# Change Communication Strategies, Model of Change Management and Change Management Competencies in Royal Malaysian Police (RMP): An overview

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**ABSTRACT:** *Change has always been part of life at the moment the world is constantly changing at a faster rate. Some of the change exhibited are either revolutionary others are evolutionary also known as incremental in that they occur in predictable series or sequence. Change usually disrupts comfort of almost all individuals in an organization. For managers change may mean growth, to middle level management it may mean additional or less resources and to junior employees it may mean more work or even loss of job. Therefore no matter the change it usually has an impact on the individuals and the organization as a whole*
**KEY WORD**: *Change Management, Change Communication Strategies, Model of Change Management, Competencies*

## I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication is the crucial factor in the successful implementation of any change initiative (Connor, 1992; Hultman, 1998). Communication defined as the exchange of information and the transmission process of meaning, and it happens in three ways: upward, downward and horizontal (Hall, 1996). In this context, it is important to provide good communication about organizational change, as poor communication can result in an unclear purpose of the change programme (Covin & Kilman, 1990). Open and honest communication reflects clear understanding and it is needed in order for the change to be made.

It is commonly believed that negative employee attitudes such as cynicism and scepticism are negatively related with employee perceptions of the adequacy of communication about the change. Communication problems or inadequate information will leads to misunderstanding (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979). It is indicated that when levels of information sharing and communication in the organization increased, the cooperation also increases and negative employee attitudes as well as resistance to change also decrease. Besides, Stanley (2005) mentioned that communication used to measure cynicism and scepticism. Failure in communicating the reasons for change to employees may result in serious risks for the success of change attempts. In this case, the management department should find other strategies such as identifying trusted employees within the organization to convince and communicate honestly regarding the management's motives for organizational change.

There are three stages of change process which are readiness, adoption and institutionalization. They emphasized that communication of a change message coordinates these stages. In addition, communication creates readiness and the motivation to adopt with the change when five features are addressed as in Table 1 below:

| Message | Definition | Question It Looks to Answer |
|---|---|---|
| Discrepancy | A gap between the current state and an ideal state | Why Change? |
| Self-efficacy | Confidence in individual and group's ability to make the change succeed | Can we do this? Will this work? |
| Appropriateness | The correct reaction to fix the gap identified by discrepancy | Why this change? |
| Principal support | Key organizational leaders support this particular change | Is management walking the talk? Do organizational leaders believe in this change? |
| Personal valence | Clarifies the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of the change | What is in it for me? |

**Table 1: The Five Message Components to Help Create Readiness to Change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002)**

The most important factor for failure in change attempts is the managers' unable to persuade the organization members to support the change (Fox, Amichai-Hamburger and Evans, 2001). Mistrust and

uncertainty change agents will cause resistance and only an effective and open communication will helps managers to reduce uncertainty, show the benefits of the change and create trusting relationship in the working environment. Managers also need to emphasize the importance of employee emotions which related to organizational motivation and citizenship behaviour.

The emotional component such as pictures, voices, colors, music, taste, smell, sensation, atmosphere information, numbers, graphs and analysis. Fox et al. (2001) identified five issues that considered while preparing a change message which includes the main massages about the change, how the massages are in packaged (slogans, pictures and so on), the characteristics of the change leaders (fair, likeable, credible) and also the interaction of change leaders with the surroundings (listening to objection with sincerity, treating others in courteous manner) and also the setting in which the interaction takes place that we called as intimate environment.

Furthermore, it is important to provide information for staff regarding the past failures and achievement in change programme (Wanous et al., 2000). Negative of positive past experiences with organizational change are not to be forgotten, but to be studied and lessons are to be learned from them. In addition, communication partial development and achievement in ongoing change efforts is a garner more employees support for change. It is a good strategy if the organization publicizing all successful changes in order to overcome pessimism and to diminish negative employee attitudes about change. "No matter how small the change is, if it is in the direction intended by management, then it should be communicated" (Wanous et. al., 2000). The past failures are also to be explained thoroughly and mistakes are to be admitted so that management credibility can be restored.

Lewis et al. (1999) examined police officers' attitude towards community policing. They used six facet of the community policing programme that implemented such as organizational structure, relationship between supervisors and subordinates, community policing concepts, the Community Policing Unit and specific community policing programmes in order to measure attitude towards community policing. Age factor and duration of service are strongly related to positive attitude towards community policing while education was moderately positively related to favourable attitude towards community policing. The differences in the attitude established among different ranks. Command staff was the most supportive group for community policing, while patrol officers who were holding the least favourable attitude towards community policing had a less positive view (Lewis et al., 1999).

Besides, study identified three levels at which change occurs which are in individual, group and organizational (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). The process of selecting the appropriate level for implementing the change is crucial decision that will effects the whole initiative structure. Selecting the right level directs to a smoother change initiative with higher success rate compared that wrong implementation level is selected.

## II. CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Change communication is the process of passing information from one person to another within an organization in relation to a change being undertaken (Green and Cameron, 2004). It is always important for the management to engage the new employees and the external environment on matters related to the change process. Communication helps employees know what is expected from them and also acts like a good tool for eliminating resistance by promoting understanding within it.
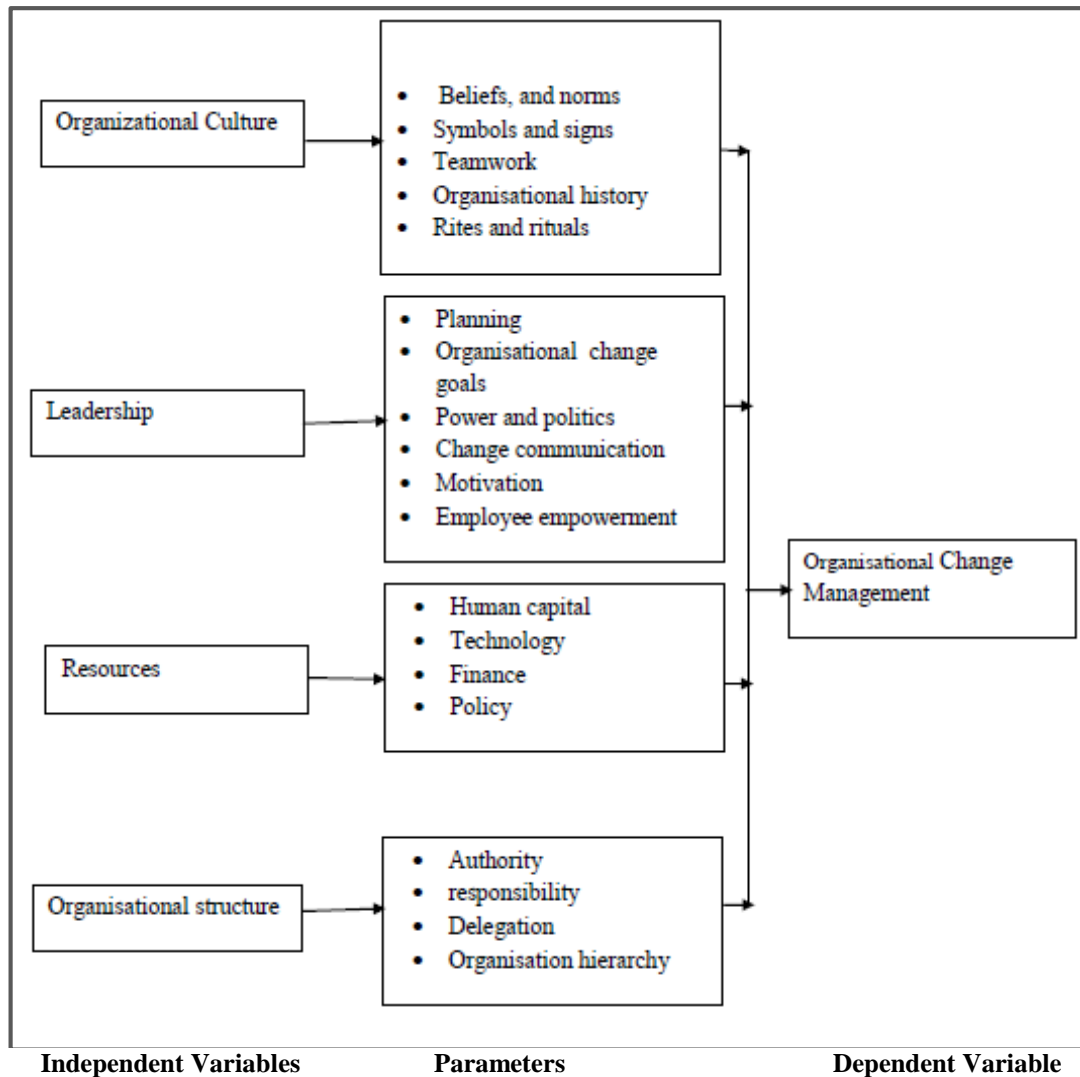
| Independent Variables | Parameters | Dependent Variable |

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

The importance of communication is a proof throughout the literature with researchers concludes that communication is a key to change. A study identified communications as an essential skill (Drew, 2010) because "change is created, sustained, and managed in and by communication" (Ford, J., Ford, L., 1995, p.560). Blanchard and Britt (2009) in the book entitled "Who Killed Change?" concluded that communications is critical element for successful change and also when drivers fail to stay and keep in touch with stakeholders, communication and subsequently failure will be occur. Lack of communication was a major contributor to failed change (Britt, Comm, and Mathaisel, 2005). Besides, listening more and talking less are another important elements in effective communication (Patterson, 2012).

The ability to communicate well requires leaders to select the suitable method for communication whether in person, in small or large meetings, via email, or other sources of communication (Kotter, 1997). Hence, effective communication described as being clear, concise, deliberate, persuasive (Kezar, Eckel, 1999, 2002; Lawler, 2011) continuous (Simsek, 1997), honest (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009), and visible (Wright & Hyle, 1995). Furthermore, visible communication such as newsletter, published articles, emails, website and speeches more readily undocumented communication (Kezar & Eckel, 2002; McKinney & Morris, 2010) and Maxwell (1999) emphasized that leaders' action must be align with communication.

Referring to the book entitled The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Covey (1980) determined that people need to be aware of their language type as either reactive or proactive. Proactive uses positive language that lead towards determinism, while reactive uses negative uses negative language, which lead towards removing responsibility. Change would cause personnel to do transition; therefore, it is important to understand the difference between the terms change and transition. Change would describe about the process of moving from one state to another new state (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009). The example of change such as new site, policy, and/or

procedure. For the meanwhile, transition is the psychological process of employees undergo when they are moving from one state to another (Bridges, W., 1991). Change also would cause conflict and disruption in a person's position which frequently triggers a feeling of anxiety (Slowey, 1995).

## III. MODEL OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT USING IN ORGANIZATION

Based on the review of the literature, six broad change theory categories were identified which are evolutionary, planned, life cycle, social cognition, political and cultural (Kezar, 2001). Each of category offers extensive theory in order for answering the following aspect such as why changes occur, what changes occur, how do changes occur, the pace of change and also the outcome of change (Kezar, 2001). In addition, theory in the political, social, cultural categories are best explain change while political category theories are best create change.

Out of the approaches listed, scholars have developed numerous Change Management which are presented as models. These models incorporate theory and approaches into a series of steps or processes that guides change initiatives. The change models overviewed in Table 2as below:

*Change Theory Models*

| Time Period(s) | Researcher or Scholar | Model |
|---|---|---|
| 1950 | Lewin | Three Phase Model |
| | | Force Field Analysis |
| 1990 | Kotter | Eight Steps to Successful Change |
| 2000 | Cooperrider & Whitney | Appreciative Inquiry |

**Table 2: Change Theory Models**

The overview of each of the models presented above in Table 2 shows areas of agreement concerning the change process, such as identifying what to improve and how to maintain the improvement. However, each model goes about the process in a slightly different manner. Therefore, out of the copious models that exist, anyone can facilitate change, but not all may be the right fit.

The three-phase model of change evolved from the study of various organizational change efforts where Lewin (1950) marked three stages that change goes through: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Additionally, Lewin found that change managers had to understand the three phases because employees also undergo them. Lewin's three phases provide a simple view of the complex change process. The first stage in the theory deals with unfreezing during which organizational members accept that a change needs to occur, move to a state of desiring to change, and propose possible solutions. Next, after an acceptable solution is identified, personnel move to action to implement the proposed solution which is often referred to as change (Lewin, 1951). The change process includes elements such as goal setting, resource allocation, building support, planning, and, most importantly, execution. Finally, after implementing the change, the refreeze step serves to engrain the change into the organization. During the refreeze stage, leaders work to establish the new behavior, document the new process, reinforce and monitor the change to ensure the organization is not backsliding into old habits.

## IV. CHANGE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES IN ROYAL MALAYSIA POLICE (RMP)

Basically Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) followed a similar framework of compensation practices outlined in the service circular 4, 2002. Separate circular for RMP however is needed since this federal government agency has unique structure, job position, scope and duties. The competency of the police force is measured based on CLA. The CLA is one of the methods used to determine annual salary increment and career enhancement for the police forces (Pekeliling Perkhidmatan 5, PSD, 2002). Two competency assessment levels which are one and two are appointment grade and three and above for promotion grade. Table 3 below represents the competency level assessment assigned in accordance to the position/rank in the police force.

| Grade | Position | Competency Levels |
|---|---|---|
| Appointment Grade | Constable<br>Inspector<br>Assistant Superintendent of Police | CLA 1<br>CLA 2 |
| Promotional Grade | Lance Corporal<br>Corporal<br>Sergeant<br>Sergeant Major<br>Sub-Inspector<br>Inspector<br>Chief Inspector<br>Assistant Superintendent of Police<br>Deputy Superintendent of Police<br>Superintendent of Police<br>Assistant Commissioner of Police<br>Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police II<br>Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police I | CLA 3 and above |

Sources from, Public Service Department (PSD) Service Circular 5, 2002

**Table 3: Competency Level Assessment for RMP**

Similar to other service schemes, the execution of CLA in RMP follows several methods such as examination and courses. Method of assessment for the CLA 1 is examination and national courses. CLA 2 for assistant superintendent of police isin the form of examination. For the meanwhile, the assessment level for assistant superintendent of police to senior assistant commissioner of police I is CLA 3 and above. Besides, the format for this is attending course, instead of a paper-based examination. Lower group officers from constable to chief inspector are eligible to sit for competency assessment level two and three which are in the form of examination. The course is available once they reach CLA 4 and above.

Though separate service circular was issued for the RMP, the overall goals of personnel assessment system remained the same. The implementation of CBPA was aimed to encourage continuous self-development and career improvement through knowledge and skill acquisition. On top of all this, it is highly hoped that personnel assessment system induces better job performance among police force.

## V. CONCLUSION

As a summary, it has all been agreed that in a modern world full of competition organizations we must keep on redesigning their strategies in order to remain relevant. Failure to embrace change may make surviving more difficult to any particular organisation. Change management enables a fir sustain its energy in the market and maintain its productivity. The issue of change management in the Royal Malaysia Police service is aimed at redefining the structures and role of the police in the society with an aim of promoting enhancement of service delivery to the members of the public. However since inception the change initiatives have faced numerous challenges hence making its management and success a distant dream.

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