Exploring the drivers towards behavioral support for organizational change: a qualitative investigation

Abay Kidane \(^{(a)}\) \& Zhao Xuefeng \(^{(b)}\)

\(^{(a)}\) Department of Management, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Louya Road, 1037, Hongshan District, Wuhahn, China

\(^{(b)}\) Professor, Management Science and Information Management, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhahn, China

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**Abstract**

Research has indicated that problems related to behavioral support for organizational change must be re-addressed to provide an improved implementation of changes. It is essential to explore factors for the complex implications of organizational change before implementing it in practice. This research aims to explore predictors of behavioral support for organizational change in Ethiopian commercial banks. In-depth interviews with purposive and convenient sampling techniques were conducted with employees \((n=43)\) because qualitative research provides opportunities to explore employee experiences and get detailed information about how they perceive behavioral support for organizational change. This study used grounded theory and thematic analysis to explain behavioral support for organizational change and to establish a theoretical basis for further investigations. Our findings indicate that traditional predictors for behavioral support for organizational change might not be enough. This study suggested three new predictors: "perceived cost," "reward," and "prior change experience" to explore behavioral support for organizational change. The study tried to clarify organizational change drivers from employees’ perspectives, which offered an alternative avenue that could provide the foundation for accepting organizational change.

**Introduction**

Organizations today face unprecedented economic, political, social, and technological changes, often leading to substantial changes to existing structures, strategies, processes, and goals. Restructuring, downsizing, mergers, and other forms of large-scale structural change are increasingly common strategies undertaken by both private- and public-sector organizations in response to dynamic environments and pressure to increase organizational effectiveness (Alexandre JS Morin et al., 2015; Sabine Raeder et al., 2019; Sirui Sun, 2021). Yet, successful organizational change remains elusive, and many change efforts fail outright (Jinia Mukerjee et al., 2021).

Throughout the last decade, a wide range of scientific research has been carried out to improve organizational change (Sabine Raeder et al., 2019) and has primarily focused on preparing and implementing specific issues of interest, especially in high-income countries (Ahmad Bayiz et al., 2018). Most current research on organizational change increasingly focuses on data and technology. For example, Christopher Smith (2021) introduced a digital workplace that embeds the latest technology into the work environment; Michael L. Tushman et al. (2017) stressed data-driven change management; Ahmad Bayiz et al. (2020) and Michal Wagner (2022) considered a modernized organizational culture by strengthening digitally-friendly attitudes. Also, the research concentrated only on a few organizational change programs. For example, total quality management and readiness for change (Mohamed Haffar et al., 2022) and change management for social customer relationship management implementation (Mona Jami Pour and Mahnaz Hosseinzadeh, 2020). Garnering employee support for changes may be one way in which organizations may more efficiently implement changes by making positive behavioral shifts.

* Corresponding author. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4605-9847

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Due to various intervention factors that promote organizational change, it is not successful for all employees at all times (Jinia Mokerjee et al., 2021). Several studies have indicated that organizational change is situational; what works in one country, organization, or culture may produce failure in a different situation (Jacobs et al., 2013). Employees’ viewpoints on behavioral support for organizational change are still pertinent. It helps stakeholders to speak a common language around change and employees to embrace and support changes more quickly. Here, employees consider factors like perceived change utility, management support, social influence, and perceived control. The behavior of employees is fundamental in the changes made by organizations because they are the actors who implement the new policies made by the organization (Ambreen Malik et al., 2019). Providing new insights into which factors of organizational change led to behavioral support is a critical issue.

Notwithstanding, conventional organizational change assessments are of limited relevance in guiding employees’ behavioral support. Successful organizational change implementation is highly problematic due to a poor understanding of employees’ behavioral support for organizational change. In previous literature, little attempt has been made to organize potential antecedents of behavioral support for organizational change within a theory-based framework. Also, there is a limited understanding of the numerous factors associated with employees’ behavioral support for organizational change. Alongside these, the drivers of behavioral support will need to be explored in organizational change research.

Thus, this study formulated the following research question that is supposed to be addressed: What factors influence employees’ behavioral support for organizational change? In line with the research question, this study aims to investigate the drivers of behavioral support for organizational change.

Data was collected from a sample of respondents working in Ethiopian commercial banks. Respondents were chosen during the qualitative inquiry’s first phase, utilizing convenience and purposive sampling techniques. The Nvivo 12 Plus (QSR International) package program supported this study by coding and organizing data obtained through quotations and participants' observations. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, previous studies related to this research are reviewed. The research methodology is incorporated in Section 3. Then, data analysis results are presented and discussed in Section 4. Finally, the conclusion, limitations, implications, recommendations, and suggestions for future research are given in Section 5.

**Literature Review**

Organizational change refers to how a company or business alters a significant component of its organization, such as its culture, the underlying technologies or infrastructure it uses to operate, or its internal processes. Organizational change can be continuous or occur for distinct periods (Tim Stobierski, 2020).

Many factors make the organizational change necessary. Some of the most commonly faced by organizations include new leadership at the helm of the company or within its departments, shifts in the organizational team structure, the implementation of new technology, and the adoption of new business models (Hussain et al. 2018).

Organizational researchers have proposed that change implementation will only be successful if employees alter their behaviors to support the change (Reema Harrison et al., 2022). The current study explores factors affecting behavioral support for organizational change in the context of employees. Thus, this section will explore the concept of behavioral support for organizational change.

Compared with the extensive research on organizational change, employee behavior to support change has received limited attention. Literature on organizational change has been limited because past studies have tended to investigate employees’ affective and attitudinal responses to organizational change more than behavioral responses. Prior research suggests that employees’ supportive behaviors assist in the successful implementation of change initiatives (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Lamm & Gordon, 2010; Adaligsa Battistelli et al., 2014; Mohamed Haffar et al., 2022).

Behavioral support for change is defined as employees’ demonstration of support by going above what is formally required and exerting extra effort to go along with the spirit of the change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Employees who are affectively committed to change will translate their feelings of obligation to support change and their positive beliefs about the benefits of change into concrete supportive behaviors.

Consistently, prior empirical research has found employees’ change commitment to be a precursor of their supportive behaviors toward change (e.g., cooperation and championing) (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Ahmad Bayiz et al., 2018). Similarly, employees’ strong affective commitment to change is expected to motivate them to invest their time and cognitive resources in generating and suggesting creative ideas amid a change to support it (Mohamed Haffar et al., 2022).

Several factors may affect employees’ behavior during times of organizational change. Affective commitment to change is one such factor. Studies utilizing Herscovitch and Meyer’s (2002) three-component model of organizational change have consistently shown higher employee affective commitment to a change to be related to increased behavioral support for the change (e.g., Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002; Machin et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2007; Shin et al., 2012).

Identifying factors that motivate individuals to support organizational change is of vital interest for the successful management of changes, where employee involvement is instrumental, and indeed essential, to accomplish specified objectives (e.g., increasing product quality or operational efficiency).
Previous research has confirmed several contextual antecedents of change-supportive attitudes and behaviors; these include organizational commitment and social relationships at work (Iverson, 1996; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Madsen, Miller, & John, 2005; Meyer et al., 2007), information about the change and beliefs regarding its consequences (Coyle-Shapiro, 1999; Miller et al., 1994; Rousseau, & Tijoriwala, 1999), and the possibilities for participation in decision-making and change-related self-efficacy (Jansen, 2004; Jimmieson, Terry, & Callan, 2004; Wanberg & Banas, 2000), anticipated benefits of the change and the quality of the employment relationship (Tai Gyu Kim et al., 2010).

Despite the cumulative progress of empirical research, little attempt has been made to organize these potential antecedents within a theory-based framework (e.g., Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts, & Walker, 2007; Piderit, 2000). Not until recently have scholars suggested and demonstrated the integrated utility of social cognitive theory, theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, and affective events theory. In this regard, this late adoption in change research is surprising, as social cognitive theory, theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior and affective events theory are established as powerful predictive models of behavior in many fields, including health sciences, education, and marketing (Kami L. Tsai, 2015; Tai Gyu Kim et al., 2010; Armitage & Conner, 2000).

Developed as an expansion of the theory of social cognitive (Bandura, 1986), reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), affective events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and planned behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), social cognitive theory proposes that behavior change is affected by environmental influences, personal factors, and attributes of the behavior itself. Affective events theory; besides focusing on affect, it encompasses cognitions, behavior, attitudes, and other crucial psychological constructs to explain job behavior and performance. At the same time, theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior specifies that individuals make conscious decisions to engage in a particular behavior, influenced by personal beliefs regarding the behavior and evaluations of its outcomes (attitude), normative beliefs regarding its social desirability and perceived social pressure to carry it out (subjective norm), and control beliefs regarding the ability and opportunity to perform the respective behavior (perceived behavioral control). These four theories seem beneficial for researchers and organizations to understand better factors that may influence employee behavioral support for organizational change.

Literature reveals that the design strategy of behavioral support for organizational change can be divided into three categories: determining behavioral support for organizational change issues, theory design, and literature review studies (Ahmad Bayiz et al., 2018). Besides, previous studies have presented several theories and concepts intended to provide empirical models for improving behavioral support for organizational change. Yet, most of the research in this area was designed to investigate its relationship with a commitment to change. However, a recent study (Ambreen Malik et al., 2019) suggests an integrated model with different antecedents.

Although the three-component model of organizational commitment and Lewin's three-step change theory has been well-known in recent years (Adalgisa Battistelli et al., 2014; Alexandre JS Morin et al., 2015; Sabine Raeder et al., 2019), the theory of social cognitive, reasoned action, and planned behavior (Mona Jami Pour and Mahnaz Hosseinzadeh, 2020; Jinia Mukerjee et al., 2021; Mohamed Haffar et al., 2022) are now becoming more popular for empirical research to investigate behavioral support for organizational change.

The model performance may vary due to diverse reasons, such as study context and background. Literature reveals the integrated model can provide more additional insight than single models (Mona Jami Pour and Mahnaz Hosseinzadeh, 2020). Additionally, Kami L. Tsai (2015) encourages researchers to introduce additional endogenous and exogenous variables to the baseline behavioral support for organizational change to enhance the explanatory power. This study developed an integrated model with newly introduced factors and existing variables based on findings of a qualitative study that contribute to behavioral support for organizational change.

**Research and Methodology**

A grounded theory (Darlan José Roman et al., 2017) methodological approach, along with thematic analysis (Ashley & Amanda, 2018), has been used in this study. The grounded theory was used to understand the current context and develop the theoretical foundation for further investigation into the drivers of behavioral support for organizational change. The grounded theory attempts to uncover the meanings of people's social actions, interactions, and experiences. (Darlan José Roman et al., 2017).

Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It is described as a descriptive method that reduces the data flexibly and dovetails with other data analysis methods. This study followed the guidelines of the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). The Nvivo 12 Plus (QSR International) package program supported this study by coding and organizing data obtained through quotations and participants' observations.

**Research Design**

In-depth interviews (IDI) serve as the primary method for collecting qualitative data for this research. The interview is the most widely employed method for data collection in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The primary purpose of the interview is to collect valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives. A research interview aims to understand an individual's perceptions, experiences, expectations, beliefs, and motives about a particular subject or topic (e.g., factors affecting...
behavioral support for an organizational change). This inductive approach was used to gain a theoretical interpretation by analyzing how employees’ conceptualized their perceptions.

The field team collected information from employees who intended to practice organizational change at different times. According to Robson (2011), IDI is an open interview, ranging from 30 minutes to several hours. Five to ten more specific questions about a particular subject or issue will be investigated. With this strategy, the data can be examined, and the fundamentals that guide employee behavior can be recognized. As a result, this study was carried out in a single discussion setting, where employees who had experienced organizational change were interviewed.

Research Team, Fieldwork, and Reflexivity

The lead researcher conducted the interviews together with a different research assistant. The research team received assistance from three independent freelance interviewers who are all business administration graduates and have completed more than six years of fieldwork. The field team travels to various districts, head offices, and branches of commercial banks in Ethiopia. The interviewer and the participants did not have any prior ties. During the stages of data collection, interactions between the interviewer and participants started to occur. Therefore, bias had no chance of developing.

All participants were informed of the purpose of the study before the interview, and the interviewer confirmed their written consent to participate in the interview by using a consent form. The researcher made every effort to create a relaxed and open environment where participants could share their experiences. Sometimes, the interviewer tried to speed up and explain unfamiliar words or phrases so that interviewees could understand and respond more effectively.

Sample Selection and Setting of the Context

During the first qualitative investigation stage, respondents were selected using purposive and convenience sampling methods. The interviewer interviewed purposively experienced employees (employees with three or more years of experience) because of the possibility of receiving a more in-depth understanding and knowledge in a specific context. This also helps to avoid any misleading from our objectives and to assure a good result.

The sample size was not pre-determined, and data were collected using a convenient sampling technique. Due to the scattered nature of the population and the respondents’ busy schedule constraints, this study applied a convenient sampling technique. Data collection was discontinued when it reached the point of data saturation, as recommended by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006). A successful 43 in-depth interviews were completed with employees who had experienced organizational change before. In particular, the participants ranged from 24 to 53 years, having at least three years of experience in the organization or coming from diverse positions. Our interviews have included chief cashiers, auditors, accountants, customer service officers, and other office workers because they significantly promote organizational change. Table 1 provides a brief overview of the participants’ characteristics.

A note-taking technique was used to record the interview, which was then reviewed to conduct additional analysis. This study gathered informants from various age groups, sexes, and job positions to synthesize as much information as possible. This maximized the number of different concepts and their diversity in terms of their properties and dimensions. Each opinion piece began with an open-ended question about their background up to the point where they experienced organizational change. All participants expressing interest and being able to give written informed consent could participate in the discussion. No person was excluded due to race, religion, health status, or gender.

Findings and Discussions

Demographic Information

The demographic information about the participants is summarized in Table 1. In this study, males surpassed females by 62.8% to 37.2%. The majority age group was between 20 and 30 (53.6%), followed by 31 to 40 (34.8%). The majority of respondents, 55.8%, were BA degree holders, and 44.2% were Master's degree holders. This indicates that they are highly educated. This study found that 34.8% were customer service officers, 20.9% were auditors, 16.3% were accountants, 14% were chief cashiers, and 14% were other office workers. 71.1 % of those who participated in this study had at least seven years of experience in their organization.

The information about organizational change before implementation came from the top management as per the response of the majority of participants (41.9%), followed by an immediate boss (32.6%) and colleague (16.3%). Also, 9.2% of the respondents never knew when the occurrence happened. This shows a communication gap. The majority of the respondents (74.4%) agreed that change occurs when it is needed. Their experience regarding the previous organizational change was excellent (37.2%), good (25.6%), moderate (23.2%), and bad (14%). However, there is a diversified response regarding managers' frequency of follow-up on organizational change. A significant proportion of the respondents showed how managers are active in the process (55.7 %). The other respondents (44.3%) didn't believe the follow-up was that regular. This variation of responses can give a researcher an idea to carefully study the manager's participation in organizational change.
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27 (62.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16 (37.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 30</td>
<td>23 (53.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 40</td>
<td>15 (34.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 51</td>
<td>5 (11.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 and above</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA degree</td>
<td>24 (55.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>19 (44.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. degree</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>12 (27.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>20 (46.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 and above</td>
<td>5 (11.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service officer (checker/Maker)</td>
<td>15 (34.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>7 (16.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef Cashier</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditor</td>
<td>9 (20.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other office works</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you know the occurrence of organizational change before it is implemented?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the top management</td>
<td>18 (41.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From my immediate boss</td>
<td>14 (32.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From my colleague</td>
<td>7 (16.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never know</td>
<td>4 (9.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How frequently is organizational change occurring?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When needed</td>
<td>32 (74.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a fixed interval</td>
<td>11 (25.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your experience regarding organizational change</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>16 (37.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>11 (25.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10 (23.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How frequently do managers follow the organizational change?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>10 (23.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>8 (18.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a year</td>
<td>7 (16.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change Targets n=43

Thematic Analysis

This study found that the drivers of behavioral support for organizational change were eleven themes and twenty-three sub-themes. The identified concepts were labeled and classified using an open, axial, and selective coding process. The six most popular thematic analysis steps, including familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up, have been performed among the different approaches (Darlan José Roman et al., 2017)). This study also identified three new themes of behavioral support for organizational change: perceived cost, reward, and prior change experience. Eight other themes are identical to the previous theories. Table 2 provides a summary of the themes and sub-themes.
Table 2: Distribution of Themes and Sub-themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme / Supported Theories</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[SCT] Adam (2016); Siriri Sun (2021)</td>
<td>Dealing with a particular situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[TRA] Fishbein and Ajzen (1977); Sabine Raeder et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Make sure of one's ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take positive actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake initiatives for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived Change Utility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[SCT] Meyer et al. (2002); Solinger, van Offen, &amp; Roe (2008)</td>
<td>Something to gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matches the priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[IDI findings]</td>
<td>Pressure at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break personal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Valence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[SCT] Fishbein and Ajzen (1977); Sabine Raeder et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Needed to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worthwhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[SCT] Meyer et al. (2002); Solinger, van Offen, &amp; Roe (2008); Kotter &amp; Schlesinger (1979)</td>
<td>Commitment level to the proposed change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reward</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[IDI findings]</td>
<td>Appropriate benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding the appraisal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helpfulness of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[AET] Achilles A. Armenakis et al. (1992); Kami L. Tsai (2015)</td>
<td>Input during the decision-making process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[TPB] Ajzen (1991)</td>
<td>Influence the change process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control over the change process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Influence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[TRA] Ajzen &amp; Fishbein (2005); Fishbein and Ajzen (1977)</td>
<td>Friends' and colleagues' approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction with other employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Change Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[IDI findings]</td>
<td>Hopefulness about the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adopted by authors

**Change Self-Efficacy.** The banking sector faces the challenge of retaining experienced and resourceful employees while adapting to environmental changes. Employees are viewed as a source of competitive advantage in today's highly dynamic business environment. The individual with change self-efficacy is unlikely to be pressured by feelings of inadequacy. The literature revealed they are expected to persevere in managing the organizational change process, will tend to understand significant ideas, take positive actions, and undertake change initiatives. It is a philosophical way for employees to respond to actions taken by their employers. Employees with a higher level of self-efficacy are more likely to have positive relationships with their organizations and to report positive behavior and goals toward employers. Therefore, change self-efficacy is employees' belief in their ability to exercise control over their functioning and events that affect their lives. Many scholars conclude that it is an essential factor for an employee's positive contribution to organizational success and acts as a facilitator to improve employee behavior. This study found:

"The feelings of competence result in positive work attitudes and success in handling change situations because I feel sure of my abilities to respond to the demands of certain organizational changes." [CSO3, CC3]

"Employees lost their belief in their ability to take necessary actions in dealing with organizational changes when they feel that the work environment is extremely insecure." [CC1, CSO7, CC5, CSO15]

Besides, young employees aged 20 to 30 years [CSO11, CC6, CSO4] showed passive behavior.

"In a more competitive employment market, I prefer to find the best place at an early age. I am not sure about staying in this organization for long; I said nothing to respond to the demands of certain organizational changes, keeping my feelings to myself, and going along with the organization's plans when I wish I were doing something else."

Findings suggest that young employees aged 20 to 30 years exhibit separation of one's self from one's work roles. They withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. So, organizations should be aware of employee demands to maintain the stability of changing relationships between workers and employers. Otherwise, it would have a negative impact on the success of the organizational change.
Perceived Change Utility. So long as organizational change is prominent, it still faces challenges of acceptance from employees. Our results found that organizational members will feel much better about implementing changes when they feel appropriate. Change utility evaluated how useful and worthwhile the employees perceived a change to be. In a dynamic business environment, legitimate reasons to make organizational changes can optimally facilitate supportive behaviors. These days, employees want to ensure that organizational change can improve overall efficiency and match organizational priorities. Organizational change might address a crucial organizational problem and reach an important goal, increasing behavioral support.

"I always asked one question – is the specific change being introduced an appropriate reaction to the need for change? Employees address the possibility that a specific change benefits the organization. If employees view the proposed change as the wrong approach, they may not be willing to attempt to make it work." [CSO1, CC2, CSO4, AUD7]

In parallel, employees found specific organizational changes introduced in their bank satisfactory because they felt it was helpful to the organization. This study found the following:

"The introduction of organizational restructuring improves our organization's overall efficiency." [CSO9]

"From my experience, organizational restructuring in the bank addresses an important organizational problem and reaches an important goal." [CC4]

The specific change being introduced should consider the vision. Thus, employees may be willing to support the change. According to the study:

"There is a possibility that employees may embrace a vision but not agree that a specific change is appropriate to support that vision. We might not take it positively if we see the proposed change is not the right way to pursue the vision." [CSO12, CSO5]

Perceived Cost. Perceived costs were overcome by convincing employees of what might have occurred in pursuing organizational change. However, the expected pressure at work and personal relationships were other challenges perceived at an individual level. Perceived costs included social and psychological costs. Often, employees are much more likely to exclude from a new behavior while believing that a certain organizational change will cost something. Perceived cost can paralyze a person's willingness to cooperate in the change process and cause them to resist change. Participants, particularly males, have identified several challenges to the support of organizational change. As organizational change creates uncertainty, our participants' prominent barriers came from competency, position, and status. Evidence shows that:

"When change happens in the workplace, I fear failing at new processes and procedures. Also, I might lose my job and position." [ACC4]

"My new roles might require skills that I don't possess, and the old ways of working will disappear." [CSO10]

Personal relationship breakups developed based on shared behavior were an obstacle identified by the interviewees. Some males were concerned with their trusted relationships.

"I might no longer be working with trusted colleagues. However, my eagerness to learn new things helps me cope with changes." [OW3]

The middle age (30 to 50 years) employees feared being more vulnerable to this obstacle. In addition, losing one's status has been described as another obstacle.

Personal Valence. Despite numerous attempts that organizations have implemented to succeed in the change, personal valence remains an unresolved issue for managers. This shows how organizational members value the specific change and how they think it is needed, necessary, beneficial, or worthwhile. They want to ensure they will or will not benefit from implementing the change. While AnnisDwi Trisnawati et al. (2021) conclude that the more organizational members value the change, the more they will want to implement it. This research result suggests that young employees have a more incredible feeling about engaging in organizational change while they make sure that it can give them new career opportunities. This shows that young employees are becoming more dedicated to their job or career than the organization (Colquitt et al., 2019). Change communication is best for employees to have a cooperative attitude in every change activity and be persistent in implementing changes. Evidence suggests that

"I believe there is something for me to gain after the organizational change is introduced. It must be worthwhile and can give me new career opportunities." [AUD4, CSO15]

When employees benefit from the change, they start implementing changes, exhibit cooperation in all change efforts, and be tenacious (Hodges, 2021).

Management Support. Prior literature outlined management support as a tool for promoting employees' confidence that there is commitment, encouragement, and involvement from senior leaders to implement efficient organizational change. In the context of organizational change, management support includes training in new skills, giving employees time off after a demanding period, or simply listening and providing emotional spur. Previous research has shown that intensify management support has strengthened employees' behavioral support. Different indicators that potentially measure conditions have been identified by this qualitative study,
including the leader's commitment level, emotional support, organizational training, and so on. In addition, employees expected a clear signal and encouragement from senior managers until the task's completion. Employee [OW2] said

"I prefer a manager who is committed to the prospective change rather than simply delegate tasks and receive results."

And "Organization's top decision-makers encouraged us to embrace organizational change. Their support builds trust and inspiration and helps me and my colleagues overcome our challenges." [CC5]

However, offering special training about the newly implemented modification is vital to persuade employees. Many banks have recently offered training on implementing organizational change appropriately and effectively. Evidence shows the following

"My bank has taught us how to implement organizational change, which explains how organizational change is necessary for companies to succeed and grow and how not only must organizations continuously consider changes that might increase their competitiveness and ability to thrive, but they must also find ways of successfully implementing such changes and do so at a much more rapid pace than ever before." [AUD3]

"I attained a training program in major organizational change areas, including strategy, technology, structure, and people." [CSO13]

The effectiveness of organizational change, which is crucial for competitiveness, has become increasingly dependent on management's active support for change programs.

Reward. In organizational change, it's no wonder that recognizing one's effort has been one of the main challenges and benefits. Reward helps employees master their work habits and set themselves up for success. It may ensure employees are kept abreast of organizational change and have supporting behavior. The primary motivation for rewards is incentivizing employees to work hard and meet organizational change goals. Two types of incentives can be categorized: monetary and non-monetary. Monetary rewards, such as profit sharing and bonuses, involve direct money to the employee. At the same time, a non-monetary reward system offers employees convenience and security. It focuses on emotional and psychological benefits.

"Promotion and flexible timings inspire me to involve in organizational change fully." [CC4, AUD9, CSO14]

A reward system can set employees up for success. For a rewards program to be successful, the motivation should depend on the individual's ability to understand what is being asked of them. This study found:

"Employees must be treated equally and have a right to know how the reward system works. The specifics need to be spelled out for every employee." [CSO8, AUD3]

Change Communication. Communication is crucial in shaping employees' expectations and attitudes regarding the organizational change. Employees are informed of the changes, how they will affect them, and what they should do next through change communications. It assists people in moving forward from their existing circumstance to the new one that is demanded of them. Change communication can reduce employee uncertainty and increase competency for the change (P. Malik & Garg, 2017). Delivering information and documentation that are timely, pertinent, and consistent, as well as providing ways for people to give feedback, voice concerns, and ask questions, should be a part of every change communication effort. Hence, communication is an interactive process with employees to develop, promote and sustain positive behaviors. The following participants [CSO14, AUD9, OW6] were described as

"Management provides employees with detailed information regarding the change and an adequate and acceptable reason for the change."

Moreover, [ACC3, AUD1] said

"I received thoughtful answers to questions on the change process, and the management kept me informed about the status of the change."

Employee Participation. According to Yurnalis & Mangundjaya (2020), there are varying degrees of participation, allowing employees to provide their input during the decision-making process, taking steps to involve employees early in the change process, and playing an active role throughout the change process. A literature review of fourteen studies on participation (Oreg, 2011) reflects that participation has a variety of positive effects on employees and is associated with increased support/reduced resistance to change. This implies that employees are passive or apathetic when management does not want to share decision-making control with others. However, getting employees on board with change isn't always easy. It takes skill as well as time to create space for productive participation. Within the context of participation, employees consider factors such as who makes decisions and how input is used, how the organization selects people to participate, what comes into play, and values or norms that might make open participation uncomfortable for some. In the present context, employee participation refers to adequate opportunities to provide input regarding organizational change.

"I was always invited to involve early in the process and encouraged to play an active role throughout the change. And provide important decisions regarding the change." [CSO6, AUD5]
"The managers only ask for what they will meaningfully use. The type and degree of participation they provide create a sense of involvement. Employees' input is mostly aligned with organizational change." [CSO8, CC4]

In this regard, giving employees a chance to voice their opinions during an organizational change may aid in their perception of their ability to control their functioning and circumstances that impact their life.

**Perceived Control.** The degree to which people perceive direct control over their surroundings significantly impacts how they perceive and respond to that environment. This concept is included as a factor that can facilitate or impair the performance of a given behavior by TPB (Ajzen, 1991), which improves the TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It strongly influences behaviors requiring persistence and effort. The greater the perceived control, the stronger should be the person's intention to perform the behavior in question (Icek Ajzen, 2019). Employees' perceptions of control over their job tend to influence their psychological states of experiencing meaningfulness of work, feeling a responsibility, and having knowledge of results. A young employee said:

"At the time of organizational change, there are things that matter to me. Like, how work makes a difference to others, the degree of responsibility assumed for work, and awareness of work quality." [ACC1]

Simultaneously, the flexibility and discretion given to employees regarding work approach, work schedule, and work requirements help them accomplish their jobs and obligations. According to the [OW1, AUD6, ACC2]

"I want to determine the order and pacing of job tasks, specific procedures for accomplishing those tasks, when to do them, coordination with other employees, and other working conditions."

Perceived control is characterized as independence and freedom in carrying out given responsibilities; it helps employees feel self-determined and free from external limitations or restraints, as the employee's opinion is following

"When I have direct control over my surroundings, my engagement and creativity increase." [OW2]

However, this study shows that young employees are the leading autonomous workforce to seek more freedom and independence. They would like to depend on how to execute their tasks and be more productive. In addition, they are demanding enriched, challenging jobs and may feel obligated to respond with higher levels of self-efficacy. According to [OW4, ACC6]

"I am curious about the range of tasks I perform and the skills I can develop. This makes for more stimulating and interesting work and adds variety, challenge, and depth to my daily routine."

**Social Influence.** Social influence indicates that employees perceive motivations for others significant to them through social pressure. The current study reveals that employees are likelier to adopt a new behavior if their social group approves it (Cajita, Hodgson, Budhathoki, & Han, 2017). Social groups may share their perspectives and provide opinions in similar situations with similar interests. According to Seethamraju, Diatha, & Garg (2018), social groups create social pressure and can influence employees to support or not support organizational change.

"I communicate with other employees about its benefit before performing reluctantly or preventing the change from being successful." [AUD8]

"I accept the change if my friends show me the desired change as an accepted and normal behavior." [CC2]

Employees are more likely to listen to those they know and respect. This helps them to adopt a new behavior since the people they know practice it themselves.

"People important to me influence my behavioral support while they invest their time and energy for organizational success." [AUD2, ACC5]

Aim messages at those who may influence the thinking of the employees and may contribute to making changes. Sometimes, it's easier and more effective to focus on those who may influence change rather than those who make it. According to [OW5, OW6]

"I always take recommendations from the People whose opinions I value."

And young employees are also influenced by those who can influence change, as this study found:

"I would like to follow experienced and highly recognized employees." [CSO2]

"I admire employees with enthusiasm for the change by doing more than is required to ensure the change is successful and by encouraging others in the organization to do the same." [ACC7]

As a result of social support, employees can make the change without fear of being rejected or cut off from their normal relationships and interactions.

**Prior Change Experience.** Prior change experience is related to the practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or a particular activity. It might create a negative attitude toward one's employing organization. People can develop a negative attitude toward their employer based on the behavior of the people in the organization.
Although perceptions of organizational practices lacking integrity may be attributed to specific individuals involved on occasion, perceptions of such behavior being widespread in the organization are more likely to be attributed to organizational characteristics.

Employee [CSO5] said

"The practices of my organization lack principles of fairness, honesty, and sincerity. The choices of organizational direction are based on self-interest, and the people in the bank are inconsistent and unreliable in their behavior."

Prior change experience not only holding certain beliefs about the organization but also experiencing a related set of emotions. It is not a dispassionate judgment about the organization; it can include powerful emotional reactions.

"I feel contempt for and anger toward my organization. I also experience distress and shame when I think about organizational change activities." [ACC7]

Expressing interpretations of organizational events that assume a lack of integrity on the part of the organization may be a behavioral tendency that characterizes negative experiences as well.

"The company is only interested in organizational change to generate good public relations. All initiatives will be abandoned as soon as they become costly." [CSO12]

Conclusions

Organizations must continuously consider changes that might increase their competitiveness and ability to thrive (Sabine Raeder et al., 2019). They must also find ways of successfully implementing such changes at a much faster pace than ever before. This research leads to our understanding of the factors that must be considered, which can satisfy and advance organizational change implementations. Practical results will include improvements in employees' attitudes and behavioral support. A literature review indicates that many organizational change efforts fail (Mark Davis, 2021). Therefore, the ability to better explore the underlying motivation of employees supporting organizational change is essential for intervention success. The focus of this study was to explore better the perception of behavioral support for organizational change drivers from employees to view in practice. This strategy brought an alternate viewpoint that could provide a basis for behavioral support for organizational change. In that regard, this research brought employees' experiences and explored their perceptions of organizational change.

Strengths and Weakness

A significant strength of this study was our emphasis on employees' perspectives, as they are perceived to be very important for accepting and implementing organizational change. Another strength of this research was the selection of participants from various backgrounds, including ages, education, position, and work experience. Moreover, the results of this study were strengthened by improved qualitative reporting strategies that utilized COREQ (Tong et al., 2007). Independent interviewers were appointed to ensure impartial opinion activities for participants. Finally, this study revealed new aspects and factors important to behavioral support for organizational change, including "perceived cost," "reward," and "prior change experience." Reflecting upon all three factors will support future studies in broadening their view toward organizational change. Despite that, this research also had limitations. The predictors for behavioral support for organizational change are derived from commercial banks in Ethiopia. Therefore, external validity, for example, the effectiveness of generalizing findings in other sectors and to other nations, continues to be a constraint of this study.

Moreover, employees are not only the centerpiece of organizational change; organizational change champions and agents also play a pivotal role in designing organizational change. Thus, the views of organizational change champions and agents would be more useful in organizational change exploration. Additionally, the sample size for this study was relatively small. It might make the conclusions given weaker. The exploratory goal is to provide information for future research that can be done with more significant sample numbers. Additionally, the outcomes of this study do not represent the opinions of those who lack expertise in organizational change, and our findings do not represent their views.

Implication for Practice and Future Research

These findings are significant to all business professionals, business managers, and researchers looking to improve organizational change practices. Exploring the drivers of behavioral support for organizational change will help business professionals predict future risks and consider appropriate implementation. While prior organizational change research primarily relied on conventional organizational change literature to investigate behavioral support for organizational change, our study showed the significance of exploring the drivers towards behavioral support for the organizational change over time by looking at them from both the organizational change literature and the viewpoint of employees. This study assists researchers and practitioners in identifying the intervention components that help improve organizational change implementation.

Future studies should seek out other affected stakeholders. It is strongly encouraged the participation of all stakeholders—including shareholders and internal and external change agents, whose involvement would likely create facilities that are easy to incorporate into practice.
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