

Introduction

William J. Rothwell and Jacqueline M. Stavros

Welcome to this special issue of the IJTD on organization development (OD). It consists of six articles on a broad range of topics related to organizational change. Those in the training field should care about organizational change because training is itself a change strategy. But there are others, and OD includes many of them.

As the original Call for Papers indicated, this issue was intended to examine research on a broad range of OD themes. These were to include: (1) cutting-edge research on OD or related topics; (2) competencies necessary for success in OD or related fields; (3) trends affecting OD; (4) research-based case studies or multiple case studies in OD or related fields; (5) innovative practices in OD or related fields; and (6) cross-cultural applications of OD or related fields. All of these topics – and more – are addressed in this special issue.

The first article is Barry J. Halm's 'A workforce design model: providing energy to organizations in transition'. A qualitative study using grounded theory research, it examines the change in performance realized by a global professional services organization. This study led to a workforce design model called the 'Life Giving Workforce Design'. The model can be a possible organizational blueprint to provide virtuous values to an open system so as to generate boundless energy to coordinate, motivate and stimulate human capital in accomplishing organizational objectives.

The second article is by Jason A. Wolf. Entitled 'Constructing rapid transformation: sustaining high performance and a new view of organization change', the article explores what supports and sustains high performance in health-care organizations. Following a generative theory model, the article explores new perspectives about how to consider and lead change. The author concludes that traditional planned change models may be less effective in today's world.

The third article is by Joseph Sprangel, Jacqueline Stavros and Matthew Cole. Entitled 'Creating sustainable relationships using the strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results framework, trust, and environmentalism: a research-based case study', it examines new forms of organizations. The strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results (SOAR) framework described in the article allows stakeholders to engage in a whole system dialogue. The authors examine the interrelationship among SOAR, trust, environmental management systems/chemical management services (CMS), and supplier performance in respect of 71 program managers and customers. Hypothesis testing was carried out using correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, Pearson product-moment correlation and Sobel's test for mediation. This study was done at Haas TCM Group, the largest CMS provider in North America.

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The fourth article is Keith W. Ray and Joan Goppelt's article entitled 'Understanding the effects of leadership development on the creation of organizational culture change: a research approach'. This article focuses on the role of leadership development programs in improving individual leaders' skills and abilities to perform. As the authors point out, the outcomes of some leadership development programs are aimed at creating larger systemic changes in organizations. The authors argue that methods that take a social constructionist perspective combined with social complexity theories of change are useful in understanding the relationship between leadership development and organizational culture change. Both researchers and practitioners can benefit from capturing emerging narratives and enlisting organizational actors in collaborative sense making when designing training and development programs in leadership.

The fifth article is Julie A. Felker's article entitled 'Professional development through self-directed expatriation: intentions and outcomes for young, educated Eastern Europeans'. This article explores the experiences of young, educated Eastern Europeans who have moved to Western Europe in search of opportunities and examines *downskilling* in which individuals work in positions well below their levels of education and capability. The study results offer two major contributions: (1) self-directed expatriates move to host countries to take advantage of professional development opportunities but do little to research their career and employment options before moving to the host country; and (2) organizations do not fully take advantage of the human capital offered by Eastern Europeans, which suggests unrealized opportunities for leveraging and developing human capital.

The sixth and final article, by William J. Rothwell, is entitled 'Replacement planning: a starting point for succession planning and talent management'. The article defines replacement planning as a form of risk management or disaster planning to address the sudden, unexpected loss of key people. Using a case study approach based on a small number of interviews, the author describes how replacement planning can be used as a possible starting point for organizations to launch a succession planning and a talent management program.

Taken together, the articles in this issue of the IJTD cast a broad net to demonstrate how researchers are examining change in today's organizational settings in a global environment. They provide, as IJTD always does, an international collection of high-quality, original research for the benefit of the academic and corporate communities as well as those engaged in public policy formulation and implementation.