

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE AMONG SELECTED MICRO AND SMALL-SCALE BUSINESSES IN MAASIN CITY, SOUTHERN LEYTE

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed how change management intersects with employees' performance in micro and small-scale businesses. It focused on communication, leadership, procedural justice, employees' development and tolerance to change as to the level of manifestation of change management wherein lower and top management have been compared. Descriptive-correlational design was used to determine the relationship between the level of manifestation of change management and employees' performance. A total of 192 participants including all managers, supervisors and regular employees of 16 businesses were selected on the basis of convenience. A survey was conducted to gather data on change management and employee's performance while one-on-one interviews were conducted to elicit further data. Findings revealed that strong relationship in the organization can be achieved by promoting high level of communication, leadership, tolerance to change, procedural justice and employees' development. These factors created and supported a high level of employees' performance in the event that change is implemented in the organization. With the proper understanding of these five areas, it can help organizations improve employee's performance, become aware of employee's needs and wants, and correct ways to augment their productivity.

Keywords: *change management, employees' performance, micro and small businesses, Maasin city, Southern Leyte*

INTRODUCTION

Currently, there are rapid-fire changes in organizations which increase the requests and openings in terms of gaining growth and profit. The ideas of organizational change can take many forms. It may involve a change in a company's structure, strategy, policies, procedures, technology, or culture. In any case, regardless of the type, change involves letting go of the old ways in which work is done and adjusting to the new ways. Employees are resistant to change if changes are not properly communicated from the top down to the lower level.

Richards (2018) emphasized that change is inevitable due to technology. Change that results from the adoption of new technology is common in most organizations, and while it can be disruptive at first, ultimately the change tends to increase productivity and service. It improves communication that allows organizations to learn more, more quickly than even before. He revealed further that change can also be due to customer needs. As the world evolves, customer needs change and grow, creating new demand for new types of products and services and opening up new areas of opportunity for companies to meet those needs. He reiterated further that economy and growth opportunities also lead to

change. In growth opportunities, change is important in organizations to allow employees to learn new skills, explore new opportunities and exercise their creativity in ways that ultimately benefit the organization through new ideas and increased commitment (Richard, 2018).

Change management has significant impact towards employees' performance depending on how the employees view changes. The situation of the workplace or environment also matters. When employees face challenges, they will be motivated to work hard on them to a high degree. They are ready to put forth their whole-hearted effort for the great contribution in the organization.

In Maasin City, Cebu, most common changes in the workplace are related to issues on restructuring leadership, adding new policies, and introducing enterprise technology. This transformation totally affects the whole company which is felt by every employee. Another form of change is personnel change where the company implements hiring of new staff or implementing layoffs. Hiring indicates training the newly-hired staff and continued support, while layoffs evoke fear and anxiety among staff members. In the city of Maasin, there are more than 50 micro and small businesses. Micro and small businesses play an important part in the economic development of Maasin City which belongs to a fourth-class city. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to analyze how change management intersects with factors such as communication, leadership, procedural justice, employees' development and tolerance to change within micro and small-scale businesses, and assess their relationship on employees' performance. The five elements for change management were identified to have an effect on employees' performance especially on their productivity.

Statement of the Problem

Given the main objective above, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the level of manifestation of change management in the micro and small scale busi-

nesses as perceived by the respondents in the areas of:

- a. Communication;
- b. Leadership;
- c. Procedural justice;
- d. Employees' development; and
- e. Tolerance to change?

2. What is the level of employees' performance in the workplace?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of change management and the level of employee's performance?

4. Is there a significant difference between the level of manifestation of change management when participants are grouped according to top management and lower management?

5. What are the other factors that can improve or deter change management and employee's performance?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the level of change management and employees' performance in micro and small-scale businesses.

H2: There is significant difference between the level of manifestation of change management when participants are grouped according to top management and lower management.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the theory of Torbenrick (2015) regarding Change Management. He demonstrated that most organizations today are in a constant state of flux as they respond to the fast-moving external business environment, local and global economies, and technological advancement. This means that workplace processes, systems, and strategies must continuously change and evolve for an organization to remain competitive.



Change affects the most important asset in the organization, the employees. Losing employees is costly due to the associated recruitment costs and the time involved in getting new employees up to speed. He postulated that a change management plan can support a smooth transition and ensure that employees are guided through the change journey. The harsh fact is that approximately 70 percent of change initiatives fail due to negative employee attitudes and unproductive management behavior.

The cited idea is relevant to this study because

employees, especially the upper level and lower level, are the first ones to be affected if change is implemented. In order for the changes in the organization to be effective, and is easy for them to adjust, management should clearly define change and align it to business goals, determine impacts and those affected, develop communication strategy, provide effective trainings, implement a support structure and measure the change process.

The theoretical framework for this study is developed based on several research frameworks conducted by Kang, Kim and Chang (2008) and Tzafirir et al. (2004) investigating the relationship

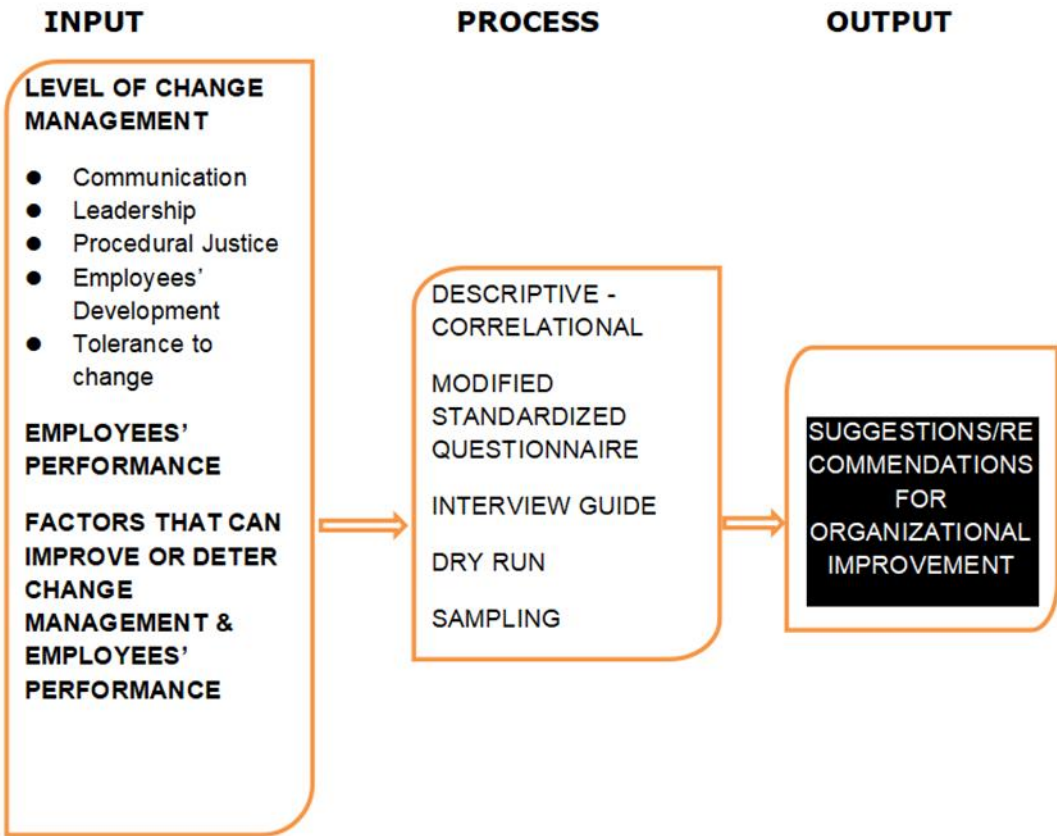


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

among variables which include communication, leadership, procedural justice, employee’s development, and tolerance to change and work performance of employees in selected businesses in Maasin City, Southern Leyte. Factors that either improve or deter change management and employees’ performance were also identified to come up with suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the business organizations studied.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational design to determine the relationship between the level of change management and employees’ performance. Participants of the study include all managers and supervisors of eight (8) micro-scale businesses and eight (8) small-scale businesses, selected on the basis of convenience alongside 80 regular employees with a total of 192. The respondents were located within the five (5) major barangays in Maasin City, Cebu. Adapting Fong, Ting, Hui, Ying, and Soo’s (2011) survey questionnaire, questions on change management and employee’s performance were contextualized to suit the respondents. An interview guide was also used to elicit and further validate data on these. In analyzing the quantitative data,

the study utilized frequency and percentage, weighted mean and Pearson r moment correlation.

The top management was composed of the managers and supervisors, while lower management included the regular employees. Results were described based on the following criteria: 1.00-1.75, not manifested; 1.76-2.50, less manifested; 2.51-3.25, manifested; and 3.26-4.00, highly manifested (Daguplo, 2019). On the other hand, employee’s performance was described as 1.00-1.75, very low , 1.76-2.50, low , 2.51-3.25, high and 3.26-4.00, very high.

Interview data from the 16 micro and small scale business establishments in Maasin City focusing on the other factors that can either improve or counter change management and employee’s performance were summarized and incorporated in the discussion of results. Ethical considerations, especially among the employees, were strictly observed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Manifestation of Change Management

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by category

CATEGORY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Micro-Scale:		
Manager	8	4.17
Supervisor	8	4.17
Regular Employees	80	41.67
Small-Scale:		
Manager	8	4.17
Supervisor	8	4.17
Regular Employees	80	41.67
Total	192	100%



Communication

In the level of manifestation of change management as perceived by the respondents in the area of communication, both levels, the lower and the top management, were interpreted as highly manifested (Table 1). The result manifests that communication played an important role in the change process and was given attention in the organization. It helped both top and lower levels accept and understand change, get involved in the change and most of all empowered them to commit and engage in the organization's desired change. It was highly evident that the managers, supervisors, and some other employees believed that communication plays a vital role in the successful implementation of change as well as in improving their work performances. According to Juneja (2020), communication is the key and the most complex parameter as it involves an exchange of ideas and feelings with people in the company. This is the toughest issue faced in the organization during the entire implementation of change.

The proper understanding of change and change management helps employees perceive the change positively. Most of them replied that a positive perception of change management created an increased commitment to their duties and responsibilities, leading them to be more useful and responsible. Therefore, increasing employees' commitment was determined as a way to improve change management and employees' performance. In the study by D'Ortenzio (2012), the proper understanding of change management can be achieved through communication effectiveness. Respondents believed that communication can be effective when management makes themselves available anytime to employees.

Failure to communicate the change properly resulted in a negative evaluation by employees, thereby creating an unfavorable understanding of change management that led them to decrease their commitment.

The study of Muda et al. (2014) on the factors influencing employees' performance stated that communication constituted a partial effect on the employees' performance. However, based on the study's findings, communication played an important role in the introduction and proper implementation of change management to allow employees to achieve the firm-set goals.

Leadership

In the area of leadership, both levels of management believed that leadership plays an important role in business success, specifically if good leadership is rendered on matters related to organizational change. In this result, it could be inferred that there is proper leadership in both micro and small-scale businesses in Maasin City, Leyte (Table 1). Both levels of management were greatly influenced by their head or superior.

Procedural Justice

Change in the area of procedural justice was manifested by the top and lower management as perceived by the respondents (Table 1). According to Klendauer and Deller (2009), interaction with procedural justice in organizational change leads to an increase in the effective commitment of employees. The total result as manifested would only mean that there is unfair treatment in their job performance. Something is wanting in the process or procedure of job allocation. The study by Roberson (2012) suggested that the perception of procedural justice constituted a great effect on the employees and the organization's performance. Therefore, it should be practiced at all levels at any cost.

Employee development

In employees' development, top management was perceived by the respondents as manifested while the lower management was perceived by the respondents as highly manifested (Table 1). The difference in the result meant that business management put more effort into training and enhancing the skills of the lower level since they are the primary ones to be affected by the change management. Mostly, bottom-ranked staff reported more negative attitudes during change (Martin & Jones, 2015). They were the ones who performed the change in their respective assignment. Although employees' development was also afforded to the upper level for being the executive implementer of change, the focus was more on the lower level. There is still a need to push them to acquire more skills needed to ensure the progress and development of the business. The manager, on the other hand, has already developed the skills of being a supervisor and can be directly mentored by the owner or their head.

Tolerance to Change

In the area of tolerance to change, top management and lower management were perceived as manifested and highly manifested, respectively (Table 1). The difference simply explains that the top management who are the executive implementers of change has lower tolerance to change as compared to the lower level, on the notion that they will be obliged to follow the stressful change. As stated in the study of Martin and Jones (2015), the upper-level staff reported more positive attitudes during change but appraised change as more stressful than non-managers.

Employees' Performance

It has been found that the performance of the employees is very high when the change is implemented properly (Table 2). The average mean of 3.46 from top management and 3.39 from lower management is described as very high performance. The effectiveness and efficiency of employees can be achieved through proper performance management. As presented in the

Employees' Performance Management model (EPMM <https://employees.tamu.edu>) developed by the Division of Human Resource and Organizational Effectiveness, performance management involves planning, coaching, evaluating, and giving rewards to create an ongoing dialogue between supervisors and lower-level employees to improve business performance in general and to the employees in particular. The last item on employees' performance revealed a weighted mean of 3.91 from top management and 3.69 from lower management regarding the question on the outcome of organization changes, reflected in the overall employee's work performance which was described as very high performance to both levels. Business success and profitability are measured by employees' performance. Successes in business primarily require the willingness of the employees to exert effort more than their usual job and extend performance that is beyond the objective of the organization (Chien, 2004).

Relationship between Change Management and Employees' Performance

This study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between the level of change management and the level of employees' performance (Table 3). Inferential analysis of data collected from the respondents, however, rejects this hypothesis, and instead, provides enough evidence that a moderate to a strong ($0.41 \leq r \leq 0.86$) significant relationship ($p\text{-value/s} < 0.001$) existed between the level of change management and the level of employees' performance. The strong positive relationship established by these variables implies that promoting good and a higher level of communication, leadership, procedural justice, tolerance to change, and employees' development in the event that change management happens, creates and supports high employee performance. Having a significant result would mean that this positive relationship could probably be 95 percent confident and true to all other bottom and top managers of micro and small businesses in other localities who shared almost the same characteristics as the respondents.

Table 2. Level of manifestation of change management

FACTOR	MANAGEMENT LEVEL					
	LOWER MANAGEMENT			TOP MANAGEMENT		
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DESCRIPTION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DESCRIPTION
Communication	3.69	0.29	Highly Manifested	3.39	0.47	Highly Manifested
Leadership	3.55	0.32	Highly Manifested	3.67	0.37	Highly Manifested
Procedural justice	3.17	0.50	Manifested	3.15	0.54	Manifested
Employees' development	3.66	0.44	Highly Manifested	3.20	0.47	Manifested
Tolerance to change	3.41	0.34	Highly Manifested	3.21	0.41	Manifested
Employees' performance	3.39	0.57	Very High Performance	3.46	0.39	Very High Performance

Table 3. Relationship between change management and employees' performance

PARAMETER	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Communication	-					
(1)	-					
Leadership	0.41	-				
(2)	<0.001	-				
Procedural justice	0.29	0.62	-			
(3)	<0.001	<0.001	-			
Tolerance to change	0.49	0.76	0.72	-		
(4)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	-		
Employee Development	0.42	0.64	0.53	0.82	-	
(5)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	-	
Employees' performance	0.41	0.86	0.64	0.83	0.81	-
(6)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	-

Correlation value (0.01-0.30=weak;0.31-0.70=moderate;0.71-0.99=strong); if p-value<0.05, the relationship is significant.

A closer look at the degree of relationship implies that in the event of change management in the micro and small-scale business, the performance of bottom and top managers can be ushered strongly by the businesses' leadership style ($r=0.86$), tolerance to change ($r=0.83$), and the opportunity for employee development ($r=0.81$). These three important aspects of change management strongly determine the promotion or sustainability of the high performance of managers whenever change management occurs in micro and small-scale businesses.

As mentioned in the study by Wanza and Nkuru (2016), change management on employees' performance was measured by leadership, technology, structure, and culture. It stated further that leadership in an organization provides direction and the leader influences others to follow. The Leader needs to influence and inspire subordinates to accomplish organizational goals related to change.

It was also mentioned in the model developed by Kang et al. (2008) that an organizational dimension like organizational learning culture, structure, reward systems, support from top management, and employee training or employee's development constituted knowledge sharing which led employees to perform with confidence resulting to an improved performance.

Difference in the Manifestation Level of Change Management between Top and Lower-Level Management

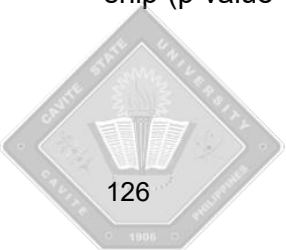
Literature narrates that, in organizations, top managers most of the time, think, decide, and act differently from lower-level management. This is true for almost all types of businesses. Some aspects of this study support this claim. Among micro and small businesses, when change management happens, top and lower-level management differ significantly in their perspectives in the aspect of Communication ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$), Tolerance to Change ($p\text{-value} = 0.003$), and Employee Development ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$) (Table 4). They, however, do not differ in the aspects of Leadership ($p\text{-value} = 0.066$) and Procedural Justice ($p\text{-value} = 0.736$).

To this effect, this study rejects the hypothesis on the aspect of communication, tolerance to change, and employee development; but fails to reject it on the aspect of Leadership and Procedural Justice.

Looking descriptively at the aspects where the top and lower-level management differ significantly would tell us that lower management experienced more positively than top managers in the event that change management occurs. The mean values of the former are higher than that of the latter. This difference aside from being significant has a higher effect ($[0.58 \leq \text{Cohen's } d \leq 1.03]$) probably on how they react, adapt, and accept change in the business operations but surely not on how they perform as both manifest high levels of performance (Table 4).

Managers differ on communication, tolerance to change, and employee development as far as manifestation level is concerned (Table 4). The manifestation level of change management varies on how the change is communicated from the top to the lower level. Managers were being appointed by the owner or higher officials of the firm because of trust from the top, and have to work with less supervision. They became managers because they already possessed the knowledge and skills needed to carry out the business. The lower-ranking employees need to have constant communication monitoring the outcome of the change. It needs to have effective and efficient communication depending on the channel that the business has at present, the build relationships in the organization in order to perceive trustworthiness.

Tolerance to change, on the other hand, would matter on how the managers perceived the change. The managers' willingness to learn new skills related to change, the weight of the change, and the adaptation of the change in the business is an important consideration in the tolerance to change. Sometimes, managers were hesitant about the change because of the worry that subordinates may not be able to carry out the change. The subordinates have a higher tolerance to change on the belief that they have the



the change. The subordinates have a higher tolerance to change on the belief that they have the support of the top manager. Lastly, employees' development differs from communication and tolerance to change for the fact that the former totally matters in the business practice. Not all business provides a budget for employees' development. Specifically, not all managers have an opportunity to avail of employees' development. The availability of the firm's resources was all that counted. Some firms focus their employees' development on the subordinates in the sense that they will be the primary ones to be affected when change happens in the organization.

With regard to leadership and procedural justice, both top managers and lower rank employees did not differ in their perception of the level of manifestation of change management in these areas (Table 4). In leadership, what one has learned and adopted from the leader is the same thing they will be applying to their subordinates when they become leaders. A leader's job is to influence his subordinates for the good of the organization, especially if this is about change to be able to get positive feedback. There is a good relationship developed between the top managers and lower rank employees. Besides, both can adjust to each other, meaning there was no fixed leadership style implemented in the micro and small-scale businesses.

An independent t-test for communication and procedural justice assumes unequal variance; b inferential statistics: p-value (if <0.05 , the difference is significant); 0.2=small effect size; 0.5=medium effect size; 0.8=large effect size.

Other Factors That Can Improve or Deter Change Management and Employees' Performance

Aside from the abovementioned results, various factors were determined based on the statements provided by the respondents to improve change management and employees' performance. The participants pointed out the following:(1)thorough understanding of change and change management creates a positive perception which leads to

increased employees' commitment; (2)proper preparation and advanced planning; (3) a program must be in place to assist employees in handling pressure on the intended change; (4) welfare of employees to develop strong character is needed with the change; (5) established trust and reward system; (6) good leadership; (6) communicating to employees what is exactly happening at all times during the change process; (7) assuring that the change approach is in line with the business culture; and (8)the change needed must meet the scope of skills and abilities of the existing workforce and expose employees to further training and development.

Inversely, the following factors were identified by the participants that deter change management and employees' performance: (1)employees' negative perception to changes decrease employees' commitment due to limited understanding of change and change management; (2) failure to communicate the change in advanced leads to employees' discouragement; (3) implementation of strict adherence to change making them feel less important; and (4) creation of unfriendly environment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings provide insights into the perceived level of manifestation of change management across various areas. Communication was highly manifested for both top and lower management, although the top management perceived some aspects as challenging due to high expectations from the owner or head. The busy schedules and numerous responsibilities make it challenging to dedicate sufficient time to communication efforts. Communication played a vital role in the successful implementation of change as well as improving their work performance. Proper communication of change and change management fosters a positive perception of change among employees, ultimately enhancing their commitment. Inadequate communication led to negative employee evaluations, resulting in a diminished understanding which reduced commitment among employees. Leadership and procedural justice were perceived as highly manifested and manifested by both management levels respectively. Results showed that there was good leadership in

both micro and small-scale businesses. In procedural justice, on the other hand, it was very evident that something was wanting in the process of the job of job allocation. In the area of employees' development, top management perceived it as manifested, while lower staff saw it as highly manifested, reflecting management's focus on training and enhancing lower-level staff skills. Tolerance to change was perceived as manifested by top management and highly manifested by lower management due to differing obligations. Top management is resistant to change due to concerns about risk, uncertainty, or the potential impact on existing structures and processes. Lower management tolerance to change was influenced by factors such as their understanding of change objectives, their ability to communicate effectively with their teams, and their perceived ability to manage the transition effectively.

The study also explored the level of employees' performance during workplace change management. Both top and lower management perceived very high performance, attributed to effective and efficient change management. The statistical analysis provided evidence of a moderate to strong relationship between change management and employees' performance, emphasizing the importance of promoting communication, leadership, procedural justice, tolerance to change, and employees' development during change. The presence of a strong positive relationship between change management and employees' performance indicates that fostering high-quality communication, leadership, procedural justice, tolerance to change, and employees' development promotes and sustains elevated levels of employee performance. In micro and small-scale businesses, differences in perspective between top and lower-level management regarding communication, tolerance to change, and employees' development are notable during change management initiatives. However, there is no significant difference in perspectives between these levels of management concerning leadership and procedural justice.

One-on-one interviews revealed factors influencing change management and employee performance. To improve, recommendations include a

thorough understanding of change, proper preparation, employee support programs, welfare considerations, trust-building, leadership exercise, transparent communication, alignment with business culture, and matching change needs with existing skills, along with exposure to further training. Conversely, factors leading to deterioration involve employees' negative perceptions, lack of communication, strict adherence to change, and an unfriendly environment.

Taking into consideration the findings of this investigation, strong relationships in the organization can be established by promoting a high level of communication, leadership, procedural justice, tolerance to change, and employees' development. These five areas of the level of manifestation of change created and supported employees' high performance in the event that change management is implemented in the workplace. However, leadership is the strongest among the factors that impact change management and employees' performance in micro and small-scale businesses. Based on this study, the leader should serve as a paragon in the workplace so that subordinates will automatically be influenced to achieve the business goals. They need to have proper motivation. This was followed by tolerance to change, as the implementation of the changes needs a period of adjustment to maintain a positive attitude toward them. Based on the study, employees' performance can be high as they are willing to learn new skills for the new tasks that exist because of change. The third factor was employees' development as this secured their employability and created high trust and confidence with the management. This was followed by procedural justice which constituted effective commitment of employees and should be practiced in the business at all cost considering employees were longing for fair treatment as a high motivation on their job. Lastly, communication played an important role in the change process, helping employees understand and get involved with the change leading them to empower in committing and engaging in the micro and small-scale businesses desired change. With the proper understanding of these five areas, it can help organizations improve employee's performance, become aware of employee's needs and

Table 4. Difference in the manifestation level of change management between the top and lower level

ASPECT OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT	GROUP	LEVENE'S TEST FOR EQUALITY OF VARIANCE			DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS		INFERENTIAL STATISTICS			
		F	df	p-value	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d
Communication	Lower	12.29	1	<0.00	3.69	0.29	4.71	190	<0.00	0.91
	Top				3.39	0.47				
Leadership	Lower	0.65	1	<0.42	3.55	0.32	-1.85	190	0.066	-0.36
	Top				3.67	0.37				
Procedural justice	Lower	14.96	1	<0.00	3.18	0.34	0.34	190	0.736	0.07
	Top				3.15	0.35				
Tolerance to change	Lower	0.13	1	<0.72	3.41	0.34	3.01	190	0.003	0.58
	Top				3.21	0.41				
Employee development	Lower	0.26	1	<0.61	3.66	0.44	5.31	190	<0.00	1.03
	Top				3.20	0.47				

wants, and correct ways to augment their productivity.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Managers, supervisors, and some other heads be more cautious in their behavioral patterns and must manifest a higher level of self-regulation behavior just to have high tolerance when change happens in the organization. Leadership training must be adopted by the establishment to be able to achieve business goals all the time. With the proper leadership style, businesses will be able to help employees perform well in their jobs. The change approach should be in line with business culture. Proper preparation and advanced planning by management and establishing a program to assist employees in handling pressure on the intended change. Trust and reward system and

exercise of good leadership must be apparent in the organization. Every organization must maintain a high level of understanding of change management together with a high level of employees' performance by continuing to promote a high level of communication, leadership, tolerance to change, procedural justice, and employees' development. Businesses must be open to embrace change in the era of technological advancement. Seminars, training and development, and continuing professional education programs should be given to lower management staff as bases for the preparation of future leadership and additional qualifications of the staff. As the research was conducted only in Maasin City, Southern Leyte, it is suggested that future research be done in other locales like Tacloban City, Leyte, or other neighboring provinces to improve the reliability and accuracy of data. Change management and employ-

ees' performance are issues that are hard to deal with, and therefore, can be considered as critical in the other organizations and can be the reasons for some failures of other industries. Since this study was conducted only on micro and small businesses, it is highly recommended that similar study be done in other industries such as manufacturing firms, banks, academic institutions, hospitality industries, and others.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Supplementary table are available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x43404mOTgj95kQQiCFnf5pG9EGOmGt3/view?usp=drive_link

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