Resistance to Change and Work Engagement of the Faculty of Occidental Mindoro State College, Philippines

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Abstract

Teachers' resistance to change is believed to affect their engagement in work which could lead to slow the implementation of educational reform. This study had the main purpose of investigating the work engagement of the faculty of Occidental Mindoro State College in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines as influenced by the extent of their resistance to change given the new teaching and learning modalities. Descriptive research design was used to address the problems of the study. It was found that the faculty's extent of resistance to change does not influence the level of their work engagement and none of the factors of resistance to change significantly influence the level of work engagement of the faculty. When the teachers are grouped according to college/department, they are found to differ on the level of their resistance to change specifically in terms of routine seeking, emotional reaction, and short-term focus. Since there are changes in the educational set-up in most higher education institutions in the country, teachers may resist change for a variety of systemic or individual reasons. Understanding those reasons for resistance may provide educational leaders with more effective strategies for implementing change.

Keywords: Resistance to Change, Work Engagement, New Teaching and Learning Modalities

1. Introduction

It is hard to believe just how different the world became over the past year, from wearing masks in public places to working from home to self-isolation. No doubt 2021 has brought more changes, especially in the delivery of education. According to Oyedotun (2020), the sudden transitions to online pedagogy as a result of COVID-19 in developing countries has exposed some inequalities and challenges, and these challenges have now become the new realities in the educational sector of developing countries.

While it is easier for tertiary institutions in the developed countries to migrate to online and virtual teachings (Langford & Damşa, 2000), the COVID-19 has made it compulsory for teachers in developing nations to rapidly adopt, consolidate and embrace the use of technology for survival at this challenging time. But what's most remarkable has been our ability to accept and adapt to these changes.

With this, higher education institutions in the country needed to formulate ways how to address these challenges brought about by the pandemic. However, according to Williamson and Blackburn (2010), one of the biggest roadblocks to addressing instructional rigor in schools is the resistance to change that is displayed by teachers and other stakeholders. Resistance to change among any teacher slows the implementation of educational reform. In spite of hopeful prescriptions from researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders, effective implementation of educational reform remains inconsistent (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

The pace of technological development in education has rapidly changed, so it forces educational institutions to adapt, and one of the critical things for change in an organization is to get employee commitment and reduce employee resistance to change (Susilo & Mangundjaya, 2019). Change has to be backed by all stakeholders through their commitment and ability to change to ensure that it happens within the organization (Mangundjaya, 2014). Resistance to change is an indicator of change-specific cynicism, eliminated when employee involvement in the organization grows (Grama & Todericiu, 2016). In other words, employees tend to associate work engagement with company changes based on the benefits that will be obtained. Therefore, gaining insight from teachers' specific reasons for resistance provides opportunities for meaningful conversations and deeper engagement from these educators.

Work engagement is an excellent predictor for individuals, teams, and organizations (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018) related to the quality of work results. In order to prosper and develop in today's continuously changing educational environment, organizations need engaged teachers (Zeng et al., 2019). Thus, this paper argues that change in any educational institution is one of the key variables that influence teacher engagement, and these two, resistance to change and work engagement, are variables in successful institutional change implementation.

This study leans on the Theory of Constraints which is an intuitive framework developed by Goldratt (1990), for managing organizations. Implicit in the Theory of Constraints framework is the desire to improve the performance of organizations continually, through a process of ongoing improvement. Moreover, this is anchored on the theory of work engagement (Bakker, 2009) which posits that an engaged employee has a very positive attitude, which is characterized by boundless vitality, energy, and a will to work and invest effort.

Results of the current study will give the administration insights into the teachers' extent of resistance to change and how this influences the level of their work engagement. Thus, such information will pave the way for interventions and strategies on how to maintain or improve the teachers' level of engagement. Moreover, resistance to change among any teacher can be addressed especially if the changes being introduced are for the betterment.

Since there are changes in the educational set-up in most higher education institutions in the country, teachers may resist change for a variety of systemic or individual reasons. Understanding those reasons for resistance may provide educational leaders with more effective strategies for implementing change. Educational leaders can greatly benefit from growing in their understanding of aspects of resistance to change. They can benefit from learning teachers' reasons for resistance. The overwhelming schedule of educational leaders (Hall & Hord, 2011) makes it difficult to inquire, understand, and integrate the reasons why teachers may resist prescribed reforms. Putting all of these in place, the researchers believed that it could lead to a higher level of work engagement which could consequently lead to the attainment of the organization's goals and objectives.

2. Objectives

Generally, this paper aimed to explore the level of work engagement of the faculty of Occidental Mindoro State College as influenced by the extent of their resistance to change given the new teaching and learning modalities. More specifically, this study aimed to:
1. Determine the extent of resistance to change of the faculty in terms of routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term focus, and cognitive rigidity;
2. Identify the level of work engagement of the faculty in terms of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement (colleagues), and social engagement (students);
3. Test if there is a significant relationship between the extent of resistance to change and the level of work engagement of the faculty;
4. Ascertain which factor of resistance to change significantly influence the level of work engagement of the faculty; and
5. Analyze if the faculty differ on the level of their resistance to change when they are grouped according to the college to which they belong.

3. Methodology

Considering the nature of the study, this study made use of a descriptive research design. The participants of the study were the 150 faculty members of Occidental Mindoro State College in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. They were selected using proportional random sampling given the fact they came from different colleges of the institution. This is to ensure that all colleges were well-represented.

Data gathering was done by requesting approval from the concerned officials and heads of the departments of the college. In order to gather the needed data, the researchers used questionnaires that were adopted from the researches having the same variables under investigation. Instruments have undergone validity and reliability tests. The validity and reliability of the

research instruments were established before their utilization. To ensure the reliability of the instruments for the conduct of the present research, the instruments were reliability-tested among the 50 faculty members. The reliability indexes of 0.95 and 0.93 for the two instruments resulting from the use of Cronbach alpha indicated that the instruments had the capacity to elicit stable data.

To analyze the respondents' extent of resistance to change and level of work engagement, mean was used. The relationship between variables was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. To determine which factor of resistance to change significantly influence the level of work engagement of the faculty, regression analysis was utilized. Lastly, to investigate the differences in the teachers' level of resistance to change when they are grouped according to the college they belong to, this was tested using ANOVA.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Resistance to Change of the OMSC Faculty

It is said that one of the factors affecting the effective implementation of reform is resistance to change (Snyder, 2017). Generally, resistance to change of teachers means opposing or struggling with modifications or transformations that alter the existing state of affairs in education. This can manifest in one teacher or in the institution as a whole. According to DuFour and Marzano (2011), resistance to change among any teacher slows the implementation of educational reform. This is in spite of hopeful prescriptions from researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders, effective implementation of educational reform remains inconsistent.

Table 1 presents the extent of resistance to change of the faculty of Occidental Mindoro State College. The overall mean of 2.56 indicates that the teachers have a moderate extent of resistance to change which means that they perceive that change in the delivery and modes of instruction today that is occurring is a threat to them at a moderate level.

It can be noted that the teachers are resistant especially in terms of routine seeking (mean=2.82) which indicates that teachers are already comfortable with the previous teaching and learning modalities and the sudden change in these made them hope for the same old ways. This could be considered a challenge to the effective implementation of reforms, as this habit slows the process of implementation of any educational reform (Hamlaoui, 2021). Hamlaoui also mentioned that resistance to technology has been found to be a prominent reason for most system failures.

Table 1. Extent of resistance to change of the OMSC faculty.

Factors	Mean	Interpretation
Routine seeking	2.82	Moderate
Emotional reaction	2.61	Moderate
Short-term focus	2.24	Low
Cognitive rigidity	2.58	Moderate
Overall Mean	**2.56**	**Moderate**

Same with routine seeking, emotional reaction (mean=2.61) got a moderate interpretation. This indicates that if teachers were to be informed that there is going to be a change in one of their assignments at work, prior to knowing what the change actually is, it would probably stress them out, but at a moderate level. Relative to this, Bartlett et al. (2020) mentioned that although most of the research shows that the psychological well-being and mental health of teachers are affected by the current health crisis, it is important to determine to what extent it influences students since they are vulnerable to the emotional impact of experiencing traumatic events that affect their daily lives.

The same level of resistance is experienced by the teachers in terms of cognitive rigidity (mean=2.58). That is, during this time of education in the new normal, their views are not that consistent over time. According to Zmigrod et al. (2019), cognitive rigidity is distinct from other aspects of cognition and was specifically implicated as a cognitive antecedent of extremist attitudes.

On the other hand, teachers can still manage their short-term focus (mean=2.24). That is, when they are informed of a change of plans, they can still manage it and resist it at a low level. And even if they thought they would do just as well without having to do any extra work, the change would probably make them feel uncomfortable but at a low level. As mentioned by Oreg (2003), the extent to which individuals are distracted by the short-term inconveniences involved in change, such that they refrain from choosing a rationally valued long-term benefit, also reflects an affective reaction to change.

4.2. Work Engagement of the OMSC Faculty

Work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Sittar, 2020). Teachers' work engagement positively impacts teachers' attitudes toward their job (Fiorilli et al., 2020).

The level of work engagement of the OMSC faculty is shown in Table 2. With the overall mean of 3.85, it can be concluded that the OMSC faculty members have a positive behavior or a positive state of mind at work that leads to positive work-related outcomes and that their level of enthusiasm and dedication they feel toward their job is high.

According to Klassen et al. (2013), measuring teachers' work engagement without capturing social engagement with students ignores one of the most important aspects of teacher engagement. Table 2 reveals that the work engagement of the faculty is highest in terms of social engagement with their students (mean=4.19). The results indicate that the teachers care about the problems of their students and they make themselves aware of their students' feelings, especially during this time of the pandemic.

Similarly, though with lower means, the teachers have a high level of work engagement in terms of social engagement with colleagues (mean=4.17) and cognitive engagement (mean=3.99). Klassen et al. (2013) cited that although workers in many settings must engage socially with colleagues, teaching uniquely emphasizes energy spent on the establishment of long-term, meaningful connections with the clients of the work environment (i.e., students) in a way that characterizes the job of teaching. In addition, Klassen et al. noted that more work is needed to understand how engagement is fostered in teachers, and especially how the specific dimensions such as cognitive and social, and perhaps physical engagement develop through teacher training and into professional practice.

Finally, among the factors of work engagement, the OMSC faculty were found to have the lowest engagement in terms of emotional engagement (mean=3.05). This means that the teacher involves their affective states, any of which factors could affect learners' involvement with learning or their sustained effort in studying, at a moderate level. Moreover, this indicates that the teachers show positive and negative reactions to the people and physical structures that make up a school setting at the same level. As mentioned by Hagenauer et al. (2015), emotions in education have been recognized as significant antecedents of students' learning and achievement, and the empirical evidence on teacher emotions is not extensive. Thus, the identification of factors influencing teacher emotions at school can make a significant contribution toward determining how to support teachers' well-being and teaching quality.

Table 2. Level of work engagement of the OMSC faculty.

Factors	Mean	Interpretation
Cognitive engagement	3.99	High
Emotional engagement	3.05	Moderate
Social engagement (colleagues)	4.17	High
Social engagement (students)	4.19	High
Overall Mean	**3.85**	**High**

4.3. Relationship between Resistance to Change and Work Engagement of the OMSC Faculty

According to Diedericks et al. (2019), academics displaying a particular level of positive psychological behavior are able to adapt to changes and are more engaged, hopeful, efficacious, resilient, and optimistic, which in turn influence their work performance. On the contrary, Table 3 shows that the extent of resistance to change of the OMSC faculty has no significant relationship to the level of their work engagement (r=-0.153, p=0.144). That is, the action taken by the teachers when they perceive that a change that is occurring as a threat to them has no significant association with the level to which they feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the institution, and put discretionary effort into their work.

Diedericks et al. (2019), however, who studied the resistance to change, work engagement, and psychological capital of academics in an open distance learning work environment empirically confirmed that a dynamic relationship exists between an academic's resistance to change and work engagement and that this produces individuals with different levels of psychological and psychodynamic behavior that informs optimal organizational functioning in a changing work environment.

Table 3. Relationship between the extent of resistance to change and the level of work engagement of the OMSC faculty.

Resistance to Change	Work Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Routine seeking	Cognitive engagement	-0.112	0.287	Not Significant
	Emotional engagement	0.025	0.812	Not Significant

	Social engagement (colleagues)	0.021	0.843	Not Significant
	Social engagement (students)	-0.046	0.663	Not Significant
	Cognitive engagement	-0.040	0.701	Not Significant
Emotional reaction	Emotional engagement	-0.251*	0.015	Significant
	Social engagement (colleagues)	-0.047	0.651	Not Significant
	Social engagement (students)	-0.076	0.469	Significant
	Cognitive engagement	-0.102	0.331	Not Significant
Short-term focus	Emotional engagement	-0.208*	0.045	Significant
	Social engagement (colleagues)	-0.101	0.335	Not Significant
	Social engagement (students)	-0.099	0.346	Not Significant
	Cognitive engagement	0.015	0.888	Not Significant
Cognitive rigidity	Emotional engagement	-0.006	0.955	Not Significant
	Social engagement (colleagues)	-0.034	0.744	Not Significant
	Social engagement (students)	-0.166	0.111	Not Significant
Overall		**-0.153**	**0.144**	**Not Significant**

On the other hand, looking into the factors of the variables, a significant relationship was found between the teachers' extent of resistance to change in terms of emotional reaction to the level of their work engagement in terms of emotional engagement ($r=-0.251$, $p=0.015$). This implies that the way teachers manage their emotional reactions correlates with their well-being and the quality of their teaching. The correlation coefficient is negative which means that the lesser the amount of stress and uneasiness the teachers experience when confronted with change, the higher their emotional engagement and they feel more excited about teaching and find teaching more fun (Klassen et al., 2013).

Further, the teachers' extent of resistance to change in terms of short-term focus significantly relates to the level of their work engagement in terms of emotional engagement ($r=-0.208$, $p=0.045$). The finding implies that as the teachers' level of resistance to change in terms of short-term focus becomes lower, they are more engaged in terms of emotional engagement. That is, resistance to short-term focus is a significant predictor of teachers' positive reactions and attitudes toward their job (Oreg, 2003; Klassen et al., 2013).

4.4. Factors of Resistance to Change That Significantly Influence the Level of Work Engagement of the OMSC Faculty

The changing environment in which organizations function requires flexibility and innovation in the development of employees' knowledge, skills, and expertise (Avey et al., 2011). Zhonggen (2015) indicated that one of the biggest challenges with regard to the effective implementation of modern, agile educational models is the unwillingness to change at the institutional level.

To identify which among the factors of resistance to change significantly influence the level of work engagement of the OMSC faculty, regression analysis is presented in Table 4. As the data reveal, none of the factors of resistance to change significantly influence the level of work engagement of the OMSC faculty. This means that the extent to which the teachers resist the changes in the educational set-up has nothing to do with their engagement as educators.

The results imply that the extent to which the teachers resist changes in terms of the given factors does not significantly tell how much engagement they will devote to their teaching job. This is opposing to what Oreg et al. (2018) have noted that academics' experience of change with regard to the perceived benefits of the change and challenges can influence their work engagement.

Table 4. Factors of resistance to change that significantly influence the level of work engagement of the OMSC faculty.

Independent Variable (Resistance to Change)	Dependent Variable	Beta Coefficient	t	p-value	Interpretation

Routine seeking		0.077	0.601	0.550	Not Significant
Emotional reaction	Work engagement	-0.105	-0.634	0.528	Not Significant
Short-term focus		-0.169	-1.065	0.290	Not Significant
Cognitive rigidity		0.043	0.338	0.736	Not Significant

4.5. Difference on the OMSC Faculty's Extent of Resistance to Change When Grouped According to College

Faculty members are believed to vary in the extent of their resistance to change depending on their work environment which includes the college or department that they belong to. Analysis in Table 5 shows the difference in the extent of resistance to change of the teachers when grouped according to college or department. As the table discloses, the OMSC faculty members differ on the extent of their overall resistance to change (p=0.008). It was found that the college that is most resistant is the College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) (mean=2.85), followed the by College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology (CAST) (mean=2.77), College of Business Admiration and Management (CBAM) (mean=2.71), College of Teacher Education (CTE) (mean=2.36), College of Agriculture (CA) (mean=2.19) and College of Architecture, Engineering, and Technology (CAET) (mean=2.14).

Looking into the factors of resistance to change, the teachers differ in terms of the factors namely, routine seeking (p=0.027), emotional reaction (p=0.0.004), and short-term focus (p=0.020). Thus, the teachers are found to have different levels of resistance relative to these factors when they were grouped according to the college they belong.

In terms of routine seeking, CAST was found to have the highest extent of resistance (mean=3.05). This implies that when compared to other colleges, the teachers from CAST would take a routine day over a day full of unexpected events, especially during this time of education in the new normal. In terms of emotional reaction, it was found that the CCJE (mean=3.01) resists the most which mean that the teachers from the college would probably stress out if they were to be informed that there is going to be a change in some of their assignments at work, prior to knowing what the change actually is. Finally, in terms of short-term focus, it is also the CCJE (2.58) that has the highest resistance which denotes that when compared with other colleges, CCJE faculty tends to feel a bit uncomfortable about changes and that their views are very consistent over time.

Correspondingly, Pakdel (2016) also investigated the differences in employees' resistance to organizational change. However, in his study, he considered the impact of demographic variables such as age, gender, and level of education. Based on the results of analysis of variance for the variables of level of education and resistance to change, the significance level of cognitive resistance is less than 0.05, thus the level of education has a significant impact on cognitive dimension of employees' resistance to change.

Table 5. Difference on the OMSC faculty's extent of resistance to change when they are grouped according to the college they belong.

Resistance to Change	Mean Square	F	p-value	Interpretation
Routine seeking	.894	2.675	0.027	Significant
Emotional reaction	3.075	3.823	0.004	Significant
Short-term focus	2.207	2.855	0.020	Significant
Cognitive rigidity	.625	1.231	0.302	Not Significant
Overall	**1.269**	**3.384**	**.008**	**Significant**

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers have come up with the following conclusions. The OMSC faculty have a moderate extent of resistance to change especially in seeking out stable and lasting routines. That is, their inclination to adopt routines can be kept within reasonable or proper limits. The level of work engagement of the faculty is high specifically in terms of interacting with students which means that teachers uplift students' sense of community, belonging, rapport, trust, and respect. It was also found that the extent of resistance to change does not influence the level of their work engagement. That is, the level of enthusiasm and dedication the teachers feel toward their job is not affected by the extent of their unwillingness to adapt to new circumstances or ways of doing things. None of the factors of resistance to change significantly influence the level of work engagement of the faculty. Lastly, the findings reveal that the faculty differ on the level of their resistance to change when they

are grouped according to the college they belong to specifically in terms of routine seeking, emotional reaction, and short-term focus.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results and conclusion of the study. To minimize the extent of resistance to change of the faculty, especially during this time of pandemic when many aspects of the teaching and learning change, the administration may consider effectively engaging the teachers in all parts of the reform and implementing change in several stages. The level of work engagement of the faculty could be further improved by focusing on onboarding to set the tone for how the teachers view the institution and their position. Onboarding teachers is recommended as a great way to connect them with the institution's mission, vision, goal, and objectives. To avoid much resistance to change, effective change management may be applied by the administration from the very beginning as it can mitigate much resistance, especially among the teachers who are quite affected. Further studies may be conducted building upon the findings of this research, addressing its limitations, and constructing the same research in a new context.

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