

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

ANTONIO SADARIĆ

**THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN BUILDING ATTACHMENT AND
LEADING CHANGE**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Ljubljana, 2022

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AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned ANTONIO SADARIĆ, a student at the University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, (hereafter: SEB), author of this written final work of studies with the title THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN BUILDING ATTACHMENT AND LEADING CHANGE, prepared under supervision of PROF. MIHA ŠKERLAVAJ, PHD.

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This first page of my dissertation is written as the last page. As I look back on this experience, it shows a series of ups and downs and tells a story of transformation, staying true to proposed research findings. From traveling over 20,000 km by car in less than a year and experiencing the cultural charms of the U.S. and East Asia within two months in 2019; to suffering personal loss, being locked down for two years during the COVID-19 pandemic and finding the silver lining motivation for another creative project. I successfully fulfilled all my obligations while enduring earthquakes and the anxiety of aftershocks, working on my research topic proposal in a friend's attic. I have learned to adapt my perfectionism the hard way, as if nothing had happened. Experience truly is a comb that nature gives us once we are bald and this completed dissertation, a *Memento Vivere* of sorts, symbolizes it. My doctoral journey was an eerie search for the arc of my character, vividly depicted and artistically portrayed in the 15-minute allegory of "Iowa." Academic value aside, I consider this dissertation a triumph of my will over external and internal adversity.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my loving mother, Ankica, who believed in me when no one else did, and to my beloved Sanja, who patiently endured the hardships of living with a struggling doctoral student.

VLOGA PRIPOVEDOVANJA ZGODB PRI GRADNJI NAVEZANOSTI IN VODENJU SPREMEMB

Povzetek

Cilj te doktorske disertacije je obravnavati težavno vprašanje, na kak način in s kakšnimi sredstvi lahko vodje sprememb uspešno vplivajo na sprejemanje sprememb med prejemniki sprememb. V današnjem hitro spreminjajočem se in ves čas turbulentnem svetu so spremembe resnično edina stalnica. Žal je tudi pandemija covida-19 občutno vplivala na pisanje te doktorske disertacije ter s tem še bolj izpostavila pomen zaznavanja vodenja sprememb kot bistvene veščine in ne le kot konjička. McKinseyjeva slavna raziskava praktikov, ki je pokazala, da je več kot 70 % pobud za spremembe neuspešnih, je zelo hitro postala standard sodobnih projektov za uvedbo sprememb in posledično navdihuje vedno več objavljene literature, v kateri obravnavajo neuspeh uvajanja organizacijskih sprememb. Če torej predpostavljamo, da bo naraščajoči trend neuspešnosti organizacijskih sprememb neizogibno upočasnil družbeni napredek in dejansko omejil razvoj družbe, postane ta raziskovalni problem zanimiv tako za akademsko okolje kot za praktike. Na začetku se osredotočim na opazovanje organizacijskih sprememb kot delne ali bistvene spremembe v organizacijski ideologiji.

Zapleteni raziskovalni problem vplivnih prizadevanj vodij sprememb je razdeljen na tri ločena raziskovalna vprašanja, ki so obravnavana z različnimi raziskovalnimi metodologijami. Cilj prvega raziskovalnega vprašanja je razširiti naše razumevanje teoretičnih pogledov in ugotoviti, kako bi lahko interdisciplinarni pogledi pomagali pri doseganju napredka v raziskovalnih pogledih. Konkretnije povedano, prvo raziskovalno vprašanje je: Kako nam lahko povezovanje izsledkov z različnih raziskovalnih področij, ki obravnavajo prepričevalno komunikacijo in pripovedovanje zgodb, pomaga razumeti vlogo pripovedovanja zgodb pri vodenju sprememb? Drugo raziskovalno vprašanje gradi na ugotovitvah iz prejšnjega vprašanja, pri čemer obravnava odnos med pogledi, ki izvirajo iz socialno kognitivne teorije, teorije navezanosti odraslih in teorije socialne identitete, in se glasi: Kakšno je razmerje med stopnjo izpolnitve psiholoških potreb prejemnikov sprememb in njihovo pripravljenostjo za spremembe ter izkazovanjem vedenja prvaka ter uporabo vplivnih vodstvenih taktik in pripovedne inteligence med vodji sprememb? Zadnje raziskovalno vprašanje raziskuje odnos, ki je bil vzpostavljen pri prejšnjem vprašanju, ter poizveduje o slogih in zgradbi zgodb, ki jih pripovedujejo vodje sprememb v zvezi z organizacijskimi spremembami. Tretje raziskovalno vprašanje je torej: Kateri so ključni elementi pripovedovanja zgodb pri organizacijskih spremembah?

Da bi dobili smiselne vpogleda in prišli do ustreznih izsledkov pri reševanju navedenih raziskovalnih problemov, je bilo treba temu primerno prilagoditi raziskovalno okolje. Obrnil sem se na 150 vodij sprememb in moj začetni ciljni vzorec je vključeval 50 vodij sprememb z ustreznimi 250 prejemniki sprememb, kar je zadostovalo za analizo na več ravneh. Žal mi je pandemija covida-19 preprečila dostop do priročnega vzorca 37 vodij sprememb v 12 organizacijah, vendar je v raziskavi kljub temu sodelovalo skupaj 164 prejemnikov

sprememb. Glavni predpogoj je bil, da naj med izvajanjem kvantitativne raziskave ves čas poteka organizacija sprememb in da je projekt sprememb zaključen najpozneje v 30 dneh med nadaljnjo kvalitativno raziskavo. V naši kvalitativni raziskavi je sodelovalo deset vodij sprememb, ki so pripovedovali anekdote o svojih izkušnjah med izvajanjem organizacijskih sprememb.

V tej doktorski disertaciji sem uporabil mešani načrt raziskave, sestavljen iz več metod, v katerem sem združil glavno kvantitativno raziskavo z nadaljnjo kvalitativno raziskavo, ki je bila namenjena raziskovanju predhodno preizkušanih odnosov. V kvantitativni raziskavi sem uporabil že prej validirane in zanesljive instrumente za merjenje zaznav prejemnikov sprememb o vedenju vodje sprememb (izkazano vedenje prvaka, uporabljene vplivne vodstvene taktike in uporabljena pripovedna inteligenca); in občutke prejemnikov sprememb, o katerih so sami poročali (stopnja izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb in pripravljenost na spremembe). Hipotetična razmerja so bila preizkušena s Hayesovim makrom PROCESS in dobljeni izsledki so odprli prostor za nadaljnjo raziskovalno študijo. Pri svoji kvalitativni raziskavi sem se osredotočil na poglede vodij sprememb glede organizacijskih sprememb, pri čemer je bil poudarek zlasti na njihovem pripovedovanju zgodb. Da bi smiselno ublažil vpliv pristranskosti anketirancev in vpliv določitve okvirja, sem vodje sprememb spodbudil, naj se spomnijo anekdot o posebnih incidentih, do katerih običajno pride med uvajanjem organizacijskih sprememb. Za prepoznavanje elementov, ki poslušalca pritegnejo k pripovedi (tj. sloga in estetskih poudarkov), sem uporabil Yorkov okvir za pisanje scenarijev, ki je posebej zasnovan za osvetlitev najzanimivejših elementov zgodb.

Rezultati opravljene kvantitativne raziskave potrjujejo, da stopnja izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb prejemnikov sprememb nastopa kot dejavnik, ki delno vpliva na izkazano vedenje prvaka s strani vodij sprememb in na individualno pripravljenost prejemnikov sprememb na uvedene spremembe. Zanimivo je bilo, da se je v nasprotju s splošno literaturo uporaba vplivnih vodstvenih taktik s strani vodij sprememb izkazala za boljši napovednik pripravljenosti prejemnikov sprememb na spremembe kot pa izkazano vedenje prvaka. Poleg tega se je naslanjanje na pripovedno inteligenco izkazalo za učinkovito, če so jo vodje sprememb uporabljali ločeno od vplivnih vodstvenih taktik, kar pomeni, da ti s pripovedovanjem zgodb pri prejemnikih sprememb vzpostavijo splošno čustveno vzdušje za sprejemanje posredovanih sporočil. Opisani vidik pripovedovanja je bil dodatno raziskan še v nadaljnji kvalitativni raziskavi in izsledki so pokazali, da so kljub najboljšim prizadevanjem vodij sprememb, da posredujejo le zgodbo o organizaciji, njihove zgodbe vsebovale tudi element preobrazbe pri človeku. Poleg tega vodje sprememb, ki omenjajo čustva, organizacijsko kulturo, simboliko in timsko delo, pripovedujejo zanimivejše zgodbe z jasnimi čustvenimi prehodi med posameznimi dejanji. Združevanje izsledkov iz ločenih raziskav kaže na to, da lahko vodje sprememb, ki imajo zaznano večjo pripovedno inteligenco, pripovedujejo zanimivejše in privlačnejše zgodbe ter bi morali torej imeti večji vpliv na prejemnike sprememb.

Trdim, da ta spoznanja dodatno osvetljujejo osnovni mehanizem vplivanja na ljudi, ki ga uporabljajo vodje sprememb. Na podlagi svojih raziskovalnih izsledkov lahko tudi povem, da bi lahko z boljšim izpolnjevanjem psiholoških potreb prejemnikov sprememb in s pripovedovanjem zgodb, ki sprožijo obdelavo informacij v obeh možganskih hemisferah, povečali pripravljenost prejemnikov sprememb, da prilagodijo svojo socialno identiteto tako, da bo ustrezala novi spremenjeni organizacijski ideologiji.

Ključne besede: organizacijske spremembe; socialno kognitivna teorija; pripovedovanje zgodb; teorija navezanosti pri odraslih; mešane metode.

THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN BUILDING ATTACHMENT AND LEADING CHANGE

Summary

This doctoral dissertation aims to tackle the difficult question of how and by what means do change leader successfully influence change adoption in change recipients. In the rapidly transforming and consistently turbulent world of today, change truly is the only constant. The unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic which has respectfully impacted the writing of this doctoral dissertation has additionally emphasized the importance of perceiving change leadership as an essential skill, and not just an extra-curricular interest. McKinsey's famous practitioner study suggesting that over 70% of change initiatives fail, has expeditiously become the standard of modern change projects, and consequently an inspiration for a rising stream of literature addressing organizational change failure. Assuming that the rising trend of organizational change failure will inevitably delay social progression and effectively limit the evolution of society, positions this research problem as both academically interesting and relevant for practitioners. I start by observing organizational change as a partial or substantial change in organizational ideology.

The complex research problem of change leader's influential efforts is deconstructed into three separate research questions, addressed using different research methodology. The first research question aims to expand our understanding of the theoretical perspectives and how interdisciplinary perspectives can help progress research perspectives. More specifically, *RQ1*: In what ways can linking the findings from different research areas that deal with persuasive communication and storytelling, help understand the role of storytelling in leading change? The second research question builds upon findings from the previous one, questioning the relationship between perspectives from social-cognitive theory, adult attachment theory and social-identity theory. Respectively, *RQ2*: What is the relationship between change recipients psychological need satisfaction and readiness to change, and change leaders' demonstration of champion behavior, utilization of leadership influence tactics and narrative intelligence? The final research question explores the relationship established in the previous one, and inquiries into styles and structures of stories being told by change leaders in organizational change. *RQ3*: What are the key elements of storytelling in organizational change?

In order to provide meaningful insights and relevant findings addressing the previously stated research problem, research setting needed to be adequately aligned. I reached out to 150 change leaders and my initial target sample included 50 change leaders with corresponding 250 change recipients sufficient for a multilevel analysis. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted my access to a convenient sample of 37 change leaders in 12 organizations, and with a total of 164 change recipients participated in the study. The main prerequisite was that a change organization was ongoing during the quantitative study, and that the change project was completed no later than 30 days during the followup qualitative study. Our qualitative study

involved 10 change leaders who shared anecdotes on their experiences during organizational change.

This doctoral dissertation utilizes a mixed-method research design, combining a leading quantitative study with a followup qualitative study aimed at exploring previously tested relationships. The quantitative study employed previously validated and reliable instruments, measuring change recipients' perceptions of change leader's behaviors (demonstrated champion behavior, utilized leadership influence tactics and utilized narrative intelligence); and change recipients' self-reported feelings (psychological need satisfaction and readiness to change). Hypothesized relationships were tested using PROCESS macro by Hayes, and consequent findings opened up space for the followup exploratory study. My qualitative study focused on change leaders' perspective of organizational change, placing an emphasis on their storytelling. In an effort to meaningfully mitigate the effect of respondent bias and the effect of framing, I nudged change leaders to recollect certain anecdotes about specific incidents that usually occur during organizational change. To identify elements of narrative engagement (i.e., style and aesthetic focus), I utilized Yorke's screenwriting framework, specifically designed to highlight the most compelling elements of stories.

Results of the quantitative study confirm change recipients' psychological need satisfaction as the partial moderator of change leader's demonstrated champion behavior and change recipients' individual readiness to change. Interestingly, change leader's utilization of leadership influence tactics proved to be a better predictor of change recipient's readiness to change than demonstrated champion behavior, contrary to the mainstream literature. Additionally, change leader's utilization of narrative intelligence proved to be effective when used separately from leadership influence tactics, suggesting that storytelling sets the general emotional tone for message reception in change recipients. This storytelling perspective was explored in the follow-up qualitative study. Results indicate that despite change leaders' best effort to convey a story about the organization, their stories contain an element of human transformation. Additionally, change leaders who mention emotions, organizational culture, symbolism and teams, convey a more interesting story with clear sentiment transitions across acts of their story. Mixing findings from separate studies suggest that change leaders with perceived higher narrative intelligence authored more compelling and engaging stories, and should therefore exert more influence over their change recipients.

I argue that these insights shed some additional light on the underlying mechanism of influencing administered by the change leader. Consistent with my research findings, I suggest that by being mindful of change recipients' psychological need satisfaction and by utilizing storytelling which triggers dual-hemisphere information processing increases change recipients' willingness to adjust social identity to fit the newly changed organizational ideology.

Keywords Organizational change; Social-cognitive Theory; Storytelling; Adult Attachment Theory; Mixed-Methods

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INTRODUCTION

Description of the Narrow Scientific Field

History of mankind is a history of change. It is a context-dependent, unpredictable, nonlinear process with unintended outcomes (Balogun, 2005). Today's business world is highly-competitive and digitally disrupted, as technology enables great ideas to become meaningful business models almost effortlessly in comparison to previous generations (Hamari et al., 2016; Zervas et al., 2017). Interestingly, most organizational change efforts fail despite organizations addressing common challenges and utilising different methodologies (Heracleous & Bartunek, 2021). Implementation endeavours aim to alter the perception of ongoing change and influence change recipients' natural inclination to maintain homeostasis and resist change (Holt et al., 2007; Oreg, 2003; Oreg, 2006). The future of organizational development (e.g., digital transformation) heavily relies on the change leaders' efforts aimed at influencing and mobilizing networks of change recipients (Battilana et al., 2009; Battilana et al., 2010; Škerlavaj et al., 2016), effectively changing the status quo in the organization. Change processes inevitably bring interdependency into organizations, and numerous interpretations of newly formed circumstances further drive ambiguity and equivocality (Lewis & Lusch, 2009). In other words, organizations are faced with the continuous pressure to adapt to the rapidly changing environment, which in turn adds complexity, reduces clarity and increases organizational change failure.

History of change is a history of experimentation. A rising stream of literature studying organizational change failure emphasises its inevitability (e.g. three perspectives from Schwarz et al., 2021 and an identity-forming perspective from Hay et al., 2021). Heracleous and Bartunek (2021) observed organizational change failure through a multilevel lens and concluded that certain short-term failures were necessary for major organizational change to be successful. These perspectives emphasising organizational learning suggest that organizational change should be observed as discourse in which arguments are accepted or refuted among the targeted population during the sensemaking process. A meta-analysis of the literature covering organizational change storytelling identified five key themes: *sensemaking*, communicating, change and learning, power and identity and identification (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Different literature streams present and discuss numerous reasons for the frequent occurrence of organizational change failure. For example, Weick (1988) mentioned the importance of self-efficacy regarding seeing oneself as capable of addressing change and minimising change resistance.

History of experimentation is a history of emotional reactions. Change causes ambiguity, and uncertainty causes strong emotional reactions such as stress, fear and anxiety, often times compared to grief (e.g. Elrod and Tippett, 2005; Zell, 2003). Such negative emotional reactions trigger a natural human tendency to discover answers and thus relieve stress and anxiety

(Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). When such answers are not easily available or do not exist, individuals tend to create pluralistic ignorance, or their own sense of reality, which sometimes is completely opposite to reality (Weick, 1988). Seeking meaning and understanding one's own identity through group membership (Tajfel, 1982) heavily relies on others' friendly faces, which offer comfort and security (Mawson, 2005), rather than turning to facts and rationale. Change recipients usually perceive change initiatives as threats (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Ford et al., 2008) rather than as benefits, further emphasising how change leaders' efforts are crucial for successful change implementation.

Emotional reactions interpret reality. Seeking social proximity in times of distress is a natural reaction (Mawson, 2005) because the calming effect closeness to attachment figures stimulates dopamine, thus reducing negative emotions associated with intensive ambiguity (Coan, 2008). Individuals seek relatedness in their interpersonal relationships; therefore, leaders perceived as attachment figures can become idealised, depending on the combination of attachment styles (Davidovitz et al, 2007). Change leaders as attachment figures invest effort in meeting change recipients' psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000), thus building attachment and creating a functional change leader–change recipient dyadic relationship. This is where change leaders' Narrative Intelligence plays an essential role. Generally speaking, a narrative is a way in which humans make sense of the world (Bruner, 1991), and Narrative Intelligence is the ability to tell the story of an individual's life and the surrounding environment (Randall, 1999).

Narrative Intelligence, among other types of intelligence, includes the ability to employ, characterise and narrate (Pishghadam et al., 2011), suggesting that effective storytellers create emotionally engaging stories by being more narratively intelligent. This approach makes the narrative more compelling and encourages change recipients to engage in negotiating identification during organizational change, which is perceived as one of organizational change's major issues (Epitropaki et al., 2016). In this context, a change leader's influencing efforts could be perceived as the act of clarifying change dynamics and emphasising the benefits arising from such activities. Perceiving change's benefits instead of its threats encourages change recipients to socially identify with the pro-change group, thus alleviating behavioural uncertainties that arise from intensive ambiguity of organizational change.

Perceived narratives create realities. In general, leading change can be characterized as an extensive communication effort to give sense to change through anticipating and addressing conflicts arising from recipients' diverging needs and perceptions (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Mento et al., 2002), effectively influencing how organizational realities are interpreted during the sensemaking process (e.g., Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). These intensive persuasive communication efforts of change leaders focused on benefit perceptions and giving sense to newly formed reality, can be identified in different research fields (e.g., Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). One of many research directions considers how stories give sense to organizational incidents and how powerful narratives are in creating perceived realities (e.g., Boje, 1991).

A change leader's narratives effectively influence how organizational realities could be interpreted during the sensemaking process, driven by change leaders' efforts aimed to influence and mobilise networks of change recipients (Battilana et al., 2009; Battilana et al., 2010; Škerlavaj et al., 2016). Some change agents demonstrate Champion Behaviours (Baer, 2012; Howell & Higgins, 1990), whereas others rely on power and Leadership Influence Tactics (Battilana & Casciaro, 2021; Furst & Cable, 2008; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993). What remains unclear is the underlying mechanism of change leaders' influential efforts in persuading change recipients' perception of organizational change. Although available literature offers some direction, it remains unclear how Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence affect change recipients' Readiness to Change.

In this doctoral dissertation I observe the dyadic relationship between the change leader and the change recipients in an effort to provide some synthesized coherence and expand the understanding of organizational change. More specifically, in my quantitative research I hypothesize how change leader's utilization of Champion Behaviour, Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence affects the sensemaking process of change recipients. A follow-up qualitative research relies on John Yorke's (2014) five-act framework of persuasive narratives in an effort to shed some additional light on change leaders' sensegiving process. Aforementioned mixed-method research design relies on commensurable theoretical perspectives of organizational change that combines: (a) social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) as the overarching foundation for the triggers of organizational change; (b) adult attachment theory (Bowlby, 2013) as the foundation for the mediating mechanisms of organizational change; and (c) social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) as the desired outcome of organizational change. These perspectives are furthermore clarified in the following section.

Research Topic and Research Questions

The overarching research topic of this dissertation is aimed at understanding how do change leaders successfully influence organizational change adoption among change recipients utilizing storytelling. This relatively broad and complex research venue is furthermore specified by focusing on the role of storytelling in building attachment and leading change:

RQ1: In what ways can linking the findings from different research areas that deal with persuasive communication and storytelling, help understand the role of storytelling in leading change?

RQ2: What is the relationship between change recipients psychological need satisfaction and readiness to change, and change leaders' demonstration of champion behavior, utilization of leadership influence tactics and narrative intelligence?

RQ3: What are the key elements of change leaders' recollected experience during organizational change?

Definition of the Subject of Study

I utilize a mixed-method approach in an effort to demystify aforementioned persuasive communication efforts of change leaders during organizational change. First, I focus on interdisciplinary perspectives in an effort to deconstruct the persuasive communication process. I review current management studies literature concerned with organizational change and use this as the theoretical foundation for interdisciplinary exploration. With identified similar topics, I then focus my attention to most cited and therefore most influential articles focusing on persuasive communication, storytelling and change in top-tier journals within the Web of Science. This includes perspectives from: developmental psychology (e.g., Richards & Schat, 2011), linguistics (e.g., Stromberg, 1990), political science (e.g., Reicher, 2004), consumer psychology (e.g., Woodside et al., 2008), and religious studies (e.g., Lalich & Singer, 1995). Using these theoretical insights, I construct a narrative-based conceptual model and propose the experiential dynamics of change leaders's sensemaking and sensegiving process.

Building upon these propositions, I move towards empirical testing with change leaders in organizations currently working on the implementation of an organizational change project. Proposed sensemaking and sensegiving variables are a matter of change recipients' perspective of change leader's behavior, which is why a dyadic approach had to be implemented in the data collection process. Although I reached out to 150 change leaders and my initial target sample included 50 change leaders and 250 change recipients sufficient for a multilevel analysis, the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted my access to a convenient sample of 37 change leaders in 12 organizations. A total of 164 change recipients participated in the study, with a minimum of five change recipients per change leader. I conduct a moderated mediation PROCESS analysis using SPSS, a statistical analysis software. Hypothesized relationships in the conceptual model include five hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Idea champion behaviour has a positive relationship with psychological need satisfaction during organizational change.

Hypothesis 2. During organizational change, psychological need satisfaction has a positive relationship with readiness to change.

Hypothesis 3. The relationship between idea championship and readiness to change during organizational change is partially mediated by psychological need satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4. The relationship between idea championship and psychological need satisfaction during organizational change is enhanced by leadership influence tactics.

Hypothesis 5. The relationship between idea championship and psychological need satisfaction during organizational change is enhanced by narrative intelligence.

With a better understanding of change recipients' perception of change leaders' persuasive efforts, I move on towards a greater understanding of change leaders' storytelling. In order to

avoid change leaders' biases and socially desirable influence, I apply the method of incident recollection and conduct a narrative analysis. Transcripts available in appendix demonstrate the change leaders' perspective, and opens up space for meaningful discussion juxtaposed to change recipients' perspective.

In this doctoral dissertation, I will propose an underlying mechanism of change leader's influential efforts during organizational change by incorporating these complementary perspectives:

1. Interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives related to empirically measured constructs of change leadership, adult attachment and storytelling
2. The link between change leader's demonstration of champion behavior and leading by example, change recipients' perception of psychological need satisfaction and readiness to change
3. What are the most utilized leadership influence tactics and how well do change leader's stories perform in terms of perceived narrative intelligence.
4. At the end of this dissertation I mix quantitative and qualitative study results and interpret results within the context established with the narrative-based conceptual model.

Definition of Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this doctoral dissertation is to contribute to the ongoing academic conversation focused on improving successful organizational change implementation rates, i. e. reducing organizational change failure rates, thus improving overall progression of organizational development and consequently the broader community.

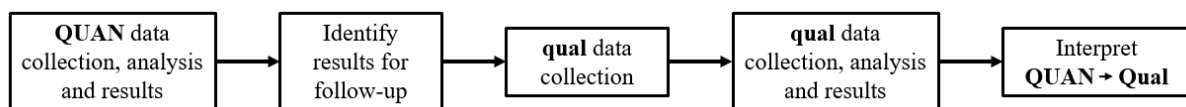
The goal of the doctoral dissertation is to understand how do change leaders successfully influence organizational change adoption among change recipients utilizing storytelling. I also introduce a narrative-based conceptual model connecting interdisciplinary perspectives from social-identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and adult attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982) as commensurable theoretical perspectives, with social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) as the over-arching theoretical foundation.

Definition of Scientific Research Methods

Aforementioned interdisciplinary theoretical background is coherently synthesized into a narrative-based conceptual model while acknowledging numerous suggestions from Cornelissen (2017). To provide remedies that frequent trouble narrative-based theorizing, I simultaneously consider interdisciplinary outlooks and offer further argumentation prior to starting a proposition, in addition to the available organizational behavior literature used as foundation.

In an effort to provide meaningful theoretical and practical contribution in terms of understanding the phenomenon of change leader’s influential endeavours, this doctoral dissertation requires quantitative and qualitative data. Consequently, this data collection and data analysis approach requires a mixed-method research design. Mixed methods research in social sciences accounts for quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, where both analysis results are then finally mixed and interpreted with the idea of combining strengths of both datasets, which enrich the final understanding of the observed problem (Edmonds, 2017). Applying this methodological perspective to this doctoral dissertation, requires the specification of priority data collection and analysis approach. I use an explanatory-sequential approach (QUAN-qual), which is utilized in case the researcher’s primary interest is in following up the quantitative results with qualitative data as displayed in Figure 1 (Edmonds, 2017). The explanatory power of interpreted findings relies on quantitative methodology to test hypothesized relationships, which are furthermore studied utilizing a follow-up qualitative study.

Figure 1: Follow-Up Explanation Design (QUAN-qual) of the Mixed Methods Study of the Role of Storytelling in Building Attachment and Leading Change



Source: Edmonds (2017)

In the primary and dominant quantitative study, I empirically test hypothesized relationships between constructs in an effort to answer the *RQ1*. My conceptual moderated mediation model includes change leader’s champion behavior (Howell et al., 2005) as the focal predictor, change recipient’s readiness to change (Vakola, 2013) as the dependent variable and change recipient’s psychological need satisfaction (LaGuardia et al., 2000) as the hypothesized partial mediator. Additionally, change leader’s influence tactics (Yukl et al., 2008) and narrative intelligence (Pishghadam et al., 2011) are introduced as hypothesized moderators. Change recipient’s general self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2001) is introduced as a theoretical covariate, acknowledging suggestions from Aguinis (2016). The ultimate unit of analysis in this study is the change recipient and what is the perception of change leader’s behavior.

I reached out to change leaders willing to participate in the study and asked them to nominate five of their colleagues that are currently working on an ongoing organizational change project, which would be assessing change leader’s behavior. Compliant with GDPR, their personal information is never disclosed. Data collection included three separate online questionnaires containing items from previously established and aforementioned validated and reliable measures, varying among five-point and seven-point scales. These questionnaires were anonymously distributed via email using Qualtrics, an online questionnaire design and distribution platform. Being mindful of common method variance, I applied suggested

prevention methods (Podsakoff et al., 2003) such as clarifying the study's purpose, splitting data collection waves into three different time points, linking personal affect with subject-matter behaviour, ensuring respondent anonymity and using different endpoint scales.

First, respondents assessed their change leader's CB and their own self-efficacy when the change leaders behaved in certain ways. Second, about a week later, respondents assessed their change leaders' influence tactics and their own Psychological Need Satisfaction when the change leaders behaved in certain ways. Finally, about 2 weeks later, respondents assessed their change leaders' Narrative Intelligence and their personal Readiness to Change when the change leaders behaved in certain ways.

Collected questionnaire (quantitative) data was uploaded to SPSS Version 26 for preliminary analysis and descriptive statistics, followed by a more detailed PROCESS analysis. I operationalised this evaluation using Hayes' PROCESS macro in SPSS Version 26, specifically testing the moderated mediation Model 9 (Hayes, 2017). Unfortunately, planned multilevel analysis could not be conducted because the actual change leader and change recipient sample size was not sufficient (e.g., Kozlowski & Klein, 2000).

Hypotheses testing helped me identify topics that needed further qualitative exploration, in an effort to improve explanatory power of analysed results. Primarily, my interest was in understanding what were the key elements of storytelling applied by change leaders whose effectiveness was perceived as relatively effective by change recipients. I consulted available academic research on persuasive narratives, as well as online available practitioner resources accessed via YouTube. My conclusion was that most persuasive narratives were multimedia, predominantly cinematographic narratives, which was in line with narrative engagement research (e.g., Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Applying this multimedia narrative perspective into the specific context of organizational change, I adapted John Yorke's (2014) five-act narrative creation methodology created for cinematographic screenwriting.

Removing all the multimedia elements from cinematographic narratives, created a framework used as the foundation for incident recollection at different stages of the organizational change narrative told by the change leader. In an effort to remove change leader's framing and biases, change leaders were asked to recollect a certain incident during organizational change phases, and retell an anecdote on how that specific incident was resolved. Interviews were conducted virtually, using the video conferencing platform Zoom, after which audio was extracted and the conversation was transcribed. I sent the transcription to participating change leaders without any identifiers, compliant to GDPR directions. Additionally, linking common themes complementary to the narrative analysis was coded into a series of categories followed by vignette quotes and displayed in a framework matrix (Edmonds, 2017). A collection of these vignettes was then used for narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993).

Finally, results of empirical analyses are discussed in the overall findings and discussion section. Quantitative insights (i.e., perceived narrative intelligence of change leaders) are mixed with qualitative insights, in an effort to meaningfully answer the initial research question. A final conclusion summarizes individual findings and rounds up the research process.

Intended Contribution to the Field of Knowledge

This doctoral dissertation aims to meaningfully contribute to the broader body of knowledge, addressing theoretical perspectives and practitioner perspectives as well. My theoretical contribution includes four separate elements. First, I propose that organizational change is a change in organizational ideology and introduce an interdisciplinary perspective into the research area of organizational change, by suggesting a narrative-based conceptual model and progressing the emotional-cognitive model of the sensemaking experience suggested by Liu and Perrewé (2005). Second, I propose an underlying mechanism of change agents' persuasive efforts suggested by Battilana and Casciaro (2012), where change leaders are perceived as human brands and improve the strength of their influence through stronger attachment with change recipients.

Third, contrary to mainstream innovation management literature, I demonstrate how leadership influence tactics (Yukl, 2008) are a better focal predictor of individual readiness to change than demonstrated champion behavior (Howell et al., 2005). Finally, I introduce narrative intelligence and narrative engagement methodological perspectives into the field of sensegiving and organizational change, predominantly the five-act approach to narrative analysis suggested by John Yorke (2014).

In terms of practitioner contribution, I showcase the importance of perception in improving successful organizational change implementation rates, placing an emphasis on strong internal marketing perspectives. By introducing threat and benefit perception and illustratively referring how innovation diffusion perspectives are enhanced through advertising efforts, I suggest that human brand perspectives could significantly reduce organizational change failure rates.

Structure of the Dissertation

This doctoral dissertation is organized into four sections, addressing different research questions with theoretical and empirical sections. After this introduction section which offers a meta-perspective of the topic, the first chapter focuses on creating a strong theoretical foundation for empirical research. It is a combination of literature review from the field of organizational change and change agency, furthermore enriched with perspectives from developmental psychology (e.g., Richards & Schat, 2011), linguistics (e.g., Stromberg, 1990), political science (e.g., Reicher, 2004), consumer psychology (e.g., Woodside et al., 2008), and religious studies (e.g., Lalich & Singer, 1995). Special attention is placed on commensurable theoretical perspectives from social-identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and adult attachment theory

(Bowlby, 1969/1982) with the overarching social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989). I propose that organizational change is a change in organizational ideology, which triggers the process of an individual's ideological social identification. In other words, a change leader needs to make sense of the proposed organizational change, before being able to meaningfully give sense to organizational change to change recipients. The general outcome of this chapter is the narrative-based conceptual model, which accounts for interdisciplinary perspectives and proposes the sensemaking-sensegiving experience of change leaders during organizational change. I place a special emphasis on theoretical and practical contribution, to keep the conclusion streamlined. Suggested propositions are then empirically tested using quantitative methodology in the following chapter.

In the second chapter I present a more focused and specific theoretical background. I connect these insights into hypothesized relationships in an effort to understand how Champion Behaviour, Psychological Need Satisfaction and Readiness to Change are connected, and what is the effect of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence on that relationship. The general outcome is the moderated mediation conceptual model, and the research sample and data collection process is described in more detail. A special emphasis is once again placed on the theoretical and practical contribution in the interpretation of analysed results. These results reflect how change leaders' behavior is perceived by change recipients, strongly suggesting what practices were effective and what practices need improvement. Following the results of quantitative research, an interesting venue covering the effectiveness of utilized storytelling is furthermore explored in the qualitative chapter.

The third chapter is dedicated to qualitative research. Here I progress the theoretical foundation towards narratives, organizational storytelling and overall utilization of narrative intelligence in organizational context. After a relatively brief theoretical foundation and without hypothesized relationships, I dedicate attention to methodological exploration. Incident recollection using a semi-structured interview based on cinematographic narrative creation is a relatively novel approach in organizational change research, and I elaborate it in more detail. The majority of the chapter is dedicated to narrative analysis of change leaders' stories and a general metanarrative is created in an effort to answer the research question. Again, I place additional emphasis on theoretical and practical contribution to ensure a coherent line of thought.

In the final chapter, I mix research results from quantitative and qualitative studies. I discuss results and how they complement each other, and overall explain the researched phenomenon. I also suggest some future research perspectives and provide a detailed overview of research limitations mentioned above. This doctoral dissertation ends with a conclusion that highlights all relevant insights, a full list of references and appendices which contain questionnaire items and interview transcripts.

1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF SENSEMAKING AND SENSEGIVING IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE¹

This chapter is organized into four sections. First, I review current management studies concerned with organizational change and focus my attention to most cited and therefore most influential articles focusing on persuasive communication, storytelling and change in top-tier journals within the Web of Science. This includes perspectives from developmental psychology (e.g., Richards & Schat, 2011), linguistics (e.g., Stromberg, 1990), political science (e.g., Reicher, 2004), consumer psychology (e.g., Woodside et al., 2008), and religious studies (e.g., Lalich & Singer, 1995). Second, I summarize theoretical perspectives with social cognitive theory as the overarching theoretical foundation of my narrative-based conceptual model of change leadership. Third, I elaborate propositions about the change leader's sensemaking and sensegiving processes during organizational change. Finally, I conclude with a proposed narrative-based conceptual model and highlight my theoretical and practical contribution with directions for future research.

1.1 Theoretical Insights on Organizational Change Failure

Various streams of literature dealing with organizational change tackle the philosophical question of defining change, and linguistics debate if the word should be a verb or a noun. There is no uniform definition that could holistically account for the contextual richness of change. As the working environment continues to be disrupted digitally, work demands inevitably increase, which in turn increases the complexity and forms a negative feedback loop on future performance (Lewis & Luscher, 2009). It comes as no surprise that a fairly novel stream of literature observes organizational change failure as a separate and interesting research field. Schwarz et al. (2020) observed organizational change failure through deterministic, voluntarist, and entrepreneurial perspectives.

On the other hand, Hay et al. (2020) observed organizational change failure through the lens of sensemaking and how such failure affected work–identity formation. Heracleous and Bartunek (2020) observed organizational change failure through a multilevel lens and concluded that certain short-term failures were necessary for the major organizational change to be successful because the organization learned to deal with change in the process. Change processes inevitably bring interdependency into the organization; numerous interpretations of newly formed circumstances furthermore drive ambiguity and equivocality (Lewis & Luscher, 2009).

In other words, organizations are faced with the continuous pressure to adapt to the rapidly changing environment, which in turn adds complexity, reduces clarity, and increases

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 82nd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, 5th-9th August 2022, Seattle.

A revised version of this chapter has been accepted for publication with the *Economy and Business Review* (EBR) titled: "Giving Sense to Change Leadership: Towards a Narrative-Based Process Model" (2022)

organizational change failure. Therefore, I turn my attention to change agency in an effort to gain a better understanding of how to reduce organizational change failure.

Change is a collective effort. Agency constructs the workplace, as different levels of information and interest flow throughout the organization, which is susceptible to interpretation (Balogun, 2005). Previous literature debates have observed the issue of agency in organizations, emphasizing the importance of embeddedness, which is closely linked to social engagement (Tasselli & Kilduff, 2019). The crucial reason for organizational change failure is the failure to engage employees in change-related activities, which are necessary for successfully completing change (Applebaum et al., 2012). Implementation rates of such innovative endeavors are led by change leaders who influence change recipients' perceptions by utilizing persuasive behavior in hopes of influencing perception of ongoing change and tackling recipients' natural inclination to maintain homeostasis and resist change (Holt et al., 2007; Oreg, 2003; Oreg, 2006).

Humans are prone to homeostasis and fallible by nature. The change recipient usually perceives the change initiatives as a threat (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Ford et al., 2008), rather than as a benefit, thus further emphasizing how change leaders' efforts are crucial for successful change implementation. Different literature streams discuss why organizational change failure occurs so frequently and present numerous reasons for this. For example, Weick (1988) mentioned the importance of self-efficacy in terms of making sense of oneself as being capable of dealing with such change and minimizing change resistance. Heracleous and Bartunek (2020) emphasized that organizational change should be observed as discourse, where arguments are accepted or refuted among the targeted population. The sensemaking process is where change recipients assess potential benefits and threats of change and form their attitudes (Wood & Bandura, 1989), creating space for interventions. Such dynamics influence how a certain change is perceived, and ongoing organizational polarity towards such a change process heavily influences this perception (Keyser et al., 2019).

Despite how influencing opinions about a proposed change are an inevitable part of change adoption, Tormala and Petty (2002) demonstrated how individuals are more certain about their attitudes and resist persuasion when exposed to higher levels of elaboration. On the other hand, Aaronson (1999) suggested that individuals tend to naturally resist persuasion and respond best to self-persuasion, where they can internalize their own thoughts on the subject. Another reason for organizational change failure is the identity crisis and negative emotional reactions caused by perceived threats stemming from change, thus leading to individual resistance to change (Repovš, Drnovšek & Kaše, 2019; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). In other words, despite the significant advances in understanding change agency, the underlying mechanism for successful influential behavior during organizational change is still quite unexplored and represents the main research subject of this chapter as well as the narrow field of research in this doctoral dissertation.

1.2 The Interdisciplinary Perspective of Influential Behavior

Change leaders' influential behavior needs to affect positively the change recipients' sensemaking process. The sensemaking process is where change recipients assess potential benefits and threats of change and form their attitudes (Balogun & Johnson, 2005), and in the case of perceived threats overpowering perceived benefits, build resistance to change (Oreg 2003). Behavioral uncertainties can be resolved by learning acceptable behavior that others display (e.g., champion change leaders' behavior), as mentioned in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Therefore, this sensemaking process is a prerequisite for the sensegiving process in which the change leader will be involved, aimed at managing change recipients' perception of the change initiative. As Hogg (2001) suggested, the leader requires some form of referential authority to be influential or perceived as a person whose advice is beneficial.

Popper and Maysel (2003) suggested an interesting relationship in which a leader's role is similar to that of a parent's in stressful and turbulent occurrences within the organization. Davidovitz et al. (2007) highlighted how leaders can be perceived as attachment figures, illustrating that different influences affect bond formation with recipients and vice versa (e.g., Berson et al., 2006; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Effectiveness of influential tactics depend on the relationship between the leader and aimed target of influence (Sparrowe et al., 2006), thus leaders have to adapt their influential objectives and corresponding tactics depending on the desired direction of influence (Yukl et al., 1995). Such persuasive communication efforts tend to gravitate towards using anthropomorphic actors in stories (Woodside et al., 2008) and storytelling tends to make the message more memorable and stimulating (Boje, 1991).

Change leaders' influential behavior is an ongoing narrative. Liu and Perrewé (2005) argued how positive information about organizational change will induce excitement in employees, while a high level of specific information, regardless of its affect, will induce fear. Rhodes and Brown (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of the literature covering organizational change storytelling and identified five key themes: sensemaking, communicating, change and learning, power, and identity and identification. This is in line with the aforementioned literature streams and suggests that the underlying mechanics of influencing could be understood by observing and meaningfully connecting the most common themes. Beigi et al. (2019) re-examined the underlying themes of organizational change almost 15 years later, and based on their analysis of 165 articles, they proposed five additional themes: subverting, manipulating, challenging, dissenting, and alienation. Obviously, newer research focuses more on the darker and undesired behavior during organizational change, connected with divergent interests and different levels of readiness to change.

To further develop this theoretical chapter, I consider experimental perspectives in philosophy suggested by Feyerabend (1993). I have observed aforementioned emerging themes as actionable areas for change leaders and change recipients. During my initial Web of Science

screening, keywords “persuasion”, “narrative”, “influence”, “storytelling” and “sensemaking-sensegiving” were the most frequent keywords that were associated with research articles across disciplines, including organizational behavior mentioned earlier.

The largest number of articles containing these keywords outside of organizational behavior and organizational change were from: developmental psychology (e.g., Richards & Schat, 2011), linguistics (e.g., Stromberg, 1990), political science (e.g., Reicher, 2004), consumer psychology (e.g., Woodside et al., 2008), and religious studies (e.g., Lalich & Singer, 1995). Relying on well-established theoretical perspectives from organizational psychology, I dared to pursue divergent thinking patterns and explore connected interdisciplinary perspectives, in an effort to meaningfully progress our understanding of how change leader’s storytelling operationalizes the sensegiving process.

Similarly, it comes as no surprise that certain studies connected several disciplines together (e.g., Heracleous & Barrett, 2001) focusing on persuasive communication efforts, storytelling and sensegiving. Change leaders have power and aim to conduct change through learning and extensive communication. On the other hand, change recipients are expected to make sense of newly formed circumstances and go through the identification process. These emerging themes highlight major issues of organizational change and narrow down the key areas that could contribute towards the understanding of influencing during organizational change.

1.2.1 Selected Insights on Influential Behavior from Developmental Psychology

Change leaders’ influential behavior is interdisciplinary. The primary idea of any planned communication is behavioral change. Complementary research streams offer commensurable findings relevant to change leaders’ influential behavior. These include developmental psychology, linguistics, political science, consumer psychology, and religious studies. Revolving around communication as the common denominator, these areas are relatively closely connected to change adoption as a general societal phenomenon and are concerned with similar research problems. Observing change leadership through the lens of developmental psychology brings forth several interesting perspectives. Harrell-Levy and Kerpelman (2010) mentioned the importance of teachers during identity formation, with teachers serving the role of safety attachment objects during the turbulence of growing up.

While attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1982) in its original form addresses early life experiences and their impact on adult behavior, it also highlights that individuals form specific bonds in “times of distress,” i.e., the stress of change (Richards & Schat, 2011). Attachments to individuals differ in types and intensity (e.g., idolizing celebrities as Houran et al. [2005] mentioned), forming different attachment styles (Keller, 2003; Ravitz et al., 2010), and the chief function of attachments is construed as conferring emotional security to the attached party, although attachment during change is not a prevailing topic in the literature.

Individual's cognitive development makes a difference. Making sense of organizational change greatly depends on individual capacity of change recipients. Kegan's (1982) perspective of meaning-making accounts for a lifelong activity, starting from infancy and evolving in more complex solutions through a series of so called "evolutionary truces", where very truce is both an achievement of and a constraint on the meaning-making process. The more diverse set of experiences an individual encounter, the broader the understanding of self and what life is. Evolutionary truces affect how individuals are connected, included and attached to others in the world and how they are differentiated from others (Kegan, 1982). Generally speaking, level of adult development determines the cognitive complexity and the capacity of the individual to make sense from experienced life events, inevitably expanding different levels of consciousness (Kegan, 1994).

More specifically, when considering the context of organizational change, individual's resistance to change can be observed through a three-system paradigm, reflecting aforementioned orders of consciousness: the change-preventing system, the feeling system, and the knowing system (Kegan, Kegan & Lahey, 2009). When considering personal development perspectives, Weick (1988) mentions the importance of self-efficacy as a significant predictor of one's capacity to deal with adversity and consequently the cognitive development an individual will experience from said.

Hardship accelerates ontogenesis. Through interpreting environmental stimuli, individuals construct identity and define themselves or develop a self-theory (Berzonsky, 2011). Greenfield (2009) highlighted how environmental changes altered the way individuals learned and experienced society, thus affecting how naturally progressive cultural norms are further developed, which in turn affects how individuals adapt to new behavioral norms. People are inevitably the product of their environment, but are simultaneously the producers of such an environment as Wood and Bandura (1989) emphasized.

In terms of developmental psychology and change leadership, Bandura (1989) highlighted the importance of addressing individuals' self-inefficacy to exercise control over ruminative thoughts because such invasive thoughts further emphasized threat perception and stimulated the build-up of stress and anxiety. These emotional reactions depend on the interpretation of the revealed narratives and are equally human and relevant to change leaders and change recipients, considering both parties inevitably experience such emotions but deal with them differently.

1.2.2 Selected Insights on Influential Behavior from Linguistics

Phrasing differs how compelling a narrative is. Rosenbaum et al.'s (2018) fairly recent exploratory literature review focused on reviewing the 13 most popular planned organizational change models after Lewin's seminal "freeze-unfreeze-freeze" model (e.g., Cummings et al., 2016). Their research findings suggested that major planned organizational change models

related to Lewin's model and their common denominator was intensive communicational efforts change leaders conducted. Brown et al. (2009) summarized the most common topics in organizational change research and pointed out how organizational change created stories that could block change if they were not authentic or did not have a compelling narrative structure.

As previously mentioned, these stories' topics cover power, identity construction and defense, plurivocality, sensemaking, and sense-destroying (Brown et al., 2009). Boje (1991) suggested there were healthy and unhealthy storytelling in organizations, where stories packed a lot more meaning because of their emotionally engaging component. Weick (2012) accentuated the importance of storytelling in sensemaking in terms of holding informational elements together, and visual learning, where organizational symbolism played an essential role in triggering emotional reactions and conveying behavioral cues. Stromberg (1990) mentioned the importance of myths and general stories about a certain societal surrounding in formulating an individual's identity and understanding their self-story and self-creation.

When observing these identification challenges after organizational change failure, Hay et al. (2021) concluded that experienced challenges during the sensemaking process created four narrative trajectories: identity loss, identity revision, identity affirmation, and identity resilience. When faced with context change and uncertainties about identity changes, people also seek proximity and comfort in familiar faces (e.g., Mawson, 2005) instead of purely relying on facts and rationalizing. This type of behavior opens up space for creating heroic and antagonistic archetypes (e.g., Fergnani & Song, 2020) in organizations expected to solve the problem or be the person to blame. However, similar to all other archetypes that occur in stories, organizational archetypes are subject to genre-specific limitations.

In other words, individuals create stories about themselves based on the stories they process and are able to make sense of in the changed environment. Persuasive narratives transport individuals into a convergent state of mind within the narrative, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative, thus causing psychological distancing from the real world (Green & Brock, 2000). The narrative transportation process initiates narrative engagement, immersing an individual into a state of enjoying the narrative and influencing the narrative's subsequent story-related attitudes and beliefs (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). A fairly known method of utilizing the strength of narrative identity transportation is bibliotherapy, frequently used in patients suffering from depression (Gregory et al., 2004) and alleviating some form of negative emotions. The power of language is used frequently in politics and political behavior, which is an inevitable element of the human experience.

1.2.3 Selected Insights on Influential Behavior from Political Science

The holy grail of influential communication is changed behavior. One way of approaching the achievement of such desired outcomes is through the power perspective (e.g., Hinkin &

Schriesheim, 1989). On the other hand, power does not need to include coercive and totalitarian perspectives, but can represent the power of aligning values towards a pro-social goal, which benefits everyone and engages the critical masses (e.g., Battilana & Casciaro, 2021). With every ideological setup, a different set of interests fluctuate. Pfeffer (1992) argued the best way to overcome resistance was by acquiring more power than the resisters possess and being savvy with political skills. Similarly, perception of strong organizational politics has numerous negative effects on desired organizational outcomes, such as: employees' lower overall satisfaction, challenging work and integrity, and no support for innovation (Parker et al., 1995).

In other words, expecting individuals to embrace change where the organization is perceived as rigid and totalitarian may not be as effective as ideological differences that inevitably create opposing ideas and trigger a change resistance (e.g., Repovš, Drnovšek & Kaše, 2019) among groups of individuals. This threat perception leads towards a polarized “us versus them” perception (Goldman & Hogg, 2016) in the organization, creating meaningful space for creating “resistance leaders.” Ole (2010) observed sensegiving and sensemaking as a political process of organizational change, where middle managers played an essential role in creating and implementing strategy.

Leaders' political ideologies play an important role in decision-making processes (e.g., Chin et al., 2021) and belonging to an ideological stream plays an essential part in defining an individual's identity (Hogg & Reid, 2006). This consideration of social categorization and belonging to a group heavily relies on the context of social identity (Reicher, 2004) where domination and resistance depend on how powerful a certain ideological position is. Depending on an individual's interpretation, adopting organizational change also can be observed as a question of freedom of choice because individuals may not have a choice in voicing opinions about change.

The modality of various interpretative schemes mediates discourse between individuals, where discourse can be observed as an influential vehicle that affects an individual's interpretations and actions (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). When observing political discourse within the organizational change context, advocating for change may be as important as advocating against the existing status quo. Disassociation tactics and the antithesis approach shift attention towards the future (Cheney, 1983), ultimately leading towards individuals favoring future outlooks in favor of change (Chreim, 2002).

Communication drives connections between group members, and connections drive results (VanVuuren & Elving, 2008). Two-sided messages that allows space for voicing opinions and attitudes are more persuasive than one-sided messages similar to totalitarian perspectives (Allen, 1991), which suggests that more discourse builds the illusion of choice. When faced with unfavorable and turbulent circumstances, politicians rely on hope as a powerful tool for painting a more favorable and idealized future (Fenton, 2008). This ideal is easier to make sense of; thus it comes as no surprise that Steigenberger (2015) mentioned hope as a powerful

predictor of organizational change success. The aforementioned interdisciplinary perspective concludes that storytelling engages the audience, stimulates identification, and ensures the intended message is understood (e.g., Rhodes & Brow, 2005; Vaara et al., 2016). Understanding intended messages particularly is important in the consumer behavior literature because accepting novel products depends on creating awareness of needs that do not exist yet.

1.2.4 Selected Insights on Influential Behavior from Consumer Psychology

Benefit perception is one of the key research interests in consumer psychology literature. If change recipients are considered internal customers or recipients of change, insights from consumer psychology can illuminate additional perceptions of organizational change. Negative perceptions of new initiatives and change agents leading change can be compared to innovation diffusion in marketing literature (e.g., Strang & Soule, 1988). The notable innovation diffusion curve speaks volumes about the small percentages of innovators and early adopters who help spread positive impressions of a certain innovation before the broad audience accepted it. This is especially true when employees are perceived as internal customers adopting a new product or service (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993), thus obtaining the role of strategy implementation vehicles (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000).

Such an approach suggests that negativity and resistance towards the change initiative is present because the need for a new product or service is enforced and not created meaningfully among employees (Rafiq et al., 2003). Much has been said in terms of storytelling in marketing, from raising awareness about a certain product or service to generating a need for such consumption (e.g., Pulizzi, 2012). Woodside et al. (2008) additionally emphasized the importance of creating human elements and adding drama into stories to encourage emotional reactions from consumers, similar to Aaker's (1997) efforts in creating brand personalities. Behaviors of leaders acting as influencers can be observed through different lenses, one of which is the position of a human brand, an umbrella term that refers to any well-known persona who is the subject of (internal) marketing communications efforts (Thomson, 2006).

Consumer behavior literature recognizes different human brands, including professional athletes and politicians who brand themselves (Scammell, 2015) to stimulate recipient attachment and influence critical masses through perceived trust and credibility (Sung & Kim, 2010). Carefully managed communication patterns and a prebuilt image of the human brand, aid organizations in leveraging recipient's attachment strength towards the human brand, effectively influencing their behavior (Thomson, 2006).

The end result is word-of-mouth advocating and behavioral change, depending on the human brand's perceived values (Carlson & Donovan, 2013). Word of mouth can also be a form of influential communication, especially when structured in the form of a compelling narrative or story, as Delgado and Escalas (2004) suggested. Synthesizing the aforementioned insights, crafting a compelling story, and highlighting the benefits of organizational change could

facilitate awareness building among organizational change recipients. This storytelling approach, focused on the perceptions of benefits, could promote identification with the ambiguous environment of the future by reducing uncertainty and perceptions of threat. A similar approach can be identified with religious and corporate cults, where followers embrace the rapidly changing environment without questioning leadership decisions.

1.2.5 Selected Insights on Influential Behavior from Religious Studies

I take this approach a step further and explore how religious leaders exert influential behavior. Cults are constantly changing and create a turbulent environment, thus representing an interesting case study of change leadership. Cults represent religious innovation (Campbell, 1978; Stark & Bainbridge, 1980) and their nature is chaotic, characterized by constant change (Bainbridge & Stark, 1979). This is unlike sects, which rely on mainstream religion for regulation and governance (Stark & Bainbridge, 1980), exposing individuals to a fairly stable surrounding dependent on dogmatic statements and sacralization (Harisson, Ashforth & Corley, 2009).

In cults, individuals adhere to constant change the cult leader drives through an intricate mechanism of social control, colloquially termed “mind control.” Lalich (2004) demystified this process and highlighted how cultural forms and norms behind the central ideology steer individuals’ behavior by limiting their thought process because individuals who do not adhere to proposed behavior are ostracized by the remaining group members who are dedicated towards achieving the desired goal (e.g., Lalich & Singer, 1995). Cult members, similar to all other religious groups, perceive themselves through group membership. The main difference from other secular groups is in the epistemological approach towards understanding “the unseen,” which is achieved by listening to the leader, i.e., believing (Ysseldyk, 2010). Interestingly, some authors argue that corporate cults exist today (Tourish & Pinnington, 2002; Tourish & Vatcha, 2005), and demonstrate similar destructive behaviors as religious cults without the religious content (Kulik & Alarcon, 2016).

These types of leadership efforts essentially can be perceived as a carefully engineered sensegiving process, aimed to limit the freedom of sensemaking directions that group members can experience. Effectively, this destructive leadership behavior is an extreme case of managing the ambiguity of change, connecting the aforementioned interdisciplinary insights. Elements of developmental psychology and attachment development can be seen in cults, as can the use of symbols and emotionally charged narratives, political behavior, and a general focus on members’ sense of utility. Therefore, I argue that regardless of the archetypal role a change leader might embody in different organizational contexts (Johns, 2006), persuasive narratives will play a vital role in the actual mobilization of the aforementioned critical mass required to propel organizational change forward.

1.2 Theoretical Congruence from Divergent Perspectives

Change leaders' persuasive communication is subjectively effective. Hogg (2001) deconstructs a leader's influence as the arisen appearance of being the most prototypical member within a specific group because members of that group cognitively and behaviorally conform to that prototypical gradient. This is simply because individuals define themselves through group participation and are willing to embrace ideas that will increase the appearance of belonging to that particular group (Hogg & Reid, 2006). In that sense, information easily becomes influence and begins gathering like-minded group members.

The process of organizational change, regardless of its form, involves a movement in an organizational entity over time (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), which can be characterized as a change in circumstances that interrupts well-practiced patterns of acceptable and desired behavior (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Despite organizational change is usually triggered as an effort to improve competitiveness through efficiency or effectiveness goals (Birkinshaw et al., 2008), change is often compared to grief (e.g., Elrod & Tippett, 2005; Zell, 2003); therefore, it comes as no surprise that such strong emotional reactions are followed by strong resistance to change (Oreg, 2003).

Strong emotional reactions such as stress, fear, and anxiety naturally result from experiencing ambiguity change causes, triggering the human tendency to discover answers and thus relieve stress and anxiety levels (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Once such answers are not easily available or do not exist, individuals tend to create pluralistic ignorance, or their own sense of reality, which is sometimes completely opposite of the actual reality (Weick, 1988). After the initial change is triggered and both emotional and cognitive processing is complete, the individual seeks meaning of the changed surroundings. This desire to identify is predicated on the search for meaning, where meaning predicts the strength of how desirable identification is (Chreim, 2002). Epitropaki et al. (2016) reduced the process of self-construal into two questions, which are inseparable from environmental focus: (a) "Who am I in this situation?" and (b) "What should I do now?"

Negotiating identification during organizational change is dependent of social identification, where perceived roles within the desired group act as a truly integrative force for commonly understood communication (Hogg & Reid, 2006). In this context, influencing could be perceived as the act of clarifying change dynamics and emphasizing the benefits that arise from such activities, thus alleviating behavioral uncertainties that arise during organizational change. In essence, this could be considered as sensemaking, a process of social construction in which an individual tries to understand key elements of the new organizational reality (e.g., Gioia et al., 1994; Rouleau, 2005). Naturally, sensemaking is a result of the sensegiving process essentially defined as the act of influencing the way others make sense of, or interpret, a certain surrounding and understand desirable behavioral patterns (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). These

divergent theoretical perspectives are furthermore explored in the following subsections of this chapter.

1.2.1 Social Cognitive Theory as the Overarching Perspective of Influential Behavior

I argue that change agents' influential behavior across disciplines can be explained with commensurable theories. The base of my argument is social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) as the overarching theory of my model, which aims to explain how people regulate their behavior in social settings, relying on control and reinforcement. More specific, social cognitive theory distinguishes three models of agency: direct personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency in an effort to control desired behavior (Bandura, 2001). Change leaders' role in this sense is to help construct, filter, frame, and create facticity (Turner, 1987).

Organizational change inevitably changes the workplace reality, which is where change agents help during the sensemaking process or "meaning construction" (Cornelissen, 2012). Weick (1995) highlighted that sensemaking was enactive of sensible environments, ongoing, driven by plausibility, social, and grounded in identity construction, suggesting that an individual would reconstruct their identity upon making sense of the new environment. This issue of identity construction remains a key problem because individuals exposed to organizational change have to adapt their identity, or redefine how they perceive themselves within the organization to accommodate this new and changed reality.

Identity transitions through life and changing contexts, where individuals seek identity salience independent from specific contexts (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). This quest for sensemaking and defining oneself is particularly difficult during turbulent times when contexts change unexpectedly, exposing an individual to different types of perceived threats (Bandura, 1989). Apart from physical threats, individuals may also perceive identity threats, thus questioning their own capability to deal with such change. Some authors argue that even when defined within as specific context, identity is not a constant but a narrative: an evolving and integrative self-story that explains an individual's role in the present and the future (e.g., Berzonsky, 2011). Ashforth et al. (2008) tackled conceptual diversity of identity and identification by observing identification as a fuzzy set starting with the core of identity (self-definition, importance, and affect) and expanding this logic to identity-based behaviors.

Observing the issue of sensemaking and identification during organizational change leads towards group membership and self-categorization. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) predicts behavior within a group, based on perceived status differences, legitimacy, and the ability to change group membership. More specific, a change leader's primary goal should be to influence enough supporters to create a referent group, which would further influence the rest of the organization via social identification mechanisms. Among others, social

identification leads to support for institutions that embody the identity and reinforces the antecedents of identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

1.2.2 The Importance of Social Identity Theory in Sensemaking

Within the specific organizational change context, socialization and identity can be conceptualized as the formation of relational identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), which integrates person and role-based identities and different levels of self. Individual, interpersonal, and collective levels of self represent a polyphony of epistemological paradigms and perspectives through which individuals make sense of their environment (Epitropaki et al., 2016). Identities are constructed through interaction (Weick, 1995); therefore, subjectively perceived relevant figures play an important role in fostering sensemaking and adapting self-schemas for individuals (Epitropaki et al., 2016). Self-schemas are defined as active, working structures and specific knowledge about the self within a context-specific domain (Epitropaki et al., 2016), which inevitably changes as that specific context changes.

In turbulent and ambiguous circumstances, people have a natural tendency to seek proximity and comfort with other people, typically an authority figure (e.g., Mayseless, 2010). This sense-seeking behavior is similar to the parent–child relationship, where parents obtain the role of attachment figures responsible for alleviating stress and anxiety ambiguity causes (e.g., Berzonsky, 2011). The aforementioned suggests that change leaders serve a similar role as attachment figures during the emotionally intensive process of sensemaking during organizational change. Thus, change recipients turn to change leaders for additional resources during sensemaking and reinventing their self-schemas in an effort to gain a better understanding of newly desired behaviors and how their relational identity has changed.

Affective processes of sensemaking have been long studied and linked to organizational change (Bandura, 1989), and emotional reactions could be perceived as an input to an outcome of the sensemaking process (Steigenberger, 2015). Perceiving threats triggers emotional reactions. When these emotions are not processed and adequately dealt with, they can derail the sensemaking process (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Identity formation is a narrative and depends on personal perceptions combined with external perceptions, implying that the identity-forming cycle of enaction-selection-retention is constant just like change is (Ibarra & Burbulescu, 2010). It is influenced with social expectations (Ashforth et al., 2007), which inevitably place additional emotional strains, where individuals with lower group positions experience higher levels of pressure to adapt their identity (Thoits, 1991).

1.2.3 Adult Attachment Formation During Social Identification Triggered by Sensegiving

Bowlby's (1969, 1982) attachment theory addresses early life experiences in developing functional attachment relationships with at least one functioning parent and how they impact relationships in adulthood. Proximity-seeking is a natural response to threat perception and the

survival instinct (Popper & Mayseless, 2007), and depending on how certain threats are perceived, individuals experience different emotional stress levels and seek out different levels of proximity (Mayseless, 2010). Interestingly, attachment to parental figures is inherently flawed because parents do not satisfy infants' every affective requirement in an effort to build their self-sufficiency (Popper & Mayseless, 2007).

As a result of this flawed relationships, certain affective needs remain unmet and a desire for an ideal attachment figure is created, which in turn sets the foundation for an individual's attachment style (Coen, 2008). Parents as attachment figures and ultimate influencers affect how individuals confront identity-constructing dilemmas (Berzonsky, 2011), which also impacts the way a leader–follower relationship will be constructed (Yip et al., 2017). Similar to the parent–child relationship, intensive communication and daily interactions develop the leader–follower relationship (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010). As interdependency increases during organizational change, interpersonal attraction develops, making an individual be perceived as a more valuable resource (Ashforth & Sluss, 2007).

Seeking proximity in times of distress is a natural reaction (Mawson, 2005) because the calming effect of being close to attachment figures stimulates dopamine and reduces negative emotions and anxiety that panic or uncertainty cause (Coan, 2008). Individuals seek relatedness in their interpersonal relationships; therefore, leaders perceived as attachment figures can become idealized, depending on the combination of attachment styles (Davidovitz et al, 2007). For example, leaders' avoidant attachment style leads to different issues in interactions regardless of the recipients' attachment style, and the leader's secure attachment style opens up space for a broad relationship-building cycle, regardless of recipients' attachment style (Davidovitz et al., 2007; Yip et al., 2017). In general, anxiously attached individuals tend to be engaged in fewer functions and have lower needs for affiliation and support, which interferes with everyday relationships at work (Richards & Schatt, 2011).

A stronger attachment to an individual suggests higher susceptibleness towards accepting novel information. Such intense attachments can occur when an individual is responsive to a person's needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence (La Guardia et al. 2000; Ryan & Deci 2000). During organizational change, an individual's need for affection closely resembles the parent–child relationship and determines to what extent the change leader as an attachment figure will be able to influence the change recipients' attitudes (Grady & Grady III, 2013). Therefore, change leaders, as attachment figures, should leverage attachment and use ideological messages during the sensegiving process to address the change recipients' psychological needs and influence their identification process.

Susceptibleness towards an attachment figure's attitudes and behaviors encourages identity modifications (Fransen et al. 2015; Harms, 2011) and identification with the narrative is one of the most efficient methods of persuasion (de Graaf et al. 2014), along with symbols and metaphors (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995; Kolarm 2012; Pondy et al., 1983). Aforementioned

theoretical perspectives converge through literature examples, forming a narrative which justifies their interconnectedness. I use this theoretically enriched narrative as the foundation for further development of the narrative-based conceptual model in the following chapter.

1.3 Towards a Narrative-Based Conceptual Model of Change Leaders' Influential Behavior

Organizational change is an emotionally intensive human experience. As change unfolds within the organization, it shifts the organization's existing ideology and working environment, and both individuals and groups have to adapt to this change. I aim to address the ultimate dilemma: Is it the chicken or the egg in terms of organizational change? In other words, are change leaders' efforts a reaction to the external pressure, or a proactive internal effort to affect the external environment? Regardless of the scenario, I argue that a change leader inevitably has to experience personally this change as a recipient, before influencing others. In fact, my argument postulates that the change leader and the change recipient will experience the full emotional range of organizational change with primary and secondary appraisal as Liu & Perrewé (2005) suggested, but at different stages and with different intensities.

In terms of individual change, both the change leader and future change recipients go through a similar process of sensemaking. On the other hand, in terms of group change, change leaders are responsible for the sensegiving process. This linked process consists of envisioning, signaling, revisioning, and energizing (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). I argue that individual sensemaking of organizational change acts as a prerequisite for meaningful group sensemaking of organizational change, where the role of being a change leader is fluid and changes as change adoption increases.

Sensemaking is an emotional process, triggered by some form disrupting the status quo or stable flow of activities within a certain environment, which in turn arouses the autonomic nervous system (Weick, 1995). Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) highlighted that shared meaning and emotion facilitate a helpful and adaptive sensemaking process. Furthermore, Maitlis et al. (2013) argued that emotions signal the need and provide the energy that fuels sensemaking, and that emotions make sensemaking a more solitary or interpersonal process. Therefore, I build on Liu and Perrewé's (2005) emotional and cognitive model by following the idea of reciprocity and sequential nature of sensegiving and sensemaking mechanics (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), while expanding my propositions with interdisciplinary insights on influential behavior.

1.3.1 Leader as an Individual Making Sense of Organizational Change

As organizational change unfolds, ideological settings change either partially or completely and an individual can belong to a prochange group or a member of the change-resistant group. An ideology represents a highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system that seeks to offer a unique answer to the problems of social action and is an initial stage in developing a

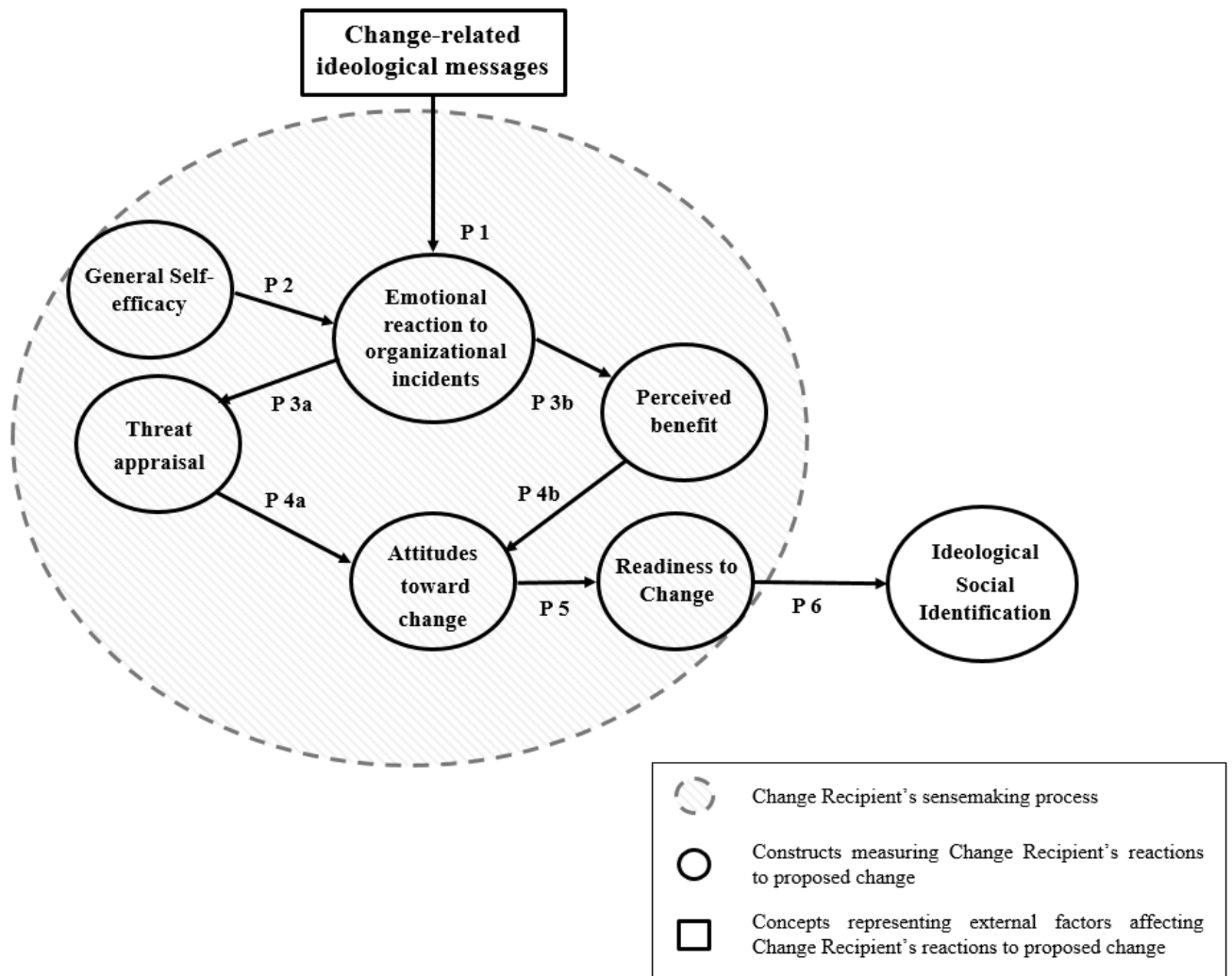
system of cultural meanings (Swidler, 1986). This aligns ideas, beliefs, and a commonly shared sense of purpose within a certain organization or social structure (e.g., Chin et al., 2021). A new ideological setting may imply a different set of values, which in turn impact how the new organizational culture will shape expected behaviors through cultural norms. Gehman et al. (2013) depicted this “values work” mechanism in four separate phases, from resolving cases of concern to explaining how future behavioral uncertainties will be resolved. Such embodying aims to make the recipients’ sensemaking process as easy as possible, minimizing room for errors.

As a result, change recipients are exposed to certain types of ideological messages, which may or may not necessarily inspire change adoption (e.g., Grant & Hofmann, 2012). In the case of the initial change leader’s sensemaking, the sensegiving process results from ideological changes and respective cultural norms. The initial change recipient becomes the future change leader, by interpreting and making sense from contextual cues, instead of receiving direct ideological messages from the respective change leader, as is the case in Figure 3. This perspective furthermore highlights the importance of change leadership in organizational change, despite the fairly recent emergence of followership literature directions. A conceptual overview of a change leader’s sensemaking (change internalization) is displayed in Figure 2.

Ideologies require formalization. New ideological settings alter the existing organizational ideology. Therefore, behavioral expectations alter accordingly in order to complement the ongoing change. Among others, the sensemaking process relies on manifestations of organizational culture to convey such behavioral expectations. Additionally, the change leader will be exposed to ideological messages aimed at conveying the importance of change and arising benefits for the organization. To make sense of contextual changes and how to behave in the newly formed environment, the change leader seeks cues on behavioral expectations from available information sources, considering forms and norms of organizational culture.

Proposition 1: The initial change recipient (future change leader) relies on social learning in making sense of organizational change without being exposed to the sensegiving process from a respective change leader. Specifically, the change leader’s own sensemaking process is essential for the construction of reality which will be the foundation for future sensegiving during organizational change.

Figure 2: Conceptual Overview of a Change Leader's Sensemaking Mechanics (Change Internalization)



Source: Own work

1.3.1.1 The Influence of Change Recipient's Self-Efficacy on Emotional Reactions to Organizational Change

Individual differences affect change perception. In terms of predicting individuals' readiness to change, general self-efficacy is mentioned as a relevant dimension (e.g., Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy is defined as belief in one's capability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to address newly formed demands within a specific context (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Depending on how an individual perceives their own capabilities to deal with the aforementioned demands affects how emotionally intensive a certain environmental event will be interpreted. The lower an individual's self-efficacy is, the more stress and anxiety will be experienced during change (Bandura, 1989). Individuals' identities change through different experiences, particularly negative ones believed to build resilience (Weick, 1988), where individuals with higher self-efficacy expose themselves to more challenging situations.

More challenging situations create a stronger stimulus, which triggers the need to revise existing self-schemes (Epitropaki et al., 2016) and internalize identity-related modifications (Weick, 2020). More specifically, individuals feel confident about themselves when enacting particular roles, and feel that they are "real" or authentic when their person identities are verified, where self-efficacy is associated more closely with the behavioral enactment of said identities (Stets and Burke, 2000). Chen et al. (2001) constructed a trait-like general self-efficacy scale covering Bandura's original conceptualization primarily focusing on the level of magnitude (how difficult an assignment will be) and strength (the certainty of successfully dealing with the task). This perspective is particularly interesting given how certain studies highlight gender and age irrelevance when predicting individual readiness to change (e.g., Kunze et al., 2013). Interestingly, lower levels of self-efficacy are associated with lower levels of self-esteem, which is connected with the intention to leave a certain social group or perceive oneself as not being good enough to be a group member (Ether & Deaux, 1994).

Proposition 2: Individuals with lower general self-efficacy are more likely than individuals with higher general self-efficacy to perceive organizational change as a negative experience.

1.3.1.2 The Influence of Emotional Reactions on the Threat-Benefit Perception of Organizational Change

Organizational change is an emotional experience that triggers the revised conception of the organization (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). This subjective sensemaking involves interpretation in conjunction with action—not just "pure" cognitive interpretation processes (Gioia et al., 1994). Internalizing available information triggers emotional reactions and is an essential part of sensemaking, before conscious cognition (Bandura, 1995). New information absorption depends on existing knowledge, creating both intended and unintended meanings (Balogun, 2005), which further highlights the importance of persuasive narratives in organizational change. Emotions influence how events are perceived (Maitlis et al., 2013), and Weick (1988) highlighted how intensive emotions affect the sensemaking process during turbulent and crisis situations. Zell (2003) mentioned how organizational change resembled the Kubler–Ross five-stage model of grief, implying change recipients' strong negative emotional reactions. One way to measure emotional reactions to organizational incidents is to link them to organizational goals or expectations, suggesting potential experienced reactions in a positive or negative sentiment (Fiebig & Kramer, 1998).

Proposition 3: Individuals who perceive organizational incidents as a negative experience are more likely to perceive lower benefits and higher threat levels of proposed change than individuals who perceive organizational incidents as a positive experience.

1.3.1.3 The Formation of Customer-Alike Attitudes on Organizational Change Benefits in Change Recipients

Emotional reactions precede cognitive reactions, and therefore affect how a certain occurrence will be perceived (e.g., Hay et al., 2021; Liu & Perrewé, 2005). This antecedent relationship suggests that expectations are a key element in creating meaning (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). In terms of sensemaking, there is a significant ambivalence between belief and doubt, effectively impacting how benefits and threats are perceived (Weick, 2020). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that utilizing hope is a powerful predictor of organizational change success (Steigenberger, 2015). An idealized future promises greater benefits than risks from threats, motivating individuals to pursue action. Drzensky et al. (2012) reported that benefit perception played an important role in predicting readiness to change, and some studies suggest that creating mutual benefits (the win–win perception of organizational change) is essential in ensuring successful implementation. McMillen and Fisher (1998) observed the perceived benefits through eight subscales, including lifestyle changes, material gain, community closeness, and increases in self-efficacy.

On the other hand, humans have a natural tendency to resist change and perceive it as threat (e.g., Oreg, 2003). These threats may not necessarily be perceived as physical danger, but as a threat to an individual's identity or self-esteem (e.g., Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Cognitively interpreting these emotional reactions results in certain regularities of an individual's interpretation of the environment (Wicker, 1969), forming attitudes towards change, which cover a wide array of positive and negative statements about change (Vakola et al., 2013). Depending on how these attitudes are formed, an individual will more, or less, likely embrace change.

Proposition 4: Employees who perceive higher threat and lower benefit from change are more likely to form positive attitudes towards change than those employees who perceive lower threat and higher benefit.

1.3.1.4 The Influence of Change Recipients' Attitudes on Readiness to Change and Social Identification

Attitudes about change affect individual readiness to change. More precisely, readiness to change measures to what extent individuals feel ready to accept the new reality resulting from change (Repovš, Drnovšek & Kaše, 2019). Organizational change requires support from various organizational characteristics (Eby et al., 2000) as well as depends on established trust levels between employees and change leaders (Vakola, 2014), where trust and attachment to the change leader facilitate the sensemaking process (Harms, 2011). Similarly, the other side of the change adoption spectrum involves individual resistance to change resulting from cognitive rigidity, lack of psychological resilience, reluctance to give up old habits, etc. (Oreg, 2003). Overall, individual readiness to change affects employees' self-reactiveness and self-

reflectiveness, which are essential parts of change agency and the subjective interpretation of change (Bandura, 2001), effectively impacting the sensemaking process.

Proposition 5: Employees who form positive attitudes towards change are more likely to perceive higher levels of individual readiness to change than those employees who form negative attitudes towards change.

Ideologies depend on like-minded people to succeed. Different levels of individual readiness to change among employees inevitably cause workplace logic conflicts, causing irreconcilability, ambiguity, and contradictions among employees both individually and interpersonally (Malhotra, 2021). As different perceptions of threats and benefits affect attitudes towards organizational change, different narratives affect individuals' sensemaking process and the general outcomes. Dealing with threats also can be perceived as an identity-forming event connected with self-efficacy, crucial for personal development and a part of the cognitive process individuals experience during sensemaking (Bandura, 1989). Identity-relevant experiences are events that threaten or enhance an identity the individual values highly (Thoits, 1991). Further, an essential part in negotiating social identity in changing contexts is responding to different threats (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). During self-categorization and social identity renegotiation within the newly formed contextual surrounding, an individual adapts self-schemas in an effort to create a new self-story (Epistropaki et al., 2016).

Contextual changes alter an organizational ideology and individuals tend to self-place themselves as members or opponents of ideological streams (Malka & Lelkes, 2010). Devine (2015) proposed a measure of ideological social identity as a combination of Mael and Tetrick's (1992) identification with a psychological group or organization (IDPG) scale and ideological self-placement approaches, suggesting that the presence of opposing ideological streams can be observed outside national politics. An individual's willingness to identify ideologically as a member of the mainstream or an opposing group effectively marks the end of the sensemaking process and determines whether an individual will embrace or reject change stemming from this newly formed meaning. This process is constant, subjective, and ever-changing because as the environment changes it consequently triggers organizational change.

Proposition 6: Individuals with higher readiness to change are more likely than those with lower readiness to change to ideologically identify with the prochange social group within the organization.

1.3.2 The Change Leader as Organizational Change Sensegiver for Change Recipients

Change leaders are the initial change recipients. Following the change leader's initial sensemaking process, organizational change requires mobilizing change recipients to sustain change momentum and ensure change adoption. On the other hand, sustaining change adoption is also about understanding how multiple resistance manifestations affect change adoption

(Alcadipani et al., 2018) and how to address cynicism fueling resistance to change (VanVuuren & Elving, 2008). In its essence, change leadership is more about future-making than it is about making sense of the past (Boje, 2012), where the change leader introduces revised interpretative schemes or systems of meaning through the sensegiving process (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Systems of meaning include using symbols as emotionally triggering segments of visual learning (Bandura, 2001), which energizes myths and other forms of organizational culture aimed at improving an individual's understanding of shared experiences towards a shared meaning (Boyce, 1996).

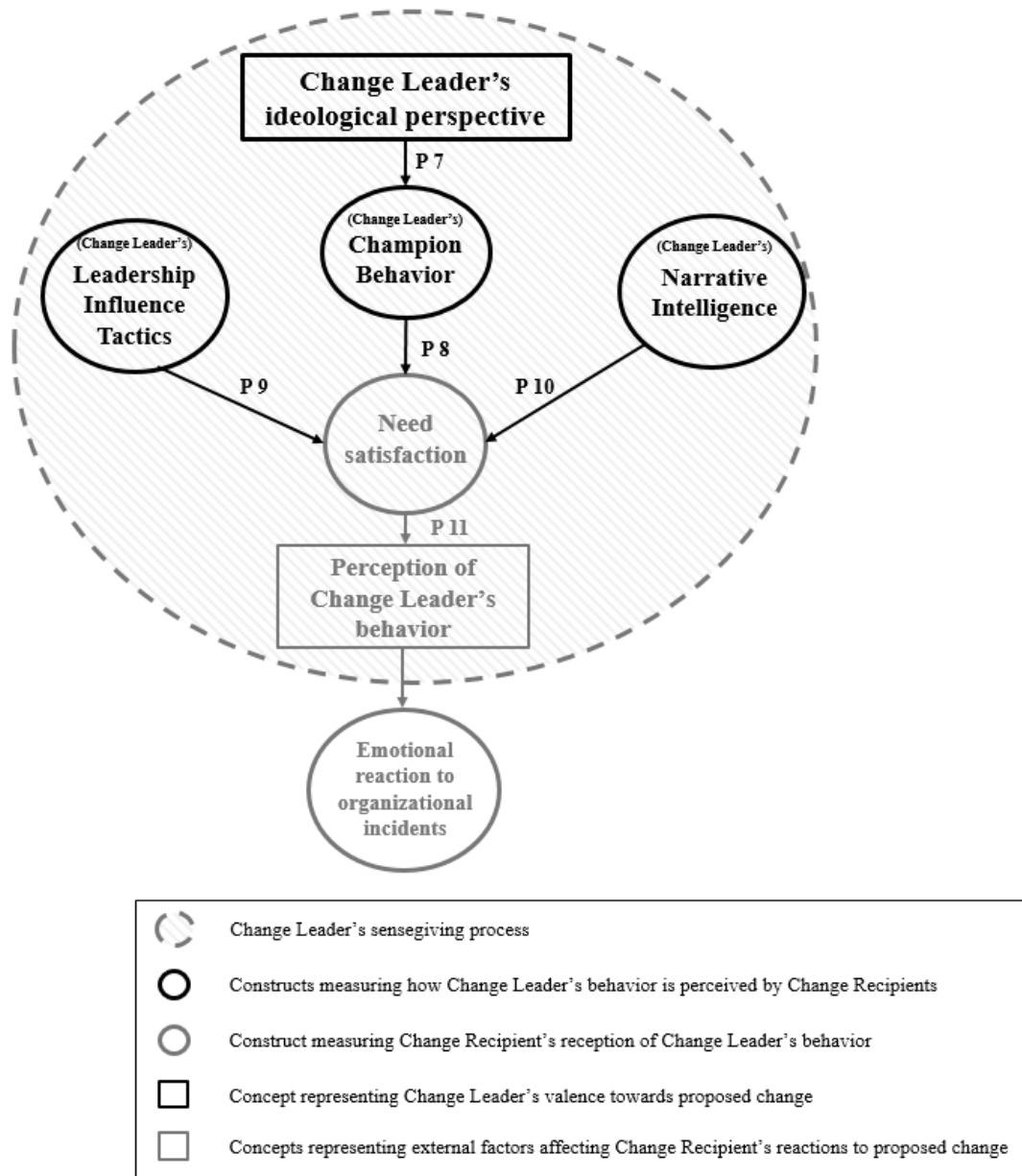
These symbolic actions include storytelling (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) as well as emphasize the importance of maintaining a follower focus aimed at effectively managing the symbolic interactionism involved in the sensemaking process (Epitropaki et al., 2016). Closely connected to the interpretation of available cultural forms and norms, contextual framing gains force from cultural resonance (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014), while on the other, hand narratives draw on the power of sequencing resulting from managerial efforts to structure, compress, and plot a change process into a storyline (Logemann et al., 2019).

The aforementioned perspectives suggest that the sensegiving process involves a skilled creation of a narrative that aims to influence change recipients' sensemaking process of the newly changed ideology through utilizing emotionally engaging symbols. In fact, the emotionally intensive nature of the change sensemaking experience opens up additional space for meaningful leadership interventions. Similar emotionally intensive episodes in life concerned with sensemaking and sensegiving rely on figures of authority to convey meaning to sense seekers. For example, teacher-student relationship, mentor-mentee relationship, parent-child relationship etc. A common denominator among these examples is the person conveying knowledge of the ambiguous to the information recipient, experiencing change and anxiety caused by ambiguity. These people tend to be perceived as attachment figures, as they provide emotional comfort and help alleviate negatively valenced emotional states caused by ambiguity.

This information asymmetry between the sensegiver and the sensemaker creates a power imbalance that can be leveraged to achieve the desired goal. Change leaders as attachment figures have great influence on change recipients, depending on the strength of the attachment established. Unlike egoistic leadership perspectives, influence based on adult attachment can be perceived as prosocial, with the well-being of change recipients being an important priority for the change leader. We argue that a change leader represents the embodiment of change-initiated ideological alignments within the organization and initiates the sensegiving process after making sense of the ongoing organizational change (similar to Nishii and Paluch [2018]).

Proposition 7: Change leaders who socially identify with the changed organizational ideology are more likely to exhibit higher levels of champion behavior than change leaders who do not socially identify with the changed organizational ideology.

Figure 3: Conceptual Overview of a Change Leader's Sensegiving Mechanics (Change Externalization)



Source: Own work

1.3.2.1 The Influence of Champion Behavior on Change Leader's Perception as an Attachment Figure

Successful change leaders demonstrate champion behavior. They are expected to inspire and mobilize change adoption across different organizational levels by utilizing available resources and intensively advocating for change in a meaningful way. Championing also involves participating in the goal-formation process, explaining, teaching, and motivating others to become involved, as well as dealing with opposing forces that encourage change resistance (Howell et al., 1990). Although, champions informally emerge in an organization (e.g., Roberts

& Fusfeld, 1988; Škerlavaj et al., 2016) and decisively contribute with enthusiasm and advocating for change, formally assigned change leaders can also manifest champion behavior. Interestingly, team-level innovation was weaker when high levels of supportive supervision were present, suggesting that champion behavior needs to be balanced in application (Krapež Trošt, Škerlavaj, & Anzengruber, 2016).

When leading by example, a change leader can easily demonstrate desirable behavior to change recipients and encourage replication of such behavior. On the other hand, champion behavior enables an attachment figure to manifest resilience against uncertainty, which helps alleviate anxiety in change recipients. This behavior initiates the exchange between a change leader and a change recipient, and as mentioned earlier, different attachment styles in both actors affect how this exchange will be perceived.

Champion behavior includes: (a) creating a clear vision that emphasizes benefits, (b) displaying enthusiasm about change, (c) demonstrating commitment towards utilizing change, and (d) involving others in supporting change adoption (Howell et al., 2005). Acting as a true champion relates perceived competence to perceived personality traits (Zhang, 2020) and positions the change leader as an attachment figure, providing comfort and anxiety relief in times of turbulence or distress that change caused (Mawson, 2005).

Proposition 8: Change leaders who exhibit higher levels of champion behavior are more likely to encourage higher levels of psychological need satisfaction among change recipients than change leaders who exhibit lower levels of champion behavior.

1.3.2.2 The Influence of Leadership Influence Tactics on Change Leader's Perception as an Attachment Figure

Successful change leaders utilize different influence tactics. Although change leaders represent the embodiment of proposed change, successful influential efforts require adaptability. Sensegiving is a process of influencing contextual interpretations during the sensemaking process (Luscher & Lewis, 2008), thus naturally the change leader's effort plays an important role in forming attitudes about change and fostering social identification. Yukl and Tracey (1992) conceptualized leadership influence tactics as attempts to influence the target person to comply with an unspecified request, to carry out a task, to provide assistance, to support or implement a proposed change, or to do a personal favor for the agent, essentially providing an extension of demonstrated champion behavior.

A prosocial approach to change leadership focuses on change recipients' wellbeing during the emotionally turbulent experience of change. Champion behavior represents a prosocial effort to improve or provide a benefit for the organization, which is why typical dark triadic behaviors are not relevant for our understanding of the underlying mechanism of influence (e.g., lying, distortion of evidence, bribes, blackmail).

In other words, change leaders as attachment figures rely on prosocial methods in conveying meaning to change recipients stress with the ambiguity and identity reconfiguration that comes with change. Being mindful of different attachment styles in change recipients, change leaders aware of their own attachment style have a broader perspective of applicable influence approaches. Such influential attempts can affect how an individual perceives the change leader, or forms attachment with a perceived and sometimes idealized human brand (Thomson, 2006). Leadership influence tactics among others include (a) rational persuasion, (b) inspirational appeal, (c) apprising, (d) ingratiation, and (e) consultation, where negative influential behaviors are excluded (Yukl et al., 2008).

Proposition 9: Change leaders who exhibit higher levels of leadership influence tactics are more likely to encourage higher levels of psychological need satisfaction among change recipients than change leaders who exhibit lower levels of leadership influence tactics.

1.3.2.3 The Influence of Narrative Intelligence on Change Leader's Perception as an Attachment Figure

Successful change leaders are storytellers. Regardless of utilized leadership influence tactics, change leaders intensively communicate with change recipients. Communications drive connections, and connections drive results (VanVuuren & Elving, 2008), while at the same time, connections may cause emotional fatigue when underutilized. Emotions play an essential role in triggering, shaping, and concluding sensemaking (Maitlis et al., 2013), where the use of language in creating compelling narratives allows creating organizational realities that will be subjected to interpretation (Chreim, 2002). In developmental psychology, a narrative is considered as a way in which humans make sense of the world (Bruner, 1991) and narrative intelligence is the ability to tell the story of an individual's life and the surrounding environment (e.g., Randall, 1999).

Change leaders as attachment figures, help change recipients make sense of ongoing ambiguity of change. Although used as an illustration, storytelling can be recognized in all aforementioned dyadic relationships, from teacher-student to parent-child relationships. Once again reverting back to different attachment styles in both actors, the use of storytelling could help bridge the gaps between different attachment style fits. A less emotionally engaging narrative could help anxious attachment style actors receive important information which encourages sensemaking, simultaneously reducing contact between actors, thus reducing attachment anxiety.

Linking the emotional power of narratives with sensemaking, Bers (2002) argued that identity-forming questions are answered by using different types of narratives: personal stories, popular tales, and cultural myths. The same can be applied to organizational realities as previously elaborated. Conceptualizing narrative intelligence, Pishghadam et al. (2011) proposed: (a) emplotment, (b) characterization, (c) narration, (d) generation, and (e) thematization, thus

suggesting that effective storytellers create emotionally engaging stories utilizing said skills. Change leaders' compelling narratives can engage change recipients through the mechanism of narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2000), which may help alleviate anxiety and negative emotions and as demonstrated in bibliotherapy (Betzalel & Shechtman, 2010).

Proposition 10: Change leaders who exhibit higher levels of narrative intelligence are more likely to encourage higher levels of psychological need satisfaction among change recipients than change leaders who exhibit lower levels of narrative intelligence.

1.3.2.4 Change Leader's Embodiment of Organizational Change as a Human Brand

Change recipients conclude organizational change. Although change leaders can be perceived as initial triggers of organizational change, the interdependency of the dyadic relationship of change agency remains the key unit of observation. Agency should be about shifting possibilities of change entailed in reconfiguring boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices in enacting a causal structure (Barad, 2007), where change leaders suggest intervention points. This interdependency also affects identification during organizational change, where the change leaders' role tends to shift when a change recipient starts to demonstrate champion behaviors and advocate for change (e.g., Epitropaki et al., 2016).

Leaders' calming effect during organizational change and change recipients' natural inclination to seek proximity in times of distress (Maitlis et al., 2013; Mawson, 2005) forms a dyadic attachment. Regardless of how different attachment styles form more or less productive and effective relationships with secure attachment styles being the ideal (Davidovitz et al., 2009), satisfying psychological needs positively relates to attachment (e.g., LaGuardia et al., 2000). Attachment styles depend on early life experiences that are inherently flawed (Bowlby, 1982; Davidovitz et al., 2002), making the principle of satisfying psychological needs helpful in understanding why change leaders tend to become idealized or antagonized as role models (Popper & Amit, 2009).

This also clarifies how human brands influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Thomson, 2006). Deci and Ryan (1985) measured autonomy, relatedness, and competence as fundamental psychological needs that affect individuals' self-determination, i.e., their motivation behind pursuing certain actions. More precisely, (a) autonomy concerns people's feelings of volition, agency, and initiative (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985); (b) relatedness concerns feeling connected with and cared for by another (e.g., Ryan, 1993); and (c) competence concerns people's feelings of curiosity, challenge, and efficacy (e.g., Deci, 1975).

In other words, actors perceive relationships with relatively higher autonomy, relatedness and competence as relationships of higher quality. These relationships encourage individuals to dedicate more effort towards maintain them, and investing personal resources in order to grow

them further. Attachment style fits among actors play an important role in assessing the quality of the relationship and how autonomy, relatedness and competence will be perceived and valued, where stronger attachment style fits positively attachment strength compared to less productive fits. This exchange is also depicted in the idea of “human brands” (Thomson, 2006) who leverage perceived attachment strength in order to influence attitudes. The difference is in the fact that change leaders rely on interactions with change recipients to build impressions, while human brands rely on idealization without interacting directly with their audience.

With this concept in mind, I conclude that sensible change leaders form dyadic relationships where they respond in ways that promote a change recipient’s experienced satisfaction of these basic psychological needs, thus alleviating some of the anxiety and stress organizational change causes.

Proposition 11: Change recipients who exhibit higher levels of psychological need satisfaction are more likely to positively relate to a change leader’s behavior and experience positive emotional reactions to organizational incidents than change recipients who exhibit lower levels of psychological need satisfaction.

I argue that the only difference between a change leader’s and change recipient’s sensemaking process is in the sensegiving phase. Thus, I conclude that the change recipient’s sensemaking process, which starts with emotional reactions to organizational change, remains identical to the previously elaborated process for the initial change leader. This perspective is furthermore explored in the following discussion subsection.

1.4 Discussion

These interdisciplinary findings suggest important theoretical implications for future organizational change research, in the hope of broadening and advancing the discussion with new insights. First, I propose that organizational change is an ongoing and dynamic state with tangible triggers but intangible endings that effectively manifest as minor or major changes in organizational ideology. Regardless of scale, organizational change naturally creates a polarized perspective, where either benefit perception or threat perception prevails within a certain group of employees. This results in the formation of prochange group and change resistant group that advocate for their ideological settings through carefully drafted narratives.

Depending on how these groups are perceived within the organization, change recipients will decide which social group represents their perception of benefits and threats stemming from proposed change. By introducing this perspective on organizational change, I open additional space for interdisciplinary insights related to ideological settings, ideological messages, and overall ideological identification. The change leader’s role is to help give sense to change recipients trying to make sense of ongoing change and transition their workplace identity.

Through this intensive communication, change leader and change recipients exchange thoughts and activities, which depending on their attachment styles developed in early childhood, creates a different attachment style fit between them. The stronger this attachment is, the higher the perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence in the relationship, making change recipients more susceptible to change leader's influence. The stronger the change leader's influence, the higher the probability of change recipients adjusting their ideological social identity to prochange.

Second, I build on the idea of the storytelling organization (e.g., Boje, 2012) by enriching this narrative with ideas from internal and external consumer behavior and identity adaptation (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2003; Carlson & Donovan, 2013; Thomson, 2006). I argue that change leaders become human brands as they embody organizational change, and exert influence over change recipients based on how strong their attachment in the relationship is. As change leaders' approval grows, their human brand perception grows into a larger organizational change narrative, both as the narrator responsible for sensegiving and as a characters who experiences sensemaking in newly formed organizational realities.

This suggests a change leader's role follows the sensegiving and sensemaking cycles in the organization (e.g., Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), is fluid, and changes as organizational change unfolds among change recipients. The general outcome of narratively intelligent change leadership is the facilitation of social identification through emotional engagement, where change recipients can make sense of organizational change with minimum negative emotions. While my proposed narrative-based conceptual model suggests a prosocial orientation of change leadership where change leaders aim to create a positive change without coercion and destructive leadership influence tactics, there are potentially negative aspects worth mentioning.

Change leaders scoring high on narrative intelligence should be able to craft compelling stories that encourage identity transportation, which could in turn, affect how individuals adapt their self-schemas and identity. Overusing this skill could encourage change adoption at the expense of change recipients' personal identity and induce negative emotions that effectively affect their wellbeing. Change leaders scoring high on champion behavior could be pursuing change adoption by any means necessary, closely resembling machiavellianistic behavior. While it is easy to exclude destructive leadership influence tactics such as blackmail, coercion, pressure and legitimizing, overutilization of desired leadership influence tactics can also turn destructive.

For example, prioritizing change adoption above change recipients' wellbeing, could turn a positive influence tactic of "inspirational appeal" into a manipulative tactic. And observing how religious cults operate, illustrates how these narratively intelligent change leaders excessively utilize prosocial influence tactics disregarding their followers' wellbeing. Expanding this insight with the phenomenon of limiting rationality through the corrective mechanism of social

norms within a cultist group, depicts a specifically abusive context although portrayed through socially desirable behaviors instead of being directly destructive to followers.

Interestingly, similar behaviors have been identified in corporate cults, such as Enron, as mentioned in the chapter focused on interdisciplinary perspectives. This furthermore highlights the importance of incorporating ethical guidelines into organizational change programs, as excessive utilization of desired aspects of change leadership, storytelling and persuasive communication can easily result in undesired outcomes.

When it comes to empirical studying of narrative effectiveness during organizational change, qualitative methodology immediately comes to mind. By interviewing change leaders or change recipients, specific elements of stories could be identified as important or emerging archetypes addressing roles and challenges during thematic analysis of organizational change. Mixing these perspectives could be particularly interesting and informing, as testing conceptual relationships and enriching them with qualitative insights in various mixed method research designs could open up novel theoretical insights. I start this approach with a quantitative study in the next chapter and follow-up with a qualitative study in a separate chapter.

2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: QUANTITATIVE STUDY²

Although change agents influence change adoption, the underlying mechanism of change leaders' persuasive communication remains relatively vague. Unlike much research prioritising organizational change's sensemaking process (Liu & Perrewé, 2005; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010), this study aims to contribute by theorising about the sensegiving process. Social science is a self-fulfilling prophecy (Eden, 1984) as it teaches future generations about empirically tested positivist perspectives which promise practical improvements. In an effort to deconstruct this influential mechanism, I enrich previous research from Sparr (2018) with affective perspectives of the dyadic relationship between the change leader and change recipients through the lens of change leader's sensegiving. More precisely, I propose a moderated mediation model based on social cognitive theory.

I furthermore enrich it with insights from social media influencer's persuasive communication and its origins in adult attachment theory. This chapter is organised into four sections. First, I review current literature perspectives and build a theoretical foundation, focusing on how narratives and social cognitive theory affect change agency. Second, I test hypothesized relationship between change leader's Champion Behaviour and change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction and Readiness to Change, based on the quantitative data collected by surveying 164 international change recipients across industries during organizational change. Additionally, I hypothesise on how utilisation of Leadership Influence Tactics and change leaders' Narrative Intelligence affects the primary relationship. Third, I test stated hypotheses with a moderated mediation model using PROCESS macro in SPSS. Finally, I conclude this chapter with theoretical and practical contribution with future research perspectives.

2.1 The Role of Change Leader's Champion Behavior during Change Recipients' Sensemaking Process

Humans are prone to homeostasis and fallible by nature. Most organizational change efforts fail despite organizations addressing common challenges and utilising different influential methodologies through change agents (e.g., Battilana & Casciaro, 2009). A rising stream of literature studying organizational change failure emphasises its inevitability (e.g. three perspectives from Schwarz et al., 2021 and an identity-forming perspective from Hay et al., 2021). Similarly, Heracleous and Bartunek (2021) observed organizational change failure through a multilevel lens and concluded that certain short-term failures were necessary for major organizational change to be successful. These perspectives emphasising organizational learning suggest that organizational change should be observed as discourse in which arguments

² An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the EURAM conference, 15th-17th June 2022, Switzerland. A revised version of this chapter is currently in review for publication with the Journal of Change Management (JCM) titled: "Leader Idea Championing for Follower Readiness to Change or Not? A Moderated Mediation Perspective" (2022)

are accepted or refuted among the targeted population during the construction of meaning in social contexts (the *sensemaking* process; Bandura, 1989).

Change leaders play a crucial role here, as their influential efforts alter the perception of proposed arguments. Thus, I observe the change leader-change recipient dyadic relationship through the lens of social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), more precisely as an endless loop of reciprocal and sequential processes of influencing the way others interpret a certain context (*sensegiving*) and sensemaking (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). I operationalize the change leader, as a position with the highest knowledge of proposed change. Innovation management literature suggests that change leaders should lead by example and demonstrate Champion Behaviour (Baer, 2012; Howell & Higgins, 1990).

Other literature perspectives suggest relying on power and Leadership Influence Tactics to drive change (Battilana & Casciaro, 2021; Furst & Cable, 2008). Unlike Champion Behaviour, Leadership Influence Tactics focus on perception and utilize different communication and power perspectives in an effort to influence how certain organizational incidents and consequent behaviors are perceived by change recipients (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl et al., 1993). Similarly, I observe the change recipient as a position with lower knowledge of proposed change, susceptible to subjective and affective interpretation of organizational narratives in perceiving threats and benefits from proposed change.

Organizational change equals human endeavour. A change leader's narratives effectively influence how organizational realities could be interpreted during the sensemaking process, driven by change leaders' efforts aimed to influence and mobilise networks of change recipients (Battilana et al., 2009; Battilana et al., 2010; Škerlavaj et al., 2016). By building a coalition of affectively engaged supporters, a change leader is able to utilize political behavior as a catalyst (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013), instead of relying solely on utilizing proposed change management methodologies which focus on communication (e.g., Applebaum et al., 2012). Through the proposed hypothesized moderated mediation model, I observe how change leaders' sensegiving efforts are perceived during change recipients' sensemaking.

The curious case of social media influencers emphasizes the importance of attachment formation when asserting influence (Thomson, 2006), as these *human brands* increase their influence by encouraging stronger attachment formation through enhancement of psychological need satisfaction (LaGuardia et al., 1992). These parallels complement aforementioned research on how affective cooptation and stronger ties are related to change resistance (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013), addressing change recipients' previously made sense of ongoing change and influencing homeostatic change resistance (Holt et al., 2007; Oreg, 2003; Oreg, 2006). Change causes ambiguity, and uncertainty causes strong emotional reactions such as stress, fear and anxiety, triggering the human tendency to discover answers and thus relieve stress and anxiety (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010).

When such answers are not easily available or do not exist, individuals tend to create pluralistic ignorance, or their own sense of reality, which sometimes is completely opposite to reality (Weick, 1988). Seeking meaning and understanding one's own identity through group membership (Tajfel, 1982) heavily relies on others' friendly faces, which offer comfort and security (Mawson, 2005), rather than turning to facts and rationale. Seeking social proximity in times of distress is a natural reaction (Mawson, 2005) because the calming effect closeness to attachment figures stimulates dopamine, thus reducing negative emotions associated with intensive ambiguity (Coan, 2008) and effectively enhancing sensemaking.

I hypothesise that storytelling shapes organizational change perception. In general, leading change can be characterised as an extensive communication effort to give sense to change through anticipating and addressing conflicts arising from recipients' diverging needs and perceptions (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Mento et al., 2002). This sensegiving process is essentially defined as the act of telling stories, more precisely as influencing the way others interpret a certain context and understand desirable behavioural patterns (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). A meta-analysis of the literature covering organizational change storytelling identified five key themes: *sensemaking*, communicating, change and learning, power and identity and identification (Rhodes & Brown, 2005).

These common themes highlight core problems during organizational change, but also the direction of change leaders' communication and this is where change leaders' Narrative Intelligence plays an essential role. Generally speaking, a narrative is a way in which humans make sense of the world (Bruner, 1991), and Narrative Intelligence is the ability to tell the story of an individual's life and the surrounding environment (Randall, 1999). Narrative Intelligence, among other types of intelligence, includes the ability to employ, characterise and narrate (Pishghadam et al., 2011), suggesting that effective storytellers create emotionally engaging stories by being more narratively intelligent. Emotionally engaging stories trigger dual-hemisphere information processing in the brain (Aldama, 2015; Taggart & Robey, 1981), effectively enhancing sensemaking.

Social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) represents the overarching perspective of hypothesized relationships, which connects the sensegiving and sensemaking mechanisms between change leaders and change recipients during organizational change. Change leaders demonstrate and instruct desired social cues and help with socialization in new ideological settings of the organization through sensegiving, while change recipients interpret these cues and construct their own understanding of organizational ideology.

Change recipients can accept these instructions or resist them, adjusting their personal identities through ideological social identification. Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory addresses these dynamics and open up space for a meaningful discussion in terms of understanding how underlying mechanisms of change leaders' influencing efforts unfold.

Drawing parallels from similar relationships where knowledge of the future is shared between

actors, more knowledgeable actors comfort actors experiencing anxiety. This behavior can be perceived in teacher-student relationships but also in mentor-mentee; coach-athlete; and parent-child relationships. Adult attachment formation (Bowlby, 1969) broadly outlines how influential mechanisms may unfold, as different early childhood experiences define an individual's attachment style. Outside romantic relationships, different adult attachment styles determine how actors exchange information and collaborate thus creating different fitting or misfitting combinations of styles.

Furthermore exploring this dynamic, I turn to self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985), where an individual's perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence in a relationship, determines the satisfaction with the relationships, i.e., strength of attachment to the attachment figure and the willingness to contribute to the relationship. This mechanism is mentioned in social media influencers' persuasive communication efforts, and serves as inspiration for my further methodological inquiry into the subject and hypothesized relationships.

Additionally, I argue that a change leader's prosocial approach to change leadership relies on adult attachment formation and the strength of this attachment. In this contextual setting, a change leader is an attachment figure, investing effort in alleviating change recipients' emotional distress caused by organizational change. Because attachment formation relies on interactions between actors, I argue that change leaders have the power to influence these interactions with a prosocial approach.

More specifically, change leaders can utilize champion behavior, different leadership influence tactics and narrative intelligence to alter existing narratives and address change recipients' concerns more adequately, enhancing change recipients' perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence. In this hypothesized relationships, the stronger the attachment between actors, the higher the readiness to change in change recipients.

2.2 The Mediating Effect of Building Attachment with Change Recipients

Organizational change sensemaking is a personal experience. Change recipients usually perceive change initiatives as threats (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Ford et al., 2008) rather than as benefits, further emphasising how change leaders' efforts are crucial for successful change implementation. Innovation champions are people who are expected to inspire and mobilise change adoption across different organizational levels by utilising available resources and intensively advocating for change in a meaningful way (Škerlavaj et al., 2016). Unlike Leadership Influence Tactics which affect the perception of certain behaviors, Champion Behaviour directly demonstrates desired behavior by example, effectively manifesting persistence under adversity, getting the right people involved and advocating positive aspects of proposed change (Howell & Higgins, 1990).

The behavioural cues of leading by example from the change leader can be perceived as a form

of sensegiving (e.g., Sparr, 2018), signalling desired behavioural patterns to change recipients during the sensemaking processes. This in turn reduces ambiguity (Wood & Bandura, 1989) and builds trust (Vakola, 2013). These close interactions inevitably affect the strength of a relationships between change recipients and change leaders (Davidovitz et al., 2007). During organizational change, leaders often serve as attachment figures (Davidovitz et al., 2007), simultaneously offering cognitive and emotional support to change recipients. Change recipients seek comfort and security from authority figures (Richards & Schat, 2011) in hopes of alleviating negative emotions (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010) and accessing guidance regarding behavioural uncertainties.

In an effort to meaningfully contribute towards our understanding of change leader's influential efforts, I draw theoretical parallels with fairly novel and emerging research on social media influencers and how their influence is unpacked through the affectively oriented utilization of storytelling. This comfort- and approval-seeking mechanism is also seen with social media influencers who support novel ideas and are perceived as human brands, effectively embodying proposed novelty (Thomson, 2006). Furthermore, exploring this theoretical parallel, I highlight how social media influencers actively affect purchasing decisions and more importantly, their audiences' social identity formation (Reicher, 2004).

These human brands influence audiences by leveraging relationship idealisation (Thomson, 2006), which relies on strong attachment between the influencer and the target audience. Members of high-quality relationships are willing to adjust their attitudes based on attitudes of their attachment figure (Houran et al., 2005) because of highly perceived Psychological Need Satisfaction (LaGuardia et al., 1992).

Psychological Need Satisfaction reflects the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness as the core of individuals' motivation behind pursuing certain actions, such as change adoption (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Applying this psychological indicator of adult attachment to the context of organizational change adoption, I hypothesise that change leaders could build stronger attachment by utilizing a prosocial approach to change leadership. Demonstration of Champion Behaviour and addressing change recipients' emotional distress and satisfying their need for autonomy, relatedness and competence, determines how strong of an attachment will be formed between the change leader and the change recipient.

Change recipients seek relatedness in their interpersonal relationships; therefore, depending on the combination of attachment styles, leaders perceived as attachment figures can even become idealised (Davidovitz et al, 2007). Relationships in which Psychological Need Satisfaction is positively perceived are considered to be stronger than those where Psychological Need Satisfaction is negatively perceived (Ryan, 1993), suggesting that change leaders will be able to exert more influence in relationships where change leader and change recipients demonstrate stronger attachment. More specifically, change leaders who lead by example and demonstrate Champion Behaviour are more likely than those who do not to positively affect change

recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction, as I stated in Hypothesis 1:

Hypothesis 1: Change leader's demonstration of champion behaviour has a positive relationship with change recipients' psychological need satisfaction during organizational change.

Sensegiving reception depend on attachment strength. As organizational change unfolds, a change recipient's need for affection can, depending on context, closely resemble a parent–child relationship (Grady & Grady III, 2013). Different attachment styles result in different levels of leader–member exchange (LMX) quality (Schyns, 2015); however, in line with Gottfredson et al. (2020), I move away from this perspective.

Despite recent conversation on the validity of LMX as a measure, I conclude that securely attached individuals tend to be engaged in more functions and have higher affiliation and support needs than others (Richards & Schatt, 2011). Relatively strong attachments can occur when a change leader is responsive to change recipients' needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence (La Guardia et al. 2000; Ryan & Deci 2000) during the emotional experience of organizational change. In other words, change recipients self-determine how satisfied their psychological needs are, resulting in different attachment strength, depending on attachment style fitness between actors.

Change leaders' efforts to meet these psychological needs would imply that a change recipient (a) has enough space to autonomously decide what actions to take when dealing with change, (b) feels related to the change leader and the implementation team (i.e. has a sense of belonging) and (c) feels sufficiently competent to deal with change-related tasks. Weick (1988) mentioned the importance of self-efficacy regarding seeing oneself as capable of addressing change and minimising change resistance. Change recipients' perception of Psychological Need Satisfaction, determines the extent to which the change leader as an attachment figure can influence the change recipients' individual Readiness to Change; in other words, change recipients' susceptibility to attachment figures encourages identity modifications (Fransen et al. 2015; Harms, 2011).

Individual Readiness to Change is defined as the extent to which a person is mentally, psychologically and physically ready to accept the new organizational reality (Vakola, 2013). The aforementioned dimensions are subjectively perceived by change recipients, resulting in different interpretations of the benefits and threats of organizational change. This suggests that a change leader's focus should be identifying the gap between change recipients' expectations and proposed changes, which would in turn reduce negative emotions stemming from threat perception (Holt et al., 2007).

Therefore, I hypothesise that change recipients who perceive relatively high Psychological Need Satisfaction are more likely than those who perceive relatively low Psychological Need

Satisfaction to feel more ready to change, as stated in Hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 2: During organizational change, change recipients' psychological need satisfaction has a positive relationship with their readiness to change.

Strong attachment reduces resistance. Previous research on change recipients' Readiness to Change suggests that it can be affected by various factors, and I introduce Psychological Need Satisfaction as another one. A multilevel perspective includes both organizational and individual factors, such as job demands, employer and employee relationships, employee relations, organizational climate, employee skills, self, family, health and demographic specifics (Oreg et al., 2011).

Fairly recent research of individual level antecedents of change recipients' Readiness to Change suggest that psychological capital is the most crucial psychological resource during organizational change reflected through self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience and affecting individual performance (Luthans & Morgan, 2017).

Psychological capital can also mediate the organizational climate and employee performance relationships, but fairly well known antecedents of change recipients' Readiness to Change (Luthans et al., 2008). While I acknowledge these findings, I focus my attention to general self-efficacy when it comes to organizational change (Vakola, 2013), building upon the previously established argument concerned with adult attachment formation and different attachment styles.

General self-efficacy is defined as belief in one's capability to mobilise motivation, one's cognitive resources and one's ability to undertake the courses of action needed to address newly formed demands within a specific context (Wood & Bandura, 1989). The lower an individual's self-efficacy is, the more stress and anxiety the individual will encounter when confronted with new experiences (Bandura, 1989). This suggests that individuals with lower self-efficacy will inevitably endure more stress during change, and therefore require more attention from the change leader in terms of comfort. Depending on individual actors' attachment style fit, this relationship results in stronger or weaker attachment formation due to perceived psychological need satisfaction.

Instead of focusing on psychological capital, my ambition is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge with novel ideas on the dyadic relationship dynamics between the change leader and change recipient. Therefore, my focus is on the sensegiving process delivered by the change leader, conditionally received by the change recipient depending on their perception of threats and benefits from the change, which is affected by the strength of attachment between the actors.

While I acknowledge the importance of general self-efficacy, I perceive it as an interesting

covariate in our conceptual model and observe Psychological Need Satisfaction as an alternative antecedent of change recipients' Readiness to Change.

Aforementioned overview of emerging research focusing on social media influencers' mechanism of influence, can be operationalized through perception of adult attachment and strongly suggests introducing Psychological Need Satisfaction as the model's mediator. It enables approximation of the level of idealization between actors, but also develops the archetype of knowledge transfer in ambiguous contextual settings. More precisely, it connects the relationship between the change leader as attachment figure and change recipients, similar to the relationship between teachers and students, mentors and mentees, coaches and athletes and parents and children.

I thus hypothesise that a change leader's Champion Behaviour will contribute to supporting change recipients' behavioural autonomy. A change leader's Champion Behaviour would also help the change leader ensure change recipients have the chance to display their competence while remaining responsive and supportive in alleviating negative emotions related to organizational change. These benefits would, in turn, result in change recipients' stronger attachment to the change leader as attachment figure, thus enhancing change recipients' susceptibility to change leader's influence. This dynamic would result in change recipients' Readiness to Change as I stated in Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between change leaders' demonstration of championship and change recipients' readiness to change during organizational change is partially mediated by change recipients' psychological need satisfaction.

2.3 The Moderating Effect of Utilizing Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence on Change Recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction

Innovation creates change on a dyadic level. Change processes inevitably bring interdependency into organizations, and numerous interpretations of newly formed circumstances further drive ambiguity and equivocality (Lewis & Luscher, 2009). In other words, organizations are faced with the continuous pressure to adapt to the rapidly changing environment, which in turn adds complexity, reduces clarity and increases organizational change failure.

The adoption of novelty thus relies on faces that contribute to making novelty more familiar and tangible (Mawson, 2005), consequently affecting the change leader as well as change recipients. I acknowledge that this perspective may contain some Schumpeterian ingredients (e.g., Gilbert, 2006) and potentially some hegemonic ambiguity of big concepts as mentioned by Alvesson and Blom (2022).

Considering their suggestions to alleviate this effect underlying our sensegiving perspective of

change leadership, I turn to self-criticality and turn my attention to potentially negative utilization of Narrative Intelligence and Leadership Influence Tactics. More specifically, I address disadvantages of unpacked concepts, how they are applied and how they are used in this study. Leading change is sensegiving (Sparr, 2018), a process of influencing contextual interpretations of change recipients during the sensemaking process (Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

Aforementioned conceptual relationship emphasized the importance of attachment strength in the relationship between the change leader and change recipients. Thus, I enrich it with additional theoretical perspectives suggesting change leader's utilization of Narrative Intelligence and Leadership Influence Tactics as moderators in the conceptual model affecting change recipients' Readiness to Change.

As individuals perceive threats and benefits from organizational change differently, they socially identify with either the pro-change group or the change-resistant group (Batillana & Casciaro, 2013; Devine, 2015). This political aspect of organizational change is particularly interesting when observing persuasive communication, especially since change leaders' ideological identification plays an important role in their perceived political affiliation and power of influence (Scammel, 2015). Generally, Leadership Influence Tactics are used to attempt to influence targets to comply with unspecified requests, carry out tasks, provide assistance or support or implement proposed changes (Yukl & Tracey, 1993).

Unlike Champion Behaviour, a change leader may utilize Leadership Influence Tactics to alter the perceived narrative and enhance the impression of demonstrating strong Champion Behaviour, without actually investing effort in it. I argue that change leader oriented towards pro-social behaviour refrains from utilising negative or destructive influence tactics, including coercion, lying and blackmail, among others.

Instead, I suggest that a change leader can enhance how Champion Behaviour is perceived by utilising Leadership Influence Tactics such as rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, apprising, ingratiation and consultation (Yukl et al., 2008). As a result of this enhancement, change recipients will perceive a relatively high level of Psychological Need Satisfaction, which results in a high level of change recipients' Readiness to Change as I stated in Hypothesis 4:

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between change leader's demonstration of idea championship and change recipients' psychological need satisfaction during organizational change is enhanced by change leaders' utilization of leadership influence tactics.

Stories are emotionally engaging. Communication drive connections, and connections drive results (Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008); however, underutilisation of connections may cause emotional fatigue. Emotions play an essential role in triggering, shaping and achieving sensemaking (Maitlis et al., 2013), and the use of language in creating compelling narratives

allows the creation of organizational realities that will be subjected to interpretation (Chreim, 2002). Change leader's Narrative Intelligence reflects the utilization of employment, characterisation, narration, generation and thematisation in communication of key messages (Pishghadam et al., 2011), suggesting key elements of compelling narratives.

Interestingly, a change leaders' compelling narratives can engage change recipients through the mechanism of narrative transportation. Individuals experiencing narrative transportation are completely immersed in the narrative and vividly visualise what characters in the story are experiencing (Green & Brock, 2000). This emotionally engaging mechanism makes the story more persuasive through dual-hemisphere information processing (e.g., Taggart & Robey, 1981) and may help alleviate anxiety and negative emotions, as demonstrated by the use of bibliotherapy (Betzael & Shechtman, 2010).

Applying aforementioned knowledge to the context of organizational change, a change leader with high Narrative Intelligence will be able to create a compelling story about the changing environment and the change recipients. Change leader's emotionally engaging stories combined with the optimally utilized Leadership Influence Tactics, should therefore enhance the sensegiving process by enhancing the effect of Psychological Need Satisfaction on change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction. In this context, a change leader's influencing efforts could be perceived as the act of clarifying change dynamics and emphasising the benefits arising from such activities.

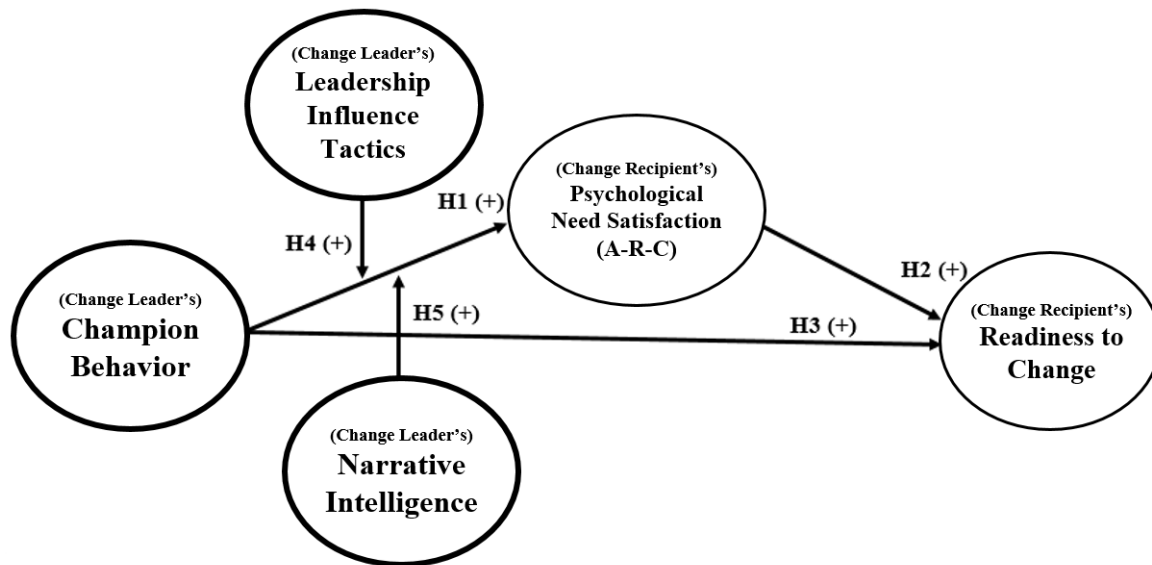
Perceiving benefits from change instead of its threats encourages change recipients to socially identify with the pro-change group, thus alleviating behavioural uncertainties that arise from intensive ambiguity of organizational change. Such dynamics influence how a certain change is perceived, and ongoing organizational polarity towards such a change process heavily influences this perception (Keyser et al., 2019).

Metaphorically speaking, Leadership Influence Tactics represent an infrastructure for the key message being delivered, and, in this metaphor, a narrative represents an emotionally engaging vehicle. I therefore hypothesise that change leaders enhance how change recipients perceive Champion Behaviour and Psychological Need Satisfaction by utilizing Narrative Intelligence, as stated in Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between change leader's demonstration of championship and change recipients' psychological need satisfaction during organizational change is enhanced by change leader's utilization of narrative intelligence.

The overall conceptual model is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4: A moderated mediation model of the effect that change leader's demonstrated champion behavior has on change recipients' individual readiness to change



Source: Own work

2.4 Methods

2.4.1 Sample and Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted with change implementation teams that were actively working on implementing change projects that influenced their working environments. The majority of these projects were technically intensive (e.g. implementation of a new software that changed a certain process), whereas others were not (e.g. new HR processes). My focus was on the dyadic relationship between change leaders and change recipients exposed to change leadership behaviour. An average of five change recipients assessed each change leader during an observed organizational change project. I have reached out to over 100 change leaders with a proven track record of successfully implementing transformation projects in large corporations as well as progressive tech SMEs.

Despite their initial interest, the final international research sample of the study included a total of 37 change leaders from 17 organizations across 12 industries. Each change leader was leading an individual change project during our data collection. Nine change projects were nondigital (e.g. new HR processes, cultural integration after a merger), and I received a total of 164 responses from change recipients. Data collection started during the peak period of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and continued until November 2021, effectively limiting my reach and response rates.

Change recipients were core team members and team managers, closely working with change leaders, who were predominantly senior middle managers and executive directors. The nature of their work can easily be described as intellectual work, predominantly focused on interpersonal skills and technical expertise. During this study they were working from home due to mandatory lockdowns across the world, and we assume that individual and cultural differences were mitigated through their seniority and multinational organizational culture influences. A relative simplification of such unprecedented complexities, opened up some space for generalization and drove us to conclusions. The surveyed change recipients were predominantly females (55%), with an average tenure of 7 years within the company. Their average age was 37 years, and they were predominantly operational level managers.

Selected change recipients completed online surveys using Qualtrics, and I split the cross-sectional data collection into three waves. First, respondents assessed their change leader's Champion Behaviour and their own self-efficacy when the change leaders behaved in certain ways. Second, about a week later, respondents assessed their change leaders' influence tactics and their own Psychological Need Satisfaction when the change leaders behaved in certain ways. Finally, about 2 weeks later, respondents assessed their change leaders' Narrative Intelligence and their personal Readiness to Change when the change leaders behaved in certain ways. I also acknowledge the hierarchical nature of this dataset, as change recipients' perceptions are nested within change leaders in different organizations. Unfortunately, following methodological guidelines suggested by Kozlowski and Klein (2000) this sample size was not sufficient for multilevel analysis due to aforementioned restrictions.

2.4.2 Measures

The measures in this study consisted of survey questionnaires, filled out by change recipients, assessing change leaders' actions and the recipients' personal responses distributed via online data collection platform Qualtrics. Considering the common method variance risk, I applied suggested prevention methods (Podsakoff et al., 2003) such as the following: clarifying the study's purpose, splitting data collection waves into three different time points, linking personal affect with subject-matter behaviour, ensuring respondent anonymity and using different endpoint scales. The presence of common method variance has been analysed using Harman's factor analysis.

2.4.2.1 Independent Variable: Change Leader's demonstrated Champion Behaviour

Change recipients completed the Champion Behaviour scale developed by Howell et al. (2005; $\alpha = .84$), which asked respondents to rate their perception of change leaders' behaviour on the observed change project. This measure contained 15 items covering three distinct dimensions of Champion Behaviour in advocating innovation. Respondents were asked to rate their perception from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). One example item is as follows: "My change leader shows optimism about the success of the proposed change."

2.4.2.2 Change Leader's utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics

The second measure of change leaders' behaviour covered respondents' perceptions of utilised leadership tactics and was developed by Yukl et al. (2008; $\alpha = .80$). This measure contained 20 items covering pro-social influence tactics. Influence tactics such as exchange, legitimating, pressure, coalition and coercion were excluded. Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions from 1 (*I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me*) to 5 (*He/she uses this tactic very often with me*). Following is an example item: "My change leader talks about ideals and values when proposing a new activity or change."

2.4.2.3 Change Leader's utilization of Narrative Intelligence

The final measure of change leaders' behaviour was focused on respondents' perceptions of change leaders' applied Narrative Intelligence and was developed by Pishghadam et al. (2011; $\alpha = .75$). It contained 20 items covering different dimensions of compelling narratives, such as characterisation and generation. Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). An example item is as follows: "My change leader is good at using rhetoric moves to sustain the interest of stakeholders (e.g. mentions a detail and elaborates on it gradually by revealing pieces of information bit-by-bit)."

2.4.2.4 Change Recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction

Change recipients were also asked to assess their personal perceptions of their satisfaction with team interaction regarding autonomy, competence and relatedness. This measure developed by LaGuardia et al. (2000; $\alpha = .77$) contained nine items that covered respective psychological needs as initially suggested by Deci and Ryan (2000). Respondents were asked to rate their personal perceptions from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), on items such as the following: "I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion."

2.4.2.5 Dependent Variable: Change Recipient's Individual Readiness to Organizational Change

The change recipients assessed their individual readiness to embrace change using a measure developed by Vakola (2013; $\alpha = .74$). This six-item measure allowed individuals to express how ready they felt to embrace change, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This measure used items such as the following: "When changes occur in my company, I believe that I am ready to cope with them."

2.4.2.5 Theoretical and demographic control variables

As suggested by Aguinis (2016), I included a theoretical variable as a control in our model. Acknowledging previous research covering antecedents of organizational change acceptance (Soumyaja et al, 2015) and my overarching theoretical approach, I asked respondents to assess their general self-efficacy with a measure developed by Chen et al. (2001; $\alpha = .86$). This

measure contained seven items covering different dimensions closely relating to self-esteem, locus of control and neuroticism.

The change recipients were asked to rate their perception from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), on items such as the following: “When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.” Additionally, I decided to test whether demographic variables such as gender, age, tenure and hierarchical position within the organization significantly affected our dependent variable. None of these variables showed statistical significance, confirming that demographic variables do not affect individual readiness to organizational change (Kunze et al., 2013).

2.4.3 Analysis

Although this research design has initially been designed as a multilevel study, relatively low response rates and external deadlines have imposed several limitations to conduct such analyses. Collected sample size is relatively small compared to suggestions from Kozlowski and Klein (2000), however, because of respondent data nested in change leaders, I ran an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) analysis on the dataset using SPSS Version 26.

In order to introduce additional methodological rigor in terms of multilevel analyses and verify factor structure, I ran a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for all multidimensional constructs. Additionally, being mindful of methodological compromises that had to be made during the data collection phase, I tested for presence of common method variance (CMV) using the common latent factor (CLF) test. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and common latent factor analysis were carried out by using AMOS version 28

Acknowledging aforementioned limitations of the optimal multilevel analysis, I opted for an alternative analysis using Hayes’ PROCESS macro in SPSS Version 26, specifically testing the moderated mediation Model 9 (Hayes, 2017). To test my hypothesised model, I decided to utilise hierarchical multiple regression to identify direct and indirect effects as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). Prior to more advanced statistical analysis, I focused on ensuring that collected quantitative data meets Cohen and Cohen’s (1983) requirements, including distribution normality, multicollinearity and overall statistically significant relationships between measured constructs.

Hayes’ PROCESS model testing separately established the relationship between change leader’s Champion Behaviour as the independent variable and change recipients’ Readiness to Change as the dependent variable. Next, I introduced change recipients’ Psychological Need Satisfaction into the model as the mediator that should reduce the effect of the primary relationship as evidence of partial moderation (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Next, I established the relationship of change leader’s utilization of Leadership Influence

Tactics to change leader’s demonstrated Champion Behaviour and change recipients’ Psychological Need Satisfaction. Finally, the first phase of the testing was to establish the effect of the second moderator, Narrative Intelligence, on the relationship between Champion Behaviour and Psychological Need Satisfaction.

The second phase of moderated mediation testing in PROCESS included testing how the presence of change leader’s utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence as moderators enhanced or antagonised the previously established moderation effect of change recipients’ Psychological Need Satisfaction. A confidence interval of 95% was ensured by utilising the bootstrap method with a random sample of 5,000 observations taken from the original sample, using three values of observed moderators (-1 standard deviation [SD], mean and +1 SD). Finally, I visualised and interpreted the conditional indirect effect and concluded our hypotheses testing.

2.4.4 Results

Although my sample of 164 respondents accounted for only around 66% of the initially contacted convenient sample, data screening tests confirmed that collected quantitative data met the necessary assumptions for statistical analysis. I coded missing data using the series mean method, and administered three methods of outlier identification: Mahalanobis distance, Cook’s distance and Leverage observations. These methods resulted in the removal of a total of five cases from the dataset. As shown in Table 1 on the next page, I also tested normality, linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of observed variables

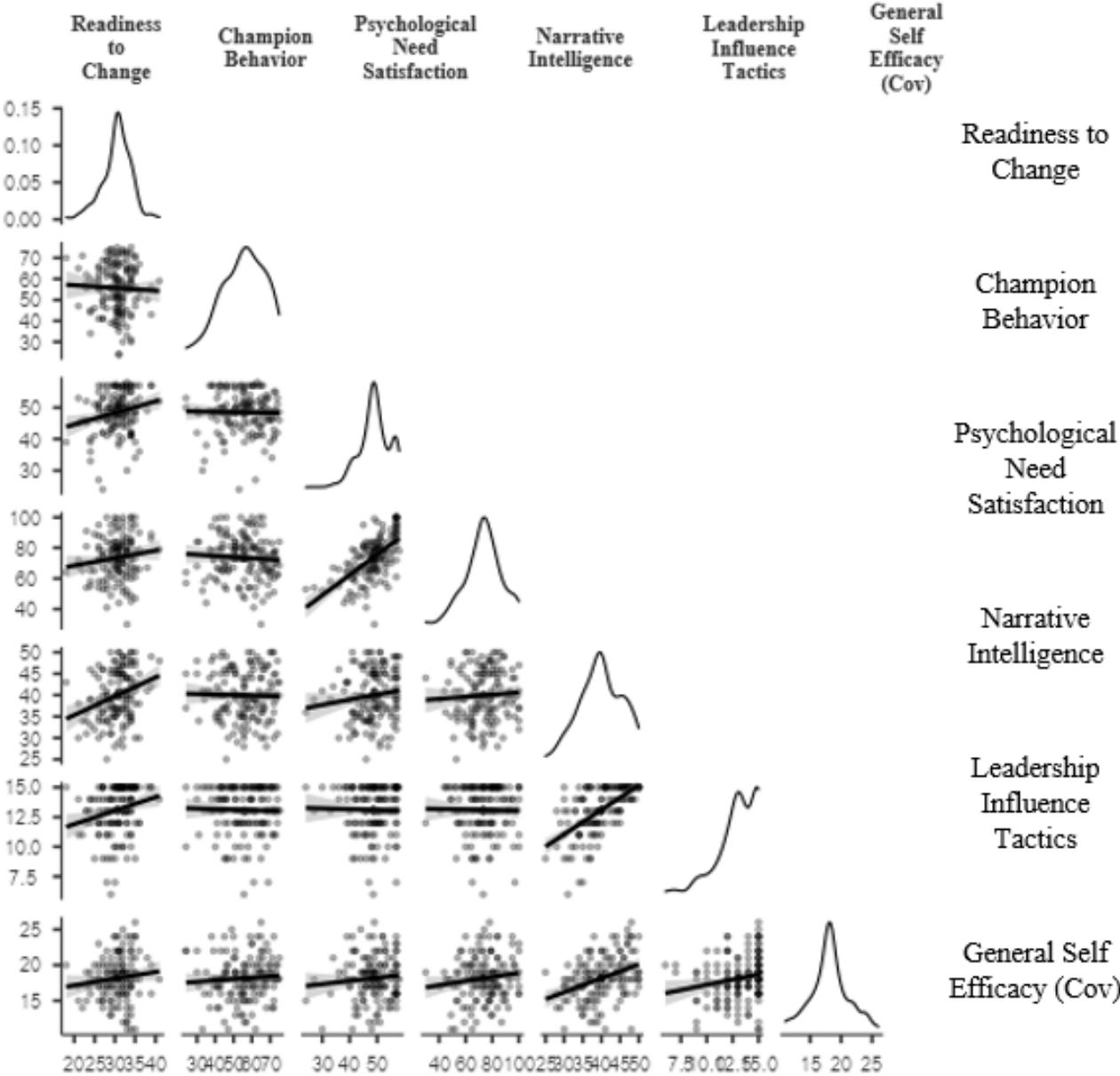
	N	Missing	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Readiness to Change	164	0	30.52	30.55	3.57	18.00	41.00	-0.47	1.13
Champion Behavior	164	0	55.59	55.83	11.55	24.00	75.00	-0.38	-0.41
Psychological Need Satisfaction	164	0	48.49	48.53	6.16	24.00	58.00	-0.95	1.81
Narrative Intelligence	164	0	73.62	73.19	13.43	30.00	100.00	-0.22	0.16
Leadership Influence Tactics	164	0	39.96	39.91	5.55	25.00	50.00	-0.12	-0.53
General Self-efficacy (Cov)	164	0	13.14	13.15	1.89	6.00	15.00	-1.17	1.43

Source: Author’s analysis of collected primary data

The data were normally distributed; both the skewness and kurtosis values were within the

appropriate range (± 2), and the visualised plots displayed in Figure 5 showcase linearity and homoscedasticity for all variables except the covariate, general self-efficacy.

Figure 5: Plot visualization of variable distribution



Source: Own visualization in SPSS

With preliminary descriptive statistics and variable distribution results confirming that the dataset is suitable for further analysis, I moved towards calculating intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC). Merlo et al. (2006) suggest that ICC values is less than 0.5 indicate poor reliability and the suitability of performing a multilevel analysis is less obvious. Similarly, values between 0.5 and 0.75 indicate moderate reliability and values between 0.75 and 0.9 indicate good reliability and values greater than 0.90 indicate excellent reliability (Merlo et al., 2006). Interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) overview for all utilized scales and measured constructs is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) Overview

Scales	k	Intraclass Correlation	Lower Bound (95% Confidence Interval)	Upper Bound (95% Confidence Interval)
Champion Behavior	15	.122	-.128	.330
Narrative Intelligence	9	.877	.845	.905
Leadership Influence Tactics	20	.931	.913	.946
General Self-efficacy	7	.843	.792	.883
Readiness to Change	6	.685	.598	.759
Psychological need Satisfaction	9	.795	.741	.842

Note. Findings are based on Average Measures.

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

a. The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.

b. Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.

c. This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

Source: Own work

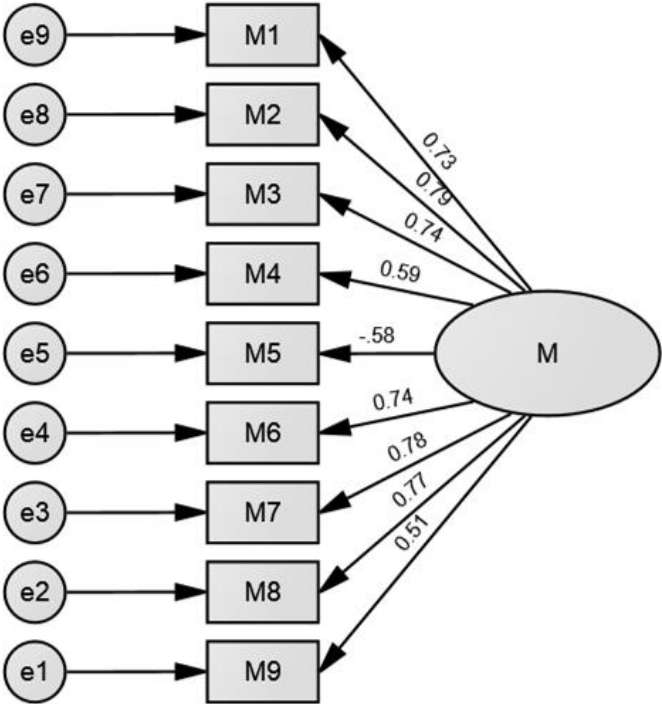
The values of ICC displayed in Table 2 suggest mediocre goodness of fit according to the criteria suggested by Merlo et al. (2006). The majority of ICC values are well over 0.75, suggesting relatively good data suitability for multilevel analysis. The dependent variable Readiness to Change indicates moderate data suitability, because the ICC (.685) is above 0.5 and under 0.75, while the mediator variable Psychological Need Satisfaction indicates relatively good data suitability with ICC (.795) just over the threshold of 0.75. The only exception is Champion Behavior as the predictor variable, which does not indicate data suitability for multilevel analysis, because the ICC (.122) is near 0 and under 0.5. In order to select the best methodological approach for additional data analysis, I conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

According to Hair et al. (2010), sample size (n=164) was suitable, as case numbers ranging from 100 to 400 are considered as appropriate for factor analysis. All the scales were exposed to principal component analysis while using SPSS 26. The inclusion criteria for items was above .30 (Hair et al., 2010). Simultaneously, I tested for common method variance to see if it had an effect on the dataset. Common Latent Factor technique introduces a new latent variable in such a way that all manifest variables are related to it, those paths are constrained to be equal and the variance of the common factor is constrained to be 1. This is similar to the Harman Single Factor technique where all manifest variables are related to a single factor; however, the research model's latent factors and their relationships are kept in this analysis.

The common variance is estimated as the square of the common factor of each path before standardization. The common heuristic is to set the threshold to 50% (Eichhorn, 2014). However, I used the criteria reported by Lowry and Gaskin, (2014) which is to compare the standardized regression weight from constraint and unconstraint model. The estimate without CLF is subtracted to estimate the effect of CLF and calculate the estimate difference. If the difference between them is larger than 0.2, then it is advised to retain the CLF construct in a model.

Example procedure for CFA and CMV analyses for the mediator Psychological Need Satisfaction is displayed below. Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to verify the factor structure of the Psychological Need Satisfaction scale, a three-dimensional construct. Items were loaded on its particular compound factor in the model. The item loading ranged from .50 to .77. All of the items significantly loaded onto their respective factors, as displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Factor Model for Psychological Need Satisfaction (M)



Source: Own visualization in AMOS

Chi-square goodness of fit test, which is known as the central measure of model fit in SEM analysis (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014), was found to be statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 75.63$; $df = 27$). The absolute fit measures including CMIN/Df and RMSEA index values were as follows: CMIN/Df = 2.80 (recommended < 5) and RMSEA = .11 (recommended < .10). Further the incremental fit measures including IFI, CFI and TLI were as follows: IFI = .92 (Recommended > .90); CFI = .92 (Recommended > .90) and TLI = .86 (Recommended > .90), as shown in

Table 3.

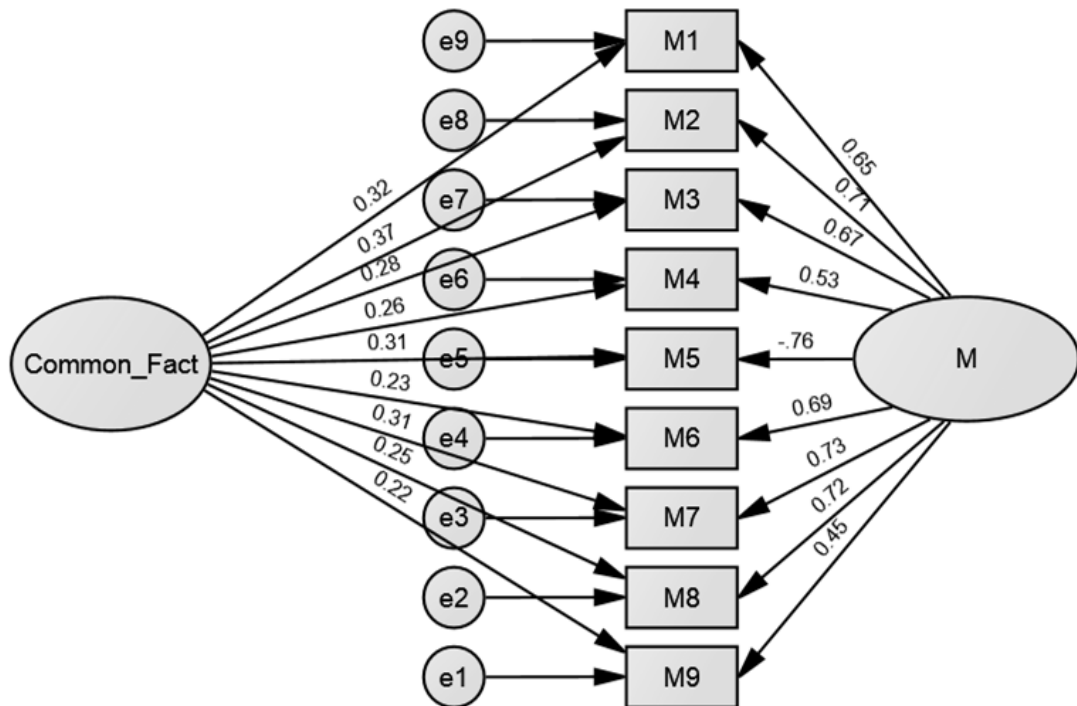
Table 3: CFA Model for Psychological Need Satisfaction (M)

Compound	Items “When I am with my change leader...”	Estimate	χ^2 (df)	IFI	TLI	CFI	CMIN/ Df	RMSEA
			75.63 (27)	0.92	0.86	0.92	2.80	0.11
Psychological Need Satisfaction (M)	(M9)*I feel controlled and pressured to be certain ways.	0.506						
	(M8) I feel a lot of closeness and a sense of belonging.	0.766						
	(M7) I feel very capable and effective.	0.778						
	(M6) *I often feel a lot of distance in our relationship.	0.742						
	(M5) I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion.	-0.577						
	(M4) *I often feel inadequate or incompetent.	0.59						
	(M3)I feel loved and cared about.	0.736						
	(M2) I feel like a competent person.	0.79						
	(M1) I feel free to be who I am.	0.726						

Source: Own work

Results displayed in Table 3 suggest that the nine-item compound variable showed almost good fit indices and acceptable construct validity, progressing my analysis towards common method variance. Using common latent factor method, indicated that the difference was not larger than 0.2 on all items of the scale after comparing the standardized regression weight from constraint and unconstraint model (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Factor Model of Psychological Need Satisfaction (M) with the Common Latent Factor



Source: Own visualization in AMOS

This suggests that there is no issue of common method bias in the scale, as presented in Table 4. Interestingly Harman’s single factor method indicated the presence of common method bias in this data, since the total variance extracted by one factor is 54% and it is greater than the recommended threshold of 50%. I have therefore decided to continue my analysis with common latent factor method, as the less disputed and methodologically more robust approach.

Table 4: Standardized Regression Weights for Psychological Need Satisfaction Scale

Items	Unconstraint	Constraint	Difference
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
(M9)*I feel controlled and pressured to be certain ways.	0.506	0.454	0.052
(M8) I feel a lot of closeness and a sense of belonging.	0.766	0.718	0.048
(M7) I feel very capable and effective.	0.778	0.734	0.044
(M6) *I often feel a lot of distance in our relationship.	0.742	0.691	0.051
(M5) I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion.	-0.577	-0.762	0.185
(M4) *I often feel inadequate or incompetent.	0.59	0.529	0.061
(M3)I feel loved and cared about.	0.736	0.667	0.069
(M2) I feel like a competent person.	0.79	0.709	0.081
(M1) I feel free to be who I am.	0.726	0.654	0.072

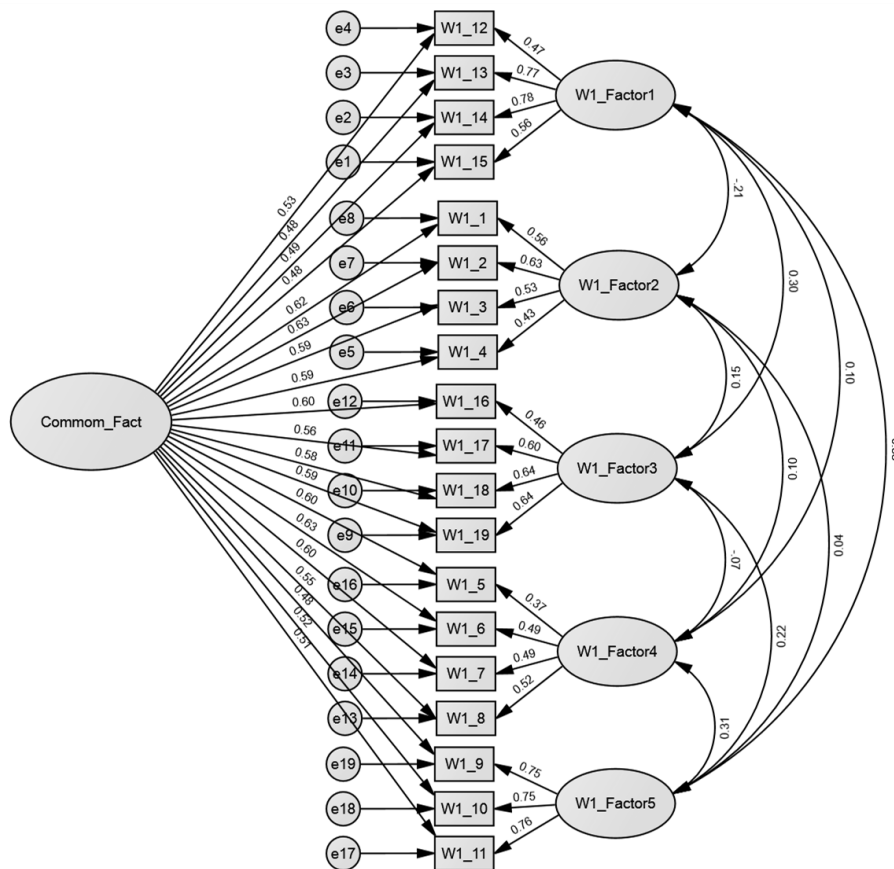
Source: Own work

The same procedure was repeated for remaining variables in the model: Champion Behavior, Leadership Influence Tactics, Narrative Intelligence, Readiness to Change and General Self-efficacy. Findings indicated that the majority of the indices showed good fit for the scales including Leadership Influence Tactics, Narrative Intelligence and Readiness to Change.

On the other hand, Champion Behavior and General Self-efficacy scales did not meet the required criteria for a good fit indices and acceptable construct validity. Overall results showed that there was no issue of common method bias in scales including Psychological Need Satisfaction, General Self-efficacy and Champion Behavior. However, some of the items in the scales including Leadership Influence Tactics, Narrative Intelligence and Readiness to Change indicated the presence of common method bias. Analysis for the hypothesized moderator variable Leadership Influence Tactics is displayed below.

Although Harman's one factor test indicated no problem with common method bias in this data ($44.95\% < 50\%$ as the recommended threshold), common latent factor method indicated otherwise. After comparing the standardized regression weight from the constraint and unconstraint model, the difference on one item of factor 1 (W1_12), and all items of factor 2, factor 3 and factor 4 were larger than 0.2, as displayed in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Factor Model of Leadership Influence Tactics (W1) with the Common Latent Factor



Source: Own visualization in AMOS

This suggests the presence of common method bias in the scale, interfering with interconstruct relationship effects. Additionally, results indicated that the correlation between latent factors decreased, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Standardized Regression Weights for Leadership Influence Tactics Scale

Factor	Items	Unconstraint Estimate	Constraint Estimate	Difference Estimate
Rational Persuasion	W1_15	0.746	0.556	0.19
	W1_14	0.918	0.78	0.138
	W1_13	0.901	0.775	0.126
	W1_12	0.707	0.466	0.241
Inspirational Appeal	W1_4	0.754	0.433	0.321
	W1_3	0.803	0.529	0.274
	W1_2	0.871	0.631	0.24
	W1_1	0.816	0.559	0.257
Appraising	W1_19	0.872	0.637	0.235
	W1_18	0.855	0.645	0.21
	W1_17	0.808	0.599	0.209
	W1_16	0.741	0.456	0.285
Ingratiation	W1_8	0.729	0.516	0.213
	W1_7	0.809	0.487	0.322
	W1_6	0.809	0.489	0.32
	W1_5	0.68	0.369	0.311
Consultation	W1_11	0.928	0.762	0.166
	W1_10	0.914	0.748	0.166
	W1_9	0.896	0.754	0.142

Source: Own work

Altogether, these results indicate potential problems in further interconstruct data analysis, therefore I have opted out of multilevel analyses and decided to continue with an alternative single level moderated mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro in SPSS. Table 6 displays variable correlations, confirming that there were no highly correlated variables that would jeopardise the multicollinearity assumption (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Change Leader's demonstration of Champion Behaviour appears to be the only variable with a fairly weak and negative correlation with individual Readiness to Change.

Table 6: Observed variable correlation factors

Variables	Readiness to Change	Champion Behavior	Psychological Need Satisfaction	Narrative Intelligence	Leadership Influence Tactics	General Self Efficacy (Cov)
Readiness to Change	—					
Champion Behavior	-0.04	—				
Psychological Need Satisfaction	0.21 **	-0.02	—			
Narrative Intelligence	0.13	-0.07	0.61 ***	—		
Leadership Influence Tactics	0.28 ***	-0.02	0.13	0.06	—	
General Self Efficacy (Cov)	0.21 **	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	0.60 ***	—

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

Source: Own work

Aforementioned PROCESS macro analysis, conducted in SPSS and presented in Table 7 on the next page, unveiled several interesting conclusions. The aforementioned phases of Hayes' PROCESS Model 9 were presented as separate models in the table, where the mediator was specified as the outcome variable in Model 1.

The Fisher statistics ($F = 14.80$) and associated probability value ($p < .01$) of Model 1 demonstrated that overall model was statistically significant, and the variables in Model 1 together explain 31% of variance ($R^2 = .31$). Only change leader's utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics significantly predicted change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction ($B = .23$; $p < .001$), whereas Narrative Intelligence and general self-efficacy were insignificant. In the second model, the outcome variable was change recipient's Readiness to Change.

The Fisher statistics ($F = 3.90$) and associated probability value ($p < .05$) in Model 2 demonstrated that overall model was significant, and the variables in the second model together explain 4% of variance ($R^2 = .04$). Psychological Need Satisfaction significantly predicted ($B = .12$; $p < .01$) change recipients' Readiness to Change in the second model; as explained, the variance of the second model was reduced compared to that of the first model.

These results confirm Hypotheses 1–3, suggesting that change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between change leader's demonstrated

Champion Behaviour and change recipients' Readiness to Change during organizational change.

Table 7: Moderated mediation effect overview (Hayes' PROCESS model 9)

Model 1: Outcome Mediator (M)					
	B	T	P	95% CI	
Variables				LL	UL
Constant	48.49**	120.29	.00	47.69	49.28
Champion Behavior	.002	.05	.95	-.07	.07
Leadership Influence Tactics	.23**	8.28	.00	.18	.29
Champion Behavior *Leadership Influence Tactics	-.002	-.96	.33	-.007	.002
Narrative Intelligence	.07	1.07	.28	-.06	.22
Champion Behavior *Narrative Intelligence	-.006	.006	.34	-.01	.006
Model 1 Summary	R	R²	F	p	
	.56	.31	14.80	.00	
Model 2: Outcome (Y)					
	B	T	P	95% CI	
Variables				LL	UL
Constant	24.58**	11.15	.00	20.23	28.93
Champion Behavior	-.01	-.50	.61	-.05	.03
Psychological Need Satisfaction	.12**	2.73	.007	.03	.21
Model 2 Summary	R	R²	F	p	
	.21	.04	3.90	.02	
Moderated Mediation					
Values of Narrative Intelligence	Values of Leadership Influence Tactics	Effect	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap ULCI	
-1 SD (-14.13)	-1 SD (-5.62)	.0089	-.0123	.0348	
M (0.0)	M (0.0)	.0003	-.0095	.0103	
+1 SD (14.13)	+1 SD (5.62)	-.0083	-.0297	.0096	

Note. B = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Level; p = probability value; R² = Percentage of variance explained by model; t = t distribution value; UL = Upper Level

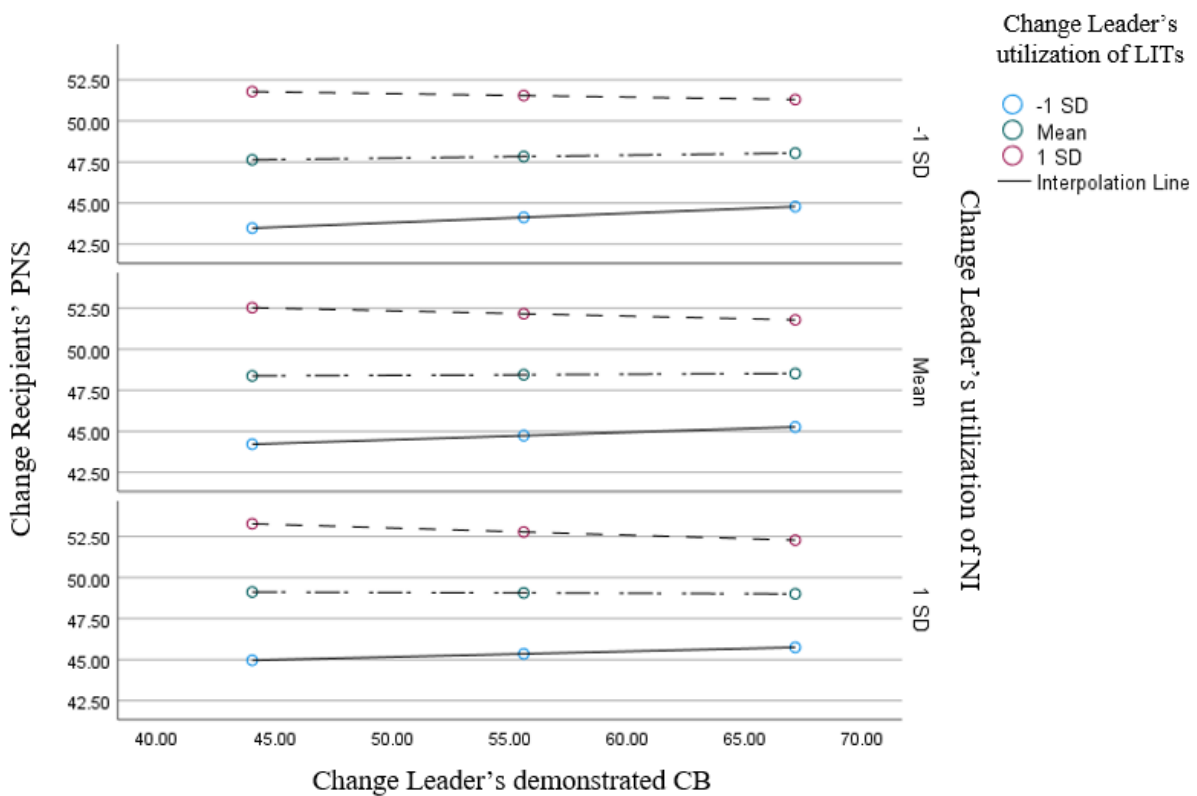
** p < .001

* p < .01

Source: Own work

Finally, neither Leadership Influence Tactics nor Narrative Intelligence moderated the aforementioned mediation process of Psychological Need Satisfaction, thus refuting Hypotheses 4 and 5, as displayed in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Visual representation of the Moderated Mediation (Hayes' PROCESS model 9)



Source: Own visualization in SPSS

The moderating effect is non-existent because all three levels (i.e. +1 SD, mean and -1 SD) have zero value within their respective bootstrap confidence intervals. Additionally, the introduction of demographic control variables and our covariate variable of general self-efficacy was statistically insignificant and decreased overall effects. Interestingly, compared with change leader's demonstrated Champion Behaviour, utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence reported a relatively stronger relationship with change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction.

This led us to introduce a complementary model with Narrative Intelligence as the moderator and Leadership Influence Tactics and Champion Behaviour as predictors. I also tested Hayes' PROCESS Model 7 with the established variable configuration, which returned similar results. The juxtaposition of the given variables conceptualised as predictors provided complementary evidence of change leader's demonstration of Champion Behaviour being a fairly ineffective predictor of change recipients' Readiness to Change ($R^2 = -0.0017$) compared to Leadership Influence Tactics ($R^2 = 0.0962$).

2.5 Discussion

Conducted analyses suggest several important findings. First, sample size is relatively insufficient for multilevel analysis and collected data shows partial reliability for multilevel

analysis of interconstruct relationships, ranging from complete unreliability to excellent reliability. Second, the predictor variable Champion Behavior and the covariate General Self-efficacy did not meet the required criteria for a good fit indices and acceptable construct validity. Finally, some of the items in the scales including Leadership Influence Tactics, Narrative Intelligence and Readiness to Change indicated the presence of common method bias. Altogether, these results indicate potential problems in further interconstruct data analysis, therefore I have opted out of multilevel analyses and decided to continue with an alternative single level moderated mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro in SPSS.

Conducted exploratory analysis of change leaders' sensegiving efforts resulted in interesting findings, some of which were less expected than others. Hypotheses 1 to 3 were confirmed, suggesting that change leaders' demonstration of Champion Behaviour positively affects change recipients' perception of Psychological Need Satisfaction, and that change recipients who perceive relatively higher Psychological Need Satisfaction feel more Readiness to Change. Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediates this relationship, suggesting that change recipients who perceive higher satisfaction of needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness feel stronger attachment to their change leader and in turn, feel more Readiness to Change.

This primary relationship within our mediated moderation model does not surprise, since the naturally present desire for autonomy implies the necessity to demonstrate competence and justify approved autonomy from the change leader, which in turn encourages a sense of relatedness in a high-quality relationship. When change leaders lead by example by demonstration of Champion Behaviour, they exert energy into demonstration of enthusiasm, persistence under uncertainty and overall inclusion of key people necessary for the success of the project. Change recipients respond to this sensation of "being in the same boat" and respond with higher Readiness to Change.

On the other hand, hypotheses 4 and 5 were not confirmed, respectively indicating that a change leaders' utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence does not moderate the primary relationship. In other words, change leaders' utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence did not significantly affect the primary relationship between a change leaders' demonstrated Champion Behaviour and change recipients' perception of Psychological Need Satisfaction. Additionally, aforementioned theoretical and demographic controls were also found to be insignificant and did not affect the primary or secondary relationship. I ran additional analyses in an effort to mitigate aforementioned sample restrictions, and these results were continuously confirmed despite being the opposite of my theorizing. However, additional results yielded unexpected results worth noting.

More specifically, change leaders' utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics proved to be a stronger predictor of change recipients' Readiness to Change with change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediating the relationship. In other words, change leaders' utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics altered change recipients' perception of

autonomy, competence and relatedness need during organizational change and resulted in stronger Readiness to Change, than in the case where change leaders demonstrated Champion Behaviour. Most utilized Leadership Influence Tactics in observed sample were rational persuasion (average score of 3.987 out of 5) and consulting (average score of 3.972 out of 5), which is particularly interesting since our sample change leaders were formally educated and experienced in change leadership, and highlighted the importance of understanding the emotional aspect of organizational change.

This finding challenges the dominant theoretical perspective of the role of Champion Behaviour when it comes to implementing innovation. Another interesting finding of these additional analyses was related to the utilization of Narrative Intelligence. Change leaders' utilization of Narrative Intelligence was most affecting change recipients' perception of Psychological Need Satisfaction and Readiness to Change when utilized without additional utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics, with an average score of 3.991 out of 5. In other words, change leaders who were creating narratives were most effective when stories were being told without the utilization of predominantly rational Leadership Influence Tactics. This is partially in line with our initially theorized relationship, suggesting that stories should be told in an emotionally engaging manner instead of simultaneously being tactical.

Concluding this discussion and acknowledging the selfcritical remedy for hegemony, ambiguity and scope limitations suggested by Alvesson and Blom (2022), I consider the case of the ideally persuasive change leader who utilizes aforementioned mechanism outside the acceptable zone of change recipients' discomfort and hinders their wellbeing. Change leaders scoring relatively high on dark triad personality traits reflecting sub-clinical psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism (e.g., Jones & Paulhus, 2014) may have a tendency to be overcompetitive and achieve the goal no matter the cost (Paleczek et al., 2018). Outside of obvious charismatic traits that enhance the persuasiveness of their communication, narcissistic personalities are particularly interesting in terms of adult attachment, as covert and overt narcissistic personalities tend to be idealized and progress their careers relatively faster than compared to individuals with lower scores (Rovelli & Curnis, 2021).

Additionally, leaders with relatively high scores on overt narcissism scales demonstrate relatively stable elements of secure attachment (Smolewska & Dion, 2005). They tend to exert stronger influence on followers through various self-enhancing mechanisms and become more desirable in positions of power and influence (Mayseless, 2010), partially addressed through change leader's Leadership Influence Tactics utilization in this study of organizational change. One example of organizational change where over utilized desirable behaviors lead to undesired outcomes, is the case of Enron (Tourish and Vatcha, 2005), widely recognized as a capital case of corporate cultism and destructive behavior to employees, camouflaged as a high-performing organizational culture. In the next chapter I followup these quantitative insights with qualitative methods, specifically focusing on identifying key elements of change leader's storytelling during organizational change.

3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE STUDY³

Storytelling frames the reality of organizational change. In its essence, change leadership is more about future-making than it is about making sense of the past (Boje, 2012), where the change leader introduces revised interpretative schemes or systems of meaning through the sensegiving process. Although we know that change leaders utilize influence to persuade change recipients in identifying with the prochange social group (Malka & Lelkes, 2010), what remains to be understood is what are the key elements of persuasive stories during organizational change. Thus, I suggest that organizational change storytelling represents a more politically-polarized narrative compared to previously portrayed narratives (e.g., Boje, 1991). In an effort to answer the question of what are the key elements of change leaders' recollected experience during organizational change, I turn to narrative analysis. Instead of focusing on firm methodological perspectives, I refer to experimental perspectives in philosophy suggested by Feyerabend (1993) in an effort to explore a new way of approaching persuasive communication during organizational change, with a focus on change leaders' subjective recollections.

Observed qualitative study sample includes 10 interviews with change leaders who finished leading a change project within the last month. I aim to create synthesized coherence by introducing a relatively overlooked perspective of narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) into the field of organizational storytelling and organizational change, furthermore enriching it with a screenwriting analytical framework (Yorke, 2014) applied to change leaders' recollections. This chapter is structured into four sections. I follow suggestions from Gephart Jr. (2004) and keep the theoretical front end relatively short in order to expand my arguments on proposed methodological perspectives. First, I setup a theoretical framework to justify my explorative qualitative methodology. Second, I elaborate proposed methodological approach in more detail. Third, I showcase findings from conducted interviews with change leaders and highlight what are the key elements of their recollected experience during organizational change. Finally, I conclude this chapter with suggestions for future research endeavours.

3.1 Organizational Change Storytelling and Ideological Messages

Storytelling enriches organizational change narrative with affect. Boje (1991) suggested that stories give sense to organizational incidents and that narrative is especially effective in creating perceived reality. More specifically, healthy and unhealthy forms of storytelling in organizations exist in parallel, and their emotionally engaging content packs much more meaning than a purely fact-based narrative. As a method of ideological identification, in altering the nature of a certain organizational incident, storytellers introduce their framing into the narrative to achieve a desired effect. Stories possess the power to reenergize existing myths and

³ A revised early version of this chapter is currently in review for publication with the Review of Managerial Science (RMS) titled: "Style Wars: Key Elements of the Transformative Metanarrative of Storytelling in Organizational Change" (2022)

enrich shared experiences as well as shared meaning within a certain organizational culture (Boyce, 1996).

Myths and general stories that revolve around a specific social context are important in formulating an individual's identity and understanding their self-story as they adapt their behavior to meet the expected behavior of the group (Stromberg, 1990). As organizational change unfolds and change recipients adjust their self-schemas (Epitropaki et al., 2016), the importance of an existing narrative may even have quantum implications (Boje, 2012), emphasizing the importance of antenarratives in creating future sense from change. With such a rich lore of previous research on storytelling in organizations, I continue with my inquiry toward understanding the key elements of change leaders' recollected experience during organizational change.

Framing organizational change alters ideological settings. Ideologies align ideas, beliefs, and a commonly shared sense of purpose within a certain organization or social structure (Chin et al., 2021) and represent a highly articulated and self-conscious belief system (Swidler, 1986). As organizational change unfolds, ideological settings change either partially or completely, with change recipients interpreting cultural values as knowledge resources, often identified as antecedents of successful knowledge management (Mueller, 2012). Consequently, these organizational changes partially or completely alter the existing organizational ideology, leaving individuals to self-place themselves as either members or opponents of ideological streams (Malka & Lelkes, 2010).

Expected outcomes in terms of altering change recipients' ideological identification rely on particular framing strategies or interpretation schemes to which individuals turn to understand the narrative of strategic organizational change (Fiss & Zajac, 2006). Change leaders invest their energy in a sensegiving effort by anticipating and addressing conflicts arising from change recipients' diverging needs and perceptions (Appelbaum et al., 2012; Mento et al., 2002). As a result, change recipients are exposed to certain types of ideological messages that may or may not necessarily inspire change adoption (Grant & Hofmann, 2011) depending on perceived ulterior motives. I conclude that framing organizational change narratives is the first step in meaningful persuasion of change recipients, as I continue with my theoretical inquiry.

Symbolism effectively frames organizational change affect. Effective framing implies effective management of symbols that unpack meaning (Fiss & Zajac, 2006), resulting in desired receptive, participative, compensative, and evaluative sensegiving (Kraft et al., 2016). Organizational symbolism accounts for multidisciplinary understanding of using symbols as the production of knowledge in organizations focusing on the logos, ethos, and pathos in the construction of systems of meaning (Strati, 1998). Systems of meaning include utilizing symbols as emotion-triggering segments of visual learning (Bandura, 2001), allowing subjective interpretation to unfold while limiting space for interpretation within contextual boundaries of the group (Dandridge et al., 1980).

These symbolic actions include storytelling and metaphors (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Kolar 2012) as well as emphasize the importance of maintaining change recipient focus aimed at effectively managing the symbolic interactionism involved in the sensemaking process (Epitropaki et al., 2016). Closely connected to the interpretation of available cultural forms and norms, contextual framing gains force from cultural resonance (Werner & Cornelissen, 2014), whereas narratives draw on the power of sequencing resulting from managerial efforts to structure, compress, and plot a change process into a storyline (Logemann et al., 2019).

It is worth reiterating that when change recipients face contextual changes and uncertainties about identity changes, they seek proximity and comfort in familiar faces (Mawson, 2005) instead of purely relying on facts and rationalizing. This inevitably opens up space for the creation of heroic and antagonistic archetypes (Fergnani & Song, 2020) in organizations that are expected to solve the problem or be the person to blame, shifting our attention to change leaders as conveyors of ideological messages.

Individual differences alter narrative reception. As mentioned previously, narratives hold informational elements together and encourage visual learning from behavioral interpretation of said narratives (Weick, 2012). A change leader's narrative intelligence thus represents the ability to tell the story of the surrounding environment using a clear, concise timeline comparable to the timeline of life (e.g., Randall, 1999). Conceptualizing narrative intelligence, Pishghadam et al. (2011) proposed (a) emplotment, (b) characterization, (c) narration, (d) generation, and (e) thematization.

Furthermore, they emphasized that effective storytellers create emotionally engaging stories utilizing said skills. In other words, change leaders who are able to demonstrate a clear timeline, introduce relatable characters, and narrate the plot in a coherent and expected way that gravitates toward a familiar genre and maintains a clear distinction between themes of the story are considered narratively intelligent storytellers.

Alternatively, change recipients' need for affect during organizational change, determines whether and the extent to which they will receive and internally process the emotional content of the story (Appel & Richter, 2010). Emotional receptiveness closely relates to Kegan's orders of consciousness, the change-preventing system, the feeling system, and the knowing system (Kegan et al., 2009). In addition, related to experiences of change, I highlight how levels of adult development determine the cognitive complexity and the capacity of the individual to make sense from experienced life events, inevitably expanding different levels of consciousness (Kegan, 1994). I therefore distance myself from observing change leaders and change recipients' individual differences and focus on deconstructing their recollected experiences during organizational change.

3.2 Deconstruction of Narrative Persuasiveness in Organizational Change

Rhetoric alters narrative persuasiveness. Rosenbaum et al. (2018) reviewed literature focused on the 13 most popular planned organizational change models and emphasized persuasion as the key common prerequisite. Persuasion generally implies communication efforts aimed at modifying beliefs, values, or attitudes of targeted individuals (Simons, 1976). Two models of persuasion are broadly acclaimed in the literature, respectively representing the ends of the dual-hemisphere information-processing dichotomy.

The elaboration likelihood model offers a cognition-focused perspective of persuasion through strength of arguments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), emphasizing centrally (elaborated) and peripherally (superficial) routed messages in terms of altering change recipients' attitudes. Elaborated messages are assumed to affect long-term change and require significant effort from message recipients, whereas superficial messages are assumed to affect short-term change at best (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Tormala and Petty (2002) demonstrated that individuals are more certain about their attitudes and resist persuasion when exposed to higher levels of elaboration. Alternatively, Aaronson (1999) suggested that individuals naturally tend to resist persuasion and respond best to self-persuasion, where they can internalize their thoughts on the subject.

Considering the aforementioned political nature of change leaders' communication, it is important to note the utilization of political rhetoric aimed at conveying messages within a targeted likeminded group, more specifically, the use of high-impact words or condensational symbols that are well connected to established systems of meaning (Kaufer & Carley, 1993), such as buzzwords, emblems, allusions, and stereotypes. This emotionally packed rhetoric highlights Fisher's approach to persuasion through narratives relying on narrative transportation mechanisms (Taylor et al., 2002), directly opposing elaboration likelihood model perspectives.

All narratives gravitate toward an archetype. Persuasive narratives transport individuals into a convergent state of mind within the narrative, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative, thus causing psychological distancing from the real world (Green & Brock, 2000). Bibliotherapy, frequently used in patients experiencing depression (Gregory et al., 2004) to alleviate negative emotions, is a method of utilizing the strength of narrative identity transportation. Personal stories, popular tales, and cultural myths are different types of narratives that aim to answer identity-forming questions (Bers, 2002).

Becker and Neuberg (2019) presented a theory of archetypes resulting from evolutionary dynamics and personal experience. They suggested that archetypes represent tendencies that have evolved to provide adaptive responses to various social problems, grouped and categorized during the sensemaking process. This mechanism applies across narrative elements, from themes to genres. For example, Kent (2015) outlined 20 master plots frequently utilized in

public relations that closely resemble certain genres (e.g., sports drama resembling the underdog theme). Another great example is an academic perspective, specifying genres as a way of organizing “puzzle framing” in an effort to clarify puzzling empirical phenomenon of the world (Zuckerman, 2017).

Emerging themes in organizational change include (a) frustrate truth statements, predominantly confirmatory; (b) embarrass power brokers, predominantly illustrative; (c) expose multiple realities, predominantly anticipated; and (d) codify practical guidelines, predominantly irrelevant (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). These themes and emerging genres reveal that narrative archetypes are formed during organizational change, but persuasive narratives are effective across archetypes. I thus continue with my inquiry into practitioner perspectives on key storytelling elements for additional insight.

Structure affects narrative engagement. Stories are told through processes of focusing on (or filtering out) certain events and characters, such as heroes, villains, fools, and magic wands (Gabriel, 2000), and the natural tendency to group and categorize observed phenomenon applies to organizational change narratives as well. More specifically, narratives are authored in a particular genre for a specific audience, where the audience interprets proposed elements of the narrative and cocreates its meaning (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). In other words, individuals create stories about themselves based on the stories they process and are able to make sense of in the changed environment. I begin with the basic elements of narratives: the setting, the hero, the plot, and the moral of the story (Brattström & Wennberg, 2019).

In an effort to expand suggested theoretical insights, I expand my search for additional key elements of storytelling and acknowledge theoretical limitations of practitioner insights. I reviewed TED Talks containing key elements of storytelling outside of organizational change context that are currently available on YouTube, totaling more than 300 min of content.

I deduct these key elements of storytelling from a practitioner’s perspective: (a) The character setting (protagonist and antagonist) needs to be emotionally stimulating and relatable to the audience; (b) A “what if”-inciting moment needs to trigger the protagonists’ motivation; (c) the most commonly mentioned archetype is the hero’s journey where the hero is transformed; (d) tension, conflict, and crisis make the story more interesting, enjoyable, and relatable; and (e) dark inversions where characters reveal a dark trait contrasted with proposed virtues enrich the moral of the story (or expected outcome in general).

These elements are also present in Boje’s (1995) three-act postmodern analysis of Disney Enterprises’ internal stories as well as Shakespeare’s three-act plays, demonstrating Hegelian dialectic of a thesis, antithesis, and synthesis being deployed in stories aimed at enhancing our understanding of life’s dynamics (e.g., Basseches, 1980). A great example of the way new knowledge is identified, further explored, and finally assimilated into the broader body of knowledge are failure stories. Using the three-act structure, the story of transformation

addresses assumptions and questions from the audience as an interesting cocreation activity that encourages narrative transportation (Bledow et al., 2017).

This three-act structure resembling life's experiences demonstrates how storytelling codifies knowledge of previous occurrences within an organization for future change endeavors, containing both positive and negative sentiment of previous transformative experiences. Aforementioned practitioner perspectives suggest that most persuasive narratives are reported in cinematography across genres, where multimedia and story structure move the audience into a state of enjoyment conceptualized as narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). I thus proceed with my inquiry into narrative engagement as the desired outcome of storytelling in organizational change, focusing our attention on narrative structure as the key element of storytelling applicable across different organizational contexts (Johns, 2006).

Styles make narratives aesthetically pleasing and engaging. Unlike the static of narrative transportation, the dynamics of narrative engagement effectively outline the end goal of organizational change: influencing change recipients' story-related attitudes and beliefs through chapters of the narrative (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). A bad story is a story that provides no aesthetic pleasure (Taylor et al., 2002). However, science fiction narratives are particularly effective in triggering narrative transportation and stimulating creativity (Black & Barnes, 2019), and the aesthetics of such stories alone are particularly engaging.

As an example of a highly fictive vision of the world translatable across different genres, Fergnani and Song (2020) suggested six archetypes operate in the science fiction genre: (a) growth and decay, (b) threats and new hopes, (c) wastelands, (d) the powers that be, (e) disarray, and (f) inversion. Generally, aesthetic perspective relies on felt understanding of meaning instead of on inductive and deductive reasoning (Taylor et al., 2002). Harvey's (1953) study analyzing writing in bestsellers highlighted the importance of style and story aesthetic almost 70 years ago. More specifically, action of the plotline, readability of chapters, low-intensity demonstration of emotions from the protagonist, affectionate attitude toward other characters, and a sentimental theme were commonly present in bestselling novels of that era.

With the technological progression of analytic methods, insights on stylography (Ashok et al., 2013) further enrich this study of style, highlighting adventures and detective stories as most interesting genres. Ashok et al.'s detailed analysis identified significant differences among more successful and less successful novels, such as including fewer uses of clichés (including sentiment-rich words), favoring verbs that describe thought-processing (e.g., "recognized") and verbs that indicate quotes (e.g., "say"), and using frequent discourse connectives and propositions. Additional analysis of available movie scripts demonstrated an 89.3% accuracy in predicting successful movies in the fantasy genre (Ashok et al., 2013), confirming that felt meaning bypasses conscious critical filters (Taylor et al., 2002).

Following the movie script analysis approach, I turned to Yorke (2014), who used a metaphor of traveling to the woods to analyze engaging narratives of transformation across genres: (a) The protagonist is at home enjoying the status quo; (b) the protagonist travels to the forest during the day; (c) the protagonist enters the woods; (d) the protagonist returns home from the woods at night; and (e) the protagonist returns home transformed from the experience. Leading with the idea that bestselling novels closely resemble informative articles (Ashok et al., 2013), I used Yorke's framework as the underlying framework for conducted interviews with change leaders because it conceptually shadows Heidegger's (1993) five stages of knowing. I address this methodological perspective below.

3.3 Methods

My research context was meticulously selected to help gain insights that address my research question. I was interested in understanding the key elements of change leader's recollected experience during organizational change, which implied analyzing their recollected incidents framed as a collection of short stories. However, due to COVID-19-related access limitations, our initial sample was dramatically reduced and participating change leaders were not at liberty to disclose actual communication with change recipients. Then again, the obvious alternative of directly interviewing change leaders on their use of storytelling placed our findings at risk of being tainted with biases and desirable framing from the change leader.

Therefore, in an effort to ensure transparent and accurate data, I compelled interviewees to recollect certain incidents instead of framing full stories. I then analyzed a collection of these short vignettes using narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993), with an additional focus on the use of reported speech and character-switching between the story realm and tale world (Bauman et al., 2003). Utilizing a pragmatic approach and adjusting my ambition to fit the newly formed conditions, I focused on exploring a new way of analysing how change leaders perceive organizational change, instead of focusing on actual findings. Expected value of this perspective is in the explorative nature, instead of being grounded in previously established methodology.

3.3.1 Access and sample

Despite these adversities, I managed to interview 10 change leaders interested in sharing their story on organizational change, compensating for sample size with richness of data (Malterud et al., 2016). Change leaders in the sample were predominantly senior middle managers and executive directors closely working with change recipients who were core team members and team managers. They worked in digitally intensive industries, and the nature of their work can easily be described as intellectual work, predominantly focused on conceptual skills and interpersonal expertise. The temporal dimension of change dynamics was a prerequisite for this study. Change leaders had to have formally finished their change projects within 30 days of the interview to minimize distortion of recollected memories. Respective projects included one intrapreneurial project, one process of company reorganization, two merger and acquisition

processes, three software implementation projects, and three human-resources-related processes. All recollected incidents consist of short stories, highlighted and emphasized by change leaders based on their subjective impressions.

3.3.2 Data collection process

I designed semistructured interview questions to address the organizational change context, following the five-act structure of Yorke's (2014) work. In other words, questions inquired into the transformation of knowledge, from having no knowledge of change to experimenting with knowledge at the midpoint of the story, to having knowledge mastery. As expected (Franzosi, 1998), findings did not follow a linear path because each recollected incident had a storyline of its own, with respective transitions from the story realm into the tale world, and vice versa. Pilot interviews were conducted informally, asking several participants who previously declined formal participation for various reasons to assess the accuracy of proposed questions. These interviews were not recorded as per their request.

The outcome of their feedback was additional streamlining of the questionnaire, including the exclusion of six follow-up questions and the introduction of a separate section of the questionnaire focusing on narrative essentials. These essentials were positioned prior to core interview questions to help the change leader formulate a more accurate recollection of the timeline. These obviously socially desirable and initially expressed elements of the story ended up being overlooked in certain recollected incidents during the interviews, effectively telling a different story in the end.

Formal semistructured interviews were conducted using Zoom virtual conferencing software. Interviewees were asked to recollect an incident and tell a short story about that specific incident, but they were not informed of the actual five-act methodology to minimize risk of biases and framing. The average interview length was 35 min, and I rarely intervened to minimize interviewer influence, focusing on follow-up questions in search of the core idea. In compliance with General Data Protection Regulation directions and prior to the formal interview, interviewees were asked to express explicit consent and were informed that their anonymity would be guaranteed and that audio and video recordings would be destroyed after transcription.

3.3.3 Analysis

Formally conducted and recorded interviews were transcribed afterwards and subjected to narrative analysis. Following some of the methodological suggestions from Riessman (1993) and Franzosi (1998), I dedicated effort to breaking up transcripts into stories and contrasting them against other respondents in the search for core narratives at each of the five stages Yorke (2014) suggested. I explored these narratives and placed a special emphasis on understanding nuances across stories that deviate from identified core narratives, placing emphasis on the

general sentiment of recalled anecdotes. I conclude my analysis with the interpretation of individually identified core narratives in an effort to create a metanarrative of storytelling in organizational change.

3.4 Findings

3.4.1 Essential Elements of the Story Reported by Change Leaders

Change leaders' initial story framing was somewhat expected. Protagonist perspectives included change leaders and team members, whereas senior management and the establishment were recognized as antagonists. Interestingly, Interviewee D directly categorized herself as both the protagonist and antagonist, directly emphasizing her personal transformation during the project. Across all stories, business context and identified growth opportunities or inefficient processes represented inciting moments that encouraged the protagonists to embark on the change journey. When asked about the biggest conflict of the story, change leaders specified differences in perspectives and the ways they were communicated, indicating the problem of ideological calibration during organizational change.

Change leaders highlighted that maintaining team motivation and obtaining senior management endorsement were the biggest challenges during the project, portraying a human focus instead of perceiving the project as the problem. Consequently, they reported human-centric perspectives as their biggest revelations on the project, varying from personal insights on negative behavior to perceived team morale improvements through specific actions. Reported morals of the story followed the same line of thought, closely resembling personal revelation and being inspirational in their sentiment, emphasizing successful change enforcement or glorifying the team. Interestingly, we identified a seeming connection between the way change leaders perceive conflicts in the story, the biggest challenges during the project, and the biggest revelations during the project (Table 8).

Although I expected to see the biggest conflict in the story represent the cause of the biggest challenges in the projects, which would lead to the biggest revelations from the project and then be highlighted as the moral of the story, reported project revelations reflected change leader's personal learnings addressing storyline conflict. However, the reported morals of the stories seem to reflect revelations on reported biggest challenges during the project. This suggests change leaders frame the stories about organizational change as a personal experience by default, without delving into the details that are susceptible to socially desirable framing and include biased perspectives.

Table 8: Overview of Essential Story Elements Reported by Change Leader

	Industry	Project	Core team	Protagonist	Antagonist	Inciting moment	Biggest conflict	Biggest challenge	Biggest revelation	Moral
Interviewee A	Banking	Merger and acquisition process	6	Business unit enrolled in the change process	Owners of the MNC, enforcing this change to the business unit	Market conditions and impatient owners	Understanding country specifics and enforcing corporate agenda without additional analysis	Keeping colleagues motivated	Understanding how to make the best of a bad situation without demotivating people participating in the project	The right team can move mountains.
Interviewee B	Manufacturing	Intrapreneurial project integrating with the mother company	6	The change implementation team	Senior managers from the mother company (“corporate guys”)	Business results not performing well	<i>Did not specify</i>	Battling expectations from nay-sayers in senior management	Nominal diversity does not add value on its own.	<i>Did not specify</i>
Interviewee C	Publishing	New organizational structure with hierarchical management	8	The company	The change	Rapid growth of the company, reducing communication clarity and employee coordination	Getting acceptance of the “new guy,” a corporate-type general manager	Owners not being perceived as one of the “guys” but as “managers”	Everything takes a lot of time in business.	Push through the change, no matter the obstacles.
Interviewee D	Finance	Organizational learning process and platform	5	The change leader	The change leader as well	External trigger, impulse from the mother company	Managing directors being excluded from the process	Convincing colleagues that everyone needs to change	Change leader is too critical of herself.	Start small if you want to make a big change.
Interviewee E	Construction	Talent-development framework	5	Hercules (hero)	The establishment	Weak succession planning	Over-engineering	Laziness	Cultural differences change preference of leadership styles.	Collaboration is key.

(table continues)

(continued)

	Industry	Project	Core team	Protagonist	Antagonist	Inciting moment	Biggest conflict	Biggest challenge	Biggest revelation	Moral
Int. F	FMCG	Upgrading a talent program	5	Talent-development team	Old-fashioned system	Expected results not being delivered from the program	Team lead vs. superior manager	Superior manager's mindset	Personal agendas are more important than organizational impact.	Change is stronger than the person in power blocking it.
Int. G	FMCG	Adoption of a new software	6	Board of directors	HR department	Profitability imperatives imposed by the board of directors	HR department vs. people whose colleagues were being laid off because of this software	Proving change leader's worth to self and others	Productivity software is a great argument to cut people cost.	Big money doesn't care if you like change or not.
Int. H	IT	HR processes introduction	5	Change leader	A couple of senior managers with a lot of influence	Company strategy believing that HRM can add value	Fighting against the negative image created by a couple of senior managers	Getting senior manager's endorsement	There are a lot more resources to be used than it initially appears.	Stay true to yourself, and the rest will sort itself out.
Int. I	Pharmaceutics	Sales platform implementation	6	Change leader	Sales department	Identified sales process effectiveness and profitability improvement	Sales fearing that their privacy will be compromised and expose them to the risk of being labeled as lazy	Convince change recipients that the change will not jeopardize their core values	Transparency and consistency are essential in making sure people get on board without force.	Change leaders should acknowledge that their change-related messages may threaten a sense of purpose and act accordingly.
Int. J	Insurance	M&A	4	The organization	The former CEO	Moving away from taking orders and enjoying the freedom of choice	Conflicting interests for many of the colleagues	How to motivate employees to wake up from their status quo	Initially resisting people turned out to be brilliant supporters in the aftermath.	We can all change dramatically.

Source: Own work

3.4.2 The Calm of Status Quo (Act I)

Following Yorke's metaphor of leaving home toward the woods, I turn my attention to the first act of change leaders' anecdotes. In this act, the change leader undergoes the sensemaking process and he or she is announced to the rest of the organization. Respective to the Shakespearean three-stage model of narration that Yorke implemented within this act, I have identified (a) no knowledge of change, (b) growing knowledge of change, and (c) awakening from obliviousness.

No knowledge of change represented the enjoyment of the status quo and indicated the importance of change leaders' vision communication. This element was usually portrayed as an organization's obliviousness to external opportunities or internal ineffectiveness, contrasting how essential the change was for the organization. Interviewee I mentioned: "*Yeah, they . . . they had freedom, and they still have it, because it was really not the intention to control people in this way, and they were. . . Well, maybe some of them were living in a, you know, with pink glasses, you know?*"

Similarly, Interviewee G said: "*Well, you could think of a traditional posttransition rich corporation where people have big offices and everyone enjoys their workday as an excuse for being paid to socialize. A lot of these people weren't capable of doing much work at a high level anyway.*" Growing knowledge of change marked initial communication efforts and initial demonstration of resistance, with the dominant sentiment being fear. Several change leaders pointed out that different levels of fear occurred (e.g., personal fear, fear for the team, or fear for results), indicating relatively intensive thinking about fear. This logically continues the change leader's sensemaking process, after initially being aware of change, moving toward internalization of change before intensively conveying it to change recipients.

Interviewee C mentioned his perspective on results: "*We were also afraid of the change on two levels, I think. One level was how the main people, the people that we needed but we thought that we could not replace at that point, how they will perceive a new leader, and if they're going to be scared off, they're going to just go away, and we're going to have a problem. The second was . . . because we were not experienced enough, we didn't actually believe that these new people coming from outside into the company would actually do their job well, right? So we didn't know whether to trust them or not [laughs].*"

Interviewee A was concerned for employees' wellbeing: "*And, you know, I still couldn't sleep. I said, you know, how can I communicate this? We're potentially closing down the bank. Potentially, these colleagues are losing their jobs, you know? I mean, come on, this cannot be the reality, you know? How do you portray these messages, you know? It can be horrible that it can impact individuals, more than they've ever been impacted.*" Awakening from obliviousness was a point in the narrative where change recipients were expected to understand

the importance of change, and this point was the moment when many change leaders created anticipation and tension.

Interviewee E proudly recalled the support received from senior leadership: *“We had a sounding board of high-level HR people throughout the world, and we had our group HR, our corporate HR committee, the highest level people in the world. And, almost always, they were positive (pauses). We took that feedback and did it again and figured it out. So, almost everyone supported the project.”* Unlike this approach, Interviewee B focused on a personal perspective: *“Yeah, so then I said, “Okay, I would like to do something else,” and I applied for a new position, and . . . actually, miraculously, I was selected as the best candidate for that position. So, then then more or less, I created the new strategy over the Christmas 2016.”*

Some change leaders turned to utilization of symbols and used metaphors, which may be indicative of how they experienced this stage of the project. Interviewee A recalled his experience of searching for a painting of a tree to symbolize: *“awakening new life, new direction, new opportunities, new chances. It’s starting something new, something better, something, something that’s going to be positive.”* Dominant sentiment of the first act is negative, effectively creating a moment of tension waiting to be resolved in the next act. Several change leaders maintained a positive sentiment, and their anecdotes mostly revolved around them and showed slight elements of self-enhancement and aforementioned socially desirable trait signaling (Table 9).

3.4.3 The Challenge of Change (Act II)

Continuing with Yorke’s metaphor of leaving home toward the woods, I move toward the second act of change leaders’ anecdotes. In this act, the change leader begins the sensegiving process, encountering the first wave of resistance from change recipients. Respective to the Shakespearean three-stage model of narration that Yorke implemented within this act, I have identified (a) change recipients’ initial expression of doubt, (b) change leader’s addressing of doubt and overcoming reluctance, and (c) change recipients’ acceptance of initial arguments.

At the beginning of this act, change recipients are informed of the change and they express doubt. Interviewee I pointed out perceived threat to self-worth in change recipients: *“So when they actually realized that they will have tablets, with a digital platform, and they will take it out in the pharmacy to take an order, it somehow immediately looks like they’re not so medical anymore, you know, that their purpose will be different, that they will be somehow humiliated, because they will not be [perceived as] medical doctors anymore.”* By contrast, Interviewee H shared her experience of bluntness and aggression in change recipients: *“One of the biggest doubts people had was that my arrival meant that everything will become more strict, rigid and corporate. Everyone was pretty vocal about that and didn’t regard my feelings particularly. They spoke about me as if I wasn’t present in the room and complained about what could be one of the outcomes.”*

Table 9: Summary of Change Leader's Anecdotes on the Calm of Status Quo (Act I)

	No knowledge of change	Growing knowledge of change	Awakening from obliviousness	Sent.
Interviewee A	Bank personnel were operating like a well-oiled machine, with the ability to go through any roadblock, which may occur down the road.	The change leader's knowledge of change triggered a turbulent internalization process, causing strong emotional reactions out of fear for the bank personnel's well-being, encouraging him to seek out symbols of positive change.	After an anxious and sleepless night, the change leader announced the change on an urgent call with bank personnel, being completely transparent and open to negative feedback without reservations.	(-)
Interviewee B	The organization was thriving in perceived market leader status and continuing manufacturing and sales of mechanical components.	The change leader identified a space for improvement of company results, and he gets ridiculed from sales colleagues for being a member of the R&D department.	The change leader applies for a sales job and "miraculously" lands it as the change journey starts.	(+)
Interviewee C	A creative startup focused on developing their product with owners actively involved in the process and nurturing first employees' development.	As headcount grew, so did the level of responsibility and complexity, making communication and coordination difficult.	The startup culture soon required some formalization, and the owners decided to hire a professional manager to start setting up processes.	(+)
Interviewee D	Employees were working alone as gardeners who jealously protect their gardens, instead of cooperating.	The change leader received information from the mother company of the future change project.	The change leader announced change in a step-by-step manner, encouraging employees to seek out additional info on their own.	(-)
Interviewee E	The organization was using an old talent-identification platform, and there were a lot of complaints about how outdated it is.	The change team and stakeholders were enthusiastic about the change and initially supported the project.	The change leader was formally appointed for the project with the support of senior HR managers.	(+)
Interviewee F	Large profitable MNC employees were doing really well and enjoying the status quo. The superior manager promised a lot of creative space for interventions to the team leader.	The talent team was initially interested, showing optimism, and that's when gossiping started.	The superior manager called out the team leader in front of everyone and aggressively challenged the proposed changes, as the original program was designed by the superior manager.	(-)

(table continues)

(continued)

	No knowledge of change	Growing knowledge of change	Awakening from obliviousness	Sent.
Interviewee G	A lot of employees were enjoying their relatively worry-free lifestyle in this posttransition corporation, with big offices and a strong hierarchical structure.	Kicked off with a template email message, and employees were invited to participate in specific events aimed at conveying a sense of urgency and announce what is expected to come from this change in the future.	Awakening moment actually started a large wave of strong and vocal resistance, mentioning money-laundering schemes and cost cutting.	(-)
Interviewee H	A chaotically creative organization thrived in its unique market position, being highly profitable with a laissez-faire attitude with little to none consistency.	Employees expressed a lot of resistance, fearing that the organization is going to turn corporate and destroy the workplace that they enjoyed over the years, which left the change agent to fend for herself alone.	The change leader organized roadshows with senior management and key employees in order to introduce herself as a person before introducing the program she had envisioned.	(-)
Interviewee I	The sales force was enjoying the freedom of a nondigitalized sales process, without pressure from management but still writing orders on paper.	Initial resistance was manifested in discarding product features and dismissing the initiative as useless.	When the change started to unfold, the salesforce consisting of medicinal experts started to feel threatened and degraded.	(-)
Interviewee J	This was a “command-driven” organization where employees had little autonomy to behave in certain ways outside of directed patterns.	The appointment of the new change leader did not go unnoticed but forced a lot of rumors and evoked fear in employees fearing new commands.	The old CEO’s micromanagement style was opposed with an empowering and conceptual management style from the new CEO, leaving employees confused and anxious.	(-)

Source: Own work

Alternatively, Interviewee D did not have the chance to receive negative feedback because of how the old way of working was designed: *“The issue is, I did not get that feedback because usually, and that was the culture at that time, negative feedback was not communicated to the [managing director]. So, all I got was very filtered diplomatic info, and basically, the resistance was not against the change. It was some, I would say, toxic emotions within the company as such, feelings like nothing can be changed, no one listens, we are underpaid and exploited.”*

Initial difference in knowledge resulted in stronger threat perception in change recipients. As a natural result, change leaders had to address doubt and overcome reluctance utilizing different styles. Interviewee J merged several change initiatives into a larger one to create a more easily understandable narrative: *“Coincidentally, we were in the process of acquiring another company, and I combined those two processes, already inviting some people from the other company to participate in the strategy creation process itself, and use the whole merger to frame this acquisition merger process and formulate the vision of the combined company. And it was a messy process.”*

Interviewee H tried speaking the same language as change resisters, reverting to pop culture references and using a lighter tone along with shared sentiments: *“I tried to make it all seem fun and “light.” I remember attaching a Toby Flenderson [a not so popular HR character from The Office] meme on one of my PowerPoint slides. I also always emphasized that I hate corporate environments, too, and that I will never make a big change in the company without consulting its employees first.”*

Change leaders’ arguments share additional knowledge of change, helping change recipients to accept initial arguments and make sense of change. Interviewee A mentioned that the team began thinking about creating solutions instead of being fearful: *“Let’s make this happen, you know, and we can make it to happen together. If we put our energy together, like we did in the past years, when so many projects that we did, you know, implementation of current accounts, the record speeds of mortgages and the record speed in everything that we’ve done so far, successfully, we will achieve this as well.”* Interviewee C recognized acceptance with previously resistant employees saw HR as an ally instead of a threat: *“We brought HR when we were already 100 people . . . students, employees, experts, everything right? Before that, [partner] and me were doing everything with about the same intensity and about the same time. So, soon after we brought HR, people embraced HR because they said: “Okay, finally, we have somebody to talk to.”*

The dominant sentiment of the second act is positive, effectively releasing tension from the previous act, which was predominantly negative. Interestingly, change leaders expressing positive sentiment did not frame change as a complete experience, but as a continuum, leaving some tension for the next act. Several change leaders maintained a negative sentiment because their anecdotes mostly revolved around them and the ways other people had behaved outside of the desired direction, crafting a less engaging narrative (Table 10).

Table 10: Summary of Change Leader's Anecdotes on the Challenge of Change (Act II)

	Change recipients' initial expression of doubt	Change leader's addressing of doubt and overcoming reluctance	Change recipients' acceptance of initial arguments	Sent.
Interviewee A	Bank employees were questioning their positions, job security, and overall personal exposure from a potentially malignant change process, experiencing fear and anxiety.	After initial calls with the change leader, employees focused more on understanding their role and how they can contribute to the creation of a positive solution.	The team did not give up when faced with ambiguity and the threat of being laid off by the new management, focusing their efforts on optimizing the balance sheet to make the bank more attractive for the buyer.	(+)
Interviewee B	Colleagues in sales were opposing the change leader's proposed business model, switching from a component-driven business into a system-driven business.	The change leader argued his case with numerous case studies; however, there was no change in colleagues' attitudes, discouraging him from this endeavor.	The change leader managed to gather a group of renegades in hopes that their diversity and last change to stay in the company would be beneficial in terms of creativity and output.	(-)
Interviewee C	Employees were resistant toward the new general manager and vocally expressed doubt about the direction in which the company was heading.	There was no appropriate communication from the owners, so the team started to hold grudges and passive-aggressively express their dissatisfaction.	Initially feared HR processes, which were a part of the new general manager's approach, were embraced as enhancing resources.	(-)
Interviewee D	The change leader did not receive direct negative feedback, as the old approach was particularly hierarchical, so no one addressed their concerns.	Despite their great performance, the team was under a lot of stress and started questioning the increase in workload and the general purpose of change.	A majority of employees accepted the proposed change, and those who were particularly loud and resistant left the company on their own.	(-)
Interviewee E	Senior leadership endorsement did a great job at keeping resistance low, with only one individual vocally expressing frustration.	The change leader was open to discussion and wanted to compromise instead of creating conflict.	With the help of the change resistor's superior manager, initial doubt was easily turned into acceptance.	(+)

(table continues)

(continued)

	Change recipients' initial expression of doubt	Change leader's addressing of doubt and overcoming reluctance	Change recipients' acceptance of initial arguments	Sent.
Interviewee F	The aggressive approach from the superior manager toward the team leader and the change team was being silently approved by stakeholders.	The change leader reverted back to the drawing board and started working on a plan to get things done, despite this rapidly growing conflict with the superior manager.	The team accepted an incrementally changing approach that would accommodate the superior manager's ego, while still changing the program for the better.	(+)
Interviewee G	The change leader reached out to HR to ensure there would be no layoffs during and a certain time after the implementation; however, no guarantees were given.	Initial software demonstration sessions delivered by the change leader were predominantly oriented toward building alliances with senior stakeholders in an effort to ensure some resources and easier acceptance.	The change leader perceived acceptance as a continuum that varied across specific phases of the timeline, relying on coercive methods to ensure these elder employees (not respecting the change leader's work) get on board.	(+)
Interviewee H	The fear of being bureaucratized was being publicly displayed with little-to-no regard for the change leader's feelings as a human being.	The change leader devised a creative approach to communicate the change scope and expected outcomes, turning to memes and popular culture references to signal group membership.	Acceptance in this stage was partially achieved through smaller group roadshows, friendly banter with team leaders, and doing personal favors to achieve minimal team player effort from reluctant team leaders.	(+)
Interviewee I	There was a fear of losing freedom, being controlled, and jeopardizing their reputation as medicinal workers.	The change leader's personal story conveyed how similar challenges were overcome in a more rigorous and less human-oriented organization, proving some comfort.	The change leader identified and utilized early adopters as ambassadors who displayed how beneficial this new software was and encouraged others to try them out, outside senior management endorsements.	(+)
Interviewee J	Employees mostly manifested passive-aggressive resistance, but some individuals were directly opposing change and left the company.	To get managers on board, the change leader relied on merging imperatives with the process of acquiring a new organization, making the transition smoother.	Two of the biggest rivals in the organizations began to realize that they can achieve more if they cooperate instead of dueling each other.	(+)

Source: Own work

3.4.4 The Deceptiveness of Acceptance (Act III)

Following the challenge of change in Yorke's metaphor of leaving home toward the woods, I move toward the third act of change leaders' anecdotes. In this act, change recipients continue their sensemaking process, inspired by the change leaders' overcoming of their initial expression of doubt, and they begin experimenting with newly acquired knowledge. Respective to the Shakespearean three-stage model of narration that Yorke implemented within this act, I have identified (a) experimentation with available knowledge, (b) increase of knowledge resulting from experimentation, and (c) experimentation after knowledge implementation and identification of new flaws.

With newly acquired acceptance of the proposed change, change recipients began experimenting with available knowledge. This stage led to additional questions that fueled future resistance. Some change leaders placed a higher emphasis on team focus, whereas others continued their heroic perspective. Interviewee C expressed fear of being perceived as a totalitarian with newly installed processes in a creative company: *"The way I perceive the world, this is a very Gestapo way to do it, but in general, what I see is that people appreciate this type of weight. And what I . . . say about Gestapo is we were very direct. So, this person is responsible for this, they're going to do this, you're going to be under this person, you need to respect the decisions; you know, very much hard data when they start, and then later on, we figure out the, you know, in between."*

Interviewee I mentioned that change recipients stopped asking questions about the purpose of the new software and focused on technical functionalities instead: *"As time was passing, they started being secure that everything is fine, that they are safe, that they didn't lose freedom, then it's okay. And then they started questioning the technical part and getting on with application etc."* Increase of knowledge resulting from experimentation is mentioned in the smallest amount of detail in all reported stories, which is interesting because this stage represents the central part of the central act in every story.

Examples from Yorke (2014) highlight this stage as an important checkpoint of the tension–conflict–resolution dynamic, leaving this emotionally intensive element underutilized in change leaders' stories. Interviewee F subtly mentioned the personal importance of this stage, while mainly focusing on project perceptions in the company: *"I was doing things under the radar, which was accepted, but I never got recognition for the good job we did because, you know how this organization works—unless you make a huge fuss about it, it's like you didn't do anything. So, this way of implementing improvements was good for my team [inclusion] and organization [improvements] but cost me my career in the company."*

Interviewee D mentioned that personal appeals to remaining relevant on the labor market seemed to have the largest effect on change recipients: *"It's not about us. It's not about the team here. It's about how fast things are evolving in 5 years. Our, I don't know, accounting*

department, our legal department, will be completely different, and if you do not keep up with changes, there won't be a use for you. Not here and not anywhere else on the market. So, basically, when they say, "Oh, we have to learn so much with the company software, with a collector, it's so complicated, and every week comes something new." That's this hygiene. If you do not know how to work that, if you do not keep up, you are irrelevant, and it's, it's the same with me and it's the same with them. It's the same on the company level."

Alternatively, change leaders were more vocal in reporting experimentation after knowledge implementation, which resulted in identification of new flaws, and consequently new resistance. Some change leaders addressed the broader context of change, whereas others focused on themselves in this stage as well. Interviewee B used an interesting metaphor to highlight the importance of delivering a proof of concept to the mother company: *Now we are seven, we act as a startup, and it will be fun. But sooner or later, and actually, in 2 years, we became 75 people. Sooner or later, we will be so, so big that we will need to put structure and we will need to integrate into the mother company. But if we don't do that, we will be perceived as a kind of outlaw, and sooner or later, somebody will, will crush us like a bug."*

Interviewee E reiterated the importance of senior leadership support during this stage: *"So, at the highest level, they, they communicated it internally and to the various heads of HR in different countries. A long time ago, they essentially said this is coming [but] didn't give any details about what the change would be, because we were developing the new framework. But people were informed, and then periodically, we would touch base with representatives from different countries to make sure."*

The dominant sentiment of the third act is positive, continuing the positive sentiment from the previous act. Although several stories left some tension in how change recipients' acceptance was reported, the majority of stories were definitive in their portrayal of the previous act. Interestingly, the majority of change leaders did not recognize a major increase of knowledge within change recipients, effectively indicating the lack of skillset required for experimentation after this big discovery. This may be the result of change leaders' skillset in highlighting what the big change of knowledge was and enhancing change recipients' achievements in understanding the new organizational context. Only two stories from change leaders expressed a negative sentiment in this stage, expressing change leaders' conflicts with senior managers, which possibly limited space for experimentation (Table 11).

Table 11: Summary of Change Leader's Anecdotes on the Deceptiveness of Acceptance (Act III)

	Experimentation with available knowledge	Increase of knowledge resulting from experimentation	Experimentation after knowledge implementation and identification of new flaws	Sent.
Interviewee A	Considering the relative value of the country bank in the mother company's balance sheet, people were expressing doubt in terms of change necessity and if the end goal is worth the effort.	The change leader encouraged the team to start thinking about numerous opportunities that will arrive from this transformation, including personal benefits as well as client benefits.	The team manifested a positive attitude and steered clear from conflict, continuing to work as a well-oiled machine despite these external pressures.	(+)
Interviewee B	The change leader steered the team toward achieving a proof of concept in order to unlock additional resources from the mother corporation.	The change team was dedicated to the common goal, effectively summarized as "making money."	The change team grew from initial seven members of the core team to 75 employees, dedicated to developing software in a manufacturing company, successfully showcasing proof of concept.	(+)
Interviewee C	The change leader was experiencing fear that the proposed change was going to be perceived as totalitarian but tried various approaches, some of which failed.	As time went by, the change leader started feeling comfortable participating in open discussions with employees, giving them both good and bad news.	With the acceptance of initial changes, the general manager was expanding his team and formalizing company policies, enabling further growth.	(+)
Interviewee D	Employees were relatively open to testing the new platform but frequently complained about the extra workload being enforced upon them.	The change leader utilized personal appeal and referenced how the labor market was rapidly changing, and the only way to stay relevant was to continuously learn.	Personal appeals from the change leader resulted in additional reduction of change resistance as more and more content was being consumed via their internal platform.	(+)
Interviewee E	Stakeholders were challenging initial plans, but the soundboards that the change leader helped organize found solutions.	Country HR managers were actively commenting on the proposed framework in order to contribute to further improvement.	Country HR managers started integrating the new framework into their business plans.	(+)

(table continues)

(continued)

	Experimentation with available knowledge	Increase of knowledge resulting from experimentation	Experimentation after knowledge implementation and identification of new flaws	Sent.
Interviewee F	There wasn't a lot of space for experimentation because the old program was being heavily pushed and endorsed by the superior manager, blocking any interventions.	The team started to understand how much change can be done through an incrementally changing approach, while still portraying themselves as "the same," as the superior manager initially designed.	The team leader gained allies in countries, seeing the value from the changed program, but they preferred to stay off the record so as not to disturb the superior manager, who has been notorious for aggressive outbursts and had a lot of power in future career progression decisions.	(-)
Interviewee G	The change leader tried to communicate in the same language as the opposing group and asked them to report everything that was wrong with the software while they were testing.	The formal go-live date was the trigger for demonstration of newly acquired knowledge, with employees being grateful for the time allocated to training.	One of the senior managers started trash talking the software heavily, and the change leader agreed in hopes of gaining trust, which resulted in personal insults to the change leader.	(-)
Interviewee H	Employees started to introduce the change leader into people-related activities and asked for advice when applicable, helping position HRM as an advisor instead of a bureaucrat.	There was no evidence of big change; however, people started embracing some HRM processes and generally tried being more mindful of the human element, instead of perceiving colleagues as billable hours.	Despite having powerful allies with the CFO and most of the senior managers, a smaller group of senior managers with a lot of influence started gossiping and sabotaging change processes, hoping to send a message to the upper echelon who they disliked.	(+)
Interviewee I	Salespeople started asking questions about functionalities instead of asking about their core values and purpose.	Through the use of early adopters as ambassadors or influences, the company managed to cascade know-how much faster and with less resistance.	Using monetary and nonmonetary incentives, the company nudged salespeople to start using the app more and compete among each other, increasing the number of inquiries on technical features and improvement suggestions.	(+)
Interviewee J	This new and messy environment with less regulation left some employees frozen, but others demonstrated some new ideas, one of which was the company's social media presence, which gained a lot of attention.	Inspired by these early adopters, employees tried to make small changes, which were then praised by the change leader, aimed at encouraging further experimentation and novel ideas.	Another innovation was introduced within the organization following these examples—this time, a financial podcast—which the team successfully self-organized without active involvement or micromanagement from the change leader.	(+)

Source: Own work

3.4.5 The Adversity of Apprehension (Act IV)

This act represents the climax of the story in Yorke's metaphor of leaving home and going toward the woods. Here, I move away from tranquility and resolution in Act III toward the chaotic nature of change leaders' anecdotes. In this act, the change recipients continue their sensemaking process after encountering the second wave of change leaders' sensegiving. Based on the Shakespearean three-stage model of narration that Yorke implemented within this act, I have identified: (a) change recipients' second expression of doubt, (b) change recipients' growing reluctance, and (c) change recipients' manifestation of regression toward old ways of working.

Following experimentation with newly acquired knowledge, change recipients identify faults in change leaders' stories and trigger the second expression of doubt. Re-emerged doubt slows down change adoption and reemphasizes the importance of change leaders' sensegiving efforts. Interviewee A portrayed how doubt began to occur after the core team had trouble finding a buyer for the bank's retail business: "*We are presenting 0.7% of the balance sheet, the assets of the company. You know, there was not this interest, to fight it through, you know—to make it successful to continue the success story. I mean, come on, just run it down, you know, and just, it's fine. Why would you bother? I mean, it was not said like this directly, but the energy was not there. You know, it was not like the willingness to push this through as much as it was internally.*" Interviewee G mentioned how doubt was manifested with the change in the polarity of allies: "*After this second doubt phase following our go-live, one of my biggest allies from our in-house business solutions department began to publicly express doubt in a fairly aggressive manner, leaving some of my bluffs exposed. This played out pretty badly for me, but I was thinking that I had already lost, so I might as well try to pull off something dramatic and reconcile this conflict. I think the effect was 50:50 in the sense that I'd gotten into a conflict with this manager, then publicly reconciled the conflict. But the scars still remained, and the people weren't all that convinced.*"

Emerging doubt stirred doubt in the change leaders as well. They witnessed the change recipients' doubts grow into reluctance despite having previously addressed them. The change leaders reported the strongest emotional reactions during this stage, mentioning pressure, tension, and conflict with increasing complaints, respectively.

Interviewee H reported the political nature of change leadership, highlighting the situation of a newly hired manager recognizing an opportunity for positioning: "*I told everyone I was open to criticism, but I asked them to be as precise as they could and to give me real examples of situations that made them question the change I was trying to make. The loudest was one of the newly hired senior managers, who joined the company almost one year after my arrival. In her opinion, I was very biased and didn't treat everyone equally. She was convinced that I was holding back some information from her. After I became aware that she felt that way, I introduced a one-on-one bi-monthly meeting to our schedules to regularly address every*

relevant topic.” Interviewee C mentioned how the only way in which to address such strong opposition was to terminate direct opponents’ contracts: “*We didn't know that we should fire him (laughs). We would just try to manage him. But later on, I think in the next year and a half, we ended up firing the person anyway. I think the loudest people are usually those whom you are at least satisfied with (ugh). But it's not directly connected. I think it's connected just because you're unsatisfied with them and don't communicate properly with them. So, something goes missing in the communication, and then, they are not satisfied with you. Then, when you try to introduce the change, they're even more untrusting.*”

Some of these reported anecdotes contained a sense of resentment, feelings of betrayal, and an overall impulse for vengeance, such as that of Interviewee A: “*The decision, you know, to exit the market in the country, I mean, this was instilled, like, you cannot understand. . . . Why would—why is this the option? Why wasn't this consulted on or other options evaluated, etc.? But it was more like, you know, the company and the new management wanted to show, you know, their strength, what they can do, that they can impose changes in their organization, and to meet the shareholders' expectations (uhh). And this is how it was done—if it was done right or wrong at the end of the day from the company group perspective.*”

Growing reluctance nudged the change recipients’ toward manifesting regression, favoring old ways of working over new ones. Interviewee B mentioned people leaving the company, thus effectively reducing change progression and regressing progression: “*I was expecting this to happen when we went back (to the mother company) because some people couldn't really see themselves, especially in the pair, in the regular environment.*” Interviewee D continued this introspection and focused on feelings of frustration because the employees were not able to perform according to her perfectionistic perspective: “*I became discouraged when things were not moving as quickly as I had expected, or when people whom I observed as being able to do it did not deliver (pauses). But I had to take a step back and say, “Okay, this is your responsibility; you have to start communicating again. And again, and again.”*”

Unlike these perspectives, Interviewee I pointed out technical details as the reason for rebellion resurfacing within the organization: “*Medical workers tend to be difficult. . . . And I think two of them were louder, even the loudest, because of what I mentioned already before. . . . They internally questioned themselves—if they needed to focus on sales, or if they were doing what they were supposed to do in life by studying to help to treat people, you know. And I think two of them were actually loudest in their complaints.*” These examples showcase the degradation of previously acquired knowledge, which is expected as a natural reaction to a failed experiment and to the fear of being ridiculed by fellow colleagues in an environment with lower psychological safety. The dominant sentiment of the fourth act is negative, dramatically moving away from the positive sentiment of the third act, and highlighting the main conflict following the resolution of a previous conflict. Only one change leader expressed a negative sentiment; however, the sentiment of her previous act was positive, so the sentiment transition recommended for effective storytelling was still present (Table 12).

Table 12: Summary of Change Leader's Anecdotes on the Adversity of Apprehension (Act IV)

	Change recipients' second expression of doubt	Change recipients' growing reluctance	Change recipients' manifestation of regression toward old ways of working	Sent.
Interviewee A	Despite the team's best effort, the change leader and management were not able to find the buyer, and the threat of shutting down the retail branch was growing.	Additional pressure was exerted from the mother company's shareholder board, pressuring the change leader to find any solution, no matter the effect on bank employees, thus limiting possible options for a positive outcome.	With external pressure growing, bank personnel's morale was decreasing, and people started questioning the purpose of all the invested effort, asking if it was worth it.	(-)
Interviewee B	The intrapreneurial endeavor was ready to be integrated into the mother company after demonstrating profitability, and certain members of the team started doubting themselves and the integration.	There was tension and conflict with certain team members because of their reservations on the topic of integration with the mother company.	Certain team members left the organization once this threat of corporate assimilation no longer provided an environment for corporate renegades.	(-)
Interviewee C	Managerial meetings were not yielding immediate results but were consistently scrutinized as useless and corporate.	Some employees were expressing their dissatisfaction aggressively, and the change leader's approach was to remove them from the company for not being a fit to the new culture.	Despite endorsing managerial talent and a more formal approach to selection, the change leader turned to perceived passion as a criteria for employment.	(-)
Interviewee D	The change leader started doubting her excellent performance and how she approached her employees in the past.	The change leader was not satisfied with emerging complaints from change recipients despite her best effort to address these concerns with arguments of labor market relevancy.	The change leader's personal frustration grew as changes were not unfolding according to her perfectionist agenda.	(-)
Interviewee E	One change recipient was particularly vocal about her reservations with how the framework was designed, despite her superior manager being a strong advocate for change.	The change leader tried addressing these issues with the change resistor, seeking a compromise to keep the momentum going.	Reconciliation efforts went without any meaningful progress, resulting in the change resistor purposely skipping meetings and blocking progression.	(-)

(table continues)

(continued)

	Change recipients' second expression of doubt	Change recipients' growing reluctance	Change recipients' manifestation of regression toward old ways of working	Sent.
Interviewee F	As change recipients expressed doubt again, the team leader downplayed the intensity and scope of change to reduce perceived threat levels.	Under the influence of the superior manager, the team leader had trouble getting access and support from country directors, so the solution was to accept their feedback and seek gaps for incremental changes.	While change recipients enjoyed the status quo and the superior manager enjoyed ownership of the original program design, the team leader refused to accept this mindset while politically showing support to the mainstream ideology.	(+)
Interviewee G	Despite the change leader's best efforts to state that doubt is a normal thing, one of the allies turned against the change leader, resulting in a public conflict.	This conflict triggered even stronger rioting from the opposing side, forcing the change leader to find new allies and try to energize change acceptance.	After some of the change leader's bluffs were exposed, the global results of software implementation showed similarly mediocre results, portraying the effort as meaningless.	(-)
Interviewee H	Newly expressed doubt was perceived as a natural occurrence and addressed with individual meetings to emphasize the development of trust.	A newly employed senior manager sensed her opportunity to win points among other senior managers by opposing change and questioning the change leader's transparency and ethics.	COVID-19 was a true test of belief in processes resulting in failure, where people quickly reverted back to the old way of working, with the addition of perceiving the change leader as the ultimate bad guy laying people off during the worst crisis in modern history.	(-)
Interviewee I	After the initial resistance from the majority of employees, a small group still remained resistant and complained about the purpose of the app, whereas others talked about functionalities instead.	As salespeople were using software more intensively, technical errors began to emerge, and the change leader relied on a third-party software vendor to transparently address all of the questions, emphasizing that they are all on the same team.	Some employees enjoyed technical difficulties and used them as an argument for sabotaging a successful implementation progress, and the change leader supported them in internalizing this change without strong resistance.	(-)
Interviewee J	Without a significant expression of doubt from employees, the change leader addressed minor concerns with statements encouraging self-efficacy and experimentation.	The change leader expressed reservations toward successful implementation of the next stage of the change project, focused more on operational excellence.	The change leader's understanding of the organization suggests that reverting to the operational part of the project is going to force a lot of people into their old, preprogrammed ways of working, which will have to be addressed more meaningfully in the future.	(-)

Source: Own work

3.4.6 The Resolution of Transformation (Act V)

Concluding with Yorke's metaphor of leaving home and going toward the woods, I focus on the fifth act of the change leaders' anecdotes. In this act, the change leader re-addresses change recipients' doubts and reluctance in an effort to force them out of regression into progressive change adoption. This act represents the end of the transformation process and predominantly shares a positive sentiment, with the exception of one change leader. Based on the Shakespearean three-stage model of narration that Yorke implemented within this act, I have identified: (a) change leaders reawakening change recipients from regression, (2) change recipients reaccepting the changed environment with reduced resistance, and (3) change recipients demonstrating total mastery of the proposed change, effectively ending the cycle of knowledge transference (Table 13).

At the end of the previous act, the change recipients demonstrated regression, returning to old ways of working instead of progressing toward a changed workplace. At the beginning of the fifth act, the change leader invests effort in reawakening change recipients from regression and encouraging reacceptance. Interestingly, change leaders reported many introspective moments, indicating a sense of personal transformation during the experience of change.

Interviewee C noted how he decided to give an aggressive opponent of change a second chance to try a more mature approach to talent development: *"We went from first, we need to introduce this to managers; then, we need to persuade managers. We did it one by one. So, we used the same process; then came the cuts. So, it was a big pain. We had the antagonist as well there, you know. We had a person who, I don't know. . . . It was so deeply unsatisfying and distrusting. She's still in the company; somehow, we manage that. But I still don't believe that we managed to solve that bad taste in the mouth completely. And that's already been a year ago now. So, over the course of more than a year, a lot of things change in between. I still don't think that we fixed that."*

Interviewee F expressed doubt about the occurrence of reawakening: "Not sure that reawakening ever happened. I think there was enough assurance that the main idea or principle that was implemented was still alive." Interestingly, Interviewee J previously expressed concerns about the future but then returned to talking about successful achievements instead: *"We are entering into the part of the story for the second time where the main character is going to face enemy soldiers in the dark, so to speak. There will be challenging times. I'm pretty convinced that there will be. Well, at the end of the day, the results will be produced in several, several, several . . . let's say "areas". . ."*

These introspective progressions helped change leaders to encourage change recipients to reaccept the changed environment with reduced resistance. The interviewees reported more team progression in this stage as well as recovery from previous conflicts, effectively announcing the grand finale of the story.

Table 13: Summary of Change Leader's Anecdotes on the Resolution of Transformation (Act V)

	Change leader reawakening change recipients from regression	Change recipients reaccept changed environment with reduced resistance	Change recipients demonstrate total mastery of proposed change	Sent.
Int. A	After some time, the change leader was able to disclose conditions that were negotiated, and the future buyer of the retail bank was determined.	Bank personnel embraced these news and continued working toward preparing the bank's balance sheet for the final part of the process.	The change leader emphasized the importance of success in the first stage of the proposed change because the second stage is the formal merger and legal integration with the new owner.	(+)
Int. B	Integration has separated the corporate renegades from regular employees, and the remaining members of the team were reemployed with the mother company.	Salespeople employed with the mother company started selling software despite expressing doubt and reservations.	The change leader has embarked on a new intrapreneurial project within the company in pursuit of new challenges, labeling himself as a corporate renegade.	(+)
Int. C	The biggest antagonist of the proposed change remained within the company, as the change leader decided to try active involvement and gave a second chance.	The organization continued to grow after a couple of rough periods, but it overall appreciates that all changes take a lot of time to succeed.	The general manager who was once feared was now broadly accepted as a cool guy, willing to make jokes at his own expense and perceived as a generally caring person.	(+)
Int. D	The change leader decided to change her approach in setting up perfectionist expectations and switch to a more supportive managerial style, allowing for learning to occur.	After the change leader presented and recognized all achievements done in previous periods, including the COVID-19 crisis, employees were less resistant and open to sharing knowledge.	Change recipients started collaborating and solving problems through knowledge sharing, effectively demonstrating successful change adoption.	(+)
Int. E	The change leader turned to other change team members and raised concerns about the change resistor's negative behavior, all deciding to ignore her inquiries and proceed as planned.	The change resistor did not object vocally but started asking operational questions instead, shedding no light on her previous reservations and formally getting on board.	The change team, local HR teams, and senior directors agreed on the completion of the framework conceptualization phase and proceeded into local implementation.	(+)

(table continues)

(continued)

	Change leader reawakening change recipients from regression	Change recipients reaccept changed environment with reduced resistance	Change recipients demonstrate total mastery of proposed change	Sent.
Int. F	The team leader doubts the awakening moment ever happened, as the effect of triggering change was buffered with destructive leadership style and compliance.	The superior manager was malignant in emphasizing that there was a lack of effort from the team leader, effectively ensuring reacceptance of the originally designed program.	Despite a lot of pushback, the team leader was able to introduce a new level of flexibility in an extremely rigid talent program, perceiving it as a personal triumph and leaving the company to start a solo venture.	(-)
Int. G	The change leader suspects that these results were reported for political reasons only because the project's new sponsors placed heavy emphasis on ROI and similar metrics, to which employees were particularly responsive.	Unfortunately, coercion was the only mechanism yielding results, and there was no true motivation for employees to accept change other than being punished for not accepting change.	True mastery of the software wasn't present; however, the change leader was happy to report a newly acquired mastery of managing his own reactions and giving up on some naive ethical principles.	(+)
Int. H	After the COVID-19 crisis was under control, things started going back to normal, and the change leader focused on being consistent and owning her own mistakes, hoping to improve the process and benefit the employees.	Instead of being defensive about the received negative feedback, the change leader focused on finding ways to meaningfully address it and cocreate a future approach with the vocal minority, reaccepting that this change project is not a one-off but a continuous effort.	Introduction of the 360 feedback process gave everyone a chance to voice their satisfaction with the change leader's work, ultimately resulting in relative acceptance, compared to the hard resistance at the beginning.	(+)
Int. I	With the number of prochange employees increasing, the change leader prioritized keeping them on board instead of addressing all complaints from change-resistant employees, counting on ambassadors to solve these disputes with resistant employees.	Instead of arguing and answering all of the questions, the change leader purposely left certain questions unanswered, provoking solution proposals from the salespeople and emphasizing collective learning from failure and overall experience.	At one point in time, the old way of working was just a fun story used as a metaphor to illustrate "the Stone Age," and the questioning of purpose was no longer present, replaced with accurate process instructions.	(+)
Int. J	The change leader transitioned from being doubtful about the unclear future to successfully completing the first stage of change.	The change leader reiterated several received recognitions, from the local employer's association to the mother company's group-level recognition for proposed projects.	Predominantly, sales results were emphasized as an accurate measure of successful change implementation, successfully creating envy among other companies within the group.	(+)

Source: Own work

Interviewee A reported how bank personnel embraced the good news and were inspired to continue working hard on the project: *“We knew that if we wanted to make this bank pretty enough to be sold, to make it bright, we needed to balance our balance sheet, you know. And the only option was to get rid of 400,000 clients, you know. That was the environment, and we knew that this was the expectation.”*

Interviewee D recognized all of the effort that the team had made in the previous period, which the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted: *“When I engaged in retrospection of the past two years—what we accomplished what we did—that was tremendous. That was from before COVID-19. It’s unbelievable, a huge step forward. But still, we’re doing this. We’re living it every day. We are in the middle of it, and it’s normal. And from this, I think it’s where these high expectations and the frustrations come from because it seems so normal.”*

Interviewee E highlighted the importance of teamwork in overcoming resistance from the vocal antagonist: *“That’s manifested itself by her not attending all of the meetings and not participating as much after a certain period of time. Honestly, you make a lot of effort to bring her into the fold and to listen to all perspectives and incorporate them. Eventually, it’s like, well, if you’re not going to be here, then we’re going to do what we feel is best because it’s gotten pretty much universal support at all levels, except for you and a couple of other people with individual concerns about it. But not concerns we can’t overcome.”*

On the other hand, Interviewee G shared a negative experience involving relying on coercion instead of prosocial methods in an effort to engage change recipients: *“Nothing special, to be honest. . . . Coercion was in full motion, and everyone played along, nominally complying but continuing to report all of the negative aspects of the software.”* I thus argue that reacceptance in this stage represents acceptance of the fact that change is constant and that this specific context will continue to change in the future.

In the final stage of the final act, the change recipients demonstrate total mastery of the proposed change and effectively end the circle of knowledge transfer from change leader to change recipient, mostly portrayed in a completely positive tone. Total mastery was perceived as a conditional and relative term, as change leaders mostly portrayed organizational change as a continuum and a never-ending story instead of a full circle as Yorke suggested.

Interviewee H recognized the acceptance of a 360 feedback tool as an indicator of mastery, simultaneously mentioning leaving the company afterward and starting a new change: *“I asked every single employee to provide feedback on HR during the 360 evaluation process in the company. The results were much better than I had expected. Some teams were still pretty resilient, but the situation wasn’t critical. Everyone (even the critics) saw something positive in this organizational change. I left the company before the change was fully accepted. But some of the strongest signs of change acceptance in my last few months was that my loudest*

“opponents” were slowly getting on board and were even providing me with constructive feedback.”

Interviewee B also left the company following the successful implementation of the project, reporting successful sales of software as a sign of mastery: *“But a lot of sales guys, more than half, are able to sell software now as well. . . . So, we sell it as a service just to sell software. And now, what was the outcome? We went from 225,000,000 euro to 350,000,000 last year. I will need to repeat this with another business dealing with similar symptoms to the one before.”*

Interviewee I used an interesting metaphor depicting the old way of working as the Stone Age. The interviewee used previous experiences as a lesson to reinforce the new way of working: *“When we are talking about this, we ask them: “Do you even remember how you were working before?” And they say, “No, we don't remember it; we were like in the Stone Age. We cannot even think about working that way again.” So, it's also a good story when we are implementing something new. When we have new changes, then we say, okay, you remember when we were talking about mobile ordering? So, you know how you had doubts? Now, it's, you cannot imagine your day or working without that. And they agree. And then we go to another topic.”*

With different styles of narration and different interpretations of change, stories seemed to naturally gravitate toward the same goal. However, it appears that the change journey that these people experienced were dramatically different. A brief overview of the change leader's stories throughout the aforementioned acts is presented in Table 14, with six narratives portraying a negative sentiment.

3.4.6 Differences in Styles of Organizational Change Metanarratives

In an effort to understand how the interviewed change leaders wanted to frame their change experiences in this project, I asked them to specify the genres of their stories. Although they specified different genres, they shared the common element of tension and mystery, which is closely related to the adventure genre identified as the most engaging genre (Ashok et al., 2013).

Dark inversion was equally present in the interviewees' anecdotes, addressing both good things turning bad and bad things turning good over the course of the story. It predominantly revolved around the associates' character transformation. The interviewees' metaphors varied across stories, but they each commonly portrayed the elements of hope and encouragement toward an ambitious goal. Several interviewees used more than one metaphor in their anecdotes, and these interviewees mentioned several references to organizational culture and symbolism as well.

Table 14: Summary of Change Leader's Stories Portrayed Through Yorke's Framework

	ACT I	ACT II	ACT III	ACT IV	ACT V	Sent.
Interviewee A	The change leader is informed of shareholders' irrational decision to sell the local retail banking business, regardless of what the future buyer will do with the bank personnel headcount, and processes it internally.	The change leader communicates the mother company's intentions transparently and addresses all concerns regarding employees' personal well-being.	The change leader addresses bank employees' questions on available options while emphasizing togetherness, suggesting the optimization of the bank's balance sheet.	The team invests a lot of effort toward the same goal after the change leader was able to turn fear from ambiguity to hope in ambiguity.	The change leader announces that the bank has a new buyer and that negotiations successfully kept all headcount without downgrading or salary cuts.	(+)
Interviewee B	The organization was enjoying the status quo in manufacturing, but market circumstances created a dent in the company's balance sheet.	The change leader identified an opportunity for a new system-based business model, opposing the traditional component-based system model, but it was ridiculed by fellow senior managers.	Originally from R&D, the change leader got a job in sales and managed to gather corporate renegades as core team members.	The team managed to get things done and showcase profitability, but that raised the topic of reintegrating with the mother company, which caused turbulence within the team.	Some team members left the team and the company, but the integration was successful, and the change leader embarked on a new intrapreneurial journey.	(-)
Interviewee C	The ideal of a creative startup was beginning to decline as company headcount and complexity were increasing, signaling the need for formal processes and managerial efforts.	The new general manager was not accepted immediately, and the owners did not communicate this change properly, triggering passive-aggressive feedback from employees.	The fear of being perceived as totalitarian was blocking the change leader's personal growth, but as time went by, he started feeling more comfortable in conveying bad news, along with the usual good news and optimism.	The change leader regressed to old ways of working, which were not particularly effective, but realized what was going on and decided to make adjustments and learn from failure.	The general manager was accepted within the organization, signaling the acceptance of a new and more formal organizational culture.	(-)
Interviewee D	Employees were not cooperating and jealously protected their knowledge without sharing it, and then the change leader learned that the mother company was imitating a change.	Compliant to the old organizational culture, the change leader did not receive negative feedback but encountered passive-aggressive resistance from employees who stayed within the company.	Change recipients were resistant toward accepting additional workload and complained to the change leader, who addressed these concerns by emphasizing how continuous learning is the only way to stay relevant on the labor market.	The change leader underwent emotionally intensive soul-searching, decided to change her perfectionist expectations, and turned them into a managerial style supporting learning from mistakes.	Change recipients started cooperating and sharing knowledge, moving away from their silos approach and embracing the culture of organizational learning.	(-)

(table continues)

(continued)

	ACT I	ACT II	ACT III	ACT IV	ACT V	Sent.
Interviewee E	The change leader personally witnessed how outdated the old talent-identification framework was, enjoying the support of senior HR managers after formal appointment to lead the project.	Strong endorsement from senior leaders within the organization kept resistance low and helped turn objections into comprisable solutions.	The change leader used soundboards and openly talked about all concerns that local HR teams had, effectively encouraging them to start integrating the new framework into their business plans.	An individual was blocking progress and vocally expressing dissatisfaction without participating in meetings, despite her superior manager's endorsement of the project.	Using strong influence from other local HR teams and the change resistor's superior manager, he placed reservations aside and successfully completed the conceptualization phase of the change project, leading to country implementation.	(+)
Interviewee F	Beautiful promises hooked the team leader into entering the organization, but gossips and a direct conflict started to show the true nature of the organization.	The team leader tried growing allies, but the superior manager's notoriety and power forced everyone to support against proposed changes, leaving the team leader alone in the dark.	Instead of directly attacking the superior manager, the team leader decided to introduce incremental changes to remain under the radar and play to the superior manager's ego, being the original designer of the program.	The team leader decided to bootleg the change of the talent program, reverted to guerrilla tactics, and mirrored the superior manager's behavior: sharing minimal information and relying on ingratiation as a smoke screen with the superior manager.	True transformation of the talent program was not delivered, but some additional flexibility was introduced through the process of serious self-management and conflict management, resulting in a new entrepreneurial venture.	(-)
Interviewee G	This posttransition, highly profitable corporation was informed of ongoing change via email and a separate event, effectively starting a vocal and strong wave of resistance mentioning hard words, such as money laundering and laying off people to drive profits.	The change leader relied on software demonstration sessions to ensure senior leadership endorsement but did not hesitate to revert to coercive methods for elder employees who were more resistant, while perceiving acceptance as a continuum instead of static.	In an effort to speak the language of the opposing side, the change leader asked for criticism of software functionalities instead of praising them, only to receive personal insults from one of the senior managers.	After being betrayed by a strong ally, the change leader's bluffs were exposed, and global implementation results confirmed that the opposing side was right, portraying the effort as meaningless in the end.	The change leader was able to make the best out of a bad thing, finding new sponsors who focused on ROI metrics and utilized coercion methods to battle resistance, developing self-control and losing some of his ethical principles on the way.	(-)
Interviewee H	A challenging opportunity to introduce HRM practices into a creative organization, enjoying its unique market position and laissez-faire management style, turned sour out of fear of being corporatized.	The change leader focused on building partner relationships by trying to speak the language of employees and worked on adjusting her image to be more "creative" and not "corporate."	After initial hiccups, the majority of allies were strong and influential; however, a majority of senior managers used this change project as a vehicle to convey dissatisfaction to the upper echelon, which they disliked.	As COVID-19 struck the world and a new senior manager was hired in the company, the opposing force gained strong allies, quickly diminishing all previous progress done by the change leader and leaving her in the middle of the conflict between power structures in the organization.	Defensive reception of employee feedback was turned into constructive criticism, used to cocreate a different approach focused on reassuring displayed fears, ultimately resulting in relative acceptance of HRM processes with more work to do in the future.	(+)

(table continues)

(continued)

	ACT I	ACT II	ACT III	ACT IV	ACT V	Sent.
Interviewee I	Salespeople saw the introduction of a GPS-based mobile app as an invasion of privacy, jeopardizing their core values and purpose.	The change leader's personal stories on previous experience, involving a much worse version of a similar mobile app, convinced some individuals to try the app, effectively turning them into early adopters and future ambassadors of the project.	The first signs of questioning technical details and functionalities occurred, whereas questioning of the app's purpose remained fairly steady, leading to the introduction of usage incentives to play the competitive drive of salespeople.	Tech-related questions were being transparently addressed by a third-party vendor, emphasizing togetherness in the ambiguous process, and loud resistors were met with compassion and understanding instead of arguments, effectively supporting their inner processing of change.	The old way of working is used as a metaphor of outdated and ineffective perspectives of sales, leaving some of the questions unanswered in an effort to emphasize collective learning and updating process instructions.	(-)
Interviewee J	The old way of working within the organization was driven by the former CEO and characterized with a micromanaging and operation-focused leadership style, and it was directly attacked with the new CEO's completely opposite leadership style.	The change leader combined several change initiatives under the umbrella of a recent merger and acquisition, and while there was some passive-aggressive opposition, direct opponents left the organization, and a majority of the organization started making adjustments.	Employees started making minor changes and adjustments that were publicly recognized by the CEO, resulting in the creation and successful management of a social media channel, as well as the creation of a finance podcast, all created without the CEO's active involvement.	Although there was no expression of doubt after acceptance from employees, the change leader expressed a lot of doubt in terms of coping with future change projects focused on operational processes.	The change leader emphasized sales results and external validation, especially from the mother company, which successfully created envy from other companies within the group.	(+)

Source: Own work

This indicates a relatively higher level of emotional awareness, an essential element of engaging stories. In terms of identifying a metanarrative of organizational change storytelling, the interviewees' anecdotes told different stories. Their initial stories explained what they were doing within organizations while leading change. The transformative element in these stories closely resembles Lewin's model of change, where the initial status of the organization was frozen in the status quo, unfrozen from change leaders' efforts, transformed through change recipients' change adoption, and then frozen in the new and changed status quo.

On the other hand, their stories actually told stories about personal transformation and how their experiences transformed them. Although corporate stories lack true emotional involvement and seem to be similar within different contextual settings, personal stories are rich with emotionally intensive content and are unique. This suggests that the metanarrative of organizational change storytelling is a personal transformation story, where transformation is manifested within the sentiment of a portrayed experience.

3.5 Discussion

My inquiry into the key elements of recollected experience during organizational change highlighted the importance of style in conveying key messages across different acts of the story. Although corporate-style narratives lacked emotionally engaging content, personal-style narratives were rich with sentiment and portrayed human experiences. This relaying of knowledge carries with it a relatable sentiment of what it means to be a human experiencing intensive emotions, which is not the case with high-level corporate narratives. The sentiment changed in between acts, just as the focus from the central characters changed, and knowledge was exchanged in line with the emotionally intensive sensemaking–sensegiving dichotomy (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

In the first act, the current situation within the organization is not working in favor of the organization, so either an internal or an external influence, or a threat, triggers the need for change. A change leader is appointed and represents the face of change, as the focus changes from the organization to the change leader. In this act, the change leader's knowledge is ahead of the change recipients' knowledge, and this discrepancy needs to be adjusted. In the second act, the change recipients begin to gain knowledge of this change while expressing doubt and resisting change. In a sense, the change recipients provide inputs to the change leader, and as the knowledge transfers, the focus changes from the change leader to the change recipients.

The change leader addresses previously disclosed questions and criticism from change recipients in Act III to return to the active position of change leadership. With the act drawing from personal energy, sharing personal stories and anecdotes, and emphasizing the emotional benefits of change adoption, the focus changes from change recipients to the change leader. The majority of the change leaders did not report big changes in knowledge with the change recipients in the middle of this stage, suggesting that the change leaders were not aware of their

growing skillsets. This may be indicative of change leaders' ability to frame change recipients' progression instead of focusing on organizational results.

Interestingly, change leaders who mentioned the change recipients' changes in knowledge were willing to repeat themselves numerous times, similar to the behavior that parents or teachers exert when encouraging children to continue to experiment. Additionally, change leaders who demonstrated the aforementioned style cues frequently changed between the story realm and the tale world (Bauman et al., 2003), reporting the delivered speech and changing characters in their narrations.

At the end of Act III, the change recipients and the change leader seem to be at an equal level regarding their knowledge of change, leading into Act IV. This act is unique within the story, as it seems to split the way in which narrative progression is portrayed. Change recipients express new doubt and second-guess change leaders' inputs as they test the knowledge prototype that was established in the previous act. This time, the change leader undergoes personal doubt and reluctance, nearing the same regression that the change recipients experience as well. This act portrays the strongest emotional reactions and the darkest moments of the project, seemingly portraying the identity-searching aspect of organizational change. Interestingly, the interviewees' reported morals of the story seem to relate to this act in particular, suggesting that the sensemaking of reality needs to be cocreated and not enforced.

The greater amount of pressure and the stronger emotions expressed in Act IV encourage change leaders to place greater emphasis on togetherness and on team efforts in Act V, the grand finale of the story. Change leaders and change recipients are once again at the same level of knowledge, but this time, they have experienced the same emotional aspect of change. This brings them closer together and grows their mutual understanding of their respective positions. The focus once again shifts to the organization in this act with a predominantly positive sentiment, as the realization of newly established mastery leads the organization toward change adoption in a cocreated reality.

These results complement aforementioned quantitative results, and introduce how change leaders perceived organizational change into the conversation. Key elements of recollected experience during organizational change open up space for additional inquiry, in mixing methodological results towards a more meaningful conclusion. These experimental perspectives are furthermore explored in the following chapter.

4 FINDINGS AND OVERALL DISCUSSION

Organizational change leadership is a complex phenomenon. Researching the underlying mechanism of change leaders' influential efforts is an equally complex endeavour, addressed with mixed-method research design. At the beginning of the first chapter I propose an alternative perception of organizational change. As organizational change unfolds within the organizational change, it changes the existing organizational ideology, incrementally or radically depending on the scope of proposed change. In other words, employees experiencing change, experience a change of ideology which requires adaptation of existing social identity and consequently their social identification.

In the first chapter I have highlighted propositions which outline the narrative-based conceptual model of how organizational change is experienced by the change leader and change recipients. Inspired by innovation diffusion and converging interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives, I proposed an adjusted perspective of change leader's and change recipients' relationship, where change leaders serve the role of attachment figures. Similar to the influential mechanism that human brands utilize on social media, I propose that change leaders highlight threats and benefits of organizational change. More specifically, I connected insights from social-cognitive theory, adult attachment theory and social-identity theory.

Change leaders utilize sensegiving in an effort to effectively enhance change recipients' sensemaking process. Emotional intensity of organizational change nudges change recipients to seek out behavioural cues from change leaders, similar to the way children seek out parental figures to alleviate anxiety and provide emotional comfort. The stronger this attachment is; the more influence a change leader may exert. In the final stage of organizational change, change recipients are exposed to the new ideological setting and have to adjust their social identification and consequently adjust their personal identity as well. Depending on how threats and benefits from proposed change are communicated, change recipients will self-place themselves as members or opponents of ideological streams, voicing their support or resistance as a result.

These propositions are empirically tested in the second chapter, portraying one side of the story about organizational change. Change recipients self-reported and rated their perception of change leaders' behavior during organizational change. Research findings partially confirm my hypotheses, confirming that perceived Psychological Need Satisfaction partially moderates the relationship between Champion Behavior and Readiness to Change. Hypothesized moderated mediation model was not confirmed, as change leaders' utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence did not moderate the aforementioned primary relationship. Additional analysis highlighted some unexpected results, suggesting that change leader's utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics predicts the primary relationship stronger than change leader's demonstration of Champion Behavior. Similarly, additional analysis suggested that change leaders' utilization of Narrative Intelligence affects the primary relationship with a stronger effect when utilized without Leadership Influence Tactics.

Quantitative analysis suggested that change leaders should utilize Narrative Intelligence separately to create an emotional foundation with change recipients, and influence the emotional aspect of dual-hemisphere information processing. Similarly, change leaders would utilize Leadership Influence Tactics to ensure that the rational aspect of dual-hemisphere information processing is accounted for, effectively adjusting the message to meet the needs of respective change recipients. Achieving dual-hemisphere information processing ensures that their message is internalized and enhances the sensemaking process in change recipients, thus enhancing individual readiness to change.

Following up on this quantitative insights, I conducted a qualitative study aimed at identifying key elements of change leaders' recollected experience during organizational change. I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews aimed at incident recollection, with change leaders whose team members previously participated in the quantitative study. After that I conducted a follow-up narrative analysis using Yorke's screenwriting framework aimed at identifying engaging elements of narratives. The aim of this study was to enrich change recipients' perspective with change leaders' perspective, providing a more holistic understanding of how the sensemaking and sensegiving processes unfold during organizational change. More specifically, the focus of this study was narrative engagement which is a relatively unaddressed dimension of change leaders' persuasive communication efforts during organizational change.

The majority of change leaders specified elements of adventure and mystery in their stories, while conveying organizational change stories. Although some change leaders positioned themselves as heroes and some focused on team efforts, the underlying story highlighted their personal transformation from the change experience. Some narratives were more engaging and others were less engaging, however they all portrayed a sentiment transition between acts. All stories shared a sense of transition from no knowledge of change, towards understanding of change, expression of doubt, addressing of these concerns finally resulting in mastery of proposed change. Their stories were stories about knowledge being transferred from the change leader to change recipients, in a more or less effective way.

Mixing these individual method findings, offers a more holistic understanding of the means that change leaders revert to in an effort to successfully influence change adoption. Observed change leaders did everything by the book and successfully lead change in terms of achieving organizational results, however those more successful managed to transform their team members' understanding of organizational change at different levels. Organizational change is a phenomenon occurring on the level of the process or the narrow workplace directly affected with the change, change recipients individually, change leaders individually, their collaboration method on a dyadic level, their team collaboration on an intraorganizational level and consequently the organization as a whole.

I connected change recipients' perception of change leader's utilization of Narrative Intelligence, with respective change leader's organizational change story. Results are somewhat

expected, suggesting that change leaders whose Narrative Intelligence was scored relatively higher, told more engaging stories. Additionally, they referenced organizational culture, directly mentioned symbolism and generally told more engaging stories which portrayed sentiment transition and kept you guessing what the outcome is going to be. Interestingly, Interviewee B and Interviewee C two of the lowest rated change leaders in unconnected organizational contexts and change project settings referenced totalitarianism, which may be indicative of how these people perceived discourse.

This inquiry into the key elements of storytelling in organizational change highlighted the importance of style in conveying key messages across different acts of the story. While corporate-style narratives lacked emotionally engaging content, personal-style narratives were rich with sentiment and portrayed a human experience. This relaying of knowledge shares relatable sentiment of what it means to be a human experiencing intensive emotions, which is not the case with high-level corporate narratives.

Change leaders whose Narrative Intelligence was scored relatively higher, were not afraid to admit their mistakes and portray their personal transformation from the experience, whereas change leaders with relatively lower scores focused on themselves and self-enhancement. This suggests that more compelling stories tell a story about personal experience and showcase humility instead of self-importance. Sentiment changed in-between acts, just as the focus from central characters changed and how knowledge was being exchanged, in line with the emotionally intensive sensemaking-sensegiving dichotomy (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

In the first act, the current situation within the organization is not working in favour of the organization, so either an internal or external influence, or threat, triggers the need for change. A change leader is appointed and represents the face of change, as the focus changes from the organization to the change leader. In this act, the change leader's knowledge is ahead of change recipients' knowledge and this discrepancy needs to be adjusted. Change leaders whose Narrative Intelligence is perceived relatively higher started with a negative sentiment and managed to hold tension within the narrative, while change leaders with a relatively lower score demonstrated a positive sentiment with self-enhancement.

In the second act, change recipients begin gaining knowledge of this change while expressing doubt and resisting change for the first time. In a sense, change recipients are giving inputs to the change leader, and as the knowledge transfers, the focus changes from the change leader to change recipients. Change leaders whose Narrative Intelligence was scored relatively lower, maintained a dominantly negative sentiment in this act. On the other hand, change leaders with a relatively higher score in Narrative Intelligence maintained a positive sentiment, expecting a degree of doubt and focusing on personal experience of change throughout the story. Comparative differences in style and perceived Narrative Intelligence displayed in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Summary of differences in styles of organizational change narratives

	Genre	Dark inversion	Selected metaphor	Initial story	Story interpretation with change leader's transformative moment	Perceived Narrative Intelligence (average 3.82)
Int. A	Thriller drama	Did not specify	Nothing is impossible.	Story about change management techniques and approaches during an M&A process in a retail bank	This was a story about the relentless pursuit of giving back to a high-performing team during their time of need. The transformation was manifested within the change of narrative, instinctively framed as a catastrophe driven by fear and reframed as a story of enthusiasm driven by hope.	4.35
Int. B	Did not specify	Did not specify	Aspirin temporarily takes care of the pain but not the root cause of that pain.	Story of how an intrapreneurial project turned into a successful venture, despite initial ridiculing	This was a war story about a visionary succeeding despite being ridiculed from members of a desired reference group. The transformation was manifested in the character of the change leader, initially being presented as a corporate businessman, later showcasing corporate rebellion and divergent thinking patterns.	3.6
Int. C	Drama	Despised "corporate" thinking turned into mainstream ideology.	Did not specify	Story of how a creative and fun company had to transform into a more corporate and process-driven organization	This was a story about growing up and accepting more responsibilities by owning up previous mistakes. The transformation was manifested in the way the change leader talked about maturity, portraying himself as the proud parent of a teenager.	3.5
Int. D	Sci-Fi	Did not specify	Big tankers vs. sailing boats	Story of how a rigid organization learned how to be more flexible and open to new experiences and collaboration	This was a story of personal rediscovery, changing expectations, and learning adaptive perfectionism. The transformation was manifested in the transition from an ego- and human-centric approach to organizational learning and development.	4.007
Int. E	Mystery	Conflict can be good.	Employee agency	A story about a successful conceptualization of a new talent-development framework	This was a story of successful politician campaigning for prosocietal values in a dark world of the power hungry establishment. The transformation was manifested in the way in which organization turned from obscurity to transparency.	3.56

(table continues)

(continued)

	Genre	Dark inversion	Selected metaphor	Initial story	Story interpretation with change leader's transformative moment	Perceived Narrative Intelligence (average 3.82)
Int. F	Tragicomedy	Loss of common sense due to pride	Open windows when the doors are locked.	Story of how toxic senior leadership with a lack of vision blocks all change efforts, regardless of how skilled a change leader is	This was a story about self-discovery and how the team leader got tired of being bossed around by a less competent, but more politically savvy, senior manager. The transformation was manifested with the team leader leaving the corporation and starting a solo venture instead.	3.7
Int. G	Documentary	The change leader's ethics were compromised.	We're here to nip it in the bud.	Story of how a young, aspiring change leader hopes to overcome resistance of postcommunist employees with empirically tested methods	This was a story of initiation, where an idealistic and fresh-out-of-college change leader was confronted with the reality of capitalism. The transformation was manifested within the individual's core values and justified unethical practices with business priorities.	3.86
Int. H	Adventure with a dash of comedy and pinch of drama	Biggest ally turned out to be the biggest burden.	If the mountain won't come to Muhammad, Muhammad must go to the mountain.	Story of how a junior HRM with corporate experience wanted to implement HRM practices within a chaotically creative and resistant environment	This was a story about coming of age and going through a rite of passage. Transformation was manifested in the way the change leader perceived her own mistakes and gave up on pointing fingers at others, pointing the finger at herself instead.	3.55
Int. I	Sci-Fi thriller	The whole project was perceived as a threat, and now it is an everyday tool that helps sales.	Everything is possible. This is a marathon and not a race. We are writing history now.	Story of how transparency and consistency of managerial efforts focused on core values helped medicinal salesforce digitalize sales	This was a story about a teacher being mindful of students' core values and how important their sense of purpose is during their transition to higher education. Transformation was manifested in the way benefits were communicated, from reducing the perceived threat to core values to enhancing features aiding daily sales operations.	4.15
Int. J	Fairy tale	Good people turned bad	Several metaphors used	Story of a successful merger recognized by the mother company and an intro into the challenge that awaits	This was a battle-hardened general's story designed to prepare an army of underdogs for the biggest challenge of their lives—that is, when the beast that is change returns. Transformation was manifested in the way the whole story ended with a cliffhanger, awaiting the upcoming change.	3.9

Source: Own work

Change leader then addresses previously disclosed questions and criticism from change recipients in act 3, in order to return to the active position of change leadership. Drawing from personal energy, sharing personal stories, anecdotes and emphasizing emotional benefits from change adoption, the focus in this act changes from change recipients to the change leader. The majority of change leaders did not report a big change of knowledge with change recipients in the middle of this stage, suggesting that change leaders were not aware of their growing skillset. This may be indicative of change leaders' ability to frame change recipients' progression instead of focusing on organizational results. Change leaders with a relatively higher score in Narrative Intelligence, portrayed this act in a positive sentiment, seeming to focus their attention on the broader context instead of focusing on self-enhancement, continuing this read thread thorough this act.

Interestingly, change leaders who mentioned change recipients' change in knowledge were willing to repeat themselves numerous times, similar to the behavior that parents or teachers exert when encouraging children to continue experimenting. Additionally, change leaders who demonstrated aforementioned style cues, frequently changed between the story realm and tale world (Bauman et al., 2003), reporting delivered speech and changing characters in their narration.

At the end of act 3, change recipients and the change leader seem to be at an equal level of knowledge of change, leading into act 4. This act is unique within the story, as it seems to split the way narrative progression is portrayed. Change recipients express new doubt and second guess change leader's inputs, as they test the knowledge prototype that was established in the previous act. This time change leader undergoes personal doubt and reluctance, nearing the same regression that change recipients experience as well. This act portrays the strongest emotional reactions and the darkest moments of the project, seemingly portraying the identity-searching aspect of organizational change. Interestingly, interviewees' reported morals of the story seem to relate to this act in particular, suggesting that sensemaking of reality needs to be co-created and not enforced.

More pressure and stronger emotions expressed in act 4, encourage change leaders to place a larger emphasis on togetherness and team efforts in act 5, the grand finale of the story. Change leaders and change recipients are once again at the same level of knowledge, but this time they have experienced the same emotional aspect of change, bringing them closer together and growing a mutual understanding of their respective positions. The focus once again shifts to the organization in this act with a predominantly positive sentiment, as the realization of newly established mastery leads the organization towards change adoption in a co-created reality.

Narrative Intelligence is an important skill for change leaders leading organizational change as it seems to reflect their emotional intelligence in terms of recognizing emotional states in change leaders. It also reflects their ability to frame sentiment transitions through various stages, allowing them to turn fear into hope and portray negative emotional reactions as key

learnings for future activities. A narratively intelligent change leader is able to create a theme that is easy to follow with a well-crafted plot which contains transitions of sentiment, is easily categorized as a certain genre which constructs primary expectations in terms of narrative and is able to narrate that as a story with compelling characters that change recipients seem to care about.

The more interesting the storyline and their style is specific, the more engaging the narrative, which is used as a primary sensemaking tool in change recipients who experience emotional valence of change, while change leaders experience this transformation as well. It appears that most engaging narratives are narratives about personal transformation which are able to relay what it means to be a human being or teach something about the context in which fallible human beings exist. And while these narratives relay an emotional aspect of a certain message, change leaders independently turn to different Leadership Influence Tactics (predominantly rational persuasion and consulting) to relay rational aspects of the same message, encouraging dual-hemisphere information processing and information retention. The more willing the change leaders it to repeat stated messages, the greater the learning from change recipients.

Considering the emotionally intensive nature of organizational change, findings suggest that change leaders who are mindful of change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction exert more influence over their readiness to change. Stories seem to be particularly persuasive in relaying emotionally intensive content and change leaders with relatively higher scores in Narrative Intelligence implied the need for autonomy and competence in their anecdotes.

Unlike Champion Behavior which is more energy demanding, utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence does a better job at energy preservation while maintaining the positive effect between change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction and Readiness to Change. This suggests that change leaders should revert to these behaviors instead of depleting their energy through leadership by example, while being mindful of emotional dynamics that change recipients experience in organizational change.

4.4.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

This doctoral dissertation aims to contribute to theoretical conversations in the scientific community as well as to practitioners dealing with rapidly increasing organizational change failure. I report three theoretical implications across three methodologically different chapters. First, I have corroborated the importance of sensegiving with an overarching social-cognitive theory (Weick, 2020) as the foundation. More precisely I argued the importance of the sensemaking-sensegiving mechanism during organizational change in an effort to minimize organizational change failure, through prosocial change leadership. I suggested a commensurable theoretical perspective of organizational change that combines: (a) social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) as the overarching foundation for the triggers of organizational change; (b) adult attachment theory (Bowlby, 2013) as the foundation for the

mediating mechanisms of organizational change; and (c) social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) as the desired outcome of organizational change.

I complement existing cognitive perspectives on the experience of organizational change suggested by Liu and Perrewé (2005) with affective perspectives. Change leaders demonstrate and instruct desired social cues and help with socialization in new ideological settings of the organization through sensegiving, while change recipients interpret these cues and construct their own understanding of organizational ideology. Change recipients can accept these instructions or resist them, adjusting their personal identities through ideological social identification. Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory addresses these dynamics and open up space for a meaningful discussion in terms of understanding how underlying mechanisms of change leaders' influencing efforts unfold.

Drawing parallels from similar relationships where knowledge of the future is shared between actors, more knowledgeable actors comfort actors experiencing anxiety. This behavior can be perceived in teacher-student relationships but also in mentor-mentee; coach-athlete; and parent-child relationships. Adult attachment formation broadly outlines how influential mechanisms may unfold, as different early childhood experiences define an individual's attachment style. Outside romantic relationships, different adult attachment styles determine how actors exchange information and collaborate thus creating different fitting or misfitting combinations of styles.

Furthermore exploring this dynamic, I turn to self-determination theory, where an individual's perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence in a relationship, determines the satisfaction with the relationships, i.e., strength of attachment to the attachment figure and the willingness to contribute to the relationship. This mechanism is mentioned in social media influencers' persuasive communication efforts, and serves as inspiration for my further methodological inquiry into the subject and hypothesized relationships.

Additionally, I argue that a change leader's prosocial approach to change leadership relies on adult attachment formation and the strength of this attachment. In this contextual setting, a change leader is an attachment figure, investing effort in alleviating change recipients' emotional distress caused by organizational change. Because attachment formation relies on interactions between actors, I argue that change leaders have the power to influence these interactions with a prosocial approach.

Proposed interconstruct relationships suggest interdisciplinary perspectives on the underlying mechanism of influence, with a greater focus on the sensegiving process, unlike the majority of the available literature focused on the sensemaking process of organizational change. In the modern era of social media influencers and the rapidly growing democratization of power, perception easily becomes reality.

Second, in the following chapter focused on quantitative methodology, I test previously stated propositions. I extended existing perspectives on change leaders' influential efforts mentioned by Battilana and Casciaro (2013) by introducing knowledge transfer perspectives from adult attachment literature. Conducted analyses confirm that change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between change leaders' demonstrated Champion Behavior and change recipients' Readiness to Change. In other words, stronger attachment manifested through perceived autonomy, relatedness and competence in a relationship between change leaders as attachment figure and change recipients, strengthens change leaders' influence over change recipients.

As attachment figures, change leaders can utilize different prosocial approaches to strengthen how change recipients perceive autonomy, relatedness and competence in the relationship. Contrary to previous studies emphasizing the importance of Champion Behavior in innovation management, my research indicated that Leadership Influence Tactics are better at predicting Readiness to Change in change recipients. This suggests that change leaders should invest their energy in utilizing different leadership influence tactics specific to their organizational context in order to encourage innovation adoption. Additionally, my research complements previous studies on organizational storytelling, suggesting that change leaders who utilize storytelling separate from Leadership Influence Tactics, affect change recipients' Readiness to Change more effectively.

Third, in the chapter focused on qualitative methodology, I continue towards complementing the work of Battilana and Casciaro (2013), by providing an additional insight into influential efforts and persuasive communication of change leaders. More precisely, I introduce narrative engagement into the conversation. I argue that by utilizing the mechanism of narrative transportation, effective change leaders give sense to organizational change by telling stories that captivate change recipients' emotional interpretation of change during their sensemaking process.

While my explorative methodological approach is not grounded in well established methodology, I contribute to the broad body of knowledge by trying something new. More specifically, my methodological contribution is reflected in the pioneer application of a screenwriting perspective into the field of organizational storytelling (e.g., Boje, 1991). I thus contribute towards our understanding of what are the key elements of recollected experience during organizational change. I argue that rhetoric grounded in personal experiences represents the optimal style which triggers dual-hemisphere information processing, and encourages individuals to identify with the newly created reality.

Similar to theoretical contribution, I also report practical implications across three methodologically different chapters. Change leaders create new organizational realities by giving sense to change and helping change recipients make sense of ongoing change and redefining their workplace identities.

Change leaders should therefore observe organizational change as a product on the internal market within the organization. By emphasizing benefits over perceived threats, change leaders could help stimulate positive emotional reactions in change recipients and then furthermore leverage prosocial change leadership approach. More specifically, change leaders could utilize champion behavior, different leadership influence tactics and narrative intelligence to alter existing narratives and address change recipients' concerns more adequately, thus enhancing change recipients' perception of autonomy, relatedness and competence. The stronger the attachment between actors, the stronger the influence of change leaders as attachment figures, which results in higher readiness to change in change recipients.

First, organizational change is a product for internal customers. Benefits arising from organizational change need to be clearly presented to all change recipients in an emotionally engaging manner of internal marketing, instead of being presented as an urgent activity with no choice but to comply (e.g., Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). This approach is consistent with Liu and Perrewé's (2005) suggestions of primary and secondary appraisal with associated emotional responses as well as suggestions of compelling narratives (e.g., Woodside et al., 2008) and persuasive argumentation (e.g., Tormala & Petty, 2002).

Second, change leaders are the face of organizational change. They act as attachment figures or "human brands" that influence attitudes by leveraging attachment strength (Thomson, 2006) and leading by example (e.g., Howell et al., 1990). By building this metanarrative of organizational change and the competent change leader before actual change management efforts take place, change recipients will begin evaluating the change leader's personal competence with a positive sentiment. Storytelling plays an important role in the emotional engagement of change recipients during the sensegiving process and therefore should be used in a meaningful and contextualized manner (e.g., Brown et al., 2009). Organizations that tell stories are more successful in conveying meaning and encourage individuals to negotiate their social identity, ensuring a more enjoyable and less stressful sensemaking process.

Finally, stories about heroic endeavours are least engaging. Change leaders should structure their emotionally engaging narratives in five acts, as they search for their personal style and know what to expect on the journey. Similarly, narrative aesthetics enhance emotional sensemaking of organizational change and reduces change recipients' resistance to persuasive ideological messages. More precisely, the use of hope, construction of tension-conflict dynamics and leveraging dark inversion in the story enhances narrative engagement and information retention. Acknowledging how organizational change stories unfold, change leaders could preserve their energy and invest it within the most demanding and challenging Act 4. Interestingly, this emotionally intensive stage of organizational change unfolds after continuous signs of knowledge acquisition and experimentation with existing knowledge.

4.4.2 Limitations and Future Research Perspectives

As any other social science endeavour, this doctoral dissertation has certain limitations that need to be stated in order to inspire future research and progression of the research field. A brief overview is displayed below, and a detailed overview is displayed in the overall findings and discussion section.

1. *Sample size*: Despite my best effort, I was not able to secure a stronger participation rate, which is probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic which unfortunately caused a lot of fear and chaos in confirmed Organizations.
2. *Multilevel analysis*: Partially connected with the previous point, I was not able to analyse nested data simply because the targeted response rate was not attainable due to lack of interest and consequently lack of access.
3. *Common method bias*: Regardless of statistically significant and low Harman's single factor test suggesting low risk of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), change recipients reporting perceived behavior of change leaders could be flawed by common method bias. Consequently, my analysis results may be partially distorted as well.
4. *Interviewer bias*: Accounting for interviewer or researcher bias in qualitative research during narrative analysis and interpretation, the same dataset may be interpreted differently by a researcher with a different skillset, demographics and overall experience.

Aforementioned limitations need to be taken into consideration when considering inferential statements made in the conclusion section, and furthermore explored in future research. Despite these limitations, this doctoral dissertation provides valuable insights and suggests methodologically meaningful answers to research questions. More specifically, I highlight limitations and future research perspectives across three methodologically different chapters.

In the first chapter, I introduced interdisciplinary perspectives. Therefore, a variety of directions for future research emerged with the goal of achieving parsimonious conclusions. My proposed narrative-based conceptual model considered the most cited research articles within the Web of Science, covering developmental psychology, linguistics, political science, consumer psychology, and even religious studies as examples of extremely turbulent environment adopting change. Future research may include different articles within identical research fields or even different research fields altogether, thus introducing varying theoretical perspectives into the conversation. Surely, these propositions should be tested empirically to validate how emotional valence affects threat and benefit perception with individuals.

Additionally, a change leader's effect on organizational change perception could be investigated by focusing more on coercion and change leaders' dark triadic personality traits, instead of my approach focusing on prosocial behavior. More specifically, whether the presence of dark triadic personality traits makes an impact on what leadership influence tactics are

utilized and how are such change leaders perceived by change recipients in different organizational contexts. For example, narcissistic personality types may be perceived as more compelling change leaders, whereas psychopathic personality types may be perceived as less successful storytellers due to their lack of empathy which is considered as an important element of narratives. Altogether, the presence of specific dimensions of the dark triad could be helpful for practitioners in terms of planning their change agent networks for future projects.

In the second chapter marked with quantitative empirical methods, my major limitation was connected to access and overall sample size. Unfortunately, this sample size was not sufficient for multilevel data analysis which could offer more relevant findings from the hierarchical nature of collected data. This study essentially explored how change recipients who are participating in ongoing organizational change project perceive their change leaders' behaviour, limiting my conclusions to a single-level perspective. Such an approach was a practical compromise during stressful COVID-19 pandemic times, which limited our access to respondents and participation rates. Future research could potentially investigate a multilevel perspective, also accounting for change leaders' perspectives. Additionally, adult attachment styles could be further investigated to increase our understanding of how change leaders' and change recipients' varying attachment styles affect organizational change adoption.

I acknowledge that my hypothesised moderated mediation model was unconfirmed and that interconstruct relationships were weaker than expected. Although the previously established theoretical foundation suggested that a specific moderated mediation model was the best explanation of persuasion's underlying mechanism, there are numerous other Hayes' PROCESS models to explore in the future. A separate examination of specific Leadership Influence Tactics and specific dimensions of Narrative Intelligence could unveil novel insights in understanding how change recipients embrace change adoption.

Finally, I focused on a specific literature direction in terms of understanding the underlying mechanism of persuasive communication. Although I have opted for a bit of interdisciplinary literature approaches, there are numerous possible venues for building the theoretical foundation observing the sensegiving process and investigating alternative mechanisms of change leaders' influence exertion to change recipients. One of many examples could be exploring power dynamics or overall perceptions of organizational politics and how such destructive behaviour affects the organizational climate, thus influencing change recipients' psychological capital. Similarly, aforementioned dark triad personality traits in change leaders and change recipients could shed some additional light on how organizational change unfolds in highly competitive organizations thriving on achieving results at a high standard.

Results presented in chapter 3 suffer the same limitation concerned with sample size. The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption and unexpected turnover in observed organizations, which significantly decreased my access and reduced participation rates. Additionally, the general sentiment of experienced change leadership was significantly affected with negative

experiences of lockdowns across the world. Conducting this research in different and more positive global contextual settings may indicate different findings.

Despite my best effort in maintaining methodological rigor, I am aware that interviewers unintentionally may influence interviewees' responses and steer them towards something they may find more socially desirable. This is also true in interpretation of core narratives inducted from interviewees' stories. I suggest that the potential effect of interviewer be tested through study repetition.

Future studies could furthermore enrich this narrative engagement perspective by investigating some other theoretical perspectives addressing storytelling and observing it through other theoretical frameworks. As previously mentioned, I have intentionally shifted my focus from individual differences of change leaders and change recipients in this study of storytelling during organizational change. This new study could be started with the role of change leaders' narrative intelligence in change recipients' sensemaking process, and then progressed with different theoretical perspectives.

4.4.3 Research Process Introspection

Given the aforementioned adversities associated with COVID -19 and the relatively moderate response rate, I turn to introspection to draw important lessons from the process to improve future research efforts. From the beginning of my research project, I have attempted to keep business practitioners involved in the process and observe their change leadership practices. Although I have tried hard to make this research as pragmatic as possible, I have realized that my approach still remained too normative. Instead of disseminating knowledge by starting with statements, I now realize that I could have asked more questions to make the collaboration more interesting for practitioners and improve the response rate.

Despite the pandemic limitations mentioned above, I realize that I underestimated the importance of applying agile principles in scientific work. Although I actively involved the scientific community in the development of this research project, the community of practitioners was relatively excluded. From the early design stages of the project to the advanced methodological milestones, I should have included the business practitioner community in the co-design process. This could have led to a greater sense of ownership and encouraged respondent engagement. Interestingly, more practitioner involvement would address several of the methodological limitations noted above and help make the research more relevant to the scientific community as well.

After experiencing the turmoil of publishing in academia, I realized how powerful YouTube's video database is, when you have sufficient background education to critically filter it. From numerous recorded lectures to commentaries focused on professional writing, a large amount of video remains under the radar of the "algorithm." Lessons on professional writing could have

made the publication experience much more constructive, as most of the comments on writing would have been excluded and reviewers could have focused on the core topic and conceptual aspects of the submitted work. Apart from the professional writing content, numerous methodological aspects were explained in detail, along with the self-assessments and experiences of other doctoral students. These insights would have saved me a lot of energy and reduced my stress levels, but nature really does give you a comb once you are bold and no longer need it, as the famous saying goes.

Last but not least, I realized that a researcher's contribution to the broad body of knowledge is not limited to actual findings based on a methodologically rigorous approach. Rather, experimentation and exploration of new methodological approaches are also considered valuable. New ideas require a slightly different approach to publication, so it is important to manage expectations with an equally different approach and adaptable ambition.

CONCLUSION

Organizational change is a complex and emotionally intense human endeavor. The human factor plays an essential role in the results of organizational change. Therefore, it is not surprising that a variety of approaches have been explored to date, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary findings. I started this dissertation with an overarching research question aimed at answering how and by what means do change leaders successfully influence change adoption among change recipients. And after three methodologically different chapters, I offer concluding remarks on the topic.

In the first chapter my inquiry was oriented towards understanding in what ways can linking the findings from different research areas dealing with persuasive communication and storytelling, help understand the role of storytelling in leading change. Interdisciplinary perspectives view organizational change as an ongoing and dynamic process of sensegiving and sensemaking, which changes the organizational ideology. Ideological change relies on ideological messages that often lack emotional appeal, and often drawing on social norms to ensure ideological compliance.

Change recipients act as consumers, but the expected benefits of using the advocated product or service are not automatically presented or implied. When benefits are not perceived, threat perceptions increase, further complicating the already emotionally intense sensemaking experience. Change leaders are attachment figures during the ambiguity of organizational change; change leaders serve as attachment figures as change recipients seek proximity to mitigate negative emotional reactions that social identity adjustment causes. Change leaders influence change adoption through prosocial methods rather than formal power by assuming the role of a human brand and telling stories to emotionally engage audiences during the sensegiving process.

In the second chapter my inquiry was oriented towards a hypothesized moderated mediation model. More specifically, towards understanding what is the relationship between change recipients psychological need satisfaction and readiness to change, and change leaders' demonstration of champion behavior, utilization of leadership influence tactics and narrative intelligence. Research results confirm first three hypotheses, suggesting that change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction as a new mediation mechanism affecting change recipients' Readiness to Change. Change recipients' perceived autonomy, relatedness and competence affect how ready they feel to accept proposed organizational change.

On the other hand, fourth and fifth hypotheses have not been confirmed, suggesting that Leadership Influence Tactics utilisation and change leader's Narrative Intelligence do not moderate the partial mediation of Psychological Need Satisfaction during organizational change. Surely, Champion Behavior plays an important role in change agency; however, I suggest it is most important in the early stage of innovation implementation, before a critical mass engagement is required.

Additionally, I conclude that applied Narrative Intelligence has a stronger relationship with change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction and individual Readiness to Change when utilised alone than when utilised with Leadership Influence Tactics. In other words, the opposite of the initially proposed metaphor has been proven true. A change leader's Narrative Intelligence prepares the communication infrastructure, and Leadership Influence Tactics utilisation represents the vehicle used to convey the intended message to change recipients. Applying these empirically tested behaviours should help make the organizational culture more adaptive and tolerant to change, effectively reducing organizational change failure in the future.

In more practical terms, change leaders working on organizational change projects should utilise Narrative Intelligence when setting the stage for their key messages. Being mindful of storytelling skills such as narrative employment, generation and characterisation should enhance change recipients' reception of key messages. The context-dependent use of various leadership influence skills, such as ingratiation and inspirational appeal, resulted in higher perceived Psychological Need Satisfaction and individual Readiness to Change. Regardless of utilised persuasive communication efforts, change leaders should always remain aware of change recipients' need for autonomy in making decisions, feeling related to the change leader and the team and feeling competent in managing change-related issues.

In the last chapter my inquiry was oriented towards understanding what are the key elements of storytelling in organizational change. Research results suggest that change leaders who are focused on themselves and self-enhancement tell less engaging stories which lack sentiment transitions and other elements of style. On the other hand, compelling narratives naturally focus on teams and adversity which had to be overcome, thus enriching the plot and creating understanding and empathy with their audience. They emphasize emotions, symbolism and

organizational culture in their stories, while being able to capitalize on the dark inversion of strong negatively valenced emotional reactions towards positive ones (e.g., from fear to hope).

Regardless of their storytelling skills and narrative engagement, all change leaders were telling stories about organizational change, however the metanarrative underneath their stories was a story about personal transformation. Interestingly, this element of humanity that teaches the audience about what it means to be human and relays a novel human experience, is often characterized as the key element of compelling stories that help in understanding novel experiences.

This doctoral dissertation shifts the well-established perspective of sensemaking within the field of organizational behavior, emphasizing the importance of sensegiving during organizational change. More specifically, I highlight the role of storytelling in creating compelling narratives about change for change recipients, but also the importance of positioning the change leader within the narrative. Change leaders can intervene meaningfully during the sensegiving process of organizational change, and thus affect the way change recipients make sense of the altered ideological framework within the organization.

Returning to the initial overarching question of how and by what means do change leaders successfully influence change adoption among change recipients, I offer the final conclusion. Successful change leaders are influential human brands who exert influence through psychological need satisfaction. They mobilize critical masses by utilizing leadership influence tactics and altering perception of personal engagement, instead of wasting energy in direct champion behavior. On an individual level, they utilize Narrative Intelligence to create engaging stories rich with symbolism and aesthetic value which relays emotional content with ease, triggering dual-hemisphere information processing in change recipients. More specifically, their stories follow a five-act structure which starts with a positive sentiment and relays a personal transformation experience, sharing novel knowledge of what it means to be a human being experiencing adversity.

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APPENDICES

UVOD

Opis ožjega znanstvenega področja

Zgodovina človeštva je zgodovina sprememb. Gre za od konteksta odvisen, nepredvidljiv in nelinearen proces z nenačrtovanimi izidi (Balogun, 2005). Današnji poslovni svet je zelo konkurenčno naravnani in digitalno moten, saj nam tehnologija omogoča, da se v primerjavi s prejšnjimi generacijami odlične ideje prelivajo v smiselne poslovne modele skoraj brez vsakršnega navora (Hamari in sod., 2016; Zervas in sod., 2017). Zanimivo je, da je večina prizadevanj za uvedbo organizacijskih sprememb neuspešna kljub temu, da organizacije rešujejo skupne izzive in pri tem uporabljajo različne metodologije (Heracleous in Bartunek, 2021). Cilj uvajanja sprememb je spremeniti zaznavanje stalnih sprememb in vplivati na naravno nagnjenost prejemnikov sprememb, da ohranjajo homeostazo in se upirajo spremembam (Holt in sod., 2007; Oreg, 2003; Oreg, 2006).

Prihodnost organizacijskega razvoja (npr. digitalna transformacija) je v veliki meri odvisna od prizadevanj vodij sprememb, katerih cilj je vplivati na mreže prejemnikov sprememb in jih mobilizirati (Battilana in sod., 2009; Battilana in sod., 2010; Škerlavaj in sod., 2016) ter s tem učinkovito spreminjati *status quo* v organizaciji. Procesi sprememb neizogibno vnašajo soodvisnost v organizacije, številne razlage novonastalih okoliščin pa še dodatno spodbujajo dvoumnost in večpomenskost (Lewis in Luscher, 2009). Z drugimi besedami, organizacije se soočajo s stalnimi pritiski za prilagajanje hitro spreminjajočemu se okolju, kar vodi do dodatne zapletenosti in manjše jasnosti ter povečuje neuspeh uvajanja organizacijskih sprememb.

Po drugi strani je zgodovina sprememb zgodovina eksperimentiranja. Vedno več literature, v kateri so proučevali neuspeh organizacijskih sprememb, poudarja njihovo neizogibnost (npr. trije pogledi od Schwarz in sod., 2021 in pogled na oblikovanje identitete od Hay in sod., 2021). Heracleous in Bartunek (2021) sta opazovala neuspeh organizacijskih sprememb skozi večstopenjski objektiv in sklenila, da so nekateri kratkoročni neuspehi nujni za uspešnost večjih organizacijskih sprememb. Ti pogledi, ki poudarjajo organizacijsko učenje, kažejo, da je treba organizacijske spremembe opazovati kot diskurz, pri katerem so v ciljni populaciji med procesom osmišljevanja posamezni argumenti bodisi sprejeti bodisi zavrnjeni.

Na podlagi metaanalize literature, s katero so obravnavali pripovedovanje zgodb o organizacijskih spremembah, so opredelili pet ključnih tem: *osmišljevanje*, komuniciranje, spremembe in učenje, moč in identiteto ter identifikacijo (Rhodes in Brown, 2005). Različne zvrsti literature predstavljajo in obravnavajo številne razloge za pogosto neuspešnost organizacijskih sprememb. Weick (1988) je na primer omenil pomen t. i. samoučinkovitosti, to je tega, da posameznik sebe zaznava kot sposobnega obvladovati spremembe in kar najbolj zmanjšati svoj odpor proti spremembam.

Zgodovina eksperimentiranja je zgodovina čustvenih reakcij. Spremembe namreč povzročajo nejasen, dvoumen vtis in ta občutek negotovosti vodi do močnih čustvenih reakcij, kot so stres, strah in tesnoba, ki jo pogosto primerjamo z žalovanjem (npr. Elrod in Tippet, 2005; Zell, 2003). Takšne negativne čustvene reakcije sprožijo naravno človeško težnjo po iskanju odgovorov ter s tem po lajšanju stresa in tesnobe (Maitlis in Sonenshein, 2010). Kadar takšni odgovori niso zlahka dostopni ali ne obstajajo, se posamezniki nagibajo k ustvarjanju pluralistične nevednosti ali izgradnji lastne realnosti, ki je včasih popolnoma drugačna od resničnosti (Weick, 1988). Pri iskanju smisla in razumevanja lastne identitete prek članstva v skupinah (Tajfel, 1982) se človek močno zanaša na prijazne obraze drugih, ker mu to daje občutek udobja in varnosti (Mawson, 2005), namesto da bi se zanašal na dejstva in konkretne utemeljitve. Prejemniki sprememb pa pobude za spremembe običajno zaznavajo bolj kot grožnje (Balogun in Johnson, 2005; Ford in sod., 2008) kot pa kot koristi, kar še dodatno kaže, da so prizadevanja vodij sprememb ključnega pomena za uspešno uvajanje sprememb.

Čustvene reakcije nastanejo na podlagi lastne razlage realnosti. Iskanje bližine drugih v času stiske je naravna reakcija (Mawson, 2005), saj pomirjevalni učinek bližine osebe, na katero smo navezani (figure navezanosti), spodbuja sproščanje dopamina in tako zmanjšuje neugodna čustva, povezana z intenzivno dvoumnostjo situacij (Coan, 2008). V medosebnih odnosih posamezniki tako iščejo povezanost z drugimi, zato so voditelji, ki jih drugi zaznavajo kot figure navezanosti, pogosto idealizirani, odvisno od kombinacije stilov navezanosti (Davidovitz in sod., 2007). Vodje sprememb kot figure navezanosti vlagajo trud za izpolnjevanje psiholoških potreb prejemnikov sprememb (Deci in Ryan, 2000), s čimer gradijo njihov občutek navezanosti in ustvarjajo funkcionalni diadni odnos med vodjo sprememb in prejemnikom sprememb. Tu ima bistveno vlogo pripovedna inteligenca vodje sprememb. V splošnem je pripovedovanje sredstvo, s katerim ljudje osmišljajo svet (Bruner, 1991), pripovedna inteligenca pa je zmožnost pripovedovanja zgodb o življenju posameznikov in njihovem okolju (Randall, 1999).

Pripovedna inteligenca je ena od vrst inteligence, ki med drugim vključuje zmožnost uporabe, opisovanja in pripovedovanja (Pishghadam in sod., 2011), kar kaže na dejstvo, da učinkoviti pripovedovalci ustvarjajo čustveno privlačne zgodbe, ker so bolj pripovedno inteligentni. Tak pristop naredi njihove pripovedi bolj zanimive in prejemnike sprememb spodbuja, da se v procesu organizacijskih sprememb vključujejo v pogajanja o identifikaciji, ki so zaznana kot eden glavnih problemov pri uvedbi organizacijskih sprememb (Epitropaki in sod., 2016). V tem kontekstu bi lahko prizadevanja vodij sprememb za vplivanje na druge razumeli kot trud za razjasnitev dinamike sprememb in poudarjanje koristi, ki izhajajo iz takšnih dejavnosti. Če namesto občutka ogroženosti, ki ga vzbujajo spremembe, prejemniki sprememb bolj zaznavajo koristi teh sprememb, jih bo to spodbudilo, da se družbeno identificirajo s skupino, ki te spremembe zagovarja, in jim tako ublažilo vedenjske negotovosti, ki izvirajo iz intenzivne dvoumnosti organizacijskih sprememb.

Zaznane pripovedi ustvarjajo resničnost. V splošnem lahko vodenje sprememb opišemo kot obsežno komunikacijsko prizadevanje, da bi dali smisel spremembam s predvidevanjem in reševanjem konfliktov, ki izvirajo iz različnih potreb in zaznav prejemnikov (Appelbaum in sod., 2012; Mento in sod., 2002), kar učinkovito vpliva na to, kako se med procesom osmišljanja interpretirajo organizacijske realnosti (npr. Gioia in Chittipeddi, 1991).

Ta intenzivna in prepričevalna komunikacijska prizadevanja vodij sprememb, ki so osredotočena na upoštevanje koristi in osmišljanje na novo oblikovane realnosti, lahko vidimo na različnih raziskovalnih področjih (npr. Hill in Levenhagen, 1995). Ena od mnogih raziskovalnih smeri analizira, kako zgodbe dajejo smisel organizacijskim incidentom in kako močan vpliv imajo pripovedi na ustvarjanje zaznane realnosti (npr. Boje, 1991).

Pripovedi vodij sprememb učinkovito vplivajo na to, kako lahko organizacijsko realnost interpretiramo v procesu osmišljanja, ki temelji na prizadevanjih vodij sprememb, da bi vplivali na mreže prejemnikov sprememb in jih mobilizirali (Battilana in sod., 2009; Battilana in sod., 2010; Škerlavaj in sod., 2016). Nekateri akterji sprememb izkazujejo vedenje prvakov (Baer, 2012; Howell in Higgins, 1990), medtem ko se drugi zanašajo bolj na moč in na uporabo vplivnih vodstvenih taktik (Battilana in Casciaro, 2021; Furst in Cable, 2008; Yukl in Falbe, 1990; Yukl in sod., 1993). Še vedno pa ni jasno, kateri osnovni mehanizem vplivnih prizadevanj uporabljajo vodje sprememb, da bi prejemnike sprememb prepričali, kako naj zaznavajo organizacijske spremembe. Čeprav razpoložljiva literatura ponuja nekaj usmeritev o tem, do zdaj še ni jasno, kako vplivne vodstvene taktike in pripovedna inteligenca vplivajo na pripravljenost prejemnikov sprememb na te spremembe.

V tej doktorski disertaciji opazujem diadni odnos med vodjo sprememb in prejemniki sprememb, da bi ponudil nekakšno sintetizirano, koherentno sliko in razširil razumevanje organizacijskih sprememb. Konkretnije povedano, v svoji kvantitativni raziskavi sem postavil hipotezo o tem, kako vodja sprememb uporablja vedenje prvaka, vplivne vodstvene taktike in pripovedno inteligenco, da bi vplival na proces osmišljanja pri prejemnikih sprememb. Pri nadaljnji kvalitativni raziskavi sem izhajal iz okvira prepričevalnih pripovedi v petih dejanjih Johna Yorka (2014), da bi dodatno osvetlil proces osmišljanja pri vodjih sprememb.

Pri prej omenjeni mešani metodi načrta raziskave sem se opiral na primerjalne teoretične vidike organizacijskih sprememb, ki združujejo: (a) socialno kognitivno teorijo (Bandura, 1989) kot krovni temelj za sprožilce organizacijskih sprememb; (b) teorijo navezanosti odraslih (Bowlby, 2013) kot temelj za posredovalne mehanizme organizacijskih sprememb; in (c) teorijo socialne identitete (Tajfel, 1982) kot želeni rezultat organizacijskih sprememb. Te perspektive so dodatno pojasnjene v naslednjem razdelku.

Raziskovalna tema in raziskovalna vprašanja

Celotna raziskovalna tema te disertacije je namenjena vprašanju, kako vodje sprememb uspešno vplivajo na sprejemanje organizacijskih sprememb med prejemniki sprememb s pripovedovanjem zgodb. To razmeroma široko in kompleksno raziskovalno prizorišče je dodatno opredeljeno z osredotočenostjo na vpliv pripovedovanja zgodb pri ustvarjanju navezanosti in vodenju sprememb:

Prvo raziskovalno vprašanje: Kako nam lahko povezovanje izsledkov z različnih raziskovalnih področij, ki obravnavajo prepričevalno komunikacijo in pripovedovanje zgodb, pomaga razumeti vlogo pripovedovanja zgodb pri vodenju sprememb?

Drugo raziskovalno vprašanje: Kakšno je razmerje med stopnjo izpolnitve psiholoških potreb prejemnikov sprememb in njihovo pripravljenostjo na spremembe ter izkazovanjem vedenja prvaka ter uporabo vplivnih vodstvenih taktik in pripovedne inteligence med vodji sprememb?

Tretje raziskovalno vprašanje: Kateri so ključni elementi spominske izkušnje zgodb pri organizacijskih spremembah?

Opredelitev predmeta raziskave

Sam uporabljam pristop mešane metode, da bi demistificiral prej omenjena prepričevalna komunikacijska prizadevanja vodij sprememb za uvedbo organizacijskih sprememb. Najprej se osredotočim na interdisciplinarne vidike, da bi dekonstruiral proces prepričevalnega komuniciranja. Potem pregledam tekočo literaturo z raziskavami s področja upravljanja, v kateri so obravnavane organizacijske spremembe, in jo uporabim kot teoretično podlago za interdisciplinarno raziskovanje. Z drugimi, podobno opredeljenimi temami se nato osredotočim na najbolj citirane in zato najvplivnejše članke o prepričevalni komunikaciji, pripovedovanju zgodb in spremembah iz vrhunskih revij, ki so citirani v podatkovnih bazah na Web of Science. To vključuje tudi vidike iz razvojne psihologije (npr. Richards in Schat, 2011), jezikoslovja (npr. Stromberg, 1990), politologije (npr. Reicher, 2004), psihologije potrošnikov (npr. Woodside in sod., 2008) in verskih študij (npr. Lalich in Singer, 1995). Z uporabo teh teoretičnih spoznanj potem zgradim konceptualni model, ki temelji na pripovedih, ter predlagam izkustveno dinamično procesa lastnega osmišljanja in dajanja smisla za vodje sprememb.

Z opisanih predpostavk potem preidem na empirično testiranje, skupaj z vodji sprememb v organizacijah, ki se trenutno posvečajo izvajanju kakšnega projekta organizacijskih sprememb. Predlagane spremenljivke lastnega osmišljanja in dajanja smisla so stvar tega, kako prejemniki sprememb zaznavajo vedenje vodij sprememb, zato je bilo treba v procesu zbiranja podatkov uvesti diadni pristop. Čeprav sem dosegel 150 vodij sprememb in je moj začetni ciljni vzorec vključeval 50 vodij sprememb in 250 prejemnikov sprememb, kar zadostuje za analizo na več ravneh, mi je pandemija covid-19 omejila dostop do priročnega vzorca 37 vodij sprememb iz 12 organizacij. V raziskavi je torej sodelovalo le skupaj 164 prejemnikov

sprememb, s po najmanj petimi prejemniki sprememb na posameznega vodjo sprememb. Izvedel sem moderirano posredovalno analizo PROCESS z uporabo SPSS, programske opreme za statistične analize. Hipotetično predpostavljena razmerja v tem konceptualnem modelu vključujejo naslednjih pet hipotez:

Hipoteza 1. Obstaja pozitivno razmerje med vedenjem zagovornika novih idej in stopnjo izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb v teku organizacijskih sprememb.

Hipoteza 2. V teku organizacijskih sprememb obstaja tudi pozitivno razmerje med stopnjo izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb in pripravljenostjo na spremembe.

Hipoteza 3. Razmerje med zagovorništvom novih idej in pripravljenostjo na spremembe v teku organizacijskih sprememb je delno posredovano s stopnjo izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb.

Hipoteza 4. Razmerje med zagovorništvom novih idej in stopnjo izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb v teku organizacijskih sprememb se okrepi z vplivnimi vodstvenimi taktikami.

Hipoteza 5. Razmerje med zagovorništvom novih idej in stopnjo izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb v teku organizacijskih sprememb se okrepi z dobro pripovedno inteligenco.

Z boljšim razumevanjem tega, kako prejemniki sprememb zaznavajo prepričevalna prizadevanja vodij sprememb, potem nadaljujem k boljšemu razumevanju zgodb, ki jih pripovedujejo vodje sprememb. Da bi se izognil pristranskosti vodij in vplivu družbene zaželenosti ali nezaželenosti, uporabim metodo spominjanja preteklih incidentov in opravi analizno pripovedi. Prepisi teh pripovedi, ki so na voljo v prilogi, mi povedo, kakšne poglede imajo vodje sprememb, in odprejo prostor za poglobljeno razpravo, kjer na nasprotno stran postavim poglede prejemnikov sprememb.

V tej doktorski disertaciji predlagam osnovni mehanizem vplivnih prizadevanj vodij sprememb v teku uvajanja organizacijskih sprememb, in sicer z vključitvijo naslednjih komplementarnih pogledov:

1. Interdisciplinarni teoretični pogledi, povezani z empirično merjenimi konstrukti vodenja sprememb, navezanosti pri odraslih in pripovedovanja zgodb.
2. Povezava med izkazovanjem vedenja prvaka in vodenjem na podlagi zgleda pri vodjih sprememb ter zaznavanjem stopnje izpolnjevanja psiholoških potreb in pripravljenosti na spremembe pri prejemnikih sprememb.
3. Katere so najbolj uporabljene vplivne vodstvene taktike in kako uspešne so zgodbe, ki jih pripovedujejo vodje sprememb glede na zaznano pripovedno inteligenco?
4. Na koncu te disertacije združim kvantitativne in kvalitativne izsledke raziskave ter jih interpretiram v okviru konteksta, določenega z konceptualnim modelom, ki temelji na pripovedovanju.

Opredelitev namena in ciljev

Namen te doktorske disertacije je prispevati k tekočim akademskim razpravam, usmerjenim v izboljšanje stopnje uspešnosti uvajanja organizacijskih sprememb oziroma v zmanjšanje stopnje neuspešnosti organizacijskih sprememb, s čimer želim izboljšati skupni napredek v razvoju organizacij in v razvoju širše skupnosti.

Cilj te doktorske disertacije je tudi razumeti, kako lahko vodje sprememb uspešno vplivajo na sprejemanje organizacijskih sprememb med prejemniki sprememb s pripovedovanjem zgodb. Pri tem uvedem tudi na pripovedih temelječ konceptualni model, ki povezuje interdisciplinarne vidike teorije socialne identitete (Tajfel, 1982) in teorije navezanosti pri odraslih (Bowlby, 1969/1982) kot primerjalnih teoretičnih pogledov s socialno kognitivno teorijo (Bandura, 1989) na drugi strani, za izgradnjo obsežne teoretične podlage.

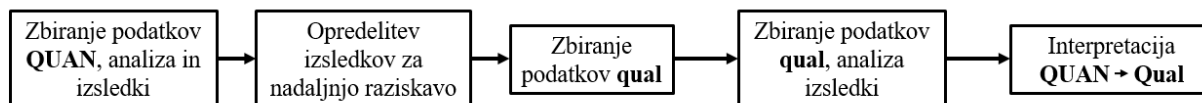
Opredelitev znanstvenoraziskovalnih metod

Omenjeno interdisciplinarno teoretično ozadje koherentno sintetiziram v model procesa, ki temelji na pripovedih, ob upoštevanju številnih predlogov Cornelissena (2017). Da bi zagotovil korektivne ukrepe, ki pogosto povzročajo težave pri postavljanju teorij na podlagi pripovedi, hkrati upoštevam interdisciplinarne poglede in preden podam svoj predlog, poleg razpoložljive literature o organizacijskem vedenju, ki jo uporabim kot temelj, ponudim še dodatne argumente.

V želji dati smiseln teoretičen in praktičen prispevek k razumevanju fenomena vplivnih prizadevanj vodij sprememb sem za to doktorsko disertacijo potreboval določene kvantitativne in kvalitativne podatke. Zato je ta pristop z zbiranjem in analizo podatkov zahteval izdelavo načrta raziskave na podlagi mešanih metod. V družboslovju predstavlja raziskovanje z mešanimi metodami kvantitativno in kvalitativno zbiranje in analizo podatkov, pri čemer na koncu združimo obe vrsti izsledkov in ju interpretiramo skupaj, da bi izrabili prednosti obeh naborov podatkov ter s tem obogatili končno razumevanje opazovanega problema (Edmonds, 2017).

Da bi pri pričujoči doktorski disertaciji lahko uporabil to metodologijo, sem moral najprej opredeliti prednostni pristop z zbiranjem in analizo podatkov. Pri tem sem uporabil razlagalno-sekvenčni pristop (QUAN-qual), ki je običajen v primerih, ko želi raziskovalec po kvantitativnih izsledkih dobiti še kvalitativne podatke, kot je prikazano na sliki 1 (Edmonds, 2017). Razlagalna moč interpretiranih izsledkov sloni na kvantitativni metodologiji za testiranje hipotetično postavljenih razmerij, ki se nadalje preučujejo s poznejšo kvalitativno raziskavo.

Slika 1: Načrt nadaljnje razlage (QUAN-qual) raziskave o vlogi pripovedovanja zgodb pri izgradnji navezanosti in vodenju sprememb z mešanimi metodami



Vir: Edmonds (2017)

V primarni in prevladujoči kvantitativni študiji empirično testiram hipotetične odnose med konstrukti, da bi odgovoril na prvo raziskovalno vprašanje. Moj konceptualni model prilagojenega posredovanja vključuje vedenje vodje sprememb kot vedenje prvaka (Howell in sod., 2005), ki je osrednji napovedni dejavnik pripravljenosti prejemnikov spremembe na spremembo (Vakola, 2013), kot odvisno spremenljivko in stopnjo izpolnjevanja psiholoških potreb prejemnikov spremembe (LaGuardia in sod., 2000) kot hipotetični delni posrednik. Poleg tega sta kot hipotetična prilagoditvena dejavnika uvedena faktorja vplivnih vodstvenih taktik (Yukl in sod., 2008) in pripovedne inteligence (Pishghadam in sod., 2011) vodje sprememb. Splošna samoučinkovitost prejemnika spremembe (Chen in sod., 2001) je predstavljena kot teoretična sospremenljivka na podlagi predloga Aguinisa (2016). Končna enota analize v tej raziskavi je prejemnik sprememb in njegovo zaznavanje vedenja vodje sprememb.

Obrnil sem se na vodje sprememb, ki so bili pripravljeni sodelovati v tej raziskavi, in jih prosil, naj imenujejo pet svojih kolegov, ki trenutno delajo na tekočem projektu organizacijskih sprememb in bi lahko ocenjevali vedenje vodje sprememb. V skladu z uredbo GDPR njihovi osebni podatki ne bi bili nikoli razkriti. Za zbiranje podatkov sem uporabil tri ločene spletne vprašalnike, ki so vsebovali vprašanja iz predhodno uveljavljenih in prej omenjenih validiranih in zanesljivih merilnih instrumentov, s petstopenjskimi in sedemstopenjskimi lestvicami. Te vprašalnike so anonimno poslali po e-pošti s pomočjo spletne platforme Qualtrics za oblikovanje in pošiljanje vprašalnikov.

Ker sem se zavedal variance pri uporabi običajnih metod, sem uporabil predlagane metode za njeno preprečevanje (Podsakoff in sod., 2003), na primer pojasnitev namena raziskave, razdelitev valov zbiranja podatkov na tri različne časovne točke, povezavo osebnega čustvovanja s predmetnim vedenjem, zagotovitev anonimnosti anketirancev in uporabo različnih lestvic končnih rezultatov. Anketiranci so najprej ocenili CB svojega vodje sprememb in lastno samoučinkovitost, kadar so se vodje sprememb obnašali na določene načine. Potem so približno teden dni pozneje anketiranci ocenili taktike vplivanja svojih vodij sprememb in stopnjo izpolnitve lastnih psiholoških potreb, ko so se vodje sprememb obnašali na določen način. Končno so približno dva tedna pozneje anketiranci ocenili še pripovedno inteligenco svojih vodij sprememb ter lastno pripravljenost na spremembe, kadar so se vodje sprememb obnašali na določene načine.

Zbrani (kvantitativni) podatki iz vprašalnika so bili naloženi v SPSS ver. 26 za preliminarne analize in deskriptivno oz. opisno statistiko, temu pa je sledila podrobnejša analiza PROCESS. To vrednotenje sem operacionaliziral s Hayesovim makrom PROCESS v SPSS ver. 26, pri čemer sem izrecno testiral model prilagojenega posredovanja 9 (Hayes, 2017). Žal načrtovane analize na več ravneh ni bilo mogoče izvesti, ker velikost vzorca vodij sprememb in prejemnikov sprememb ni bila zadostna (npr. Kozlowski in Klein., 2000).

Preizkušanje hipotez mi je pomagalo ugotoviti tiste teme, pri katerih je bilo potrebno nadaljnje kvalitativno raziskovanje, da bi izboljšal razlagalno moč analiziranih izsledkov. Zlasti sem želel vedeti, kateri so bili ključni elementi pripovedovanja, ki so jih uporabili vodje sprememb in so jih prejemniki sprememb ocenili za sorazmerno učinkovite. Pogledal sem v razpoložljive akademske raziskave o prepričljivih pripovedih, pa tudi spletne vire praktikov, ki so dostopni na YouTube. Moj sklep je bil, da so bile najbolj prepričljive pripovedi multimedijske, pretežno filmske pripovedi, kar je bilo v skladu z raziskavo o tem, kaj poslušalce pritegne k pripovedi (npr. Busselle in Bilandžić, 2009). Na podlagi tega multimedijskega vidika pripovedi v specifičnem kontekstu organizacijskih sprememb sem potem prilagodil metodologijo pripovedi v petih dejanjih Johna Yorka (2014), ki je bila razvita za pisanje scenarijev za filme.

Z odstranitvijo vseh multimedijskih elementov iz filmskih pripovedi sem dobil okvir, ki se uporablja kot temelj za spominjanje na incidente v različnih fazah pripovedovanja vodij sprememb o organizacijskih spremembah. Da bi preprečili, da bi vodje sprememb določili okvir, in preprečili njihovo pristranskost, smo vodje sprememb prosili, da se spomnijo določenega incidenta v posamezni fazi organizacijskih sprememb, in povedo anekdoto o tem, kako je bil ta incident rešen. Intervjuji so potekali virtualno na videokonferenčni platformi Zoom, nato pa je bil izluščen samo zvok in izdelan je bil prepis pogovora. Prepis sem poslal sodelujočim vodjem sprememb brez identifikacijskih podatkov, skladno z navodili GDPR. Poleg tega je bilo povezovanje skupnih tem, ki so dopolnile analizo pripovedi, zakodirano v niz kategorij, ki so jim sledili citati vinjet, in vse skupaj je bilo prikazano v matriki okvirja (Edmonds, 2017). Zbirka teh vinjet je bila nato uporabljena za analizo pripovedi (Riessman, 1993).

Na koncu v razdelku o splošnih izsledkih in razpravi razpravljam o rezultatih empiričnih analiz. Kvantitativne vpoglede (tj. zaznana pripovedna inteligenca vodij sprememb) združim s kvalitativnimi vpogledi, da bi lahko smiselno odgovoril na prvotno raziskovalno vprašanje. V končnem sklepu še povzamem posamezne ugotovitve in zaokrožim raziskovalni proces.

Predviden prispevek na področju znanja

Cilj te doktorske disertacije je bil smiselno prispevati k širšemu obsegu znanj in pri tem obravnavati tako teoretične kot praktične vidike. Moj teoretični prispevek vključuje štiri ločenih elementov. Prvič, trdim, da so organizacijske spremembe v resnici spremembe organizacijske ideologije, in v raziskovalno področje organizacijskih sprememb uvedem interdisciplinarni

pogled s tem, da predlagam konceptualni model, ki temelji na pripovedi in naprej razvija čustveno-kognitivni model procesa osmišljanja, ki sta ga predlagala Liu in Perrewé (2005). Drugič, predlagam osnovni mehanizem prepričljivih prizadevanj akterjev sprememb, ki sta ga predlagala Battilana in Casciaro (2012) ter pri katerem so vodje sprememb zaznani kot človeške blagovne znamke, ki povečujejo moč svojega vpliva prek močnejše navezanosti prejemnikov sprememb.

Tretjič, v nasprotju s prevladujočo literaturo o upravljanju inovacij pokažem, da so vplivne vodstvene taktike (Yukl, 2008) boljši osrednji napovedni dejavnik za pripravljenost posameznika na spremembe kot dokazano vedenje prvaka (Howell in sod., 2005). Nazadnje v področje dajanja smisla in organizacijskih sprememb uvedem še metodološka vidika pripovedne inteligence in pritegnitve poslušalcev k pripovedi, zlasti pristop petih dejanj k analizi pripovedi, kot ga je predlagal John Yorke (2014).

Kar zadeva prispevek praktikov, osvetlim pomen zaznavanja za izboljšanje stopnje uspešnosti uvedbe organizacijskih sprememb, s poudarkom na močnih notranjih vidikih trženja. Menim, da bi z upoštevanjem zaznavanja bodisi ogroženosti bodisi koristi ter z ilustrativnim opisom o tem, kako se z oglaševalskim delom krepijo vidiki širjenja inovacij, ter z upoštevanjem vidika človeške blagovne znamke lahko bistveno zmanjšali stopnje neuspešnosti organizacijskih sprememb.

Zgradba disertacije

Ta doktorska disertacija je organizirana v štiri sklope, ki obravnavajo različna raziskovalna vprašanja ter ima teoretični in empirični del. Po uvodu, v katerem predstavim metapogled na to temo, se v prvem poglavju osredotočim na izgradnjo močne teoretične podlage za empirične raziskave. Gre za kombinacijo pregleda literature s področja organizacijskih sprememb in sposobnosti za spremembe, ki je obogatena z znanji iz razvojne psihologije (npr. Richards in Schat, 2011), jezikoslovja (npr. Stromberg, 1990), politologije (npr. Reicher, 2004), potrošniške psihologije (npr. Woodside in sod., 2008) in verskih študij (npr. Lalich in Singer, 1995). Posebno pozornost namenim primerljivim teoretičnim vidikom iz teorije socialne identitete (Tajfel, 1982) in teorije navezanosti pri odraslih (Bowlby, 1969/1982), s krovno osnovo iz socialno kognitivne teorije (Bandura, 1989). Trdim, da so organizacijske spremembe v resnici spremembe organizacijske ideologije, ki pri posamezniku sprožijo proces ideološke družbene identifikacije.

Z drugimi besedami, vodja sprememb mora najprej dati smisel predlagani organizacijski spremembi, šele potem lahko prejemniki sprememb zase zadostno osmislijo dano organizacijsko spremembo. Splošni rezultat tega poglavja je konceptualni model, ki temelji na pripovedi in so v njem upoštevani interdisciplinarni vidiki, s predlogom za proces osmišljanja in dajanja smisla drugim pri vodjih sprememb ob uvajanju organizacijskih sprememb. Poseben poudarek je na teoretičnem in praktičnem prispevku, da bi lahko sprejel zgoščene zaključke.

Podane predloge v naslednjem poglavju nato še empirično testiram s kvantitativno metodologijo.

V drugem poglavju predstavim bolj osredotočeno in specifično teoretično ozadje. Te vpogleda potem povežem v hipotetične odnose, da bi razumel, kako so medsebojno povezani vedenje prvaka, stopnja izpolnjenosti psiholoških potreb in pripravljenost na spremembe ter kakšen je vpliv vodstvenih vplivnih taktik in pripovedne inteligence na ta odnos. Splošni izid, ki ga dobim, je konceptualni model prilagojenega posredovanja, ob tem pa podrobneje opišem raziskovalni vzorec in postopek zbiranja podatkov. Poseben poudarek je ponovno na teoretičnem in praktičnem prispevku k interpretaciji analiziranih izsledkov. Ti izsledki nam kažejo, kako prejemniki sprememb zaznavajo vedenje vodij sprememb, kar močno nakazuje, katere prakse so bile učinkovite in katere je treba še izboljšati. Po predstavitvi izsledkov kvantitativne raziskave v kvalitativnem poglavju nadalje raziščem še zanimivo temo učinkovitosti uporabljenega pristopa s pripovedovanjem zgodb.

Tretje poglavje je posvečeno kvalitativnim raziskavam. V njem naprej razvijam teoretično osnovo v smeri pripovedi, pripovedovanja organizacijskih zgodb in splošne uporabe pripovedne inteligence v organizacijskem kontekstu. Po sorazmerno kratki teoretični podlagi brez obravnave hipotetičnih odnosov se posvetim uporabnim metodologijam. Pripovedovanje o preteklih incidentih v okviru delno strukturiranega intervjuja na podlagi oblikovanja filmske pripovedi je sorazmerno nov pristop pri raziskavah organizacijskih sprememb in ga tu podrobneje obravnavam. Večji del tega poglavja je posvečen pripovedni analizi zgodb vodij sprememb, medtem ko je splošna metapripoved usmerjena zlasti v to, da odgovorim na zastavljeno raziskovalno vprašanje. Ponovno dodatno poudarim teoretični in praktični prispevek za zagotovitev koherentnega razmišljanja.

V zadnjem poglavju združim izsledke kvantitativnih in kvalitativnih raziskav. Razpravljam o teh izsledkih in o tem, kako se medsebojno dopolnjujejo, ter v splošnem razložim raziskani fenomen. Predlagam tudi nekatere prihodnje raziskovalne vidike in podam podroben pregled zgoraj omenjenih raziskovalnih omejitev. Doktorsko disertacijo zaključim s sklepom, ki osvetli vsa relevantna spoznanja, popolnim seznamom literature ter prilogami, ki vsebujejo vprašanja iz vprašalnika in prepise intervjujev.

Appendix 2: Cover Letter for Participation in Research

Doctoral dissertation: The role of storytelling in building attachment and leading change

PhD candidate: Antonio Sadarić

Supervisor: Prof. Miha Škerlavaj, PhD

This questionnaire is key part of the doctoral dissertation aimed to understand how and by what means do change agents successfully influence change acceptance in organizations.

Why are we doing this study?

We live in a time where technology is developing at an exponential rate, which is reflected in frequent industry disruptions. As organizations try to keep track by innovating their business models, employees experience a lot of changes. As a result, change management becomes a new reality for managers, and a natural human tendency to avoid change and maintain the status quo becomes one of the biggest challenges to overcome.

Some research findings indicate that up to 70% of change initiatives fail, which is why numerous organizations aren't able to keep up with competitors. And while previous studies placed more emphasis on change leaders, we understand that change acceptance occurs from informal activities of change agents without formal authority. Therefore, we believe that the problem of relatively low success rates of change initiatives, can be solved through the process of understanding, accepting and advocating benefits of proposed change within the organization.

What is the expected outcome?

We expect to get a better understanding of:

- how change agents utilize storytelling in conveying important messages
- how different champion behaviours of change leaders affect feelings of attachment during change implementation
- what types of leadership influence tactics are most efficient in leading change and
- how to improve employee's readiness to change?

All this combined, aims to contribute toward higher success rates of change initiatives (e.g. digital transformation initiatives).

How you participate in this research?

As a change agent involved in some form of change within your organization, you play a vital role in how successful the implementation is going to be. By answering our survey questions about your personal impression of change and your change leader's behaviors, you contribute towards greater understanding of change acceptance in organizations. Your response will be anonymised and will not be singled out, as our survey sample includes different international organizations operating in different industries (see GDPR consent on the next page).

This survey won't take longer than 10 minutes of your time, and additional instructions will be available for your convenience.

Before proceeding to the survey, please take a moment to review how GDPR applies to this scientific-research project.

CONSENT FOR PERSONAL DATA PROCESSING FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH PROJECT (GDPR)

By clicking "I agree", I hereby give my explicit consent for the processing of the personal data (age, gender, income, and employment status), as collected in this survey questionnaire. The personal data will be processed solely for the purpose of carrying out the scientific research project. All personal data obtained with the survey will be stored under a research code (anonymisation), thus fully protecting the identity of the participants, while only summary results (anonymised and presented in different statistical forms) will be publicly available.

- Personal data will be processed until the consent is withdrawn or until the end of the scientific research project, after which they will be stored in anonymous form for research purposes in an online data repository, such as Social Science Data Archives - <https://www.adp.fdv.uni-lj.si/eng/> or Open Science Framework - <https://osf.io/>
- Given consent may be withdrawn at any time by a written notice to School of Economics and Business, Ljubljana University (SEBLU), Kardeljeva ploščad 17, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- For any further information regarding the processing of the data or consent in question, you may contact the authorized person for the protection of personal data at SEBLU Nataša Mulec (natasa.mulec@ef.uni-lj.si) or one of her assistants Jure Jeklič (jure.jeklic@ef.uni-lj.si) or Aljaž Kotar Mlakar (aljaz.kotar.mlakar@ef.uni-lj.si).
- SEBLU ensures that personal data collected on the basis of this consent will be used only for the above mentioned purposes and can not be transferred to third parties without your written consent. The legal basis for the processing of personal data in the public sector is regulated by Article 9 of the Personal Data Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 86/2004), which states that processing **of personal data in the public sector without legal basis, can only be done with the personal consent of the individual.** This consent and the processing of personal data itself is also justified by the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation in EU (GDPR).

By clicking "I agree" and participating in the series of surveys covering this research project, and by consequently consenting, you declare that you have read and understood the terms of this statement and fully agree with them.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire Distributed to Change Recipients Assessing Change Leader's Demonstrated Champion Behavior, Basic Personal Information and Personal Feeling of General Self-efficacy

Please specify to what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements, based on your impression of proposed change in the organization:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leader Champion Behavior

The following set of questions aims to understand how frequently your change leader demonstrates championship behaviors.

Please rate how frequently your change leader demonstrates proposed behavior:

	Not frequently	Somewhat frequently	Frequently	Almost always	Always
Enthusiastically promotes the advantages of proposed change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expresses strong conviction about the proposed change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expresses confidence in what the proposed change can do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shows optimism about the success of the proposed change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Points out reasons why the proposed change will succeed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not frequently	Somewhat frequently	Frequently	Almost always	Always
Keeps pushing enthusiastically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate how frequently your change leader demonstrates proposed behavior:

	Always	Almost always	Frequently	Somewhat frequently	Not frequently
Sticks with proposed change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shows tenacity in overcoming obstacles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Continues to be involved with the proposed change until it is implemented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knocks down barriers to the proposed change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does not give up when others say it cannot be done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate how frequently your change leader demonstrates proposed behavior:

	Not frequently	Somewhat frequently	Frequently	Almost always	Always
Persists in the face of adversity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gets problems into the hands of those who can solve them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gets the right people involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gets key decision makers involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please specify your age in years:

Please specify your gender:

- Male
- Female

Please specify how long have you been working for this Organization (in years):

What is your current leadership level in the Organization?

- Non-managerial level
- Operational management level (e.g. Sales supervisor, Production line supervisor)
- Middle management level (e.g. Regional Sales Manager, Business Unit Warehouse Manager)
- Top management level (e.g. General Manager, Functional director)

Appendix 5: Questionnaire Distributed to Change Recipients Assessing Change Leader's Utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Personal Feeling of Psychological Need Satisfaction

My change leader...

	I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me	He/she very seldom uses this tactic with me	He/she occasionally uses this tactic with me	He/she uses this tactic moderately often with me	He/she uses this tactic very often with me
Uses facts and logic to make a persuasive case for a request or proposal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explains clearly why a request or proposed change is necessary to attain a task objective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explains why a proposed project or change would be practical and cost effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides information or evidence to show that a proposed activity or change is likely to be successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My change leader...

	I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me	He/she very seldom uses this tactic with me	He/she occasionally uses this tactic with me	He/she uses this tactic moderately often with me	He/she uses this tactic very often with me
Says a proposed activity or change is an opportunity to do something really exciting and worthwhile.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describes a clear, inspiring vision of what a proposed project or change could accomplish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talks about ideals and values when proposing a new activity or change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Makes an inspiring speech or presentation to arouse enthusiasm for a proposed activity or change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My change leader...

	I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me	He/she very seldom uses this tactic with me	He/she occasionally uses this tactic with me	He/she uses this tactic moderately often with me	He/she uses this tactic very often with me
Explains how the task he/she wants you to do could help your career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Describes benefits you could gain from doing a task or activity (e.g., learn new skills, meet important people, enhance your reputation).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explains how a proposed activity or change could help you attain a personal objective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explains why a proposed activity or change would be good for you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My change leader...

	I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me	He/she very seldom uses this tactic with me	He/she occasionally uses this tactic with me	He/she uses this tactic moderately often with me	He/she uses this tactic very often with me
Says you have the special skills or knowledge needed to carry out a request.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Praises your past performance or achievements when asking you to do a task for him/her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Praises your skill or knowledge when asking you to do something.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Says you are the most qualified person for a task that he/she wants you to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My change leader...

	I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me	He/she very seldom uses this tactic with me	He/she occasionally uses this tactic with me	He/she uses this tactic moderately often with me	He/she uses this tactic very often with me
Asks you to suggest things you could do to help him/her achieve a task objective or resolve a problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consults with you to get your ideas about a proposed activity or change that he/she wants you to support or implement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourages you to express any concerns you may have about a proposed activity or change that he/she wants you to support or implement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Invites you to suggest ways to improve a preliminary plan or proposal that he/she wants you to support or help implement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The final section of this questionnaire aims to understand how you feel about the formed relationship while working with your change leader. Please specify to what degree do you agree with the following statements:

When I am with my change leader...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel free to be who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like a competent person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel loved and cared about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*I often feel inadequate or incompetent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
*I often feel a lot of distance in our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel very capable and effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a lot of closeness and a sense of belonging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*I feel controlled and pressured to be certain ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 6: Questionnaire Distributed to Change Recipients Assessing Change Leader's Utilized Narrative Intelligence and Feeling of Readiness to Change

Please specify to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your change leader's communication:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My change leader has good recalling of events, people, and settings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at identifying possible sources of conflicts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at proposing a measure of resolution for conflicts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at inking events in a consequential order.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at envisioning events before they occur.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please specify to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your change leader's communication:

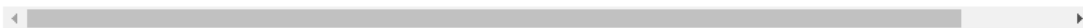
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My change leader is good at feeling compassion for stakeholder's thoughts and feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at using rhetoric moves to sustain the interest of stakeholders (e.g. mentions a detail, and elaborates on it gradually by revealing pieces of information bit-by-bit).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at seeing situations from different angles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is good at maintaining a particular tone (e.g. optimism, negativism, realism) when sharing updates about the change implementation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please specify to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your change leader's communication:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My change leader is good at finding particular points in events and comments (e.g. ethical messages, journalistic implications, religious beliefs, political propaganda).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is capable of meeting his/her responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader is known to be successful at what he/she tries to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My change leader does things competently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please specify to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your change leader's communication:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
*At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the story that my change leader presented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found my mind wandering while my change leader was presenting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The story that my change leader presented affected me emotionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was mentally involved in the story that my change leader presented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world that my change leader was talking about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please specify to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
When changes occur in my company, I believe that I am ready to cope with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually try to convince people in my company to accept change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*When changes occur in my company, I tend to complain about them rather than deal with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that I am more ready to accept change than my colleagues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't worry about changes in my company because I believe that there is always a way to cope with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When changes occur in my company, I have always the intention to support them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 7: Followup Semi-Structured Interview Questions for participation with Change Leaders

Before proceeding with our interview, please take a moment to review how GDPR applies to this scientific-research project. Additionally, by proceeding with this interview you agree to have this interview recorded for transcription purposes only. This interview will never be published as audio or video, nor will there be any sensitive information made public, which may jeopardize your anonymity or identify the organization where you work in. After the interview is transcribed, the audio and video recordings will be permanently deleted.

CONSENT FOR PERSONAL DATA PROCESSING FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH PROJECT (GDPR)

By clicking "I agree", I hereby give my explicit consent for the processing of the personal data (age, gender, income, and employment status), as collected in this survey questionnaire. The personal data will be processed solely for the purpose of carrying out the scientific research project. All personal data obtained with the survey will be stored under a research code (anonymisation), thus fully protecting the identity of the participants, while only summary results (anonymised and presented in different statistical forms) will be publicly available.

- Personal data will be processed until the consent is withdrawn or until the end of the scientific research project, after which they will be stored in anonymous form for research purposes in an online data repository, such as Social Science Data Archives - <https://www.adp.fdv.uni-lj.si/eng/> or Open Science Framework - <https://osf.io/>
- Given consent may be withdrawn at any time by a written notice to School of Economics and Business, Ljubljana University (SEBLU), Kardeljeva ploščad 17, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- For any further information regarding the processing of the data or consent in question, you may contact the authorized person for the protection of personal data at SEBLU Nataša Mulec (natasa.mulec@ef.uni-lj.si) or one of her assistants Jure Jeklič (jure.jeklic@ef.uni-lj.si) or Aljaž Kotar Mlakar (aljaz.kotar.mlakar@ef.uni-lj.si).
- SEBLU ensures that personal data collected on the basis of this consent will be used only for the above mentioned purposes and can not be transferred to third parties without your written consent. The legal basis for the processing of personal data in the public sector is regulated by Article 9 of the Personal Data Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 86/2004), which states that processing **of personal data in the public sector without legal basis, can only be done with the personal consent of the individual.** This consent and the processing of personal data itself is also justified by the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation in EU (GDPR).

GENERAL INFORMATION - NO ANECDOTES REQUIRED

- Industry
- Type of project
- Previous change leadership experience
- Tenure within the organization
- Team members included in the quantitative study
- **What was the biggest challenge during implementation?**
- **If your organizational change project could be perceived as a story...**
 - Who was the protagonist?
 - Who was the antagonist?
 - What inciting moment motivated the protagonist to start the journey (the what if...)?
 - What was the biggest conflict?
 - What would be the genre of this story?
 - What would be the moral of this story?
 - What was the dark inversion of this story (good gone bad, or bad gone good)?
 - What is your most frequently used metaphor?
 - What is your biggest revelation?

CHANGE PROJECT INFORMATION - ONLY ANECDOTES REQUIRED

PHASE 1 - AT HOME, STATUS QUO

Talk me through an anecdote which demonstrates how change recipients were behaving when they had no knowledge of the upcoming organizational change.

Could you recall how the knowledge of organizational change was initially started?

How did you articulate the “awakening” moment where the organizational change was formally initiated?

How did change recipients express doubt towards the change project? Could you recall an anecdote of how you addressed this challenge?

Talk me through an example of growing reluctance to accept the change-

Who was challenging you the most?

What exactly did you communicate to change recipients?

PHASE 2 - LEAVING FOR THE WOODS

Talk me through an anecdote which demonstrates how change recipients were behaving when initial resistance was being demonstrated?

What would you say was the moment of “big change” that initiated this positive change in attitudes of change recipients?

Could you recall who was the loudest and how you addressed these comments?

PHASE 3 - ENTERING THE FOREST

Talk me through how you handled this second round of growing reluctance among change recipients.

What were the biggest obstacles during this stage?

Could you recall the most difficult conversation you’ve had to manage during this phase?

Could you recall an anecdote covering the regression of change recipients from the stage of accepting change towards resisting change again.

Who was the most resilient and how did you handle this challenge?

PHASE 4 - LEAVING THE WOODS AT DARK

Talk me through the process of reawakening change acceptance within change recipients.

How did you manage to achieve it and what were the early signs of them experiencing reawakening?

Who was your strongest ally at this stage?

Could you recall an anecdote which could illuminate how this final stage of reacceptance was unfolding within the organization?

PHASE 5 - AT HOME, TRANSFORMED

What were the first signs of successful transformation with change recipients?

How did you recognize the occurrence of true mastery in accepting change?

What do you think is the most important thing to highlight here?

Appendix 8: Transcripts from Interviews

Transcript 1: Statements Expressing No Knowledge of Change, Growing Knowledge of Change and Awakening from Obliviousness in Act I (The Calm of Status-Quo)

Category	Example From Interview
No Knowledge of Change	<p><i>“Yeah, they... they had freedom, and they still have it, because it was really not intention to control people on this way. And they were... well maybe some of them were living in a, you know, with pink glasses... you know?” (Interviewee I)</i></p> <p><i>“Well you could think of a traditional post-transition rich corporation where people have big offices and everyone enjoys their workday as an excuse for being paid to socialize. A lot of these people weren’t capable of doing much work at a high level anyway...” (Interviewee G)</i></p>
Growing Knowledge of Change	<p><i>: “Because we are, we are, we were also afraid of the change on two levels. I think. One level was how the main people, the people that we need it, but we thought that we cannot replace at that point, how they will perceive a new leader, and if they're going to be scared off, they're going to just go away, and we're going to have a problem. The second was we... because we were not experienced enough, we didn't actually believe that this new people coming from outside into the company will actually do their job well, right? So we didn't know whether to trust them or not (laughs).” (Interviewee C)</i></p> <p><i>“And, you know, I still couldn't sleep I said, you know, how can I communicate this, we're potentially closing down the bank, potentially, these colleagues are losing their jobs, you know, I mean, come on, this cannot be the reality... you know, how do you portray these messages, you know, it can be horrible that it can impact individuals, more than they've ever been impacted?” (Interviewee A)</i></p>
Awakening from Obliviousness	<p><i>“We had a sounding board of high level HR people throughout the world. And we had our group HR, our corporate HR committee, the highest level people in the world. And almost always, they were positive (...) we took that feedback and did it again and figured it out. So mostly is very much supported by almost everybody.” (Interviewee E)</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, so then I said: "Okay, I would like to do something else", and I applied for a new position. And, and... actually, miraculously, I was selected (...) So, then then more or less, I made the strategy over the Christmas 2016.” (Interviewee B)</i></p> <p><i>And portraying the message or dates in the morning, okay... "3:30 AM, let's buy a painting, what should it be?" and then I was looking for I might be something, you know, growing trees or, you know, something new. And there is in Japan, they have the blooming of the blossom, cherry blossom, but there's also the plum blossom, you know, that it's also a symbol of awakening new life, new direction, new opportunities, new chances, it's starting something new, something better, something, something that's going to be positive.” (Interviewee A)</i></p>

Source: Own work

Transcript 2: Statements Expressing Doubt, Addressing Reluctance and Change Recipients' Acceptance of Initial Arguments in Act II (The Challenge of Change)

Category	Example From Interview
Change Recipients' Initial Expression of Doubt	<p><i>“So when they actually realized that they will have tablets, with a digital platform, and they will take it out in the pharmacy to take an order, it somehow immediately looks like they're not so medical anymore, you know... that their purpose will be different, that they will be somehow humiliated, because they will not be (perceived as) medical doctors anymore.” (Interviewee I)</i></p> <p><i>“One of the biggest doubts people had was that my arrival meant that everything will become more strict, rigid and corporate. Everyone was pretty vocal about that, and didn't regard my feelings particularly. They spoke about me as if I wasn't present in the room and complained about what could be one of the outcomes.” (Interviewee H)</i></p> <p><i>“The issue is, I did not get that feedback. Because usually, and that was the culture at that time, negative feedback was not communicated to the (managing director). So, all I got was very filtered diplomatic info. And basically, the resistance was not against the change. It was some, I would say, toxic emotions within the company as such, feelings like nothing can be changed, no one listens, we are underpaid and exploited.” (Interviewee D)</i></p>
Change Leader's Addressing of Doubt and Overcoming Reluctance	<p><i>“Coincidentally, we were in this process of acquiring another company. And I combined those two processes, already inviting some people from the other... other company to participate in the process in the process itself, and use the whole merger, to call acquisition merger process to formulate the vision of the combined company. And it was a messy process.” (Interviewee J)</i></p> <p><i>“I tried to make it all seem fun and “light”. I remember attaching a Toby Flenderson (not so popular HR character from The Office) meme on one of my PowerPoint slides. Also I always emphasized that I also hate corporate environments and that I will never make a big change in the company without consulting its employees first.” (Interviewee H)</i></p>
Change Recipients' Acceptance of Initial Arguments	<p><i>“And let's make this happen, you know, and we can make it to happen together, if we put our energy together, like we did in the past years, when so many projects that we did, you know, implementation of current accounts, the record speeds of mortgages and the record speed in everything that we've done so far, successfully, we will achieve this as well.” (Interviewee A)</i></p> <p><i>“we brought HR when we were already 100 people... students, employees, experts, everything right? Before that, everything (partner) and me were doing the same and about the same time. So, soon after we brought the HR and people embraced the HR because they said: “Okay, finally, we have somebody to talk to”. (Interviewee C)</i></p>

Source: Own work

Transcript 3: Statements Expressing Experimentation with Available Knowledge, Increase of Knowledge Resulting from Experimentation and Experimentation After Knowledge Implementation and Identification of New Flaws in Act III (The Deceptiveness of Acceptance)

Category	Example From Interview
Experimentation with Available Knowledge	<p><i>“The way I perceive the world; this is very Gestapo way to do it. But in general, what I see is that people appreciate this type of weight. And what I... what I say about Gestapo is we were very direct, so this person is responsible for this, they're going to do this, you're going to be under this person, you need to respect it with the decisions, you know, very much hard data when they start, and then later on, we figure out the, you know, in between.” (Interviewee C)</i></p> <p><i>“As time was passing they started being secured that everything is fine that they are safe that they didn't lose freedom then it's okay and then they started questioning technical part and getting on with application etc.” (Interviewee I)</i></p>
Increase of Knowledge Resulting from Experimentation	<p><i>“I was doing things “under the radar”, which was accepted but I never got recognition for good job we have done. Because you know how this organization works - unless you make a huge fuss about it, it's like you didn't do anything. So this way of implementing improvements was good for my team (inclusion) and organization (improvements) but cost me career in the company.” (Interviewee F)</i></p> <p><i>It's not about us. It's not about the team here. It's about how fast things are evolving in five years. Our I don't know accounting department; our legal department will be completely different. And if you do not keep up with changes, there won't be no use for you. Not here, and not anywhere else on the market. So basically, when they say: “Oh, we have to learn so much with the with the company software, with a collector, it's so complicated. And every week comes something new...” That's this hygiene. If you do not know how to work that, if you do not keep up, you are irrelevant. And it's, it's the same with me. And it's the same with them, it's the same on the company level.” (Interviewee D)</i></p>
Experimentation After Knowledge Implementation and Identification of New Flaws	<p><i>“Now we are seven, we act as a startup, and it will be fun. But sooner or later and actually, in two years, we became 75 people, sooner or later, we will be so, so big that we will need to put structure and we will need to integrate into the mother company. But if we don't do that, we will be perceived as a kind of outlaws. And sooner or later, somebody will, will crash us like a bug.” (Interviewee B)</i></p> <p><i>“Yeah, there. So at the highest level, they, they communicated it internally and to the various heads of HR in different countries. A long time ago, they essentially said this is coming (but) didn't give any details about what the change would be, because we were developing the new framework. But... but people were informed. And then periodically, we would touch base with representatives from different countries to make sure...” (Interviewee E)</i></p>

Source: Own work

Transcript 4: Statements Expressing Doubt, Growing Reluctance and Manifestation of Regression Towards Old Ways of Working in Act IV (The Adversity of Apprehension)

Category	Example From Interview
<p>Change Recipients' Second Expression of Doubt</p>	<p><i>"We are presenting 0.7% of the balance sheet, the assets of the Company, you know, there was not this interest, to fight it through, you know, to make it successful to continue the success story. I mean, come on, just run it down, you know, and just, it's fine. Why would you bother? I mean, it was not said like this directly, but the energy was not there. You know, it was not like, the willingness to push this through as much as it was internally." (Interviewee A)</i></p> <p><i>"After this second doubt phase after our go-live, one of my biggest allies from our inhouse business solutions department started publicly expressing doubt in a fairly aggressive manner, leaving some of my bluffs exposed. This played out pretty bad for me, but I was thinking that I already lost, so I might as well try to pull off something dramatically and try to reconcile this conflict. I think the effect was 50:50, in a sense that I've gone into a conflict with this manager, then publicly reconciled the conflict, but the scars still remained and the people weren't all that convinced." (Interviewee G)</i></p>
<p>Change Recipients' Growing Reluctance</p>	<p><i>"I told everyone I was open for criticism but I asked them to be as precise as they can and give me real examples of situations that made them question the change I was trying to make. The loudest was one of the newly hired senior managers who joined the company almost one year after my arrival. In her opinion, I was very biased and didn't treat everyone equally. She was convinced that I held back some information from her. After I became aware she felt that way, I introduced a 1-on-1 bi-monthly meeting to our schedules to regularly address every relevant topic." (Interviewee H)</i></p> <p><i>"We didn't know that we should fire him (laughs). But we would just try to manage that. And later on. I think in the next year and a half we anyway fired the person. And I usually I think the loudest are those who you are at least satisfied with. (ugh...) But it's not directly connected. I think it's connected just because you're unsatisfied with you don't communicate properly with them. So something's goes missing in the communication. So then they are not satisfied with you. Okay, and then when you try to introduce the change, they're even more untrusting." (Interviewee C)</i></p> <p><i>"The decision, you know, to exit the market in the country, I mean, this was instilled like, you cannot understand... Why would, why is this the option, why was not this consulted are other options evaluated, etc. But it was more like, you know, the Company and the new management wanted to show, you know, their strength, what they can do, what they can impose changes that they can make in their organization, and to meet the shareholders expectations (uhh...) and this is how it was done, if it was done right or wrong in at the end of the day. From the Company group perspective..." (Interviewee A)</i></p>
<p>Change Recipients' Manifestation of Regression Towards Old Ways of Working</p>	<p><i>"I was expecting this to happen when we went back (to the Mother company). Because some people couldn't really see themselves especially in the pair, in the regular environment." (Interviewee B)</i></p> <p><i>"I got discouraged when things were not moving as fast as I expected, or when people who I observed as... that they can do it, did not deliver. (pauses) But I had to take a step back and say: "Okay, this is your responsibility, you have to start communicating again. And again, and again." (Interviewee D)</i></p> <p><i>"Medical educated workers tend to be difficult... And I think two of them were louder, even loudest, because of what I mentioned already before... They had some processes inside questioning their self, if that is in the sales, it is something they were supposed to do in life because they were studying to help people to treat people to be doctors, you know, and I think two of them were actually loudest in in complaints." (Interviewee I)</i></p>

Source: Own work

Transcript 5: Statements Expressing Reawakening from Regression, Re-Acception of Change and Demonstration of Total Mastery in Act V (The Resolution of Transformation)

Category	Example From Interview
<p>Change Leader Reawakening Change Recipients from Regression</p>	<p>“We went from: first we need to introduce this to managers, then we need to persuade managers, we did it one by one. So the same process, then it was the cuts. So it was the big pain. We had the antagonist as well, there, you know, we had a person who, I don't know... what was so deeply unsatisfied and distrusting. She's still in the company, somehow we manage that. But I still don't believe that we managed to solve that bad taste in the mouth completely. And we're still and that's already a year ago now. So more than a year, a lot of things change in between, I still don't think that we fixed that.” (Interviewee C)</p> <p>“Not sure that reawakening ever happened. I think there was enough assurance that the main idea or principle that was implemented is still alive.” (Interviewee F)</p> <p>“We are entering into the part of the story for the second time, where the main character is going to face either no enemy soldiers in the dark, so to speak, there will be challenging times. I'm pretty convinced that they will. Well, at the end of the day, its results on set in on several, several, several, let's say, areas...” (Interviewee J)</p>
<p>Change Recipients Re-Accept Changed Environment with Reduced Resistance</p>	<p>“We knew if we want to make this bank pretty to be sold, to make the bright, pretty, so to say that we need to balance our balance sheet, you know, and the only option was to get rid of 400,000 clients, you know, that was the environment and we knew that this is the expectation” (Interviewee A)</p> <p>When I made retrospection, about the last two years, what we accomplished what we did, that was tremendous. That was from before COVID-19, it's unbelievable, huge step forward. But still, we're doing this, we're living every day, we are in the middle of it, and it's normal. And from this, I think it's where these high expectations and the frustrations come from, because it seems so normal.” (Interviewee D)</p> <p>That's manifested itself by her not attending all the meetings, and not participating as much after a certain period of time. Which, honestly, you make a lot of effort to bring her into the fold and listen to all perspectives and incorporate it. And eventually, it's like, well, if you're not going to be here, then we're going to do what we feel is best, because it's got pretty much universal support at all levels, except for except for you and a couple of other people with individual concerns about it. But not concerns we can't overcome.” (Interviewee E)</p> <p>“Nothing special, to be honest... Coercion was in full motion and everyone played along, nominally complying, but continuing to report all the negative aspects of the software.” (Interviewee G)</p>
<p>Change Recipients Demonstrate Total Mastery of Proposed Change, Effectively Ending the Cycle of Knowledge Transference</p>	<p>“I asked every single employee to give their feedback on HR during the 360 evaluation process in the company. Results were much better than I expected. Some teams were still pretty resilient, but the situation wasn't critical. Everyone (event the critics) saw something positive in this org change. I left the company before the change was fully accepted. But some of the strongest signs of change acceptance in my last few months was that my loudest “opponents” were slowly getting on board and were even providing me with constructive feedback.” (Interviewee H)</p> <p>But a lot of sales guys, more than half, are able to sell software now as well... So we sell it as a service, just to sell software. And now, what was the outcome? We went from 225 million euro to 350 last year. I will need to repeat this with another business. Similar symptoms as the one before...” (Interviewee D)</p> <p>“Medicinal educated workers tend to be difficult... And I think two of them were louder, even loudest, because of what I mentioned already before... They had some processes inside questioning their self, if that is in the sales, it is something they were supposed to do in life because they were studying to help people to treat people to be doctors, you know, and I think two of them were actually loudest in complaints.” (Interviewee I)</p>

Source: Own work