

Cognition, Resistance and Turnover Intentions of Employees

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Abstract: Most researches have been done on the organizational change discussing the fact that individuals are against the organizational change process. This study provides the insights about the psychological process, which takes place behind the behavioural resistance of employees during the organizational change process. Self administered survey is used for gathering responses through a structured questionnaire from the 300 persons of banking sector organizations. Cognitive distortion is significantly affecting the emotions of the employees, which leads to increased behavioral resistance. Behavioral resistance is not significantly affecting the intention to quit which means that employees are resisting the change but not leaving the organization.

Key words: Cognitive Distortion • Emotions • Individual Psychology • Organizational Change

INTRODUCTION

Organizational success is influenced by the resistance of employees. Traditionally resistance is considered as a problem. According to [1] many major corporate changes failed just because of little resistance. Now days this concept is under attack that “people resist inherently” as said by the [2]. This paper is written, for the better understanding of the motivations behind the employee resistance [3]. No one resist change itself, but just because of loss of status and loss of comfort [2], loss of control [4], panic from poor outcome [5] and perform more work [6]. Usually resistance is assumed as socially constructed phenomena, which is continuously redefining through the interaction of parties involves in change effort [3].

Resistance is defined in different ways like “Resistance is an expected reaction to any major change” and “The action of opposing something that you dislike or differ with”. “We define resistance here as any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo [7]. Resistance is also referred as anything that employees do but employer does not like it. Employees’ resistance to change is considered as natural response [7] because they don’t know the consequences of change.

Today, organizations need to be more flexible and to adjust with change, for remaining competitive and for ensuring long term survival [8]. Management does not focus on the human element, which is more important in organizational change process [9]. For the success of organizational change, individual change is needed [8], because individual resistance is a barrier to change [4].

[10] explain individual resistance process in 4 phases: “initial denial, resistance, gradual exploration and eventual commitment”. This paper discusses the worker thinking and there outcome [3]. Individual protect themselves from change through habitual defense mechanism and from the feelings of worry [11]. It is also considered that emotions are the reason behind the failure of organizational change effort [12]. This paper is contributing in the examination of effect of emotions on the individual behavior. This paper discusses the effect of positive and negative emotions on individual behavior.

This paper is identifying, measuring and evaluating the employees’ affective and cognitive constituents.

Literature Review: There are four constructs used in this model namely, cognitive distortion, emotion, behavioral resistance and intention to quit. This paper describes the Human process involved in organizational change.

There are four processes, sense, think, feel and act [13]. This source argues that individual does not experience the basic process separately. [14] said that there are three components behind resistance, cognitive component, affective component and behavioral component and these three components produce different kinds of resistance [15].

Individuals thinking comes under the cognitive component (e.g., Is it essential?); employees feeling come under the affective component (e.g., anger, worry); and employees reactions comes under the behavioral component (e.g., trying to induce others that the change is awful, expressing dissatisfaction about the change) [14]. These components are interrelated because employee's actions are associated with thinking and thinking is affected by feelings [14]. It is possible that may be some variables have more authority on peoples thinking about change, and some have more contact with what they feel and some variables may have control on their actions. In the same way, peoples feeling can cause of different results.

The A-B-C theory of personality said that A (an activating event) does not affect C (behavioral results); instead it is B (an individual's belief) about A that mainly affect C [13, 16]. This theory is explaining that cognitive distortion cannot effect the behavioral resistance instead it is emotion/affection about the cognitive distortion which mainly affect the behavioral resistance.

Cognitive Distortion: [17] suggests that individuals tend to develop negative philosophy about life events and about themselves, which results in a consistent pessimistic attitude. Emotions increase this pessimistic attitude and systematic errors, which are Cognitive distortion [17]. So according to [17] negative philosophy and pessimistic attitude led the cognitive distortion towards the behavioral resistance.

[17] said that individuals are able to show numerous cognitive distortions. And these distortions can occur simultaneously. These distortions do not exist in reality, just are the creation of mind, and individual consider them true and boosted by emotions because these cannot be tested [7]. So, during the organizational change individual interpret circumstances themselves that what is going to happen. And it is consider as true because there is a lack of information and their emotions are also boosting their feelings [7]. Individual protect themselves from change through habitual defense mechanism and from the feelings of worry [11].

Therefore, these are the cognitive distortions which damages individual's association with the other employees, management and with organization. [18] claims that resistance will be boost if cognitive distortion will not be controlled as their emotions are attached with the cognitive distortion.

The above conversation provides some proof that cognitive distortions and emotional attachment are as common in our workplace as in our life. So, this paper purposes that there could be a statistical relationship between cognitive distortion and emotion.

H1: Cognitive distortion has an impact on the behavioral resistance.

Affection/Emotions: Anger, joy, disgust, surprise are the emotions, which are generally practiced by individuals. Usually individual practice these emotions throughout the organizational change. Usually feeling of denial, anger, frustration and loss are the resultant of organizational disturbance [19]. When established ways are changed, Individuals experience grief and loss. Individuals feel sadness, anxiety, anger when their roles are changed in an organization. When individuals do not succeed to accept change emotionally then they show resistance [20]. It is considered that emotions are the reason behind the failure of organizational change effort [12] therefore emotion is hypothesized below.

H2. Emotion has an impact on the behavioral resistance.

Behavioral Resistance: Behavior is described as "physical actions which can be heard or seen" and also "comprise mental process that cannot be heard or seen" [21]. The dependent variable will measure an individual's intentions either the individual will show supportive behavior or will show the resistant behavior to organizational change.

H3. Behavioral resistance has an impact on the intention to quit.

Intention to Quit: literature proposes that pessimistic attitudes toward change may have negative results for an organization. [22] said state government employees increased stress is associated with perceived pressure of change and that will ultimately lead towards lower job satisfaction as well as amplified intention to quit. [23] described, merger of two plants decreased the employees'

job satisfaction level and decreased their organizational commitment, and it increased their intention to quit. When employee heard about the change, their irritation increased which causes lower level of job satisfaction and lowers the level of organizational commitment, but increases the level of intension to quit [24].

[25] demonstrated precisely that resistance arbitrates the relationship between situation of change and work-related outcomes. On the basis of this literature the paper purposes that higher level of resistance to change taking place in organization will be related to, lower levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of organizational commitment and higher level of intention to quit. And eventually an employee who has higher level of resistance towards organizational change may actually come to a decision to leave the organization.

Study purposes that individual's behavioral resistance to change is positively related to higher level of intention to quit. [25] said that level of resistance depends upon the form of change and if the resistance is high then, it lowers the level of job satisfaction and higher the intention to quit. The behavioral factor of attitudes engages both, behavior and intent to act, intention to leave the organization appear a suitable outcome that might tap the behavioral factor of resistance to change.

Methodology: Relationship strength between variables is tested through hypotheses testing. Participants of this study are the employees of banking organizations. Self administered questionnaire is used for collecting data only one point of times. Author personally visited the Banks for gathering information. Information about the age, gender and job tenure in the current organization is also obtained. 300 Questionnaire are distributed at workplace for the convenience of employees.

For measuring the independent variable Cognitive distortion, scale developed by [7] is used. This scale is consisted of 20 items, measured by 7 point likert scale and used in the form of self administered questionnaire. Emotion is measured by using the 7 point likert scale. 7 items are used for measuring the positive and negative emotion of employees about change. This scale is used by [26].

A 20-item scale is used for measuring the validity of behavioral resistance. A 7 point likert scale is used, which is developed by [27]. This scale measures the positive and negative behavior about change. 7 point likert scales is used for measuring 3-items scale used by [26].

RESULTS

Here is the detail response rate of demographic variables

Descriptive stat is showing the central tendency and dispersion of the responses from the mean value. All the values of mean are above 3 and the dispersion of responses is below 1.

Cronbach Alfa is showing the reliability of the instrument used for this study. All the Cronbach Alfa values are reporting the significant level of reliability. Therefore this study is using the response for final analysis.

In this section, research model is tested through AMOS

The above figure is showing the relationship among the variables and structural equation model is also measuring the relationship strength of each variable.

Table 1: Age of participants

| | | Age | | | |
|-------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Below 25 | 50 | 16.6 | 16.6 | 16.6 |
| | 25-30 | 80 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 26.6 |
| | 30-35 | 54 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| | 35-40 | 64 | 21.3 | 21.3 | 38.6 |
| | Above 40 | 52 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 2: Gender of participants

| | | Gender | | | |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 210 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| | Female | 90 | 30 | 30 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 3: Job Tenure in Current Organization (years)

| | | Job Tenure | | | |
|-------|---------|------------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Below 1 | 24 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| | 1-3 | 102 | 34 | 34 | 34 |
| | 4-6 | 86 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 58 |
| | Above 7 | 88 | 29.4 | 29.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|-----------------------|--------|----------------|-----|
| Cognitive Distortion | 3.5428 | .79285 | 300 |
| Affection/Emotions | 3.6877 | .73903 | 300 |
| Behavioral Resistance | 3.8772 | .86324 | 300 |
| Intention to Quit | 3.7783 | .87933 | 300 |

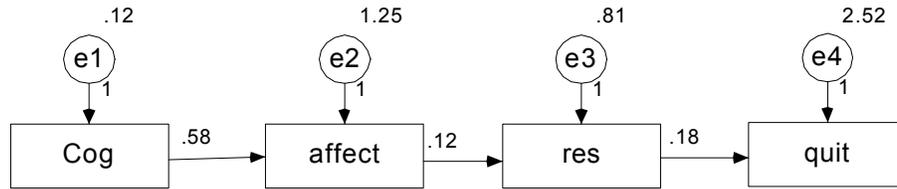


Fig. 1: The results of model

Cog Cognitive Distortion
 Res Behavioral Resistance
 Affect Affection/Emotions
 Quit Intention to Quit

Table 5: Cronbach’s Alpha

| Variable | No of Items | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Cognitive Distortion | 20 | 0.741 |
| Affection/Emotions | 7 | 0.854 |
| Behavioral Resistance | 20 | 0.764 |
| Intention to Quit | 3 | 0.931 |

Table 6: Regression Analysis

| Variables | Estimates | Critical Standard P | | | Decision |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| | | Ratio | Errors | Values | |
| Cognitive Distortion | .579 | 2.480 | .233 | .013 | Accepted |
| Affection/ Emotions | .119 | 2.117 | .056 | .034 | Accepted |
| Behavioral Resistance | .178 | 1.444 | .123 | .149 | Rejected |
| Chi Square | | 166.504 | | | |
| Degree of freedom | | 3 | | | |
| Overall P Value | | .000 | | | |

The index of fit is shown above. The value of degree of freedom is 3. This is showing an evidence that overall research model is significant (Chi= 166.504).

The results of hypothesis test of relationship between the variables Cognitive distortion, Affection/Emotions, Behavioral Resistance and Intention to quit are shown Table 4 and Figure 1.

Table 4 is showing the value of β .579 between the variable Cognitive distortion and Affection/Emotions and this is showing the strength of relationship, e.g. if there is a one degree change in cognitive distortion then there would be 57.9% change in Affection/Emotions. The relationship between the Cognitive distortion and Affection/Emotions is significant and acceptable. Table is also showing the values of β 0.119 between Affection/Emotions and Behavioral Resistance, and it means that if there is a one degree change in Affection/Emotions then there would be a 11.9% change in Behavioral Resistance. β is 0.178 between the Behavioral Resistance and Intention to Quit variables, it shows the strength that if there is a change of one degree in Behavioral Resistance then there would be a change of 17.8% in Intention to Quit.

Behavioral Resistance is affecting the variable Intention to Quit but there is no significant relationship between them.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study is carried out from the banking organizations where major changes are taking place. Employees are surveyed for checking the association between cognition and turnover intentions. Scales used for data gathering are tested for factorial validity.

Result shows that cognition has a positive fact on emotions. Survey shows that employee with high cognitive resistance and emotions leads to high behavioral resistance which ultimately leads to high turnover intentions. Therefore it increased the turnover ratio.

Cognitive distortion is affecting strongly to emotions, as β is showing the strength of relationship. Individuals personally build up thinking about a certain event which leads them in the direction of good or bad. Thinking affects the emotions of a person and when the emotions become in line with the thinking then it leads to ultimate behavior. This thinking can be categorized as polarized thinking, because there is no middle point. In polarized thinking, there are only two classes good or bad. There is no gray area in polarized thinking. This study is also pointing out one thing that if an individual minimizes the level of irrational ideas then he can embrace change. This only can be done if individual feels the sense of responsibility.

If individual feels the sense of responsibility then he can also overcome their personal life problems and can avoid the difficulties of their personal life [13]. It also increases their confidence level if they are given task and they achieve them. Self discipline is required for overcoming the problem of avidness [13]. This will enhance their confidence to work on difficult tasks. Employee should participate actively because laziness increases their chances of failure.

Organizations face the resistance when they made changes and resistance come from different angles and human resistance is one of these. So, when an organization implements change, management should keep it in view that cognition and emotions can cause of behavioral resistance and it can increase turnover ratio.

This research is evidence that organizations should use a stable approach. Along with the technical factors, management should also focus on human factor. Organization should use involvement strategies that create self responsiveness in employees and minimize the cognitive distortion. This development can change individual's thinking and emotions about the change and it can reduce their resistance toward change.

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