Chapter 87
Organizational Change Management:
Perceptions, Attitude, Application, and Change Management Practices in Nigerian Universities

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ABSTRACT

Change management is a continuous method used in transitioning individual employee, groups, and organizations to an anticipated future change. It focuses on the change management processes that addresses individual employee, groups and organizational factors that acts as catalyst for possible changes in organization. The purpose of change management is ultimately to make use of initiatives and ensure that every employee in an organization is willing and ready to switchover to an anticipated new role in the proposed business environment. This current study evaluated the relationship between leadership perception, attitudes and application towards organizational change. Using a structured questionnaire, principal officers, their deputies and faculty perceptions were analyzed and the results revealed that though change matrix are often painful and chaotic, however, significant relationship was found between employee perception, attitude, application and organizational change. The study recommends that Nigerian universities should be proactive in the implementation of changes to improve their employees' perception, attitude and application towards organizational change.

INTRODUCTION

Administration implies organization influence through a number of persons efforts geared towards achieving certain lay down objectives. It is certain that those involved must be well organized to be able to satisfy and achieve the expected goal. All their efforts must be channeled towards actualizing the same goal through cooperative energy. This can only be possible if there is an organizational structure to channel their effort for organizational development. Therefore, for any administrative action, there must be an organization because no administrative action can be implemented without an organization (Vishoo & Vidya, 2007).

Organizational change is as old as organizational development, what this implies in this context is that organizations find ways to improve and change its current status to a better-developed status. The universities just like any other organization change as they grow. The study of organizational change, its application, effect and management practices in goal attainment in Nigerian universities is a means aimed at higher education reform. If educational reform/change or development was to become effective and yield measurable output, element of quality management needs to be present in the improvement efforts (Detert & Jenni, 2000).

Stakeholders in education and university administrators are responsible for developing a vision and strategy for the understanding and development of university education. Universities as public sector agencies should identify the significance of leadership and management as instrument of quality improvement and sustainability in university system (Julius, 2005). We may have leadership, or in other words leaders (university administrators) either because they do not have what to offer which may be as a result of the means they attain or got to the level they are in the field of academics, professorship is the apex level in academic profession, surprisingly, there may be some who are professors, yet do not have anything to offer in a particular academic domain, this sometimes pose challenges in the process of change since most people believe that once you are a professor, you know it all.

For so many decades, there has been vociferation for improvement in university education, especially in south-south Nigerian. This implies a severe and ever challenging but of vital importance for university management/administrators to ensure that there is organizational change from its current state to a better developed state. It is an established fact that since the year 2000, perceptions on the standard of university education in Nigeria has declined, resulting in universities producing low quality or half-baked graduates that are not generally accepted by both private and public organizations globally (Ololube, Kpolovie, Egbezor, & Ekpenyong, 2009).

University administrators and lecturers no longer adhere to lay down rules, and innovation to enhance goal attainment. Similarly, it would appear that the problem of organizational change, its application, and the effects of management practices in organizational development remains crucial for management to contend with. Therefore, a decline in organizational change in Nigerian universities especially in the south-south has posed a very serious problem in the achievement of the set goals of the universities, such as quality of program, conducting researches, to widen the frontiers of knowledge available to humanities and producing different categories particularly high level human resources for the economy and political system. The notable deficiencies and the need for organizational change are no longer in doubt, what appears uncertain is the effective application, attitude/reaction, effect and management practices. The study identifies the major components of organizational change perception, attitude and application towards goal attainment. This article is written to inform higher education administrators, managers, lecturers, policy makers, and university students of the relationship and advantage of organizational

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