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THE BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF THE EMPLOYEES AND THE WAYS OF IMPROVEMENT WHILE FACING CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION

This work aims to study the process of changes in organizations and the multi-layered relationships that arise in them. Since the implementation of changes infers a certain change in the behavior of employees, the article puts forward certain factors that can determine the reaction of employees in the process of changes, implying such behavioral manifestations as support and resistance. Using the SPSS software package, the behavior of the employees of the "Teach for Armenia" organization during the implementation of changes was studied, hypotheses were put forward based on previously created factors, which were confirmed due to descriptive and correlational analyses. As a result of the analysis, appropriate conclusions were made. The paper also touches on the key directions for improving the employees' behavior, which is reflected in the section of conclusions. On the basis of some recommendations the organization's current experience is studied. Some organizations have already had successful experience, and some of them are related to such directions of behavioral improvement of employees, such as the formation of a package of effective habits.

Keywords: *change, behavior, support, resistance, habit, "Teach for Armenia"*

JEL: M12, M50

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Introduction. Today, the business world is radically different from what it used to be, and very often organizations face a variety of problems, the effective solution of which requires the investment of many efforts and resources. The framework of change

management, which is inevitable in today's highly competitive economic conditions, is among such problems. To deal with the latter, organizations must constantly improve and meet the ever-increasing consumer demands. In spite of the fact that management changes are more than necessary for modern organizations, in the process of their implementation new and multi-level relationships between employees, groups of employees, and different departments emerge as new challenges and working styles, as well as needs for adaptation to new conditions arise.

This work aims at studying the behavioral demonstration of the "Teach for Armenia" organization's employees during the implementation of changes. The main objectives of the work are:

- to illustrate the essence and characteristics of changes and change management,
- to show the patterns that determine the behavior of employees, particularly using the example of management habits and their improvement,
- to highlight the factors determining employees' behavior in the process of changes in organizations, following the example of "Teach for Armenia".

Literature review. The term "organizational change" refers to a complex scheme of transformation that takes place in an organization. It affects systems, structures and processes. This usually implies a radical change in the organization's strategy. A new strategy determines how roles, skills, behaviors or workstyles will be transformed. Change management is a complete provision of the necessary techniques and tools for the managers and employees of the organization in the process of change, which implies the transition from state "A" to the future improved state "B" (Baskin, 2008, p. 7). In general, the authority to implement and manage changes belongs to the team leader or the head of the department. Moreover, before carrying out the assessment of changes, they should be able to give answers to questions like "What factors affect the organization's activities?", "What types of intra-organizational changes are there?" "What strategies are there for their management?" etc (Baskin, 2008, p. 86). Every organization uses different methods of implementation and management of changes. It already depends on the characteristics of the given organization and the variety of characteristic features.

In organizations there are often employees who, no matter what changes are expected to take place, want to maintain the old behaviors, old habits, and always show resistance to any change. Sometimes this resistance is logical, for example, when computers became widespread, accountants had to switch from paper-based accounting to digital accounting. Naturally, it takes time to adjust. There is also psychological resistance as a result of mental, psychological factors: fear of uncertainty, antipathy to leadership, intolerance to change, etc. Resistance can also be social, when individuals may be ready for a change, but due to the opinions and pressures of their teammates, they do not show much readiness.

One of the important issues often encountered in the process of change management is overcoming resistance shown by employees. It is necessary to understand why employees resist changes and then try to neutralize them. In his book "Leading Change" James O'Toole states that people generally resist change because they do not want the will of others to be imposed on them. Proper management should ensure the timely prediction of such objections, so that there is no need to "put out the fire" later on (Strand, 1995). There are a number of reasons that can serve as a basis for employees to show resistance to the implementation of changes. In particular, the lack of information creates fear for the future because the latter is uncertain. Employees are constantly wondering if they will be able to meet the demands of the new procedures and technologies. Hence the anxiety arises when employees think that they may lose their jobs, experience work inefficiency, etc. Maslow's hierarchical pyramid of needs comes once again to prove that after meeting the physiological needs of a person, safety needs come up (primary level).

Grolman, a senior partner at the automotive company "Weber Hydraulik," notes that there is a small percentage of employees who unconditionally follow the change management process because, for many, changes are unpleasant and perceived as a threat. All this is followed by resistance. Grolman identifies seven types of employee behavior that occur during the change process:

1. **"Vision and mission holders"** who have a positive attitude towards changes, try to involve their teammates in the process of changes, explaining the necessity and importance of implementing changes.
2. **"Active believers"** who are sure that the changes taking place are very urgent for this moment and are ready to actively participate in that process.
3. **"Opportunists"** study all the advantages and disadvantages and make appropriate decisions accordingly.
4. The most common types of employees in organizations are the **"waiting and indifferent ones"**, who are not ready to participate in the change process. However, if the end result of the change is convincing and positive, they are ready to take part in them.
5. **"Underground fighters"** are secretly resisting the innovations. In addition, they often infect their teammates with the same behavior.
6. **"Open opponents"** weigh every detail and offer constructive criticism; ultimately, they can have a positive impact on the change process.
7. **"Expatriates"** are not ready to participate in the change process and decide to leave the given organization.

The successful implementation of changes also largely depends on the existence of the right organizational habits. Habits reduce uncertainty and, most importantly, create agreement between employees or groups who are in conflict within an organization (Becker, 2004, pp. 643-78). Researchers and experts in this field find institutional habits in almost every organization that they study. Economist and Professor of Management Geoffrey Hodgson has spent years studying organizational habits and has come to the conclusion that "individuals have habits and groups have behaviors. The latter are the organizational analogs of habits" (Hodgson & Geoffrey, 2004). As for the pragmatist philosophers and institutional economists (Veblen, Dewey, McDougall, Peirce and others) they consider that a habit is an acquired ability that may or may not be expressed in a person's current behavior (Hodgson & Geoffrey, 2004). If the behavior is repeated, then it confirms the emergence of a habit.

Professors Richard Nelson and Sidney Winter from Yale University consider the evolution of a business firm behavior in their book entitled "A Theory of Economic Development", noting that "Organizational behavior is more accurate to perceive as a reflection of general habits and strategic orientations arising from the past rather than as a remote part of the decision tree, the result of a detailed study of branches" (Nelson & Winter, 1982, p. 108). Sometimes it seems that the leaders of organizations are making a wise managerial decision when making a choice, but in reality they are guided by long-standing organizational habits, which often arise as a result of decisions made by individual employees on their own. In their work, the professors have referred to the idea that, usually, organizations are not big, happy families having no conflicts, but having common interests. All organizations that operate on the principle of solidarity and family have habits that create harmony and enable employees to put personal interests aside and perform work tasks more effectively.

It should be noted that the models proposed by many management theorists have also been studied for this research, such as Kurt Lewin's organizational change model, Virginia Satir's behavioral change model, the change curve model, etc.

Research methodology. The subject matter of the given work is the behavior of employees in the process of changes, and the object ("Teach for Armenia") is

highlighting its possible displays in the organization and the implementation of works aimed at its improvement.

The basis for solving the research problems was the information related to the subject of the research problem in local and foreign literature on the given specialty. The international experience of employees' behavioral reaction in the process of change, the characteristics of their management and the set of habits formed by individual organizations aimed at improving the negative reaction of employee behavior were studied.

Since change management is related to various behavioral manifestations of employees, and the study of employees' behaviors is practically a rather complicated process, we considered it more typical to choose the online anonymous method of sociological survey in order to distinguish the factors determining the reaction of employees to organizational changes. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods were used. The SPSS software package was used to carry out the quantitative analysis effectively, using the statistical tools of descriptive analysis and correlation analysis.

As a result of the study, the descriptive method of research was used, because the latter provides an opportunity to carry out a comprehensive qualitative analysis, examining the behavioral manifestations of employees, carrying out a detailed observation. The method of descriptive research makes it possible to study the object from different perspectives and at the same time to show a systematic approach to it.

The correlation method is a statistical method used to measure and calculate the linear relationship between the two variables. With the help of this analytical method, it is possible to calculate the level of change of one variable as a result of the change of another factor. A strong correlation is the evidence of strong relationships between two variables, while a weak correlation is the evidence of weak relationships between variables. Experts generally use the method of correlation analysis in their studies to analyze group quantitative data. In order to bring the research carried out by us to a logical end, we found it appropriate to use this method as well, because the study was carried out in the logic of observing changes in the group behavior of the employees of the "Teach for Armenia" organization.

Now let's try to present the responses of the "Teach for Armenia" employees to the changes taking place in the organization, answering the following questions:

1. To what extent does the support provided by the organization's management influence employees' perception of changes and behavior?
2. To what extent do employees' fears and worries influence their responses to changes?
3. To what extent does employee motivation to learn and improve affect their response to changes?
4. To what extent does employees' trust in management affect their response to changes?
5. To what extent does employees' awareness of the need for changes affect their response to it?

In each of the following questions, let's identify the main factors that determine employees' behavioral reactions, such as support and resistance, in the process of changes in the organization (see Diagram 1). Then, based on each factor, hypotheses will be put forward that will be confirmed or denied at the end of the data collection, according to the results of the analysis.

Hypothesis 1. There is a direct relationship between organizational support and employee response to change.

Hypothesis 2. There is a direct relationship between fear of the outcome of change and employee response to change.

Hypothesis 3. Employees who are oriented towards learning and development have a positive attitude towards the process of change.

Hypothesis 4. There is a direct relationship between trust in managers and employees' response to change.

Hypothesis 5. There is a direct relationship between employees' awareness of the need for change and their response to it.

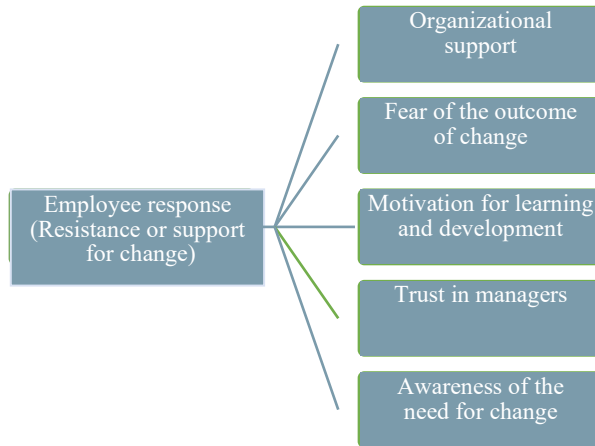


Figure 1. Factors determining employees' response to change

Analysis. We prepared an online survey (both in Armenian and English) that was sent to 43 employees of "Teach for Armenia" (These employees constitute the main staff of the organization). The survey consisted of 23 statements that could be answered on the Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 representing "strongly disagree," 2 - "disagree," 3 - "neutral," 4 - "agree," and 5 - "strongly agree." In addition to the statements, there were 2 other questions in the survey related to employees' gender and length of time working for the organization, but these questions were not used in the data analysis process.

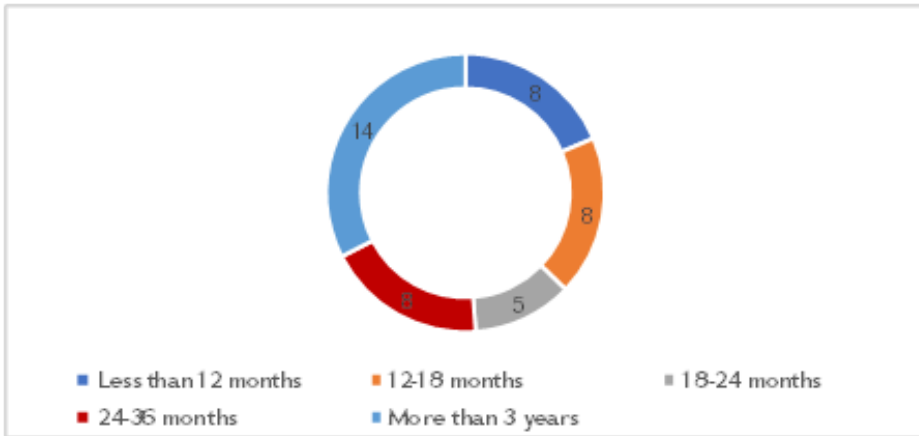


Figure 2. Distribution of the survey respondents according to the period of time they have worked in the organization

Out of 43 survey participants, 31 were female employees and 12 were male. 8 respondents had been with the organization for less than 12 months, 8 for 12-18 months, 8 for 24-36 months, 5 for 18-24 months, and 14 for more than 3 years.

The data analysis was carried out using the SPSS software package, from whose toolkit descriptive analysis and correlation analysis statistical tools were used.

We identified 5 factors that could determine employees' behavior towards changes (resistance or support). There were separate statements in the survey for each of the

factors. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each group of statements. The latter is a coefficient of quality assessment, the purpose of which is to measure the reliability of the test and to find out whether the statements within the group are related to each other or not. George and Mallery developed the following table for interpreting Cronbach's alpha.

Table 1

Interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha according to George and Mallery (2003)

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
> 0.9	Excellent
> 0.8	Good
> 0.7	Acceptable
> 0.6	Questionable
> 0.5	Poor
< 0.5	Unacceptable

In the table below, it is clear that employees were given 2 statements regarding resistance and support for change, 4 statements about expected organizational support, fear of the outcome of change, trust in managers and awareness of the need for change, and 3 statements regarding motivation for learning and development. Cronbach's alphas calculated for each factor group can also be found in the table.

Table 2

Reliability assessment

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Number of statements</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
SC	2	0.502
RC	2	0.504
OS	4	0.731
FOC	4	0.639
MLD	3	0.796
TM	4	0.714
ANC	4	0.796

SC-Support for changes, RC-Resistance to changes, OS-Organizational support, FOC-Fear of the outcome of changes, MLD-Motivation for learning and development, TM-Trust in managers, ANC-Awareness of the need for change.

Thus, the reliability coefficient of the variable for resistance to change is 0.504, support for change - 0.502, organizational support - 0.731, fear of the outcome of change - 0.639, motivation for learning and development - 0.796, trust in managers - 0.714, and awareness of the need for change - 0.796. For all variables Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.5, so we can start the data analysis process.

Table 3 shows the minimum, maximum, average values and standard deviations for each statement. The lowest average value was obtained for the tenth statement (1.42): "I resist changes because I am afraid of losing my job", and the highest (4.56) was obtained for "Today we cannot make progress without changes".

Table 3

Descriptive analysis results by individual statements

<i>Question</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
1	43	3	5	4.21	0.559
2	43	2	5	4.56	0.629
3	43	1	2	1.49	0.506
4	43	1	3	1.70	0.599
5	43	2	5	3.74	0.658
6	43	2	5	4.09	0.610

7	43	2	5	3.67	0.680
8	43	2	5	4.09	0.750
9	43	1	4	1.98	0.672
10	43	1	2	1.42	0.499
11	43	1	3	1.72	0.630
12	43	1	3	1.44	0.590
13	43	2	5	3.70	0.708
14	43	2	5	4.05	0.754
15	43	3	5	4.14	0.639
16	43	1	5	4.09	0.750
17	43	3	5	4.14	0.675
18	43	2	5	3.79	0.709
19	43	1	5	3.91	0.781
20	43	1	4	2.14	0.966
21	43	1	4	2.28	0.959
22	43	1	3	1.60	0.541
23	43	1	5	1.93	1.019

Table 4 shows the general perceptions of employees towards the change process. The binary questions included in Blocks 01 and 02 were general questions that clarify employees' attitudes regarding the overall change process. The 2 questions of Block 01 were given the following marks: 2 (1 of it), 3 (3 of it), 4 (44 of it), 5 (38 of it). The average rating for this block is 4.38. 2 questions of Block 02 were given the following marks: 3 (3 of it), 2 (45 of it), 1 (38 of it). The average rating for this block is 1.59. Thus, the "SC" variable received an average value of 4.38, which indicates that the majority of employees have a positive attitude towards the change process and generally support it. The high index of the average of the "OS" variable is directly related to this. Employees find that there is above average support from the organization in the process. The results of the "MLD" variable were also above average (3.96), so training and development are also priorities for the "Teach for Armenia" employees. They support the change process because the organization has a training program before and after making changes, and these trainings and the results of the change help them grow in their careers.

Table 4

Descriptive analysis results by individual variables

Group of variables	Number of respondents	Min	Max	Average	Standard deviation
SC	43	2	5	4.38	0.617
RC	43	1	3	1.59	0.561
OS	43	2	5	3.90	0.698
FOC	43	1	4	1.64	0.638
MLD	43	2	5	3.96	0.722
TM	43	1	5	3.98	0.737
ANC	43	1	5	1.99	0.918

Almost 80% of the respondents have trust in their managers, and employees are sure that their managers clearly understand the roles and responsibilities of each to make the change process successful. If there are conflicts in the team during the change process, they are mostly resolved by the efforts of professional managers.

In spite of the fact that the average value of the variable "ANC" is 1.99, in any case, this does not prove that the employees resist the changes, because they do not realize the changes taking place at the given moment or do not find logical and visible reasons for their implementation. Aggregate statements of the factor "ANC" were formulated in negative sentences and employees answered "disagree" (≈2) on average.

These average values preliminarily suggest that "Teach for Armenia" employees have low resistance to the change process, that is, they show supportive behavior in that process.

Table 5 shows the correlation between the given factors. As a result of the analysis, it becomes clear that there is a low, negative ($r=-0.350$) connection between the factors of organizational support and resistance to change. This means that an increase in one variable will lead to a decrease in another one, that is, the bigger the organizational support from management, the less resistant to change the employees will manifest. There is a positive, trivial ($r=0.232$) connection between organizational support and support for change variables, therefore, as organizational support from management increases, the level of support for change from employees increases slightly. Fear of the outcome of change and support for change have a negative correlation ($r=-0.184$). In contrast, there is a positive and significant connection between the factors of resistance to change and fear ($r=0.311$). The motivation for learning and development factor has a positive and significant ($r=0.370$) connection with the support for change factor, and a negative relationship with the resistance to change factor ($r=-0.282$). Trust in the manager and support for change factors have a positive correlation ($r=0.186$), and trust in the manager and resistance to change factors have a negative correlation ($r=-0.263$). The connection of ANC with SC and RC factors can give us a false picture, because from the beginning, the statements of that block in the survey were formed in a negative way. Therefore, we can claim that the ANC factor has a positive correlation with the SC factor, and a negative correlation with the RC factor.

Table 5

Correlation analysis results

		SC	RC	OS	FOC	MLD	TM	ANC
SC	Pearson Correlation	1	-,571**	,232	-,184	,370*	,186	-,109
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	,135	,237	,015	,231	,487
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
RC	Pearson Correlation	-,571**	1	-,350*	,311*	-,282	-,263	,360*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		,021	,043	,067	,089	,018
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
OS	Pearson Correlation	,232	-,350*	1	-,104	,706**	,678**	-,214
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,135	,021		,507	<.001	<.001	,168
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
FOC	Pearson Correlation	-,184	,311*	-,104	1	-,148	-,069	,510**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,237	,043	,507		,344	,658	<.001
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
MLD	Pearson Correlation	,370*	-,282	,706**	-,148	1	,611**	-,011
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,015	,067	<.001	,344		<.001	,946
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
TM	Pearson Correlation	,186	-,263	,678**	-,069	,611**	1	,071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,231	,089	<.001	,658	<.001		,652
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
ANC	Pearson Correlation	-,109	,360*	-,214	,510**	-,011	,071	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,487	,018	,168	<.001	,946	,652	
	N	43	43	43	43	43	43	43

* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level,

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

The results of the descriptive and the correlation analysis help us to deny or confirm the hypotheses put forward at the beginning of the analysis.

According to the results of the analysis, all the proposed hypotheses are confirmed. The problem is how strong or weak the correlation between the dependent (SC and RC) and independent (OS, FOC, MLD, TM and ANC) variables is.

Table 6 shows whether the connection between the variables is negative or positive.

Table 6

Correlation between dependent and independent variables (positive or negative)

	<i>OS</i>	<i>FOC</i>	<i>MLD</i>	<i>TM</i>	<i>ANC</i>
SC	+	-	+	+	+
RC	-	+	-	-	-

Conclusions. Thus, we can state that the employees of "Teach for Armenia" generally provide support in the process of changes. They believe that the support provided by the organization, the motivation for training and development, the level of trust in managers, as well as the awareness of the need for change can have a significant impact on the attitude of employees towards change. The results of the survey also indicate that employees do not have a conservative attitude towards the introduction of innovations in the organization, as well as the main possible reason for resistance in the change process is not the fear of losing jobs. On the other hand, the major reason why employees have a positive attitude towards change is the existence of the corporate culture at "Teach for Armenia".

As a result of the research, let us now present the respective proposals. In order to ensure the positive behavior of employees in the process of changes, it is necessary to implement the following steps:

- To create an organizational culture where the wide support of management, a healthy psychological atmosphere, a training and development system, and trust in managers will be vital.
- To create open communication in manager-subordinate(s) relationships. Employees must be informed in advance, in a clear and orderly manner, about the implemented changes and their role in that process.
- To involve employees in the entire cycle of the change process, that is to say, not only during implementation, but also during the identification and planning of changes. As a successful example, the case of "Teach for Armenia" can be employed, when the organization conducts team retreats, during which the management presents the new challenges facing the organization, and then ideas are brainstormed (possible solutions, the need to introduce new systems) by the employees of all levels of the organization.
- To create a professional development fund in organizations that employees can use to fund professional trainings, buying books, and anything else that will help them grow professionally (the proposal is based on Teach for Armenia's "Professional Development Fund," which provides employees with 100,000 AMD per year for professional development). All in all, nowadays, knowledge seekers are constantly looking for new ways to improve themselves.
- To regularly organize meetings with employees after the implementation of changes. Before the meeting, all the concerns or observations made by the employees after the introduction of the innovation can be raised via surveys. The meetings should identify the differences before and after the changes, understand what inconveniences occurred after the implementation of the changes, identify the positive aspects of the changes and take steps to address the areas for improvement, thus continuing to support employees to prevent possible resistance or continue to maintain the positive behavior.

- To form a set of effective habits in organizations and constantly monitor their implementation. Create a "habit contract" between managers and employees. According to the contract, the employee undertakes to form this or that habit in favor of productive work and personal growth (Clear, 2021, pp.185-188).

These recommendations are based on research and will be useful for all organizations planning to implement changes.

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Appendix 1. Survey

<i>N</i>	<i>Statement</i>
01.1	I have a positive attitude towards changes.
01.2	Today we cannot make progress without changes.
02.1	I have a negative attitude towards changes.
02.2	Implementation of changes is not related to effective work.
1.1	I accept changes because I feel supported during changes.
1.2	I accept changes because the company is considering our values while implementing them.
1.3	I accept changes because there are predetermined guidelines for how the system implementation is to be managed, and these guidelines are followed.
1.4	I accept changes because in our team, corporate culture has a high value level.
2.1	I am not ready to accept any changes because the future is uncertain.
2.2	I resist changes because I am afraid of losing my job.
2.3	I resist changes because I am in my comfort zone and I like it.
2.4	I resist changes because I have a conservative attitude towards innovations.
3.1	I accept changes because the organization has a training program to support the change.
3.2	I accept changes because I get the training which helps me grow in my career.
3.3	I accept changes because I have the potential to advance in my career here.
4.1	I accept changes because my manager shows a clear understanding of his role and responsibilities to make this project a success.
4.2	I accept changes because there are long planning periods before the change is implemented.
4.3	I accept changes because my manager finds out the conflicts in the team and tries to settle work relations.
4.4	I accept changes because my manager is a real professional and I trust him unconditionally in any matter.
5.1	I resist changes because I don't understand why this project is taking place now.
5.2	I resist changes because there aren't logical, visible reasons for any change.
5.3	I resist changes when they are not initiated by me.
5.4	I resist changes because I think they are carried out of personal expediency without considering the needs of the employees.