

EFFECT OF CHANGE ON PERFORMANCE OF LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF CO-OPERATIVE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Many middle level colleges are converting into constituent colleges and some constituent colleges are converting into public Universities as evidenced on increased registration. There has also been an escalation of private colleges seeking to offer education and training to a population that is increasingly seeking this service. This in turn has led to structural and human resource challenges that learning institutions are trying to cope with. The study aims at examining the effect of change on performance of learning institutions and its impact on key result areas that affect performance. The sample comprised of the 265 staff composed of 55 lecturing and 210 non lecturing staff. From this sample 74 respondents representing more than 10% of the population provided necessary data for the research. Descriptive research design was used where a self administered structured questionnaire was issued to respondents. From the findings it was evident that change is necessary for survival of any organization since it improves overall performance (74.3%). The results indicate that a change policy is necessary for organizations and if implemented its embraced by majority hence need to seek out better ways of performing tasks. Organizations ought to effectively plan and communicate change and consistently evaluate its impact since it arises more from external factors (74.3%) which are largely uncontrollable. Change is inevitable and the only constant and for learning institutions that are resisting change, then change will change them.

Key words: Learning institution, change, performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Change is the modification or altering of the present condition of a situation or phenomenon and can be predictable because it's bound to happen any time in future. Bennet (1997) indicates that change is predictable and in some other instance unforeseen. Change is caused by external forces and at times internal forces that shock and break the current trends and patterns of an organization. It's therefore necessary to always be prepared for the predictable and non-predictable change. Change management is the process of continually renewing organizations direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever changing needs of external and internal customers. Bringing about change is vital for strategic success and if it's not for definite benefit it is not worth implementing since the aim is to improve long-term operational effectiveness. Griffin (2006) viewed management change as any substantive modification of some or all parts of an organization.

Organizational change is any planned attempt by management to improve overall performance of individuals and groups. It is the altering of structure, behavior and technology. Change is caused by many factors such as introduction of new products, emergence of new markets and competitors, technological revolutions among others. It's therefore necessary for every organization to be prepared at all times for any type of change that may emerge if it is to remain relevant and competitive. Kreitner (2004) further emphasized that the only constant thing is change and organizations should avoid any type of excuse once it occurs since there is a high degree of certainty that it will occur. Organizations aim to change in order to cope with the changing trends and circumstances. The impact of change is determined by the preparedness to address it and the process used to implement it. Once change occurs the way it's managed may lead to success or failure of an organization. The total impact of change is positive if the desired results are achieved using a participatory process. Negative impact occurs when the desired result is not achieved or if the change causes collapse of systems, processes and structures. Stoner (2005) suggests that the possible solution to problems relating to change is designing change management strategies since they ensure preparedness at all times.

Co-operative organizations have to keep pace with environmental changes and adjust accordingly. The Co-operative movement is trying to cope with change brought about by enacted policies by government and stakeholders interests where policies are constantly under review to ensure they are adequately serving the co-operative movement. The co-operative movement in Kenya has mobilized savings of Ksh. 501 billion with an asset base of 694 billion. The movement has employed more than 500, 000 people who seek information from the Co-operative University College. Environmental changes have posed challenges that have forced the Co-operative University College to develop strategies that make it fit its new status and also satisfy stakeholders' expectations. Change in educational training institutions is being driven by Government restructuring programs, competition by other learning institutions and management consultants offering Co-operative education and training.

Change therefore is bound to occur due to people's necessity for economic and social needs that are continuously met through economic effort (Griffin 2000). Change is also seen as the process through which an organization continuously renews its direction, structure and capabilities (Davis 2000). Appropriate change to an organization is that which is in line with time frame, resources and desired results. No matter how welcoming an organization is to change it will face a degree of employee, suppliers, distributor, stakeholder and consumer resistance. An organization may manage to reduce the frequency and potency of such resistance but it will never eradicate the fear of the unknown.

Kurt Lewin suggested that organizations should adopt a planned change strategy that involves three stages namely, unfreezing which involves altering the present stable equilibrium which supports existing behaviors and attitudes, moving that involves developing new responses based on new information and refreezing that involves stabilizing the change by introducing the new responses into the personalities of those concerned (Armstrong, 2009). This process ensures that the new behaviors are relatively safe from aggression. The new behaviors should be congruent with the rest of the behaviors, personality and environment of the learner or will lead to a new round of disconfirmation (Schein, 1996). Change therefore is always bound to occur due to people's necessity for economic and social needs that are continuously met through economic effort. Even in the education sector, change has occurred and education vision has changed from transmission of knowledge to producing competent people who are able to apply their knowledge under changing conditions. Appropriate change to an organization is that which is in line with time frame, resources and desired results. Change of any kind will always come with a price. Its wise to let go of the past in order to embrace the new and preparedness enables appropriate handling of reality shock that comes with a new status.

Bennet (1998) suggested that change maybe caused by introduction of new products, discovering of new materials, emerging of new markets, competitors, technological revolutions and development of new alliances. Stoner (2005) suggested that planned change occurs when there is a systematic attempt to revise an organization in a way that will help it adopt to changes in the external environment. Armstrong (2006) stated that change starts with analyzing the existing culture and desired culture is then defined which leads to identification of culture gaps that needs to be filled. Change also occurs due to the sophistication of information processing technology, globalization of organizations and organization structure. Since organizations are open systems their interaction with the environment is bound to occur. The threatening arrival of a newcomer in a particular market leads to reactive change. Technological revolutions prompt organizations to keep up with the change. Burnes (2000) indicates that it's important for every organization to keep changing as technology changes in order to make work efficient and to cope with competition. Networking within an organization saves time and makes it easier to adjust personnel related issues. Much of organizational communication is today done through e-mails, fax, teleconferencing or even videos. There is no other option for an organization but to continuously improve on its technology.

The political factor affects the operations of an organization. The Government sets and ensures adherence to rules and regulations. The laws set may relate to local and international trade, conduct of Government Business in Government owned organizations and also in protecting businesses from unfair business practice. The Commission of University Education provides guidelines on how institutions of higher learning should conduct their business. A change in peoples culture implies need to change to meet the changing needs and wants. Cultural change relates to a change in attitudes, values and opinions. Service and product providers have to change to meet the real needs of the clients. Griffin (2006) explains that an organization is never static. An organizations culture, structure, and practices frequently changes and there is need to keep up with the change. In some circumstances demographic changes result to organizational change. An increase in population may lead to a higher demand for goods and services hence causing a corresponding change in production levels of an organization.

The internal triggers to change are; need to change current strategies, adoption of new culture, and improvement on production, efficiency and quality management. To successfully manage change, there is need to address barriers to effective change management. Structural change addresses the structure of the organization. It's an attempt to improve performance by altering the formal structure of the tasks and authority relationships. Behavioral change is an effort to redirect and improve employee attitudes, image,

culture or skills and knowledge. The objective is to enhance capacity of individuals to perform assigned tasks in coordination with others. Early scientific management theorists studied management in organizations and advocated for changes in style and structure of the organization. Fredrick Taylor (1856-1915) advocated changes in the work environment and the result of his work is still applied to most organizations today.

Before launching any major change campaign, the management should understand the implications of the new system. The strategic significance of the change should be compared with the resistance of the particular change. In change planning and implementation special attention is given to company's opinion leaders. Rothwell (2007) suggests that change leaders need to inspire the workforce in trying to embrace change. Change ought to be continuously monitored and guided if desired results are to be achieved. Appleby (1994) also advises managers to understand change and regard it as necessary and beneficial. Change poses a challenge to many human resource managers in that they have to identify new approaches whose effective use will not jeopardize the survival of the organization. Todd (1999) further explained that management needs a structured and systematic approach to achieving a sustainable change of human behavior within an organization. Invancerich (2004) indicates that human resource managers must cope with trends and changes while still contributing to the organization growth. Koontz (2004) held the view that old and new managerial concepts should be combined to ensure change is handled effectively. Trust is an essential ingredient in change management. When management and employee relationship is based on trust then everything done by either party is taken positively. The concept of trust is equated with integrity, loyalty, caring and keeping promises in the relationships at work including that which relates to introduction of any change. Bennet (1999) suggested change can be managed in a step by step basis and all persons should be involved.

Different strategies can be adopted to cope with change and some of them include: altering existing technologies, existing structures, tasks and people in an organization. Change can be managed by creating financial reserves, maintaining existing workgroups, preparation of inventories, ensuring job security for employees and good management. Change is appropriately managed when the approach used greatly minimizes employee's resistance by incorporating participation at every stage. For the successful management of change, employees should be able to voice their ideas and managers must also feel secure in their own positions. Debby (2007) noted that there is little within the Co-operative College curriculum that reflects the needs of contemporary Co-operative movement. Change is needed to enrich the curriculum to fit the changing market needs. The Co-operative Societies Act Amendments 2004 also introduced a degree of Government regulation into the Co-operative movement. Training on the change needed and its implementation process was necessary and the College was to take a leading role to ensure the curriculum addressed client needs.

In training needs analysis CCOK (2005) it was observed that the college curriculum was too general and focused on general management principles. Change was recommended to review curriculums to reflect the main purpose and to provide programs that are tailored specifically to the Co-operative movement. Other aspects that needed to be changed include, development of a comprehensive information technology system, decentralizing training programs and the need to develop a coordinating body for training the co-operative movement. The need to build capacity to determine and implement changes is also necessary. The college is challenged to position itself not just as a general management college but a Co-operative University College for the African region and beyond.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

Purposive sampling was used on the lecturing and non teaching staff. A list of all staff was obtained from the Human Resource Department of the College that indicated the total number of permanent staff as 265 employees. The total population of 55 teaching staff and 210 non teaching staff was considered in the sampling process. From the target population a sample of 74 respondents was obtained. Kombo (2006) explains that for descriptive studies 10% of target population is representative enough. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) further indicate that the sample should be large enough to allow accurate interpretation of the results and at the same time ensure that data is manageable. Mugenda (2013) suggests that purposive sampling and extreme case sampling is allowed where respondents can provide required information for a specific purpose.

A self administered questionnaire was used to the sampled population. Written records that included manuals, proposals, terms and condition of service, work schedules and other needed records were referred to. Authorization was sought to enable access data which was viewed private due to its strategic importance in ensuring competitiveness of the University College.

Some of the data collected related to change in staff levels, physical facilities, performance contract process, performance appraisal information and other achievements by the University College.

2.2 Study area

The Co-operative University College of Kenya is an institution of higher learning located in Karen Nairobi county and an affiliate of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology. Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya where reputable public and private learning institutions are located. Being a business hub many learning institutions offer day, evening and week end based programmes to cater for all cadres of staff. Co-operative University College has been in existence for over 40 years and offers degree, diploma and certificate programmes to co-operative members and the general public using both residential, non residential and distance learning methods. Co-operative College started effective co-operative training in 1972 through support of the Nordic Countries who partly funded construction of the current Karen campus. In 2011, the Co-operative College of Kenya was converted into a University College of Kenya as a constituent college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology through a legal Notice. The study is conducted at Cooperative University College of Kenya at the main campus Karen and at its Ufundi SACCO branch located at Moi Avenue Nairobi County, the Meru campus and Mombasa campus. The University College has a population of about 2500 students and has a mandate of training and equipping the co-operative movement workforce with knowledge and skills. The target population is staff of the Cooperative University College and data is collected from teaching and non teaching staff. The current staffing levels for permanent staff are 265 employees comprising 55 academic staff and 210 non teaching staff. These two categories of staff provide diverse ideas since they differ in experience, skills, age and most have come from diverse background.

2.3 Data Analysis

Before data analysis, data processing was done. This involved editing to detect any errors or omissions. Data classification was done with an aim of arranging data into common categories. Tabulation ensured responses for each category in the questionnaire were counted. This information was put in tabular form hence enabling easier analysis. Usage of Simple statistical measures of central tendency like mean and mode helped to come up with a solution on the most common indicators in each category. Measures of dispersion indicated the spread of variables under study. Data is put in a logical sequence using categories that relate to a particular theme. Tables are used for condensing data and providing more clarity. Theoretical explanation of the data helped bring out clarifications derived from the data itself and tables are used to provide a clear understanding of the effect of change on performance of training institutions.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondents' characteristics

The population of study was all the 265 staff working for the Co-operative University College comprising 210 staff members and 55 lecturing staff. Some employees had worked for the institution for more than 25 years while some joined the University College once it was upgraded to a university. From the sample 42 lectures (56.8%) returned the questionnaires while for the non teaching staff 32(43.25%) managed to return questionnaires within the required time. Lecturers were more enthusiastic about the results and understood the good intention of the research. The questionnaires return rate was 74 representing 28% of the population. The College has expanded its physical facilities to include construction of lecture theatre in 2015, Retreat and seminar facilities in 2006, opening new satellite campus in Nairobi in 2005, in Meru and Mombasa, starting the Agri business Training centre in 2004 among others. These are meant to cater for the increasing student population, stakeholder's demands and the University College expansion strategy.

Table 1: Existence of a Change Policy

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	33.8
No	49	66.2
Total	74	100

Those who felt that the College has a change policy were few (33.8%) while those who believed a change policy did not exist were 66.2%. The justification of a change policy was existence of a strategic plan, the general guidelines by department of co-operatives and that of Commission of University Education. This indicates that there is need to develop an agreed change policy that would guide implementation process of the institutions activities.

3.2 Whether consulted during change implementation.

In the course of implementing change majority indicated that they were consulted. In the procedures of ISO certification and in changing the college to a Semi Autonomous Government Agency and to a University College almost all staff indicated they were consulted. Other areas where some staff were consulted are in curriculum development and review, staff recruitment, examination policy issues, creation of the Aids Control Unit, and in opening of new branches. The procedures on ISO certification and computerization were areas in which staffs were involved in ensuring successful operation.

3.3 Factors that affect organizational change

The major factors influencing organizational change are internal and external environmental forces. It was evidenced that external factors have greatly influenced change when compared to internal factors.

Table 2: Factors influencing change

Factors affecting Organizational change	Frequency	Percent
Internal	19	25.7
External	55	74.3
Total	74	100

External factors influencing change are the Government through Commission of University Education, economic factors and competition with other learning institutions (74.3%). These forces were need for the Institution to be the market leader in co-operative education and training, changing technology, changing client needs, internal administration strategy, and employee related factors. Other factors that have caused change are implementation of performance contracts, formation of Agri-and Cooperative training and consultancy services Ltd, new status as a University College, and professional recruitment in specialized areas hence bringing in new ideas.

3.4 Effects of organizational change

Organizational change has had an effect to the organization and to employees in terms of performance.

Table 3: Effects of organizational change on overall performance

Effect of Change on performance	Frequency	Percent
Improved performance	46	62.2
Not Affected	7	9.5
Increased Workload	21	28.3
Total	74	100

Change effected by the institution was viewed to have improved performance (46.6 %) compared to those who felt that implemented change had not affected performance(7%).This shows that planned change has a positive contribution to both employees and the organization and hence should be encouraged.

Table 4: Appropriateness of the Changes Implemented

Changes Implemented	Frequency	Percent
No inappropriate changes	61	82.4
Inappropriate changes	13	17.6
Total	74	100

It is evident that change implemented is appropriate (60 %) hence the institution is focused on its mandate and implemented the required change. However some respondents felt that some changes were not appropriate (13%).The appropriate changes were related to human resource, ISO certification and Collaboration with some stakeholders especially in starting the degree programme. On personnel issues respondents indicated on need to extend retirement or renewal of employment contracts to all employees and not just some staff. The pension scheme ought to have been fully debated and agreed before implementation. It was felt Collaboration with JKUAT in offering a degree programme had initial challenges relating to coordination and lack of human and capital resources. However majority belief the changes implemented have been fruitful in achieving the mission of the institution.

3.5 The main challenges when implementing organizational change:

Table 5: Opinion on why some employees resist institutional change

Response	Frequency	Percent
Need to maintain the status quo	37	50
Fear of the unknown	12	16.2
Lack of change related skills	16	21.6
Lack of financial resources	9	12.2
Total	74	100

The results indicate that most employees fear change because they would rather maintain the status quo (50%), while others (16%) lack necessary skills to cope with the change or belief lack of financial resources (9 %) may hinder effective implementation of the change.

3.6 Organizational change and work performance.

Organizational change greatly affects work performance as portrayed by the table below.

Table 6: Effects of organizational change on performance

Effects of change on performance	Frequency	Percent
Improved work performance	55	74.32
Deteriorated	-	-
Remained the same	16	21.62
Do not know	3	4.05
Total	74	100

The results show that institutional change led to improved work performance (74.3%) and no activity deteriorated due to implemented change. Improved performance was as a result of implementing ISO procedures, performance contracts, increased student enrolment and improved terms and conditions of service.

3.7 Change implementation method

Opinion on whether participation of all organization members is needed during change implementation indicated that successful change implementation involves participation by all and not just a few persons. The best method to implement change is consultation and involvement of all those to be affected by the change. To implement change successfully the need should be communicated to all with discussions on the expected benefits, costs and implications. The role of every person during implementation should be understood. Implementation of change is monitored with feedback systems from the stakeholders which should be acted upon.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

Tremendous change has occurred in the last five years. This change is reflected in expansion strategies of the learning institution. The changes relate to, establishment of satellite campus in different parts of the country, establishment of the seminar and retreat centre to cater for different needs of stakeholders, ISO certification, implementation of performance contracts, construction of a lecture theatre, increased student enrolment and employment of more professional staff in various disciplines. These changes have affected the operation mode of the University College compared to previous years and hence posed management challenges. The study established that the Government plays a major role on the type of change and methods of implementation in training institutions of higher learning. Change affects performance either negatively or positively and its occurrence is inevitable. Change has led to improved performance and has led to greater efficiency and effectiveness in operations. However change poses some challenges once implemented and

there is need to prepare adequately by analyzing the costs and benefits of its implementation. The process of change implementation also requires careful analysis. Change was noted is inevitable and organizations that are not preparing for change are preparing to fail hence need for planned change. The only constant thing in prevailing times is change for there are many internal and external environmental forces that are pushing organizations to adapt to changing times. There is therefore need for change but not necessarily changing for change sake.

4.2 Recommendations

- ❖ In relation to training and development there is need to diversify employee competencies and also ensure career progression for staff in their professional line. Systematic training adds more skills and knowledge and positions an organization appropriately as compared to its competitors.
- ❖ The organization structure adopted needs to be flexible and fully integrate all employees and consider any other issue that may indicate need to adjust it.
- ❖ There is need to adapt to change and meet changing client needs by developing market driven courses, undertaking curriculum review and ensuring quality implementation for current ones.
- ❖ Formal and informal consultative forums with employees and stakeholders ought to be held and be used to coordinate and harmonize changes being implemented in training institutions. Participatory management in planning and managing change make it home grown and command acceptance during implementation.
- ❖ Departments in the institution should computerize all their activities for it will ease workload, maintain consistency and easily link with stakeholders.
- ❖ Training institutions should avail resources such as resource persons and financial resources in time and also seek ways of increasing resources to effectively address the changes being implemented.

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