

Chapter 2 – Understanding change

TRUE/FALSE

1. Organisation development (OD) efforts are focused on both planned and unplanned change.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Introduction

2. Planned change can be used to solve problems, to learn from experience, to adapt to external environment changes, to improve organisational performance and influence future changes.

ANS: T PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Introduction

3. Theories of planned change have become less relevant as a result of recent global events.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Difficult TOP: Theories of planned change

4. There are three theories of organisation change: Lewin's change model, the action research model and the positive model.

ANS: T PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Theories of planned change

5. The action research model is traditionally focused on a linear model of planned change.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Action research model

6. In organisations that are underorganised, the consultant shares leadership of the change process with management and maintains flexibility when relating to the organisation.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Degree of organisation

7. Kurt Lewin's fundamental model of planned change has seven steps.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Lewin's change model

8. The 'positive' approach to planned change is in line with Lewin's model of the action research process.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: The positive model

9. The general model of planned change describes the way organisation development (OD) efforts always proceed in a strict linear sequence.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: General model of planned change

10. Quantum change occurs when an organisation drastically alters its strategic direction and develops its capacity to solve problems and achieve high performance.

ANS: T PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Magnitude of change

11. Traditionally, OD practitioners have been engaged to help solve specific problems in particular organisational systems.

ANS: T PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Magnitude of change

12. Quantum change is usually driven by the OD practitioner due to the expert knowledge required to make significant changes to an organisation.

ANS: F PTS: 1 DIF: Difficult TOP: Magnitude of change

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Those generally responsible for carrying out planned change efforts are:

- A. managers of organisations
- B. organisation development (OD) practitioners
- C. personnel departments
- D. those who worked on designing the change project
- E. those who need to lift their performance

ANS: A PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Introduction

2. Lewin conceived of change as:

- A. modifying the forces that keep a system's behaviour stable
- B. changes brought about by decreasing the forces for change
- C. the result of effective leadership
- D. a modification of those forces that keep a system's behaviour dynamic
- E. all of the above

ANS: A PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Lewin's change model

3. The three steps in Lewin's change model are:

- A. freezing, moving and changing
- B. unfreezing, moving and refreezing
- C. unfreezing, refraining and refreezing
- D. changing, moving and freezing
- E. moving, unfreezing and refreezing

ANS: B PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Lewin's change model

4. Action research:

- A. has cyclical phases of planned change
- B. depends on diagnosis after planning and implementation is completed
- C. reports new data from previous research
- D. introduces new actions based on sound OD principles
- E. all of the above

ANS: D PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Action research model

5. What is the first step in the action research model?

- A. data gathering and analysis
- B. consultation with a behavioural scientist
- C. joint diagnosis of problem(s)

11. There are several criteria for designing interventions, including:
- A. entering and contracting, planning and implementing change, diagnosing change, evaluating change and institutionalising change
 - B. the organisation's readiness for change, its current change capability, its culture and power distributions and the change agent's skills and abilities
 - C. human processes at the individual, group and total system levels, the organisation's structure and technology and human resource structures
 - D. motivating change, creating a desired future vision of the organisation, developing political support, managing the transition towards the vision and sustaining momentum for change
 - E. all of the above

ANS: B PTS: 1 DIF: Difficult TOP: Planning and implementing change

12. In practice, the steps in the general model of planned change are often implemented:
- A. by the organisation's managers
 - B. by organisation development (OD) practitioners
 - C. as organisation members modify the stages
 - D. in a variety of ways
 - E. in the sequence depicted in the model in typical organisations

ANS: D PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Different types of planned change

13. Planned change was traditionally applied to:
- A. general problems in organisational systems
 - B. organisational problems in general systems
 - C. all dimensions of organisations
 - D. all dimensions and levels of organisations
 - E. situations that involve incremental change

ANS: E PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Magnitude of change

14. Organisation development (OD) has been increasingly concerned with quantum change because:
- A. organisations can achieve better results by focusing on longer-term, planned change
 - B. to remain competitive, many businesses need to drastically alter how they operate
 - C. realigning businesses requires developmental change
 - D. enhancing the quality of work life (QWL) cannot be achieved using incremental change
 - E. planned change is insufficient to enable organisations to manage complexities effectively

ANS: B PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Magnitude of change

15. An organisation is overorganised when:
- A. its policies and procedures are too rigid for effective performance
 - B. its organisation chart specifies every position in detail
 - C. everyone has a job description
 - D. its leaders are autocratic
 - E. it becomes bureaucratic

ANS: A PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Degree of organisation

16. An organisation is underorganised when:
- A. there is too little regulation for effective task performance
 - B. leadership and organisational structure are ill-defined

- C. it fails to control task behaviours
- D. communication is fragmented
- E. all of the above

ANS: E PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Degree of organisation

17. The key to successful organisational change is:
- A. change in the behaviour of each member
 - B. change in the behaviour of some members
 - C. change in the behaviour of all members
 - D. providing information about causal mechanisms
 - E. making information available about various settings

ANS: A PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: Conceptualisation of planned change

18. Most models of planned change specify:
- A. the organisational features that can be changed
 - B. a general set of steps that are intended to be applicable to most change efforts
 - C. the causal mechanisms of change which can be diagnosed at the beginning of the engagement
 - D. the contingencies upon which successful change depends
 - E. all of the above

ANS: E PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Conceptualisation of planned change

19. Different typologies of change management are:
- A. participative evolution
 - B. charismatic transformation
 - C. forced evolution
 - D. dictatorial transformation
 - E. all of the above

ANS: E PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: The contingency approach to change management

20. Dunphy and Stace argue that change management should be approached from:
- A. a holistic perspective
 - B. a leadership perspective
 - C. an organisational perspective
 - D. a situational perspective
 - E. a strategic perspective

ANS: D PTS: 1 DIF: Easy TOP: The contingency approach to change management

SHORT ANSWER

1. Define quantum change and briefly explain how it is related to organisation development?

ANS:

Quantum changes are directed at significantly altering how the organisation operates. They tend to involve several organisational dimensions, including structure, culture, reward systems, information processes and work design. They also involve changing multiple levels of the organisation, from top-level management through departments and work groups to individual jobs.

PTS: 1

DIF: Easy

TOP: Magnitude of change

2. Briefly explain the importance of Lewin's change model.

ANS:

Lewin conceived of change as a modification of those forces that keep a system's behaviour stable. Specifically, the level of behaviour at any moment in time is the result of two sets of forces – those striving to maintain the status quo and those pushing for change. When both sets of forces are about equal, current levels of behaviour are maintained in what Lewin termed a state of 'quasi-stationary equilibrium'. To change that state, one can increase those forces pushing for change, decrease those forces that maintain the current state or apply some combination of both. Lewin suggested that modifying those forces that maintain the status quo produces less tension and resistance than increasing forces for change and consequently is a more effective strategy for change. This is one of the early fundamental models of planned change and the other two theories/models (the action research model and contemporary approaches to change) have been developed on the basis of Lewin's model.

PTS: 1

DIF: Moderate

TOP: Lewin's change model

3. What are the steps in Lewin's change model?

ANS:

- **Unfreezing.** This step usually involves reducing those forces that maintain the organisation's behaviour at its present level. Unfreezing is sometimes accomplished through a process of 'psychological disconfirmation'. By introducing information that shows discrepancies between the behaviours desired by organisation members and those behaviours currently exhibited, members can be motivated to engage in change activities.
- **Moving.** This step shifts the behaviour of the organisation, department or individual to a new level. It involves the development of new behaviours, values and attitudes through changes in organisational structures and processes.
- **Refreezing.** This step stabilises the organisation at a new state of equilibrium. It is frequently accomplished through the use of supporting mechanisms that reinforce the new organisational state, such as organisational culture, norms, policies and structures.

PTS: 1

DIF: Easy

TOP: Lewin's change model

4. Explain how action research has substantially increased the degree of member involvement in the change process and why.

ANS:

The action research model focuses on planned change as a cyclical process in which initial research about the organisation provides information to guide subsequent action. This model substantially alters traditional approaches to planned change where consultants, with the agreement of management, carried out most of the change activities.

Contemporary applications have significantly increased the degree of member involvement in the change process, emphasising the democratic nature of the process. It provides an opportunity for organisational members to gain the knowledge and necessary skills to change their organisation for continuous improvement in the future.

The promotion of the 'positive model' suggests that all organisations are to some degree effective and that planned change should focus on the 'best of what is'.

PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Action research model

5. Explain the key issues relating to underorganised organisations.

ANS:

In underorganised organisations there is too little constraint or regulation for effective task performance. Leadership, structure, job design and policy are ill-defined and fail to control task behaviours effectively. Communication is fragmented, job responsibilities are ambiguous and employees' energies are dissipated because of lack of direction. Underorganised situations are typically found in such areas as product development, project management and community development, where relationships among diverse groups and participants must be coordinated around complex, uncertain tasks.

PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: Degree of organisation

ESSAY

1. Different theories of planned change have been integrated into a general model of planned change. This general model identifies the steps that an organisation normally moves through in the process of planned change. Discuss.

ANS:

The general model of planned change describes the four basic activities that practitioners and organisation members jointly carry out in organisation development (OD). The typical sequence of events begins with entering and contracting, then moves on to diagnosing, planning and implementing change and finishes by evaluating and institutionalising change. In this model, organisational change is not a straightforward, linear process, but involves considerable overlap and feedback among the activities. In actual practice, the different steps are modified by OD practitioners to fit the needs of the situation. Steps in planned change can be implemented in a variety of ways that depend on the client's needs and goals, the change agent's skills and values and the organisation's context.

The first set of activities in planned change concerns entering and contracting: helping managers decide whether to engage further in a planned change program and commit resources to such a process. Entering an organisation involves gathering initial data to understand the problems or opportunities facing the organisation. Once this information has been collected, the problems are discussed with managers and other organisation members in order to develop a contract or agreement to engage in planned change. The contract spells out future change activities, the resources that will be committed to the process and how OD practitioners and organisation members will be involved.

In the diagnosis step, the client system is carefully studied. Diagnosis can focus on understanding organisational problems, including their causes and consequences, or on identifying the organisation's positive attributes. The diagnostic process is one of the most important activities in OD. It includes choosing an appropriate model for understanding the organisation and gathering, analysing and feeding back information to managers and organisation members about the problems or opportunities.

In the planning and implementation step, organisation members and practitioners jointly plan and implement OD interventions. They design interventions to improve the organisation and make action plans to implement them. There are several criteria for designing interventions, including the organisation's readiness for change, its current change capability, its culture and power distributions, and the change agent's skills and abilities.

The last stage in planned change involves an evaluation of the effects of the intervention and management of the institutionalisation of successful change programs. Feedback to organisation members about the intervention's results provides information about whether the changes should be continued, modified or suspended. Institutionalising successful changes involves reinforcing them through feedback, rewards and training.

PTS: 1 DIF: Moderate TOP: General model of planned change

2. What is one of the most important processes in OD? Why? Explain the process as part of your answer.

ANS:

The diagnostic process is one of the most important activities in OD. It includes choosing an appropriate model for understanding the organisation, and gathering, analysing and feeding back information to managers and organisation members about the problems or opportunities.

Diagnostic models for analysing problems explore three levels of activities. Organisation problems represent the most complex level of analysis and involve the total system. Group-level problems are associated with departmental and group effectiveness, and individual-level problems involve how jobs are designed. Gathering, analysing and feeding back data are the central change activities in diagnosis. Data can be gathered through interviews, observations, survey instruments or from archival sources such as meeting minutes and organisation charts. Data can also be reviewed and analysed, and the process of feeding back diagnostic data will depend on a number of factors. Organisation members, often in collaboration with an OD practitioner, jointly discuss the data and their implications for change.

Diagnosis can focus on understanding organisational problems, including their causes and consequences, or on identifying the organisation's positive attributes. While diagnosis is of value for the OD practitioner and the organisation, it can also be useful in deciding on the change strategy to be adopted.

PTS: 1 DIF: Difficult TOP: Diagnosing

3. Identify and discuss problems with the way planned change has been conceptualised.

ANS:

Planned change has typically been characterised as involving a series of activities for carrying out effective change in organisations. Considerably more information is needed to guide how those steps should be performed in specific situations.

In a critique of planned change theory, Porras and Robertson argued that planned change activities should be guided by information about (1) the organisational features that can be changed, (2) the intended outcomes from making those changes, (3) the causal mechanisms by which those outcomes are achieved, and (4) the contingencies upon which successful change depends. In particular, they noted that the key to organisational change is change in the behaviour of each member and that the information available about the causal mechanisms that produce individual change is lacking. Overall, Porras and Robertson concluded that the information necessary for guiding change is only partially available and that a good deal more research and thinking are needed to fill the gaps.

A related area where current thinking about planned change is deficient is knowledge about how the stages of planned change differ across situations. Most models specify a general set of steps applicable to most change efforts. However, change activities can vary, depending on such factors as the magnitude of change and the degree to which the client system is organised.

Planned change also tends to be described as a rationally controlled, orderly process. However, this view is seriously misleading. Critics point out that planned change has a more chaotic quality, often involving shifting goals, discontinuous activities, surprising events and unexpected combinations of changes. For example, managers often initiate changes without clear plans that clarify their strategies and goals. As change unfolds, new stakeholders may emerge and demand modifications that reflect previously unknown or unvoiced needs. These emergent conditions make planned change a far more disorderly and dynamic process than is customarily portrayed and conceptions need to capture this reality.

The relationship between planned change and organisational performance and effectiveness is not well understood. Organisation development (OD) has traditionally had problems assessing whether interventions are, in fact, producing observed results. The complexity of the change situation, the lack of sophisticated analyses and the long time periods for producing results have all contributed to a weak evaluation of OD efforts. Moreover, managers have often accounted for OD efforts with post-hoc testimonials, reports of possible future benefits and calls to support OD as the right thing to do. In the absence of rigorous assessment and measurement, it is difficult to make resource-allocation decisions about change programs and to know which interventions are most effective in certain situations.

PTS: 1

DIF: Difficult

TOP: Critique of planned change

4. 'Critics have suggested that there are several problems with the way planned change is carried out. These concerns are not with the planned change model itself, but with how change takes place and with the qualifications and activities of organisation development (OD) practitioners.' Do you agree? Why or why not?

ANS:

Critics have suggested that there are several problems with how change takes place and with the qualifications and activities of OD practitioners. A growing number of OD practitioners have acquired skills in specific techniques, such as team building, total quality management, large-group interventions or gain sharing, and have chosen to specialise in those methods. Although such specialisation may be necessary, given the complex array of techniques that make up modern OD, it can lead to a certain myopia. Some OD practitioners favour particular techniques and ignore other OD strategies that might be more appropriate. They tend to interpret organisational problems as requiring the favoured technique. Thus, for example, it is not unusual to see consultants pushing such methods as diversity training, re-engineering, organisation learning or self-managing work teams as solutions to most organisational problems.

Effective change depends on a careful diagnosis of how the organisation is functioning. Diagnosis identifies the underlying causes of organisational problems, such as poor product quality and employee dissatisfaction. It requires both time and money, and some organisations are not willing to make the necessary investment. They rely on preconceptions about what the problem is and hire consultants with appropriate skills for solving it. Managers may think, for example, that work design is the problem and hire an expert in job enrichment to implement a change program. The problem, however, may be caused by other factors, such as poor reward practices, and job enrichment would be inappropriate. Careful diagnosis can help to avoid such mistakes.

In situations that require complex organisational changes, planned change is a long-term process involving considerable innovation and learning on site. It requires a good deal of time and commitment and a willingness to modify and refine changes as the circumstances require. Some organisations demand more rapid solutions to their problems and seek 'quick fixes' from experts. Unfortunately, some OD consultants are more than willing to provide quick solutions. They sell pre-packaged programs, which tend to be appealing to managers as they typically include an explicit recipe to be followed, standard training materials and clear time and cost boundaries. The quick fixes, however, have trouble gaining wide organisational support and commitment. They seldom produce the positive results that have been advertised.

Other organisations have not recognised the systemic nature of change. Too often, they believe that intervention into one aspect or unit of the organisation will be sufficient to ameliorate the problems. They are unprepared for the other changes that may be necessary to support a particular intervention. Changing any one part or feature of an organisation often requires adjustments in other parts in order to maintain an appropriate alignment. Thus, although quick fixes and change programs that focus on only one part or aspect of the organisation may resolve some specific problems, they generally do not lead to complex organisational change, or increase members' capacity to carry out change.

PTS: 1

DIF: Difficult

TOP: Practice of planned change