Developing Commitment to Change in Egyptian Modern Bureaucracies

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Abstract : Purpose: To examine the nature of the civil service sector as an employer through identifying the likely ways to develop employees' commitment towards change in the civil service sector. Design/Methodology/Approach: a qualitative research approach was followed. Data was collected via a triangulation of interviews, non-participant observation and archival documents analysis. Non-probability sampling took place with a case-study method applied on a sample of 33 civil servants working in the Egyptian Ministry of State for Administrative Development (MSAD) which is the civil service entity acting as the change agent responsible for managing the government administrative reforms plan in the civil service sector. All study participants were actually working in one of the change projects/programmes and had a minimum of 12 months of service in the civil service. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed in the form of MS-Word documents, and data transcripts were analyzed manually using MS-Excel worksheets and main research themes were developed and statistics drawn using those Excel worksheets. Findings: The results demonstrate that developing the civil servant's commitment towards change may require a number of suggested solutions like (1) employee involvement and participation in the planning and implementation processes, (2) linking the employee support to change to some tangible rewards and incentives, (3) appointing some inspirational change leaders that should act as role models, and (4) as a last resort, enforcing employee's commitment towards change by coercion and authoritarianism. Practical Implications: it is clear that civil servants' lack of organizational commitment is not directly related to their level of commitment towards change. The research findings showed that civil servants' commitment towards change can be raised and promoted by getting them involved in the planning and implementation processes, as this develops some sense of belongingness and ownership, thus there is a fair chance that low organizationally committed civil servants can develop high commitment towards change; given they are provided a favorable environment where they are invited to participate and get involved into the move of change. Originality/Value: the research addresses a relatively new area of 'developing organizational commitment in modern bureaucracies' by virtue of investigating the levels of civil servants' commitment towards their jobs and/or organizations -on one hand- and suggesting different ways of developing their commitment towards administrative reform and change initiatives in the Egyptian civil service sector.