

LACK OF COMMUNICATION- A MAJOR REASON FOR RESISTANCE TO
CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS



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ABSTRACT

The study on nature of communication and resistance to change has been an understudied topic. In this research a quantitative relationship between Dialogic communication variables and resistance to change has been explored. It is a case study approach on a single organization undergoing a major change such as acquisition. The findings indicate that dialogic communication does have an impact on resistance to change and most of the dimensions of dialogic communication reduce the resistance to change in an organization.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Change is the only constant element in today's dynamic world. Every organization needs to change in order to survive, grow and to remain competitive within the industry.¹Change can be defined as “replacing the old ones with new” but it's easier said than done.²

Change may occur at various levels within the organization and how a change is viewed varies significantly from person to person. A manager may perceive a change within an organization as an opportunity for growth while an employee might perceive it as disruptive or redundant.¹Change within an organization might be planned or a result of certain factors (internal or external) that are beyond the control of the organization, but what so ever may be the reason for change, the employees are going to resist it.²This resistance to change is often mentioned as the main reason for difficulty in implementation of change and for unsuccessful change initiatives.³Thus, sustaining any change within an organization requires an essential shift in thinking¹of the people within the organization.

Fear is considered as the main cause of resistance towards change by the employees; fear could be of additional work and responsibilities, of losing the job or of adapting to the new system. But change is unavoidable as organizations are under extreme pressure to survive in today's competitive environment by constantly updating from old ways of doing business².

Employees' resistance is considered as the biggest problem that organizations have to deal with during change initiatives thus; according to several researches employees are to be considered critical for any organizational change.⁴Karamjeet et al. (2012) supports this by describing the seven phases of the change process that the employees undergo: immobilization or shock, minimization or denial, depression, acceptance, testing out or learning, realization and internalization. It is essential for the management to understand these phases and act accordingly in order to successfully implement change. Along with that, the management needs to communicate and consult with the employees to help them at least understand why change is needed within the organization¹.

¹Mutihac (2010)

²Karamjeet et al. (2012)

³ Dennis & Andrew (2010)

⁴ Saruhan (2014)

According to several experts an organizational change can be successful if it is viewed positively by the employees, only then will they develop behaviors and attitudes that'll help in making a change initiative successful. Management needs to understand, accept and make efforts to break the resistance barriers, in order to create a climate in the organization that encourages acceptance towards change and decreases resistance.¹

Effective communication is considered as an important element in the process of change implementation and overcoming any resistance to change. Internal communication not only reduces confusion regarding the change process but also helps in increasing the understanding of commitment to change¹. Accurate communication not only enhances the credibility of the management but also incorporates positive perception of justice among the employees for the management, which in turn reduces their resistance towards change⁴.

Problem Statement

According to several researches, there are various factors that can be identified as the cause of unsuccessful change initiatives; such as poor organizational infrastructure or the external pressures from the business environment like political, social and economic factors, but among all these the employees' resistance has been recognized as the main source of failures of most change implementations across various organizations (Kali McKay et al., 2013). The purpose of change initiatives is mostly for growth of the business or to remain competitive. But it has been observed that employees mostly react negatively towards these change initiatives, this is mainly because all the change plans bring in a lot of stress, pressure and uncertainty for the employees. This uncertainty and lack of understanding within the employees of their surroundings result in resistance towards these change efforts (Rosemond & Asamoah, 2012).

It can be observed that the need for change needs to be communicated accurately to the employees in order to avoid any resistance towards change. Thus, through my research I will be focusing on whether communication and consultation with the employees is the most important factor towards successful change initiatives or not.

Significance of Study

Elving, 2005 in his study about role of communication in organizational change stated that although many researchers show a lot of interest in internal communication during organizational change but the research shows that it is still an understudied topic. The findings in his article support the topic of my research that communication is important during change management. Johansson and

Heide (2008), Simoes and Esposito (2012), Frahm and Brown (2007) are among few other authors who have backed Elving's point regarding the importance of communication and highlighted the fact that although communication has been considered crucial by several authors but in spite of that, research in the field of communication has been rarely done. Simoes and Esposito (2012) have further stated that the previous researches on communication with respect to organizational change have not much discussed about the nature of communication. Communication especially through constructivist perspective has not been studied much and is thus being treated as a phenomenon that exists in isolation from organizational context. There have been researches on communication through instrumental framework but just providing information won't help in reducing resistance to change, a meaningful communication is important (Esposito, 2012). Keeping all this in mind I am addressing the importance of communication in my research, focusing on whether just providing information helps in overcoming resistance to change in an organization or quality of information also plays a crucial role.

Purpose

The purpose of my thesis is to focus on whether lack of meaningful communication is the most important factor in resistance towards change within an organization or not. The purpose is to understand the importance of internal communication during a change process. The analysis of my research will be based on my study on employees' experiences of a change in their organization and their perceptions regarding communication and resistance to change. The previous qualitative research was conducted by Simoes and Esposito (2012) on the factors of dialogic communication and resistance to change based on subjective experiences, and they suggest that future researches should be conducted taking into account the quantitative methodology on organization undergoing radical change process, in order to establish a mathematical relationship between dialogic communication and resistance to change. This aspect led to the study of my research and my research focuses on establishing a quantitative relationship between the two variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication and Change

Lewis in 2006 examined the effect of communication on change processes through employees' perspectives. He stressed on the importance of the communication process in the change implementation. But very few literatures are available that focus on the communicative actions that the management needs to carry out in order to achieve desired outcomes of a change process.

According to Mutihac (2010), organizational communication is a process in which the members of the organization gather important information regarding their organization and changes being implemented within it. Communication process involves the timing, methods and the message content. It helps the employees in accomplishing organizational as well as individual goals by facilitating them in interpreting the change within the organization, thus making it possible for them to fulfill their personal needs along with accomplishing the evolving organizational responsibilities.

Elving (2005) also stressed upon the importance of internal communication in communicating the change within an organization and stated that it could prevent or at least reduce resistance towards change.

Goals of Communication in an Organization

Elving (2005) further discussed the purpose of internal communication which according to him is the better understanding of the change process. He mentioned two goals that internal communication plays in a change process. One is to serve as a mean to give information regarding the change process and the other is to serve as a mean in creating community spirit.

Communication has been studied in isolation but Elving's research emphasizes that communication should be studied in relation to other organizational aspects as well. Internal communication within an organization also helps in defining the identity of groups in an organization and creates a community spirit. This phenomenon has been discussed through the social identity approach; which states that "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his or her membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". This basically shows that a person's judgments and observations are influenced by the community or group he belongs to (in this case belongingness towards the organization). Both the goals of internal communication are related; as information is important to develop feelings of a community within the employees. This community creation will help employees to be committed

with the organization, develop trust in the management and organization and form organizational identification which according to Elving (2005) will affect the employees' readiness for change. He also stressed on communication as a means to manage uncertainty by reducing job insecurity.

So according to Elving's proposition the various goals of communication are to provide information to employees regarding change initiative, create a feeling of community in the organization and reduce uncertainty. All these factors will affect the employees' readiness towards change within the organization.

Approaches of Communication during Organizational Change

Johansson and Heide (2008) further discussed communication through two perspectives; functional and constructivists perspectives. The functional perspective elaborates on Elving's (2005) point of view and discusses communication as a tool or as a mean to provide information. This approach states that communication is used as tool to declare and explain the change initiative, mostly focusing on "when, what, how and who", and also as a way to convey employee's feedback of their feelings and attitudes. This realist approach has been dominant when studying organizational communication but is faced with criticism such as overly simplifying the process of communication in change implementation. This perspective views communication as a tangible entity which flows vertically, horizontally and laterally in an organization (Heide, 2008).The general technique offered for effective implementation of a change initiative is to keep the organization's members well informed.

Frahm and Brown (2007) state that most of the researches analyze communication and change through the instrumental framework but they have laid emphasis on a constructivist approach for analyzing communication in relation to organizational change. They believe that the emergent organizations can be studied through a constructivist framework, instead of using the same theoretical model of transmission of messages, for analyzing planned changes through sender-message-receiver mechanism. Change agent plays a role of a prime mover (i.e. sending the information) in an instrumental approach, where as in a constructivist approach a change agent makes sense of the communication during the change process. This approach explores how individuals make sense of the change and form new realities. Simoes and Esposito (2012) also focused on sense-making communication during a change process. They studied communication through socially-constructed perspective or sense-making theory, "everything that is involved in the change process will also bring change through their social interactions and the meanings they develop as a result of these interactions"

Frahm and Brown (2007) established through their research that the problem regarding communication was due to limited number of formal channels and lack of proper feedback mechanisms. The information regarding any change initiative was mostly communicated in downwards direction in the organizations and there was rarely any mechanism for feedback or “upward” communication. Thus, the absence of information about change and proper channels of communication gives rise to grapevine discussions and rumors about the change process which results in disturbances and resistance. This supports Elving’s (2005) view about internal communication that a group or community drives resistance or acceptance towards change. Frahm and Brown (2007) also noticed that flow of information usually ended at the supervisory level and the lower level or front-line employees tried to make sense of the change process without receiving any information from their supervisors. Therefore, the emphasized that this aspect should also be examined during the study of change management to gain more understanding of role of communication in change initiatives.

Communication Strategy

Simoes and Esposito (2012) highlighted the importance of communication in successful implementation of change initiative. Communication as a tool to inform employees is not enough for a change initiative as the message itself has only cognitive effect, and the meanings attached to these messages by the employees depends on the context in which it took place or the culture of the organization. So basically communication is not effective if it is not meaningful or as Simoes and Esposito (2012) state that “it’s not just the quantity but the quality of information also plays a vital role in implementing change.”

Mutihac (2010) stresses the importance of a communication strategy and states that it should match and vary according to the different stages of a change process. The various stages of a change process according to Lewin’s model of change are: Unfreezing stage, Movement and Refreezing stage. Simoes and Esposito (2012) also pointed out the importance of a communication strategy but emphasized that having a communication strategy is not enough, the nature of a communication strategy is equally important to reduce the resistance towards change.

A communication strategy that justifies and rationalizes a change initiative will tend to use the traditional ways of communication that focuses on organizing, distributing, and expressing information. In this, change initiative is communicated through increasing the number and sophistication of tools and messages but it might not reduce resistance as this strategy does not focus on building shared meanings.

While on the other hand, a communication strategy that focuses on refining and aligning a change initiative may be more successful in reducing the resistance towards change. This is because this strategy emphasizes on a meaningful communication through building a two-way communication and allowing contributions from the employees as well. As Elving (2005) also stated that the aim of communication is to build a trust factor between the employees and the management which will positively affect the attitudes, performance and cooperation of employees and impact their feelings of belongingness towards the organization.

Monologic and Dialogic Communication

The two natures of communication discussed by Simoes and Esposito (2012) are Monologic and Dialogic communication. They suggest that organizations need to develop a dialogic communication in order to manage resistance but mostly organizations are carrying out monologic communication in which employees are encouraged to voice their opinions but without any likelihood that their opinion will influence the implementation of change initiative. Frahm and Brown (2007) research indicates that when organization moves from a monologic towards a dialogic communication this will enhance employees receptivity to change.

Frahm and Brown (2007) examined employees change receptivity through Kent and Taylor's (2002) principles of dialogic communication which are: Mutuality in which the employees involved in communication are not just viewed as objects of change but as individuals and it focuses on avoidance of exercising superiority and power during dialogue.

Propinquity involves engaging the employees during the implementation of change rather than after the decision has been made. It also emphasizes on willingness of employees to participate in the process of dialogue.

Empathy is about a supportive environment that encourages dialogic communication and factor of trust is involved in communication.

Risk is an important principle and it means that the employees are aware of the uncertainties and the risks involved in change implementation and results.

Commitment basically means a commitment to the dialogue or conversation. It is about honest and straightforward conversation. It involves sharing of similar meanings and working towards common understanding in a conversation.

Another dimension of dialogic communication proposed later by Jabri et al in 2008 was Input Use which means through input collected during change communication the changes were made to the change initiative if needed. These principles indicate that it is not easy to operationalize dialogic communication in an organization.

They indicate that the most important aspect of dialogic communication is to be open to new interpretations and according to the sense-making theory individuals form interpretations of a change based on their community (Esposito, 2012).

The important factor of a dialogue is to remain open to new ideas and interpretations and the sense-making theory elaborates on this point by stating that our interpretations and framing of reality are implicit and not always conscious. These develop through our interactions with others and through these interactions an individual draws on a conclusion of either validating or not his own interpretation. The problem arises when there is no alignment between ones interpretations and those of others. Resistance occurs when an individual is not given the freedom and right to interpret the reality any differently, it gives rise to two effects; classifying others response as invalid or persuade him to accept your interpretation. These two effects are termed as resistance (Esposito, 2012).

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

What is Resistance?

Simoes and Esposito (2012) defined resistance through communicative aspect of change:

“Resistance, properly understood as feedback, can be an important resource in improving the quality and clarity of the objectives and strategies at the heart of a change proposal. And, properly used, it can enhance the prospects for successful implementation”

Simoes and Esposito (2012) explored resistance through an operational viewpoint, on the basis of sense-making theory of change. According to their research, resistance is due to a tridimensional attitude model and this model comprises of three components: Behavioral, Affective and Cognitive. These components although are different from one another but have some interdependence as what an employee feels about a change will often signify what he thinks about it and what are his behavioral intentions based on these.

Mutihac (2010) in his research also established that resistance can be defined through tridimensional model. First dimension defines resistance as a behavior. Kali Mckay et al.(2013) further supports this research and explains resistance as a negative employee reaction to change. He defines resistance as a behavior that focuses on maintaining the status quo in the times of pressure to the change of status quo. He states that resistant behaviors can be shown overtly such as vocal oppositions or covertly such as withholding information. Overt behaviors can be easily seen within an organization while covert behaviors are difficult to identify.

Second dimension emphasizes on the emotional factors that serve as sources of resistance. It is defined as a response to aggression, stress and frustration caused by the change.

The third dimension defines resistance through cognition which refers to beliefs and attitudes of employees. Schoor (2002) defines resistance as employees' reluctance to invest their skills and time for something they are not certain will give them an adequate return.

Oreg's Model for Resistance to Change

Simoes and Esposito (2012) further discussed resistance through Oreg's model for change and also according to Meier et al. (2013) this model is commonly used by organizations for analyzing resistance to change.

Oreg evaluated change through three process variables which are; participation, information and trust in the management. According to his study, trust is the only factor that influences all three dimensions of change while "information" variable influenced the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of change. The study showed that information and cognitive dimension had a direct relationship i.e. more the information provided, more the resistance towards change which was the opposite of the expected result. Oreg explained this phenomenon by stating that the content of information is also extremely important in reducing resistance and just the existence of information is not enough. He further states that the way in which the particular information is communicated to the employees will also influence the acceptance of change.

This model backs the view point of Simoes and Esposito (2012) and Frahm and Brown (2007), that a meaningful communication or sense-making is crucial in reducing the resistance towards change.

Participation and Communication

Simoes and Esposito (2012) further discuss that participation or involvement of employees should be based on respect by recognizing that a change depends on the employees' contributions.

Participation should not be treated as a way to get agreement from employees but to genuinely discuss the ideas and change initiative. Any change initiative strongly depends on a genuine participation and the ways in which information is provided, and not on just quantity of information provided. Therefore these authors stress that communication and change should be studied further through this point of view i.e. focusing on the quality of communication or nature of participation. Many authors suggest that mostly organizations carry out change initiatives through an instrumental method in order to encourage change compliance which will not help in minimizing resistance to change but might make change difficult to manage.

Overcoming Resistance

Lunenburg (2010) discussed various ways to overcome resistance to change particularly in the education sector. Among various approaches communication and participation are considered extremely important in overcoming resistance.

He discussed that the management needs to communicate to the employees, the need for change and how important it is for the organization. Communication within organizations can be achieved through discussions, group presentations or publications or reports. This approach can be used if inadequate communication is the cause of resistance and the employees are unaware of the actual reasons for change and how it'll benefit them and the organization. Dr. Fareeha & Kanwal (2014) also emphasizes on the importance of communication within organizations in order to make the transition of change smooth. Employees need to be kept informed in every phase of the process in order to reduce resistance. Mutihac (2010) discusses the views of various authors on communication during change process. He states that in order to avoid uncertainty and cynicism early communication is necessary, otherwise employees might predict various reasons and outcomes of a change. This supports the view point of the sense-making theory. Thus, it is important for the management to provide the employees with information regarding what, why and how a change is going to be implemented and to avoid any misinterpretations among employees regarding the change program.

Lunenberg (2010) states that the employees, who are involved in the change process that is in the planning and the implementation of change, would not likely resist the change. All the employees should be allowed to express their opinions regarding the change plan which will help in reducing resistance. Similarly Dr. Fareeha & Kanwal (2014), states that participation of employees results in a constructive behavior and improves employees responsiveness to change. It also increases job satisfaction and performance of the employees.

Dr. Fareeha & Kanwal (2014) in their research article mentioned training as another important factor in overcoming resistance to change. If a change is technological then training will help the employees to acquire the necessary skills in order to carry out the new tasks. Training will also improve the performance of the employee and boost his confidence.

Mutihac (2010) states that change can be managed through two ways. Some authors believe resistance needs to be overcome or eliminated, while others consider that resistance can be positive and useful if it is used in a constructive manner.

METHODOLOGY

Organizational Background and Change

Orient Petroleum Pty Limited (OPPL) previously known as BHP Billiton Petroleum Pakistan is an Australian based petroleum company. BHP Billiton Petroleum had its operations in Pakistan since 1994. It has been operating on the Zamzama gas plant from a decade now but recently it decided to sell its assets in Pakistan to a local conglomerate Hashoo Group, as it wants to reduce its global operations (Hoyle, 2015).

In March 2016, Tri Resources Investment Inc. which is a subsidiary of Hashoo group announced its acquisition of BHP Billiton Pakistan. The CEO of OPPL, Kamran Ahmed stated that it'll further invest 30-35 million dollars in the current year to boost the drilling activities in the Zamzama oil and gas project. Zamzama gas field is one of the largest drilled fields in Pakistan, but recently a decline in production has been observed in this field thus Tri Resources Company decided to invest more in this field by drilling more wells to increase the production of oil and gas from this field. Furthermore the company has signed an agreement with BHP Billiton in Houston and this Technical Services Agreement will help the company in case of any support needed from BHP Billiton (Yousafzai, 2016).

After the acquisition by Hashoo Group, BHP Billiton Petroleum Pakistan was renamed as Orient Petroleum Pty Limited. All the assets and the human resource formerly working for BHPL also shifted to OPPL.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

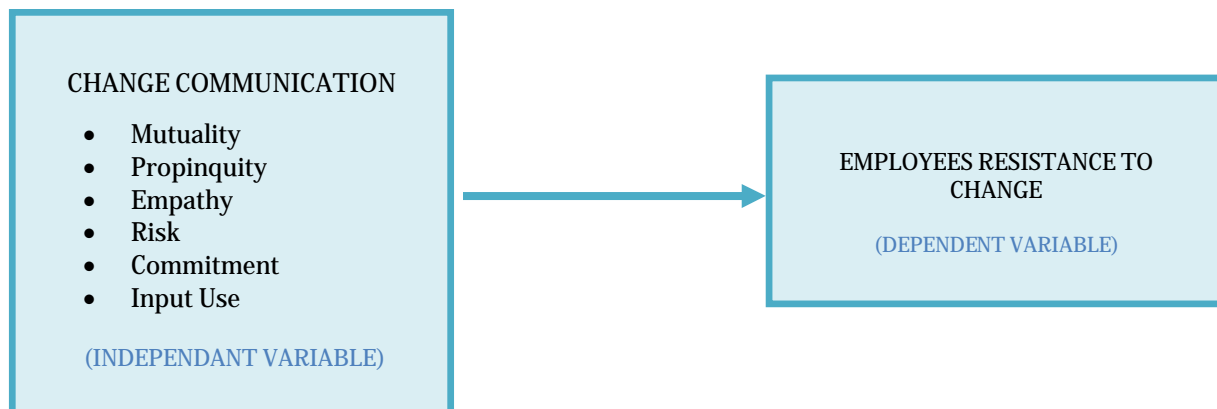
This literature review resulted in developing the following theoretical framework and hypothesis.

H₁: Change initiative if communicated through dialogic communication will reduce employees' resistance to change.

There have been various studies conducted regarding Resistance to change and communication. In this research the nature of communication (Monologic or Dialogic) has been primarily taken into account and how it affects resistance to change in organizations. The whole purpose of this research is to explore the quantitative relationship between dialogic communication variables and resistance to change (Esposito, 2012).

It is a case study approach which provides a holistic perspective in an organization which has recently underwent a major change such as an acquisition or merger. As this research is conducted

keeping in mind the constructivist framework of communication which focuses not treating communication process in isolation with the organizational context therefore a case study approach is quite helpful as it will give a detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of conditions or events (change and communication in this research) and their relationship. An instrumental case study approach has been used in this research; group of employees are selected in an organization undergoing a radical change, and their perceptions and behaviors are examined in detail.



The purpose of this research is to analyze the nature of communication in the above mentioned organization through evaluating the elements of a dialogic communication. Previous researches have focused on the relation between internal communication and resistance to change but hasn't much explored variables of dialogic communication. If these six principles are present in the organization then that will indicate that the organization has an effective dialogic communication, even if the presence of some of these principles is low then that will not indicate that an organization has a monologic communication, but rather it might have a weak dialogic communication. A complete absence of all these principles will definitely indicate an absence of a dialogic communication (Esposito, 2012). Thus, in this research the relation among each variable of dialogic communication and resistance is tested and whether it will reduce resistance to change or not.

The following are the hypotheses that are being tested in this study:

- H1a: Empathy may reduce resistance to change.
- H1b: Mutuality may reduce resistance to change.
- H1c: Input use may reduce resistance to change.
- H1d: Propinquity may reduce resistance to change.

H1e: Commitment may reduce resistance to change.

H1f: Risk may reduce resistance to change.

Instrumentation

The research method used for this thesis was a quantitative research method. Quantitative surveys helps in gathering large amount of data (Govender,2014).The questionnaire designed for this thesis was to gain information about perceptions of employees about internal communication during a change initiative. It comprised of 42 questions that catered to the principles of dialogic communication and resistance to change and 5 demographic questions. The questionnaire was developed using the questionnaires from Govender (2014), Hallgrímsson (2008), Hayase (2009) andFrahm's (2005) researches. The propinquity and input use dimensions were measured using items from Hayase (2009) research. For measuring the empathy Govender's (2014) and Hayase (2009)research was used. Frahm's (2005) research was used for measuring mutuality. The measurement of risk, commitment and employees' resistance was done through items from Hallgrímsson's (2008) research.

The scale used in the questionnaire was a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly agree, 5= Strongly Disagree) to identify the employees perception regarding change and communication of change within their organization.

The alpha scores of the items tested in the questionnaire as reported in the researches the items were taken from are as follows:

	NUMBER OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Empathy	15	0.89
Mutuality	6	0.72
Propinquity	4	0.82
Input Use	3	0.89
Risk	4	0.74
Commitment	4	0.87
Resistance	6	0.86

The details about each item in the questionnaire are as follows:

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING EMPATHY IN THE ORGANIZATION

Management identified and discussed actual change or major opportunities during merger process.

Management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process.
Management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.
The culture within the organization has facilitated change.
The tools of communication via: email, newsletters, memorandums and group meeting etc. used in the post-merger phase were effective in informing employees of the change the organization was going through
Employees in the organization were communicated on time with via emails, newsletters, memorandums and group meetings during and after the change period
Communication with employees is mostly via electronic media such as e-mail and the intranet
During times of crisis, the fastest source of information is the grapevine/rumors.
I am pleased with management's efforts to keep employees up to-date.
I receive information from sources I prefer (i.e. emails, group meetings etc).
I am notified in advance of changes that affect my job.
Top management is providing me with the kinds of information I really want and need.
I am satisfied with explanations I get from top management about why things are done as they are.
People freely exchange information and opinions in my organization.
People are encouraged to be really open and candid in my organization

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING MUTUALITY IN THE ORGANIZATION

Most of the information about change in this organization comes from the top.
Management uses communication as a tool to get their own way of doing things.
My colleagues really listen to what I have to say about the changes in the organization.
My manager really listens to what I have to say about the changes in the organization.
My colleagues demonstrate a lot of respect for other people's opinions about change.
My manager demonstrates a lot of respect for other people's opinions about change.

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING PROPINQUITY IN THE ORGANIZATION

I really care about the fate of this organization.
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
There's not much to be gained by staying with this organization.
I feel very little loyalty to this organization.

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING INPUT USE IN THE ORGANIZATION

I believe my views/opinions have real influence in decisions taken by management.
I can expect that recommendations I make will be heard and considered.
My opinions make a difference in the day

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING COMMITMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION

I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
I feel like part of the family at my organization.
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING RISK IN THE ORGANIZATION

In my place of work, people feel uncertain regarding the future.
In my organization, there is a clear plan/vision for the future
My job is secure in the future.
I don't know what my job will be in the future.

- QUESTIONS EVALUATING RESISTANCE IN THE ORGANIZATION

The area in which I work functions well and does not have any aspects that need changing.
There is nothing I need to change about the way I do my job to be more efficient.
I will resist if any changes are made to the program or area in which I work.
It is impossible to predict the result of the merger.
I will work hard to make the merger successful.
I feel optimistic that the merger is/will be successful.

Procedure

There were 80 questionnaires that were distributed in the organization and the responses received were from 51 employees (64%). The duration of completion of the questionnaire was about 15-20 mins. The respondents varied from front-line employees to supervisors. The survey data was then inserted in STATA software to analyse the results, as it is easier to use and helped in clustering the questions under each principle of communication and determining relationship with resistance. As one of the most important factor in my research was deriving the percentage of each element of dialogic communication and then analysing its relationship with resistance to change. Stata software makes it easier to merge all the questions under a particular factor (such as mutuality, propinquity etc) and exploring the percentages of these factor with resistance to change. Stata software is easier to use and it is easier to interpret the results through Stata tables.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was employees who were basically directly affected by the change initiative. The reporting structures of these employees and their job descriptions were affected after the change initiative. They were undergoing loss of their positions and in extreme cases even loss of their jobs. Thus, this indicates that these respondents are quite accurate for the analysis of my study as they can offer opportunities to obtain the relation between variables of nature of communication and resistance.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

General Findings

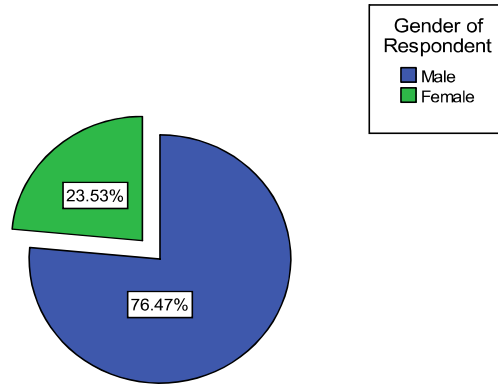
The survey results show that mostly employees agreed or strongly agreed to the questions asked in the empathy section indicating that organization has a presence of a supportive environment encouraging employees to voice their opinions. Mutuality, propinquity and Input use were slightly present in the organization. Almost half of the respondents indicated that they have the right means of communication in the organization and that they were well informed before the change initiative took place. A few respondents (mostly the supervisors) agreed to the fact that their opinions were being valued and used if they were beneficial for the implementation of the change, the front-line employees showed disagreement in this section of the questionnaire. More than half of the employees disagreed with the questions asked in the 'risk' section of the questionnaire.

Descriptive Analysis

Gender of the Respondents

The pie chart and the table below analyses the gender of the respondents that participated in the research survey. According to the results, there were 76.5% males and only 23.5% females

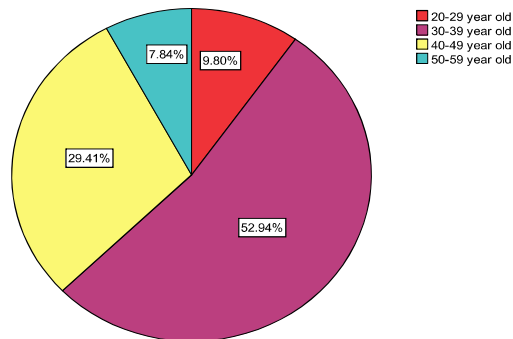
GENDER OF RESPONDENTS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	39	76.5	76.5	76.5
	Female	12	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	



Age of the Respondents

The pie chart and table below analyses the age groups the participants belong to. 9.8% of the respondents lie in the 20-29 year old age bracket, 52.9% lie in 30-39 year old age bracket, and 29.4% lie in 40-49 year old age bracket and 7.8% respondents lie within 50-59 year old age bracket.

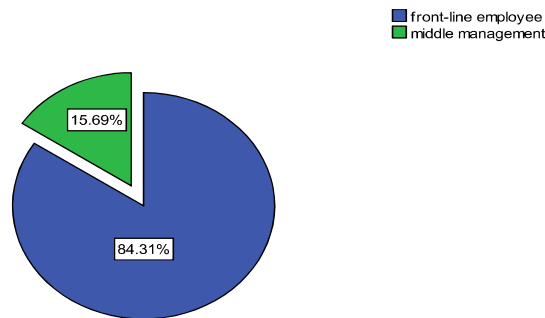
AGE OF RESPONDENTS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-29 year old	5	9.8	9.8	9.8
	30-39 year old	27	52.9	52.9	62.7
	40-49 year old	15	29.4	29.4	92.2
	50-59 year old	4	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	



Designation of the Respondents

The pie chart and table below shows that 84.3% of the participants were the front-line employees while only 15.7% of the participants belonged to the middle-management or supervisory positions.

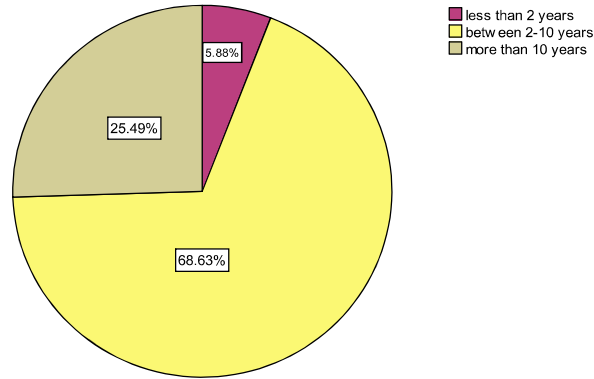
DESIGNATION OF RESPONDENT					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Front-line employee	43	84.3	84.3	84.3
	Middle management	8	15.7	15.7	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	



Years Worked in the Organization

The pie chart and table below analyses how long have the participants worked in that particular organization. It shows that mostly participants had worked for 2-10 years within the organization (68.6%).

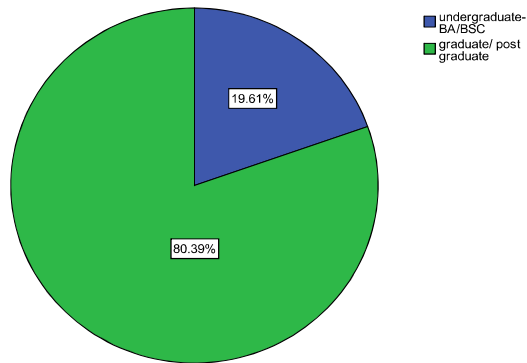
YEARS WORKED IN THE ORGANIZATION					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 2 years	3	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Between 2-10 years	35	68.6	68.6	74.5
	More than 10 years	13	25.5	25.5	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	



Educational background of the Respondents

The pie chart and table below analyses the educational background of the participants. It shows that 80.4% of the participants were post graduates while 19.6% of participants were undergraduates. No participant had less than an undergrad degree.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate- BA/BSC	10	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Graduate/ post graduate	41	80.4	80.4	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	



Resistance to Change

Means of the percentages of each factor of resistance was calculated to determine which dimension of resistance was mainly present in the organization.

The table below indicates the mean of percentages of each resistance observed in the organization.

Mean estimation		Number of obs = 51		
	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
R1per	86.79804	.7167163	85.35847	88.23761
R2per	49.60784	2.132122	45.32535	53.89034
R3per	72.69804	2.13572	68.40832	76.98776

The means of the percentages of resistance indicate that the highest scored dimension of resistance was R1 i.e. affective and R3 i.e. cognitive resistances with 86.7% and 72.6% mean values while R2 i.e. behavioral resistance is the least with the mean of 49.6 %

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Correlation Analysis

	empathy	mutual-y	propin-y	inputuse	commit-t	risk	resist-e
empathy	1.0000						
mutuality	0.3526	1.0000					
propinquity	0.2557	0.1303	1.0000				
inputuse	0.2506	0.3463	0.1102	1.0000			
commitment	0.5868	0.0806	0.4017	0.1900	1.0000		
risk	-0.2520	-0.1926	-0.1864	-0.0316	-0.0961	1.0000	
resistance	-0.4958	-0.4880	-0.3613	-0.4865	-0.3043	0.1006	1.0000

The correlation among empathy and resistance is -0.4958 hence there exists moderate correlation among empathy and resistance. The nature of relation is negative. The correlation among mutuality and resistance is -0.4880 which tells the correlation is moderate and it is negative. The correlation among propinquity and resistance shows a moderate and negative relation -0.3613. The correlation among input use and resistance is also moderate and negative and it is -0.4865. The correlation among commitment and resistance is -0.3043 which is moderate and negative relation. The correlation among risk and resistance is 0.1006 which indicates that the correlation is quite weak and it is positive.

Multiple Regression Analysis

For testing the hypotheses multiple regression analysis was conducted between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The following hypotheses are tested through this regression analysis:

H1a: Empathy may reduce resistance to change.

H1b: Mutuality may reduce resistance to change.

H1c: Input use may reduce resistance to change.

H1d: Propinquity may reduce resistance to change.

H1e: Commitment may reduce resistance to change.

H1f: Risk may reduce resistance to change.

Source	SS	df	MS			
Model	878.54312	6	146.423853	Number of obs =	51	
Residual	891.827425	44	20.2688051	F(6, 44) =	7.22	
Total	1770.37055	50	35.4074109	Prob > F =	0.0000	
				R-squared =	0.4962	
				Adj R-squared =	0.4276	
				Root MSE =	4.5021	

resistance	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
empathy	-.3506455	.1622636	-2.16	0.036	-.6776663	-.0236246
mutuality	-.103829	.0492138	-2.11	0.041	-.203013	-.004645
propinquity	-.1304049	.0622344	-2.10	0.042	-.2558301	-.0049796
inputuse	-.3753301	.1441533	-2.60	0.013	-.665852	-.0848081
commitment	.0857985	.239336	0.36	0.722	-.3965515	.5681484
risk	-.0274958	.0389592	-0.71	0.484	-.1060129	.0510212
_cons	119.5408	7.482671	15.98	0.000	104.4605	134.6212

The model summary tells that R Square value is 0.4962. The analysis tells that with independent variables, 49.62% change is caused in resistance to change. The value of F and p helps in identifying the model significance. From the above table results, it can be found that model is significant as F is 7.22 and p-value is 0.0000. Therefore, it can be said that there is at least one independent variable that significantly reduces the resistance to change.

The table above also reports the coefficients of the constant and independent variables. The constant value is 119.54 which tells that when there will be no empathy, mutuality, propinquity, input use, commitment and risk there will be positive resistance to change which means that resistance will increase.

H1a: Empathy may reduce resistance to change.

The coefficient of empathy is 0.35 with a negative sign which tells that with one unit change in empathy, there will be 0.35 unit change in employees' resistance. For accepting the hypotheses, value of t must be greater than 2 and value of p must be less than 0.05. The results tell that value of t is 2.16 and p value is 0.036, therefore, hypothesis is supported, so it is concluded that empathy may reduce resistance to change.

H1b: Mutuality may reduce resistance to change.

The coefficient of mutuality is 0.103 with a negative sign which tells that with one unit change in mutuality, there will be 0.103 unit change in employees' resistance. The results tell that value of t is 2.11 ($t > 2$) and p value is 0.041 ($p < 0.05$), therefore, hypothesis is supported, so it is concluded that mutuality may reduce resistance to change.

H1c: Input use may reduce resistance to change.

The coefficient of input use is 0.375 with a negative sign which tells that with one unit change in input use, there will be 0.375 unit change in resistance. The results tell that value of t is 2.6 ($t > 2$) and p value is 0.013 ($p < 0.05$), therefore, hypothesis is supported, so it is concluded that, input use may reduce resistance to change.

H1d: Propinquity may reduce resistance to change.

The coefficient of propinquity is 0.130 with a negative sign which tells that with one unit change in propinquity, there will be 0.130 unit change in employees' resistance. The results tell that value of t is 2.10 and p value is 0.042, therefore, hypothesis is supported, so it is concluded that, propinquity may reduce resistance to change.

H1e: Commitment may reduce resistance to change.

The coefficient commitment is 0.085 with a positive sign which tells that with one unit change in commitment, there will be 0.085 unit change in employees' resistance. The results tell that value of

p is 0.722 ($p > 0.05$) and t is 0.36 ($t < 2$), therefore, hypothesis is not supported, so it is concluded that, commitment may not reduce resistance to change.

H1f: Risk may reduce resistance to change.

The coefficient of risk is 0.027 with a negative sign which tells that with one unit change in risk there will be 0.027 unit change in employees' resistance. The results tell that value of p is 0.484 ($p > 0.05$), therefore, hypothesis is not supported, so it is concluded that, risk may not reduce resistance to change.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Hypotheses	Results
Empathy may reduce resistance to change	Supported
Mutuality may reduce resistance to change	Supported
Input use may reduce resistance to change	Supported
Propinquity may reduce resistance to change	Supported
Commitment may reduce resistance to change	Not Supported
Risk may reduce resistance to change	Not Supported

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

Discussion and Analysis

The literature that was reviewed in this research was based on the concept of nature of communication particularly dialogic communication. Different elements of dialogic communication suggested in the literature i.e. Empathy, Mutuality, Propinquity, Input Use, Commitment, Risk were explored and the effect of these different elements on the employees' resistance to change was studied.

The quantitative relationship between the elements and resistance was explored through detailed analysis. The correlation results suggested that a negative relationship between these elements and employees' resistance to change exists except that of risk which showed a positive and direct relationship with resistance. It means that overall in a dialogic communication if these elements exist; they lead to low levels of resistance to change. It had been formulated in the hypothesis and proved to be true that if the dialogic communication exists in the organization, the employees will show low levels of resistance to change.

It was further investigated to see if our hypotheses regarding these elements reducing employee's resistance are true or not. It was observed that empathy, mutuality, propinquity and input use were reducing employees' resistance to change. While the hypotheses of commitment and risk were not supported in this study. Because these findings are counter intuitive and go against some aspects within the literature review, it indicates that organizational dynamics and culture is different in different organizations and what might not work in one organization may work in the other thus, the hypotheses that have been rejected in this study might be because of the organizational dynamics of this particular organization or because of individual differences.

Commitment and Resistance

The results show that commitment may not reduce resistance to change and the reason could be that more committed an individual is towards a change dialogue the more he will be determined to get his own way thus, might show more resistance. This factor might indicate individual affective and behavioral resistance towards change and as seen through the results affective resistance was the most observed in the organization. Simoes and Esposito (2012) also established that often participation and commitment leads to getting compliance to a common idea instead of accepting various ideas and interpretations. This indicates that commitment to dialogue might not contribute

in reducing resistance in some instances, where individuals focus on getting validation of their ideas and interpretations.

Risk and Resistance

The results also indicate that the hypothesis that risk may reduce resistance to change is not supported and it also shows a positive correlation with risk which indicates more an employee knows about the risks and uncertainties concerning a change the more he will resist a particular change in an organization. According to the Oreg's model of resistance to change study information and cognitive dimension had a direct relationship i.e. more the information provided, more the resistance towards change. This may indicate that more an employee gets aware of the risks the more he will resist a change and the results indicate that the presence of cognitive resistance was high which justifies this result. Therefore, this result about risk and resistance does not completely go against the literature.

According to Esposito (2012), a complete absence of all these principles of dialogic communication will indicate an absence of dialogic communication, but even a low presence of some of these principles might indicate a weak dialogic communication in a particular organization. Thus, the results show a low presence of some of the principles of dialogic communication thus indicating a very weak presence of a dialogic communication in the organization or it might show that the organization is moving towards dialogic communication. This has also been established in our quantitative analysis and 5 of our hypotheses based on the negative relationships (except risk) between the elements and employee resistance, proved to be correct.

Limitations

Due to accessibility and time issues, the current research is carried on a single organization. The scope of the research is limited as only one organization was focused in the research and the data was collected once. An analysis of larger data set across various organizations would have yield better results.

Although there are a few limitations in this study but this research can serve as a foundation for other researches conducted on nature of communication establishing a quantitative relation among principles of dialogic communication and resistance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of data set and a thorough review of the literature would indicate that depending on the organizational dynamics if proper dialogic communication is practiced, employees show low levels of resistance to change. The negative impact of most of the elements of dialogic communication on resistance was also observed.

Recommendations for Further Studies

As nature of communication is an understudied topic thus it is recommended that further studies should be conducted in order to evaluate impact of dialogic communication on resistance. As various factors were not supported in this study further studies should be done on evaluating each factor and its impact on resistance.

As this research is based on one organization future studies can look into these elements on various different organizations to get better results. The relationship between dialogic communication and resistance is explored in this study and future studies can also take into account other organizational and individual factors to see how other factors might affect the impact of dialogic communication on resistance.

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APPENDIX

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

I am a student of NUST Business School and this survey is part of a master's thesis. I am gathering data on role of communication in affecting employee's response to the planned change in an organization.

The following questionnaire is not traceable to individual participants and your employers will not have access to your answers. Even so, it is important that you do not write your name or personal information on this copy.

Please complete the questionnaire by selecting the option that reflects your response to the statement

SECTION A - DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1. Gender

- Woman
- Man

Q2. How old are you?

- 19 year old or younger
- 20-29 year old
- 30-39 year old
- 40-49 year old
- 50-59 year old
- 60 year old or older

Q3. How long have you worked for your organization?

- Less than two years
- Between two and ten years
- More than ten years

Q4. What is your education? (Tag all completed degrees)

- Compulsory education (MATRIC)
- Secondary school (FSC/FA)
- Under graduate (BA/BSc or similar)
- Graduate/ post graduate (masters degree, doctorate or similar)

- None of the above

SECTION B- In the following segment you are asked to respond to statement concerning your work environment and internal communication during and after the merger. Answers are given on a scale of 1 to 5, corresponding respectively to Strongly Agree (1) and Strongly Disagree (5).

Please draw a circle around the number best describing your position on each statement.

1. Management identified and discussed actual change or major opportunities during merger process.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. Management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. Management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. The culture within the organization has facilitated change.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. The tools of communication via: email, newsletters, memorandums and group meeting etc. used in the post-merger phase were effective in informing employees of the change the organization was going through

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. Employees in the organization were communicated on time with via emails, newsletters, memorandums and group meetings during and after the change period

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. Communication with employees is mostly via electronic media such as e-mail and the intranet

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. During times of crisis, the fastest source of information is the grapevine/rumors.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. I am pleased with management's efforts to keep employees up to-date.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. I receive information from sources I prefer (i.e. emails, group meetings etc).

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. I am notified in advance of changes that affect my job.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

12. Top management is providing me with the kinds of information I really want and need.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

13. I am satisfied with explanations I get from top management about why things are done as they are.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

14. People freely exchange information and opinions in my organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

15. People are encouraged to be really open and candid in my organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

16. Most of the information about change in this organization comes from the top.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

17. Management uses communication as a tool to get their own way of doing things.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

18. My colleagues really listen to what I have to say about the changes in the organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

19. My manager really listens to what I have to say about the changes in the organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

20. My colleagues demonstrate a lot of respect for other people's opinions about change.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

21. My manager demonstrates a lot of respect for other people's opinions about change.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

22. I believe my views/opinions have real influence in decisions taken by management.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

23. I can expect that recommendations I make will be heard and considered.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

24. My opinions make a difference in the day-to-day decisions that affect my job or change initiatives.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

25. I really care about the fate of this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

26. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

27. There's not much to be gained by staying with this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

28. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

29. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

30. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

31. I feel like part of the family at my organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

32. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

33. In my place of work, people feel uncertain regarding the future.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

34. In my organization, there is a clear plan/vision for the future.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

35. My job is secure in the future.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

36. I don't know what my job will be in the future.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

37. The area in which I work functions well and does not have any aspects that need changing.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

38. There is nothing I need to change about the way I do my job to be more efficient.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

39. I will resist if any changes are made to the program or area in which I work.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

40. It is impossible to predict the result of the merger.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

41. I will work hard to make the merger successful.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

42. I feel optimistic that the merger is/will be successful.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---