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**A retrospective analysis of organizational change: A case
study of Octaware Technologies**

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this paper was to describe the change events as a case study in Octaware Technologies and analyze the change events utilizing the constructs of organizational development in order to get a better understanding of the change in an organization.

Methodology: This study was conducted using a qualitative case study method to analyze the organizational change event in Octaware Technologies.

Findings: The study revealed that the external environment of regulatory and economic change are the key drivers of organizational development in the company. The findings also highlighted that the organizational development of the company is demonstrated by its learning culture and outstanding management processes.

Unique contribution to theory, practice, and policy: The results of the study make two contributions to the literature. First, the author sheds light on the underlying change that leads to the improvement of the specific construct of organizational development. Second, the author presented an empirically validated model conceptualized from a theoretical framework of organizational development.

Keywords: *Organizational Change, Organizational Development, Change Management, Organizational Diagnostics Framework, Information Technology, Octaware Technologies.*

Jel: D23, L20, M10

Introduction

Most organizations are continuously experiencing numerous programs for change at an increasingly rapid pace. Organizations need to build the capacity to implement change more efficiently. Explaining organizational change in many fields has become an enduring search for academics.¹ Organizational change for internal management development is a process of collaborating with people and resources to complete the organizational change within the purpose, framework, incentives, support system, and leadership.² Change management is increasingly recognized in this sense as a primary determinant of business success or failure, which in turn depends most critically on the efficiency of internal management systems.³ In addition, in achieving organizational objectives such as higher value, comprehensiveness, and corporate governance, successful change management is essential. The term “organizational diagnosis” refers to a strategic technique to facilitate organizational development and effectively manage the change.⁴

The first crucial stage in planning the organizational change is organizational diagnosis.⁵ Organizational diagnosis is important for recognizing organizational challenges, determining the root causes, and choosing effective interventions irrespective of whether the process of change is planned or evolving. Management and corporate leaders are likely to tackle the wrong issues and/or select the wrong solutions in the absence of a robust diagnostic method.⁶ Organizational diagnosis plays a part in affecting organizational readiness-to-change.⁷ No change is better introduced without organizational development; it can be described as a set of planned change measures based on humanistic, democratic principles that aim to improve the efficiency of the organization and the performance and well-being of employees.⁸

Organization development (OD) started in the 1960s out of research based on behavioral science. Organizational behavior is the study related to the effect of individuals, groups, and structure has on the behavior within the organization.⁹ Organizational development is defined as a planned intervention at the organization level which is managed from the top to increase the effectiveness and health of the

¹ Poole, S. M., Van de Ven, A., Dooley, K., Holmes, M. (2000) *Organizational Change And Innovation Processes*. Oxford. UK.

² Weigelt, C., Miller, D.J. (2013) Implications of internal organization structure for firm boundaries. *Strateg. Manag. J.* 34, 1411–1434.

³ Cummings, T.G., Cummings, C. (2014) Appreciating organization development: A comparative essay on divergent perspectives. *Hum. Resour. Dev. Q.* 25, 141–154.

⁴ McFillen, J.M., O'Neil, D.A., Balzer, W.K., Varney, G.H. (2013) Organizational diagnosis: An evidence-based approach. *J. Chang. Manag.* 13, 223–246.

⁵ Spector, B. (2007) *Implementing Organizational Change: Theory and Practice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson).

⁶ Meaney, M., Pung, C. (2008) McKinsey global survey results: creating organizational transformations, *The McKinsey Quarterly*, August, pp. 1–7.

⁷ Armenakis, A., Harris, S., Cole, M., Fillmer, J., and Self, D. (2007) A top management team's reactions to organizational transformation: the diagnostic benefits of five key change sentiments, *Journal of Change Management*, 7(3–4), pp. 273–290.

⁸ Stephen p. Robbins., judge, seema sanghi. (2005) *Organizational behavior*, 13th edition, prentice Hall.

⁹ Robbins, S.P. et al. (2009) *Organisational behaviour global and Southern African perspectives*. 2nd Edition. Pearson Education, Inc, Publishing as Prentice Hall.

organization using behavioral science knowledge.¹⁰ The theory of organizational development in the information technology industry has received significant attention from researchers in the field of information management over the last few decades.¹¹ Organizations should consider a number of non-technical elements, such as structure, behavior, leadership, and culture, for effective organizational development in the IT industry.¹² However, theoretical clarification and guidance in this area of study are lacking.¹³ A potential reason for this under-use is that the phenomenon of organizational development is fundamentally complex and unpredictable, and therefore no one theory is adequate.

The purpose of this paper was to fill this void by describing the organizational change events in an IT services company during organizational change through the listing at the stock market, and analyzing the change events utilizing the concepts of organizational environments, structure, leadership, and culture, in order to get a better understanding of the organizational development in an organization. The study used a case study research method in which a qualitative approach was used to study the phenomenon in its real-life context¹⁴ enabling the study to capture practical knowledge and gain new insight.¹⁵ In this context, firstly, the case organization was described. Secondly, workplace culture and OD structure of the organization was discussed. Thirdly, organizational change events at the case organization were described, and its changes were compared against the organizational change diagnosis theory for performance and change. Next, an analysis was carried out to determine the organizational change in the development of the organization. Finally, the conclusion was made; the key implications were discussed.

Case Study: Octaware Technologies Limited

Octaware Technologies¹⁶ is a software development and enterprise solutions firm with two software delivery centers in India located in SEEPZ-SEZ, Mumbai. Since 2005, the company has been serving global customers through its delivery centers, which are managed by hands-on Vice Presidents who report to the company's Chief Executive Officer.¹⁷ The theory of OD metaphors¹⁸ gives a good insight in understanding the organizations and is widely used to describe the organization. The metaphors are organizations as a *machine*, as an *organism*, as *brains*, as *cultures*, as *political systems*, as *psychic*

¹⁰ Beckhard, R. (1969) Organization development: Strategies and Models, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

¹¹ Lucas, H.C. Jr, Agarwal, R., Clemons, E.K., El Sawy, O.A. and Weber, B. (2013), Impactful research on transformational information technology: an opportunity to inform new audiences, MIS Quarterly, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 371-382.

¹² Markus, M.L. (2004) Technochange management: using IT to drive organizational change, Journal of Information Technology, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 4-20.

¹³ Besson, P., Rowe, F. (2012) Strategizing information systems-enabled organizational transformation: a transdisciplinary review and new directions", Journal of Strategic Information Systems, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 103-124.

¹⁴ Yin, R. K. (2014) Case Study Research: Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

¹⁵ Benbasat, I., Goldstein, D. K., Mead, M. (1987) The Case Research Strategy in Studies of Information Systems, MIS Quarterly (11:3), pp. 369-386.

¹⁶ Octaware Technologies Limited. The Bridge To Productivity. 2021. <http://www.octaware.com>.

¹⁷ Khan, M.A. (2020). The impact of project management styles on digital transformation: A Case Study of an IT services company. International Journal of Project Management, 4(1), 1-9.

¹⁸ Morgan, G. (1986) Images of Organization. Beverly Hills: Sage.

prisons, as flux and transformations, and as instruments of dominations. Each metaphor indicates a means of seeing and thinking of organizations. These metaphors are applied, and its strength and weaknesses are outlines to describe IT organizations.¹⁹

A single metaphor is not applicable to describe the case organization but a combination of *culture*, *brain*, and *machine*. The company is like a *culture* metaphor during its establishment phase, where the focus was to develop the organization on its strong vision and mission of “creating growth, adding value and serving the individuals, enterprises and social entities.” The core business of the case organization is software development which is dependent on talented manpower to deliver the services. Therefore *brain* metaphor is applied here. The company delivers software solutions to its global customers, functioning more like a *machine* with usability, quality, and maximum output as the drivers.

Defining workplace culture at the case organization

There are various theories to describe organizational culture. In literature, organizational culture is defined as a set of values, beliefs, and norms that influence the way employees think, feel, learn and behave at the workplace.²⁰ The organizational culture influences the learning process. The importance of organizational culture is highlighted in understanding how organizational learning occurs. Learning organization is defined as an organization that continually develops and facilitates the learning and development of its people.²¹

The case organization provides formal technical and soft skill training and cultivated a system that created continuous opportunities for learning; therefore, the case organization is a learning organization. The organization developed the learning culture through the following means:

First, the human resource department creates a professional development plan for each staff of the company by identifying the knowledge gap of each individual;

Second, learning and development is made one of the key performance indicator in the yearly performance appraisal system;

Third, introduced a knowledge-sharing platform to encourage informal learning;

Fourth, employees are encouraged to attend conferences, networking events, reading books and industry magazines, and joining online webinars and forums;

Fifth, the company celebrates and rewards learning and development achievement;

Sixth, mentoring culture sharing experience, insights, and learning with peers.

Organizations learn new things more easily when successful coaching is carried out and thus respond to changes more effectively.²² Coaching is a key aspect of organizational culture and plays an

¹⁹ Walsham, G. (1992) Organizational metaphors and information system research, European Journal of Information systems. Vol. 1, no. 2.

²⁰ Schein, E. H. (1992) Organizational Culture and Leadership (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

²¹ Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. Century Business, London.

²² Redshaw, B. (2000) Do We Really Understand Coaching? How Can We Make It Work Better?, Industrial and Commercial Training, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 106-108.

important role in organizational development.²³ It is a process of preparing the people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities to develop the team to become effective in their commitment. Coaching deals with employee growth, development, and achievement by removing roadblocks to performance and enhancing creativity. This work-based coaching culture was missing in the case organization.

Brief Introduction of the Change Events

The Bombay Stock Exchange is a trading platform that provides investors with securities that give all stakeholders many advantages. Not only does it help investors invest in the market and benefit from their savings, but it also allows companies to raise investments to fund their business activities. The SME exchange is a new instrument that offers funding to small and medium-sized organizations to raise public funds. This is one of the emerging exchanges launched in India in 2012.²⁴ The case organization utilized this advantaged situation of listing the company at the SME platform of the Bombay Stock Exchange and made several crucial decisions to rightly utilize the raised capital for enhancing the organization's performance, in turn, maximizing the shareholder's value.

Firstly, the company changed the business model from technical software services offering to business-domain centric software solution focusing on three industry segments, namely finance, healthcare, and government sectors utilizing all the available technologies. The company's overall business strategy was changed from services-focused to business-focused. Formerly, the company had been a core software services provider organization. Now, after the listing of the organization at BSE, a transformation of the organization from a generic IT services organization to a business-focused one was inevitable. The change agent was the business-focused demand, an emerging market driver external to the company, in these planned change events.

Secondly, the company shifted the focus on expanding the market from the developed region such as the USA, Singapore, and Australia to emerging and non-traditional countries such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and other African countries. The main reason for focusing on new territory was rapid growth. The growth of the company was mainly due to funds availability during the listing of the company to the BSE. Both of these change events gave the company many possibilities for improved business. At the same time, they were the seeds for expected organizational change, along with the strategy of the business for growth.

Thirdly, the company developed a new team reporting structure which was divided between technical and functional reporting instead of one reporting manager. A concept of two reporting managers, Team Lead and Project lead, was introduced. A planned change was initiated by the management to shift the organizational structure to become more business-focused. The organization was split into business divisions; each focused on specific territories. Also, the incentive program of team members was changed. A new division of reporting and modifications in job descriptions, especially the job division between the team lead and project lead, was a planned change event.

²³ Rosinski, P. (2011) Global coaching for organizational development. *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 30, 49–66.

²⁴ Sanjay, D., Ravinder, A. (2017). Initial and after performance of SME IPO in India. *Global Business Review*, Sage Publication, 18(6)1536-1551.

And at last, another change event was the implementation of the Employee Stock Options (ESOP) to reward and encourage the existing employees and attract the new talent for lateral hiring. This new reward model and the listing of the organization at BSE motivated the team to work more actively. The new ESOP system was itself introduced and implemented as a significant change event, a purposeful and expected management action to facilitate the process of becoming a business-focused company.

In this paper, the causal elements in the four change events, particularly the external environment, the organizational change, and the process of organizational change using organizational change diagnosis theory was mainly analyzed.

Causal model of organizational change and diagnosis

Change management is defined as the process an organization uses to design, implement, and assess appropriate internal changes to deal with organizational development.²⁵ Organizational change is a process of working with people and resources with purpose, rewards, structure, support, and leadership to make the change in the organization.²⁶ Organizational diagnosis is a way of looking at an organization to determine the change between current and past performance and how it achieved it. Organizational diagnosis is the critical first step in understanding organizational problems, identifying the underlying causes, and planning change interventions.²⁷ There are numerous theories of organizational diagnostics models found in the literature, such as the Weisbord six-box model,²⁸ McKinsey 7S framework,²⁹ and Burke-Litwin model.³⁰ The main purpose of these frameworks is to help in identifying, understanding, and reducing the complication in the change situation by analyzing the change variables important to the organization, sequence of activities to be adopted in handling the change situation, and the relationship between various organizational properties.³¹

Weisbord proposed six general categories in his model of organizational life, namely purposes, structures, relationships, leadership, rewards, and helpful mechanism. The Weisbord model primarily focused on internal problems within an organization by asking diagnostic questions that describe “what is” and “what should be.” McKinsey 7s model is a framework developed with seven key organizational elements: strategy, structure, systems, style, skills, staff, and shared values. The framework is used to create a coherent approach and to examine the company and what leads to its performance. The Burke-

²⁵ Murthy C.S.V. (2007) Change Management, 1st ed.; Himalaya Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.: Mumbai, India.

²⁶ Markus, M.L. (2004) Technochange management: using IT to drive organizational change, *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 4-20.

²⁷ Burke, W.W. (1994) *Organization Development: A Process of Learning and Changing*, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

²⁸ Weisbord, M.R. (1978) *Organizational Diagnosis: A Workbook of Theory and Practice*; Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.: Boston, MA, USA.

²⁹ McKinsey & Company. (2008) *Enduring Ideas: The 7-S Framework*. [online] Available at: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/enduring_ideas_the_7-s_framework.

³⁰ Burke, W., & Litwin, G. (1992) A causal model of organizational performance and change. *Journal of Management*, 18, 523-545.

³¹ Ian Palmer, R. D., Gib Akon (2009) *Managing Organizational Change: A Multiple Perspectives Approach*.

Litwin model consists of twelve key variables at different organizational levels. It implements causality by demonstrating a reciprocal relationship among its variables.

In this paper, the causal elements in the change events at the case organization, especially the external environment and the organizational change process, were analyzed using Burke-Litwin's causal model of organizational performance and change. The Burke-Litwin offers a powerful model to bring in change in the performance of a team or organization as it is an open system that distinguishes between transformational factors, transactional factors, and personal factors. This model links the relationship between internal and external factors and performance. There are ten factors in this model which were extracted from the case organization to evaluate the Burke-Litwin model.

Analysis of the change events: Advancing the Organizational Diagnosis Process

The Burke-Litwin model is found to be significant for assessing and planning the change at an organization.³² In the two-dimensional Burke-Litwin model, twelve variables identified as external environment, leadership, culture, structure, systems, climate, management practices, task requirements and individual skills/abilities, individual needs and values, motivation, individual and organizational performance are connected by arrows going both directions, indicating that any two variables can affect and be affected by each other. For example, the external environment may affect the organizational performance through policy and regulation; meanwhile, the organizational performance may affect the external environment via products and services. This model also distinguishes between transformational and transactional organizational changes. Environmental factors are more likely to trigger transformational shifts in the external environment, mission and strategy, leadership, company culture, and person and organizational performance variables, while transactional changes are short-term changes induced by people's reciprocity.

Through diagnosing the change events at the case organization, it was found that the company went through transformational changes as well as incremental changes on a day-to-day basis. While diagnosing the four change events, it was observed that the external environment of regulatory and economic change was the key driver to change the internal system. Internally, the company was a well-designed "machine" metaphor. It has its unique vision, values, and work culture; the well-defined structure, management practices, and standard policies. The machine was running from the top with a vision and had feedback from every element of the internal system producing the outcome in terms of enhanced individual and organizational performance. The following constructs of the change events in the case organization were figured out to better illustrate the Burke-Litwin model.

First, BSE-SME listing and fundraising through IPO — Listing to BSE-SME reflected "regulatory" element, capital fundraising through IPO was "economic" element, diversifying the technological breadth was "technological" change, and overseas market expansion to developing countries

³² French, W., & Bell, C. (1999) Organization development: Behavioral science interventions for organization improvement. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

reflected “geography” element, and these were the outside conditions of the external environment that influenced the performance of the case organization.

Second, leadership team and organizational culture — During the listing process of the case organization at BSE, senior industry professionals from finance and healthcare sectors joined the board of directors who were visionary, reflective, and inspirational leaders influencing the morale and organizational development. The learning culture created in the case organization promoted ongoing staff development, employee collaboration, constructive feedback process that helped to increase the efficiency, productivity, and profit of the company. The vision of the company “Serving, adding value and creating growth for individuals, businesses, and society” continued to be the belief of the staff. The mission, strategy, leadership, and organizational culture of the case organization reflected the factors of transformational changes.

Third, governing board, quality management certification, and Balance scorecard system — The governance structure of the case organization is set up with an advisory board, independent directors, and executive directors. The case organization is ISO 9001: 2008 (an international standard for quality management systems) certified and successfully appraised by SEI CMM level 3 (Process Improvement developed by Software Engineering Institute), and built capabilities to constantly improve its services and products. The company implemented a balanced scorecard to measure the organizational performance goals. The Burk-Litwin model includes the structure, system, and management practices and defines it as the internal system of transactional factors.

Fourth, Reporting structure and ESOP implementation — The change in the reporting structure where the employees were supervised by the project lead for services delivery to the customers, and the team lead was assigned for their mentoring and career growth created a collaborative climate within the team. The contribution and involvement of individuals in the corporate social responsibility initiative of the case organization provided the opportunity to the employees to put forth their opinion and needs in the social and business activities of the case organization. The ESOP scheme implemented at the company motivated and encouraged the employees to work harder and perform better. Individual needs/values, motivation, and work unit culture are factors included in the open system of the model.

The application of the diagnosis theory drew the inference that the company was transformed from a boutique technology provider to a focused industry expert. It spread its target market from developed countries to the emerging region and expanded the operations internationally by investing in overseas subsidiaries. The company’s organizational development was demonstrated by ongoing learning culture and outstanding management processes.

Conclusion

In this study, the case of an IT services company, Octaware Technologies, and organizational change events that emerged during the listing process at BSE was described. The Burke-Litwin causal model of organizational change and performance was used to identify the different causal elements in the change events. The four events are the change of strategy resulting from the listing of the case organization

at BSE, the internal change caused by the change of corporate strategy in the external environment, and the listing at BSE leading to corresponding changes in the company. This study presented a theoretical structure as well as an implementation approach for analyzing an organizational internal diagnosis method as well as an organizational development model.

After applying the theories to four change events, conclusions can be made as follows. The external environment can directly affect internal changes, and the organizational environment is decisive in organizational changes. When changes occurred, whether it happened within the organization or in the external world, case organization's leaders were able to understand and analyze the situation. The causes of organizational changes were divided into transformational and transactional. While assessing the organizational culture and change at the case organization, it can also be seen that the coaching culture was missing in the case organization.

There are a few limitations in this study. First, the results are based on a single case study, so generalizing from it should be done with caution. Second, the single case study method prevented a detailed analysis of the relative effect of transformational changes and outcomes. Last, the analysis may suffer from the omission of certain IT services-specific constructs.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made based on the finding of this study:

First, this paper recommends the case organization establish a coaching culture adopting the CLEAR³³ systematic coaching model. Coaching culture delivers personal and organizational learning, helps in organizational cultural change, and motivates the staff and stakeholders to achieve better and increased job performance.

Second, it is also recommended to establish organizational development practice by creating an organizational development plan aligned with the company's strategic goals and maximize the organization's ability to achieve them.

Third, the company shall review and define the organization's key strategic goal, potential capability, and capacity of existing resources, ability to achieve these goals with existing resources. This can be achieved by identifying current knowledge gaps in the organization and identifying the skills required to achieve the organizational goals.

Fourth, the organizational development strategy shall be created to develop the existing skills and to focus on bridging the skill gaps by investing in the right training and development and recruitment of hiring external coaches.

³³ Hawkins, P. (2012) Creating a coaching culture: Developing a coaching strategy for your organization. London: McGraw-Hill International.

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