

Organization Development Models: A Critical Review and Implications for Creating Learning Organizations

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ABSTRACT: *Over approximately the last 20 years, models have been used to guide the organization development (OD) consulting process for enhanced organizational effectiveness, with implications for creating learning organisations. This review analyses and synthesizes the characteristics, similarities and differences, and strengths and weaknesses of four main models of OD, and the extent to which they can be used to create learning organisations. The models reviewed are the three-step, action research, appreciative inquiry, and the general planned change model. Whereas all four models overlap in characteristics such as involving participants in the change process, important differences including the focus and stages of change exist amongst them. On the basis of the review, the general model of OD which integrates the other three models is revised and extended to address two main gaps. The first is the absence of a stage in the change process that focuses on assessing pertinent organizational and client factors capable of influencing the success/failure of planned change efforts. The second concerns the lack of clarification on how organizations can become learning organizations as part of the change process. The proposed extended general OD model comprises six overlapping stages, including a final “empowering-withdrawal” stage. It proposes that OD efforts should empower clients to become learning organizations as an ultimate focus of the field of OD. The review holds important implications for OD practitioners and researchers to jointly adopt, review, and build on the proposed revised general model of OD.*

KEYWORDS: Organization Development, Organizational Learning, Learning Organization.

INTRODUCTION

From its beginning in the early 19th century, various change models have been proposed to guide the core purpose of the field of organization development (OD) – to plan and implement change in order to promote organizational effectiveness. Although they may not explain every situation in the real world, these models provide the grounds on which change agents might proceed with designing, planning, and implementing change. During approximately the last twenty years, the use of models to guide the OD consulting process has been associated with enhanced organizational effectiveness through the adoption of one or a combination of change intervention strategies which are: human process-based strategies, techno-structural strategies, socio-technical strategies, and organizational transformation strategies (Mulili & Wong, 2011; McLean, 2005)

Organizational change, development, and learning organizations

All OD change intervention strategies may lead to some form of organizational learning such as knowledge acquisition, gaining of insight, and habit and skill learning (Mulili & Wong, 2011). Unfortunately, not all intervention strategies can result in the creation of a learning

organization. A learning organization is an organization that seeks to create its own future; that assumes learning is an ongoing and creative process for its members; and one that develops, adapts, and transforms itself in response to the needs and aspirations of people, both inside and outside itself (Navran Associates Newsletter, 1993). Such an organization therefore seeks to continuously improve itself as a whole, by proactively adopting organizational learning activities in order to effectively manage both internal and external change situations ahead of time (Cummings & Worley, 2009). It is important that these two concepts – organizational learning and a learning organization – are not confused or used interchangeably, as there exists important distinctions between the two. In their review of the importance of organizations in continuously adopting OD efforts, Mulili and Wong (2011) underscored the fact that organizational learning is a learning process that naturally exists in all organizations without any planned efforts. On the other hand, a learning organization was described as a type of organization that requires conscious effort on the part of the whole system to be established. Perhaps, a more concise distinction is that reported by Schein (1996), which described organizational learning as learning by individuals and groups IN the organization and a learning organization as learning BY the organization as a total system.

The advantages associated with the creation of learning organizations cannot be underestimated. It enhances organizations' capability to meet the ever changing and complex needs of clients. It also gives organizations a sustained competitive edge over other organizations. In addition, successful translation of knowledge gained from continuous learning into new products and services, can allow learning organizations to constantly create new sources of wealth (Cummings & Worley, 2009). In fact, it is argued that learning organizations are an important hallmark of OD efforts that distinguish the field from that of change management.

In effect, organizations and change agents may focus on a number of outcomes as a measure of the OD change process. However, the creation of learning organizations, which has emerged over the years as an ultimate focus of the field of OD, must be targeted not only as a desirable outcome, but an imperative one. Considering the value of organizations in becoming learning organizations, a review of the models that typically underpin the OD change process, is but a noble course. This would help ascertain the suitability of existing models in guiding change agents to form learning organizations as part of the OD consulting process. Other vital reasons support the review of OD models. Comprehensive models guide successful planned interventions, which are necessary to promote not only organizational structures and procedures, but also the quality of work life of organizational members. The ever-changing needs and nature of organizations, in part due to advancements in technology, also support the continuous appraisal of planned change models in order to ensure that the general model of OD is always comprehensive and relevant to the complex and dynamic needs of its clients.

The purpose of this review therefore, is to appraise four of the main models utilized in the field of OD to guide planned change processes, and their implications for creating learning organizations. Specifically, a brief overview of organizational change models as well as the key characteristics of the three-step model; the action research model; appreciative inquiry model; and the general model of planned change will be presented. The similarities and differences in the characteristics of the models, as well as their strengths, effectiveness and weaknesses will be analysed with an attempt to synthesize and draw out the core and relevant components/characteristics into a more comprehensive model. Drawing on the analysis of the

models, the review will end with implications for the creating of learning organizations as part of the OD consulting process. Recommendations for evaluating and enhancing the adoption of a proposed model in a way that would help to foster greater integration between theoretic and practitioner-generated knowledge, particularly, in the creation of learning organizations would then be presented.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Overview of Organisational Development Models

Conceptually, organizational change approaches are based on two main theories: change process theory and implementation theory. The former concerns the dynamics of the change process (how and why change occurs), whereas the latter addresses how actions generate change and what actions can be taken to initiate and guide change (Austin & Bartunek, 2003). Each theory encompasses different categories of change theories which are further comprised of many different individual models. For instance, implementation approaches include four primary theories or motors for initiating and guiding change. According to Austin and Bartunek (2003), these are the participation, self-reflection, action research and narrative motors of changing. Similarly, change process theories, according to a classification by Van de Ven and Poole (1995), include four main categories or motors of change; the teleological, dialectical, evolutionary, and life cycle motors. A key distinction between change process and implementation approaches is the fact that the former are largely developed by academics, whereas the latter are largely developed and utilized by practitioners.

Models of OD (e.g. appreciative inquiry model) are individual models guided by assumptions from one or a combination of motors (Austin & Bartunek, 2003). Indeed, most organizational change models tend to be primarily influenced by either change process or implementation theories, although this approach often threatens the focus of OD in fostering greater integration of theoretic and practitioner-generated knowledge (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). For instance, the four models under review tend to be largely implementation theories, as they guide the process/phases through which change occurs and/or explain the sets of activities necessary to bring about change at each phase (Austin & Bartunek, 2003). However, some models (e.g. the action research model), may draw on assumptions from a combination of change process and implementation motors.

In this review, the phases through which organizational change unfolds as described by Lewin's three-stage model, the action research model, the appreciative inquiry model and the general model of planned change are presented. The models will be reviewed using the following framework: 1) Characteristics of planned change models, which will comprise the background (proponent(s)/ key individuals and assumptions) and core components of each model (the process for planning and implementing change); 2) Comparison of the models; 3) Strengths, effectiveness and weaknesses of the models; and 4) implications for the creation for learning organizations.

The Three Step-Model of Change

Background: The Three-Step model of change was proposed by Kurt Lewin in 1947 as one of the four interrelated elements that comprise his planned approach to change, with the other

three being field theory, action research and group dynamics (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Burnes, 2004). It focuses on the conditions/forces that drive or hinder behaviour (Kritsonis, 2005). According to the social scientist, human behaviour is the result of a dynamic balance of forces working in opposing directions (Burnes, 2004; Kritsonis, 2005). The three-step model or field theory therefore assumes that a shift in the balance of these forces or conditions towards the direction of the planned change can bring about desired changes in behaviour (Kritsonis, 2005). In organizational terms, whereas driving forces (e.g. incentives) facilitate change by pushing employees from their current behaviour towards the planned change, restraining forces (e.g. group norms) hinder change by pushing employees in the opposite direction (Burnes, 2004; Kritsonis, 2005). The existing behaviour, problem situation, or status quo is referred to as a quasi-stationary equilibrium state (Burnes, 2004).

Core components: According to Lewin (1947), a successful change project involves three stages. The first stage, termed *unfreezing*, involves reducing the forces maintaining the present organizational behaviour or status quo; increasing the forces that direct behaviour away from the present organizational state; or using a combination of both methods.

The second step involves *moving* the organization to a new level of equilibrium/desired behaviour (implementing the desired change). It has been found that certain activities are necessary to implement the first two stages of the change project. These include disconfirming the validity of the status quo or persuading employees to agree that the existing situation is not beneficial to them. Also, inducing guilt about the existing situation, and actively engaging employees and leaders in identifying problems and solutions are important in the unfreezing and moving stages. In addition, creating psychological safety or reassuring members that the desired change will be at no psychological cost such as loss or humiliation to them, has been found to facilitate these two stages of the three-step model (Burnes, 2004; Kritsonis, 2005).

In the third or *refreezing* step, the planned change is integrated into the organizational values and traditions in order to stabilize the new quasi-equilibrium state and prevent regression to the previous problem situation. At this third stage, reinforcement is a critical method for stabilizing and institutionalizing new behaviours within organizations (Burnes, 2004; Kritsonis, 2005). Markers of refreezing or a new quasi-equilibrium state include changes in organizational culture, policies, and practices (Burnes, 2006).

The Action Research Model

Background: The concept of action research, like the three-step model, is attributed to Kurt Lewin (1946) as an element of planned change. According to Lewin (1946), action research is an approach to research which is based on a collaborative problem-solving relationship between the researcher and client, and which aims at both solving a problem and generating new knowledge. Thus, in relation to organizations, traditional action research assumes that organizational problems can be solved with cycles of knowledge gathering and implementation of action solutions when these dual activities are concurrently and actively engaged in by members of the organization (Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014). Action research further assumes that the desired outcomes of research/knowledge in action are solutions to the immediate organizational problems as well as important learning from intended and unintended outcomes (Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014). Although various paradigms of action research such as action learning (Revans, 1998) and participatory action research (Chambers, 1994) have been proposed, the traditional concept of the model has been, and continues to be

the dominant organizing model in OD (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Burnes, 2004; McLean, 2005).

Core components: Action research is a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action (Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014; Burnes, 2004). In guiding planned change within organizations, eight main steps are involved: problem identification, consulting with a behavioural science expert, data gathering and preliminary diagnosis, feedback to client, joint diagnosis of the problem, joint action planning, action, and data gathering after action (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

The first of these steps is *problem identification*. This involves sensing a change situation or problem within the organization (Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014). Usually, this is done by an executive or a powerful and influential person within the organization who realises one or more problems that might be solved with the help of an OD practitioner (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

The second step involves the organization *consulting with a behavioural science expert* such as an OD practitioner. During this stage, the expert may share his framework for implementing planned change with the organization in order to establish an open and collaborative relationship (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014; McLean, 2005).

The third step concerns *data gathering and preliminary diagnosis*, which, although predominantly completed by the OD practitioner, is done together with organization members. Here, the OD practitioner may use process observation, interviews, questionnaires and/or organizational performance data to gather appropriate and pertinent information about the organization's structures and/or operations. This information is then analysed to understand precisely, how the organization is currently functioning, and to determine the underlying causes and consequences of the problems within the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

Feedback to key client/group follows the data gathering stage and involves the OD practitioner feeding back findings of the diagnostic exercise to members of the organization (e.g. employees, managers, and executives). As highlighted by Cummings and Worley (2009), a balance between openness about relevant and useful information and confidentiality about sensitive or private data sources is critical at this stage of the change process. Likewise, the readiness of the organization for the diagnostic information is crucial to the preceding stages of the change process.

Joint diagnosis of the problem follows feedback to the client. At this stage, the OD practitioner and organization members jointly agree on what the problem and its causes are, as gaps in communication during the data gathering stage could result in misdiagnosis. This is a critical stage within the action research model (Wicks & Reason, 2009), as misdiagnosis or misunderstanding of the diagnosed problems could bring the change process to a halt or create resistance to change (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

The *joint action planning* step precedes the actual action phase and involves the OD practitioner and the organization members jointly agreeing on the actions or interventions needed to bring about the desired change. The specific action agreed upon at this stage usually depends on a host of factors including the diagnosis of the problem, the culture of the

organization and the nature of the intervention/actions (Cummings and Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005).

At the *action* phase, the planned actions are undertaken to bring about desired changes to the overall organization (e.g. changes in strategic mission and goals, structure, processes and human resources); at the group level (e.g. changes in culture or behaviour of departments or teams); or at the individual level (e.g. changes in job descriptions and tasks) Cummings and Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005). The *data gathering after action* has been taken, is the last step in the model. Here, the OD practitioner gathers data on the effects of the action and feeds this information back to the client. This may result in re-diagnosis and new actions, giving this model its cyclical nature.

The Appreciative Inquiry Model

Background: One of the first OD methods that operated outside the Lewinian paradigm of planned change was appreciative inquiry (Bushe, 2011). Originally proposed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), this model adopts a positive approach to change as an alternative to the problem-centred approach of action research. Firmly grounded in social constructionist theory, the appreciative inquiry model draws on narrative OD approaches such as storytelling, to generate new ideas, theories, and images of the future for change (Bushe, 2011; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006). It builds on recognizing and appreciating the capabilities of an organization in order to develop better ways for fostering the existing potentials (Bushe, 2011; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Lewis, Passmore & Cantore, 2008; McLean, 2005). It is also based on the assumption that people tend to communicate and act in ways that make their expectations occur, and that positive expectations about the organization can create an anticipation that energizes and directs behaviour toward making those beliefs happen (Bushe, 2011; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006). It is further based on the argument that the most important force for change is new ideas, and that traditional action research model does not generate such ideas (Bushe, 2011). The original appreciative inquiry method was a collective discovery process into the best of what is, what might be, what should be, and what can be (Bushe, 2011). Over the years, various perspectives of the positive approach have been proposed (e.g. the 5-D model; Cummings & Worley, 2009). However, the 4-D model, which guides planned change through a process of four main stages, continues to stand out as the approach that is almost universally described as the appreciative inquiry method (Bushe, 2011).

Core components: According to the 4-D model of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), organizational change is the result of a cyclical process that begins with *discovery*. At this phase, an inquiry is made into the subject of change/focus, using participants' reflections and discussions on the "best of what is" in relation to the subject (Bushe, 2011; Cummings & Worley, 2009). For instance, an inquiry into improving customer satisfaction may involve interviewing participants about instances of customer satisfaction as opposed to customer dissatisfaction (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Lewis et al., 2008). The *dream* phase follows the discovery stage and involves organizational members visualizing the organization in an ideal state in relation to the subject of change. Usually, an attempt is made to identify and symbolize the common aspirations/dreams of organization members (Bushe, 2011; Lewis et al., 2008).

The *design* stage, the third phase of the 4-D model, involves members developing concrete proposals for the new organizational state as well as compelling possibility/design statements

to bridge the gap between the current best practices and the ideal future state of the organization (Bushe, 2011; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Lewis et al., 2008). At the final stage, the *delivery or destiny* stage, members take actions in line with the design statements, assess the results of their actions, and make the necessary readjustments to move the organization toward the vision/ideal state in order to achieve “what will be”. This cyclical process continues with a review of the best of “what is” (Bushe, 2011; Lewis et al., 2008).

The General Model of Planned Change

Background: Based on the three models reviewed above, Cummings and Worley (2009) have proposed a general framework for guiding the OD consulting process: the general model of planned change. This general OD model focuses on planned change from a problem solving perspective, as well as from the perspective of identifying and leveraging best practices within organizations. As noted in the literature, the model emphasizes not only a participative approach to change, but also an overlapping and nonlinear approach to planned change (Cummings & Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005).

Core components: According to the general OD model, planned change within organizations can be achieved in four main stages through four sets of activities: entering and contracting, diagnosis and feedback, planning and implementation, evaluation and institutionalization. The first stage, the *entering and contracting* stage, describes the initial set of activities that the change agent and the organization must engage in, in order to better understand what needs to be improved or facilitated and whether to engage further in the planned change programme (Cummings & Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005). The activities include data gathering to identify the problems or opportunities for change; joint discussion of the data gathered; agreement to engage in planned change; and setting expectations around the role (e.g. consultant or expert), time, and pay of the change agent as well as the resources that the organization would need to commit to the process.

The *diagnosis and feedback* stage is the second stage of the OD consulting process. It involves a set of activities aimed at understanding the current state of the organization (including the causes and consequences of organizational problems or best practices), in order to clearly identify the set of intervention activities necessary to improve organizational effectiveness. This phase, according to Cummings and Worley (2009), is one of the most important stages in the change process. Key change activities at this stage are; choosing an appropriate diagnostic model (e.g. the whole systems model) for understanding the organization; collecting pertinent data about current operations and culture at the organizational, group and/or individual level; analysing the data; and feeding back the conclusions drawn to the organizational members (Cummings & Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005).

The *planning and implementation* stage follows the diagnosis and feedback stage and precedes the last phase of the change process. At this stage, organization members and the change agent mutually design action plans or interventions based on the diagnostic results. Depending on the outcomes of the diagnosis, interventions may focus on modifying organizational strategy, structure, technology, human processes, and/or human resources. The nature and scope of the interventions developed may also depend on organizational factors such as readiness for change, change capability, organizational culture, and power distributions, as well as on factors that relate to the change agent such as motivation, commitment, skills and abilities. This stage also involves the change agent engaging in

implementation activities, i.e. leading and managing the application of the action plans or interventions such that all members of the organization at least, perceive the impact of the change (Cummings & Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005).

The last stage of the change process concerns *evaluating and institutionalizing change*. Here, the change agent gathers data on the current state of the organization following the implementation of the intervention in order to ascertain how well the intervention accomplished the objectives that were planned. Feedback to organizational members about the impact of the intervention is also a significant activity at this stage. It allows organizational members (particularly the management) to decide whether the changes should be continued, modified or abolished. When found to be successful, the intervention becomes institutionalized, i.e., a usual way in which business is done in the organization through methods such feedback, rewards and training (Cummings & Worley, 2009; McLean, 2005).

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENTIATING CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT MODELS

All four models – the three-step model, action research model, appreciative inquiry model and the general OD change model – describe the main stages by which planned change unfolds in organizations. They all emphasize on action plans that are preceded by an initial diagnosis or unfreezing stage and followed by an evaluative or closing stage. The models also overlap in their involvement of organizational members to varying degrees, as well as in their emphasis on the application of behavioural science knowledge to the planned change process (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006; McLean, 2005).

However, whereas Lewin's model focuses on the general process of planned change, the other three describe the process as well as the specific OD activities necessary to bring about change (Kritsonis, 2005). Lewin's model, the action research model and the general OD model also differ from the appreciative inquiry model in that the three approaches emphasize the role of the change agent with some participation from organizational members. Whereas, the appreciative inquiry model views both the change agent and organizational members as co-learners who are mutually involved in the planned change process (Cummings & Worley, 2009). The models also differ in their change foci. Whereas the appreciative inquiry approach is concerned with identifying and leveraging strengths, best practices, and new ideas, Lewin's model and the action research model focus on identifying and solving problems (Bushe, 2011; Kritsonis, 2005). The integrated general OD model on the other hand, focuses on both problem solving and development of opportunities as ways to bring about planned change (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006). Furthermore, Lewin's model appears to be a linear approach, whilst the other three models support a cyclical approach to exploring problems or opportunities; advocating actions; and reflecting on effected changes, (Gallos, 2006). Table 1 below presents a summary of the analysis of the stages of planned change as proposed by the four models.

Table 1. Analysis of the three-step, action research, appreciative inquiry, and general OD models

	Three-step	Action research	Appreciative Inquiry	General OD model
Stages of change				
Entering & contracting		Yes		Yes
Diagnosis of problems & Feedback / Unfreezing	Yes	Yes		Yes*
Discovery of the best of what is			Yes	
Planning & Implementation / Dreaming & Design	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evaluation & Institutionalization		Yes		Yes
Adoption/Integration /Delivery/Destiny	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Targeted outcomes				
Organizational effectiveness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*This stage also includes identifying organizational strengths or the best of what is, and new and positive ideas.

Table 1 indicates that all four models have at least three stages: pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention stage. Table 1 further shows that improving organizational effectiveness is the principal outcome of focus of the models that currently guide the OD change process.

EVALUATION OF ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT MODELS

General strengths, effectiveness and weaknesses

Across all the models reviewed, the focus on participation from organizational members (although to varying degrees), is an important element, as it allows organizations to learn from the experience and detailed understanding of the change agent (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Organizations can therefore feel empowered to effectively collaborate on, or support future changes. On the contrary, this emphasis on collaboration can be costly to employees in terms of the extra hours required of them to participate in research/inquiry and other stages of the change process. Newly formed and small organizations with limited resources, particularly time and human resources, may lack the capacity to engage in cycles of research and action (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006). Also, all four models do not take into consideration the need for change agents to assess important organizational and practitioner factors that can influence planning, implementation and adoption of action plans. In addition, the models reviewed do not provide guidance on how the change agent can withdraw from the helping relationship as part of the change process. Perhaps more importantly, none of the models clarifies how change agents can support and empower organizations to become learning organizations by the end of the change process.

Three-step Model of Planned Change

In specific relation to the three-step model, the group-based approach of Lewin's work can be argued as a key strength of the model (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). As rightly noted by Burnes (2004), changes to individual behaviour will not be sustained unless group norms and routines are also transformed. Cummings & Worley, (2009) also noted that the simplicity of the model may offer a straightforward approach to organizational change and provide a basis for the development of other change models. These include Lippit's phases of change theory (Lippit, Watson & Westley, 1958) and Kotter's (1996) eight-stage model. Hendry (1996), also argued that any approach to creating and managing change seems to be underpinned by the idea that change is a three-stage process that begins with a process of unfreezing or challenging the existing situation.

On the other hand, Lewin's model has been criticised for being overly simplistic, linear, and relatively slow, limiting its influence in situations where rapid and complex changes are required within an organization (Burnes, 2004; Kritsonis, 2005). It is also criticized for ignoring personal factors that can affect change such as the feelings, experiences and past input of employees (Kritsonis, 2005). Further, the model focuses on change largely from the perspective of employees' behaviours, rather than from a whole-systems' perspective (e.g. organizational strategies, technology, structure, and behaviours) (Kritsonis, 2005).

Action Research Model of Planned Change

The action research model has over the years, made significant contributions to the field of OD and beyond, through its emphasis on the dual process of academic research/knowledge creation and problem solving (Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014; Reason & Torbet, 2001). It can therefore be argued that the concept has played and continues to play a critical role in bridging the researcher-practitioner gap in the field of OD. In support of the various problem-centred cases noted by Gallos (2006, pp 141) to have been successfully solved through the application of the action research model, Burnes and Cooke (2012) stated that the model is the most used approach by OD practitioners. Furthermore, the action research model is known for its rigour, and has shown extensive contributions in the area of theory and methodology advancements, considering that a host of action research forms have been developed from the original concept (Coghlan, & Brannick, 2014).

Despite its strengths and effectiveness, the action research model has been criticised by other proponents of the OD field. Cooperrider and Srivastva, as far back as in 1987, criticized the model and its underlying assumptions as focusing on utilitarian and technical views of organizations as problems to be solved. They therefore proposed the appreciative inquiry model as an alternative. According to Gummesson (2000), the action research model is also the most demanding and extensive method of doing case study research.

The Appreciative Inquiry Model of Planned Change

In relation to the appreciative inquiry model, a key strength has been its focus on appreciating existing situations to generate new and positive ideas, which have been argued by some in the field as being the most important force for change (Bush, 2011). The effectiveness of this approach has also been well documented. It has been found that the appreciative inquiry model has been instrumental in fostering positive change and growth in both small- and

large-scale organizations, including religious, medical, military, academic and educational organizations (Cooperrider, 2000; Lewis et al., 2008; Gallos, 2006).

However, in spite of the outstanding outcomes associated with the 4-D model, it has been criticized for omitting an important first step of identifying or defining the focus of the inquiry/the subject of change itself (Bushe, 2011). Although how the subject of inquiry is defined has not been well articulated, clarifying what it is, and ensuring that it is of high interest to leaders and stakeholders, has been argued to be crucial to the overall success of the change process (Bushe, 2011). In addition, the model has been criticized for focusing solely on the strengths of an organization. As noted by some in the field, complete and successful changes require not only a focus on the best of what is, but also, solutions to the problems and challenges facing organizations (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006; McLean, 2005).

General Model of Planned Change and Limitations of the reviewed OD models in creating Learning Organizations

The general model of OD, being an integration of the other three models, shares in their strengths, whilst attempting to bridge the gaps in these approaches. Its strengths lie in the following: it fosters collaborative work between the change agent and client, and focuses on both problem identification and development of new and positive ideas and best practices. It also targets change at the organizational (e.g. strategic and structural change), group (e.g. departmental behaviours and norms) and individual (e.g. job descriptions) levels. It emphasizes cycles of research and action until the desired change has been achieved. It also encourages research to promote problem identification/defining. In addition, the general OD model informs change agents not only about the stages of change, but also, provide clear guidance on the sets of activities necessary at each stage to move the organization to the desired state (Cummings & Worley, 2006; Lacey, 1995).

On the contrary, it can be argued that the model is limited in at least, two main respects. First, the literature highlights certain important client and practitioner factors that can influence the planning and implementation of change, for example, organizational readiness, and the change agent's skills and values (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gallos, 2006; McLean, 2005). However, the model does not specify assessment of these core factors as a key stage in the change process. Secondly, it is true that the model's emphasis on participation from organizational members can foster sharing of skills and experiences between members and the change agent. But the question remains of the extent to which organizational members' participation can ensure that clients become learning organizations, capable of anticipating and planning effective changes ahead of change situations triggered by either internal or external organizational factors, or of managing the unpredictable deftly? As mentioned above, all organizations may naturally engage in some form of learning in order to survive. However, it is only those organizations that put measures in place to continuously and proactively acquire and develop knowledge as a whole system, which may thrive and become leaders in their field. Considering that the creation of learning organizations is a core focus of the field of OD, it is crucial that the general OD model is revised to specify how change agents can ensure that clients become learning organizations by the time they withdraw from their helping role. Even in situations where change agents may work with clients on a long-term basis, it remains essential that the underpinning model used is able to guide how they may continue to work with the client to foster continuous learning and adaptation.

PROPOSED EXTENDED GENERAL MODEL OF ORGANISATION AND THE CREATION OF LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

In light of the current review, and particularly, the gaps identified in the typical OD programme, it is proposed that the general model of planned change (Cummings and Worley, 2009) be revised in order to ensure that the model adequately guides the creation of learning organizations as part of the OD consulting process. In particular, the revised model should:

1. Comprise of six overlapping and nonlinear stages of change: *entering and contracting, diagnosis and feedback, assessing organizational and client factors, planning and implementation, evaluation and institutionalization, and empowering-withdrawal stages.*
2. The scope and focus of the four existing stages – entering and contracting, diagnosis and feedback, planning and implementation, and evaluation and institutionalization – would remain the same.
3. The proposed third stage, *assessing organizational and client factors*, should focus on identifying those factors capable of influencing whether a planned change would be successful, accepted, implemented and adopted. Examples of such organizational factors are readiness, resources, support of all members, perceived need to change, perceived self-efficacy to manage change, and perceived psychological cost of the expected change. The pertinent practitioner factors that change agents may need to assess include their motivation, capability, resources (e.g. ample time), power, and relevant skills required to implement the necessary intervention strategies (e.g. whole systems/global intervention strategies). It is important to note that activities at this stage should also include feedback to organizational members, and seek to address any potential barriers to the planning and implementation of the necessary interventions. Overall, the purpose of this stage should be to create readiness for change, ensure suitability of the change agent, and set expectation regarding the type and level of intervention that can be achieved.
4. It is proposed that the last stage, *empowering-withdrawal*, should have two pathways.
 - 1) The change agent, following institutionalization of the change and before withdrawal from their role, should consciously train and empower key organizational members to continuously learn (research/inquire), and proactively plan successful changes ahead of anticipated change situations. Key organizational members may consist of a group of motivated members (including at least a manager or an executive), strongly interested in, and dedicated to activities that promote organizational effectiveness.
 - 2) The change agent, following institutionalization of the change, may work with organizational members on a continuous basis, to help the whole organization to engage in constant learning activities. The advantage of this recommended pathway is that together with the change agent, organizations can continuously acquire, create, and use knowledge to alter their fundamental strategies, processes, and practices. This way, organizations are likely to develop a culture of constant learning, and as a result, remain learning organizations over the long term.

Figure 1 is a graphical illustration of the stages of change in the revised general model of OD.

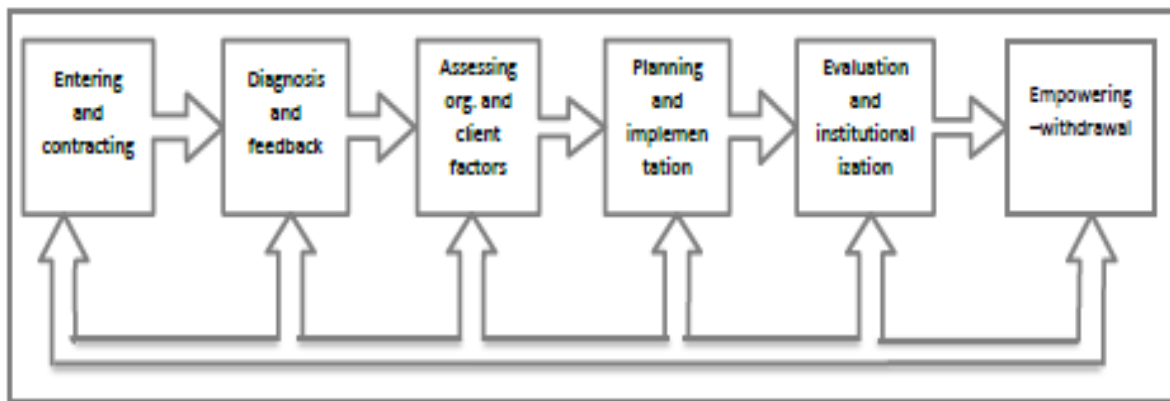


Fig. 1 Proposed General Model of Planned Change

Table 2 is a summary of the analysis and synthesis of the main stages of planned change as proposed by the four models, and by the revised general model of planned change proposed.

Table 2. Analysis and synthesis of the stages of planned change as proposed by the four models reviewed, and the revised general OD Model

	Three-step model	Action research model	Appreciative Inquiry model	General model of planned change	Revised general model of planned change
Stages of change					
Entering & contracting		Yes		Yes	Yes
Diagnosing of problems & Feedback / Unfreezing	Yes	Yes		Yes*	Yes*
Discovery of the best of what is			Yes		
Assessing organizational and client factors					Yes
Planning & Implementation / Dreaming & Design	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evaluation & Institutionalization		Yes		Yes	Yes
Adoption/Integration /Delivery/Destiny	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Empowering & Withdrawal					Yes
Targeted outcomes					
Promoting organizational effectiveness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Creating learning organizations					Yes

*These stages also include identifying organizational strengths or the best of what is, and new and positive ideas.

Table 2 indicates that although all four models have at least three stages: pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention, the pre-intervention stage of the revised general OD model proposed, focuses on assessment of pertinent client and organization factors as part of

the OD consulting process. Furthermore, the proposed revised model emphasizes two outcomes of the planned change process: improved organizational effectiveness and creation of learning organization.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

In order to ascertain the relevance of the proposed model to the field of OD, it is imperative that the model is adopted by practitioners to underpin future real-world organizational change cases, and its long-term effects on organizational effectiveness and the creation of learning organizations rigorously assessed. Adoption of the proposed model by practitioners is also necessary to identify and inform researchers about the parsimonious set of organizational and client factors that work together to enhance successful implementation of action plans. Furthermore, there is the need for both academics and practitioners to identify the extent to which the proposed model can guide successful planned change, and formation of learning organizations in an increasingly virtual world.

CONCLUSION

Lewin's three step model, the action research model, appreciative inquiry model, and the general model of planned change are implementation models that guide the process by which planned change is developed and implemented in organizations. Whereas all four models overlap in characteristics such as involving participants in the change process, important differences including the focus and stages of change exists amongst them. A revised version of the current general model of planned change has been proposed that highlights the need to assess the important organizational and client factors that can influence the success/failure of planned change efforts. More importantly, the revised model proposes that OD efforts, whether continuous or not, should empower clients to become learning organizations as an ultimate focus of the OD consulting process. However, this model with its significant implications for creating learning organizations can only serve the field of OD well, if both theorists and practitioners jointly adopt, review, and build on it

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