

# **Managing not to Change: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Anosognosic Management and the Indirect Impact on Organizational Change**

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*Anosognosic management occurs when a manager is both functionally inept and lacks the ability to perceive that ineptitude. This study explores Anosognosic managerial performance and its indirect impact on organizational change. This study used a concurrent mixed methods approach to examine the relationship between respondents' perceptions of the ease with which their organizations could change and the respondents' perceptions of manager job performance, perceptions of manager-induced employee morale (MIEM) and perceptions of manager-induced interaction hostility (MIIH). The study found correlations between Anosognosic job performance, the perceived ease of organizational change, the perception of manager-induced interaction hostility and the perception of manager-induced employee morale.*

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

There is no shortage of research on organizational change (Riley et al., 2012; Hallingera et al., 2010; Boga & Ensari, 2009; Erwin, 2009). Organizational change occurs anytime there is an alteration to an organization's processes, mission or strategic function. An organization's ability to change, or respond to environmental stimuli, is an important factor in its ability to succeed (Santos & Garcia, 2006). In a society characterized by strained economic markets, the ability for organizations to change becomes even more critical. Ideally, organizations would create and maintain an infrastructure that would make the need for change easier to address. The most essential component of that change infrastructure, conceptually, would be the organization's management cohort.

Managers within an organization have the ability to significantly help or harm change processes. Typically, when examining the relationship between managerial behavior and change, the analysis leans toward direct managerial effects such as administrative resistance to change. However, it may also be

possible for managers to indirectly and unintentionally impact an organizations ability to change through specific managerial behaviors. The problem addressed by this study is that scholars do not have a thorough understanding of the managerial behaviors that may lead to indirect organizational resistance to change.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between management practices and their indirect impact on the ease of organizational change. In order to accomplish this goal, the study has created five objectives. The first objective is to examine the relationship between a managers' job performance and the ease of enacting change. While managerial job performance impacts many day-to-day functions of an organization, scholars seldom view managerial job performance as a change-related precursor. However, managerial job performance may create an overall atmosphere within an organization that is not conducive to change. A manager who is not proficient in their job duties may engender mistrust in their subordinates.

The second objective is to examine the relationship between the manager-inspired employee morale (MIEM) and the ease of organizational change. This variable encapsulates two important concepts. First, the researchers recognize that while managers are important change agents, employees are often the change actors. As a change actor, the employee's morale must be an area of concern. The second realization brought on by the MIEM variable is that employee morale is often manager-induced. An organization's management team has the ability to directly impact how lower-level employees feel about the organization as a whole. Managers are the primary point of contact with the organization's administration. Managers received reports and complaints as well as convey decisions, messages and policies.

The third study objective is to examine the relationship between manager-induced interaction hostility (MIIH) and the ease of organizational change. Perhaps the most consistent opportunity for a manager to impact an employee's morale is through daily interactions. It is possible for an employee to view the manager-employee interaction as hostile even when the content or nature of the interaction was favorable to the employee. Manager-induced interaction hostility may be traced to a misalignment of management styles. One example of manager-induced interaction hostility that resulted from a misalignment of management style would be a manager who uses a Theory X management approach when supervising a contingent of highly motivated intelligent employees. The Theory X assumptions that the workers are lazy and unmotivated would almost certainly lead to interaction hostilities between the manager and the employees. Prior to the analysis it is important to examine the issues of organizational change and management.

## **THE NECESSITY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

Every industry whether, banking and finance, manufacturing, media, or pharmaceutical industries periodically require different magnitudes of change (Storey, 2000). The impetus for organizational change can come from internal factors such as employee shortages (Schriner et al., 2010) or product development. However, highly interconnected external factors such as rapid shift in economic markets can produce wide-reaching external catalyst for organizational change. The bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers investment bank in 2008 is considered to be the event that sparked the ongoing late-2000s global economic crisis (McKibbin & Stoeckel, 2009). This cycle of limited monetary and human capital has heightened the need for innovation and transformation throughout entire organizations and industries.

The global unemployment rate increased 15.6% between 2007 and 2010, with developed economies accounting for 55% of the overall growth (International Labor Office, 2011). These economic shifts have also required many organizations to restructure their organizations. These unemployment numbers represent a significant change not only in available capital of some organizations but also in employment pools, manufacturing processes and strategic stabilization. This type of economic shift is only one catalyst for organizational change and seems to produce more reactive change. However, change may also be more proactive in nature.

Results from a survey of 104 managers found strategic change, change of products, and change of productive processes to be the most welcomed forms of organizational change (Santos & Garcia, 2006). Through proactive change, organizations may also become more productive and increase their chances of attracting better employees. Valuable employees, who have the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities, are attracted to organizations that are positive and productive (Boardman & Sundquist, 2009). The best way of ensuring that an organization has the capacity to engage in either reactive or proactive change is by maintaining an infrastructure that can facilitate change more efficiently. The core of any change infrastructure is the management cohort.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND THE MANAGER**

Organizational change and innovation require a competent, capable, and inquisitive manager at their helm (Stone, 1981). Managers affect organizational change in many different ways. Prior studies (Boga & Ensari, 2009; Santos & Garcia, 2006) have found that organizational change is greatly impacted by the perceptions and leadership of managers. This type of direct, decision-based effect on organizational change is typically how scholars view the relationship between management and organizational change. However, there are other studies (Storey, 2000) that have examined the impact of personality traits of managers as threats to organizational change and innovation. The results showed that organizational change can be significantly influenced by the managers' perception of its necessity. While studies (Storey, 2000; Santos & Garcia, 2006) suggest that managers can directly impact organizational change for various reasons, there are additional studies that allude to a manager's ability affect organizational change indirectly.

The relationship between job performance and managerial personality is well-represented in the management literature. One study (Erwin, 2009) found that for organizational change to be successful it takes both strong and skillful leadership as well as a buy-in from the employees working under the leader. A study by Gellatly and Irving (2001) tested the relationships between situational job performance and personality. The results showed that managers who were viewed as a greater assets to the organization were also seen as cooperative, sympathetic, and helpful. Poor managerial work habits not only produce negative organizational results, but have a tendency to offset the positive gains from strong work habits (West & Berman, 2011). Several detrimental work habits were reported in West and Berman's study were: closed-mindedness and intimidation. Conversely, the study also identified several positive managerial work habits that may impact organizational change such as willingness to collaborate and willingness to adapt (West & Berman, 2011). Personality attributes such as narcissism, when found in management, have been negatively correlated to integrity and leadership skills (Blair et al., 2008; Mumford et al., 2001).

Studies have shown that a host of positive personalities such as conscientiousness (Robertson et al., 2000), job over qualification (Fine & Nevo, 2008) and self-accountability (Parker et al., 2011) correlate to effective managers.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND THE EMPLOYEE**

Employee consideration proves important across various studies of the change process. Along with the fit and importance of the change, the motivation of the individual employee was found to be significantly correlated to continuing commitment to proposed change (Daif & Yusof, 2011). Often the unfamiliarity that accompanies change is understood to be one of the main contributors to employee resistance to the process (Caldwell et al., 2004). Some scholars (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) argue that, in order for employees to be committed to organizational change, they must be bound to the course of action that will lead to the successful implementation of such change. Other studies (Baltzer, 2011; Patton, 2002) show that employees may engage in 'resistant behaviors' when they lose trust in the management or organizations where they work. The manager is the most visible representative of an organization and as such, is the glue that serves to bind employees to a course of change.

Increased communication can aid in the organizational change process (Kim, 2011). This connection is logical due to the information sharing and clarification produced by adequate communication. Kim's study of hierarchical classes in the long-term healthcare industry revealed that professional workers exhibited more readiness for change processes than their minimalist counterparts. In this survey of 100 long-term care institutions, minimalists were characterized by low training and low communication. Kim suggested that, in order to improve employee reception to change, the job training and communication channels for these workers must be enhanced. This analysis (Kim, 2011) alludes to the fact that there is something lacking in the manager-employee communication. The manager-employee communication may be hostile, strained or missing altogether.

## **ANOSOGNOSIC MANAGERS AND THE INDIRECT CHANGE AFFECT**

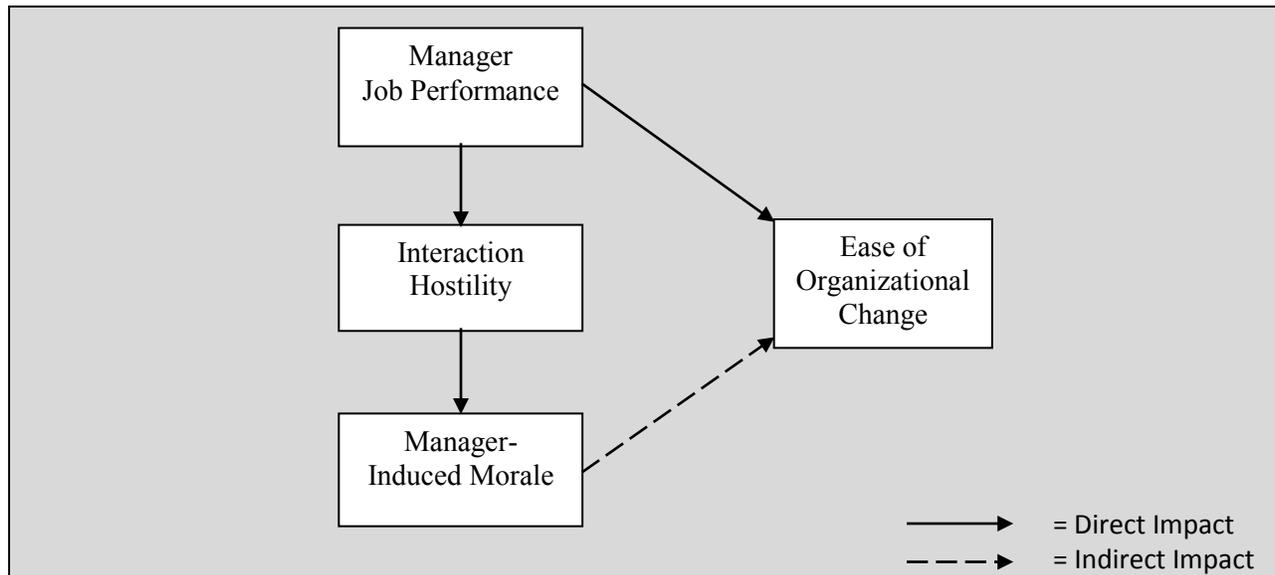
An Anosognosic manager is one who simultaneously possesses managerial ineptitude and the inability to recognize the managerial ineptitude (Parker et al., 2011). The concept of Anosognosia is derived from a Psychiatric disorder of the same name, in which some patients who endure severe physical trauma develop a psychological inability to perceive the resulting disability. The sociological variant of Anosognosia is often called the Dunning-Kruger Effect. The Dunning-Kruger Effect argues that incompetence often hides the awareness of that incompetence (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Dunning and Kruger (1999) also explain that the type of decision making skills needed to identify the right solutions are also the same type of skills needed to recognize the right solution. Subsequent iterations and applications of the Dunning-Kruger Effect have begun to stray far from the basic elements of the construct: one that there is a profound deficiency and that 2) the subject's inability to perceive that deficiency. In developing the concept of Anosognosic Management, the researchers chose to maintain the highest degree of theoretical fidelity with the original psychiatric construct.

The specific process through which Anosognosic managers may indirectly impact the ease of organizational change is through their interaction with employees. The first type of manager-employee interaction occurs through the manager's job performance. Job performance is not typically considered to be a form of interaction. However, when employees witness a manager's job performance they develop critical perceptions about the manager's knowledge skills and abilities. Once these critical perceptions have been formed, they create the context in which the employee interacts with the manager.

The second step of the indirect change affect occurs during the manager-employee interaction. Managers interact with employees many times per day. It is important to note that although the employee may bring negative perceptions about the manager to the manager-employee interaction, it is still within the power of the manager to correct or affirm the perceptions of the employee through the interaction. Managers, who are viewed as hostile, inflexible or simply inept, may use daily interactions to correct negative perceptions. If the manager does not correct the negative perceptions of the employee, the employee's morale may be impacted by long-term negative manager interactions.

Over protracted periods of time, employees may experience deflated morale due to consistently negative interaction with managers. Additionally, the employee may begin to assign the negative attributes of the manager to the organization as a whole simply because of the manager's role as organization representative. Employees may assume that if a hostile, inflexible and inept manager was selected by the company it must mean that the company is also hostile, inflexible and inept. Figure 1.1 depicts a theoretical model of the direct and indirect impact of Anosognosic managers on the ease of organizational change.

**FIGURE 1.1**



## STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study used a concurrent mixed methods design to examine anosognosic management and organizational change. The concurrent mixed methods design allows for the simultaneous collection of qualitative and quantitative data for a more comprehensive investigation of the research topic (Creswell, 2009:14). This is advantageous in an exploratory analysis such as this one because it provides a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon than if a single method was used separately. The study used a cross-sectional time design, collecting data from subjects at the same point in time; the data were collected in July 2011.

A non-probability, judgmental sample was employed to select study participants in July 2011. Volunteers were selected based on their age and work experience due to the research focus on a specific type of manager. The resulting sample size was relatively small (N=46) but was acceptable due to the mixed method design. The data were collected using face-to-face interviews. Recruitment flyers were posted in six different locations to request volunteer participation. The criteria for inclusion in the study was that each volunteer had to have been over the age of 21, have a minimum of five years of work experience, and be in a non-supervisory role.

Respondents who met the aforementioned criteria were sent (via email) a consent form for their review. Those who expressed further interest in participation were scheduled for in-person interviews. Once verbal consent was given, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect privacy. They were then interviewed using a 48 question interview guide. The instrument included a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions about the participants' experience with Anosognosic Managers.

After the surveys were completed, a Grounded Theory approach was used to extrapolate key concepts from the qualitative data. Axial coding was then used to delineate notable themes and relationships in the data. The creation of thematic networks was used to promote Rhizomatic validity; assuring that rational associations are made between the concepts presented in the data (Creswell, 1998:199) (Findings from the qualitative data are not discussed in this article). The quantitative data were tested using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal reliability of the scale and Factor Analysis to test the scale validity. Subsequently, the data were collapsed into appropriate indices.

	Eigen Value	Cronbach's Alpha	Range
<b>Job Performance</b>			
1. Constructing new organizational policies.	.606	.875	Inept= 10-19 Functional= 20-29 Proficient= 30-40
2. Implementing policy for the organization.	.726		
3. Managing collaborations between organizations.	.678		
4. Managing collaborations within organizations.	.805		
5. Maintaining industry standards.	.760		
6. Making work schedules.	.868		
7. Resolving employee conflicts.	.819		
8. Following HR hiring procedures.	.531		
9. Recruiting new employees.	.453		
10. Following the organization's mission.	.577		
<b>Manager-Induced Employee Morale</b>			
1. Management style affects organizational Effectiveness.	.738	.840	Low= 5-9 Moderate= 10-14 High= 15-20
2. Management style affects employees' effectiveness.	.567		
3. Management style affects employee morale.	.817		
4. Management style affects employees' job satisfaction.	.929		
5. Management style affects employees' trust of management.	.856		
<b>Manager-Induced Interaction Hostility (MIIH)</b>			
1. Employees felt they could disagree with LIND without fear of reprisal.	.755	.833	Congenial= 8-15 Strained= 16-23 Hostile= 24-32
2. Employees felt they could complain about LIND without fear of reprisal.	.623		
3. Employees respected LIND as a person.	.640		
4. Employees would have selected LIND as a manager if they had a choice.	.615		
5. LIND knew how to motivate employees in a positive way.	.885		
6. LIND was genuinely interested in employees' professional growth.	.717		
7. LIND was genuinely interested in employees' personal growth.	.730		
8. LIND made decisions in the organization's best interest.	.430		

## STUDY FINDINGS

The sample size used in this research was forty-six (46) cases. Females comprised 73.9% (n= 34) of the sample and the majority of the respondents were African-American (87.0%, n= 40). Half of the sample (50%, n= 23) were single, and various fields of employment were represented in this study. The largest discipline represented was 'Other' (54.3%, n= 25), with Healthcare comprising the second largest representation (17.4%, n= 8). Mental Health and Social Work each represented 8.7% of the sample (n= 4) (See Table 1). The study participants' ages ranged from 21-71 years with the mean age being 36 years old (Md= 33, Sd= 11.96). The study participants had several years of employment experience ( $\bar{X}$ = 16, Md= 13, Sd= 10.75) and most of the study respondents were college educated ( $\bar{X}$ = 16. Md= 17, Sd= 2.95) See Table-1).

**TABLE 1**  
**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE**

		n	%
Sex	Male	12	26.1
	Female	34	73.9
	Total	46	100.0
Ethnicity	Black/African American	40	87.0
	Hispanic	1	2.2
	White	4	8.7
	Other	1	2.2
	Total	46	100.0
Marital Status	Married	12	26.1
	Single (never married)	23	50.00
	Divorced	6	13.0
	Other	5	10.9
	Total	46	100.0
Career Field	Healthcare (non-mental health)	8	17.4
	Mental Health	4	8.7
	Social Work	4	8.7
	Law Enforcement	2	4.3
	Education	3	6.5
	Other	25	54.3
	Total	46	100.0

Note: \*Table does not include missing data

Of the respondents who reported having worked for Anosognosic managers, the mean score on the perception of manager job performance was 18.7 (n=24). The range of possible scores in the job performance index was from 10, being inept, to 40, being proficient. The findings show that 70.8% of the sample scored 19 or below on this scale. This indicated that the majority of the sample perceived the Anosognosic manager's overall job performance to be inept. Only two scores, a 33 and a 35, fell within the 'proficient' range, representing 8.4% of the sample.

The range of scores in the Manager-Induced Morale index was from 5, being low manager-induced morale, to 20, being high manager-induced morale. The mean score in this index was 8.1 (n= 39). The findings show that 64.1% of the sample scored 9 or below on this scale. This indicated that the majority of the sample perceived the Anosognosic manager as producing low employee morale. The mean score on the Manager-Induced Interaction Hostility index was 23.6 (n= 40). The scores in this index range from 8, being congenial, to 32, being hostile. The findings show that 95.0% of the sample scored 17 or above on this scale. This indicated that the overall sample perceived their interaction with Anosognosic Managers to be strained or hostile. (See Table-2).

**TABLE 2**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

	Mean	Median	SD
Age	36	33	11.96
Years Employed	16	13	10.75
Years of Education	16	17	2.95
Job Performance	18.7	18.0	6.31
Manager-Induced Employee Morale	8.1	7.0	2.63
Manager-Induced Interaction Hostility	23.6	24.0	4.81

Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to determine the bivariate relationships between the study variables. The managers' job performance, the perceived ease of organizational change, Manager-Induced Employee Morale, and the Manager Induced Interaction Hostility all presented statistically significant relationships. Prior to any further discussion of the bivariate correlations, it is important to be aware that perceived ease of organizational change was re-coded into a binary variable for the purpose of this analysis. Re-coding the variable into a binary form produces a point biserial correlation rather than a standard Pearson's *r*. The point biserial correlation is still a valid measure but does suffer from attenuation due to one of the variable pairs being dichotomized.

The perceived ease of implementing organizational change was correlated with manager's job performance ( $r = .728, p = .01$ ), manager-induced employee morale ( $r = .428, p = .01$ ) and manager-induced interaction hostility ( $r = -.484, p = .01$ ). These correlations suggest that it is more difficult to execute organizational change under a manager with low job performance, and one who induces low employee morale. Additionally, the correlations suggest that it is easier to implement organizational change when the manager-induced interaction is more congenial (See Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION**

	PERF	MIEM	MIIH	OCHG
PERF	1	.511*	-.516*	.728**
MIEM		1	-.476**	.428**
MIIH			1	-.484**
OCHG				1

PERF= Job performance

MIEM= Manager-Induced Employee Morale

\*\*P < .01 \*P ≤ .05

OCHG= Ease of Organizational Change (Binary)

MIIH= Manager-Induced Interaction Hostility

In addition to the variables that were correlated to the perceived ease of organizational change, there were inverse correlations between job performance and manager-induced interaction hostility ( $r = -.516$ ,  $p = .05$ ) as well as an inverse relationship between manager-induced interaction hostility and manager-induced employee morale ( $r = .476$ ,  $p = .01$ ). These correlations suggest that as an Anosognosic manager's job performance decreased, the manager-induced interaction hostility increased. These correlations also suggest that as the manager-induced interaction hostility increased, the manager-induced employee morale decreased.

Due to the respondent demographics being heavily non-representative, partial correlations were run, controlling for sex, age, and ethnicity, to determine if there were any situational specificities in the demographic variables that may impact the observed relationships. As Table-5 shows, the correlation between perceived ease of organizational change and job performance were stable when controlling for age and sex. However, the relationship between perceived ease of organizational change and job performance lost significance when controlling for ethnicity ( $r = .048$ ,  $p = .910$ ). Additionally, all other correlations lost significance when controlling for age, sex, and ethnicity (See Table-5).

**TABLE 4**  
**PARTIAL CORRELATIONS**

Correlation	Full Model	Controlling for Age	Controlling for Sex	Controlling for Ethnicity
OCHG x PERF	.728**	.710*	.711*	.048
OCHG x MIEM	.428**	-.258	-.236	-.068
OCHG x MIIH	-.484**	-.310	-.167	-.207

PERF= Job performance

MIEM= Manager-Induced Employee Morale

\*\*P < .01 \*P ≤ .05

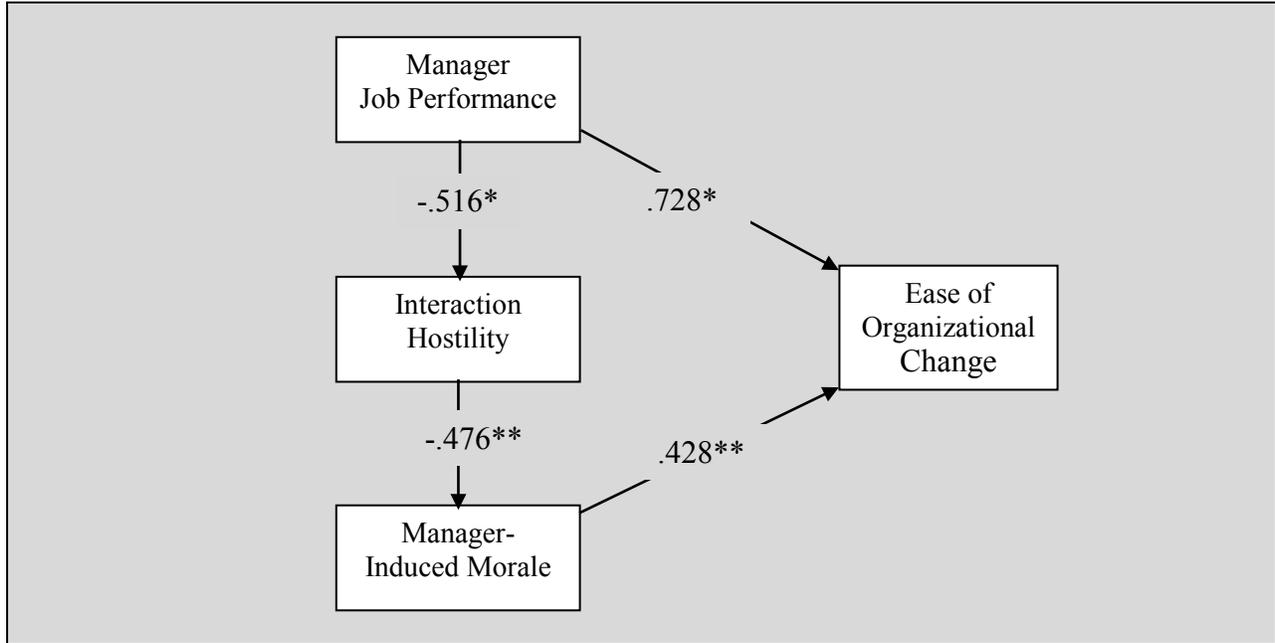
OCHG= Ease of Organizational Change (Binary)

MIIH= Manager-Induced Interaction Hostility

## MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS AND MODELING

The original intent of computing the bivariate associations was as a colinearity diagnostic for a subsequent multivariate or SEM test of the model. The researchers attempted to run both an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model and Structural Equation Model (SEM). Both multivariate tests were unsuccessful due to the small sample size (N=46). However, Figure 4.1 displays the Pearson Product Moment correlations for the variables in the model.

**FIGURE 1.2**



Note: Model reflects Pearson Product Moment Correlation

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study suffered from several limitations that bare discussion. First, the study used a small sample size with limited the statistical analyses that could be employed. It was not possible to conduct the multivariate analysis which would have provided measures of controlled association for the relationships. The small sample size also prohibited the generalization of the findings to larger populations. In future research, it is recommended that larger sample sizes be used to provide the maximum flexibility in analyzing the data. Another study limitation occurred with respect to demographic representation.

The sample was heavily African-American, female, and highly educated. It is possible that the findings may be represented only among that specific demographic. It is not clear if these correlations can be found among other demographics. In future research, a probability sample is recommended. Using a probability sample would not only allow the researchers to generalize the findings to the population, but also provide a method for determining the sampling error. Despite the limitations of the study, the findings help researchers begin to understand Anosognosic management.

The findings from this study offer several suggestions about the effect of Anosognosic Management on organizations. The findings suggest that Anosognosic managers have the ability to harm organizations in three ways. First, Anosognosic managers can harm organizations by directly impacting an organization's ability to change through their substandard job performance. The same substandard job performance that would be evident in the Anosognosic manager's daily duties would also carry over to the implementation of any organizational change. This limits the organization's ability to adapt to rapidly evolving internal and external situations. Additionally, the findings support the hypothesis that the Anosognosic manager can harm that organization by creating an indirect effect on the organization's ability to implement change. The second way in which the Anosognosic manager can harm the organization is by inhibiting the organization's ability to change through the indirect process.

The process of witnessing manager ineptitude and being subjected to manager-induced interaction hostility can lead to morale problems among employees. Employees with low morale are less likely to

embrace organizational change. The culmination of the indirect effect process is the third way in which Anosognosic managers can harm organizations. Anosognosic managers convert employees into disgruntled employees. When considering the cost of low employee productivity, workplace hostility, and employee attrition, Anosognosic management may represent more than a mere administrative inconvenience. Anosognosic management may be more akin to the proverbial screen door on the submarine.

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