

## An Organizational Diagnosis for Change Readiness: A Case of the Department of Special Education

Sahib Khan<sup>1</sup>  
Muhammad Uzair Ul Hassan<sup>2</sup>  
Iram Parveen<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to conduct an organizational diagnostic (OD) within the Department of Special Education in order to evaluate its readiness for change. Data was collected from a sample of 1,200 individuals, including heads of the top, middle, and bottom tiers within the department. The Organizational Diagnostic Questionnaire (ODQ), based on Weisbord's six-box model, was used to gather information. A total of 506 respondents willingly completed the ODQ survey. The findings revealed that the department staff has a strong understanding of the organizational objectives. However, there are several areas that hinder optimal performance, such as limited employee engagement in departmental discussions, centralized decision-making, irrational work distribution, and inadequate resource allocation. In addition, poor communication, inefficient help-seeking methods, unsatisfactory promotions, restricted knowledge sharing, strained inter-relationships, conflicts, and ineffective help-seeking processes all impede effectiveness. The study also identified variations in change readiness based on qualifications, experience, years served, and gender. To improve change absorption capacity, the study recommends fostering collaboration, enhancing inter-departmental communication, and promoting employee participation. Comprehensive involvement from all levels, as well as supportive supervision and improved communication, are essential for enhancing organizational effectiveness in terms of change preparedness.

**Keywords:** Organizational Diagnosis; Special Education, Readiness for change, Weisbord's model

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<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha-Pakistan, Email: [s.khansajid139@gmail.com](mailto:s.khansajid139@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, University of Sargodha, Sargodha-Pakistan, Email: [druzairulhassan@gmail.com](mailto:druzairulhassan@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, University of Sargodha, Sargodha-Pakistan, Email: [irumiqbaluos@gmail.com](mailto:irumiqbaluos@gmail.com)

**Introduction**

Employee retention depends on several critical factors, including people and culture, workplace appreciation, meaningful benefits, continuous training, the work environment, and alignment of goals and values (Pynes, 2008). To effectively manage human capital, organizations must implement systems and tools that ensure the right individuals with the appropriate attitudes and skills are placed in suitable positions at the right times (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2019).

Organizational readiness for change is a complex concept that varies across different levels of analysis, such as the individual, group, unit, department, and organization (Weiner, 2009; Holt, Helfrich, Hall, & Weiner, 2010). The assessment of change readiness can occur at any of these levels (Wang, Olivier, & Chen, 2020). It's crucial to recognize that organizational change readiness isn't a uniform construct that applies universally. When evaluating preparedness, consider five critical factors: leadership, culture, systems, organization, and personnel (Weiner, 2009). Organizations with high readiness levels are more likely to initiate and sustain significant changes (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Vakola, 2013). Employees who embrace change tend to exert more effort, display resilience in the face of obstacles, and exhibit cooperative behaviors (Vakola, 2013).

A comprehensive analysis of cultural aspects within public organizations becomes imperative to overcome challenges like bureaucratic inertia, excessive formalization, stringent departmentalization, and government centralization (Monteduro, Hinna, & Moi, 2016; Villoria, van Ryzin, & Lavena, 2013). The culture of public sector organizations is intricate, especially in environments characterized by corruption, bureaucracy, poor governance, political and individual influences, resource constraints, prejudice, favoritism, and inadequate protection of public rights. Therefore, there is a strong demand for examining and diagnosing culture in the literature, particularly concerning public organizations operating within complex social, political, and economic contexts (Rukh & Qadeer, 2018). Scholars and practitioners emphasize the complexity and challenges associated with exploring the culture of public organizations (Schultz, 2012). It's well-known that organizational development initiatives aimed at cultural change often fail due to neglect or a misunderstanding of cultural diagnosis (Hastings et al., 2022). Furthermore, empirical findings related to cultural diagnosis in the public sector are either scarce or fragmented in nature.

Organizational Diagnosis (OD) stands as a potent methodology for scrutinizing an organization and pinpointing disparities between its current performance and desired outcomes, while also charting the course for achieving its objectives (Kumari, 2018). In recent years, OD has emerged as a distinct and pivotal technique within the organizational development landscape (Gallos, 2006). The core purpose of OD is to methodically assess individuals' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns within the organizations they function. The overarching

aim is to systematically unearth areas of growth or opportunity, discern the factors that hinder the full utilization of human resources, and formulate interventions aimed at optimizing performance at both the individual and collective levels. Therefore, every endeavor in organizational development should commence with a comprehensive diagnostic process, as it strives to augment the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization's systems, processes, and roles, thereby influencing the attitudes and behaviors of its human resources. Each diagnostic undertaking should center on enhancing institutional capacity, enabling the Human Resources department to function as a strategic catalyst, and identifying, nurturing, and assessing vital adjustments that impact performance beyond the individual level. Consequently, any approach or process of organizational diagnosis should be seen as a strategic undertaking (Beer & Spector, 1993). OD entails an exhaustive examination of the entire organization, encompassing its objectives, resources, the allocation and utilization of these resources to attain its goals, as well as its dynamic interactions with the external environment (Singh & Ramdeo, 2020). In today's dynamic economic, social, and political landscape, organizations must display agility in adapting to change promptly and effectively (Rolland & Roness, 2011; Jacobs, van Witteloostuijn, & Christe-Zeyse, 2013). Organizational diagnosis plays a pivotal role in identifying and resolving organizational issues and selecting the most suitable methods for implementing changes, whether they are planned or unforeseen. Without a thorough diagnostic process, business leaders and consultants may misdirect their focus toward the wrong problems or adopt inadequate solutions.

Scholars are keenly aware of the challenges inherent in diagnosing organizations, underscoring the critical importance of carefully selecting the appropriate diagnostic models or approaches. The efficacy of OD is profoundly influenced by the caliber and comprehensiveness of the diagnostic process. Consequently, practitioners must possess a deep understanding of a spectrum of diagnostic models and methods, along with the flexibility to tailor their approach to address the unique needs of each organization (Vehmas, 2010; Cheng & Lai, 2020).

To assess the readiness for change within the Department of Special Education (DSE), organizational diagnosis becomes indispensable. This entails a thorough examination of systems, procedures, and resources to unearth potential shortcomings and areas primed for enhancement. For successful implementation of organizational change initiatives, it is imperative to confront challenges, fortify institutional capacity, and facilitate positive transformations. The diagnostic process yields invaluable insights into the department's preparedness for change by pinpointing crucial factors such as leadership, culture, systems, organization, and personnel. Armed with this comprehension, appropriate interventions and strategies are crafted to optimize performance and achieve desired outcomes. Given the intricate and dynamic nature of the educational and governmental landscape, grasping the specific context and

Challenges are imperative. An organizational diagnosis approach tailored to the department's unique demands provides invaluable guidance for effective change management and decision-making.

This article endeavors to underscore the paramount significance of evaluating readiness factors, identifying gaps, and implementing targeted interventions within the DSE to facilitate successful organizational change.

### **Study Rationale**

Examining an organization's structure can significantly impact its productivity. An accurate diagnosis, based on data, provides the foundation for implementing precise interventions that can enhance various aspects of the organization's operations. This can include streamlining administrative processes, adopting effective management systems, reducing unnecessary expenditures, implementing time-saving measures, reevaluating employee motivation policies, restructuring departments, providing training, and eliminating redundant structures and procedures to improve the overall health of the organization. Embracing these practices and adapting to the ever-changing modern marketplace can empower businesses to enhance their efficiency, competitiveness, and prospects for success (Khan et al., 2023). Additionally, an earlier version of this article is available as a preprint.

### **Education of Special Needs in Pakistan**

Children with disabilities face a range of challenges, including emotional, behavioral, cognitive, intellectual, hearing, visual, speech, and learning difficulties. Special education programs are designed to support these diverse needs (Sultana, 1993; Akram, 2012). Typically, students with special educational needs struggle more than their peers of the same age in grasping educational concepts, although definitions may vary between countries.

In Pakistan's early years of independence, educational and rehabilitation services for disabled children were nearly non-existent. Recognizing the importance of special education, the Punjab government has made it a priority by taking measures like increasing enrollment, teacher recruitment, facility enhancements, best practices implementation, an international rehabilitation center establishment, and vocational training programs (Special Education Department. 2022).

In 2003, the Department of Special Education became an independent entity, significantly improving the quality of services for special students. It focuses on stable financial resources, expanding support for special students, developing policies for children with disabilities, and upgrading the special education system. These services include skill development, socialization, economic empowerment, recreation, and sports tailored to disabled students

(Special Education Department). The Department aims to empower special students to become self-reliant contributors to society.

Different from general education, special education delivers customized instruction to children with unique needs (Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990). It demands a holistic approach covering all stages, from planning to monitoring (Zigmond & Kloo, 2019). Specific challenges include visual and hearing impairments, slow learning processes, and physical and mental disabilities (Cook & Schirmer, 2003). The DSE, part of the Government of Punjab, offers services through a network of 303 institutions and promotes inclusive education by integrating children with mild disabilities into mainstream schools (Special Education Department, 2022). To address challenges, the Department implements a strategy involving inclusion, mainstreaming, and segregation, empowering children with special needs to lead independent lives.

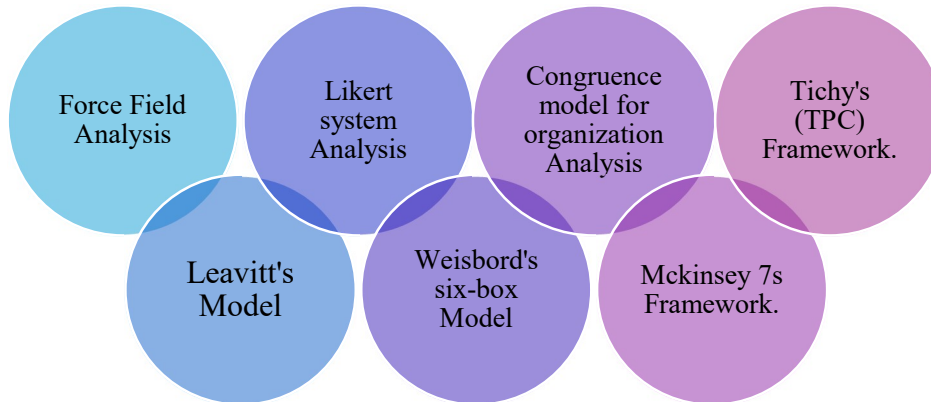
### **Mandate of Special Education Department**

The organization's primary mission is to ensure inclusive educational opportunities for children with special educational needs (SEN), enabling them to unlock their full potential and make meaningful contributions to society. The overarching goal is to empower children with SEN, enabling them to effectively harness their abilities and skills and fostering their growth as positive and productive community members. To achieve this, the organization offers comprehensive educational programs, vocational training, and specialized psychiatric and rehabilitative services. The department's key policy objectives encompass delivering high-quality education, targeted training, rehabilitative interventions, assistive devices, and equitable access to education for children with SEN. The department emphasizes accurate and up-to-date data collection related to disabled children.

In the pursuit of its objectives, the department initiates various measures, including staff capacity building, enhancing the emotional well-being and physical accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (PWD), extending educational services to remote areas, expanding rehabilitative practices, fostering collaborations, and enhancing the structural framework of the special education department (Department of Special Education, 2022).

**Figure 1**  
*Organizational diagnosis model & techniques*

### Organizational Diagnostic Models and Techniques



Diagnostic models serve as vital tools to enhance people's understanding of how organizations operate, enabling them to take effective actions by simplifying complexity (McFillen, O'Neil, Balzer, & Varney, 2013). Numerous diagnostic models have emerged to facilitate organizational diagnosis, including Weisbord's Six-Box Model (Freedman, 2013).

These models play a crucial role in simplifying complex realities and providing insights for effective organizational action (di Pofi, 2002). Open System Theory (OST) (Freedman, 2013; Paul, 1996), which focuses on the interaction between organizations and their external context, serves as the foundational theory underpinning these models. Katz and Kahn (1978) employed OST to examine how organizations adapt to new environments, both with and without IT intervention.

One such model, Weisbord's Six-Box Model, serves as a diagnostic tool to assess the management system of the DSE. Organizational diagnosis is conducted using this model, which encompasses six categories: goals, structure, relationships, rewards, leadership, and supportive mechanisms (Freedman, 2013). It's worth noting that the choice of diagnostic perspectives may vary depending on the analysis's objectives and the analysts' levels of experience and training (Bissell & Keim, 2008). By employing this comprehensive model, a holistic assessment of the department's management practices becomes possible, allowing for a thorough examination of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Utilizing Weisbord's Six-Box Model aids in gaining a deeper understanding of the department's management practices, facilitating the implementation of measures to enhance efficiency and achieve the desired outcomes.

## **Objectives**

1. Determine how employees perceive the department's objectives.
2. To evaluate the department's organizational structure in relation to its goals.
3. To investigate the methods utilized by administrative leaders for staff collaboration, direction, and management.
4. Determine how employee relationships affect the achievement of organizational objectives.
5. To evaluate the employee performance and reward system.
6. To investigate the department's capacity for seeking ai.
7. To evaluate the department's adaptability and receptivity to change.

## **Methodology**

To assess the organizational performance of the Department of Special Education, a combination of Preziosi's Organizational Diagnosis (OD) scale and an expanded version of Weisbord's six-box model was employed (Serrat, 2021). The data collection process involved distributing a questionnaire to managerial staff members, using the Organizational Diagnostic Questionnaire (ODQ) as the survey-feedback instrument (Haryanti et al., 2020). The ODQ evaluates seven critical factors: goals, structure, relationships, rewards, leadership, supportive mechanisms, and attitudes toward change, based on Weisbord's Six-Box Organizational Model (1976) (Haryanti et al., 2020). Additionally, an extra variable was included in the questionnaire to gauge change readiness (Hadisoebroto et al., 2021).

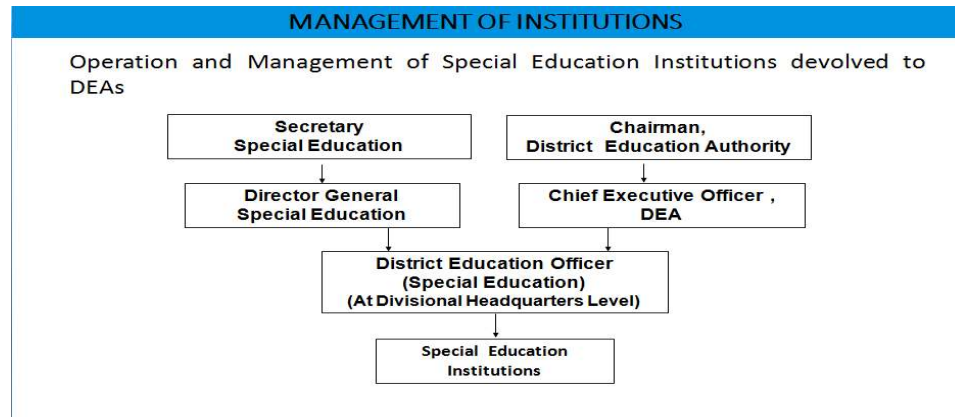
The ODQ offers a structured approach to examine the interrelations among these variables and their impact on organizational management (Serrat, 2021). While the ODQ primarily focuses on assessing the informal components of the system, it may be essential to gather data on the formal aspects and explore potential differences between the two (Adebayo et al., 2021; Olufunke et al., 2021). To gain a comprehensive understanding of organizational dynamics, the questionnaire can be employed independently or in conjunction with other data collection methods, such as interviews and observations.

## **Sample and Sampling**

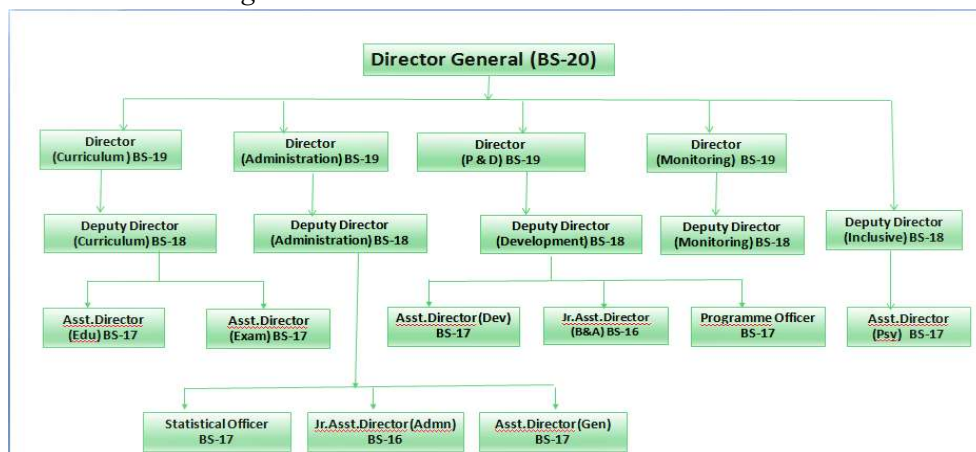
Data for this study was gathered from personnel holding managerial and administrative positions within the Department of Special Education, which operates under the Government of Punjab. This group of staff members represented various hierarchical levels, including department heads at special education schools/centers situated across different districts and tehsils. The estimated total staff population within this cohort comprised approximately 1,200 individuals. Out of this larger population, a total of 506 participants willingly participated in the survey using the Organizational Diagnostic

Questionnaire (ODQ), contributing valuable insights to the study. Figures 2 and 3 provide a visual representation of the department's diverse management structures.

**Figure 2**  
*Top tier Management Structure of the Department of Special Education*



**Figure 3**  
*Middle-tier Management Structure*





## Results

**Table 1**

*Descriptive results*

Indicator	N	Min	Max-	Mean	Std.Dev.
Purpose	506	1	5	3.26	1.315
Structure	506	1	5	3.06	1.445
Leadership	506	1	5	2.11	1.353
Relationships	506	1	5	2.19	1.613
Rewards	506	1	5	2.44	1.681
Helpful Mechanism	506	1	5	1.78	1.464
Attitude Toward Change	506	1	5	2.24	1.431
Total				2.44	.587

The results predicted that various factors e.g., leadership, relationships, rewards, mechanism for help-seeking, and change acceptance were poor. The overall mean score shows that administrative functions toward change acceptance are poor.

**Table 2**

*Comparison of opinion on the basis of variation in job Experience of respondents*

Factor	N	Std. Error	F	Sig.
Purpose	506	.05434	15.826	.001
Structure	506	.05873	13.538	.001
Leadership	506	.07318	13.638	.002
Relationships	506	.05434	14.001	.003
Rewards	506	.03840	11.348	.006
Helpful Mechanism	506	.05815	16.387	.008
Attitude Toward Change	506	.07318	14.857	.002

**Table 3**

*Comparison of opinion on the basis of qualification*

Factor	N	Std. Error	F	Sig.
Purpose	506	.03605	15.826	.003
Structure	506	.17130	17.538	.332
Leadership	506	.03605	13.638	.003
Relationships	506	.17255	11.001	.001
Rewards	506	.17130	14.348	.002
Helpful Mechanism	506	.17255	17.387	.002
Attitude Toward Change	506	.03605	10.857	.073

*An Organizational Diagnosis for Change Readiness***Table 4**  
*Comparison of opinion on the basis of Salary*

Factor	N	Std. Error	F	Sig.
Purpose	506	.02646	15.826	.094
Structure	506	.12573	16.538	.000
Leadership	506	.02646	17.638	.094
Relationships	506	.12665	16.001	.000
Rewards	506	.12573	14.348	.000
Helpful Mechanism	506	.12665	16.387	.000
Attitude Toward Change	506	.02646	10.857	.094

**Table 5**  
*Comparison of opinion differences on the basis of training attended*

Factor	N	Std. Error	F	Sig.
Purpose	506	.02646	15.826	.094
Structure	506	.12573	16.538	.000
Leadership	506	.02646	17.638	.094
Relationships	506	.12665	16.001	.000
Rewards	506	.12573	14.348	.000
Helpful Mechanism	506	.12665	16.387	.000
Attitude Toward Change	506	.02646	10.857	.094

**Table 6**  
*Comparison of opinion on the basis of gender differences*

Indicators-	Gender	N	Mean	S.	t	Df	Sig.
				D-			
Purpose	Male	237	3.26	.331	1.45	506	.058
	Female	269	3.06	.408			
Structure	Male	237	2.11	.177	1.63	506	.052
	Female	269	2.19	.344			
Leadership	Male	237	2.44	.177	1.63	506	.002
	Female	269	1.78	.344			
Relationships	Male	237	2.24	.177	1.63	506	.001
	Female	269	2.90	.344			
Rewards	Male	237	3.06	.177	1.63	506	.002
	Female	269	2.11	.344			
Helpful Mechanism	Male	237	2.19	.177	1.63	506	.004
	Female	269	2.44	.344			
Attitude Toward Change	Male	237	1.78	.177	1.63	506	.001
	Female	269	2.24	.344			

## **Discussion**

### **Purpose**

The organization's objectives are well-defined, and a majority of employees align with these goals. They comprehend the department's *raison d'être*. However, employee input in major decision-making processes is limited, often centralized. The articulation of the organization's vision and mission is considered a pivotal element in its strategic management approach (Papulova, 2014). This principle applies across various company sizes and types, encompassing both public and private sectors, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and international entities. A well-crafted vision and mission statement can differentiate one organization from another by highlighting the unique qualities that set it apart from competitors (Taiwo, Lawal, & Agwu, 2018).

### **Structure**

Human resource deployment is driven by the organization's needs and commitment to achieving its objectives. However, the allocation of job responsibilities appears somewhat arbitrary, leading to a less-than-optimal allocation of human resources. Due to a centralized recruitment process, the majority of personnel hail from the Lahore district, often expressing a desire to relocate or be reassigned to their hometowns. This imbalance affects the equitable distribution of human resources. A well-structured organization enhances operational efficiency, fostering improved communication and accelerated growth (Tavitiyaman, Zhang, & Qu, 2012).

### **Leadership**

The feedback reveals a lack of robust support and supervisory systems within the department. Many upper-tier employees adopt an authoritative approach when assigning tasks. Organizational leadership entails leaders actively contributing to formulating the organization's strategic goals and inspiring team members to effectively execute their duties in support of these goals (Griffith et al., 2018). A critical facet of leadership is directing an organization's resources toward enhanced efficiency and goal attainment (Shanafelt et al., 2015). Effective leaders set clear objectives while motivating and guiding their teams toward the organization's objectives. Organizational

Leaders can foster teamwork, inspire cooperation, and establish attainable goals by harnessing the specific skill sets of their teams (Yaghi, 2017).

## **Relationships**

Harmonious inter-relationships among employees are lacking, with poor communication and collaboration for task discussions. The absence of a supportive system for fostering collaboration and building inter-relationships is evident, resulting in conflicts at various levels. Workplace relationships are crucial, especially in the context of increasing telecommuting and digital communication (Zayas-Ortiz et.al., 2015). Genuine, trustworthy workplace relationships have been linked to increased job satisfaction, which, in turn, boosts engagement, productivity, and employee retention while reducing healthcare costs (Tsai, 2011). Effective leaders leverage these relationships to collaborate and influence others to achieve shared goals and a shared vision (Taylor, Cornelius, & Colvin, 2014). This ability is a key component of team building (Baird, Hu, & Reeve, 2011).

## **Rewards**

A significant portion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with promotions, task-based incentives, and rewards. An effective compensation system should incentivize employees to perform at their best and align their goals with those of the organization. The current trend toward performance-based incentive schemes aims to motivate and reward high-performing individuals. Strategic incentive management is critical in making employees feel valued for their contributions to the organization (Taba, 2018).

## **Summary**

According to the survey results, the organization faces challenges in terms of change acceptability within its administrative functions. Across all aspects, including purpose, structure, leadership, relationships, rewards, supportive mechanisms, and attitude toward change, the mean ratings fell below the neutral point of 3. This indicates a negative attitude among respondents towards administrative responsibilities related to change acceptance within the organization.

Inferential analysis was conducted to assess whether respondents' attitudes varied based on factors such as employment experience, qualifications, remuneration, training, and gender. The analysis revealed significant

differences in respondents' opinions across all factors except for structure and attitude toward change based on their qualifications. Additionally, respondents' opinions significantly varied based on their income and level of education across all factors. Gender differences were also significant across all factors except for structure. Notably, women exhibited a more positive attitude towards administrative roles associated with change acceptance compared to men, and this difference was statistically significant.

The study highlights areas where the organization's administrative processes related to change acceptance can be strengthened. The findings suggest that businesses should focus on providing appropriate training and offering competitive salaries to retain qualified employees. Furthermore, organizations should prioritize gender inclusion and diversity to eliminate gender bias in administrative tasks related to change acceptance.

The study provides insights into how employees perceive administrative tasks linked to change acceptance in organizations. These insights can be utilized by organizations to enhance administrative procedures and achieve better outcomes in change management.

The study's conclusions carry significant implications for organizational leaders and managers. The results underscore the importance of mechanisms that aid and support employees during periods of change, fostering relationship-building, leadership development, and effective reward systems. The findings also emphasize the need for managers to consider demographics.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Following the organizational diagnosis conducted within the Department of Special Education, several key findings have come to light:

**Clarity of Purpose:** Employees are well-informed about the organization's purpose. However, their input in major decision-making is limited, as decision-making primarily follows a centralized approach.

**Work Allocation:** The distribution of work tasks appears to lack logical reasoning, and the allocation of human resources often deviates due to the centralized recruitment system. This results in a significant number of employees originating from the Lahore district and seeking transfers to their native stations.

**Supervisory Support:** The department's supervisory support system is deemed inadequate, with a majority of upper-tier personnel adopting an authoritative approach to task management. This has led to a lack of harmonious inter-relationships and poor communication and collaboration among employees.

**Conflict Existence:** Various levels within the department experience conflicts, and most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with aspects such as promotions, task-based rewards, and incentives.

**Knowledge Sharing and Professional Ties:** Knowledge sharing among employees and the establishment of professional ties were found to be lacking, while the mechanisms for seeking help were inadequate.

Furthermore, the department exhibited a low level of readiness for change due to static policies that impede the organization's ability to adapt to emerging trends. Respondents' opinions also displayed significant variations based on factors such as their education level, work history, length of service, and gender.

Consequently, it is recommended that the department undertake the following strategic actions:

1. **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Adopt a more inclusive approach to decision-making, soliciting input from all organizational levels.
2. **Workforce Distribution:** Implement a decentralized recruitment system to ensure equitable distribution of human resources.
3. **Supportive Supervision:** Establish a supportive supervisory system that promotes positive interpersonal relationships and enhances communication among employees.
4. **Addressing Conflict:** Address conflicts at various levels within the department through appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms.
5. **Enhancing Engagement:** Improve aspects such as promotions, task-based rewards, and incentives to enhance employee satisfaction.

Moreover, to address the issue of low change readiness, policies should be reviewed and revised to facilitate adaptation to new trends. Additionally, it is essential to conduct further research to develop a comprehensive framework for enhancing the department's capacity to effectively manage change.

In conclusion, the Department of Special Education must prioritize inclusive decision-making, equitable workforce distribution, supportive supervision, and conflict resolution mechanisms. These actions are crucial for fostering positive organizational dynamics and ensuring the department's adaptability and effectiveness in the face of change.

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