**Change Research and Application Report**

**Nikki Hardin**

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**University of Louisville**

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**Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to develop skills in analyzing a scholarly research article as it relates to organizational change and development. The name of the Organizational Dynamic article I chose to research is named *“Stop Blaming Resistance to Change and Start Using It”,* written by Jeffrey D. Ford and Laurie W. Ford.

**Review of the Article**

This article caught my interest because I was curious to learn how resistance could be used as a valuable resource rather than automatically perceiving resistance as something negative. Generally, people tend to resist change. Adapting to something new can be challenging. It's easier to stick with the familiar because it offers predictability (you know what to expect); however, change isn’t always a bad thing if executed correctly. Having recently undergone an organizational change this year, this article provided me with insights into how resistance can play a beneficial role in the process of implementing change. The purpose of the article is to bring awareness as to why managers attribute the failure of change to resistance, to point out how resistance can serve as a beneficial factor in achieving change successfully, and how resistance can overall be a good thing in the change process. In my experience, the typical response to resistance often involves becoming defensive, assigning blame to others, and feeling offended by the resistance. Instead of blaming resistance, the authors surprisingly suggest a better approach which is to view resistance as valuable feedback to successfully implement change.

In the article, the authors begin by explaining how resistance is defined and why resistance to change is often used to blame the failure of the change. I found it interesting to discover that managers are likely to blame resistance for the failure to achieve change due to them not wanting others to view them negatively. Everyone wants to look good and be viewed as competent. Nobody wants to experience failure, it’s embarrassing. Consequently, it’s more convenient to attribute resistance to the failure of an organizational change rather than taking responsibility for possible ineffective communication and inadequate planning.

Several factors contribute to people's resistance to change, such as inadequate communication from managers, a lack of trust in leadership, and concerns about job security. The article provides various strategies for reducing resistance, including clear communication, attentive listening to employees and addressing their fears and concerns.

Specifically in organizational change, resistance is viewed as the opposition that occurs when management tries to implement change and there is pushback from employees. Examples given in the article include being uncooperative, displaying a lack of interest or engagement, or having negative complaints about the proposed changes. Resistance can also be displayed in verbal and nonverbal actions. What one person may view as normal behavior; another person can review as resistance.

The article outlines methods for overcoming resistance and offers several detailed examples of managerial strategies for implementing organizational change, along with their approaches to rectifying mistakes when encountering resistance. This article didn’t focus on why employees shouldn’t resist change, instead, it shifts our perspective on resistance and shows us how to benefit from it.

The article concludes by offering suggestions on how to use resistance as something beneficial during organizational change. This is achieved by providing detailed examples and illustrations throughout the article, demonstrating how resistance can be beneficial in enhancing the change process. Resistance is often a contributing factor to the failure of organizational change, but it doesn’t have to be.

**Implications and recommendations**

To gain a deeper understanding of how resistance can positively influence organizational change, those tasked with implementing a new process could find value in the concepts outlined in this article. Navigating change is not always an easy process, however; the objections, fears, and concerns expressed by individuals often give insight that can help streamline the process and support the recommended change. The findings in this article suggest when resistance is only viewed as a hindrance, managers miss the opportunity to allow resistance to work in their favor. Managers who continue to blame resistance can be viewed as lacking accountability therefore they must think differently about resistance.

Though resistance is frequently perceived as a barrier hindering managers from achieving successful implementation of the change (Anderson, p. 187) results presented in this article show that resistance has the potential to reveal underlying purposes, increase participation and engagement by fostering collaboration among groups to address concerns, reveal hidden issues that managers might overlook, and pinpoint areas of confusion or deficiencies in the plan.

Organizational change initiatives may fail due to several factors including the lack of communication and inability to execute. Understanding the root causes of resistance can help managers develop strategies to combat resistance. These causes include “parochial self-interest, misunderstandings, lack of trust, different assessments of the costs or benefits of the change, and low tolerance for change.” (Anderson, p. 186)

**Application to Case Example**

Before reading this article, I never viewed resistance to change as something that could benefit organizations or any situation for that matter. The information I have found in this article has opened my eyes to viewing resistance differently. At my job, we recently experienced an organizational change that resulted in an increase in the weekly caseloads for all case managers. Before the change was ever officially communicated to those whose jobs it would directly impact, there were meetings held among executives that had taken place for months. None of these planning meetings included case managers or their supervisors. Like most communications within organizations, the upcoming change was leaked and many of the case managers began to “hear through the grapevine” regarding this impending change. The supervisors were not on board and did everything they could to stop caseloads from increasing. To no avail, the change was implemented, and the supervisors met with their teams to officially communicate the change. The executives who implemented the change viewed the concerns of the case managers and the supervisors as resistance due to criticism and the flood of questions that followed. Seeking further clarification was perceived as offensive. In the article, various methods are outlined to illustrate how employers may express resistance which includes asking a lot of questions and needing more detail. The case managers were excluded from all planning meetings therefore there were a lot of unanswered questions and hesitancy to buy into this change.

Based on recommendations from the article, this situation was an opportunity for managers to consider the reservations of the case managers who are hesitant towards the change and engage them in the planning process. Managers should perceive the need for clarification through questioning as constructive feedback rather than interpreting it as resistance.

According to the authors, there are several methods that can aid in reversing resistance. Specifically, implementing a new communication plan and hosting a collaboration meeting to include all persons or groups affected. Those methods can help introduce the change, present rationale, and reason for the change, and gather input from all groups affected by the change. The article also suggests instead of viewing resistance as defiance, view resistance as involvement (whether good or bad). We see in the article the importance of having a formal introduction to discuss the change process with all individuals who would be affected by the change. Having closed-door meetings is not beneficial to getting people on board. “When people know why things are changing, they are more willing to join the process” (J.D. Ford & Ford, 2010, p. 29).

Other findings in the article suggest that resistance can help managers take a closer look at the proposed change by discovering ways to improve the change or reconsidering making the change all together. Rather than taking offense, resistance has the potential to unite both groups, fostering collaboration toward a mutually beneficial solution or at the very least gaining a better understanding of why the change is necessary. Resistance can prompt managers to more clearly articulate why the change is needed in a way that resonates with those affected by the change (Anderson, p. 189).

Reference

Anderson, Donald L. (2017). Organization Development: *The Process of Leading*

 *Organizational Change*: Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ford, J., & Ford, L. (2010). *Stop Blaming Resistance to Change and Start Using It*.

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