational change in the Delta State Ministry of Education Asaba, Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional research methodology and a self-administered Likert-type questionnaire. Data for the study were obtained from employees who were undergoing through significant upheaval. The data collected was evaluated using structural equation model. The study found that essential change leadership qualities including communication and involvement aid in building employee support for change initiatives. The cognitive and behavioral reactions of the employees to the planned change was influenced by change leadership. Employees' cognitive assessments of and emotional reactions to the planned change event served as a mediating factor in the relationship between change leadership and behavioral intentions to support the planned change. When assessing planned organizational transformation efforts, leaders frequently pay more attention to how employees respond to the change than to the causes of those reactions. The significance of addressing employee attitudes as the first step toward desired change activities was emphasized by this study. This study adopted a multidimensional approach to attitudes and examined their hierarchy of impacts in order to more accurately describe the influence of change leadership on employee support for change. The study makes a number of suggestions, one of which is that leaders should boost employee morale prior to initiating change projects in order to increase the likelihood of success. In a world of rapid change and cultivation of adaptable mindsets, change leadership is essential.

Keywords: Change, change leadership, attitudinal support, organizational transformation.

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Introduction

Based on a leader's personality and leadership style, research has examined the extent to which employees will support change initiatives in the past few decades. These results are consistent with leadership theory, which maintains that leadership is largely a process of influence in which leaders train their subordinates with the right behaviors while setting organizational standards. The continuing changes in the corporate environment have an impact on the long-term profitability and survival of today's organizations. On the other hand, corporations may find it challenging to improve when organizations are unable to develop continuously adaptive systems and when their expectations do not align with the demands of the environment; planned organizational transformation is necessary to adjust to environmental changes (Burke, 2017). According to previous research on the subject, few intentional organizational changes have been successfully implemented (Hughes and Ford, 2016).

Numerous variables, such as lack of cooperation between organizational members, employee uncertainty, and concern about potential hazards from suggested changes, contribute to the failure of many organizational change efforts (Bailey and Raelin, 2015). In order to foster employee collaboration and support for deliberate organizational change, it is critical to address these change-related concerns, as members' actions have a significant impact on organizational change. Facilitating employee support is one of the most crucial duties for leaders during organizational change. Leadership is crucial for an organizational transformation to be successful and to gain employee support for change initiatives (Burke, 2017; Stouten et al., 2018).

Although many studies suggest that leaders may influence how their teams react to change, it is currently unknown whether the ways that change drivers could modify the way their groups assist with specific organizational change (Hughes and Ford, 2016; Oreg and Berson, 2019). Various situations must be considered in order to completely comprehend how and when the concept of change leadership behaviors, based on standard transformation models, influences staff enthusiasm for change.

This study greatly advanced our understanding of organizational change and leadership by demonstrating a causal relationship between change leadership and staff enthusiasm for change and by elaborating on the hierarchy of effects among

employee attitudes that account for that support. Change leaders are those who hold positions of authority within an organization, such as senior managers and directors of departments, divisions, and units. Planned organizational change occurs when a change program is initiated at the top levels of an organization with the goal of achieving particular change objectives (Wiatr, 2022). This study therefore examines the influence of change leadership on employee support for an intentional organizational change in the Delta State Ministry of Education Asaba, Nigeria.

Review of related literature

Change leadership

During organizational transformation, leadership focused heavily on leader characteristics (such as personality and demography) and how they relate to strategic decisions and behavior. The attitudes and opinions of followers, including whether they are in favor of or against the change, are influenced by the actions and decisions of the leader on the change initiatives. Oreg and Berson (2019) claim that the majority of research on the implementation of change is conducted under the implicit assumption that change leaders are fully aware of and in favor of the changes they are implementing.

This common misconception stems from earlier studies and ignores the complex tasks that leaders perform during organizational change. Compared to transformational leadership, less research has been done on the functions and conduct of change leaders (Higgs and Rowland, 2011). The effective execution of top-down intended reforms requires change leadership. The term “change leadership” was first used by Herold et al. (2008). The process that examines the actions change agents take to achieve a specific intended change is usually referred to as change leadership.

Most studies on the change process focus on the leadership functions played by managers and change agents in the process and how they might impact the way a change is put into practice and develop step-by-step. However, the attention shift from process-oriented to leadership-oriented with the realization that successful change implementation requires a complex, responsive process rather than through a linear or step-by-step implementation process, making facilitative and engaging models of leadership more preferable (Dumas and Beinecke, 2018). The literature on the change process includes recommendations from experts on leadership tactics that encourage transformation.

Putting together a group of people who will support the change is one of them; convincing others to be part of change process, creating a brief and clear change vision, demonstrating compassion for those who struggle with the change, offering support for it, evaluating how it is implemented and consolidating its success are very important for any organization (Herold et al., 2008; Battilana et al., 2010). People in positions of change leadership coordinate the aforementioned initiatives (Kotter, 2011).

Kurt Lewin’s force-field theory of change states that how a change occurs within an organization is determined by two opposing sets of forces (Lewin, 1947).

When the two distinct kinds of forces are in balance, the organization is in a condition of equilibrium and remains unchanged. Organizations need to figure out how to either strengthen the forces that propel organizational change, weaken the forces that support resistance to change, or do both at once.

Kurt Lewin also said that before leaders can begin implementing changes, they need to determine the different barriers the organization will encounter (Lewin, 1947). According to Deviana and Hendarsjah (2023), these barriers can be found at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Organizational change will encounter resistance from these diverse barriers. The second step in the process of implementing the change is to decide who will be responsible for carrying out the change and overseeing the change process.

This function can be performed by people who have authority and influence within the organization. These individuals may also come from outside the management structure of the organization and perform the functions of an agent of organizational change.

Employees' support for change

Successful change implementation requires employee support. Academics have long emphasized attitudinal characteristics to explain why workers embrace or reject change (Choi, 2011; Oreg and Berson, 2019). These attitude-related categories take into account the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive objectives of employees in relation to change. Research has focused on employee appraisal and assessment of the essence and value of change, as well as employee beliefs or opinions about the appropriateness, support, and value of a desired change (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002).

Previous studies examined how much workers resist change, how tense and nervous it made them feel (Smollan, 2015). Deviana and Hendarsjah (2023) have also investigated the behavior of employees in response to change, including their readiness to support the change and their behavioral decision to approve or disapprove the change in question.

The idea of the learning model of behavior modification states that people's thoughts, attitudes, and intentions have an impact on their outer conduct (Smollan, 2015). Similar ordering of the attitude components may be seen in the learning model of behavior modification created by Valente et al. (1998), with cognition coming before emotion and emotion influencing conduct.

The fundamental principle of these ideas is that people experience change after becoming aware of it; based on these two emotions, they choose through their behaviors whether or not to accept the change. These findings are in favor of a comprehensive approach to measuring and understanding employee support for change.

Managing organizational change

Prior to attitudinal reactions to change, leadership decisions were made during change events, which are known to have significant emotional impact (Herold et al., 2008; Choi, 2011; Oreg and Berson, 2019). When examining the importance of leadership in the context of organizational change, some studies focus on more

stable and transcendent leader characteristics, including transformational leadership, while others examine situational leadership behaviors (Herold et al., 2008; Hughes and Ford, 2016). Despite the parallels and distinctions between the two concepts, each leadership approach can influence how people react to change in different ways (Oreg and Berson, 2019). According to Herold et al. (2008), change leadership is tactical and focuses on leadership practices to implement specific organizational changes.

Transformative leadership has long-term strategic implications that go beyond a specific situation. It encourages the development of a long-term relationship between leaders and followers through a variety of contacts in order to foster strong universal identification with change visions. The notion of change leadership states that some leaders are more equipped than others to handle change. On the other hand, change leadership makes the supposition that any leader may convince people to embrace a planned change by engaging in specific change-related behaviors that produce beneficial results (Hughes and Ford, 2016).

The presence of a leader has an impact on how people relate to each other within the organization when it comes to change. Research has shown that leaders are essential in fostering positive employee reactions to change (Higgs and Rowland, 2011). According to Astuty and Udin (2020), employees' affective commitment and performance may be influenced by transformational leadership. They have also demonstrated how transformative leaders can envision the future and motivate people to strive for it.

When implementing changes, transformative leaders take into account the needs of each employee, involve them in the process, and clearly illustrate and communicate the changes so that employees are aware of them, which can foster employee support for the change. Moreover, transformational leaders use the tactics of validating preferred perspectives, highlighting favorable consequences, giving significance to the change, and promoting optimistic thinking about the change (Carter et al., 2012).

Leadership support and employee attitudes for change

Change implementation resistance refers to the effects of the change after it has been implemented. More abstract attitudes, which relate to the content of the change, convey the normative consequences and basic values of the change. The premise that leaders may affect followers' attitudes and promote change by involving them serves as the theoretical foundation for the most of research on change processes (Higgs and Rowland, 2011; Oreg and Berson, 2019). Although leadership expertise in managing change is positively associated with effectiveness, stress and mistrust among change beneficiaries (Stouten et al., 2018). Haroon et al. (2017) argue that emphasizing the benefits of planned change, demonstrating its necessity, encouraging employees' participation in decision-making, fostering collaboration between top management and employees will lead to more positive attitudes toward planned change.

According to Luo et al. (2016), workers' relationships with a change leader during the process of change have an impact on their emotional attachment

to the change, which reduces their concern about it. Participating in a change decision-making process allows staff members to evaluate the change effects and think about how they could support the change project (Oreg and Berson, 2019). One of the most important factors shaping how employees view the encouragement of their organization is the degree of leadership assistance they receive from their supervisor, who they believe values their efforts and is concerned about their physical and mental health.

Leaders support their employees by fostering a culture of trust and a psychologically safe workplace that promotes and secures their participation and commitment. Employees who are more engaged, motivated and enthusiastic are better equipped to handle their work responsibilities because they are often supported by their superiors (Aitken and Von-Treuer, 2020).

Due to the fact that positive support encourages employees to view the change more favorably and better equip individuals to carry out the change's tasks, in the setting of organizational change, these effects continue.

Managers can better understand the essential components of management support required during organizational transition by focusing on the traits that influence workers' responses to change. The foundation of managerial support is establishing a partnership based on mutual respect, where employees feel that their needs are recognized and met. Furthermore, such assistance can improve communication and the implementation of planned changes (Henricks et al., 2020). Leaders serve as role models during transition, and lack of leadership can be detrimental.

Change leaders are more likely to be trusted because of their capacity to identify the particular needs of followers as a result of their change leadership tactics and employee trust in management during organizational transition increases. Employee commitment to change and leader trust may increase when staff members develop confidence in change management techniques (Peng et al., 2020).

Employee identification with change visions during transition appears to be aided by leaders' effective communication skills, particularly their attention to the kind and frequency of communication that fosters a committed workforce that thrives on shared objectives and aspirations. Therefore, for organizational transformation efficient internal communication is required. Lack of information and communication significantly affects employee uncertainty and anxiety, which limits their ability to accept change (Henricks et al., 2020). Informational accuracy, timeliness, and relevance are all positively connected with employee attitudes to changes, as psychological contract fulfillment is the degree of trust, and perceived urgency of the change. Leaders who value employee inclusion provide employees with the knowledge they need and pay attention to them so that they make decisions that are advantageous for the organization (Yahaya, 2020).

Due to the greater emphasis on participatory and horizontal communication, which enables people to be heard and to be listened to, employees will support planned change. Finally, this encourages social empowerment and participation. Organizations that routinely go through difficult transitions must allow

their employees the freedom to participate in implementing change in the most effective way to deal with the challenges they face. Based on previous studies, the following characteristics of change leadership are hypothesized to affect employees' views on planned change in this study:

1. H1a: Employee cognitive evaluation of change is not statistically influenced by change leadership activities during a planned change.
2. H1b: Employee emotional reaction to a planned change is not statistically influenced by change leadership practices.
3. H1c: Employee behavioral intentions to support change during a planned transition is not statistically influenced by change leadership practices during the change.

Regardless of how followers feel about the content of the change or whether they disagree with the way it is implemented, leaders have the power to influence followers through their actions, both consciously and unconsciously.

By encouraging followers to participate in decision-making and communicating effectively, leaders can affect how followers react to organizational change (Oreg and Berson, 2019). It is challenging to imagine how change leadership can produce supportive change-related behaviors of employees if their cognitive assessments and emotional reactions to the change are negative, as previous research has suggested some form of causality exists between various dimensions of attitude to change (Oreg et al., 2018). To successfully implement change, change leaders must evaluate crucial factors that influence employee behavioral support of change. Armenakis et al. (2007) have identified the perspective of the recipients as an important precondition for action. They further claim that leaders must monitor employee behavioral support for change to determine the success of transformation efforts.

The staff members' collaboration and enthusiasm for change increase with a positive attitude towards planned shift (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). Additionally, Huy (2002) found that how employees feel and experience change is a direct indicator of how they will behave in response to change initiatives. It is not unexpected that changing employees' perceptions and sentiments regarding the change event is essential to gaining employee support for change, given that behaviors are intellectually and emotionally motivated. In light of the above, this study also suggests a relationship-based ordering of attitudes:

H₂: Employee cognition and emotion to change serve as serial mediators in the interaction between change leadership and behavioral goals for a scheduled change.

Research Methods

A cross-sectional design was used to collect data for this study from the staff of the Head Office of the Delta State Ministry of Education in Asaba, Nigeria. The headquarters housed 1067 senior personnel. This group was selected for the study because their efforts have a direct impact on how the ministry's policies are implemented and because the ministry's organizational change workshop included monitoring and evaluation.

To ensure that the demographic requirements were met, we enlisted the help of a Deputy Director of the ministry who provided access and support for the study. All respondents took part in the survey on a voluntary basis. The Taro Yamane formula (1967) is used to determine sample sizes in research methodology.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = 1067

e = error unit

1 = constant

A sample size of 291 was generated from the formula as shown below.

$$n = \frac{1067}{1 + 1067 (0.0025)}$$

n = 290.93

n = 291 App.

After screening the questionnaires, 26 respondents were excluded because more than 20% of the values were missing, leaving 247 participants' complete and legitimate respondents. Of the 247 respondents, 87% were members of the principal staff and 13% were members of the support staff.

This study was intended to improve access and the standard of education while also supporting educational systems in Delta State and Nigeria at large. Effective change is expected to take six years to be implemented and plans to support or oppose a change should be clear at the early stage of change process. The Herold et al. (2008) change leadership scale was used to assess change leadership. Three dependent variables were used to operationalize employee support for change, and a five-point Likert scale was used to rate employee attitudes towards leadership activities.

This scale consisted of three parts that addressed the steps taken by leaders (cognitive appraisal, emotional response, and behavioral intentions) to successfully execute a particular change. They were measured by modifying Zimbelachew et al. (2022) change scale.

This study only employed questions with positive wording that accurately conveyed the respondent's appraisal of their thoughts about the anticipated improvement because some of the categories overlapped. On a five-point scale, respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with each statement. Structural equation modeling was the method of analysis employed in this investigation.

Research results

Using the data collected, the measures were initially tested against the demographics of the respondents as indicated in Table 1 below. Table 1 shows that 153 respondents (61.9%) are male employees and 94 respondents (38.1%) are female employees. This indicates that males, who predominate in the workforce, are more concerned about leadership change in the workplace and behavioral motives toward a planned change than females.

In terms of age, 107 respondents (43.3%) are between the ages of 41 and 50, and 97 respondents (39.3%) are over the age of 50. 17.3% of the respondents, or 43 staff, are younger than 40 years. In light of the fact that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 41 and 50, 233 people (94. %) reported being married, 4 (1.7%) divorced, and 10 (4.0%) widowed. This implies that the majority of the staff was married. 155 staff (62.7%) had master's or doctoral degrees, while 18 (7.3%) had professional degrees like the ACAN, CIPM, ACCA, CIPA, CIPD. In terms of years on the job, 109 staff (44.1%) had twenty one to twenty-five, 93 people (37.3%) had sixteen to twenty-five, and 45 people (18.2%) had more than twenty-five years work experiences. This suggests that the majority of respondents had been working at their current positions for between 21 and 25 years.

Table 1

Respondents Demographic Results

Items	N	%	Cumulative, %
Gender			
Male	153	61.9	61.9
Female	94	38.1	100
Total	247	100	
Age range			
31–40 years	43	17.4	17.4
41–50years	107	43.3	60.7
Above 50 years	97	39.3	100
Total	247	100	
Marital Status			
Married	233	94.3	94.3
Divorced	4	1.7	96.0
Widowed	10	4.0	100
Total	247	100	
Qualification			
Undergraduate Degree	74	30.0	30.0
Postgraduate Degree	155	62.7	92.7
Professional Degree	18	7.3	100
Total	247	100	
Work Experience			
16–20 years	93	23.1	69.9
21–25 years	109	20.8	90.7
Above 25 years	45	9.3	100
Total	247	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

To assess the data-model fit, reliability, and validity of variables, confirmatory factor analysis was displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Validity, Reliability and Latent Factor Correlations

Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	COG	CLB	BEH	EMO
COG	0.901	0.707	0.439	0.946	0.861			
CLB	0.875	0.574	0.394	0.833	0.671***	0.757		
BEH	0.869	0.590	0.388	0.820	0.459***	0.438***	0.759	
EMO	0.943	0.951	0.410	0.980	0.651***	0.469***	0.617***	0.911

Notes: Change Leadership Behaviors (CLB), Cognitive Appraisals (COG), Emotional Response (EMO), Behavioral Intentions (BEH), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Maximum shared variance (MSV), Maximum reliability (MaxR(H)).

*** $p < 0.001$. Statistics in bold represent square root of respective AVEs.

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022 (-hereinafter, unless otherwise noted).

The composite dependability results for the four factors, range from 0.869 to 0.943 as shown in Table 2.

It can be considered that all of the constructions are reliable because the values of the composite coefficients are above the cut-off value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017).

The reliability results are validated by the Average Variance Extract (AVE) discriminant validity, which are also above the threshold value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017). A close look at the absolute and incremental fit indices demonstrated that the model can fit the data.

Finally, we tested the CFA for common bias using the latent method factor test developed by Podsakoff et al. (2003). A comparison of the standardized regression rates of the CFA model with and without a typical latent factor (CLF) revealed that none of the regression weights were significantly influenced by the CFA (the differences were all less than 0.1), demonstrating that the results were unaffected by common bias.

Testing the hypotheses

The coefficients and p-values of each between-component regression line were calculated to test Hypothesis 1. Only two of the three expected direct effects of change leadership on employees' attitudes toward change were proven. Change leadership has a statistically significant impact on employees' cognitive assessment and behavioral intentions. However, the influence of change leadership on the emotional response of employees to change (H1b) was not proven in this study.

Table 3

Summary of hypothesized direct effects

Variables	Direct effects	Coefficients	S.E	CR	P	Conclusion
H1a	Change leadership → Cognitive appraisal	0.602	0.135	8.614	0.001	Supported
H1b	Change leadership → Emotional response	0.131	0.140	1.590	0.112	Rejected
H1c	Change leadership → Behavioral intentions	0.524	0.119	7.439	0.003	Supported

Table 4

Summary of hypothesized mediation

Variables	Serial Mediation	Indirect effect	Upper limit	Lower limit	Conclusion
H2	Change leadership →	0.343	0.356	0.178	Supported (Serial mediation)
	Cognitive appraisal →				
	Emotional response →				
	Behavioral intentions				

We also examined the unintentional effects change leadership has on staff members' support for planned change. The results showed that employee desires to support planned change and change leadership were related serially, with employee cognitive and emotional responses to change acting as a mediator. This mediation test was statistically significant, as "0" lies outside the lower limit (0.178) and the upper limit (0.356) of the confidence interval. Table 4 summarizes the results of the mediation.

Discussion of findings

The main objective of the study was to analyze the effect of change leadership strategies on employees' attitudes toward change and to characterize the overall process by which employees learn to support meaningful organizational changes. To achieve the goal, we used change leadership strategies and modification model to project employee attitudes toward planned change. This study produced two notable findings: first, the data analysis supports Hypothesis 1a, which states that the main goal of change-related leadership actions during planned change is to alter participants' opinions of the proposed change. This has a significant impact on how employees respond to the change by highlighting its importance. The result is consistent with previous studies that have found a significant correlation between change leadership activities and affective commitment to change (Herold et al., 2008; Liu, 2010; Oreg and Berson, 2019).

The direct impact of change leadership on employee cognitive appraisal lends support to the notion that change recipients are motivated by reason and will adopt

a change provided that the change is rationally justified to them (Zimbelachew et al., 2022). Contrary to expectations, Hypothesis 1b was not supported by the study results. According to our study, this is due to the fact that change leadership is primarily a process of advocacy and persuasion through which change agents deepen their comprehension of a change event. Leaders establish a framework for understanding change in the vast majority of change leadership activities, often known as enabling behaviors (Higgs and Rowland, 2011). The evidence also lends credence to hypothesis 1c. This may help to explain why behavioral goals are more directly impacted by change leadership than emotional ones.

Studies also show that task- and people-oriented behaviors are necessary for successful change management (Battilana et al., 2010; Stouten et al., 2018; Oreg and Berson, 2019). It was evident from the study's examination of change leadership behaviors that these actions frequently had a task-oriented focus and were largely motivated by the practical effects of the change. To evoke positive responses that go beyond intelligence may require a significant number of people-focused activities, such as responding to the emotional needs of subordinates and encouraging them to express a wider range of emotions (Huy, 2002).

In light of the above, we posit that the establishment of such relationships could be more successfully accomplished by a thorough selection of change leadership activities. Second, this study has illustrated how employees' cognitive assessments of change are influenced by change leadership, which in turn affects other facets of their attitudes toward change. This study also identified the multidimensional attitudinal construct of employee support for change and the process by which change leadership eventually persuades people to support deliberate change. This aspect of attitude is considered significant as it accurately predicts how people will act or behave in response to change (Oreg and Berson, 2019).

Conclusion and recommendations

This study investigated the effects of change leadership strategies on employees' attitudes toward change. Change implementation is most successful when leaders support the change initiatives. This study sheds light on previous consequences of change leadership activities on employees' attitudes toward change in the workplace. Because they have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviors of change beneficiaries, leaders play a critical role in assisting employees to embrace organizational change.

Organizational transformation requires the support of leaders, and even a small increase in perceived support can have a significant impact on workers' attitudes and actions. In less developed countries such as Nigeria, there are not many studies on this subject, but recently there has been a rise in interest in studies on leadership role in change and employees' behavioral intentions toward a planned change. This study fills this knowledge gap regarding how change leadership influences employees' behavioral intentions toward a planned change in developing countries.

The results of this study demonstrated that cognitive assessment and emotional response among employees mediate the sequential relationship between change leadership and employees' intentions to support planned change. Therefore,

change leadership has an influence on how employees perceived and understood the planned change. Emotional responses to the change ultimately determined whether or not employees would accept or reject planned change. Emotional findings are consistent with change leadership literature, which holds that an individual's affective and behavioral reactions to a change are influenced by the conditions and techniques they use to evaluate the change events. The findings of this study suggest that:

1. Leaders of Delta State Ministry of Education and related organizations should offer assistance to employees before launching initiatives for change to increase the chances of success. This is because change leadership is essential to fostering flexible attitudes in a world of constant change.
2. Leaders of Delta State Ministry of Education should emphasize fair procedures while enhancing the perception of justice to increase support for change.

Practical implications

By looking at the attitudinal aspects of employee support for change, we were able to pinpoint the exact connection between change leadership and the desire to support change through behavioral intent. This relationship reinforces the prediction of explicit workers' behavior towards change. Additionally, our study demonstrated that it is possible to thoroughly examine how individuals interact with change in research by combining numerous discrete attitudinal changes. This lends support to the standard approach models of change leadership and the theories of change leadership developed by scholars. Consequently, organizational leadership can use the results of this research to gather vital data for creating, executing, and authorizing an effective change process.

This study also emphasizes how important it is for executives, practitioners, and change facilitators to understand how employees' attitudes affect their readiness to accept a change, particularly how they perceive it cognitively.

Thus, in order for the implementation of productive change to be feasible, staff grievances must be addressed, as organizations cannot be capable of making the necessary changes without their employee' participation and support.

When assessing organizational efforts to implement a planned change, leadership should typically focus on employee behaviors towards the change rather than the conditions that support those behaviors. The study findings suggest that change agents should focus on workers' attitudes as a possible early indicator of desired change behavior.

Limitations and recommendations for further research work

This study was conducted within a single organization; there may be concerns about the validity and applicability of the findings (with several divisions). We believe that our results may be influenced, in particular, by the research population's distinctive cultural traits. More research on this subject involving different groups would be beneficial. The study employed a cross-sectional design because it focused on the attitudes of employees at a specific point in the change implementation process. Since employee openness to change may change over time,

tracking its evolution may yield valuable insights for more effective management of change initiatives. Future research can evaluate employee support for change at different stages of the implementation process by using a longitudinal study design. The variable that predicted employee support for change may not have been all-inclusive, and the observed hierarchy of influence may oversimplify the extremely complex nature of employee attitude toward change given that attitudes can be developed in a variety of ways. Future studies should combine change leadership with other leadership theories, such as transformational leadership, to fully analyze the impact of change leadership on employee attitudes toward change.

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