The role of human resources in the process of effective organizational change

An analysis between human resource practices, effective change competences and steps in the change process

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Abstract

Organizational change is important for an organization to be competitive, but it means also heavy managerial challenges (Leana & Barry, 2000). These changes have a significant impact on the emotions and practices of the employees, because all changes involve new behaviors that should be accepted and enforced (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). A human resource employee, being part of a supportive department, is closely connected to the people who are the key in the change process. However, it is not clear if a human resource employee can act as a change agent, especially if human resources can meet the underlying operational and strategic requirements posed on a change agent. Therefore, the role that human resource employees can take to directly influence the process of change, is examined in this research. The research design of this study is desk research, in which only secondary data from scientific articles is used to answer this question. After analysis of the literature, it became clear that the operational human resource practices, which include performance appraisal, reward system, training and development, and recruitment and selection (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2005; Laursen & Foss, 2003; Shipton, Fay, West, Patterson & Birdi, 2005), are effective to the unfreeze, change and refreeze stage of change (Lewin, 1951). Next to that, the strategic people-oriented capabilities of human resources are effective for leading the communication and mobilization of change (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). As a conclusion, human resources have an operational and strategic role in the development and implementation of effective change management, especially for changes in behavior and culture. However, human resources have not all the capabilities and they cannot be effective in every stage of the change process. Therefore, human resources should work together with task-oriented change agents.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and problem statement

Organizational change is the process of continuously renovating the direction, structure, and capabilities of an organization to meet the changing needs of internal and external clients (Moran & Brightman, 2001). Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992) mentioned that management of change has become the most important managerial responsibility since organizations are constantly linked with aspects of change. This varies from moving organizational boundaries to diversify the organizational structure and improving the decision making processes (Taylor-Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006). These changes have a significant impact on the emotions and practices of the employees, because all changes involve new behaviors that should be accepted and enforced (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). Besides, few organizations are able to implement change effectively and 70 percent of the change programs fail (Kotter, 1996). Effective change management occurs when the change objectives are reached and the majority of the change actors are satisfied with the outcome. Individuals, teams and organizations are involved in the change process, and change agents have the responsibility to make this happen. A change agent is someone who has the capabilities and power to facilitate, stimulate, and coordinate the change exertion (Lunenburg, 2010). However, understanding the motivation, motion and unpredictability of change, does not mean that these change agents know how to manage organizational change (Ulrich et al., 1997; Conner, 1999).

In the process of organizational change, one or more change agents are needed. Next to that, the change process requires the creation of a new system, which in turn always claims leadership for the individuals, teams and organizations that are involved (Kotter, 1996). However, it is not clear if a human resource employee can act as a change agent, especially if human resources can meet the underlying operational and strategic requirements posed on a change agent. This human resource employee, being part of a supportive department, is closely connected to the people who are the key in the change process. The operational human resource practices lead to employee motivation, increased knowledge, synergy and engagement of employees (Hislop, 2003), which are essential aspects for the effectiveness of organizational change. Also, human resources have the leadership capabilities to have an effect on employees' beliefs, motivation, attitudes, values, and behavior (Ganta, and Manukonda, 2014). The connection with people in the organization and the behavioral background of human resources could therefore be effective characteristics for leading change. Although looking at the obvious connection between human resources and employees, up to now little is known about the possible role of human resources in organizational change. Therefore, the role that human resource employees can take to directly influence the process of change, is examined in this research.

To be able to implement the process of change effectively, human resources should know what kind of roles they could have in organizations that deal with the complex processes of change, given their regular, supportive role.

1.2 Objective

Gain insights in the roles human resource employees could have to add to the effectiveness of organizational change.

1.3 Research question and sub-questions

Main question:

What are the roles human resource employees could have to add to the effectiveness of organizational change?

Sub questions:

1. What is the nature of organizational change and how to assess its effectiveness?
2. What are the roles and practices of human resource employees within an organization?
3. Which roles could human resource employees play to achieve organizational change effectively?

2. Research design and methods

The research design is the plan how methods will be used during the research (Kumar, 2014). This research will not be qualitative or quantitative, but the answers on the research questions come from secondary data. The literature study section starts with the operational practices and strategic capabilities that are needed for effective organizational change to answer the sub-question: *'What is the nature of organizational change and how to assess its effectiveness?'* The second paragraph is about the operational practices and strategic capabilities the human resource department implement in the organization to answer the sub-question: *'What are the roles and practices of human resource employees within an organization?'* The last paragraph is about the linkage between the first two paragraphs to investigate which operational practices and strategic capabilities human resources can implement to add to the effectiveness of organizational change to answer the last sub-question: *'Which roles could human resource employees play to achieve organizational change effectively?'* The literature study is the basis for answering the main question in the conclusion chapter. The design that suits best with this research is a desk research.

This research is based on several steps to answer the sub-questions. These steps are as follows:

- The first step was the selection of search terms. The keyword used with this research are: 'human resources', 'change management', 'effective change management', 'leading change', 'role of human resources', 'human resource practices', 'steps in the change process', 'role of human resources in change management', 'change capabilities', 'capabilities of human resources', 'capabilities in the change process for human resources'. 'performance appraisal', 'reward system', 'recruitment and selection', and 'training and development'. These search terms are categorized from general to specific.
- The second step was the selection of several relevant sources by reading the summary and conclusion of the articles. The relevant sources contained 90 articles.
- The third step consisted of the selection of the information from the sources that is relevant to answer the sub-questions.
- The last step consisted of analyzing the data in the literature study and draw conclusions and recommendations.

Reliability and validity
A research is reliable when it can be executed again with the same results and validity means that the methods measures what needs to be measured. In this research, there is attention paid to reliability and validity by selecting different search terms from general to specific and by using academic databases like 'Scopus', 'ScienceDirect', 'Google Scholar' and 'JSTOR'.

Structure of the report
In chapter one, the concept is introduced, together with the problem statement, the research objective, and the research questions. The second chapter describes the research design and the methods of data collection. Chapter three shows the literature study to answer the sub-questions. The discussion, conclusion and recommendations will become clear in chapter four and five and lastly the references are shown.

3. Literature study

3.1 Capabilities and steps for effective change management

In this paragraph, the capabilities for effective change management and the steps for effective change management will be described to answer the sub-question: 'What is the nature of organizational change and how to assess its effectiveness?'

3.1.1 Capabilities for effective change management

Change agents

A change agent is someone who has the capabilities and power to facilitate, stimulate, and coordinate the change exertion (Lunenburg, 2010). The individual who is able to manage change is many times discussed in previous studies. Some researchers think that this individual should be the program or project manager (Turner et al., 1996; Kliem et al., 1997). Other researchers stated that this person should have a less technical or project-based background, which is more focused on behavioral science (Cummings and Worley, 2001; Caluwe and Vermaak, 2003).

The person or team that has the task to manage change in the company is called the change agent. It is possible that change agents are internal, like employees or managers who are able to review the process of change. In a lot of innovative organizations, employees and managers are trained to review this change (Tschirky, 2011). On the other hand, change agents can be external, like consultants from another organization (Lunenburg, 2010). There is raising evidence that the leadership behaviors and characteristics of change agents influence the successful achievement of the change process (Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005; Waldman, Javidan, & Varella, 2004). For most of the organizational changes, businesses recruit external change agents. The advantage of external consultants is that they are not affected by the organizational politics, culture, or traditions. Therefore, they have another perspective to the process and challenge the current state. However, external change agents can also be a disadvantage, because they have no understanding of the procedures, history, operation, and personnel of the organization (Lunenburg, 2010).

Leadership is seen as the ability to have an effect on employees' beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior (Ganta, and Manukonda, 2014). A capable leader can motivate the employees of the business and apply changes effectively. According to Atkinson and Mackenzie (2015), if there is no leader, no changes will be made because they should provide a clear way of working in the organization.

Authentic leadership has potentials to contribute to effective change processes in organizations, particularly for complex change (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). According to Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004), authentic leaders '*have achieved high levels of authenticity in that they know who they are, what they believe and value, and they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others*' (p. 802). This leadership style drives certain learning and motivational mechanisms in employees during the process of change, which will facilitate an effective implementation. All changes involve new behaviors that should be accepted and enforced. Important is, where fast radical change is needed for business survival, dictatorial

leadership style with pressure should be suitable. An environment of collaboration and consultation is linked with a more quiet form of change (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013).

Change agents should have capacities, together with structures that increase the clearness, for example the job descriptions and the vision statement. This should ease a possible culture obstacle. To select the change agents itself, the organization need to know the effective leading capabilities. However, organizations that operate in masculine cultures should not select change agents that are led by interdependence and collaboration rather than assertiveness and independence. This means that the change agent's leadership style should fit with the organizational culture (Friedman, 2007). Individual driven leadership are suitable in for example the United States, which has high rates on individualism. On the other hand, team based leadership should fit in Hong Kong which has a culture of collectivism (Hofstede, 1993). In high power distance countries, the change agents have difficult access to top management. So, human resource managers must challenge this barrier for change to be successful. Examples are building a network of supportive decision makers to gain access to the top management (Friedman, 2007).

Organizational change capabilities
Organizational change is a continuous process where several capabilities are needed. Prior research has shown that effective organizational change should start with a diagnosis of the current state to analyze the need and ability to change. The aim, process, content of change must all be taken into account in an effective change management plan. Most of the time, effective change processes include creative thinking in the field of marketing to be able to communicate between the change actors, but also knowledge about leadership styles and team interaction is needed. Change projects are profitable because it aligns group expectations, it communicates and integrates groups, and manages training for the employees. Change projects make use of performance metrics like, operational efficiency, financial results, leadership engagements, effective communication, and the observed necessarily change. This leads to suitable strategies, the avoidance of failures in the change process and a solution for problems (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013).

There are mainly three capabilities involved in the implementation of effective organizational change: communicating, mobilizing, and evaluating. These steps are shown in figure 1. Communicating includes the practices leaders attempt to change, and also to share the importance for change with actors. Mobilizing includes the activities of leaders to create support from colleagues to accept the new way of working. Evaluating includes the measurement of leaders to assess and monitor real efforts and changes. Not all the change processes should be executed on the same manner or have the same profit (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010). These capabilities are given more in detail in the following paragraphs:
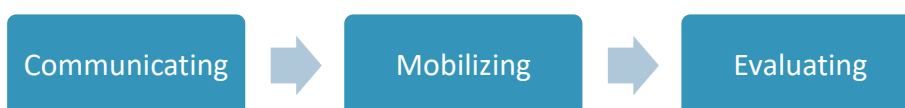

Communicating → Mobilizing → Evaluating

Figure 1: Organizational change capabilities

- Communicating

To make an overview of the current state and the required new situation for involved employees, managers of change should communicate the importance of change. Employees need to know why their routines and behaviors need to change (Fiol et al., 1999; Kotter, 1995). Employee resistance to change is due to the emotional reactions and stemming. Leaders who are employed at interpersonal interactions have the capability to monitor their own emotions and that of employees. This kind of leaders use this knowledge to manage action and thinking (Goleman, 1998). They can also see and influence these emotional reactions to solve issues and adjust behaviors (Huy, 1999). In organizational change, leaders expect emotional reactions when they have a consultation with employees who are involved in the process of change. After that, they take the needed actions to considerate those emotional reactions (Huy, 2002). The leaders make use of communicating activities to explain why the certain change is needed, and to talk about the nature of that change. In this way, confusion and uncertainty of actors in the change process is minimized (Bass, 1990). Communication is the best way to provide innovative ideas to have the best outcome for the business (Maxwell, 2009). Leaders who want effective change in the company should motivate employees to work together and communicate with each other to discover new ideas (Gilley, Dixon and Gilley, 2008). This lead to a better result for the business and also pushes them to learn from colleagues to improve themselves. Communication is also an important capability to gain trust between colleagues, and to make a linkage between all the employees in the company (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015).

- Mobilizing

The second step of the change process is that leaders mobilize employees to adopt and accept the introduced changes into their day to day routines (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Kotter, 1995). Mobilizing is complex because of the different professional and personal objectives of each actor in the organization, and thus different believes on the change process. Change actors who have the possibility to profit from the change will usually be enthusiastic about the change process, but those who have the possibility to lose something are not motivated (Bourne & Walker, 2005). The aim of mobilizing is to develop capable change actors to engage and cooperate with the predefined action points (Huy, 1999). By doing this, leaders should create a coalition to support the change process (Kotter, 1995). The creation of such a coalition is a political process that includes the movement to change actors' collaboration and the introduction of organizational systems that enable that collaboration (Nadler & Tushman, 1990).

- Evaluating

Finally, leaders of the change process need to evaluate change to see how change actors are performing the practices, routines, and behaviors which are needed in effective change management. As experts of the mission, vision, and objectives of the business, leaders should evaluate the content of change and ensure that change agents execute the new day to day work routines (Yukl, 2006). Before the change process becomes institutionalized, change agents evaluate the new processes and procedures and their effect on the business performance. Therefore, leaders should create measurements to assess and monitor the effect of the implemented efforts in the change process. These processes are normally based on formal systems of measurement (Kotter, 1995).

Lewin (1951) also developed an understanding of planned change in combination with unintentional or accidental change, and stated that the continuous process of change includes mainly three stages: unfreeze, change and refreeze.

The leader plays an necessary role in the first stage: the unfreezing stage. In this stage, disposition in the business with regard to the necessary changes is needed and it includes diminishing the present situation to improve the future situation. This is a complex time for the leader because challenging the present beliefs, behavior, and status while designing the future can lead to opposition by the employees. During this unfreezing stage, the leader should develop readiness and motivation to change among the actors by displaying new opinions, and a common direction for what could be done to reach the second stage. To guide the business through this unfreezing stage, the leader should generate respect and trust from the employees to learn and motivate them to change, and to create a common view about the need to change. Trust is an important aspect in leadership, because receiving the trust of a team of employees could contribute to improve the general performance and engagement of the team or employees (Lee et al., 2010).

Lewin (1951) described the next stage as 'change', in which the actors move to another level of behavior and develop another perspective on the change itself. Learning is important in the second stage of change. It is namely not only the employees that should improve but also all leadership levels of the business. This is necessary because these levels motivate the employees to learn. Change leaders should participate in training programs to empower their leadership knowledge and skills, which makes them more successful in their strategy implementation (Freifeld, 2013). This holds also for employees, because trained employees will strengthen their power to do their work and facilitate the effective execution of the predefined changes. This contributes to the productivity and performance of the employees (Abou-Moghli, 2015).

Finally, the refreezing stage presents where the change is associated into the value systems of the change actors. To have sustainable change, the leader should have a major role during this stage by intensify the new behaviors with encouragement, positive feedback, rewards, and recognition. Otherwise the change will be not sustainable and the employees will go back to their old behaviors (Huber, 2010; Lewin, 1951). The whole process is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: steps in the change process

3.2 The nature of human resources

In this paragraph, the traditional supportive role of HR, the human resource practices, and the new strategic role of human resources is described to answer the second sub-question: *'What are the roles and practices of human resource employees within an organization?'*

3.2.1 Traditional supportive role of human resources

Porter (1985) introduced the value chain, which includes the practices that the business executes to create long-term competitive advantage. This value chain assess the value from all the practices of the business to their products and services. A part of the practices is straight connected with production of goods and services, the so called core activities. The other part of the practices are supporting activities. The core practices are inbound and outbound logistics, operations, sales and marketing, and service. The goal of the support practices is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire organisation, and especially the core activities. These practices are human resource management, procurement, infrastructure, and technology development (Porter, 1985). Because of the fact that organizations function in an open system that is connected to other departments and organizations with their own value chain, the organization should manage this value chain with external value chains of suppliers and customers. This is important to ensure its growth successfully, and also to create new strategies for keeping the sustainable competitive advantage (Agrawal & Pak, 2001). Human resource management is an essential support practice of the organization (Porter, 1985).

Ulrich (1998) stated that the activities of human resources are often disconnected from the real work of the organization. However, Schuler (1992) mentioned that when the business strategy has been decided on, the human resource strategy must support the chosen business strategy. In this case, a human resource strategy should match with the practices, processes, program, policies and philosophy that will create employee behaviors that fit with the strategy. Also, Beer et al. (1984) stated that there should be a close relationship between the elements of the business strategy and the human resource strategy. A negative effect of a misalignment between human resources and the primary departments can be for example that there are not enough capable employees to design and implement the business strategy (Zadeh, 2009). The specific value that human resources adds in the organization will become clear in the following paragraphs.

3.2.2 Operational human resource practices

Human resource practices are a couple of activities executed by the business to manage human resources through competencies development, the generation of social relationships and the creation of knowledge into the organization to gather long-term competitiveness (Minbaeva, 2005). Human resource practices lead to employee motivation, increased knowledge, synergy and engagement of employees, that create long-term advantage for the organization (Hislop, 2003). The literature comes up with four common human resource practices, which include performance appraisal, reward system, training and development, and recruitment and selection (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2005; Laursen & Foss, 2003; Shipton, Fay, West, Patterson & Birdi, 2005). The role and activities of human resources in these practices are given as follows:

- Performance appraisal

Performance appraisal includes the methods and processes that are used by companies to assess the level of performance of their employees. The activities in this process for human resources are measuring employees' performance and accommodating them with feedback about the quality and level of their performance in the organization (DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006).

- Reward system

A reward system includes the mechanisms and policies by which companies manage and control rewards for employees. An example of this is an increase of the annual payment. A reward system satisfies the goals that are linked to the strategy of the business. Next to that, rewards should also be cost effective for the organization, and attractive and fair for the employee. Within such a system, the role of human resources is to consider the reward type and the reward criteria. There are differences in reward types because it can be for example financial or non-financial, and fixed or accidental (Van Eerde, 2015). There are also different reward criteria, which means the principles and norms on which rewards are assigned. An example of this criteria is individual or group performance. Other criteria are responsibility, knowledge, and skills (Chiang and Birtch, 2005).

- Training and development

Training is the process of learning, provided to all employees with the aim to obtain knowledge and develop behavioral attitudes and skills in order to be more effective in their current position (Kriemadis & Kourtesopoulou, 2008). According to Dressler (2003), human resources should follow a five-step training and development process to be effective in the organization. Firstly, human resources should complete an analysis of the needs, in which the important skills for their employees are identified, the current skills are analyzed and specific training objectives are developed. The mostly used methods to gain information about the training needs are data research, questionnaires, individual- and team interviews, written tests, evaluation of the performances, observations, analysis of duties and organization's strategy, and recording critical cases (Stredwick, 2001). Secondly, human resources should plan the training program, which can be externally or internally executed. An external training can be provided by a consultancy firm or a university. The third step includes the validation, in which human resources should confirm that the developed training program is directly linked to the training needs of the employees. The fourth step is the implementation of the training program, which could range from a few hours to a couple of years. The evaluation of the training program is the fifth and last step in the training and development process that human resources should take (Kriemadis & Kourtesopoulou, 2008).

- Recruitment and selection

Recruitment is another human resources practice that include the activities to acquire a satisfactory number of skilled employees at the right function and at the right time so that the new hires can improve the short and long term interests of the organization (Schuler, 1987). Human resources should develop a policy of recruitment and retention, assess the needs to define the current and future human resources needs of the organization, identify an internal and external human resource pool, analyze functions and evaluate jobs to identify the individual aspects, assess the qualification profiles, and draw job descriptions where the responsibilities and competences are clearly described. Next to that, human resources should determine the ability of the organization to pay salaries and bonuses within a certain period, and identify and document the recruitment process with job interviews, and selection (Richardson, 2009).

3.2.3 The new strategic role of human resources

In the last decades, human resource management changed dramatically (Lievens, 2006). Before the technological evolvements, human resources was only busy with administrative tasks, like making job descriptions and the registration of working hours (Ulrich et al. 2009). Now, human resources has

moved to a real business partner (Lievens, 2006), where they can also focus on essential strategic human resource management problems, especially in large organizations (Ulrich et al., 2009). These strategic activities are for example aligning the capabilities of employees with technological changes in the future. Human resource moved from the focus on only the human resource activities to a more focus on what it contributes to the organization (Spencer, 1995; Lawler, 1995; Ulrich, 1997). This is in line with strategic human resource management that connects the strategic goals and objectives of the organization with human resource activities to increase the organizational performance (Truss and Gratton, 1994).

Spencer (1995) identified three fields in which human resource management can add value to the business. The strategic area can create the most added value, second comes human resource services, and third with the lowest added value is human resource administration. Besides, the activities in the administrative area are most costly and the activities in the strategic area have the lowest costs. Therefore, human resources should focus on strategic activities by outsourcing the administration and service-delivery, which are costly and create less value (Spencer, 1995). However, this is only possible in large organizations.

3.3 Role of human resources in effective organizational change

In this paragraph of the literature study, human resources as a strategic change agent, the linkage between capabilities for effective organizational change and human resources, and the linkage between common human resource practices and effective organizational change is described to answer the last sub-question: 'Which roles could human resource employees play to achieve organizational change effectively?'

3.3.1 Human resources as a strategic change agent

Now, the analysis if a human resource employee can act as a change agent is described, based on the operational practices and strategic capabilities of human resources and the needed operational practices and strategic capabilities for effective change management. It became clear that human resource management turned into a strategic role and its role in helping organizations manage change since the organizational environment became more competitive (Thill, Venegas, & Groblschegg, 2014). Some researchers stated that the change agent should have a behavioral science background such as the human resources department (Cummings and Worley, 2001; Caluwe and Vermaak, 2003).

External change agents have limited familiarity with the business, and therefore they work usually together with an internal member from the human resources department. These two actors should collaborate with line managers. Large organizations have sometimes a specific function of a change expert. This internal change agent replaces the external change agent and works directly with the management team of the business to facilitate change efforts (Lunenburg, 2010). Business collaborations between human resource experts and the employees is dominant for human resource activities within organizations. They show the role of human resource specialists next to other members of the company to help them achieve their objectives by creating strategies to improve productivity. This is done through the alignment of corporate resources to these objectives (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). Dunphy and Stace (1990) stated that human resources is key in organizing and implementing organizational change. Therefore, effective change is a main challenge

for human resources which will motivate managers to solve problems about behavior change, participation, and resistance (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013).

Guest (1990) follows the assumption that the combination of behavioral science and business strategy of human resources results in competitive advantages. He stated that one of the focus areas of human resource managers can be productivity improvement and change. Also Story (1992) developed a model in which four roles for human resource managers are presented. Those roles are: the 'advisers', the 'change makers', the 'handmaidens' and the 'regulators'. Handmaidens and regulators are present at the tactical level of an organization, while advisers and change makers are located in the strategic level. This was an inspiration to Dave Ulrich's human resource role model.

Ulrich defined the different human resource activities and roles: change agent, strategic partner, administrative expert, and employee champion. Ulrich´s human resource role model shows the two axes people/processes and strategic/operational focus. The change agent and the strategic partner have a strategic focus of the human resource work. The strategic partner aligns the human resource practices to the business strategy and develops a human resource strategy. The change agent is people oriented and is focused on the capability to change. The administrative expert and the employee champion concentrate on the operational practices of the human resource activities. The administrative expert provides an efficient design and delivery of the human resource processes. The employee champion is concerned with the daily issues and the employee needs (Ulrich et al. 2009).

Human resources as a change agent, delivers a business that has more competitive advantages. To get and hold competitiveness, businesses should adapt unavoidable changes in the competitive environment, like regulations of the government and the globalization of the economy. Human resources should implement practices that help managers to react on meaningful changes in their organizational landscape. They should also guide managers to communicate the direction of the future, develop procedures that reward and motivate behavior that is aligned with the business objectives, and avoid resistance to change (Friedman, 2007). Through the strategic capability of human resources to change behaviors, it becomes clear that human resource professionals do not themselves execute change. They make sure that it is carried out with the implementation of an action plan. Human resources should not decide what changes the organization should execute, but they should lead the process to make them clear (Ulrich, 1998).

3.3.2 Linkage between the strategic capabilities and human resources
Looking at the behavioral background of human resources that is stated earlier, human resources is more people-oriented instead of task-oriented. People-oriented behaviors focus more on the communicating and mobilizing practices than task-oriented leaders, and concentrate less on the evaluating practices. Task-oriented leaders focus more on the mobilizing and the evaluating activities, and less on the communicating practices (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010). Task-oriented leaders are the architects of the organization (Bass, 1990). Instead of communicating the importance of change, task-oriented leaders develop the processes, procedures, and systems to be able to implement change. They keep the psychologically distance from the change actors, because task-oriented leaders want to put less effort on communication practices (Blau & Scott, 1962). Organizational change is most of the time a confusing period, which means that the human resource department should have open communication channels with employees. This keeps employees up-to-date about what is coming through different methods. Written

communications and possibly team meetings are necessary in this case. The feedback can let human resources know how well changes are received and if adjustments may be necessary. Also, effective communications that informs different involved employees about the reason for change, the benefits of successful implementation and the content of the change will support effective change management (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). People-oriented leaders see communication as a tool to promote participation, and as a request to contribute members from different levels in the organization (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Effective communicators and specialists in managing emotions can arrange commitment to the business vision and inspire employees to strive towards its goal (Egri & Herman, 2000). The tendency of human resources to take care of employees result in more attention to their attitudes towards change.

Mobilizing asks people-oriented and task-oriented competences. Support for change from different employees can be an emotionally process (Huy, 1999). People-oriented leaders are specialized at managing the feelings and emotions of other people (Bass, 1990). Mobilizing also includes redesigning current organizational processes and systems with the goal to convince organizational members to adopt the change (Kotter, 1995). The creation of a new design for organizational systems and processes to facilitate a bond requires task-oriented skills. The task-oriented leaders identify the different individuals who need to be involved in the change process and build systems that facilitate their involvement. Task-oriented leaders focus on structure, systems, and procedures, and they are therefore more concentrated on the need to implement systems to facilitate the new goals (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010).

People-oriented leaders like human resources have too much accentuation on method, productivity and on the imposition of impersonal standards (Bass, 1990). This lead to the fact that they are less engaged in the evaluating practices involved in change implementation and to carry them on. Task-oriented leaders, concentrate on tasks that should be performed to achieve the targeted performance improvements (Bass, 1990). Their focus is to structure and perform goals and adjust them to the achievement of these goals. They know that they should analyze the objectives and are comfortable with the need to redefine processes that follow from the evaluation (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010).

3.3.3 Linkage between operational human resource practices and the steps of change

Recruitment involves employing and obtaining suitable and competent people through external sourcing (Sparrow, Schuler & Jackson, 1994). Organizational change can create the requirement for the human resource department to concentrate on recruitment challenges. Fast growing businesses may need to extend the amount of employees. Therefore, human resource should extend its recruitment process or restructure the reward program to attract more skilled employees. An organization in bad weather need human resources to carry out employees who have to leave. Also, human resource employees should maybe have to modify job descriptions if the fired employees result in other functions for the remaining employees (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). When organizations develop and introduce new products, processes or new administrative activities, they need innovative, creative, flexible, and risk taking employees who are tolerant of uncertainty and ambiguity (Chen & Huang, 2007). Therefore, human resources should search in their recruitment process for employees with these capabilities. Recruitment that attaches the fit between the organization and employee result most of the time in high organizational innovation (Tan &

Nasurdin, 2011). When management at a higher level makes human resources aware of a change, like organizational extension that need more employees, the human resource department needs to collaborate with upper management to implement the change program effectively (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013).

Next to that, an effective change leader can motivate employees in the business to learn through certain types of motivators, like rewards or promotion (Azzam, 2014). Training is important in the 'change' phase, which is the second stage in the theory of Lewin (1951) and an important practice of human resources. Training helps the employee to gain knowledge, skills, and the ability to innovate in terms of products and processes, and managerial activities in the daily work (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Therefore, training develops the knowledge, skill, and ability of employees to execute the goals effectively in their job that will lead to more organizational innovation.

The human resource practice rewarding is important in the refreeze stage to sustain the new behavior of employees. The reward system provides financial reward, promotion and other compensation, which lead to motivated employees that take risk, successfully develop new products and generate new thoughts (Gupta & Singhal, 1993). The organization should replace bonuses towards a system that reward managers for setting and meeting realistic objectives (Friedman, 2007).

4. Discussion

Reflection of the literature study

As shown in the literature study, efficient and effective human resource management activities are necessary in creating positive work behaviors among employees which directly result in organizational change. Also, human resources is moving towards a strategic business partner. However, this role is not in every business the same or has the same strength. In general, small organizations spend less attention to human resource management than larger organizations do (Hornsby and Kuratko, 1990). Larger organizations are most of the time more focused on strategic level, and small organizations do sometimes not even have a human resource department. This is because smaller organizations have less financial funds than extended organizations have, and often have more problems in gaining external financial funds (Fu et al., 2002). Next to that, small organizations have relatively a few employees, and decisions with regard to human resources have to be made less often, and they have less experiences and routines in human resource practices (Nooteboom, 1993). In general, small organizations operate most of the time in a more informal way compared to larger organizations (De Kok, 2003). Jackson et al. (1989) founded that smaller organizations have more informal performance appraisals, less compensation is production-based and the employees get less training opportunities than larger organizations with more than 1000 employees. Therefore, this research is more applicable to large organizations, then to small organizations.

Next to the differences between smaller and larger organizations, it is relevant to mention that human resources is a part of the whole organization. Therefore, human resources can only be effective in change management if senior operating managers create an area in which human resources have the possibility to focus on strategic issues. These managers should communicate the position of human resources to the rest of the organization and they should hold human resources accountable for the results (Ulrich, 1998).

Limitations

With regard to the main problems and limitations of this research, the first one is about the use of secondary data. Not all the sources from the literature review were recently published. Therefore, some of the sources are quit old, which could lead to outdated information. This problem is minimized by searching for the most recent information about change management and human resource management as possible. The next limitation is about the time period in which this research is executed. The time set for this research is eight weeks. This means that it was not realistic to extent this research with interviews and surveys.

The third limitation is about the fact that no articles were found about the different roles of human resources in different types of change. Now, the research was really focused on the change process for the development of new products and processes. However, change can be in the field of strategy, structure, and culture. The more the change is focused on human aspects and behaviors, the more human resources have influence on the effectiveness of the change process. Therefore, human resources have more influence on cultural changes compared to technical changes for example.

Further research

Based on the reflection of the literature study and the limitations, further research could be done on the comparison between theory and practice. The role of human resources in real organizations may be different than described in the theory. Interviews or surveys can be held with human resource departments of different small and large organizations to investigate what kind of role they have in change management.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

To answer the main question 'What are the roles that a human resource employee could have to add to the effectiveness of organizational change?', the sub-questions will be answered first.

What is the nature of organizational change and how to assess its effectiveness?
Organizational change is the process of continuously renovating the direction, structure, and capabilities of an organization to meet the changing needs of internal and external clients (Moran & Brightman, 2001). Organizational change should be managed by a person or team. This person is called the change agent (Tschirky, 2011). Effective change management occurs when the objectives are reached and the majority of the change actors are satisfied with the outcome. Leadership behaviors and characteristics of these change agents influence the effectiveness of the change process (Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005; Javidan, & Varella, 2004). Authentic leadership is a style that contributes to effective change management, especially for complex change (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). On the other hand, for fast radical change, a coercive and dictatorial leadership style should be used. For a more quiet form of change, extensive collaboration and consultation is effective (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). However, organizations that operate in masculine cultures should not select change agents that are led by interdependence and collaboration rather than assertiveness and independence. This means that the change agent's leadership style should fit with the organizational culture (Friedman, 2007).

To make an overview of the current situation and the desired new state for involved employees of the change process, change agents should communicate first the necessity for change. Employees need to know why they have to change their routines and behaviors (Fiol et al., 1999; Kotter, 1995). The second step of the change process is the mobilization of employees to adopt and accept the predefined changes into their day to day practices (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Kotter, 1995). The last step is to evaluate the extent to which change actors are executing the practices, routines, and behaviors which are needed in the change process. Change agents should evaluate the content of change and ensure that the change actors execute the new work routines (Yukl, 2006).

Lewin (1951) developed an understanding of change by stating that the process of change includes mainly three stages. The first stage is the unfreezing stage, which means the preparation in the business with regard to the necessary changes and it involves diminishing the current situation to improve the future state. Lewin (1951) called the second stage 'change', in which the employees involved in the change process actually shift to another level of behavior and developed a new perspective on the change process. Finally, the refreezing stage means where the change is integrated into the value systems of the change actors.

What are the roles and practices of human resource employees within an organization?
Human resource management is an essential support practice of the organization (Porter, 1985). To be effective, there should be an alignment between the business strategy and the human resource strategy (Beer et al., 1984). Next to that, effective human resource practices influence employee behavior in a positive way (Pickles et al., 1999). Human resources have mainly four common human resource practices, which include performance appraisal, reward system, training and development, and recruitment and selection (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2005; Laursen & Foss, 2003; Shipton,

Fay, West, Patterson & Birdi, 2005). Nowadays, human resources has moved towards the role of a strategic business partner in the organization that focusses on long-term goals that increases the business performance (Ulrich et al., 2009).

Which roles could human resource employees play to achieve organizational change effectively?
Human resources can act as a change agent through its behavioral science background (Cummings and Worley, 2001; Caluwe and Vermaak, 2003). Also, Guest (1990), Story (1992), and Ulrich et al. 2009) stated that human resources could have the role of the strategic change agent in the business. Next to that, it is also possible that human resources work together with an external member to compensate the limited familiarity with the organization of external change agents (Lunenburg, 2010). In the process of effective change management, human resource professionals do not execute the change themselves, but they make sure that it is carried out with the implementation of an action plan (Ulrich, 1998).

Human resources can be effective through their specific capabilities. Human resources is namely more people-oriented instead of task-oriented. These human resource professionals are effective in behaviors and therefore they are specialized in communicating and mobilizing activities, and not in evaluating activities. This is because people-oriented leaders like human resources have too much accentuation on method, productivity and on the imposition of impersonal standards, and are less engaged with the evaluating practices to carry the change implementation on (Bass, 1990). Communication keeps employees informed about what changes they can expect through written communications and team meetings. Besides, the feedback about the change process from employees that comes back to human resources through this communication, can let human resources see how effective the change was. Effective communications also provide information about the reason for change, the benefits of successful execution, and the content of the change (Adeniji, Osibanjo, & Abiodun, 2013). The mobilization phase includes emotionally support and consideration to manage the feelings of all the members in the change process (Huy, 1999; Bass, 1990). On the other hand, task-oriented leaders concentrate on the mobilizing and the evaluating practices, and less on the communicating practices (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010). Because of the fact that mobilizing also includes redesigning the current business processes and systems to press all employees to adopt the change (Kotter, 1995), human resources should work together with more task-oriented leaders during the change process.

Human resources can also be effective in the process of organizational change through different human resource practices. First of all, organizational change can create the need to focus on recruitment issues. When organizations want to develop new products or processes, they need innovative, creative, flexible, and risk taking employees who are tolerant of uncertainty and ambiguity (Chen & Huang, 2007). However, these employees can also be found internally. Next to that, human resources should offer training and development for employees in the 'change' phase, which is the second stage in the theory of Lewin (1951). Through training, the employee gains knowledge, skills, and the ability to be innovative in the production and processes (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Finally, the human resource practice rewarding is effective in the refreeze stage to sustain the new behavior of employees. Human resources can reward employees with financial compensation and promotion. By doing this, employees will be motivated to take risk, create successful new products and generate new ideas (Gupta & Singhal, 1993).

Main question: What are the roles human resource employees could have to add to the effectiveness of organizational change?

As a conclusion, human resources is one of the main functions in the development and implementation of effective change management, especially for changes in behavior and culture. However, human resources have not all the capabilities and they cannot be effective in every stage of the change process. Therefore they should work together with task-oriented employees or external actors who are not influenced by the history of the organization. In figure 3, the role of human resource management in each capability for effective change management is shown. In figure 4, the role of human resource practices in every stage of effective organizational change is presented.
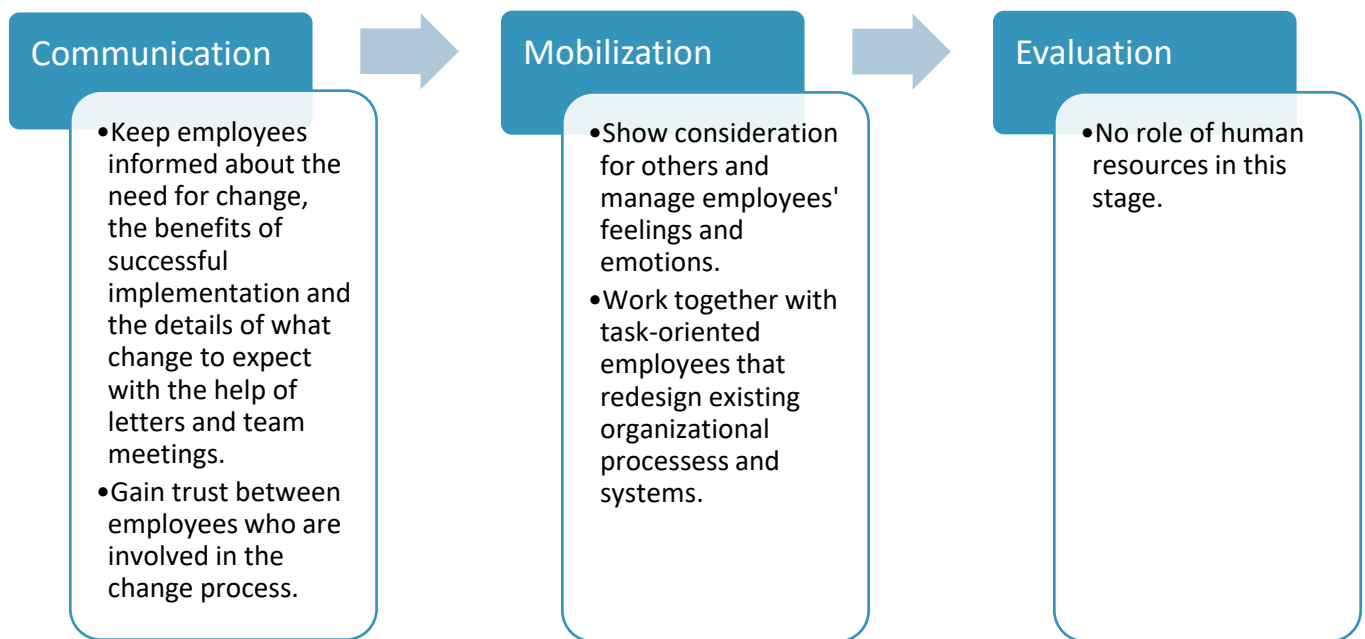
Communication → **Mobilization** → **Evaluation**

Communication
- Keep employees informed about the need for change, the benefits of successful implementation and the details of what change to expect with the help of letters and team meetings.
- Gain trust between employees who are involved in the change process.

Mobilization
- Show consideration for others and manage employees' feelings and emotions.
- Work together with task-oriented employees that redesign existing organizational processess and systems.

Evaluation
- No role of human resources in this stage.

Figure 3: organizational change capabilities and the strategic role of human resources

Unfreeze → **Change** → **Refreeze**

Unfreeze
- Recruit and select innovative and creative employees, who are flexible, risk taking, and tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty.

Change
- Select trainings for employees to gain knowledge, skills, and the ability to innovate in terms of products, production processes, and management practices in the daily operation.

Refreeze
- Compensate employees with financial reward, promotion or other recognition to sustain the new behavior and in order to motivate them to take risk, create successful new products and generate new ideas.
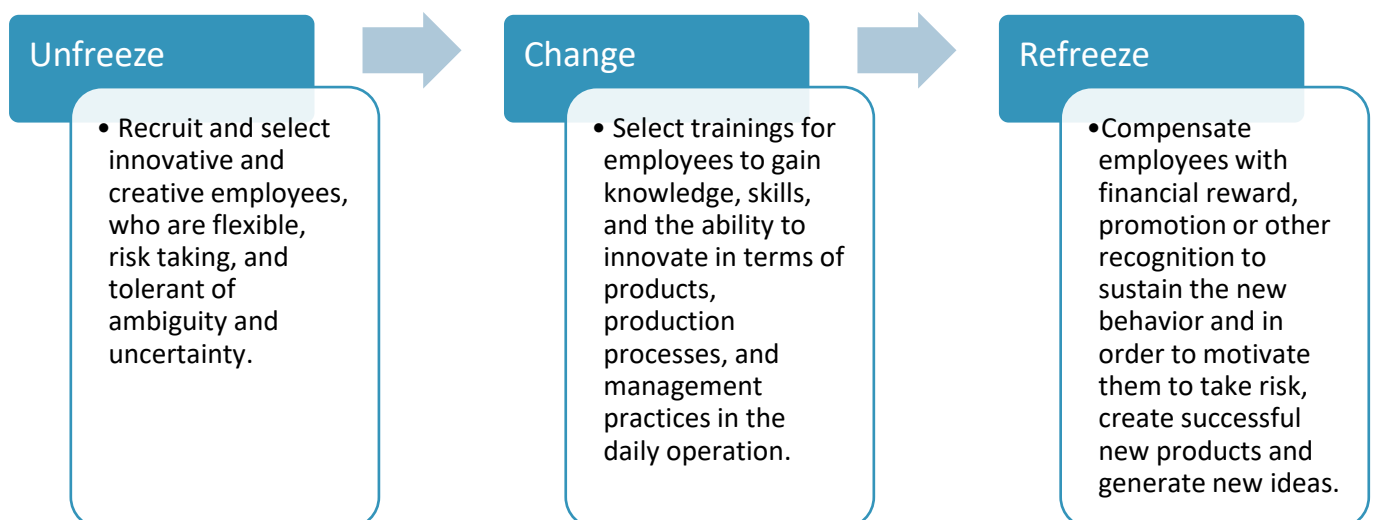
Figure 4: steps in the change process and the role of operational human resource practices

Recommendations

Based on the literature study and the conclusion, there are some recommendations to positively influence the effectiveness of the change management process.

First of all, organizations should not select just one change agent who is responsible for the management of the change process. The leaders of change should be a combination of task-oriented and people-oriented leaders. Recommended is to select human resources as the people-oriented leader, considering the capabilities and the human resource practices.

Secondly, the fact that organizations function in an open system that is connected to other departments and organizations with their own value chain, senior operating managers should create an position in which human resources have the possibility to focus on strategic issues. These managers should communicate the position of human resources to the rest of the organization and they should hold human resources accountable for the effectiveness of the change process (Ulrich, 1998).

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