

Chapter 2

Evidence–Based Organizational Change and Development: Organizational Understanding, Analysis, and Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

The chapter first provides an overview of “best practice” and conventional “received wisdom” relating to OCD and emphasizes the importance of adopting more evidence-based approaches to develop in-depth understanding of the organization prior to planning and instigating an OCD initiative. The authors then discuss a range of historical and contemporary theoretical perspectives for analyzing and making sense of the interacting relationships between an organization’s structure, function, and culture, and of the complexities, contradictions, and paradoxes of organizational life. Additionally, they identify various approaches, tools, techniques, and desirable attributes, competencies, and political skills for developing and evaluating the effectiveness of EBOCD strategies and change agency practice.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides in the first instance an overview of ‘best practice’ and ‘received wisdom’ relating to organizational change and development (OCD) as reported in the management literature over the past three decades or so. It then draws attention to various insights concerning how best to bring about change successfully based on examples of more recent theory and practice. And finally it discusses some of the realities of modern day organizational life that challenge the role of the evidence-based organizational change and development (EBOCD) practitioner (change agent).

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The change agent's role is complicated because of the complexities, contradictions and paradoxes of organizational life (Hamlin, 2001; Hatton, 2001) and the 'complexity and creativity in organizations' (Stacey, 1996a; 2011). This role includes the need: (i) to understand the organization and make sense of the organizational dynamics taking place; (ii) to develop appropriate OCD strategies; (iii) to implement them effectively; and (iv) to assess how effective the strategies have been in execution. Additionally, change agents need to spend time critically evaluating the effectiveness of their own change agency so as to draw lessons for the future (Cummings & Worley, 2014; Hamlin, Keep & Ash, 2001; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009). As argued by Hamlin and Davies (2001), "organizations and people employed in them are more complex than is often implied by much of the management literature, and that 'solutions' to organizational change 'problems' are also more difficult to grasp than many 'experts' imply" (p.39). Besides selecting carefully the theoretical/philosophical approaches to be used in formulating their OCD initiatives and programs, change agents need to build in sufficient time for evaluation and critical reflection. It is through such evaluation and reflection that (i) new insights can be gained to explain why certain aspects of the formulation and implementation of OCD strategies either succeed or fail; and (ii) new ways of approaching change agency problems may emerge through new approaches and models of change being developed as a result of the lessons learned. As argued in Chapter 1, engaging in 'critically reflective' as well as 'evidence-based' practice should become an essential feature of managing/facilitating change programs.

Over 30 years ago Morgan (1988), reflecting on the *emerging waves and challenges of change* that confront organizations and the need for new competencies and mind sets, suggested that one of the challenges for managers is to *create semi-permanent order* out of the environmental turbulence impacting on organizations. Handy (2002) also drew attention to the major problems that organizations would need to deal with as a result of what he called the increasing discontinuities in organizational environments. What these futurists foresaw has indeed become a present day reality for many if not most organizations. As Buchanan and Badham (2008) assert, organizational change, innovation, revolution, and discontinuity are the norm in the 21st century.

THE CHALLENGE FOR EBOCD PRACTITIONERS

As already implied, this chapter aims to emphasize for line managers, and for those various stakeholders such as colleague HRD professional practitioners, external OD professionals, management consultants, and/or executive coaches who support them in their role as change leader or change agent, that the quality of their decisions concerning the effective management of change will increasingly be of crucial importance within the context of rapidly changing organizational environments. We suggest that a fuller understanding of their role as change agents requires them to adopt a stance, if they have not already done so, which can be best understood as that of the 'critically reflective, research-informed/evidence-based practitioner' (see Hamlin, 2002: 2007). This means becoming familiar with or extending their knowledge of current theory and research concerning strategic thinking, organizational change, organization development and the role of the evidence-based change agent, and then using their understanding to inform and subsequently critically reflect upon and evaluate their change agency practice (Hamlin, 2016; Hamlin & Davies, 2001).

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Whereas Reddin (1986) defined managerial effectiveness as “the extent to which a manager achieves the output requirements of his position” (p.7), Hamlin and Davies (2001) defined change agency effectiveness as “the extent to which a change agent achieves the required outcome requirements of his or her respective role” (p.42) within the context of a specific OCD initiative or program. Thus, to be effective in facilitating/managing effective and beneficial OCD regardless of the approach adopted, change agents need: (a) to acquire a deep understanding of the particular organization being changed and developed, (b) to become involved in the development and implementation of a suitable OCD strategy, and (c) to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy implementation in terms of the process and outcomes- both proximal and distal.

UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATION

Before devising effective strategies for change within a specific organization it is crucially important that the respective change agents gain an in depth understanding of the organizational structure, function, and culture and make sense of (i.e. comprehend explicitly) the relationship between these factors and the core activity of the organization. Over the past three decades or so, much has been written about the need for managers to manage the cultural context of the organization so as to achieve strategic change and to develop organizational adaptive capabilities that sustain the change (see Burnes, 1996; 2000 & 2017; Carnall, 1991; Carnall & Todnem By, 2014). Hamlin and Davies (2001) argued that organizations need to be analysed in depth and with rigor using expertly “a ‘set of critical/analytical spectacles’ through which the organization can be ‘looked at’, where the method of ‘looking at’ the organization will affect the way in which change agents should act to initiate and manage change subsequently” (p.43). And it is OCD-related theoretical models and conceptual frameworks that “provide the change agent with the ‘practical tools’ for creating suitable ‘spectacles’ through which to understand and make sense of the organization” (Hamlin & Davies, 2001, p.43).

In the mid 20th century academics/scholars turned to the core theories of sociology, psychology, biology, anthropology and economics to make sense of organizations. Over time the theories deployed to develop better organizational understanding have become even more eclectic and diverse, and are generally associated with what has become known as the study of organizational behavior. The main difficulty that confronts many change agents striving to create in the words of Hamlin and Davies (2001) a suitable ‘set of critical/analytical spectacles’, is the conflict between on the one hand their implicit theories of change management derived from their personal experiences and practices, and on the other hand what is needed to inform and develop rigorous, strategic and critical analytic thinking which is more theoretical and abstract, and often more difficult to apply. That such conflict exists is reflected by many reports in the mainstream management and HRD-related literatures regarding the much reputed gap between ‘industry’ and ‘academe’ (Hughes & Gosney, 2016; Worrall, L, 2008). But we suggest that external OD professionals, management consultants and executive coaches, as well as internal managers and HRD professional practitioners who engage in OCD strategy formulation and/or its implementation using an ‘evidence-based practice’ approach, are by so doing contributing to a closing of the so called ‘research-practice gap’.

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Organizational Analysis

Classical approaches to OCD generally follow a linear and rational model based on the assumption that the change process involves a series of predictable stages that can be planned and managed (Collins, 1998). Furthermore, the specific tools and techniques chosen by change agents in OCD interventions are typically determined by the particular ‘structured set of assumptions, premises and beliefs’ (i.e. philosophies of change) about the way that change works in organizations (Graetz & Smith, 2010).

In this section, we give a brief description of the assumptions behind the main theoretical perspectives of organisational behavior as a field of study, and of the various philosophical approaches to managing OCD. We then state how these can provide a focus for analysing organizations, and what the change advocated by the theory implies for OCD intervention strategies when ‘looked at’ through these particular sets of philosophical ‘critical/analytical spectacles’. This is followed by a discussion of the range and type of ‘evaluation tools and techniques’ that can be particularly useful for analysing and making sense of organizational contexts prior to developing OCD initiatives and programs and subsequently instigating the associated strategies for change.

Perspectives of Organizational Behavior Relevant to Organizational Analysis and Change

In Table 1 we set out our interpretation and elaboration of five mainstream theoretical perspectives relevant to organizational analysis and change as summarized by Hamlin and Davies (2001) which, according to these writers, are “mechanistic in terms of the way the analytical approaches based upon them are applied” and contrast sharply against the application of “an organic approach to understanding features of organizations” (p.45). Buchanan and Boddy (1992) draw a distinction between the ‘crisp’ rules of authority which characterize mechanistic organizations compared to the ‘fuzzy’ rules associated with organic authority structures; whilst Hassard and Parker (2009) highlight the distinction between ‘modern’ mechanistic organizations and the ‘post-modern’ organizations. And it is now recognized that to understand organizations better, the best of the ‘hard’ systems perspectives which focus on understanding organizational structures and systems should be combined with the best of the ‘soft’ systems perspectives which focus on understanding motivation, team development, and other HR related issues as utilised in the concept of re-engineering learning processes (Hallworth, 1994; Hatch, 2018). In so doing, the organizational analysis can focus on those key dynamically inter-linked processes that have a significant influence on the effectiveness of OD and other types of OCD interventions and programs, namely the business strategy, the organization culture and management culture, and whether or not the climate is conducive to organizational learning. Various writers have highlighted the significance of organizational learning processes and the need to understand organizations as learning environments (Antal, Meeusburger & Suarsana, 2014; Handy, 2002; Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1996; Swieringa & Weirdsma, 1992). Furthermore, from a strategic HRD perspective Walton (1999) discusses a wide range of OCD related issues that have ‘organizational learning’ implications, including ‘TQM’ and ‘downsizing’ initiatives as well as the trend towards creating ‘learning organizations’, ‘corporate universities’, ‘virtual organizations’ and ‘agile organizations’ amongst others. Hence, the idea of an organization actually learning to create a conducive learning culture, plus the opportunity for its employees to learn how to welcome and adapt to organizational change, has clear implications for OCD practitioners.

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Table 1. Mainstream theoretical perspectives relevant to organizational analysis and change

<p>Structural Functionalism Theory Organization: Consists of a set of structures in which managers direct people to perform various functions Analysis: Both formal and informal structures of the organization are analysed with a particular focus on investigating and understanding conflict between management and the workforce. Change: The aim of intervening is to change the structures and the functions in order to reduce the conflict.</p>
<p>Systems Theory Organization: Consists of a hard system of interconnected variables (within and across functions) which interact with soft variables (people) in various parts of the organization. Analysis: The organizational system is analyzed but knowing that any part examined will be affected systemically by the other parts of the system. Change: The purpose of the analysis is to change parts of the system in the knowledge that any change will have a systemic effect on the other parts of the whole organizational system.</p>
<p>Human Relations Theory Organization: Consists of an organized network of relationships created by the organization. Analysis: The focus of analysis is on the needs and motivations of managers and non-managerial employees in order to understand the lack of alignment that may exist between the organizational goals and needs of individuals. Change: The purpose of intervening is to facilitate change in the organizational structures and functions so that they more readily meet individual needs as well as the organizational needs</p>
<p>Psychodynamic Theory Organization: Behavior manifested in the organization is determined by people’s psychodynamic defence mechanisms against anxiety. Analysis: The focus of analysis is on the projections, rationalizations, dependence and counter dependence behaviors held and/or exhibited by individual members of the organization Change: The aim is to enable individuals to realise the implications of their respective defensive behavior, and through this realisation to help them change behavior by creating different structures and functions within the organization.</p>
<p>Contingency Theory Organization: Consists of a set of systems and subsystems, the functioning of which are dependent on particular contingent factors in the environment or the type of functions of the system or sub system. Analysis: The focus of analysis is on the management system so as to understand how these parts of the organization’s functioning are contingent upon the nature of the functions and tasks performed, and the nature and impact of the organizational environment. Change: The aim is to change the contingent factors within the organizational system to develop the most appropriate management system and organizational structure.</p>

More recent writers have criticized the mechanistic linear approaches to OCD much favored by change consultants, whose underlying philosophical assumptions regarding change management are based on the classical perspectives of organizational behavior outlined above. For example, Graetz and Smith (2010) describe a ‘spectrum’ of change philosophies, namely the ‘rational’, ‘institutional’, ‘biological’, ‘resource’, ‘contingency’, ‘psychological’, ‘political’, ‘cultural’, ‘systems’ and ‘postmodern’, of which some overlap with the classical organizational behavior perspectives. Additionally, they discuss the impact of these philosophies on the tools and techniques typically employed in change interventions, and reveal the various biases and uni-dimensional nature of the classical philosophies that guide so many OCD initiatives. They conclude that these prominent change management philosophies are rigid and/or subject to the privileging imposed by their principle undergirding assumptions, and thereby suffer various limitations. However, we suggest such limitations may not be manifest in all OCD situations. Nevertheless, Graetz and Smith (2010) have called for a multi-philosophy approach that applies an interactive mix of continuity and change. At the *rational* end of their spectrum they suggest that the scope for change agents to provide structure and process and a clear course of action (OCD strategy) is limited because of the inconsistencies and ambiguities of typical organisational life. At the other end, *postmodern* discursive philosophies which view reality as multiplicitous, fragmented and contradictory, and give preference to

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individual experience and power, are even more ambiguous in specifying practical OCD intervention strategies without falling into a power trap or instigating chaos. And whereas change agents who adopt the *contingency* philosophy can develop OCD strategies and courses of action that best fit the particular situations and circumstances, those who adopt one of the philosophies either side of the middle of the spectrum will necessarily be inclined to focus their OCD intervention strategies on either the ‘systems’, ‘cultural’, ‘resources’, ‘political’ or other organizational features that need to be changed. This issue of regarding the complexity of developing OCD related strategies will be discussed later.

Various other pragmatic approaches have been developed for analysing organizations for the purpose of generating better organizational understanding. Through the use of analytic maps or frameworks (tools) these approaches have tended to focus on particular organizational functions that need to be understood from the practical perspective of managers. The understanding so gained then acts, drives, or guides the development of subsequent pragmatic approaches for bringing about effective and beneficial OCD. Such diagnostic tools for analyzing organizations have increasingly gained favor since the 1990s, including for example Galbraith’s organization design variables (see Robinson, 1992), the McKinsey 7S’s conceptual model which focuses on analyzing and making sense of the relationships between the ‘strategy, structure, systems, style, staff, skills, and shared values (culture)’, and Johnson’s (1992) ‘cultural web’ which is a convenient device for conducting a culture audit. An analytical approach advocated in the 1990s and 2000s by Harrison (2005) focuses on the ‘organizational environment, goals and tasks, and on the structure, technology, workforce and political system’. Similarly, the focus of Trahan and Burke’s (1996) approach to organizational analysis includes the ‘external environment, mission, strategy, culture, structure, systems, policies and procedures, work climate, skills and job match, motivation, individual needs, values, performance’, as well as a focus on ‘management and leadership practices’. However, as Hamlin and Davies (2001) note, such pragmatic approaches to organizational analysis “are based on the assumption held by most managers that successful change is primarily concerned with establishing a new order; of moving the organization from a comparatively ‘unhealthy’ to a more ‘healthy state’; and of maintaining a degree of ‘fit’ between the configuration of the strategy, structure and systems of the organization and the external environment”(p.46). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, they ‘are based on a mechanistic perspective which views change as an incremental process of adjustment comprising a series of logical, inter-related sequential steps from a present *undesired* stable state to a future *desired* stable state’ and that ‘the destination for the change is clear’. Whilst these mechanistic approaches may be possible for organizations operating in comparatively stable external environments, for those having to adapt to uncertain, rapidly changing, turbulent, and volatile environments they can be inappropriate. Indeed, more organic approaches are called for, as will now be discussed.

Empirical research conducted by Miller (1990) and Pascale (1990) has revealed that although highly successful companies tend strongly to design/create organizational ‘7S’ configurations to achieve consistency, harmony and internal ‘fit’ that leads to integration, stability and a ‘state of stable equilibrium’, such tendencies at one and the same time lead to eventual ‘out-of-fit’ configurations which can result in organizational failure (see also Barile, Pellicano, & Polese, 2018; London & Sessa, 2006; Scott & Davis, 2016). As Miller demonstrates, organizations tend to yield to pressures for integration (‘fit’) by developing to excess such configurations; and this can then lead to ‘ossification’ and an incapacity to facilitate change easily. In order to prevent ossification, an organization needs to be ready to break apart/disintegrate (‘split’) its organizational configuration at the same time as striving for integration (‘fit’). In so doing a creative tension is generated which stimulates questioning and inquiry and from which new insights and perspectives emerge that help to ensure the organizational configuration is kept ‘in-fit’

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with an ever changing environment (Pascale, 1990) As Hamlin and Davies (2001) note, Pascale argues that “organizational success.... is strongly related to maintaining the contradiction between ‘stability and integration’ on the one hand, and ‘instability and disintegration’ on the other” (p.47). Drawing on the research of Miller and Pascale, Stacey (1996a,b; 2011) uses ‘chaos theory’ and the ‘complexity sciences’ to support his argument that managers should work at developing a whole new frame of reference (i.e. a new set of philosophical ‘critical/analytical spectacles’) for seeing, analysing, understanding, and making sense of organizations.

To understand managerial behavior in organizations, Morgan (1993) draws upon the theory of termite behavior. This asserts that termite mounds are created from random chaotic termite activity guided by what seems to be an overall sense of purpose and direction but in an open-ended manner. He argues that managers who metaphorically operate as ‘strategic termites’ are clear on what they need to achieve. But rather than force-fit their plans for the future through ‘top down’ direction and control, they should manage and lead in an open-ended way by encouraging and allowing ‘bottom up’ change initiatives to emerge as situations evolve. According to Morgan, managers who adopt this opportunistic and incremental approach are strategic in the sense that while their change agency is subject to the influence of random opportunity within a chaotic environment, their decisions and actions are informed by a strong sense of the end goal that needs to be achieved.

Another perspective that can be adopted for analyzing the factors which determine the behavior of both managers and employees engaged within a particular OCD initiative is the ‘Institutional Logics Perspective’. According to Thornton and Ocasio (1999), within the context of organizational studies this perspective focuses on how broader belief systems shape the cognition and behavior of actors within particular organizational contexts. They define ‘institutional logics’ as:

socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning in their social reality. (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p.804)

According to Thornton (2004) there are six distinctive ‘institutional logics’ that theoretically could influence and shape the *cognition* and *action* of individuals, groups and organizations which she refers to as the ‘market logic’, ‘corporation logic’, ‘professions logic’, ‘state logic’, ‘family logic’ and ‘religious logic’. *Market Logic* relates to the marketplace in which the organization competes. *Corporation Logic* suggests the mission, vision, and operating procedures of the organization. *Professions Logic* refers to the logic associated with the professions that operate within the organization, such as the accounting, legal, human resource management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) professions. *State Logic* indicates the organization operates within a particular national context or culture. *Family Logic* refers to the norms of the families to which the employees belong. Finally *Religious Logic* indicates that the organization functions within a specific religious context. Using the ‘institutional logics perspective’ approach to organizational analysis can help EBOCD change agents to: (a) explore and understand better the ‘institutional’ complexities due to conflicting logics within particular organizations; and (b) gain valuable insights into important intra-organizational processes affecting organizational practice, change and success (see Thornton, Lounsbury & Ocasio, 2012).

With such a diverse body of theoretical and pragmatic perspectives and approaches, it can be difficult for change agents to decide which is the most appropriate form of organizational analysis to adopt in a given change situation. And the problem of selecting the most sound theoretical perspective(s) can be

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made more acute by the pressure to adopt popular ‘best practice’ approaches to change which offer the prospect of a ‘quick-fix’ or ‘simple’ solution. Yet, as most well respected experts who write about OCD-related change management practice claim, theoretically sound organizational analysis is important and often the essential first step in identifying the ‘hard facts’ (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006) required to make sound change management decisions. Within this understanding, evidence-based and data-driven decision-making relating to the formulation of suitable OCD intervention strategies need to be core characteristics of a change agent’s practice. As discussed in Chapter 1, critically reflective EBOCD practitioners make a habit of using theory and available ‘best evidence’ to inform and shape the formulation and practical implementation of their OCD strategies, but also to critically evaluate their change agency practice in terms of the processes and outcomes. We hope that the various examples of EBOCD practice presented in Section 2 and Section 3 of this two-volume book will offer some ‘insights’ and ‘lessons’ that might help other change agents to navigate the plethora of organizational analysis options

Making Sense of the Organization

According to Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005) sensemaking “involves turning circumstances into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and that serves as a springboard into action” (p.409). They go on to argue that fundamentally it “is about the interplay of action and interpretation” and “is, importantly, an issue of language, talk, and communication” (p.409). This perspective is somewhat consistent with our argument that change agents need (a) to gain an in depth understanding of the structure, function and culture of an organization and (b) to make sense of the relationship of these factors to the core activity of the organization and the planned change processes. Within the context of EBOCD, and particularly for internal HRD practitioners and external OCD consultants working as change agents in support of organizational change leaders and line managers operating as change agents, we see ‘making sense’ primarily as a process of developing a contextual understanding of how a specific OCD initiative has come about and what it means for all stakeholders. Fundamentally, it is a process of explanation that allows change agents to understand the social nature and organizing processes of the organization. In particular, it is about understanding the behavioral interplay that has been taking place between the ‘complicated collective network of individuals’ involved in the change, as determined by their respective individual skills, perceptions and beliefs. In short, it is about understanding how the organization works either prior to finalizing the formulation of an OCD strategy, or as needed during the strategy implementation.

DEVELOPING EBOCD STRATEGIES

Just as the spectrum of philosophies and assumptions undergirding the various approaches for managing organizational change [and development] that have emerged over the past two decades, which range from the classical ‘rational’ to the ‘postmodern discursive’, there has also emerged within the strategic management field two quite different perspectives (*adaptive* and *interpretative*) to the one based on *rationalist* predictive assumptions which most strategic managers in previous decades adopted (Johnson, 1987). As Hamlin and Davies (2001) summarized, a *rationalist perspective* “is seen as the outcome of a sequential, planned search for an optimum solution to predefined problems, with implementation following on from the decisions made about such problems” (p.48). In contrast, an *adaptive perspec-*

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tive “is one which is incremental, and the problem solution evolves as a result of the monitoring of an incremental additive pattern”, and an *interpretative perspective* “is one in which strategy is seen as the product of individual or collective sense making” (p.48).

Since the mid-1990s strategic management has undergone a re-examination in terms of its underlying philosophical assumptions and their implications; and this has led to alternate forms of thinking about strategy as evidenced by the work of Stacey (1996a, 1996b, 2011) who, as previously mentioned, advocates applying chaos theory and the sciences of complexity, uncertainty and creativity to better understand the dynamics of organizations and the strategic management implications. These emergent developments in the field of strategic management, which space limitations prevent being discussed further in this chapter, have also influenced the forms of thinking about OCD strategy formulation and implementation. For example, Buchanan and Boddy (1992) advocate that change agents should: (a) see the managing of change as being more about process than the end destination, (b) plan and implement change based on sound rational strategies, (c) recognize change takes time and that planned time-spans need to be appropriate/realistic; (d) understand in depth the internal and external context of the organization, and (e) recognize change is chaotic. Furthermore, they characterize the chaos of internal organizational environments in terms of agendas and priorities constantly changing; managerial work and tasks being subject to disruption and discontinuity, and of unexpected organizational events. And they suggest change agents need to recognize that the practical possibility for facilitating change effectively and successfully will much depend on whether the change program is ‘minor/moderate’ or ‘major/radical’; ‘expeditious’ or ‘incremental over time’; and whether it involves changing the ‘peripheral’ or ‘core’ objectives of the organization.

Whichever type of change strategy is implemented the impact and consequences can either be beneficial or detrimental depending upon the effectiveness of the respective change agents. As discussed in Chapter 1, empirical evidence suggests that a very high proportion of OCD programs fail and lead to unintended and unwanted consequences, which Hamlin (2001) argues are caused in part by the failure of change strategists giving sufficient attention to the HRD and organizational learning issues associated with the bringing about of effective and beneficial OCD (see also Franklin, 1996; Weick, 2009). Evidence suggests that most of the classical and even some contemporary approaches for bringing about strategic change can be deficient or problematic in terms both of planning and process. In the following section we discuss various ideas and approaches that have emerged since the early 1990s for addressing these problems associated with the effective implementation of OCD change strategies.

IMPLEMENTING OCD STRATEGIES

The 20th century managerial practice of picking a popular book prescribing a particular organizational change strategy, and then implementing it in a formulaic way, has been superseded in recent years by approaches based on the belief that appropriate organizational analysis and understanding of the characteristics of a proposed OCD strategy are crucial for ensuring its successful implementation. That discontinuities of organizational life are continuous and proposed organizational change will likely increase them, and that implemented change processes need to be constant and continuing over long periods of time, are well acknowledged realities (see Burnes, 2014; Burnes & Randall, 2016). If OCD strategies are to be implemented successfully they cannot be formulaic ‘quick fixes’. As mentioned in Chapter 1, ‘quick fix’ approaches are typically based on Lewin’s (1958) three-stage model of *Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze*, or

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similar models such as the *Unfreezing-Inducing Flux-Information Building-Experimentation-Refreezing* model offered by Johnson (1990). However, these models implicitly assume (a) that organizations are not in an extant state of flux, (b) that the change process is discrete rather than continuous, which suggests that employees can metaphorically ‘be taken from the cold store, de-frozen, changed, and refrozen’, and (c) that these models are universally applicable. Yet we suggest such models are not necessarily applicable in all organizations because (a) Lewin’s model was developed to reflect and understand the psychology of small groups and the process of changing small group behavior; and (b) Johnson’s model was derived to help reflect and understand the change imperatives of and change processes experienced by stakeholders in privatised utilities.

The traditional approaches to implementing OD strategies have also proved problematic because (a) they have often failed to take sufficiently into account the internal politics and the strength/resilience of the embedded cultures, and (b) even when the interventions have been appropriate they have tended to result only in minor changes and improvements in organizational performance, rather than the transformational change required to recover from a crisis or a perceived trajectory of terminal decline (Dunphy & Stace, 1988; Harrison, 2005). However, Heracleous and DeVoge (1998) have demonstrated that an ‘integrated organizational model’ that embeds OD into strategic management and the change process by utilizing an ‘action research’ approach can be ‘a powerful tool for diagnosis, action planning and implementation of OD strategies’. Even so, Stacey (1996b, 2003; 2011) claims that most organizational change (OC) and OD models with their emphasis on the concept of linear and negative feedback systems, do not take adequate account of the complex dynamics of organizations caused by the effects of positive feedback and non linearity. And this, he asserts, is a reason why OD interventions designed to bring about large scale OC such as a change in culture often fail. For example, OD efforts can: (i) provoke and reinforce powerful organizational defence routines that are difficult to identify and deal with; (ii) upset employees and arouse managers’ fears of losing control when they get people to question the status quo or expose weaknesses in existing organizational systems and procedures; (iii) set off greater peer rivalry or passive loyalty when power is successfully dispersed, central authority is weakened, or participation is allowed, and (iv) raise levels of uncertainty and anxiety because major/radical/transformational organizational change resulting from OD programs alters power positions and jobs which provoke in people positive feedback loops of unconscious behavior. These block effective functioning, and result in organizational defence routines and unconscious defence mechanisms against anxiety.

In particular contexts where power and politics are dominant features of organizational life, the implementation of OCD strategies can be particularly problematic. Hence, as Buchanan and Boddy (1992) suggest, change agents need to exercise ‘backstage’ political skill such as (i) constantly analysing and monitoring the situational politics, and (ii) countering the political moves of others with their own developed political strategies in order to gain support for the change. According to Carnall (1990) and Carnall and Todnem (2014), the biggest problems of implementing organizational change strategies involve the politics of people within the organization, the cultural issues, and the differences between people. These views conflict with those of Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) who argue that organizational settings are no different from family and community settings where success depends on a consistency of values, identity, and purpose. But Buchanan and Badham (2008) suggest this view is naïve and perhaps dangerous because it: (i) ignores the nature and implications of organizational structures, power inequalities, and political agendas; (ii) ignores the potential benefits of tension, conflict and political behavior; (iii) puts ideological constraints in the path of those who would resist, challenge, and otherwise seek to

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subvert change when they believe it to be misguided or flawed; and (iv) hinders discussion of the need to act politically, and how to cope with the associated personal costs and benefits. Thus, according to Buchanan and Badham (2008), change agency based on the view that the “harmonious community of citizens, pursuing aims and activities without question, with presumed benefit to all, is unlikely to be an effective or successful venture” (p.288)

The issue of organizational culture change is much discussed in the change management literature. Drennan (1992) defined culture as employee attitudes and behaviors; but as Azjen and Fishbein (1980) and Fishbein and Azjen (2009) have demonstrated, there is little relationship between attitudes as measured and subsequent behavior. The implications of this for change agents is that OCD effort should focus more on changing behavior and beliefs rather than attitudes, values, and other associated internal states of individuals. As Hamlin and Davies (2001) argue, “behaviour change is the major outcome intended in most change strategies; changes in the culture may follow”(p.53).

These ‘political’ and ‘cultural’ aspects of change management are well summed up by Buchanan (2016) who argues that change is a paradoxical process in which two paradoxes stand out, namely the tensions between ‘*rationality* and *politics*’ and between ‘*rationality* and *creativity*’. Drawing upon his experience and observations of organizational change as a field researcher, he reminds us that (a) organizations are political systems and change is a politicized process, and (b) managers or leaders acting as change agents “who are not able or willing to play the organization politics game will fail, sooner or later, because most if not all other stakeholders are playing the game, too, to protect or advance their own interests” (Buchanan, 2016, p5-6). Sadly, as he observes, the politics of the change process seems to be a ‘missing ingredient’ in much of the common discourse and commentary on change management; and furthermore, training and development in strategic leadership which is centrally about change often avoids the development of political skill. The issue of the ‘political dimension’ in change management is discussed later in this chapter.

In discussing the ‘*rationality* and *creativity*’ paradox, Buchanan (2016) notes that the practical advice from both management consultants and academics/scholars “often seeks to codify and simplify the change process” (p.5) by exhorting managers to simply ‘follow these steps to success.’ But as he states, the “generic advice has to be translated into action that ‘fits’ the context-presenting problems, past history, local cultural norms, available resources, stakeholder views, and so on” which means the “translation process is a creative one, based on locally informed managerial judgement” (Buchanan, 2016, p.5). Again, sadly, as Buchanan (2016) observes, the “creative dimension of the change design and implementation process is often overlooked or considered unimportant”(p.5).

As implied by the foregoing discussions, OCD strategy implementation can be highly complex, and change agents need to be clear on the type and time scale of the approach to be adopted and the extent to which the OCD intervention could be disruptive of behavior and beliefs. We suggest all managers and colleague HRD practitioners acting as change agents need: (a) to hone up their skills of leadership and persuasion so that they are effective in managing ‘upwards’, ‘side-ways’ and ‘downwards’ depending on the organizational structure, and (b) to develop sufficient organizational and political ‘know how’ to manage/facilitate effectively the change processes within the power dynamics and politics of the organization. This implies they need constantly to analyse, critically reflect upon, and monitor the politics of the OCD situation in order to develop appropriate political strategies that enable the change to take place within the political support system. Additionally, they need to recognize that there is no one approach to OCD that is ‘in fit’ for all change contexts. Different OCD strategies need to be implemented to satisfy different change criteria dependent on specific organizational situations and circumstances.

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EVALUATION OF EBOCD CHANGE AGENCY PRACTICE

The implementation of an OCD initiative may be initiated with an appropriate change strategy and concomitant organizational support but fail to achieve the desired outcomes (Burnes, 2011). Carnall (1991; 2003) and Carnall and Todnem (2014) provide a list of reasons for such failures. These include: (a) the change management process takes more time than originally planned; (b) unexpected problems arise during the change process; (c) co-ordination of the various change agency activities is inadequate; (d) competing demands on managers' time and crisis events distract management from properly or fully implementing the decision to bring about the desired organizational change; (e) change agency competence and capability of the various managers and supervisors involved in facilitating/managing the change are not sufficient; (f) the training and instruction given to lower level employees is inadequate; and (g) uncontrollable factors in the external environment adversely affect the implementation. Furthermore, without the development of a logic model, an examination of the linked activities, and an evaluation process, the change agent may never be completely certain as to the reasons for the success or failure of the intervention (McLaughlan & Jordan, 1999; Russ-Eft, 2014; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009). More details on the development of logic models can be found at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf) and the University of Wisconsin Extension (www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse)

The importance of analysing the issues of power and politics within the context of organizational change is supported by Buchanan and Badham's (2008) conclusion that "the dynamic nature of power and politics and the dynamic nature of organisational change mean that these concepts are closely related" (p. 220). As they found from a survey of management experiences and attitudes with regard to OCD, politics can be a significant beneficial feature of change but equally it can be damaging and distracting. However, as they observe, political behavior is more significant than is commonly recognized or admitted, and the change management literature has tended to underplay the role of political behavior in shaping organizational change. Hence, they believe that: (i) engagement with political behavior in the context of OCD is needed to reveal both the positive and negative aspects of such behavior rather than allow a narrow stereotyping of politics as being bad, and (ii) political behavior should be incorporated into the education, training and development of managers and leaders, including, we suggest, the type of political behavior that impact positively and negatively on OCD aspects of their respective roles.

In relation to the role and power of organizational leaders in the context of specific change interventions, various writers draw attention to the impact of different styles of leadership and change management approaches on the effectiveness of OCD initiatives. For example Dunphy and Stace (1988) argue that the success or failure of organizational change programs can depend on whether an autocratic, dictatorial or participative change agency approach has been adopted. Binney and Williams (1995) contrast 'mechanistic' views with 'organic' views of the change agency processes and locate success or failure within the purview of the respective organizational leaders. Specifically, they argue that effective change management occurs when organizational leaders instigate a sound analysis and evaluation of the particular organizational external and internal environment, and use the findings to inform the development of a clear, practical vision and organizational change strategy grounded in the actual external and internal realities. But they also argue that organizational change will only come about when organizational leaders recognize that by giving away some power they become more powerful (by adopting a more participative approach), and when they listen in order to become more forthright. As Nicholas Clarke and Malcolm Higgs discuss in Chapter 9, employee participation has been found to predict more

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positive attitudes to change and change outcomes. Furthermore, from their own research findings in the context of organizational culture change programs, they have found that in those OCD initiatives where employee participation had greater breadth and depth during all stages of the change process, the change was generally perceived by the employees and change agents as having greater success.

Empirical evidence exists which indicates the importance of the particular style of leadership adopted by organizational leaders and of employee participation in the change process. Bergmann, Hurson and Russ-Eft (1999) and Brennan and Russ-Eft (2001) describe competencies and strategies used to lead organizations through change. These include setting a vision by creating a compelling future, engaging all employees by involving every mind, and by building credibility and trust. Jones and Gross (1996) demonstrated that the very different leadership styles of two Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) were reflected in the particular OC strategies that they had respectively adopted; the one being a 'top down' leadership approach with the CEO striving to force-fit the change strategy implementation program to a timetable, and the other a 'bottom up' approach with the CEO facilitating the change through time. In both cases the planned OC programs were effective in so far as the end goals had been achieved. However, it should be noted that Jones and Gross found the type of change strategy adopted by the two respective organizational leaders was not particularly relevant in determining the effectiveness of the OC process and outcome; rather, it was the constant expression of the two CEOs personal commitment to their respective OC programs.

This type of commitment to the effective implementation of a planned OCD program is similar to the continued support of Dick Shepherd, Executive Head of HM Customs and Excise (Anglia Region-UK) for a longitudinal research study into his organization's culture, and the perceived managerial and leadership behavioral effectiveness of his managers that he had commissioned as part of an on-going OCD program (see Hamlin & Reidy, 1997). As described in his Case Testimonial and that of his internal OD consultant and researcher Margaret Reidy (see Chapter 1), the purpose was to use the empirical evidence resulting from rigorous internal Mode 2 research to help create a conducive organizational climate for effecting significant strategic change in what had become a mal-adaptive management culture.

Although there is a plethora of books on change management there continues to be a dearth of American and British literature focusing on the evaluation of change strategies specifically within organizations – compared to the numerous evaluations of change initiatives through government programs (Russ-Eft, Bober, de la Teja, Foxon, & Kozalka, 2008; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009). Most of the texts deal with evaluating training interventions (Griffin, 2014; Krkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; McCain, 2016; Phillips & Phillips, 2016). While there have been numerous longitudinal studies examining the effectiveness of training and development interventions (e.g., Russ-Eft, Krishnamurthi, & Ravishankar, 1994; Taylor, Russ-Eft, & Chan, 2005; Taylor, Russ-Eft, & Taylor, 2009), there has only been a few longitudinal studies that have effectively evaluated change agency processes within different organizational contexts (see also Hamlin & Davies, 2001). As these authors suggest, this may be because the evaluation of organizational change is seen by many as a 'research' issue rather than a 'practice' issue. Alternatively, it may be because in general "evaluation's potential has barely been tapped in most organizations" and "its many benefits have been largely ignored over the years" (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001, p. xvi). Yet, as Russ-Eft and Preskill note, "the two forms of inquiry employ the same data collection and analysis methods" though "they differ significantly in at least three ways" (p 7) in terms of the 'purposes', the 'kinds of audience or client questions' and the ways the evaluators/researchers 'communicate and report their findings' to 'different groups'. Nevertheless, we argue that managers, HRD professional practitioners, OD professionals, management consultants, executive coaches and other 'people and organization' developers-whether

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operating as designated change leaders or as advisors in supporting roles-need to evaluate their change agency practice using appropriate evaluation/research tools and techniques to validate claims that could be made in relation to the success or otherwise of the formulation and/or implementation of their OCD related strategies. In relation to this argument, there has been since the early 1990s an increasing interest in conducting ‘action research’ within organizations, as reported by Russ-Eft and Preskill (2009).

From the foregoing discussion and arguments, we suggest that for OCD related intervention strategies and programs to be formulated and implemented effectively within a particular organization, the respective change agents need to be prepared to evaluate constantly their change agency practice against change effectiveness criteria. Furthermore, they need to do everything possible to enlist the support of the organizational leaders (top management) whose active interest and involvement can be of critical importance. Indeed, visionary leadership and support from the top is often the key factor for OCD success.

Examples of how such support can and has been achieved will be found in some of the ‘reflective case histories’ offered by various contributors to Section 3 in Volume 2 of this book, and also in Coleman and Thomas (2017).

EBOCD Evaluation Tools and Techniques

As discussed by Cummings and Worley (2009), organizations’ change efforts should begin with diagnosing the organization, the groups, and the job. Such diagnostic activities are commonly known as ‘needs assessment’. Sleezer, Russ-Eft, and Gupta (2014) suggested five different approaches to needs assessments: (a) knowledge and skills assessment, (b) job and task analysis, (c) competency-based needs assessment, (d) strategic needs assessment, and (e) complex needs assessment. In addition to a thorough description of each approach, their book contains various tools for undertaking the approach, a change readiness checklist, and a performance improvement planner. The discussion of the approaches and the various tools can aid in the initial diagnostic process.

Recognizing the importance of evaluation in the change process, Russ-Eft, Bober, de la Teja, Foxon, and Kozalka (2008) undertook the development and validation of evaluator competencies, focused primarily on those who undertake evaluations within organizational settings. This study involved evaluators not only in North America and Europe, but also in Africa, the Middle East, Australasia, and South America. The 14 competencies were aligned with four domains: (a) professional foundations, (b) planning and designing the evaluation, (c) implementing the evaluation plan, and (d) managing the evaluation. In later work, Russ-Eft, Bober-Michel, Kozalka, and Sleezer (2014) developed a series of tools to enhance the competencies or capacities of evaluators (or those charged with undertaking such evaluation).

Recently in the field of program evaluation, there has been a recognition of the importance not simply of engaging stakeholders but in building their capacity for evaluation. Preskill and Russ-Eft (2016) provided over 80 different tools and activities to build the evaluation capacity of organization members. One important section involves various tools focused on ‘reflections on learning’. As discussed earlier in this chapter, such reflections are an important aspect leading to success in change efforts.

Beyond building competencies or capacities for undertaking a diagnostic or evaluative effort, the literature has long neglected the critical aspects of managing such work, particularly when the change effort takes place over time. Martineau (2017) stated: “although research” and change and evaluation “methods are commonly taught in graduate school, research management is not ... it is something that must be learned through experience, yet it can be significantly improved by having written guidance providing advice on all of the nuances required ...” (p.xii). To support change agents and evaluators in

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managing their efforts within organizations, Russ-Eft, Sleezer, Sampson, and Leviton (2017) provided various 'tools, strategies, and insights' needed to manage the complexities of an organizational change and evaluation effort.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EBOCD PRACTITIONERS

It is our hope that what we have presented in the previous sections will give managers, HRD professional practitioners, OD professionals, management consultants, executive coaches and other EBOCD practitioners cause to reflect upon and critically evaluate the effectiveness of their own change agency practices. In this section we wish to draw particular attention to the work of Buchanan and Boddy (1992), Buchanan and Badman (2008), Carnall (1990; 2003) and others who have identified a range of competencies considered necessary in order to develop expertise as a change agent. We suggest that their emphasis on role expectations as expressed between a consultant and a client will be helpful to anyone who needs to develop these essential skills. Regarding successful consultant-client relationships, Burgoyne (1990) argues that change consultants should help their clients to take responsibility for the organizational change, but also support and confront them about the appropriateness of the change actions being advocated, though in so doing being aware of the confidentiality involved in such relationships.

Valuable insights into the leadership of strategic change and the different approaches/styles and required concomitant sets of skills and expertise have been offered by Wallace and Ridgeway (1996) who identify eight types of 'change leader' as follows: the 'Visionary Leader'; the 'Influential Leader'; the 'Facilitative' Leader'; the 'Leading Change in a Crisis Leader'; the 'Leading Change in a Developmental-Participative Way Leader'; the 'Leading Change Where the Organisation Needs New Vision Leader'; the 'Leading Change in a Flexible Manner Leader'; and the 'HR Manager as a Strategic Change Influence Partner'. Their call for the latter type of change leader supports the notion of HRD professional practitioners operating as the strategic partners of managers engaged in the facilitation of OCD programs, as discussed in Chapter 1.

A consideration that OCD practitioners need to recognize is that the psychological aspects of the change process create stress and anxiety not only for the various stakeholders affected by the OCD intervention, but also for themselves. Hence, it is important that they look after their own well-being by developing support networks in order to cope. As Keep (2001) observes, many change consultants find themselves close to 'burnout', having endured many months or even years of difficult times which they have had to face and work through. She claims that networking can help them maintain resilience and calmness by offering not only support but also alternative ideas and forums for sharing views and information. Furthermore, networking can be a useful part of the 'resource investigation' aspects of change agency, particularly as a way of 'testing' ideas or perspectives. She also recommends finding an outside mentor to provide much-needed objectivity, critical thinking and thoughtfulness, which is a 'lesson' similarly advocated by other EBOCD practitioners (see also Germans, 2001).

Regarding the impact of the psychological aspects on the stakeholders, Carnall (1991; 2003) suggests that individual managers, employees, and teams in the change organization will experience differential effects on performance because of the effect that the change process will have on role expectations. Inevitably, they will need to learn new systems, procedures and processes as well as new ways of operating and behaving which will take time, during which the speed and effects of the 'progression' of their learning will need to be anticipated and supported. This means that modifications to the OCD

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strategy and action plans may need to be developed to deal with ‘snags’ as they arise within the change process. The impact of major organizational change will likely have differential effects on the feelings, psychological well-being, and self-esteem of different stakeholders. Change agents need to anticipate or become sensitive to these effects in terms of the impact of the psychological processes associated with the change journey, and how individuals react and behave. As reported in Hamlin and Davies (2001), Carnall describes the behavioral reaction to change in terms of stages as follows: (a) denial of the need to change; (b) defence of the old ways of doing things; (c) discarding the ‘undesired’ old behaviors by the majority in the organization before adapting to the ‘desired’ new changes; and (d) internalization of the change behaviors. Hence, as these authors argue, internal change agents such as HRD practitioners “need to understand, and get their organizational leaders to understand, that whatever the strategy of change being advocated happens to be, the change process needs time: time for planning, time for implementation, time for evaluation, and also time for reflection in order to take account of the vagaries of the psychological processes that organizational members and change agents will inevitably experience.” (Hamlin & Davies, 2001, p.58)

The somewhat dated but still relevant generic implications discussed above are supported by Buchanan and Badham (2008) who provide a clear synthesis of the change agency ‘competencies/skills’, ‘habits’, ‘attributes’ and political ‘capabilities/skills’ that characterize effective change agents. More recently Burnes and Randall (2016) suggest that academics, consultants and managers when acting as change agents should: (a) always challenge assumptions regarding the nature of the change and the contextual circumstances; (b) recognize that changing behavior is central to successful change; (c) recognize that change is a participative learning experience where communication and openness needs to be encouraged and facilitated; (d) be patient and not rush the change process; (e) make sure the change team is comprised of people with the necessary knowledge, skills and aptitudes; (f) understand the change context and recognize that what works well in one context may be disastrous in another; (g) ensure unresolved issues regarding problems and obstacles are identified and that people are not allowed to ignore or bury them; (h) recognize they will be treated as role models which others will follow, and that change raises ethical issues that could challenge their credibility as an effective change agent; (i) accept they do not have, nor can acquire all of the experience, talent and aptitude to be effective in all change situations; and that they should (j) build their personal resilience by staying physically fit, making time for themselves, and seeking emotional support. As will be seen later in this book, many of the ‘insights’ and ‘lessons’ discussed in the foregoing are further advocated, illuminated and illustrated through the ‘critical reflections’ on EBOCD practice of the various authors who have contributed the nine ‘EBOCD practitioner perspective’ chapters in Section 2 of this Volume I of the book and the thirty three OCD/EBOCD related ‘reflective case history’ chapters in Section 3 of Volume II.

CONCLUSION

Perpetual change and flux is taking place within the external environments in which 21st century organizations operate, and to which managers need to respond and adapt with agility and speed. To meet the challenge of on-going change successfully, whether it is episodic or continuous, insights and strategies that support OCD initiatives instigated at any level of management are needed. This calls for high degrees of change agency capability on the part of those with responsibility for bringing about change effectively and beneficially. With this in mind we hope the chapter has provided a useful synthesis of theoretical

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perspectives, philosophies and approaches for you to consider when conducting organizational analyses for the purpose of gaining organizational understanding prior to formulating OCD strategies, and also insights on the range of evaluation tools and techniques that you could use to assess the effectiveness of the change implementation processes and change agency of yourself and your colleague change agents. Additionally, we hope that you will be proactive in using the insights offered in this chapter to further develop your EBOCD change agency capabilities and competencies.

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