

A STUDY ABOUT EMPLOYEES' ACCEPTANCE of CHANGE

PRACTICES in ORGANIZATIONS

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The success of the change efforts particularly depends on organizational members' acceptance of change practices. A study is carried out among the white collar workers and managers of three big companies in the electronic sector in Turkey. Results show a significant difference among the respondents' attitudes about the acceptance of change according to which stage of change their company is involved in. Furthermore, the dimensions of change that are mostly related to the respondents' attitudes of acceptance are determined.

Key Words: Adapting to change in organizations, attitudes toward organizational change, management of change, organizational change, resistance to change in organizations.

ÇALIŞANLARIN ÖRGÜTSEL DEĞİŞİM UYGULAMALARINA KARŞI TUTUMLARINA İLİŞKİN BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Değişim uygulamalarının başarısı, özellikle çalışanların bu uygulamaları benimsemesi ve kabul etmesine bağlıdır. Türkiye'de elektronik sektöründe faaliyet gösteren üç büyük ölçekli işletmenin yöneticileri ve beyaz yakalı çalışanları bu araştırmanın uygulama alanını oluşturmaktadır. Anket yöntemi ile toplanan verilere ilişkin bulgular; cevaplayıcıların değişimin hangi aşamasında olduklarına göre farklılık göstermektedir. Ayrıca bu araştırma çerçevesinde, çalışanların örgütsel değişime karşı tutumlarının, değişimin hangi boyutlarıyla ilişkili olduğu ve demografik değişkenlerle ilişkileri belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Örgütsel değişim, örgütsel değişime karşı tutumlar, değişim yönetimi, değişime direnç, örgütsel değişime uyum.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations function in a dynamic environment where economic, technological, political and social changes occur mostly in an uncertain manner. In this unpredictable environment, companies must cooperate with these changes in order to stay alive and to compete with their rivals through success. In relation to environmental changes, customers' needs and expectations vary. As customers nowadays have the freedom of choice about which products they want to consume and as there are many competitor products surrounding them, companies must acquire ways of cooperating with change. Thus, they will be able to adapt themselves to the external environment.

While companies concentrate on cooperating with the external environment, they must take their internal environment into consideration as well as internal customers that work for the company. Changes are always accompanied by feelings of uncertainty and anxiety at first. As a natural response of human beings, people either resist change or feel apprehensive about what to do in changing circumstances. Functioning in this challenging environment, employees require to develop new skills and acquire new methods of doing things in their companies. Above all, feelings of anxiety and uncertainty must be overcome by ensuring internal integrity.

The internal integrity on the other hand, will be achieved by building common norms, beliefs and values shared by organizational members which is one of the main concerns and functions of organizational culture. Therefore, the new ways of doing things will be assimilated by the members of the organization. Accordingly, change practices in the organization will tend to be accepted by organizational members as a consequence of internal integrity. It seems like all they need is time, patience, appropriate consultation and training.

The factors that are important in employees' approval of change in organizations will also be important in terms of organizational culture since organizational culture intends to make change acceptable in the organization by building an appropriate structure for the change and by providing internal integrity among organizational members.

This study focuses on employees' acceptance of change practices and the factors that take place in employees' acceptance of change in organizations. First of all, the importance of change and resistance to change will be examined theoretically and briefly. Afterwards, the methodology and findings of a research carried out in Turkey among three big companies in the electronic sector will be discussed in more detail.

1.CHANGE, RESISTANCE TO CHANGE AND EMPLOYEES' ACCEPTANCE OF CHANGE PRACTICES AT WORK

1.1.The Importance of Change

Organizations face multiple challenges and threats today- threats to effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability; challenges from turbulent environments increased competition, and changing customer demands(Oswick, 2005, p.p.383).

Change is a simple process to describe but it is incredibly difficult to implement. It occurs whenever we replace the old with the new. Change is about travelling from the old to the new, leaving yesterday behind in exchange for a new tomorrow(Jager,2001, p.24). Change that take place in companies may have a small impact on employees and the company or it may have a much greater impact according to the type of change that occurs. Changes can be radical or incremental, planned or unplanned. Particularly, radical or important changes that occur less frequently or sometimes unexpectedly should be handled properly and carefully. Before change is implemented for instance, people along with the procedures and equipments should be prepared for changes(the unfreezing phase of planned change) in order to minimize resistance to change(Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborn,1994, p.p.635-636).

For some change and transition is exciting and stimulating- they cannot wait to make the changes and get to the new state of things. For others change is deeply unsettling and a threat to their values and sense of worth- something to be resisted at all costs. This range of human responses to the challenges and uncertainties of change, means that organizations may not achieve change readily or easily. Managing organizational change is at its core about managing people and their reactions and responses to change (Smith, 2005, "Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning", p.p.153-154).

In most cases, transformational, radical or large scale changes cause stress. Stress at work is a well known factor for low motivation and morale, decrease in performance, high turnover and sick- leave, accidents, low job satisfaction, low quality products and services, poor internal communication and conflicts etc. All the aforementioned problems are related, directly or indirectly, to stress and they have an effect on overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Receptivity, resistance, commitment, cynicism, stress, and related personal reactions are clearly relevant criterion variables to be considered in the framework of planning and implementing an organizational change.

Change can obviously cause cynicism and stress, thereby inhibiting success (Vakola and Nikolau, 2005, p.p.161-163).

Change may result profitable and beneficial for the company as well as for the individuals who work for the company but its influence on employees and the acceptance of change by employees shouldn't be ignored or underestimated. One of the recent studies among 9144 employees of Watson Wyatt Worldwide in San Francisco concluded that three barriers exist in managing change which are lack of management visibility and support, employee resistance to change and inadequate management skills (Boles and Sunoo, 1998, p.25).

As employee resistance to and employees' acceptance of change is the main focus of this study, one of the above mentioned research findings which draws attention to the importance of employee resistance to change for the success of change efforts is particularly valuable for us.

An individual goes through the following stages of major change (Buckman, 1996, p.10):

- Denial: The change is rejected so the individual refuses to acknowledge the change or refuses to participate in change believing that change won't occur if he doesn't look at it.

- Numbness: People respond to change in a fashion that only contribute mechanically and very little.

- Disorganization: When leaving the old behind but not yet in to the new, many people become disoriented and confused.

- Anger: At this stage, the full impact of change sets in. This realization is accompanied by anger and feelings of being treated unfairly. It may result in a destructive way by leading to sabotage of the change process and so forth.

- Acceptance: At this stage, things are integrated and the inevitability of the fact is totally clear and people may start working together through the implementation of the new way.

We should remember that it is the leader's talent to design the process in a way that it includes empathy for people and it allows for discussions at all stages so that the changes can take place without excessive resistance.

1.2. Resistance to Change and Solutions to Overcome Resistance

According to Elizur and Guttman (1976), attitudes toward change in general consist of a person's cognitions about change, affective reactions to change, and behavioral tendency toward change. Researchers have therefore, identified various employees' responses to an organizational change ranging from strong positive attitudes to strong negative attitudes. Therefore, change can be received with excitement and happiness

or anger and fear while employees' response to it may range from positive intentions to support the change to negative intentions to oppose it.

Positive attitudes to change were found to be vital in achieving organizational goals and in succeeding in change programmes. Employee attitudes toward change can impact their morale, productivity and turnover intentions.

Research findings suggest that negative attitudes to change have negative consequences for the organization. More specifically, perceived increased pressure coming from change implementation among state government employees was associated with increased stress, and as a result, was associated with lower job satisfaction and increased intentions to quit (Vakola and Nikolau, 2005, p.p.161-163).

As people are suspicious about the unfamiliar, they are reluctant to leave the old that they are familiar with. If the novelty that is presented by the change requires learning something new that may risk failure, the situation becomes even more serious. Managers trying to improve processes in their organizations need to understand why people resist change. Resistance is simply a very effective, very powerful and very useful mechanism. Change resisters may demand that the person proposing the change prove that what he or she is proposing is the best for the company (Jager, 2001, p.p.24-25).

The popular expression regarding the prospects for change is represented in management consulting by the "change equation". It suggests that change happens if $Ch = f(D \times V \times P) > Co$.

Change (Ch) takes place if the Dissatisfaction (D) with the status quo, multiplied by a Vision (V) of the future, multiplied by agreed Processes (P) that remove obstacles blocking access to the desired state is greater than the Cost (Co) of change. The multiplicative nature of the variables means that if any is zero then change will not occur. This thinking is informed by the work of Kurt Lewin.

The current appearance of the Lewin's formula should be rewritten as $Ch = f(D \times V \times P \times R) > Co$, where R is resistance (Michael Jarrett, 2003, p.p.23-26).

Although it seems obvious that one of the main reasons for resistance to change is the improper implications of change activities such as lack of sufficient preparation for change and lack of inviting employee contributions and ideas about change, in other words, employee involvement, there are several other causes of resistance to change. Some of the causes of resistance to change presented by such authors as Kreitner (1992), Griffin (1993), Stearns (1991), Schermerhorn (1989), Dubrin and Ireland (1993) are as follows (Dent and Goldberg, 1999, p.p.25-27):

- Misunderstanding of the change targets and content
- Emotional side effects
- Lack of trust
- Fear of failure
- Poor training
- Personality conflicts
- Threat to job status or security
- Work group breakup
- Fear of poor outcome
- Uncertainty

Other causes of resistance proposed by some other authors are as follows(Petrini and Hultman,1995, p.p.15-16):

- Some people resist because they believe their needs are already being met and they are content with the way things are.
- Some resist because they believe the change will make it harder for them to meet their needs.
- Some believe that the risks of change outweigh the benefits.
- Some believe it is unnecessary to avoid or escape a harmful situation anyhow.
- Some believe that the organization is mishandling the change process and its methods.

Apart from the causes mentioned above, the forms that resistance to change take place in organizations are important and should carefully be observed. Sabotage, malicious compliance such as secretly undermining the change while saying that they are going along with the new approach, starting rumors, distorting facts, threatening the management and keeping silent are some of the dangerous forms of resistance that are hindered and are not developed obviously. Immediate criticism, denial such as denying that a reason for change exists and the people who loudly and clearly say in your face that they don't like the change, on the other hand, are less dangerous forms of resistance to change that can be expressed directly and openly. Failing to implement change, withholding information, suggestions, help or support, standing by and allowing the change fail are some other forms of resistance to change that can be faced in organizations(Maurer,1998, p. p.28-29; Petrini and Hultman,1995, p.18).

Some of the strategies overcoming resistance to change that are emphasized by such authors as Kreitner(1992), Griffin(1993), Stearns(1991), Schermerhorn(1989), Dubrin and Ireland(1993) can be summarized as follows(Dent and Goldberg,1999, p.p.25-27):

- Education
- Participation
- Facilitation
- Negotiation
- Manipulation

- Coercion
- Discussion
- Financial benefits
- Political support

It is better to repeat and summarize that resistance can be experienced in some change situations in organizations but the sources of resistance should be carefully analyzed by managers. Accordingly, precautions such as training the personnel about the benefits and outcomes of the change, letting them participate in the change process right from the beginning with their ideas and suggestions, discussing and negotiating about the problems that occur or about the financial and other benefits that people will get as a result of the change and management facilitating the circumstances by providing the required resources should be taken before resistance becomes a threat for the success of the change targets.

Communication is vital to the effective implementation of organizational change. The general importance of communication during planned change has already been empirically demonstrated and generally agreed among practitioners. Poorly managed change communication results in rumors and resistance to change, exaggerating the negative aspects of change. The empirical picture that is slowly emerging indicates that communication process and organizational change implementation are inextricably linked processes.

Robertson et al. state that the change effort is dependent of the ability of the organization to change the individual behavior of individual employees. If organizational change is about how to change the individual tasks of individual employees, communication about the change, and information to these employees is vital. Communication with these employees should be an important, and integrative part of the change efforts and strategies (Elving, 2005, p.p.129-131).

1.3. The Importance of Employees' Acceptance of Change Practices at Work and Management of Change

In some research studies, factors such as an organization's environment, leadership, culture, structure, incentive and reward systems, communication processes, work design and employee attitudes(work satisfaction, organizational commitment, work motivation and effort) are analyzed and examined in developing models of change processes in organizations for achieving the change(Rainey, 1999, p.p.135-138). A huge number of companies have used attitude surveys, for instance, to gauge job satisfaction and employees' perceptions of the corporate culture and climate. However. today, employee attitude surveys are often

used to diagnose the capacity for adapting to change and the degree to which new strategic initiatives are being implemented(Worren,Ruddle and Moore,1999, p. p.277-278).

If organizational change is to take hold and succeed then organizations and the people who work in them must be readied for such transformation. Change readiness is not automatic and it cannot be assumed. A failure to assess organizational and individual change readiness may result in managers spending significant time and energy dealing with resistance to change(Smith, 2005, "Achieving Readiness for Organizational Change", p.408).

Steve Kerr puts forward that any change effort has two basic and important elements defined by the following equation(Becker, Huselid and Ulrich,2001, p.183):

$\text{Effective Change} = \text{Quality} \times \text{Acceptance (EC= Q x A)}$

Our study has focused on particularly, the importance of the second element in this equation. In other words, acceptance of change by employees or participants is an important issue in accomplishing an effective change. According to this equation, high quality is not enough to ensure success unless acceptance is provided. Without acceptance, the change effort might begin with enthusiasm and excitement but will quickly diminish.

The assumption can be made that when employees are ready to accept the change, and experience large feelings of readiness for change (or low feelings of resistance to change) that the change effort will be more effective. Effective organizational change will be showed in low levels of resistance to change, or high levels of readiness for change by employees (Elving, 2005, p.p.129-131).

Because it is the people who do the work of organizations the capacity and capability of organizations to achieve change is, to a very large degree, determined by the attitude of their employees(Smith, "Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning", 2005, p.153).

Some key success factors for the accomplishment of change can be described as follows(Becker, Huselid and Ulrich,2001, p.187):

- Finding who is responsible for change and leading the change accordingly
- Creating a shared need (a reason for change)
- Shaping a vision (what will it look like when we are done)
- Mobilizing commitment (who else needs to be involved)
- Building enabling systems (how will it be institutionalized such as rewards)

- Monitoring and demonstrating progress (how will it be measured)

- Making it last (how will it be initiated and sustained)

The above mentioned factors may help organizations develop further strategies for dealing with change. Particularly, in terms of ensuring change to be accepted by organizational members, these factors and related strategies may represent an important criteria for the success of the change efforts.

There are a number of pinpoints drawn by the suggestions and recommendations of experienced companies in change activities that should be taken into consideration for making the change accepted by the employees. Some of these recommendations can be explained as in the following (Foote,2001,p.36; Buckman,1996,p.10; Walker,1999, p.29; Hoopes and Hale,1999,p.p.94-95):

- The change teams should be kept small so that the impact on change efforts is the greatest.

- There should be clear agreement among influential managers and workers on a compelling need for change. Broad participation of the employees to change activities should be invited. On the one hand, management must constantly manage expectations and repeatedly communicating mission, vision, philosophy, process, choices and details about change initiatives. On the other hand, communication must be enhanced, involvement in decisions must be increased and leaders must concentrate on the cultural aspects of the change. It should always be remembered that all these efforts take time and patience.

- Significant changes can occur only when the beliefs about how things ought to be are willingly modified and then commitment to new methods and ideas can be accomplished. A personal vision should be created to get a clear picture of who you are and where you are going.

- Failure should be anticipated and embraced. The failure can be deterred by helping others see the benefits change can bring. Thus, people will be combined by shared goals and be motivated to accept and implement the change.

- For change management to be successful and to be approved by people in the company, the drive to change must come from the top. In other words, leaders must believe in the process and lead by example. Above all, reward structures and systems should encourage the implications of the proposed change. Appropriate metrics must be developed to more easily measure and reward performance toward achieving change objectives.

- Most of the above recommendations must be reflected on organizational culture and accordingly must become critical organizational values.

The leaders who are responsible for the implementation of the change as well as the outcomes of the change should determine the executives and department heads who see the need and who are strong communicators respected by both peers and line workers and should assign them as active missionaries of the change. They should also be careful and sensitive about the methods and processes that will change and the skills that are required to be able to cope with changing circumstances (Goff, 2000, p.54).

By examining the above given suggestions of experienced companies in change efforts, it is possible to say that many of the suggested strategies or procedures mainly focus on how to make people accept change and how people can be adapted to change as it is one of the very important key factors for success in achieving and managing change in organizations. Above all, each of the various recommendations developed for the success of change must become important organizational values that are known and practised by organizational members in the context of organizational culture.

In following sections, the methodology and results of a research related to the main focus of our study will be discussed. This research about organizational members' acceptance level of change in relation to which stage of change process they are involved to will be examined among three big companies in Istanbul.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Goal of the Study and Related Hypothesis

As the acceptance of change by organizational members as well as the decreased level of resistance to change help the success of change practices in organizations and add value to the achievement of organizational goals, this research has been planned to be carried out.

Based on the formula given in the theoretical background of this study (Effective Change = Quality x Acceptance), the importance of employee acceptance for effective change has been intended to be emphasized but the quality has not been considered in the content of this research.

For the comparison of employees' acceptance of change in between companies, the length of time that they're involved to these change practices are taken into consideration. In other words, as the time these companies have initiated the change are considered, which company's employees have more positive attitudes toward change are examined since the longer time the company is involved to change practices, the more positive its employees' attitudes are expected to

be. When the length of time one company involved in change is longer than other companies, that company is supposed to manage a successful adaptation to change so far.

Apart from to determine organizational members' acceptance level of change in relation to which stage of change process they are involved to, it is also intended to explain the demographic factors such as age and education that take place in employees' acceptance of the change practices. The relationship between employees' acceptance of change in general and the dimensions that the change concept consists of such as standards, organizational commitment, support and organizational structure are also examined in the content of this descriptive study. It is not intended to generalize the results of this study to all organizations. The results are interpreted and discussed in the context of the companies that are involved to this research.

The hypothesis of the study are as follows:

H₁: In terms of accepting change, there are differences in organizations between the ones who have completed the change process and the ones who have not.

H₁: From the point of accepting change, there are differences between employees' age groups.

H₁: In accepting change, there are differences among employees in terms of the length of time they spent in the organization.

H₁: There are differences between employees' educational backgrounds in terms of their acceptance of the change.

H₁: There is a relationship between employees' acceptance of change in general and the dimensions that the change concept consists of.

2.2. Sample of the Study

The content of the study included superiors and white collar workers as employees of three big companies in the electronic sector that are located in Istanbul. This sector is assumed to provide valuable data about the issue since keeping up with change is very important particularly for companies in electronic sector. The companies were selected based on their scope, scale and the stage of change they're involved to. Since 200 respondents would represent %40 of the blue collar workers in three companies, they were intended to be included in the research. Finally, a total of 170 respondents contributed to the study. Two of the three companies are considered in the middle stage of the change process as they have been dealing with it for almost 2-3 years whereas the other one has already completed the change that took 5 years. In using the term "change" in this article we are interested in strategic or "transformational" change. The change that

take place in these companies is named as reorganization.

2.3. Data Collection Technique

The data of the study was collected by a questionnaire which consists of two sections. There are questions about demographic characteristics of the respondents in the first section such as age, gender, the length of time spent in the company and educational background.

In the following section, questions about attitudes of respondents toward the change process in the company are asked. The attitude scale demonstrates the degree of people's acceptance of change based on individual responses given on a likert type of scale. These questions were prepared by the researcher as a 5 point likert type of scale, ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. If an item is completely disagreed by the respondent in this scale, it is evaluated as 1 whereas the totally agreed responses get a value of 5. Some of the items are reversed type. The questionnaire's reliability coefficient has been found 0.95 cronbach alpha.

As mentioned above, employees' acceptance level of change was investigated by a five point attitude scale and the scale measures the intensity of employees' attitudes in relation to change assuming that negative or positive attitudes determine employees' acceptance level of change. For instance, if the attitudes of employees in one company are over the average in terms of attitudes arithmetic mean, then their attitudes toward change are rather positive and they have a tendency to approve or accept change. Attitude scale consisted of many items containing several dimensions about change such as conflict, support from the top management, organizational commitment, reward and reinforcement, risk taking, responsibility, standards, warmth and organizational structure. Each dimension was represented by a group of items which measure employees' attitudes toward change practices in the company in terms of these dimensions. The content of the dimensions that the items represented in the questionnaire are as follows:

Conflict: In the change process, whether conflicts that are experienced in the organizations have positive outcomes or not such as encouraging creativity and generating new ideas, revealing the problems that are faced so that an attempt can be made to solve these problems and so on.

Support from the top management: The top management's support for the achievement of goals of change, for coordinating all the units in the organization, for solving the problems and for allocating the required resources.

Organizational commitment: The commitment of managers and employees for the success of change, willingness to remain in the organization and to overcome the costs and difficulties of change, the belief about the future success that the change will provide.

Reward and reinforcement: During the change, if the rewards and reinforcements are provided in relation to the achievement of goals and expectations of change or not, if the team performance has been rewarded as well as the individual performance.

Risk taking: As part of the change, if the company has taken a moderate level of risks or not, if the company has demonstrated encouragement for setting and achieving higher goals than the previous ones.

Responsibility: The teamwork that took place in the organization, the cooperation among team members for corporate responsibility, the awareness of responsibility among employees, the employees' responsibility and control over the work processes are determined.

Standards: Along with the change whether work procedures have become more efficient and clearer as well as the performance standards, if the performance standards are related to the goals of change.

Warmth: While the change takes place, has there been a supportive, friendly, and cooperative climate.

Organizational structure: In relation to change practices in organizations, whether there has been any change in the structure or not. In the meantime if the new structure influenced productivity of the organization through the success of change and if the new structure clarifies role expectations and encourages creative thinking and innovation.

The change concept is considered to consist of these dimensions and the items were prepared accordingly. In other words, the items of the scale are prepared in a manner that they measure respondents' attitudes in relation to the dimensions that are assumed to be important in terms of respondents' acceptance of change.

Additional data about which stage of change process the companies are involved to was collected by interviews with superiors.

2.4. Statistical Analyses

Pearson correlation technique is utilized to observe the relationship between employees' acceptance of change in general and the dimensions that the change concept consists of. In terms of accepting change, the differences between the ones who have completed the change process and the ones who have not are analyzed by t-test. The differences from the point of accepting change and each demographic characteristics such as age, the length of time and education are analyzed by

Anova and t-test. SPSS statistical program was performed for the analyses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the study can be discussed by separating the outcomes under three sections. In the first section, organizational members' acceptance level of change in relation to which stage of change process they are involved to will be discussed. In the following section, the demographic factors such as age and education that take place in employees' acceptance of the change practices will be explained. The third and final section deals with the relationship between employees' acceptance of change in general and the dimensions that the change concept consists of such as standards, organizational commitment, support and organizational structure.

3.1. Results Considering Organizational Members' Acceptance Level of Change and the Stage of Change Process They Are Involved To

Results show that in terms of accepting change, there are significant differences between the companies who have completed the change process and the ones who have not (Table I).

According to the t test analysis results, our hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.04$). The ones who have completed the change process tend to have higher levels of acceptance of change activities in their

organization when compared to the others who haven't completed the process yet.

As the people in companies who have completed the change process have already changed the structure of the organization and the standards of behavior in a way that will support the changes, they tend to have higher levels of acceptance of change when compared to the other companies that are in the middle of the change process. If we put in different words, they have accomplished the requirements of the change process so the change has become a part of organization's daily life.

The top management, on the other hand, helps this situation by supporting change efforts and by delegating responsibility to the people in change activities. Apart from that, in a teamwork manner, the people act as one in the accomplishment of shared goals concerning the change. These results draw our attention to the fact that the company that has completed the so called reorganization type of change has also managed to make changes a part of organizational life. In other words, changes have become core values of organizational culture.

3.2. Results About Demographic Factors That Take Place in Employees' Acceptance of the Change Practices

This group of hypothesis are about demographic factors such as age group differences, education and seniority at the work in relation to employees' acceptance of the change practices (Table II).

Table I: Differences Between The Companies Who Have Completed the Change Process

CHANGE	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	Std. Error
Completed	78	4,03	,61	,07
Not Completed	92	3,84	,55	,06
Variables		Significance		
The Stage of Change Process		P=0.04 < 0.05		
		t=2.10		

Table II: Differences Among People in Relation to Demographic Characteristics in the Acceptance of Change

<u>Change/Age Groups</u>	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	Std. Error
21-35	84	3,81	,59	,06
36-50	81	4,04	,56	,06
21-35	84	3,81	,59	,06
51-more	3	4,45	,18	,10
36-50	81	4,04	,56	,06
51-more	3	4,45	,18	,10
<u>Change/Seniority</u>	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	Std. Error
Less than 2 years and 2-10 yrs.	18	3,52	,40	,09
	79	3,82	,62	,07
Less than 2 years and more than 10 yrs.	18	3,52	,40	,09
	65	4,18	,51	,06
2-10 years and more than 10 yrs.	79	3,82	,62	,07
	65	4,18	,51	,06
<u>Change/Education</u>				
High school	32	4,35	,36	,06
University	134	3,83	,59	,05
VARIABLES	SIGNIFICANCE			
<u>Age Groups</u>	P=0.01<0.05(ANOVA)			
21-35 and 36-50 yrs.old	P=0.01<0.05 t=-2.52			
21-35 and over 51 yrs.old	P=0.06 t=-1.88 (%90 confidence level)			
36-50 and over 51 yrs.old	P=0.20>0.05 t=-1.28			
<u>The Length of Service</u>	P=0.00<0.05 (ANOVA)			
Less than 2 years and 2-10 yrs.	P=0.05 t=-2.00			
Less than 2 years and more than 10 yrs.	P=0.00<0.05 t=-5.10			
2-10 years and more than 10 yrs.	P=0.00<0.05 t=-3.72			
<u>Education</u>				
High School - University	P=0.00<0.05 t=4.79			

To start with the age groups, Anova was used first to clarify whether there are differences in between the age groups. Accordingly, the t test analyses point out significant differences between 36-50 and 21-35 age groups in terms of accepting change ($p=0.01<0.05$). It can be concluded that the age group of 36-50 approve changes at work more than the group of 21-35 years old. The difference between the age groups of 21-35 and 51 and above, on the other hand, can be considered as significant only at 0.10 significance level ($p=0.06$). Resuming the results show that the older age group (36-50) have more positive attitudes toward accepting change when compared to the younger age group (21-35). The reasons such as the maturized way of looking to the future of the company at an older age, the previous experiences of older people in similar change attempts and the possibility of lower expectations at older age groups compared to the younger ones may cause such an outcome. The findings that there is no significant difference between the age groups of 36-50 and 51 and above support the idea that the expectation, experience and adaptation level of the two groups are quite the same or similar to each other ($p=0.20$).

In terms of seniority at the work, Anova analyses show that there are significant differences in the acceptance of change practices among people who have been in the same company for a long time and the ones who have been working shorter in the same work place. The t test analyses draw our attention to the fact that the ones who have spent 2-10 years in the same company have more positive attitudes to change practices than the ones that spent less than two years ($p=0.05$). A similar difference between more than 10 years of seniority and less than 2 years of seniority exist according to the findings ($p=0.00<0.05$). Furthermore, the difference between more than 10 years of seniority and 2-10 years of seniority also coincides with the two previous findings about seniority ($p=0.00<0.05$). In other words, it can be said that the people who have been in the same company for longer years have more positive attitudes to change practices in the company than the people whose length of service is shorter. Among the causes of such an outcome can be senior people's long time commitment to the company and the way they perceive their contribution as valuable in change practices as well as their role perception as a consultant to the new members of the company. Senior people may also be aware of the necessity of change that take place in their organizations by combining new applications with the previous ones in a more rational way.

As another demographic characteristic that is considered in terms of approving change applications is education. In order to find out how attitudes about change differs among employees based on their educational backgrounds, t test analysis was used.

According to the t test analysis results, there is a significant difference between high school graduates and university graduates in approving change. High school graduates have a more positive attitude toward change attempts in the company when compared to the university graduates ($p=0.00<0.05$). This finding can be interpreted as a result of university graduates' hard to please approaches toward adopting new ideas. In different terms, since they seem to question every detail in a rather analytical way and prefer to see specific outcomes of the suggested application, they act sceptical and their adaptation to the new practices may require a longer time than the high school graduates. The high school graduates, on the other hand, may have a fear of losing their job and finding a new one because of their concern about their qualifications. Therefore, they tend to accept current practices whether they approve or not.

3.3. The Relationship Between Employees' Acceptance of Change and The Dimensions That The Change Concept Consists Of

The relationship between employees' acceptance of change in general and the dimensions that the change concept consists of such as performance standards, organizational commitment, support from the top management, organizational structure, conflict, rewards, risk taking, responsibility and warmth in interpersonal relations are among the concerns of this group of findings. These dimensions are determined by several questions considered in the questionnaire. This relationship was determined by Pearson Correlation analyses.

Organizational structure ($r=0.90$), performance standards (0.86), organizational commitment ($r=0.86$) and the top management support ($r=0.85$) are the dimensions of change that are mostly related to employees' acceptance of change in general. Taking and sharing responsibility ($r=0.82$), on the other hand, is another dimension highly related to employees' acceptance of change.

This group of findings draws our attention to the fact that the approval of change activities by employees in the organization is reflected in the structure of the organization. In other words, the structure of the organization is in harmony with the change activities carried out in the organization as it is supposed to be designed in a way that will support the change efforts. Structure was determined by the questions in the questionnaire such as whether the structure clarifies the boundries of the responsibility, whether it has changed through a flexible organization as a result of change and if the structure welcomes innovative and creative ideas. As another dimension, performance standards (questions such as how clearly they've been set, how much

contribution employees have provided for setting them and how standards have been related to performance evaluation and reward systems) are also in combination with the change practices which means standards are set in a way that will facilitate the accomplishment of change efforts. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, is highly related to the approval of change practices since approving change activities and concentrating on its goals may result in commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment was described by questions such as employees' strong commitment to the company success in change practices, their belief and desire for the future of their company, the effort and contribution they've demonstrated during the change and so on. Unless change activities are approved by top management, the possibility of their success decreases. Therefore, results showing significant relations between the acceptance of change applications and support from the top management seem to be relevant with the expectations. The top management's support was determined by questions such as the effort they showed, the role models they've played to their subordinates, the encouragement they've provided by allocating necessary resources, the solutions they've developed for the problems faced during the change and so on. Finally, taking responsibility seems to be significantly related to the change practices which brings to our attention the fact that when people are responsible for a specific task and their contribution is counted, they work with all their effort to accomplish the task. Furthermore, people who are involved in change activities by being responsible for the results may tend to approve change as they take part in it. The responsibility dimension was defined by several questions in the questionnaire such as coordination among the employees through the accomplishment of responsibilities, team responsibility, process responsibility and consultation, employees' awareness of their responsibilities and how clearly the responsibilities were identified.

CONCLUSION

Since the acceptance of change by organizational members as well as the decreased level of resistance to change help the success of change practices and the achievement of goals in the organization, this research has been intended to be carried out. 170 white collar workers of three big companies which are at different stages of change in the electronic sector in Istanbul were involved to this study.

According to the results of the study, the ones who have completed the change process tend to have higher levels of acceptance of change activities in their

organizations when compared to the others who haven't completed the process yet. This finding emphasizes the differences between the companies who have completed the change process and the ones who have not in terms of accepting change practices. In other words, according to the stage of change process the companies are involved to, their acceptance level of change or resistance to change differs. While companies progress through the achievement of organizational change, their members' level of acceptance enhances as they get involved with the change activities more and people become more identified with the idea and the goals underneath the change. Therefore, managers should be aware of the stage of change their company is involved to and the progress they made towards the goals of change. If the company is advancing in change practices without ensuring the approval of employees, resistance may occur and the success of change activities may result in failure. In different terms, the idea of change should be shared mostly by the members of the company and the required training, equipment and support should be provided in relation to the stage of change of the company. In order change to be approved by organizational members, new organizational values related to change must be provided by training programs.

As another finding of the study, some of the demographic factors such as age groups, education and seniority at the work make differences in employees' acceptance of the change practices. The results briefly show that the older age group such as 36-50 have more positive attitudes toward accepting change when compared to the younger age group of 21-35. As people grow older, they have lower expectations than the younger ones, they become more maturized and more experienced in similar change attempts. Managers whose companies are involved to organizational change should be careful about different age groups' acceptance level of change.

In terms of seniority at the work, there are significant differences between the acceptance of change practices among people who have been in the same company for a long time and the ones who have been working shorter in the same work place. In other words, the reasons such as senior people's long time commitment to the company and the comparisons they make between the present change and the previous ones based on their experiences may help the more senior employees develop positive attitudes toward change in their companies. As findings generated from the companies which contributed to this study show that managers must be sensitive about the participation of both groups, the more senior ones and the less senior ones, for the approval of change applications. Managers should also assign the more senior ones responsible for

convincing the less senior ones through the achievement of change targets.

The comparison of people's educational level in terms of approving change shows that high school graduates have more positive attitudes toward change attempts in the company when compared to the university graduates. This finding can be a consequence of the university graduates' analytical and sceptical approaches to see specific outcomes of the suggested change application. The high school graduates in relation to their qualifications, on the other hand, may have a fear of losing their job. Managers should take education into consideration as one of the indicators of the approval of organizational change.

The last group of findings reminds us the importance of the relationship between employees' acceptance of change in general and the dimensions that the change concept consists of such as performance standards, organizational commitment, support from the top management, organizational structure, responsibility and so on. Organizational structure, performance standards, organizational commitment, the top management support and taking and sharing responsibility are among the positively and highly correlated dimensions of change to employees' acceptance of change in general. By considering the results related to these dimensions, it is appropriate to give the following recommendations.

The managers who apply any kind of organizational change to their companies should keep in mind that the structure must be designed in a way that will support the change efforts as the approval of change activities by employees in the organization is also reflected in the structure of the organization (whether the structure clarifies the boundaries of the responsibility, whether it has changed through a flexible organization as a result of change and if the structure welcomes innovative and creative ideas). As another dimension, performance standards such as how clearly they've been set, how much contribution employees have provided for setting them and how standards have been related to performance evaluation and reward systems will facilitate the accomplishment of change efforts and that will be in harmony with organizational structure. Since approving change activities and concentrating on its goals may result in commitment to the organization, the relationship between organizational commitment and the change applications should be taken seriously by managers. Talking about top management support dimension of change, change activities should be approved by top management for enhancing the probability of their success. Related to one of the other findings about change dimension, managers should also consider the tendency that people who are involved in

change activities by being responsible for the results may tend to approve change as they take part in it.

As a final conclusion, it can be said that though the findings of this study cannot be generalized, it may provide a frame about the change issue in organizations and how people's attitudes vary toward change, particularly in electronic sector. When managers deal with the change process, they should take such criteria into consideration as what progressive stage of change the company is at, what personal characteristics employees possess like education, age and seniority that may interfere the approval of change and which dimensions of change are important in terms of their relation to change issue in general. Therefore, managers can accomplish the goals of organizational change with contributions of most of the members of the organization by allocating all the required plans, procedures and resources. Above all, making the goals of change as important cultural values of the company may enhance the approval of change as well as the organizational success. It is also hoped that this study will encourage similar studies about change in organizations and will help find a way in dealing with the problems of change.

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