The Role of Change Agents in Education: Analyzing Diffusion Strategies within Organizations, Innovativeness, and Stages of Innovation in Islamic Education

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Volume: 2	The current phenomenon of disruption is occurring worldwide, including in the field of education. The world of education must remain open and prepare to adapt to new innovations to sustain the continuity of institutions. The reality is that educational institutions that exhibit adaptive patterns towards change and maintain an open attitude toward various offered innovations have proven capable of enhancing the quality and quantity of the educational processes they carry out. Therefore, there is a need for a concept of innovation implementation within an educational institution and the role of change agents (agents of change). With this standardized concept, it can serve as a reference point to minimize the percentage of failures, refine planning, and maximize the level of participation from the existing social system members.
KEYWORD	This research employs a library research approach by gathering various references from various reading materials.
Diffusion, strategies and innovation	The conclusion of this research is that in performing the role of innovation diffusion, change agents have roles as Catalysts, Resource Linkers, Process Helpers, and Solution Givers. The participation of all participants in implementing innovation is crucial to supporting the success of the innovation process, particularly in education.

1. Introduction

In recent times, there has been a growing concern about the phenomenon of disruption, a large-scale innovation process that displaces or even replaces preexisting systems. Innovations of this kind, according to Kasali, are occurring worldwide in various fields, including education, which is on the brink of a new era. In addition to primary education, the most prominent targets for innovation in the present century are university institutions. This necessitates the swift adaptation of the education sector to new innovations in order to sustain the continuity of institutions.

In dealing with this disruption, Marina expounds:

> In the fast-changing business world of today, innovation has become the mainstay of organizations. The nature of global economic growth has been changed by the speed of innovation, which has been made possible by rapidly evolving technology, shorter product lifecycles and a higher rate of new product development. The complexity of innovation has been increased by growth in the amount of knowledge available to organization.

This portrays how innovation in the present era is rapidly evolving and becoming more complex through the growth of knowledge. Various reforms in the realm of education, including Islamic education, must be carried out to deal with the

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existing wave of innovation, coupled with the job market that start to prioritize values skills over degrees. This shift prompts educational consumers to gravitate towards skill-based education and self-craft their skill and expertise. Failure to innovate would thus continue to marginalize traditional education.

Evidence suggests that educational institutions displaying adaptive patterns towards change and being open to various offered innovations and have proven capable of enhancing the quality and quantity of their educational processes. Thus, a concept for implementing innovation within an educational institution and the role of agent of change become essential. This standardized concept serves as a reference point throughout the process, minimizing failure rates, refining planning, and maximizing the participation of existing social system members.

Education is a dynamic process which develops and evolves in line with the changing times. Stakeholders respond to these changes by formulating contemporary ideas and concepts for innovation, aligning education with prevailing demands.

Innovation in the field of education is essential because it is related to issues of relevance, quality, efficiency, effectiveness, and structural issues. Moreover, the innovation process has characteristics regarding the need, clarity, complexity, quality and practicality, influenced by local societal characteristics. Thus, the role of change agents becomes pivotal to the success of educational innovation.

This underscores the significance of educational organization leaders as agents of change, guiding organizations towards improvement. The presence of change agents is expected to be a stimulus for achieving educational innovation goals. Education does not occur in a vacuum, but rather interfaces with its evolving surroundings. This serves as a rationale for re-actualization of the established educational concepts in Indonesia by elaborating on aspects aligned with contemporary demands. In this regard, the paper examines the role of change agents in education: analyzing diffusion strategies within organizations, innovativeness, and stages of innovation within organizations.

Based on the aforementioned background, the core issue addressed in this paper is the role of change agents in education.

2. Literature Review

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3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Role of Education Agents of Change in Diffusion Strategies within Organizations

The term organization in this paper refers to a place or forum where individuals collaboratively engage in rational, systematic, planned, directed, and controlled activities utilizing resources, facilities, data, etc., more efficiently and effectively to achieve the goal. Strategy means the methods or techniques for disseminating innovation.

Ibrahim asserts that organizations inherently rely on change agents. A change agent is a person who influences clients to accept innovations aligned with the goals envisioned by the change agency who acts as the link in the communication chain connecting change agents with clients.

Educational institutions require change agents who are capable of driving to change, rather than being led by change or resisting change. The change agents need to possess knowledge about change and the fundamental aspects of change as something critical to the process of planning, leadership, management, and change evaluation.

Within the context of innovation diffusion, change agents undertake roles such as :

1. Catalyst. Mobilizing the community to embrace change while demonstrating commitment, respect, achievement, loyalty, integrity, professionalism, and initiative, providing positive solutions for institutional progress.
2. Solution Givers. Offering problem-solving approaches.
3. Resource Linkers. Establishing connections with essential resources required for addressing challenges.

4. Process Helpers. Assisting in problem-solving and innovation dissemination, offering guidance on recognizing needs, diagnosing problems, setting goals, sourcing relevant resources, selecting or creating problem-solving strategies, and planning problem-solving stages.

One of the factors that determines the effectiveness of social change programs implementation by change agents is the accuracy in using the strategy. The selecting of strategy plays a pivotal role, yet this process is not easy. Udin Syaefudin identifies four education innovation diffusion strategies concerning change agents.

3.1.1 Facilitative Strategies

This strategy posits that the implementation of a specific innovation necessitates prior provisioning of supporting facilities. Its effectiveness hinges upon a collective awareness of the need for change that requires these support facilities to act as motivators for catalyzing social system transformation. Conversely, this strategy may not function effectively when applied in situations where the stakeholders are resistant to altering the social status or when rapid changes are desired but there is a lack of readiness or willingness among those involved to embrace such alterations.

3.1.2 Educative Strategies

Educational strategy is a method employed to ensure that members of the social system have a full awareness of what they intend to do. Essentially, humans are learning beings, they govern themselves, and they will only react when motivated by their environment.

Referring to the essence of education and humanity, it is expected that with this awareness, the level of participation among members of the system will increase, and innovative ideas will become more consistently ingrained in every individual within the social system. Furthermore, since innovation can only be achieved through the core of the educational process, which is dialogue, it is hoped that with this strategy, social change through innovation can be effectively realized. According to Udin Syaefudin, this strategy will work effectively when social change does not need to occur rapidly, members of the system lack the necessary skills or knowledge, strong resistance is anticipated, fundamental changes are desired, and the need for change is known and understood by members of the social system. Conversely, it may not be effective when there are insufficient resources to support educational activities and there is no follow-up or other strategies are not implemented.

3.1.3 Persuasive Strategies

Persuading members to adopt an innovation introduced by innovators is an alternative strategy that is essentially optional, but its binding force is weaker compared to others. This strategy can be employed in social systems where there is minimal participation in the change process, when the issue is considered less important, when the social system is aware of its benefits but perceives high risks, when the change cannot be experimented with, is difficult to comprehend and observe, and when minimizing resistance is necessary.

3.1.4 Coercive Strategies

The implementation of social change programs by applying a coercion strategy means forcing the social system to achieve the goals of change. The strength of coercion depends on the size of the system members dependent on change implementers, the rigor of supervision, and the availability of support. Additionally, at a certain level, the coercion strategy has another dimension that follows the flow of leadership influence.

If the change implementer is a charismatic leader who commands respect from the system members, then the system members will voluntarily follow because of the identity and values instilled in the change implementer.

This strategy will be effective if the level of social system participation in the innovation process is low, the social system does not feel the need for innovation, expects quick results, seeks to avoid resistance to innovation, and desires assurance in its implementation. This strategy is ineffective if used in conditions where the target lacks adequate supporting facilities to pursue existing innovations to achieve them.

Although there are no clear boundaries between these strategies, one strategy will still stand out among the others. In practice, combinations of these strategies become alternative approaches. And, of course, the suitability of the strategy used to the existing environmental conditions is a determining factor in the successful achievement of the expected goals of change.

3.2 The Role of Education Change Agents in Organizational Innovativeness

Innovativeness refers to the extent to which individuals are inclined to be relatively early to engage in and adopt new ideas from other members of a system. An innovator is an individual who actively seeks new ideas and possesses a broad insight through a network that typically extends beyond their social system. Additionally, innovators demonstrate the capacity to address challenges that arise during the implementation process of these novel ideas.

Hence, towards the achievement of change and transformation, individuals undertake the process of adapting strategies, environmental demands, incorporating numerous elements that characterize the essence of change itself and depending on

specific junctures in time. This is referred to as innovativeness. The characteristics of innovativeness are: 1) Generation of Ideas: Engaging in the analysis or synthesis of information to produce novel concepts. 2) Trying or Pioneering: Identifying, proposing, encouraging, and demonstrating a particular idea. 3) Leadership: Planning and coordinating diverse activities. 4) Information Management: Demonstrating the dissemination and channeling of information concerning the changes. 5) Sponsoring: Guiding and nurturing less experienced employees in their professional growth and development.

In addition to the innovator factor, the innovativeness of an organization is also significantly influenced by the typology of adopters. In Diffusion of Innovations, Rogers explicates that the acceptance of an innovation is characterized by several distinct adopter typologies, namely: Innovators, who represent a group of individuals daring and prepared to engage with novel concepts. Typically, these individuals embody a dynamic urban lifestyle, rich in interpersonal connections and relationships. Early Adopters, constituting a category of adopters that wield substantial influence over opinions, continuously seek out information pertaining to innovations. The Early Majority, a category who cautiously deliberate before making a decision to adopt an innovation, frequently spanning a considerable duration to decide. Individuals within this category play a crucial role in demonstrating to the broader community the viability or utility of a given innovation. The Late Majority, comprising those who adopt innovations at a later stage, exhibit a heightened caution concerning an innovation's functionalities. They await the widespread of an innovation before making the decision to embrace it themselves. Lastly, Laggards, the final group to adopt an innovation, tend to exhibit more traditional tendencies and are disinclined to explore novel concepts. By the time this group embraces the new innovation, the majority of individuals have already adopted other innovations.

3.3 The Role of Educational Change Agents in the Stages of Innovation within Organization
Innovation in the field of education goes through the following stages :
3.3.1.   Knowledge Stage
The process of decision-making for innovation begins with the knowledge stage, where individuals become aware of an innovation and seek to understand its functions. There are three types of knowledge within the innovation introduction stage: awareness of the existence of innovation, technical knowledge, and principle-based knowledge. The first type involves awareness of the existence of innovation. The second type includes information about how to use or apply a piece of information. The third type of knowledge pertains to the principles underlying the functioning of the information.

Individuals who become aware of or open themselves to innovation do so actively rather than passively. They recognize the need to know about innovation based on their observations and how it aligns with their needs, interests, or beliefs. The existence of innovation generates a need because they happen to feel a need. However, it may also happen that someone needs something, and innovation is introduced to fulfill it. In reality, in society, the latter rarely occurs because many people do not know what they need. Especially in the field of education, those who typically sense the need for change are experts.

Once someone becomes aware of an innovation and opens themselves up to learn about it, their quest for knowledge about the innovation extends beyond the knowledge stage and continues into other stages. Even up to the confirmation stage, a desire to understand specific aspects of the innovation still occurs.

At the outset, individuals are curious about what the innovation is, why it exists, and how it works. During the persuasion stage, they typically seek to understand how to use it correctly, the required conditions, and so on. The more complex an innovation, the more complex that must be learned. Individuals may then delve even deeper into understanding the principles of its use, which is related to its theoretical foundations. The clearer and deeper individuals' understanding of innovation, the stronger their foundation for accepting or rejecting it.

3.3.2. Persuasion stage
In the persuasion stage of the innovation decision-making process, an individual forms an attitude of a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the innovation. At the stage of knowledge, the cognitive aspect holds the main role, while at the persuasion stage, the main role is played by the affective or emotional aspect. An individual cannot favor an innovation until they know more about it.

During the persuasion stage, there is greater mental activity at play. An individual will make an effort to learn more about the innovation and interpret the information they receive. At this stage, information is selectively processed based on individual conditions and characteristics. This is where the characteristics of the innovation play a crucial role in influencing the innovation decision-making process.

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In this stage, the ability to anticipate the potential future application of the innovation is also highly important. There is a need for the capability to project the implementation of the innovation in thought, considering the existing conditions and situations. To facilitate this mental process, a clear picture of how the innovation will be implemented is needed, possibly including the consequences of the innovation.

The primary outcome of the persuasion stage is the determination of whether one favor or unfavor the innovation. It is expected that the results of the persuasion stage will guide the innovation decision-making process, or in other words, there is a tendency for alignment between favoring the innovation and implementing it. However, it should be noted that there is a gap between attitude and action. Favoring an innovation does not necessarily mean one will implement it. There is a gap or disconnection between knowledge, attitude, and practice. For example, a teacher may know about the discussion method, know how to use it, and be willing to use it, but they may not implement it due to factors such as inadequate seating arrangements, a large number of students, and the fear that they will not be able to cover the lesson within the specified time frame.

In the implementation of innovation, there is also something known as preventive innovation, where an individual adopts an innovation to avoid undesirable outcomes in the future. For instance, adopting ICT-based learning, using helmets, purchasing insurance, and so on.

3.3.3. Decision Stage

The decision stage of the innovation decision-making process occurs when an individual engages in activities aimed at determining whether to accept or reject an innovation. Accepting an innovation means fully adopting it, while rejecting it means choosing not to implement it.

It often happens that an individual decides to accept an innovation after trying it out first. In some cases, they may initially try a small part of it and then proceed to implement the entire innovation if it proves to be successful as expected. However, not all innovations can be easily broken down into smaller parts for trial. Innovations that can be tested incrementally are more likely to be accepted quickly. It is also possible that the trial is conducted by one group of people, and others trust the results of their peers' experiments. In reality, at each stage of the innovation decision-making process, resistance to the innovation can occur. For example, at the beginning of knowledge stage, during the persuasion stage, or even after confirmation, among other points in the process. There are two types of innovation rejection :

- Active rejection: This occurs when an individual rejects an innovation after considering whether to accept it or perhaps even trying it out but ultimately decides to reject it.
- Passive rejection: This type of rejection happens without any consideration at all.

In the implementation of innovation diffusion, the stages of knowledge, persuasion, and decision-making often occur simultaneously. They are interconnected, and for certain types of innovations and under specific conditions, the sequence can even be knowledge-decision-making before persuasion.

3.3.4. Implementation Stage

The implementation stage of the innovation decision-making process occurs when an individual or organization puts the innovation into practice. In this stage, both mental and behavioral activities are involved. The decision to accept a new idea or innovation is demonstrated through practical application. Implementation generally follows the innovation decision. However, there are cases where a decision to accept an innovation is not followed by implementation, often due to a lack of available resources or facilities for implementation. The duration of the implementation stage can vary widely depending on the nature of the innovation but typically ends when the innovation becomes institutionalized or routine, when it is no longer about implementing something new.

During the implementation stage, a phenomenon called "Reinvention" may occur, which involves applying the innovation with changes or modifications. Reinvention doesn't necessarily imply something negative; it can be a deliberate policy in the implementation of an innovation, taking into account the existing conditions and situations.

Several factors can lead to reinvention : 1) The innovation is highly complex and difficult to understand. 2)The recipients of the innovation struggle to comprehend it because they have limited access to change agents. 3) The innovation allows for various possible applications. 4) When the innovation is applied to solve very broad problems. 5) Regional pride in a specific innovation can also lead to reinvention in different areas or contexts.

3.3.5. Confirmation Stage

In this stage, an individual seeks reinforcement for the decision they have made and may retract their decision if they obtain information that contradicts their initial decision. The confirmation stage is an ongoing process that starts from the moment a decision is made to accept or reject an innovation and continues indefinitely. During this stage, an individual strives to avoid

cognitive dissonance or at least reduce it. If someone feels cognitive dissonance within themselves, they will try to eliminate or at least reduce it by altering their knowledge.

In the context of innovation diffusion facilitated by change agents, efforts to reduce cognitive dissonance can occur:

- When someone becomes aware of a need and seeks something to fulfill that need, such as searching for information about the innovation. This occurs during the knowledge stage of the innovation decision-making process.
- When someone knows about the innovation and has a favorable attitude toward it but has not yet made a decision to accept it. They will then make an effort to accept it to reduce the dissonance between their favor and belief of the innovation with their actions. This occurs during the decision and implementation stages of the innovation decision-making process.

After an individual has decided to accept and implement the innovation, they may be encouraged to reject it. In this case, the dissonance can be reduced by discontinuing the acceptance and implementation of the innovation. There is also the possibility that someone has initially decided to reject the innovation and is then encouraged to accept it. In this case, the effort to reduce dissonance involves accepting the innovation, which is a change from the initial decision. This change happens during the confirmation stage of the innovation decision-making process.

Several ways to reduce cognitive dissonance are related to changes in an individual's behavior. In reality, attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and actions are closely interconnected and can be difficult to separate, as one can influence the others. Therefore, individuals often seek information that can strengthen their decisions to avoid the emergence of cognitive dissonance.

In summary, these are the five stages of the optional innovation decision-making process that occur in individuals or decision-making units. However, they can also be used as a basis for thinking or comparison in the implementation of educational innovation diffusion, as the process of change in each individual remains the same.

4. Conclusion

The existence of change agents is projected to encourage change (drive to change), rather than being led by change (lead by change), or resisting change (resist to change). In their role in innovation diffusion, change agents serve as Catalysts, Resource Linkers (connecting to resources), Process Helpers (assisting in the change process), and Solution Givers (providing solutions to problems).

When it comes to adopting an innovation, there are several typologies of adopters that are considered ideal. These typologies are: Innovator, Early Adopter, Early Majority, Late Majority, and Laggard. These typologies are divided based on the speed at which they fulfill their roles as agents of change.

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