



Strategies for Overcoming Teachers' Resistance to Change in 21st Century Education: Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract, Resistance to change (RTC) is a significant challenge in implementing educational reforms, particularly in the 21st century. This study explores strategies to overcome RTC among educators, using a qualitative approach involving 20 teachers from diverse backgrounds. Data collected through open-ended questions and a Likert scale reveal that Facilitation and Support (85%) and Negotiation and Agreement (90%) are the most effective strategies, highlighting the importance of training, resource allocation, and incentives in fostering adaptability. Participation and Involvement (75%) also proves effective by enhancing teacher commitment through collaborative decision-making. In contrast, Manipulation and Co-optation and authority-driven strategies are viewed as less sustainable, with respondents expressing concerns over their long-term impact. Challenges such as frequent curriculum changes, limited technological proficiency, and unclear communication exacerbate RTC. This study emphasizes the need for practical strategies like direct support, collaboration, and motivational incentives to address resistance effectively. The findings extend Kotter and Schlesinger's framework by contextualizing it within educational settings and highlight the interplay between external pressures for reform and internal resistance mechanisms. By aligning resources, fostering collaboration, and incentivizing participation, schools can navigate the complexities of change and reduce resistance among educators.

Keyword : Teachers Resistance, 21St Century, Facilitation and Support, Negotiation and Agreement, and Teacher Involvement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Change is an inevitable part of organizational dynamics, especially in educational contexts. Educational institutions are at the heart of both organizational and social development; therefore, they bear the brunt of the high impact of forces emanating from societal values, technological changes, and ever-changing governmental policies. All these forces put together impress on the schools the need to adapt to the current situation if they are to remain relevant and efficient in addressing the current needs in education. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008) argue that as an organization, educational institutions have to be flexible, meaning "a strategic response to externally imposed pressures while maintaining stability and effectiveness." On the other hand, change is often hard to implement due to several barriers, of which resistance to change from members within the organization is the most powerful. Resistance to change has also been identified, for a long period, as one of the main deterrents to the successful introduction of reforms. According to Yılmaz and Kılıçoğlu (2013), RTC involves emotional stress and difficulties that one faces when coming out of their comfort zones by experiencing change. Resistance has been described as multi-dimensional in nature and has complex psychological, personal, cultural, and organizational dimensions. At the psychological

dimension, some feelings like loss, uncertainty, and anxiety always tend to heighten resistance. Personal factors relate to an individual's views, beliefs, and opinions about the change process. The culture of schools, with its prevalent norms and values, forms the basis on which individuals' views and reactions to all proposed change programs are based. According to Palmer et al. (2017), latent and manifest school culture significantly influence the perception of and reaction to instigated change. RTC is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct. According to Oreg (2003), it consists of four dimensions that include routine seeking, emotional reactivity, short-term focus, and cognitive rigidity.

These dimensions have brought forth the tendencies of individuals to resist change in response to the need for stability, emotional discomfort, and incapacity or unwillingness to proffer alternative perspectives. The very sophistication of these resistance factors would imply that proper strategies to handle them must be defined. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) listed six strategies for minimizing resistance to change: education and communication, participation and involvement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, manipulation and cooptation, and both explicit and implicit coercion. While these strategies have been explored comprehensively in organizational settings, how exactly they are to be implemented within educational contexts requires further exploration. The change in education is mainly brought about by external factors, such as the government's intervention policies and the introduction of sophisticated technological elements, which have a direct impact on the policies, curriculum, and administration of schools. For example, the introduction of sophisticated technologies in schools is intended to promote efficiency, but at the same time, it requires significant changes in teaching and administrative practices as well (Rosenblatt, 2004). However, such changes are resisted by teachers and administrators, which is well reflected in schools where strong routines, set cultural frameworks, and lack of resources impede innovation.

Resistance to change has been researched previously as a complex phenomenon within school settings. Evans (1996) argues that teachers commonly resist change out of fears of inadequacy, increased workload, and loss of autonomy expected to result from change. Fullan (2001) goes on to discuss the role of leaders in minimizing resistance through communication, cooperation, and support. However, these research studies are limited to one perspective regarding resistance and do not provide any comprehensive effort to address the issue of resistance in a school environment. Second, scant research documents how school administrators use approaches to systematically apply methods that will minimize resistance and result in a cultural shift towards acceptance.

What are the most effective strategies applied to overcome teachers' resistance to change in educational field from teachers perspectives?. By addressing this problem, the study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it seeks to extend Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) framework by examining its applicability in educational contexts. Practically, it provides school administrators with evidence-based strategies to foster adaptability and inclusivity, ensuring the successful implementation of change initiatives.

The objective of this study is to analyzing the most effective strategies applied to overcome teachers' resistance to change in educational field from teachers' perspectives. This study focus on Strategies to overcome teachers' resistance to change in educational field especially for teachers.

As defined by Tjiptono (2011), a strategy is a comprehensive guide to implementing ideas or plans within a specified period, emphasizing the importance of structured steps to effectively achieve goals. Similarly, Rangkuti (2013) views strategy as a master plan incorporating long-term visions and missions, ensuring systematic and integrated actions toward desired outcomes. Resistance, on the other hand, is seen by Barnard and Jonathan (2000) as opposition to changes perceived as misaligned with expectations or as a reaction to power imbalances, while Tarsan (2018) describes it as rejecting external pressure or commands, particularly when changes threaten values or interests. Snyder (2018) highlights that resistance in education often comes from experienced teachers who prefer familiar methods and resist changes that disrupt their professional identity or established practices. Change itself, as Santoso (2011) explains, is a dynamic process inherent in society, involving shifts in mindsets, values, and behaviors, which can occur on individual or societal levels as Martono (2012) elaborates, ranging from personal transformations to broad social and cultural adjustments. In the context of 21st-century education, Galbreath (2009) describes it as a blended learning approach aimed at developing not only intellectual knowledge but also strong character, while Daryanto and Karim (2019) emphasize equipping learners with critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills to face global challenges. Sasmoko (2016) further underscores the need for holistic competencies, including life and technological skills, alongside adaptability and innovation, making education a means to prepare students for an increasingly complex and evolving world.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the most effective strategies to overcome teachers' resistance to change in 21st-century education from the teachers' perspectives. Twenty teachers were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diverse backgrounds and experiences to enrich the findings. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions to gather detailed insights and a set of strategies provided on a 1-5 Likert scale for participants to rate their effectiveness. The responses were analyzed using thematic analysis for the open-ended questions and descriptive analysis for the Likert scale data, focusing on identifying recurring themes and patterns to interpret the key strategies and perspectives shared.

3. RESULT

Tabel 1 Effectiveness of Strategies in Reducing Resistance to Change

No	Strategies	High effectiveness
1.	Education and Communication	60%
2.	Participation and Involvement	75%
3.	Facilitation and Support	85%
4.	Negotiation and Agreement	90%
5.	Manipulation and Cooptation	75%
6.	Explicit and Implicit Coercion	75%

Based on the survey results, teachers perceive Facilitation and Support and Negotiation and Agreement as the most effective strategies to overcome resistance to change in the educational field. Facilitation and support, rated highly effective by 85% of respondents, focus on providing training, resources, and ongoing assistance, enabling teachers to adapt with confidence and competence. Similarly, negotiation and agreement, which received the highest rating from 90% of respondents, leverage incentives and rewards to motivate teachers and encourage acceptance of new practices. Participation and involvement also play a significant role, with 75% of respondents acknowledging its effectiveness in fostering a sense of ownership and commitment. This strategy emphasizes the importance of engaging teachers in decision-making processes, reducing resistance by ensuring they feel included and valued. While manipulation and co-optation were rated as effective by 75% of respondents, they are seen as less impactful compared to the top strategies and are best used in combination with

facilitation or negotiation. Authority-driven approaches, though less favored, can serve as supplementary strategies to enforce structural changes when combined with participative or supportive methods. Overall, teachers prefer strategies that provide practical support, tangible rewards, and active involvement, as these approaches directly address their needs and concerns while fostering collaboration and motivation.

The findings indicate that teachers perceive strategies such as facilitation, support, and negotiation as the most effective methods for overcoming resistance to change in the educational field. These results align with previous studies, such as Fullan (2007), which emphasize that providing teachers with sufficient resources, training, and professional development opportunities is essential for fostering their willingness to embrace change. Facilitation and support, which were rated highly effective by 85% of respondents, underscore the importance of equipping teachers with practical tools and consistent guidance to build their confidence and competence in implementing new approaches. Similarly, the effectiveness of negotiation and agreement strategies, highlighted by 90% of respondents, supports findings from Bush (2018), who noted that offering incentives, whether in the form of recognition, financial rewards, or career advancement opportunities, significantly motivates teachers to engage with change initiatives. These strategies not only address external motivators but also appeal to teachers' intrinsic desire for acknowledgment and validation. The role of participation and involvement, which 75% of respondents found effective, further corroborates the work of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), who argue that engaging teachers in decision-making processes creates a sense of ownership and accountability, reducing resistance and increasing their commitment to change. When teachers feel included in the planning and implementation phases, they are more likely to view change as a collaborative effort rather than an imposed directive.

However, the relatively lower effectiveness of manipulation and co-optation strategies, rated positively by 75% of respondents, reveals limitations in approaches that rely on indirect influence. This finding resonates with Oplatka's (2016) critique of coercive strategies, which may yield temporary compliance but often fail to achieve sustainable change. Furthermore, while authority-driven approaches were deemed less effective overall, their occasional usefulness aligns with Kotter's (1996) perspective that leadership authority can be a necessary component in driving urgent or large-scale reforms, particularly when combined with participative and supportive measures. These findings highlight the critical importance of addressing both the practical and psychological needs of teachers during times of change.

Practical strategies such as facilitation, support, and negotiation help reduce uncertainties and provide the resources teachers need, while participative strategies foster trust and a shared sense of purpose. Future efforts to implement educational reforms should prioritize these approaches to minimize resistance and maximize long-term success.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that overcoming resistance to change (RTC) in educational settings requires a strategic focus on facilitation, support, and negotiation, which were identified as the most effective approaches. Facilitation and Support empower teachers by providing necessary training, resources, and ongoing assistance, while Negotiation and Agreement motivate acceptance through tangible rewards and incentives. The involvement of teachers in decision-making processes further reduces resistance by fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. Conversely, strategies such as Manipulation and Co-optation and the use of explicit authority are less effective, as they often result in temporary compliance without fostering long-term commitment. The findings align with Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) framework, emphasizing that direct support, incentives, and participation are essential to address the psychological and practical concerns of teachers. Overall, the study highlights that sustainable change in education can be achieved by prioritizing strategies that build trust, collaboration, and confidence among educators, ensuring the success of 21st-century educational reforms.

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