The Change Management Challenges in the School Environment during the Corona Pandemic from the Principals' Point of View

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the challenges facing change management from a school principal's point of view. The current study adopted a questionnaire as an instrument, which was applied to a simple random sample of 300 principals. The results indicated that most of the change management challenges in the school environment are technical, administrative, human, and technological. The order of these challenges was as follows: The human challenges came in first place with an arithmetic mean of 3.66, followed by the administrative challenges with an arithmetic mean of 3.48. In third place came the technological challenges, with an arithmetic mean of 3.41. Finally, the technical challenges come with an arithmetic mean of (3.39). Moreover, the study proved that there were no statistically significant differences between the means of the dimensions: technical challenges, administrative challenges, human challenges, and technological challenges from the principals' point of view ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to gender.

Keywords: Change Management, Challenges, School Environment, Corona Pandemic.

Introduction

The world in which we live today has changed from the world of yesterday, so we find the impact of the various scientific and technological developments resulting from the knowledge revolution and the accompanying globalization, which have affected us in a large and diverse way, including all aspects of the life we live in, which have led to a large number of changes. All of this led to the creation of many great and dangerous challenges for those in charge of the administrative process in educational and educational environments regarding many modern administrative concepts and how to employ and use them in order to benefit from them in the right ways: to improve the educational and educational process and develop it at all levels and scientific fields, from which educational and educational institutions work; to harness all of its capabilities in order to keep pace with the era in which we live; to develop the educational process and work to modernize its systems (Cohen, 2019).

Most educational institutions and international organizations face sudden and dangerous challenges, whether global or local, that invade the bottom of their institutional environments, whether they are educational,

educational or administrative-industrial. The world of commerce and industry, excellence and scientific competition (Al-Mussalt, Al-Mikhlafi, 2021, Stouten, Rousseau & Cremer, 2018).

Hence, we find that it is difficult for educational, administrative, and industrial institutions to predict the level of these variables, which costs them great and great efforts to identify those variables that may negatively affect their performance or try to reduce their significant impact on the levels of those departments of various types and sizes, and thus much scientific research and future studies have proven that most of the traditional methods and means that are practiced at the level of those administrations have become invalid in today's world, as bureaucracy and authoritarianism in order to control everything. Therefore, it is necessary to work on rapid and contemporary change to bring about development (Al-Zayoud, 2017; Kovoor-Misra, 2020).

The modern administrative leaders in today's world and the great events that the world is witnessing, perhaps the latest of which was the global pandemic, COVID-19, must be qualified leaders who are able to bring about and lead change in their educational institutions and make it possible and necessary to convince others of it. and help them bring about that change. The main task of the leaders of the twenty-first century is to bring about continuous change in their educational environments, and this is a great opportunity that qualifies them to bring about modern radical changes that keep pace with the era in which they live; where this change has become necessary to introduce the processes of improvement and development to the administrative and educational systems; to keep pace with global changes in this field (Al-Essa, 2021), and this was confirmed by the Al-Hamlan study (2020), that change has become an inevitably necessary to achieve competitive advantage.

Therefore, most educational institutions, including public or private schools, worked and worked hard to improve and develop the capabilities of principals and teachers to possess the latest modern means and methods that would enable them with great effectiveness to accomplish the tasks assigned to them by working to possess the best modern scientific and technological competencies that help them use the means and techniques. Modern technology in the world of technology and the modern knowledge revolution (Abu Qwaider, 2019) and this is proven by both the study of Ali and Jilali (2019) and the study of Al-Otaibi and Al-Anzi (2021) that managing change has a close relationship with the processes of improvement and development within educational institutions.

Many previous studies also indicated the importance of adopting a policy of change and knowing the challenges and obstacles it faces on the ground. Among these studies are the following:

The Makhdoom study (2021), which sought to identify the levels of application of strategic leadership in a government organization, used the descriptive analytical method by developing a questionnaire tool. The comprehensive survey method was applied to the case study community, represented by all the male and female employees of the College of Business Administration. The study used descriptive and inferential methods to analyze the data, and the study reached a set of results, the most important of which are:

The employees' perceptions of the level of implementation of strategic leadership came to a medium degree, and their perceptions of the level of application of change management came to a medium degree, with a positive and statistically significant relationship between effective leadership practices and change management in the organization, and there were no statistically significant differences at level (0, 01) and less in the attitudes of the study members about effective strategic leadership practices and change management in the organization according to the variables of gender, age, and academic qualification. The study recommended the need to enhance the application of strategic leadership in all its dimensions, which contributes to the success of the change process in the organization, taking into account the characteristics of the study community in both the application of strategic leadership and the management of the change process in the organization.

As for the study of Al-Otaibi and Al-Anazi (2021), it aimed to identify the terms of change management and its multiple concepts, as well as their practical and theoretical importance within educational institutions. In Kuwait, the researcher used the analytical approach based on content analysis, and after reviewing the studies and literature related to the study and analysing it, the following was concluded: Change management is a philosophy that exists within the organization and is among the strategic plans scheduled to be achieved in one of the aspects of the institution, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the institution and working on Achieving the required balance and organizational loyalty are two of the biggest factors affecting the

effectiveness of the institution and its production, and it is one of the aspects that preoccupy many institutions and organizations. among the administrative leaders.

While the weather study (2020) came to get acquainted with the reality of change management in government institutions and to identify the ways of conducting the change process and to clarify what the change means, the importance Change Management The study reached the following results:

Change is an imposed reality that is necessary for the success of the institution or organization, and it is considered the surviving tool for the success of institutions and organizations, and the culture of change and its absence from the organization's life is a major obstacle to achieving the best results, as the study indicated that there is an absence of the term "total quality management" within institutions. The study also indicated the existence of structural indicators among leaders regarding the implementation of the change process within the organization.

Hamlan's study (2020) carried out a study to identify the implications of change management; To achieve the competitive advantage of Royal Jordanian Airlines through the innovation management process, the researcher used the descriptive approach, and the questionnaire was a tool by applying it to (208) managers from the airline. The study reached the following results:

The study indicated that there is a statistically significant effect at the significance level (0.05) in favour of change management, as it achieves a competitive advantage in its various dimensions (cost dimension-diffusion dimension) on the Jordanian Airlines Company. The study also indicated that there is a statistically significant effect at the significance level (0.05). In favor of the management of creativity in achieving the competitive advantage of the Jordanian Airlines Company, to remove it (cost-difference), as it was found that there is a statistically significant effect at the significance level (0.05) of the management of change in achieving the competitive advantage.

As for the Obadha study (2020), which aimed to apply the test of the impact of strategic leaders on the management of change in the African Union

The strategic communication skills, the development of human capital, and the building of the organization's culture greatly affect the change management process, and the organization's vision and basic mission have proven their usefulness in helping employees and managers understand the change management strategy, so strategic management represents one of the mainstays affecting the change process within every institution.

While Coban and Ozdemir's (2019) study aimed to determine the relationship between the levels of strategic leadership of senior managers working in the Ministry of Education and their ability to manage organizational change, the quantitative method was used, and the questionnaire was a tool. The study community was one of the main factors, along with educational experts, specialized assistants in the Ministry of Education, unit managers, teachers working in the main organization of the Ministry of Education, and heads of departments. The study reached the following results:

The study indicated that there is a positive correlation between the process of managing organizational change and the levels of strategic leadership for senior managers. The study also found that the dimensions of strategic leadership were indicators that predicted the dimensions of change management.

From here, the current study came to investigate the reality of change management challenges (administrative, technical, human, and technological) in the school environment and to know the extent of its presence and availability in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman, as it came for the purpose of identifying the order of these challenges.

Statement of study problem

The contemplator of the Oman 20/40 vision, which the Sultanate of Oman began implementing at the beginning of the previous year 2021, and which in its entirety dealt with basic dimensions and themes that dealt with: the Omani society and the individual; development; economy; governance; performance; and the sustainable environment, finds that the supreme goal of that vision is to work on improving and developing the various classifications of the Sultanate in many global indicators in the fields of innovation, competition, and governance; and all this in order to bring about a radical change in many traditional and routine matters that have become an obstacle to progress in many matters, as the process of change is an indispensable necessity to achieve prosperity and growth, and this was proven by Sultan Haitham bin Tariq (2020).

Thus, the Ministry of Education was not isolated from that, as it began from an early age to do many things that would improve the educational process despite the internal and external challenges faced by the administrative and educational systems in schools, and perhaps the last event that it was exposed to was the Corona COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly affected the educational and administrative systems in schools, which led to the emergence of many and multiple challenges within the school environment, and the severity of these challenges differed from one place to another and from one educational administration to another educational administration

Thus, we find the large number of efforts made by the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman to adopt change as one of the modern administrative entrances in the educational development and modernization processes in schools. However, most of the current indicators of this give indications of shortcomings in many administrative and educational aspects that prevent administrative leaders in Their schools prevented them from practicing the process of change at various levels and systems, and this was proven by the study (Al-Ghilani, Al-Khatib, 2005) that showed that the practice of change management in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman came at a mean level, which confirms the shortcomings of the change management process in various aspects. (2012) to ensure the absence of the role of the principal who is able to convince the members of the school community of the importance of change. As for the study (Al-Siyabiya, 2011), it indicated that the administrative practices are practiced to a high degree by school principals in light of the approach to change management, and the study (Al-Ghilaniah, 2015), confirmed the practice of the directors of the Sharqiya Governorate for managing change at a high level, but no study addressed the challenges or problems facing the management of change, so the study came to identify the most important challenges facing the school environment facing the management of change. change during the Corona pandemic, and thus the main question of the study was represented in the following: What is the reality of the challenges of managing change in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman?

The following sub-questions are derived from the main question:

- What are the challenges of managing administrative, human, technical and technological change in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman?
- What is the order of the dimension of change management challenges (administrative, human, technical, technological) in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman?
- Are there statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) about the views of the study sample members in the challenges of managing change in the school environment according to the gender variable?

The importance of studying

Theoretical importance:

It represents the theoretical importance of what the study presents on change management and its importance for educational institutions and the goals achieved through them.

Applied importance: It is the most prominent results reached through the practical application of the questionnaire, and through the recommendations recommended by the study to avoid some real challenges in the educational environment. The study also seeks to develop practical solutions to the problems facing managers in managing change, which are expected to help and inspire Decision makers in the Ministry of Education to take practical measures and appropriate decisions regarding their implementation.

Objectives of the study

- Identifying the challenges of change management (administrative, human, technical, technological) in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman.

- Identifying the order of the dimension of challenges change management (administrative, human, technical, technological) in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Identifying the statistically significant differences between males and females about the challenges of change management (administrative, human, technical, technological) in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from the point of view of the sample members.

The limits of the study

Objective limits: It is represented in the management of change and its concepts.

Spatial boundaries: all schools in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Time limits: 2021 / 2022

Human Frontiers: Principals and Principals in Ministry of Education Schools.

Study Approach: In this study, the researchers adopt the descriptive analytical method, which is the appropriate method for such studies, which describes and explains the problem.

Terminology of study: Change management: It is a continuous and comprehensive process, carried out by the leader in his various disciplines, by working to employ all the skills and technical expertise related to leadership in order to influence for the better; To bring about an effective change process in all parts of the educational institution, and by adapting to the course of the future vision of education, which affects the nature of performance of employees (Muia, 2015).

As Okemba (2018) defined it as that system through which the process of moving the individual within the organization from a position he does to a better future situation; To achieve the formulated goals of the corporate strategy, or it is an organized process through which change processes are carried out aimed at achieving the best results correctly, through organized administrative procedures to implement the change management process.

school environment: It is called all the factors affecting the school environment, whether inside or outside the school, which are practiced within the framework of educational and educational activities, with the aim of working to achieve most of the required and desired goals through which the students' personality is built, and ensuring their educational interaction in the educational curricula applied to it (Al-Saadi, 2017).

The two researchers define it as the place prepared for the practice of the teaching process, so that the student is able to receive all the desired sciences under suitable conditions for learning.

Corona pandemic: The term corona is called according to what came in the dictionary and the definition of the World Health Organization as that disease that affects the human body and causes acute pneumonia, leaving traces of exhaustion and fatigue and sometimes death, which was known by the term Corona (covid-19), which was announced according to what it reported and announced by the organization The World Health Organization as a global disease sweeping the world and a global catastrophe facing the whole world (Al-Hadhrami, Personal, 2021).

Study Methodology

Study Population: The study population was selected from all categories of school principals in the Sultanate of Oman, males and females, whose number is approximately (1164), according to the statistics of the Ministry of Education's statistical book for the year 2021.

The study sample:

The study sample was chosen by simple random method, which reached (300) school principals from all governorates of the Sultanate.

Instrument of Study:

A five-point Likert scale, which is represented by the following five statements: (very few - few - medium - large - very large). Where the results were coded in the following table according to the scale:

Validity of the study instrument:

The study instrument was developed by referring to previous studies related to challenge of change management, and before the researchers started applying the study tool, it was presented to 8 arbitrators known for their experience and knowledge in the field of management, where the initial image of the questionnaire consisted of (4) main dimensions and (34) item distributed as follows: the first dimension was administrative challenges and contained (10) items, the second dimension was human challenges and included (9) items, and the third dimension was technical challenges and contained (9) items, and the fourth dimension was technological challenges and contained (6) items. The researcher made the required amendments according to the arbitrators' notes, where the tool came out in its final form to (28) items divided into the four dimension, administrative challenges, human challenges, technical challenges, and technological challenges.

Reliability of the study instrument:

Cronbach alpha was extracted to assure the instrument validity by applying the instrument to a sample of (40) principals from different schools of education in the Sultanate of Oman, and the following table shows the Cronbach Alpha coefficient:

Table(1). Cronbach Alpha coefficient

No	Dimension	No. Item	Alpha Cronbach
1	Administrative challenge	8	0.83
2	Human challenge	7	0.80
3	Technical challenge	8	0.79
	Technological challenge	5	0.85
Total			0.81

Through Table (2), we note that the reliability coefficient of the tool reached (0.80), which is a high degree of stability, and this indicates the stability of the tool as a whole between its dimensions.

The research Findings:

Finding of the first question which states: What are the challenges of change management (administrative, human, technical and technological) in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from school principals point of view in the Sultanate of Oman ?

In order to answer the previous question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to reveal the challenges facing change management (administrative, human, technical and technological) in the school environment. To find the challenges, all the means and standard deviations of the dimension were extracted as follows:

First, the administrative challenges

The arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to reveal the administrative challenges of change management from the point of view of school principals, and the table (3) below illustrates this.

Table (3) Arithmetic means and standard deviations of administrative challenges dimension

no	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	rank	Degree
1	The traditional method of doing central business with the educational directorates prevails	3.46	.932	5	high
2	The craftsmanship of the laws is applied to making decisions	3.49	1.093	4	high
3	The school principal restricts decision-making to some simple matters	3.41	1.032	7	high
4	The school principal is not trusted by senior leaders	3.50	1.089	3	high
5	Influencing the process of change in decision-making due to human relations	3.45	.965	6	high
6	Lack of financial and human resources to effect the change process.	3.55	1.016	1	high
7	Not adopting a change policy for the quality of work for fear of business accumulation.	3.49	.942	8	high
8	Stagnation of regulations and regulations to bring about the process of change	3.53	1.084	2	high

It is noted from Table (2) that the items mean ranged between 3.15-3.55), and item (6) came as " lack of financial and human resources to effect the change process." In the first place, with an arithmetic mean of (3.55), which represents a significant degree the researchers attribute this to the weak financial expenditures allocated to school administrations and the lack of qualification of human cadres and their enrolment in the assigned training programs, while item (3) was occupied by "The school principal restricts decision-making to some simple matters." Eighth place with a mean of (3.41), which represents a significant degree; The researchers attribute this to a lack of awareness, fear of changing work and obligating the employee to more complex work.

Second: human challenges

The arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to reveal the human challenges of managing change from the point of view of school principals, and the table (4) below illustrates this.

Table (4) Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the human challenges dimension

no	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	rank	degree
1	Lack of a culture of change in the school community	3.65	1. 086	4	high
2	Fear of the change process due to the loss of current positions	3.49	1.032	6	high
3	Some staff at the school stuck to traditional methods and resisted the process of change	4.19	1.012	1	high
4	Lack of qualified human cadres ready for the change process	3.90	1.065	2	high
5	Inaction due to exaggerated satisfaction with the current and practiced situation within the school	3.53	1.014	5	high
6	Weak conviction of the school staff in the change process	3.80	1.065	3	high
7	Lack of strong cooperation between management and staff within the school	3.10	1.096	7	moderate

It is noticed from the previous table (4) that the items of the dimension in which the means ranged between (3.10-4.19). so the item (3) "Some staff at the school stuck to traditional methods and resisted the process of

change" came in the first place, and an arithmetic mean (4.19), which represents a large degree close to the great is very; the researcher attributes this to the lack of awareness of the institutional culture, adherence to the government job, and the lack of consideration for the interest of work due to the absence of culture on the part of the employees, while the item (7) "Lack of strong cooperation between management and staff within the school." The researchers attribute this to the failure to use the democratic method between management and workers and the lack of consideration in many matters, or it may be that the employee's thinking about the wages he receives is not equal to his efforts at work."

Third: Technical Challenges

Arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to reveal the technical challenges of change management from the point of view of school principals, and the table (5) below illustrates this

Table (5) Arithmetic means and standard deviations of technical challenges dimension

no	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	rank	Degree
1	Weak rehabilitation of school leaders to manage change during crises.	3.46	1.027	4	High
2	Not having the ability to make decisions in a scientific manner in the change process	3.70	1.079	1	High
3	Some school principals are unfamiliar with the change in the new assessment process.	3.11	.0981	7	moderate
4	There are no ongoing programs to help me make the change.	3.56	1.099	3	High
5	**Full acceptance of the transition from the current situation to a different situation.**	**3.34**	**1.038**	**5**	**High**
6	Some managers' lack of dialogue, discussion and persuasion for the change process.	3.10	1.039	8	moderate
7	Lack of information and data used for the change process	3.61	1.066	2	High
8	There are errors in the quality of the information used for the change process.	3.28	1.099	6	moderate

We conclude from Table (5) that the dimension items in which the arithmetic means ranged between (3.10-3.70), and item (2) "not having the ability to make decisions in a scientific manner in the process of change" ranked No. (1), which represents a great degree of agreement arithmetic mean (3.70); The researchers attributed this to the monopoly of the decision by senior leaders in some logistical matters, while the item (6) "some managers do not have the method of dialogue, discussion and persuasion for the change process" ranked (8) with a medium approval degree, and an arithmetic mean (3.10); The researchers attribute this to the lack of in-service training courses and programs.

Fourth: Technological Challenges

The arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to reveal the technological challenges of change management from the point of view of school principals, and the table (6) below illustrates this

Table (6) Arithmetic means and standard deviations of technological challenges dimension

no	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	rank	degree
1	Weak equipment and technology inside the school	3.66	1.098	3	High
2	The school staff does not have the skills to use modern technology	3.89	1.077	2	high
3	Poor Internet service support from the school's operating carriers.	4.20	1.078	1	Very high
4	Internet service is available continuously within the school.	2.29	1.146	5	low
5	It uses modern electronic programs to complete the work.	2.99	1.099	4	moderate

Through Table (6) we conclude that all the expressions of the dimension ranged between (2.29-4.20), where the statement (3) "Poor Internet service support from the school's operating carriers" came on rank No. (1), with an arithmetic mean (4.20), which represents very large degree; The researchers attributed this to the weak Internet services provided by telecommunications companies, and the absence of a competitor to them or the existence of decisions that obligate them to exercise their social responsibility, while the item (4) "Internet service is provided continuously within the school" came in the last place, with an mean of (2.29) and a degree of approval few; The researchers attribute this to the weak infrastructure of telecom companies operating in the Sultanate.

The findings of the second question which state: What is the order of the dimension of change management challenges (administrative, human, technical, technological) in the school environment during the Corona pandemic from school principals point of view in the Sultanate of Oman?

Table (7) Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the challenges of change management in the school environment

No	Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	rank	degree
1	Administrative Challenge	3.48	1.087	2	High
2	Human Challenge	3.66	1.099	1	High
3	Technical challenge	3.39	1.067	4	High
4	Technology challenge	3.41	1.07	3	High
Total		3.43			High

Through Table (7), we conclude that the arithmetic mean of the challenges of managing change in the school environment as a whole reached (3.43), which represents a significant degree. Therefore, the arrangement of the dimensions was as follows: Human challenges ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (3.66), which represents a degree of agreement. The dimension of administrative challenges came in second place with an arithmetic mean of (3.48), while in the third place came the dimension of technological challenges with an arithmetic mean of (3.41), which also represents great approval, while the dimension of technical challenges came in the last rank with an arithmetic mean of (3.39), which represents a high degree of approval.

The findings of third question which states : Are there statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) about the views of the study sample members regarding the challenges of managing change in the school environment according to the gender variable?

In order to answer the question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the challenges of managing change in the school environment were calculated according to the variable (type), and the "t" value was calculated for the arithmetic means. The following table illustrates this.

Table (8) Arithmetic means, standard deviations, and the "t" value of the change management challenges in school environment according to gender

Domain	gender	no	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Sig.
Administrative challenges	male	135	3.43	1.176	3.654	0.003
	female	175	3.49	0.899		0.002
Human challenges	male	135	3.78	1.074	3.774	0.001
	female	175	3.70	.870		

Technical Challenges	male	135	3.56	1.155	3.972	0.001
	female	175	3.58	.995		
Technological challenges	male	135	3.47	.974	3.283	0.002
	female	175	3.40	.913		
Total	male	135	3.56	1.041	3.930	0.002
	female	175	3.54	.816		

It is clear from table (8) that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level (0,05) in all areas and in the tool as a whole between the two sex variables (males and females), and the researcher attributes this to the similarity of school environments in all schools in the Sultanate and receiving the same logistical services.

Conclusion

Most of the expressions of change management challenges (technical, administrative, human, and technological) in the school environment in terms of their presence as a challenge during the Corona pandemic came to a high degree in all items, which explains that the challenges exist on the ground and are continuous. In the school environment, as follows: The dimension of human challenges came in the first place with an arithmetic mean of (3.66) and represented a high degree, then came the dimension of administrative challenges with an arithmetic mean of (3.48), and the dimension of technological challenges came in third place with an arithmetic mean of (3.41), and finally came the dimension of technical challenges with an arithmetic mean of (3.39). The study proved that there were no statistically significant differences in the answers of the study sample about the four dimensions: technical challenges, administrative challenges, human challenges, and technological challenges from the point of view of managers at the 0.05 level due to a variable of gender.

Recommendation:

The researchers recommend the following:

- The necessity of adopting leadership programs and courses on change in school environments.
- Studying the challenges that exist on the ground to mitigate them and knowing the reasons behind this.

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