Evaluating Organizational Change Management

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Abstract: **It is arguable that the effective management of change is vital to the survival and success of any organization in the present day and age, given the intense level of competition that exists in the business world and the fact that it is always changing. However, the theories and methods of change management that are currently available to academics and practitioners are frequently contradictory. The majority of these theories and methods also lack empirical evidence, and they are supported by unchallenged hypotheses regarding the nature of modern organizational change management. Therefore, the objective of this article is to provide a critical analysis of some of the most prominent ideas and approaches to organizational change management. This will serve as an essential first step in the construction of a new framework for the management of change. In its final section, the article provides some suggestions for additional research.**

Keywords: **Critical review, theories and approaches, change, management change, organizational change.**

1. Introduction

"The process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to fulfill the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers" is one definition of "change management" (Moran & Brightman, 2001). According to (Burnes, 2004), change is something that is always present in the life of an organization, and this is true on both an operational and a strategic level. As a result, there should not be any uncertainty regarding the significance of an organization's capability to determine where it needs to be in the future and how to effectively manage the changes required to get there. As a result, organizational change and organizational strategy are inextricably linked and cannot be considered independently of one another (Burnes, 2004); (Rieley & Clarkson, 2001). The ability to handle organizational change is becoming increasingly sought after as a result of the significance of organizational transformation (Gill, 2002). According to (Graetz, 2000), who goes so far as to suggest that "Against a backdrop of increasing globalization, deregulation, the rapid pace of technological innovation, a growing knowledge workforce, and shifting social and demographic trends, few would dispute that the primary task for management today is the leadership of organizational change," few would dispute that the primary task for management today is the leadership of organizational change.

Since the need for change is often unexpected, it tends to be reactive, discontinuous, ad hoc, and often set off by an organizational crisis (Burnes, 2004); (Wit de B, 2010); (Luecke, 2003); (Nelson, 2003). Even though (Balogun & Hailey, 2004) say that about 70% of all change programs that are started fail, (Luecke, 2003) and (Okumus & Hemmington, 1998) agree that change management must be done well in order to survive and thrive in today's highly competitive and constantly changing world. It could be said that this low success rate shows that there is no valid framework for how to implement and manage organizational change. At the moment, academics and practitioners have access to a wide range of theories and approaches that contradict each other and are hard to understand (Burnes, 2004). (Guimaraes & Armstrong, 1998) say that most analyses of change management have been personal and superficial. (Doyle, 2002) says that there is evidence to suggest that, with only a few exceptions, practice and theory are mostly based on assumptions that haven't been questioned about the nature of change management in organizations today. (Edmonstone, 1995) agrees with this point when he says, "Many of the change processes over the last 25 years have had fundamental flaws that made it impossible to manage change well".

Even though it's hard to find agreement on a framework for managing organizational change, there does seem to be agreement on two important points. First, everyone agrees that the rate of change in the business world has never been faster than it is now (Balogun & Hailey, 2004); (Burnes, 2004); (Carnall, 2003); (Kotter, 1996); (Luecke, 2003); (Moran & Brightman, 2001); (Okumus & Hemmington, 1998); (Siebert, Paton, & McCalman, 2015); (Odor, 2018). Second, everyone agrees that change, whether it's caused by internal or external factors, comes in all shapes, sizes, and forms (Balogun & Hailey, 2004); (Burnes, 2004); (Carnall, 2003); (Kotter, 1996); (Luecke, 2003) and therefore affects all organizations in all industries.

Even though there is a growing body of general literature that talks about how important change is and how to deal with it, there isn't much evidence to back up the different theories and approaches (Guimaraes & Armstrong, 1998). So, the goal of this article is to give a critical review of the current theories and approaches in order to encourage more research into the nature of organizational change and build a new, practical framework for managing it. So that the article can do this, it uses Senior's (2002) three categories of change as a framework to connect other major theories and approaches. Changes have been put into these three groups based on how often they happen, how

they happen, and how big they are. Even though total quality management (TQM), business process re-engineering (BPR), and other change initiatives (Balogun & Hailey, 2004); (White, 2017) share some of these traits, this article will focus on the main traits of change and not on specific change initiatives. Lastly, the article points out some places where more research needs to be done.

2. Change Characterized by the Rate of Occurrence

Early techniques and concepts of organizational change management stated that organizations could not be effective or enhance their performance if they were continually changing (Rieley & Clarkson, 2001). It was believed that people require routines to be efficient and capable of enhancing performance (Luecke, 2003). However, it is currently believed that the ability of individuals to undergo continual change is of essential value to organizations (Burnes, 2004); (Rieley & Clarkson, 2001). While (Luecke, 2003) indicates that a state of constant change can become a habit in its own right, (Leifer, 1989) considers change as a normal and natural response to internal and environmental situations.

According to the frequency of occurrence, Table 1 lists discontinuous and gradual change as the most prevalent types of change. However, different authors describe the same approach using distinct nomenclature. Other authors do not distinguish between incremental and continuous change, unlike (Burnes, 2004). In addition, to further complicate matters, (Grundy, 1998) and Senior (2002) differentiate between smooth and bumpy incremental development.

According to (Grundy, 1998), discontinuous change is characterized by abrupt transformations in strategy, organization, or culture, or all three. This type of quick transformation might be precipitated by either serious internal issues or a significant external shock (Senior, 2002). According to (Luecke, 2003), discontinuous change is a single, abrupt shift from the past' that occurs as a result of massive, widely spaced initiatives that are followed by long periods of stabilization and stability (Luecke, 2003).

Advocates of discontinues change believe that this strategy is cost-effective since it does not encourage a never-ending sequence of costly change projects and because it causes less disruption than continuous change (Guimaraes & Armstrong, 1998). There are times of gradual change wedged between more violent periods of change, which have contributed to the illusion of stability previously believed to be the case, as stated by (Nelson, 2003).

2001), there appears to be a consensus among contemporary authors that the benefits of discontinuous change are not sustainable (Bond, 1999); (Grundy, 1998); (Holloway, 2017); (Love, Gunasekaran, & Li, 1998); (Taylor & Hirst, 2001). This strategy, according to (Luecke, 2003), permits defensive behavior, complacency, an inward concentration, and routines, which produces conditions in which considerable reform is commonly required.

As a better approach to change, it is recommended that organizations and their members continuously monitor, detect, and respond to the external and internal environment in modest, ongoing increments (Luecke, 2003). In contrast to discontinuous change, (Burnes, 2004) defines continuous change as the capacity to change continually and fundamentally in order to keep up with the rapid rate of change.

(Burnes, 2004) defines incremental change as the process through which distinct components of an organization tackle one problem and one objective one at a time. This perspective contends that change is most effectively executed through a series of small, negotiated shifts (Burnes, 2004). (Grundy, 1998) suggests categorizing incremental change as either smooth or bumpy. By smooth incremental change, (Grundy, 1998) refers to change that evolves slowly in a predictable and systematic manner at a consistent rate. This type of transformation is predicted to be unusual and uncommon in the current and future environment (Senior, 2002). However, periods of relative calm punctuated by a quickening of the rate of change characterize transformation that is characterized by humps and bumps (Grundy, 1998); (Holloway, 2017). This form of shift is referred to by Burnes (2004) and Balogun and Hope Hailey (2004) as punctuated equilibrium.

The distinction between (Burnes, 2004) understanding of continuous and incremental change is that the former refers to departmental, operational, ongoing changes, whereas the latter focuses on organization-wide strategies and the ability to continuously adapt these to the demands of the external and internal environment. In an effort to simplify the categories, (Luecke, 2003) advocates combining incremental and continuous change. It may be argued, however, that this combination makes it impossible to distinguish between departmental and enterprise-wide approaches to change management. Therefore, for the purposes of this essay, Table 2 offers a combination of the aforementioned criteria of change.

Table 2
Change characterized by the rate of occurrence 2

Type of change
Discontinuous change
Incremental change
Bumpy incremental change
Continuous change
Bumpy continuous change

Smooth incremental change has been removed from the list since it is considered an obsolete method of change (Grundy, 1998). In addition, (Burnes, 2004) and (Balogun & Hailey, 2004) punctuated equilibrium model has been integrated with

Table 1
Change characterized by the rate of occurrence 1

Type of change	Balogun and Hope Hailey (2004)	Burnes (2004)	Grundy (1993)	Luecke (2003)	Senior (2002)
Discontinuous			✓	✓	✓
Incremental		✓			
Smooth incremental			✓		✓
Bumpy incremental			✓		✓
Continuous	✓	✓			
Continuous incremental				✓	
Punctuated equilibrium	✓	✓			

Although the discontinuous approach to change is still used in contemporary change projects (Duncan, Mouly, & Nilakant,

(Grundy, 1998) bumpy incremental change model because they both describe the same strategy. In addition, Table 2 distinguishes between incremental change and continuous change to enable the difference between operational, ongoing adjustments and strategies executed throughout the entire organization to enable it to continuously adapt to the external and internal environments. Assuming that, as with operational changes (Grundy, 1998); (Senior, 2002), there will be periods of relative calm punctuated by a quickening of the rate of change, it can be argued that the same is true for organization-wide strategies, we propose the addition of the category of bumpy continuous change.

3. Change Characterized by How it Comes About

As shown in Table 3, there are a number of distinct approaches to change, categorized by the manner in which it occurs. Nonetheless, intentional and emergent change dominate the literature (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Although there is no widely accepted, clear, and practical approach to organizational change management that explains what changes organizations must make and how to implement them (Burnes, 2004), the planned approach to organizational change attempts to explain the processes that bring about change (Burnes B., 1996); (Elrod & Tippett, 2002). In addition, the planned approach emphasizes the significance of understanding the various states an organization must pass through in order to transition from an unacceptable condition to a predetermined ideal state (Elrod & Tippett, 2002).

Lewin (Bamford & Forrester, 2003), a theorist, researcher, and practitioner in interpersonal, group, intergroup, and community connections, established the planned method to change in 1946. (Elrod & Tippett, 2002). Lewin (1946, cited in (Burnes B., 2004)) stated that in order for change and new behavior to be successfully embraced, the former behavior must be abandoned. According to Lewin (1952, as cited in (Elrod & Tippett, 2002)), a successful change project requires the three processes of de-freezing the current level, moving to the new level, and refreezing the new level. This paradigm of change recognizes the necessity of discarding old behavior, structures, procedures, and culture prior to adopting new ones successfully (Bamford & Forrester, 2003).

Table 3
Change characterized by how it comes about

Type of change	Burnes (1996)	Dunphy and Stace (1993)	Senior (2002)
Planned	✓		✓
Emergent	✓		✓
Contingency		✓	
Choice	✓		

Even though this three-step model was accepted as a generic framework for comprehending the organizational change process, it is quite general (Elrod & Tippett, 2002). Several authors have consequently attempted to make Lewin's work more applicable by expanding upon it (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). (Bullock & Batten, 1985) established a four-phase model of planned change that divides the process into exploration, planning, action, and integration. According to (Burnes B., 2004) this is a very applicable paradigm for most transition circumstances. The model looks at the processes of change, which define the methods taken to transfer an organization from one state to another, and the phases of change, which describe the stages an organization must go through to accomplish successful change implementation (Bullock & Batten, 1985).

Although the planned approach to change has a long history and is seen as extremely effective (Bamford & Forrester, 2003); (Burnes B., 2004), it has been increasingly criticized since the early 1980s (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992); (Burnes B., 2004). First, it is suggested that the emphasis of the strategy is on small-scale and incremental change, making it inapplicable to situations requiring rapid and revolutionary change (Burnes B., 2004); (Senior, 2002).

Second, the planned method assumes that organizations work under consistent conditions and can transition from one stable state to another in a predetermined manner (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Several scholars (Burnes B., 2004); (Burnes B., 1996); (Wilson, 1992) dispute these assumptions, arguing that the contemporary, rapidly-changing world undermines this hypothesis. In addition, it is hypothesized that organizational transformation is a more open-ended and ongoing process than a predetermined series of discrete and self-contained occurrences (Burnes B., 2004); (Burnes B., 1996). It is stated that by seeking to establish deadlines, targets, and techniques in advance, the process of change becomes overly dependent on senior management, who in many cases do not fully comprehend the ramifications of their actions (Wilson, 1992).

Thirdly, the planned change approach disregards circumstances that demand directed approaches. This can be a crisis situation that necessitates large and rapid change, but does not allow for extensive input or participation (Burnes B., 2004); (Burnes B., 1996); (Wilson, 1992). Critics contend that the planned approach to change presupposes that all stakeholders in a change project are willing and interested in its implementation, and that a consensus can be established (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). This presupposition disregards organizational politics and conflict, assuming that they can be discovered and resolved without difficulty (Burnes B., 2004); (Burnes B., 1996).

The emergent approach has gained ground in reaction to these criticisms of the planned approach to organizational change. Instead of viewing change as being pushed from the top down, the emergent approach tends to view change as being driven from the bottom up (Bamford & Forrester, 2003); (Burnes B., 2004); (Burnes B., 1996). The method posits that change is so quick that it is hard for top managers to identify, plan, and implement the organizational solutions effectively (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992). Therefore, organizational transformation responsibility must become progressively decentralized (Wilson, 1992).

The emergent approach to change emphasizes that change should not be viewed as a sequence of linear events occurring over a specific period of time, but rather as a continuous, open-ended process of adaptation to changing situations and

conditions (Burnes B., 2004); (Burnes B., 1996); (Dawson, 1994). The emergent approach emphasizes the unpredictability of change and considers it as a process that emerges from the interaction of numerous elements inside an organization. Change is regarded not just as a means for altering organizational practices and structures, but also as a learning process (Altman & Iles, 1998); (Davidson & de Marco, 1999); (Dunphy & Stace, 1993).

According to proponents of the emergent approach to change, the external and internal uncertainty of the environment makes this approach more relevant than the planned approach (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). To deal with the complexity and unpredictability of the environment, it is argued that organizations must become open learning systems in which strategy formulation and change originate from how a corporation as a whole obtains, interprets, and processes environmental information ((Dunphy & Stace, 1993). The method emphasizes the development of an "extensive and in-depth understanding of strategy, structure, systems, people, style, and culture, and how these might operate either as sources of inertia that can impede change, or as levers to promote a successful change process" (Burnes B., 1996). In addition, (Burnes B., 1996) argues that "successful transformation depends less on specific plans and projections than on gaining an awareness of the complexities of the issues at hand and identifying the range of possible possibilities." Therefore, it may be stated that the emergent approach to change is more concerned with change preparedness and change facilitation than with providing predetermined processes for each change project and endeavor.

Despite (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1993) assertion that there are no universal principles for leading and managing change, numerous proponents of the emergent approach have proposed action sequences that organizations should adhere to. However, many of these recommendations tend to be abstract and difficult to implement (Burnes B., 2004) (Kanter R. M., 1983). Some authors provide more pragmatic advice for organizations and managers. (Kanter R. M., 1983), (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992), (Kotter J. P., 1996), and (Luecke, 2003) are three of these authors. Table 4 combines (Kanter R. M., 1983); (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992) Ten Commandments for Executing Change, (Kotter J., 1996) 's Eight-Stage Process for Successful Organizational Transformation, and (Luecke, 2003)'s proposed Seven Steps to find parallels and contrasts between these models.

As the emergent method to change is newer than the planned approach, it is stated that it lacks consistency and a variety of techniques (Bamford & Forrester, 2003); (Wilson, 1992). Another critique of the emergent method is that it is comprised of a relatively varied group of models and approaches that tend to be more united in their skepticism of the planned approach to change than in their acceptance of a consensus alternative (Bamford & Forrester, 2003); (Dawson, 1994). Nevertheless, according to (Burnes B., 1996), the universal applicability and validity of the emergent approach to organizational transformation is contingent on whether or not one believes that all organizations operate in dynamic and unpredictable settings

to which they must continually adapt. Consequently, (Burnes B., 1996) asserts that the emergent model is applicable to all organizations, all settings, and all periods.

Table 4
A comparison of three models of emergent change

Kanter *et al.*'s Ten Commandments for Executing Change (1992)	Kotter's Eight-Stage Process for Successful Organisational Transformation (1996)	Luecke's Seven Steps (2003)
1) Analyse the organisation and its need for change		1) Mobilise energy and commitment through joint identification of business problems and their solutions
2) Create a vision and a common direction	3) Developing a vision and strategy	2) Develop a shared vision of how to organise and manage for competitiveness
3) Separate from the past 4) Create a sense of urgency	1) Establishing a sense of urgency	
5) Support a strong leader role 6) Line up political sponsorship	2) Creating a guiding coalition	3) Identify the leadership
7) Craft an implementation plan 8) Develop enabling structures	5) Empowering broad-based action	
9) Communicate, involve people and be honest	4) Communicating the change vision	
10) Reinforce and institutionalise change	8) Anchoring new approaches in the culture	6) Institutionalise success through formal policies, systems, and structures
	6) Generating short-term wins 7) Consolidating gains and producing more change	
		4) Focus on results, not on activities
		5) Start change at the periphery, then let it spread to other units without pushing it from the top
		7) Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the change process

(Dunphy & Stace, 1993) disagree with this viewpoint and believe that "managers and consultants require a model of change that is fundamentally a "situational" or "contingency model," one that shows how to adjust change tactics to achieve "optimal fit" with the changing environment" (Dunphy & Stace, 1993). They recommend a strategy that reflects not only the fact that organizations operate in surroundings that are always changing, but also the fact that there are numerous approaches to change. In addition, it is maintained that planned and emergent ways to change should not be considered the complete range of change occurrences.

Therefore, a strategy to change that promotes a "one best method for each" organizational approach as opposed to a "one best way for all" approach is advised. The contingency approach to change is based on the premise that an organization's structure and performance are contingent on the situational circumstances it experiences (Dunphy & Stace, 1993). No two businesses are identical, nor will they necessarily experience the same variables. Consequently, their operations and structures may vary (Dunphy & Stace, 1993). However, the general contingency theory has been criticized for the difficulties of tying structure to performance and for the theory's assumption that organizations and managers have no major control or choice over situational variables and structure (Burnes B., 1996).

(Burnes B., 1996) argues that an organization is not required to adapt to its external environment and advocates a choice-based approach by stating, "there is evidence that organizations wishing to maintain or promote a particular managerial style can choose to influence situational variables to achieve this." The argument is that rather than being compelled to modify

their internal procedures to conform with the norm, they have a choice.

4. Change Characterized by Scale

When it comes to changes characterized by magnitude, there is less misunderstanding and a greater degree of consensus. According to (Dunphy & Stace, 1993), change recognized by scale can be split into four main characteristics: fine-tuning, incremental adjustment, modular transformation, and corporate transformation. Fine-tuning, also known as convergent change (Nelson, 2003), characterizes organizational change as an ongoing process to align the strategy, processes, people, and structure of the organization (Senior, 2002). It manifests itself typically at the departmental or divisional level of an organization. According to (Dunphy & Stace, 1993), the objective of fine-tuning is to build employees matched to the current strategy, link mechanisms and form specialized units to improve volume and attention to cost and quality, and enhance policies, procedures, and methods. Furthermore, the fine-tuning should build both individual and collective commitment to the excellence of departments and the organization's objective, define existing roles, and promote confidence in accepted ideas, norms, and myths (Dunphy & Stace, 1993). According to (Senior, 2002), incremental adjustment entails distinct modifications to management processes and organizational strategies, but not fundamental transformation.

Modular transformation is characterized by the significant relocation of one or more departments or divisions. In contrast to incremental adjustment this shift might be drastic. However, it concentrates on a subset of the organization rather than the entire organization (Senior, 2002). If the shift is enterprise-wide and marked by substantial modifications to the business plan, it is referred to as a corporate transformation, (Dunphy & Stace, 1993). Examples of this type of transformation, according to (Dunphy & Stace, 1993), include reorganization, modification of interaction patterns, reformed organizational mission and core values, and altered power and position.

5. Recommendations for Further Research

On the basis of the reported low success rate of change programs in general, the dearth of empirical research on change management within organizations, and the arguably fundamental absence of a valid framework for organizational change management, it is recommended that additional research be conducted into the nature of change management. The initial stage in this procedure should be to do exploratory research to expand knowledge of organizational change management. These investigations should permit the identification of crucial success elements for change management. Furthermore, in order to develop a meaningful framework for change management it is likely important to enable measurement of the success rate of change projects. Consequently, it is necessary to design measurement methods.

6. Conclusion

This article demonstrates that change is an ever-present factor that affects all organizations. There is widespread agreement that the rate of change in today's ever evolving corporate environment has never been faster. Therefore, change management is a skill that is in high demand. Currently, however, the management of organizational change tends to be reactive, discontinuous, and ad hoc, with a reported failure rate of over 70% for all undertaken change programs (Balogun & Hailey, 2004). This may indicate a fundamental lack of a valid framework for how to successfully implement and manage organizational change, since what is currently available is a wide variety of contradictory and confusing theories and approaches, which lack empirical evidence and are frequently based on unchallenged hypotheses about the nature of contemporary organizational change management.

This article attempts to highlight the need for a new and pragmatic framework for change management by giving a critical analysis of current change management theories and practices and use Senior's (2002) three categories of change as the central structure. It is advised that additional exploratory investigations of the nature of change and its management be done in order to develop such a framework. Such research would likely discover crucial success elements for change management. The paper also advises that mechanisms for monitoring the performance of organizational change management should be developed so that the worth of any proposed new frameworks can be determined.

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