

STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK PRIVATE ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to expose the managerial and organizational characteristics and practices of the owners-managers of Greek private enterprises and to propose several Organizational Development (OD) interventions in order to attain planned developmental changes. The author of this work proposes such interventions in the areas of reducing/eliminating resistance to change, using the services of planned change agents, induce creativity and innovation, decentralize the decision-making process and that of delegation of authority and responsibility, and create effective and efficient multi-directional communication for the benefit of the entire human resources.

JEL: M16, M20

KEYWORDS: Organizational Development, Organizational Development Interventions, Planned Change Agents, Empowerment, Greek Owners-Managers

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to expose the managerial and organizational characteristics and practices of the owners-managers of Greek private enterprises and to propose a number of Organizational Development (OD) interventions in order to attain planned developmental changes.

According to Schein (1988), Organizational Development is a process conducive to planned changes from the top echelon of organizations which leads to better organizational performance. Lewin (1951) viewed OD as an Action Orientation process in which the status quo is unfreezed, a change is made through planned interventions, and the new status quo is refreezed. Furthermore, Organizational Development is leading to an increase in a person's capacity to attain the desired mission, goals, and objectives and at the same time perceive and understand the process and essence of attaining them (Griesgraber & Gunter, 1996).

Planned change agents are the people who conduct OD interventions; they have commensurate education and preparation (Bennis, 1969). Leaders who have a learning orientation encourage employees to learn new skills on the job; such leaders also seek to implement various advanced management practices in promoting employee commitment to learning (Dragoni, 2005). Developmental strategies ought to be directed towards interventions that stimulate, facilitate, and promote the capacity development of people who can undertake new combinations (Carpenter et al., 2004).

Interventions by planned change agents, mainly consultants, can face difficulties in performing their tasks because the owners-managers of private enterprises in Greece play various roles in conducting their management and organizational tasks (Theodore, 2013a). The planned change agents must rigorously demonstrate to the owners-managers the benefits of accepting Organizational Development interventions that are conducive to planned developmental changes (Cassells & Lewis, 2011). Experienced planned

change agents who conduct OD interventions can sense when their clients are protecting an insecure self if they avoid revealing personal struggles and conflicts, present views in a dogmatic or intolerant manner, manifest a pattern of denial, rationalization and blame-shifting, or if their comments remain external and superficial (Theodore, 2012).

Literature dedicated to Greek private enterprises is abundant today in Greek, English, French, and German. However, there is no literature pivoting around planned change interventions in Greek private enterprises in the areas of reducing/eliminating resistance to change, using the services of prepared change agents, create creativity and innovation, decentralize the decision-making process and that of the delegation of authority and responsibility, and create effective and efficient multi-directional communication for the benefit of the employees and managers.

This article includes new information pertinent to Greek private enterprises and it is pivoting around planned change OD interventions and it adds another new chapter in the existing literature. This article will also serve as a sequel to the author's previous article (Theodore, 2021) dedicated to the management and organizational status of such enterprises during the 1960-2010 period.

The article is divided into the following sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Data Methodology, Results and Discussion, A Path Forward, and Concluding Statements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review includes references starting in the 1980s and concluding in the 2010s.

The Identity of the Owners-managers in Greek Private Enterprises

Greek owners-managers of private enterprises have formed their identity through their management behavior and this identity is being reflected in their respective organizations that include the entire force of their human resources (Komninos & Tsamis, 2008). The owners-managers' identity pivots around their essence and it is based on their own values and from subjective perceptions as to who they are. For example, their decisions are being influenced by their psychological forces such as values, motivations, skills, and beliefs.

The size of private enterprises has been traditionally small. In the 1960s, most private enterprises (49%) employed 1-9 employees; 9.6% had 10-19 employees; 10.7% had 20-49 employees, and 30.1% had 50 or more employees. (National Statistical Service of Greece, 1964). In the 2010s, 99.5% of the Greek private enterprises were small and employed 74.3% of the labor force;.04% were medium size and employed 10.9%; and .01% were massive and employed 14.8% of the labor force (European Commission, 2012). The size of organizations is critical to their development. A small organizational size is a negative element to managerial and organizational development (Theodore, 2009).

The owners-managers' management and organizational practices are rooted in the culture of the industry (micro external environment) of their enterprises and the general culture (macro external environment) in which they live (Brewer, 1991).

The following management and organizational characteristics pivoting around the identity of the owners-managers in Greece have been detected by expert researchers, professors, consultants, and professional managers:

Resistance to developmental change and acceptance of a static status quo (Comninos & Tsamis, 2008).

Avoidance of using professional assistance, such as consultants, who can provide them with specialist knowledge regarding ways to work more efficiently and to deal with stress more effectively (Kourounakis & Katsiolouides, 2009).

Creativity and innovation are missing (Papadakis, 2006).

The decision-making process is centralized and rests on the judgment of the owners-managers (Hatzikian & Bouris, 2007); there is an absence of delegation of authority and responsibility and a lack of empowerment of employees (Psychogios & Szamosi, 2007).

The owners-managers do not communicate with their employees on elements that are pertinent to the operation of their enterprises (Psychogios & Szamosi, 2007), and they are not able to provide directions and guidance for them because such owners-managers are encircled in a limited and microscopic management model (Vlachos, 2008).

To reiterate, the characteristics of management and organizational practices of the owners-managers in Greece are pivoting around: (1) resistance to development change; (2) avoidance of using professional assistance, such as consultants; (3) creativity and innovation are missing; (4) the decision-making process is centralized, and there is lack of delegation of authority and responsibility; and (5) there is a lack of communication and reluctance to provide directions and guidance to employees.

Resistance to Change

There are two major types of leaders: Transactional and Transformational. Transactional leaders, such as the owners-managers of private enterprises in Greece, practice mainly top-to-bottom communication and are controlling and demotivating (Theodore, 2013b) causing less innovative behavior.

The purpose of the interventions by the planned change agents in the areas of communication and control is to change the leadership style of the owners-managers from Transactional to Transformational by using psychological empowerment which is a motivation force that will allow them to start and complete desirable actions, perform advanced managerial and organizational tasks, and also feel both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction for doing superior work (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Transformational leaders transform and develop their subordinates by improving their work performance and values (Bass, 1999). Leaders who have a learning orientation encourage employees and managers to learn new skills on the job; such leaders also seek to implement various management practices in promoting employee commitment to learning (Dragoni, 2005).

Reluctance to Use Professional Assistance

Planned change agents are responsible for initiating, directing, and controlling planned changes in organizations (Burnes, 2004). In order for the planned change agents to function effectively and efficiently with the owners-managers of private enterprises in Greece, the latter must make evident their missing goals and objectives (Beckhard & Harris (1987).

Planned change agents must interact effectively, efficiently, and on a timely basis with the owners-managers. Emphasis needs to be placed upon the understanding of owners-managers and the rationale behind their desire to undergo planned changes (McLean, 2005). Without understanding the desire for planned changes, the relationship between owners-managers and change agents will be short-lasting (Schein, 1997).

The benefits of a fruitful and robust synergy between owners-managers and planned change agents are being discussed in the sections that follow in this article.

Lack of Creativity and Innovation

Creativity involves generating novel and useful ideas, while innovation is the successful implementation of the creative ideas generated (Hatzikian & Bouris, 2007)). In small enterprises, due to the small number of employees and the flat organizational hierarchy, the effects of the owners-managers personal characteristics on the organizational outcome are far more influential than are their impact on large organizations (Lubatkin et al., 2006).

Five phases depict the acceptance and use of innovation: *Knowledge*, potential adopters must first learn about the innovation; *Persuasion*, they must be persuaded as to the merits of the innovation; *Decision*, they must decide to adopt the innovation; *implementation*, once they adopt the innovation, they must implement; and *Confirmation*, they confirm that the decision to adopt is an appropriate decision (Rogers, 1995).

Interventions conducted by planned change agents in the area of innovation and creativity need to be focused on changing the owners-managers from being Transactional to Transformational ones.

Centralization of Decision-Making and Lack of Delegation

Greek enterprise owners-managers make practically all the decisions by themselves and do not ask their employees to participate in the decision-making process; they do not delegate authority and responsibility to their employees for improving their performance through empowerment (Theodore, 2021). Organizational decision-making is the rational process for selecting alternatives that are conducive to achieving desired goals (Simon, 1978) and consists of a procedure that utilizes rules of search, rules of choice, and rules of learning (Beach & Mitchell, 1978).

The planned change agents' intervention needs to be focused on the owners-managers correct decision-making process and its decentralization. Intervention also needs to be directed to empowering employees through delegation of authority and responsibility. Making employees participate is conducive to building positive employee-organization relationships, employee satisfaction, and commitment (Kim et al., 2011).

There are limits to what the single owner-manager can accomplish, whereas working with employees in a concerted manner leads to collective efficacy in decision-making that influences group motivation conducive to correct decision-making (Little & Madan, 1997). Planned change agents must demonstrate to the owners-managers that there is a strong need to make rational decisions and that the acquisition of a high degree of procedural rationality will enable such persons to make high quality decisions that meet the attainment of selected goals (Etzioni, 1998).

The movement of authority and responsibility from higher to lower hierarchal organizational levels is referred to as delegation (Hellriegel et al, 2005). The acceptance of authority and responsibility by lower echelon levels creates empowerment for the recipients and prepares them for additional responsibilities (Mills & Ungson, 2001).

Delegation means that the owners-managers will be entrusting their employees and empowering them to make decisions in harmony and synergy with the delegated authority and responsibility which they have received from the owners-managers. The owners-managers' benefits will be derived from the delegation of authority and responsibility and will concentrate on the tasks that require their attention (which are important tasks) and free them from performing tasks their employees can do, which are mainly routine tasks (DiMaggio, 2001).

Intervention by the planned change agents in the delegation of authority and responsibility is to change the owners-managers' perception and beliefs and induce them to implement advanced management and organizational principles. The reluctance of owners-managers to delegate is their unwillingness to share power with the employees, view delegation as a weakness, fear losing control of their enterprises and the idea that they are smarter and more competent than their employees (Ackoff, 1999).

Greece's job market is competitive and competition among enterprises is becoming more substantial and more critical. In order for private enterprises to maintain their competitive ability and strength, they need to have continuous developmental training in their direct tasks, technology and other related areas. The greater the number of employees engaged in this positive behavior, the most likely a work culture is created that is productive and positive (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

In addition, the effective and efficient delegation will be conducive to the training and development of employees through empowerment enrichment and enhancement of their involvement in the tasks within the organization, making concerted decisions with the owners-managers, and augmenting their confidence and trust of the owners-managers (Chiles & McMackin, 1995).

The planned change agents must ensure that once delegation of authority and responsibility is accepted and implemented by the owners-managers, the latter need to practice effective, efficient, and timely communication. Feedback must play a key role in the communication process (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Lack of Communication and Directions to Employees

Organizational communication is the transfer of information (Katz & Kahn, 1966), whereas knowledge is the degree of freedom to select among patterns to be transmitted (Miller, 1965). Centralization is the degree to which communication is concentrated in a single point of the organization (Pace, 1996) which, in this work, refers to the owners-managers of private enterprises in Greece who do not like to communicate with their employees on work related elements.

The purpose of the intervention by planned change agents in the area of organizational communication is to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and the adequate coverage of the communications area of information employees receive and which pivots around their work when the tasks they perform are intertwined with a larger area of their activities (Steigenberger, 2013). Furthermore, such interventions need to be directed toward creating effective, efficient, and timely two-way vertical and horizontal communications and toward decisions made under joint efforts of those responsible for such decisions (Tourish, 2005).

Top-to-bottom only communication and the high reliance on the instructions such communication conveys are unacceptable in today's organizations. Such practice inhibits and prohibits upward communication and employee participation in the decision-making process. Shamir & Howell (1999) emphasized that superiors' high instructions and decisions exclude any type of participation and input on the part of subordinates in the decision-making process.

The environment of organizations is a function of communicative transactions among top echelons and employees, and what employees say and do and how their actions are interpreted, is the distance of the climate that permeates in the organization (Lammers & Barbour, 2006). Organizational communication entails critical behaviors, such as how instructions come from the top of the echelon, how employees interact to accomplish their goals or how complaints develop (Murphy, 2005).

Effective, efficient, and timely communication will assist the private enterprises in Greece in developing systems of meanings that the employees and other stakeholders can use to make sense of situations,

diagnosing organizational problems, selecting alternatives for action, and coordinating organizational activities (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990). Effective communication between the top echelon and employees, satisfies the basic human needs like recognition, sense of belonging, and safety (Adler, 1989).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data incorporated in this article are secondary and emanate from the research of the present writer, Greek and non-Greek researchers specializing in Greek private enterprises, and other scholars whose work is dedicated to Organizational Development. The author has been conducting research and publishing peer-reviewed articles and books on Greek private enterprises from the late 1960s to the present time. In addition, the author is a Certified Management Consultant by the Institute of Management Consultants in Washington, D.C. and one of his specializations is Organizational Development which he has been implementing in various domestic and international organizations during the last five decades. He has also published peer-reviewed articles on OD, some of which are included in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A-Greek Managerial Style

The characteristics of management and organizational practices of the owners-managers of private enterprises in Greece are resistance to developmental change, avoidance of using professional assistance, creativity and innovation are missing, the decision-making process is centralized, there is a lack of delegation of authority and responsibility, and there is a lack of communication and reluctance to provide directions and guidance to employees.

The present author has vividly detected that a profound managerial deficiency in the style of Greek managers is the absence of delegation. Delegation means that the owners-managers are not entrusting their employees and not empowering them to make decisions in harmony and synergy with the delegated authority and responsibility which they otherwise have received from the owners-managers. The owners-managers' benefits are not derived from the delegation of authority and responsibility and do not concentrate on the tasks that require their attention (which are important tasks) and free them from performing tasks their employees can do, which are mainly routine tasks.

B-Greek Organizational Characteristics for Private Enterprises

The organizational characteristics are resistance to developmental change and acceptance of a static status quo. Avoidance of using professional assistance, such as consultants, who can provide them with specialist knowledge regarding ways to work more efficiently and to deal with stress more effectively. Creativity and innovation are missing. The decision-making process is centralized and rests on the judgment of the owners-managers; there is an absence of delegation of authority and responsibility and a lack of empowerment of employees. The owners-managers do not communicate with their employees on elements that are pertinent to the operation of their enterprises, and they are not able to provide directions and guidance for them because such owners-managers are encircled in a limited and microscopic management model.

C-Greek Private Enterprise Owners-Managers Practices

Greek owners-managers of private enterprises have formed their identity which is conducive to their management/organizational behavior and is being reflected in their respective business organizations that include the entire force of their human resources.

D-Proposed Organizational Development Interventions

To change the managerial and organizational entity and the idiosyncrasy of the owners-managers, a number of Organizational Development interventions need to occur by planned change agents. Organizational Development is a process conducive to planned changes, and it emanates from the top echelon of organizations which leads to better organizational performance. The planned change agents must rigorously demonstrate to the owners-managers the benefits of accepting Organizational Development interventions that are conducive to planned developmental changes.

In the owner-managers' reluctance to developmental change, the interventions by the planned change agents must focus on the leadership style of the owners-managers and change it from Transactional to Transformational by using psychological empowerment.

In the area of the owners-managers' reluctance to use change agents, such agents must interact effectively, efficiently, and on a timely basis with the owners-managers and emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the owners-managers and their rationale behind the desire to undergo planned changes.

In the area of lack of creativity and innovation, interventions conducted by planned change agents need to be focused on changing the owners-managers from being Transactional to Transformational leaders by using psychological empowerment. In the centralization of decision-making and lack of delegation of authority and responsibility, the planned change agents' intervention needs to focus on the owners' decentralization of decision-making. Intervention in the delegation of authority and responsibility changes need to take place in the owners-managers' perception and beliefs and encourage them to implement such management and organizational principles correctly.

In the area of centralization of communication, the intervention by planned change agents is to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and adequate coverage of the communications area of the information employees receive pivoting around their work when the tasks they perform are intertwined into a larger area of their activities.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The purpose of this article was to expose the managerial and organizational characteristics of the owners-managers of private enterprises in Greece and propose a number of Organizational Development interventions to precipitate developmental changes. The author of this work proposed such interventions in the areas of reducing/eliminating resistance to change, using the services of planned change agents, create creativity and innovation, decentralize the decision-making process and that of delegation of authority and responsibility, and create effective and efficient multi-directional communication for the benefit of the employees and other stakeholders.

The primary findings indicate the need for planned change interventions in Greek private enterprises in order to move them from a static status quo to Action Orientation phases that entail continuous evolutionary development.

Managers-owners, the business world in general, and the overall economy of Greece and that of the European Union will benefit from such an article whose infrastructure is pointing to the attainment of a developmental level in which Greek private enterprises will be able to operate effectively and efficiently under economies of scale.

The present article can serve as an infrastructure for future research on the development of Greek private enterprises and for OD practitioners of consultancy in management and organization in Greece.

This article can be used as an infrastructure for similar works in other parts of the World. The author is using such an article for additional similar projects in Latin America. A possible limitation is the absence of references after the 2010s to 2022.

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BIOGRAPHY

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