

## Development of Change Management Board Game

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at developing change management board game for executives. This study synthesized and analyzed related concepts of board game design and change management to develop the prototype of change management board game. Results indicated that the first prototype of change management board game consists 50 moving spaces with distinguished card that are designated a specific number from 1-25. Findings indicated that the appropriate players for this board game were limited to 4-6 players with the playing time about 1-2 hours. Dice and tokens were needed to use as equipment to play this game. In addition, during the game, players were required to discuss the relevant situations about change in order to exchange their knowledge about change management.

**Key words:** Board game, Board game design, Change management.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Today's organizations are living in a rapidly changing environment, which requires more flexibility and resilience than the past decades. Employees in the organizations are continuously prepared to cope with change. The most popular method for the organizations utilized to raise awareness of employees to understand the importance of change is "training."

Training is one of essential human resource management functions that helps ensure employees to have sufficient knowledge and skills to perform in their current jobs. To enhance employees' understanding of change, organizations need to find effective ways to encourage and motivate employees to embrace changes. Various traditional approaches such as lecture, case study, or outdoor activity might not be appropriate and effective enough to promote individuals' learning to deal with changes excellently. In the light of this, human resource developers have proposed new techniques and tools to help employees in the organization better understand the impacts of changes and how to deal with them effectively.

The use of board games has increasingly become more popular in training about change management. A number of related issues about changes that must be learned cannot successfully learn through the traditional classroom method. Instead, learning about change management is involved with the self-learning process, which a board game for training can meet this requirement [1].

The board game was developed about 5,000 B.C., which the most important piece of today's board game as a dice game was assumed to be the oldest game of mankind, according to historical discovery. The development of board games has been ongoing over the past thousand years prior to facing the slothful conditions due to the emergence of technology. Nevertheless, the popularity of board games has increased dramatically in recent years. The Guardian newspaper reported that 2012 was the golden age for board games with a growth rate of up to 40 percent a year and became one of the new generation businesses [2]. In the past five years, a board game has not been used solely for entertainment but training for education as well [3]. A board game provides numerous benefits to employees such as linking knowledge on related topics easier, creating a relaxed learning atmosphere, and making understanding of complex issues more clearly [4].

Although an organization is currently living in a digital age, which advanced technologies are more interestingly to be used for training through e-learning systems, applications or social networks, many organizations conversely choose board games as a key tool to stimulate learning and adaptability to changes [5] ; [6]. The major reason to use board games is to help an organization gather personnel together leading to discussion and knowledge sharing. Also, during the play of board games, employees as a gamer feel more relaxed and widely open to new ideas, which help them learn more than ever before [7]. Additionally, the board game also creates a good atmosphere for employees to de-

velop and implement their tactics, strategies, and theories into practice, and obtain instant feedbacks from other people during the game [8]. The use of board games in business training not only enhances the relationship between employees, but also promotes rational and systematic thinking skills and collaboration [9].

As shown, board games are not just tools that are used for entertainment only, but can be employed for employee skills development [10]. Organizations have adopted the use of board games to develop employee learning skills on various topics, particular the subject of change management. The popular board games in change management include Wallbreakers<sup>®</sup> [11] SysTeamsChange<sup>®</sup> game [12] and The Game of Changes (version 1.5) [13]. In Thailand, the use of board games for training is still doubtful as the trainer not yet understands clearly how to combine board games as part of training method. Also, the developed serious board games for training are limited and needs to be encouraged to create more training board games [14]. Training board games seem novel in Thai academic research and need more attention. Therefore, the development of board games for change management is very important and needs to be designed systematically to help employees understand changes in the organization and to be ready to cope with change effectively. The objective of this present study is to develop a change management board game for executives in the organization.

## 2 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This study used three well-known board games in change management as a guideline to design a change management board game for executives.

## 3 LITERATURE REVIEWS

### Board Games in Change Management

Change management board games widely used for management development and organizational changes are Wallbreakers<sup>®</sup>, SysTeamsChange<sup>®</sup> game, and The Game of Changes (version 1.5), which described as follows:

1. Wallbreakers<sup>®</sup> was designed to use for training about organizational change. This game focuses on motivating employees to be part of desirable changes and demonstrate players how to form a different leadership style in each step of the transition process. This game was developed based on the number of related theories such as MBTI/JTI theory, Edgar Schein theory, John Kotter, Rick Maurer, and Daniel Goleman.

2. SysTeamsChange<sup>®</sup> game was developed as training and learning tool that allows players to interact with each other. This game helps prepare change agents and motivates understanding of change management and organizational development processes. This game was designed based on the actual change projects, which encompass related concepts and theories in change, organizational development, and

learning organization such from Peter Senge and Chris Argyris, leadership and motivation for transformation process of John Kotter, and effective transformation strategies of Lewin and Lippitt.

3. The Game of Changes (version 1.5) was designed to be an effective tool that helps encourage in-depth and broad conversations on change management. Also, this board game helps facilitate learning in classroom, workshop, and short learning activities in change management. In the board of the game, there is a statement written as “improve your skills as a change facilitator or agent in the journey to organizational change.”

This research synthesized these three change management board games to determine ways to develop change management board game for executives in the organization.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

This study was a development study in which change management board game for executives in the organization had been developed. Board game design and development had been conducted based on documentary analysis of related concepts in change management and board game designs. The analysis process in this study included 4 essential steps as follows:

1. Synthesis of board game information related to change management. Synthesizing process was based on [15] suggestions, which included the game name, manufacturer/ year of manufacture/ sample, proper age level of the game, description for the game purpose, and game components.

2. Analysis of each board game design in accordance with [16], which included play duration, mechanism of the game, writing rules, luck and strategy, feedback, catch up the features, meeting player expectation, and stakes, risk and reward.

3. Analysis of each board game design in accordance with [17], which a game designer should ask important questions as follows:

- How many players are to play a board game?
- How long does it take to play a board game?
- What are the options for game players and when they will get the opportunity to use those options?
- How can game players choose that option?
- How the choose of one player affects other players?
- How do board game players interact with other players?
- What are alternatives that one player can do but other players cannot do?
- What is the progress of the game? Is it switching the move of players according to the sitting position in the play?
- What expressions can the player do?
- What is the goal of the player?
- How can a player win?

4. Applying results from the analysis to determine the change management board game design for executives in the organization.

After conducting the synthesis and analysis of major change management board games, the researcher connected

change management concepts to the board game design and development, which were related to two important steps as follows:

1. The step of determining relevant issues in change management by linking Lewin's transformation process concepts and Kotter's change management procedures including guidelines for reducing resistance to change. The details of these relevant issues led to identify "reward and punishment" in the change management board game.

2. The step of developing board game prototype by developing relevant questions from major change management concepts to put in the board game table and determine rewards and punishments for each issue that leads to goal accomplishment through the move of each point on the board to the victory point.

## 5 FINDINGS

Results of data analysis consisted of three important parts including analysis of three major board games in change management, linking concepts of change to board games development, and the change management board game prototype development.

After synthesizing and analyzing three major board games in change management and linking concepts related to change management to board game development and design. The next step was to develop a prototype of board game in change management for organizational executives. Relevant questions from major change management concepts had been developed to place in the board game table and define rewards and punishments for each issue that leads to goal achievement through the move of each point on the board to the victory point.

Results of the relevant board game analysis led to the formulation playing rules for change management board games for executives as follows:

1. Determine the number of players from 4-6 people, spending 1-2 hours for playing time.

2. The game format is a snake-ladders game. There are a total of 50 spaces of move, excluding the victory point that is specified in the name of the game as "achieving the goal of change."

3. Rewards and punishments in each space are linked to the concept of organizational change management to make some fun and gain knowledge through the opening of the card. There are totally 25 cards used during the game play.

4. Use dice and walkers (tokens) to perform the game to create risks, coincidence and uncertainty, which were considered as part of organizational change management process.

5. To reach the goal or victory point from the 50<sup>th</sup> space, a player needs to throw the dice and get "1" and must answer special questions in the goal box to be the winner.

6. Players are allowed to discuss relevant issues in change management during the game in order to exchange knowledge and experience in organizational change management.

The next step is to identify relevant issues in change management by linking Lewin's transformation process con-

cepts and Kotter's change management procedures including guidelines for reducing resistance to change. The details of these relevant issues led to identify "reward and punishment" in the change management board game.

Figure 1 illustrates the prototype of change management board game, which consists of 50 moving spaces excluding the starting point (Start) and victory point (Goal).

## 6 CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The design of change management board game for executives in the organization proposed the prototype of the game (first draft) in accordance with board game design concepts of [16] Tinman (2008) and [17] Silverman (2013), and integrated these concepts to develop the board game. Results of this study found that the change management board game for organizational executives covers 5 important issues, namely; defining the mechanism of the game that must be linked to the steps of the organizational change management process, determining the number of players and playing time; determining the strategy of playing the game through defining the situation cards that are relevant to each step of change in order for players to brainstorm and give feedback in the team; determining ways to create fun in playing games caused by luck and penalties, and creating criteria for answering questions in each situation in order to determine the progress towards achieving goals. This study used the universally popular change management board games like Wallbreakers®, SysTeamsChange®, and The Game of Changes (version 1.5) as a guideline for game development and design. Results of this study indicated that the game style is similar to The Game of Changes (version 1.5), which focused on providing important knowledge about organizational change management. However, the board game in this study is different from the previous board games in the style of playing at the board game. In this study, the board game was designed by adding the situation cards used to make more fun and challenging.

Both public and private organizations can use the prototype of this board game obtained from this study to experiment in their organizations to help increase knowledge and understanding about organizational change management. This change management board game can also be used as part of training related to change management. In addition, educational institutions by instructors in related subjects to change management can apply this board game as part of activities to improve teaching efficiency in relevant subjects. For those interested in designing and developing games related to change management can employ this board game as a basis for relevant board games design and development in the future.

For change management board game quality improvement in the future, this study suggests that there should be an expert to evaluate the quality of this board game using Delphi technique in a further study to ensure that this board game is truly consistent with the change management

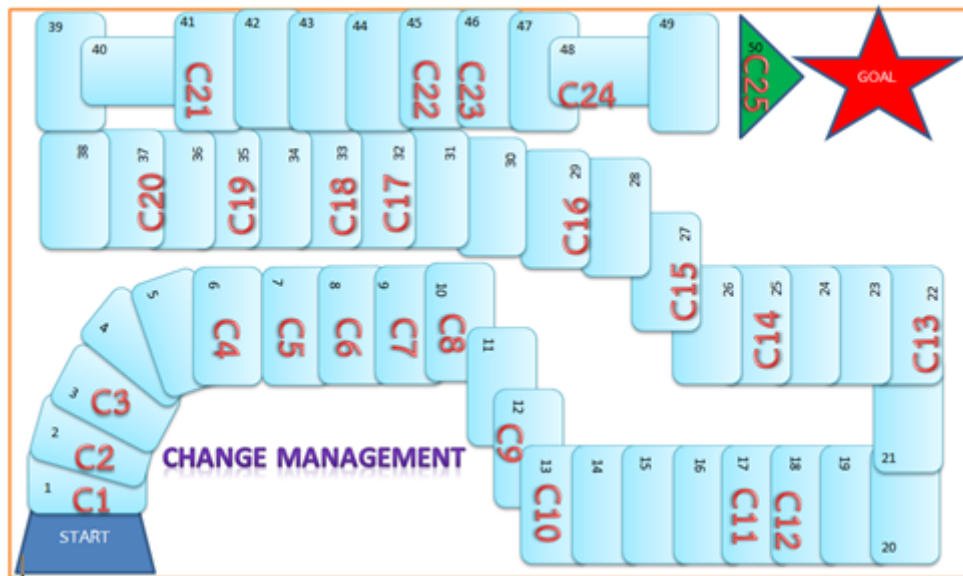


Figure 1. The Prototype of Change Management Board Game for Executives

concept leading to the improvement of game quality. In addition, experiment the applicability of this change management board game with the management group or students by testing their knowledge before and after playing board games as well as evaluating the satisfaction of playing this board game.

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