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Resistance to change and its management: Why people's resistance changes

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ABSTRACT:

Muutos on jatkuvaa ja muutosten johtaminen on aina ajankohtaista. Muutokset johtavat kehitykseen, ja muutosten avulla organisaatiot pystyvät vastaamaan kilpailuun. Nykypäivänä muutokset tapahtuvat yhä nopeammin, ja tämä vaatii jatkuvaa reagointia organisaatiolta sekä sen johtajilta. Muutosjohtaminen ei aina ole helppoa. Muutosjohtamisen yksi ongelmista on muutostavastarinta. Vaikka muutostavastarinta usein kuulostaa ongelmalta, sitä ei pitäisi automaattisesti pitää ongelmana. Muutostavastarinta voi joskus auttaa muutosta toteutumaan.

Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on analysoida muutosjohtamista, muutostavastarintaa sekä muutostavastarinnan hyödyntämistä resurssina. Tutkielman tavoitetta määritellään yhdellä päätutkimuskysymyksellä sekä kolmella alakysymyksellä, joilla avustetaan pääkysymykseen vastaamista. Tutkielman pääkysymys koskee yksilöiden muutostavastaisuutta sekä sen kehittymistä ja sitä, kuinka muutostavastarintaa voitaisiin käyttää resurssina. Ensimmäinen määrittelee yksilöiden muutostavastaisuuden esiintymistapoja organisaatiossa. Toinen tutkimuskysymys pohtii muutostavastarinnan kehitystä muutosprosessin aikana. Kolmas tutkimuskysymys esittää keinoja, joilla muutostavastarintaa voidaan johtaa sekä hyödyntää sitä resurssina.

Kirjallisuuden perusteella voidaan päätellä, että muutosta johtaessa voidaan käyttää erilaisia tapoja ja malleja. Muutos ei aina etene lineaarisesti ja eri teoriat voivat täydentää toisiaan. Voimme huomioida, että muutos on kriisi työntekijöille ja suurin yksittäinen muutostavastarinnan aiheuttaja on pelko. Yksilöt pelkäävät muutosta ja muutoksen seurauksia, jolloin reaktiona on vastarinta muutokselle. Muutostavastarinta voi ilmetä käytöksessä, tunteissa sekä tietoisena ulottuvuutena. Nämä kolme ovat linkittyneitä toisiinsa. Muutostavastarinta kehittyy muutoksen aikana. Kehitysprosessissa on kolme vaihetta: prosessin vastustaminen, vanhan poisoppiminen sekä uuden omaksuminen. Yleisesti kaikki käyvät nämä vaiheet läpi, mutta vaiheiden läpikäyntinopeus vaihtelee.

Muutostavastarintaa johtaessa kommunikaation sekä luottamuksen vaikutus korostuvat. Kommunikaation toimiessa muutostavastarintaa on helpompaa hyödyntää resurssina. Saadun palautteen avulla voidaan kehittää organisaation strategiaa, vaihtaa suuntaa, löytää potentiaalisia yksilöitä sekä mahdollisesti välttää virheellisiä investointeja.

KEYWORDS: Change management, Resistance to change, Organizational change, Leading change

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1 Introduction

Change is a continuous process. According to Nemanick (2019, p. 1), change is a dilemma. Why? Change is something that we would love and hate at the same time. Ezzeddine et al. (2023, p. 1) note that it is important to handle changes in the business world. If an organization manages changes effectively, it has a positive impact. For example, change could encourage innovations. Burnes (2004B, p. 886) notes that organizational change is an important subject that challenges organizations because the world is fast-moving. Child et al. (2000, p. 333) state that organizational change is continuous, and according to Kotter (1996, p. 18), global business creates more threats and opportunities. Competition is global and not stable.

Why is it important to understand the resistance to change? Ford & Ford (2010, p. 24) note that according to managers involved in the change process, over half of organizational changes fail due to resistance to change. Child et al. (2000, p. 357) add that organizational change nearly always meets resistance. Change resistance affected the links between employees' productivity and change management. If the resistance is low, employees' productivity increases, and if change resistance is higher, employees' productivity is lower (Shaik et al. 2023, p. 1052). Burke (2018, p. 111) adds that change resistance is not always resistance to change; it can also be resistance to the fear of losing something personally valuable. If people feel their independence is being taken away, they try to return it.

Leaders can be significantly affected by resistance to change. Bruckman (2008, p. 211) notes that some leaders do not fully understand the change process. Instead of understanding the change process, they rely on their own instincts and experience. In today's business environment, it is important that leaders fully understand changing processes. If leaders understood these processes, they could lead organizations successfully. Galli

(2018, p. 129) adds that leaders must understand the forces of resistance. If leaders do not understand resistance, it can cost money, reduce loyalty, and waste resources.

1.1 Research question and the frame of study

The main research objective of the bachelor's thesis is to explain why and how people resist change, and to increase understanding of resistance to change. The thesis's main research question is: How and why does individual resistance to organizational change emerge and evolve, and how can it be leveraged as a resource by organizations?

To answer the main research question, we use the following three sub-questions:

1. In what ways does individual resistance change show within organizations?
2. How and why does individual resistance evolve during organizational change processes?
3. How can organizations manage resistance to change and leverage it as a resource?

1.2 Structure of the study

This thesis begins with an introduction. The introduction chapter includes information about the research background. The introduction chapter has three subchapters, whose aim is to introduce the thesis effectively. First, the subchapters present the rationale for the research background, as well as the research objective and the research questions. The following subchapter outlines the structure of the study, and the last subchapter is the definition of key terms.

The next main chapter includes the theoretical foundations of organizational changes. First introduced the theme of organizational change. After that, it introduces different theories for leading organizational change.

The third main chapter represents individuals' change resistance and introduces individuals' resistance to change from different perspectives. The fourth chapter introduces managed and leveraged resistance to change. The final chapter summarizes the thesis with conclusions and presents ideas for a future research proposal.

1.3 Definitions of key terms

Change management

Murthy (2007, p. 22) defines change management as a process that helps reach goals in changes of the business processes, information, organizational structure, or organizational tasks, and optimize benefits. Shaik et al. (2023, p. 1052), referring to Russell-Jones (1997) definition of change management, say that change management is a process that moves an organization from its current state to the vision about the future. Ezzeddine et al. (2023, p. 1) elaborate on the previous point that today's continuously changing world organizations need to put change management in their strategies.

Change management has a link to employees' job satisfaction and productivity. Change management aims to minimize the negative impact of change on employees (Shaik et al., 2023, p. 1052).

Resistance to change

Resistance to change is one important factor in the success of organizational changes. Waddell & Sohall (1998, p. 543) mentioned Maurer's research. This research states that one-half to two-thirds of all major corporate change efforts fail. One main point of these failings is resistance to change. Child et al. (2000, p. 357) note that resistance to change

is a universal phenomenon that is noted in groups that feel that their interests are threatened. Burke (2018, p. 110–110) adds that resistance can be resistance about losing something that is valuable to a person and not exactly resistance to change. O' Connor (1993, p. 30–36) adds that resistance can be unplanned, planned, obvious, or uncovered. Resistance is opposition to specific ideas or plans in organizations. Although resistance to change could play a valuable role in the change process, it must be used wisely.

Organizational change

According to Burke (2018, p. 28), the first recorded organizational change is in the Old Testament Exod. 18:13-27) and organization change has existed longer than organizations themselves. Gilgeous & Chambers (1999, p. 44) add that if either organization does not want to change, changes can happen. If Organizations did not respond to changes, they could miss new opportunities. Schein (1999, p. 60) believes that one reason for starting change is dissatisfaction or frustration.

Organizational change is a process that moves an organization from its current state to the future state (Hussain et al. 2018, p. 123). Hubbart (2023A, p. 6) adds that organizational change is a process that involves making some structural changes because the organization wants to respond, for example, to growth opportunities. Gilgeous & Chambers (1999, p. 44) state that organizations must recognize the changes in the environment and respond to them. This is a way to maximize the potential of organizations.

Leading change

Leadership and management are closely linked to each other. Leadership focused more on people than management (Poulson, 2007, Strategic leadership). Kotter (1996, p. 25–30) adds that leadership is focused on leading people. It is a collection of processes that are needed when an organization starts action, or processes that help organizations with change.

1.4 Research methods

This research will be conducted as a literature review. This research aims to examine and understand existing literature. The aim is to draw on existing literature to advance understanding of resistance to change. This research does not collect empirical evidence about this subject. This research is based on peer-reviewed articles and the key literature in the field.

Most of the references are collected from the Tritonia Library search service. Several databases are used for this research. The primary databases were Scopus, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect. Information is also collected and searched by browsing all databases using a search tool. The search combined search terms like change management, resistance to change, conflict management, organizational change, leading change, and strategic planning. Boolean operations OR, AND, and NOT were used to combine search terms. The search was restricted to peer-reviewed articles and English-language articles. The thesis also uses classic literature in changing theory. This offers a basis for theoretical knowledge for today's knowledge.

2 Theoretical background of organizational changes

This chapter provides the theoretical foundation for understanding organizational change and presents models to manage changes. Models offered different styles to lead organizations during change, introducing different ways to handle it. Hussain et al. (2018, p. 123) note that theories of change describe how effective organizations can change their strategies, structures, or practices.

According to Talmaciu (2014, Introduction), organizational change models usually have three main objectives. These main objects are defining change, implementing change, and consolidating change. Although all models have some similar effects, the main points can differ in many ways. Next, we examined different theories behind organizational change.

The first subchapter introduces the theme of organizational change. After that, the subchapters are structured thematically. First are presented linear and planned approaches, and then non-linear models.

2.1 Organizational change

This chapter introduces the term organizational change. The chapter defines what this term involves and why it can be challenging for organizations. Understanding the term "organizational change" helps explain change models.

Most researchers accept that organizational change starts when something new happens in the organizational environment. For example, Burke (2018, p. 170) notes that change generally starts when an organization is dealing with some shift or event in the

organization's exterior environment. Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 25) add that another reason that can start organizational change is a new leader, who has new ideas. Helms Mills et al. (2008, p. 4) add that many factors can impact organizations. These factors can be, for example, leadership, fusion, growth, increase, reduction, new products, changes in technology, industrial doubts, competition, changing political climate, and regulations.

What if the organization does not make any changes? Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 25) note that if organizations are not changed and are in a stagnant state, it means that the organization is dropping down. Helms Mills et al. (2008, p. 9) add that change is an important reason for the organization's success. Kotter (1996, p. 30) agrees that. He says that, if the business environment were to become constant or at least slow down, it would be a reason to be so worried about the change problems inside the organizations.

According to Pettigrew (2012, p. 1311), organizations that performed better in response to strategic changes differed from the other organizations in five ways. Organizations that do not perform well do not direct environmental assessments, not lead changes, not link to operational and strategic changes, not manage human resources, and not manage the coherence process of change.

There are different kinds of organizational changes. Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 16) write that there can be different organizational changes. *Surviving Change Manager's guide* (2009, p. 4–5) states that organizational change can be structural, cost-cutting, process, or cultural. It is important to choose the form of organizational change. Choosing helps choose a strategy of change. Burke (2018, p. 156) wants to add that change can be planned or unplanned. According to Jain et al. (2010, p. 260), organizational change can focus on individuals, teams, or the whole organization. Organizational change can focus on cognitive skills, affective changes, or behaviors. Before planning or making organizational changes, it is important to think about an organization's strengths and weaknesses. Flamholtz & Randle (2008, p. 6–7) add that organizational change is difficult because it moves individuals from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

Ford & Ford (2010, p. 34) note that organizational change can fail for many reasons. Working with individuals during changes is not always easy, and there are no easy instructions for that. Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 26–32) add that the organization change process can be clearly planned. When organizational change is well planned, it is known what stage comes next. There is also knowledge of what every stage includes. That is important because organizational change is a complicated phenomenon. It can be considered in many ways. Looking for different angles on organizational changes helps to understand them.

Planning organizational change can be helped by using some models of organizational change. Some models are based on other models of organizational change. The next three subchapters introduce ways to lead change.

2.2 Linear and planned approaches to organizational change

Linear and planned change models describe structured approaches where change occurs in predictable phases. These models suggest that each phase of change can be controlled and directed. This section summarizes the main ideas presented by Lewin, Kotter, and Schein. This chapter supports the research question about how organizations can effectively manage change. Planned change models emphasize stability and movement between different states. Two famous models of this kind are Lewin's three-step model and Kotter's eight-step model. These models are based on the thought that change can be planned and controlled step by step.

One of the most famous organizational theories is Lewin's three-step model. According to Burnes (2004A, p. 995), Lewin has a strong influence on the field of change. Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 36) add that Lewin is connected to the development of organizations' behavior, and Burnes (1996, p. 12) continues that many change management models

are based on Lewin's model. One of the most famous theories, which is based on Lewin's model, is Kotter's eight-step model. Galli (2018, p. 126) states that Kotter's 8-step model is increased for Lewin's model. Appelbaum et al. (2012, p. 765) add that Kotter's model is the key reference in the field of change management.

Lewin's three-step model of organizational change includes three stages: unfreezing, movement or transition, and refreezing. Unfreezing, meaning that before people can forget old behavior and adopt new behavior models successfully, the equilibrium needs to be destabilized (Burnes, 2004A, p. 985). Schein (1999, p. 62) to expand to earlier one by adding and explaining: What is unfreezing? Unfreezing gives motivation to learn, but does not automatically control the learning and direction of learning. Child et al. (2000, p. 350) state that unfreezing is a process by which individuals identify and admit that changes are needed. The unfreezing process is important to inform people how changes affected them and the importance of change. Galli (2018, p. 126) to underline that Lewin thinks that change does not happen if there is no motivation for change.

If there is no motivation to change, the second step, movement, does not happen. That step is where real change happens and moving towards the new (Child et al., 2000, p. 350). Burnes (1996, p. 12) adds that before the new behavior can be adopted, the old one must be deleted. If there is resistance to change, Galli (2018, p. 126) points out that the resistance appears to be in Lewin's model's step two. That is the step where employees must leave their old habits and use new ones. That is why employees must have a backup that helps them to use new habits. Employees are concerned about changes and how successful the changes are. Those who are centrum about changes need to adapt.

When movement ends, the final step, refreezing, starts. In this stage, the aim is that the new behavior is adopted. That step is also the stage where it is aimed at stabilizing groups at a new and steady state. That is important because new behavior models stay and old ones do not come back (Burnes, 2004A, p. 986).

Lewin's model has three steps. Kotter's model has eight steps, but according to Hubbart (2023B, p. 2), Kotter's 8-step model can be divided into three stages.

First stage preparation includes three phases:

1. Create a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Create vision, short or long

Second stage implementation includes the next three phases:

4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empower others to act on the vision
6. Create quick wins

The third stage follow-through includes two phases:

7. Build on change
8. Institutionalize the change

Most researchers accepted that Kotter's eight-step model is presented in a practical order, but some researchers pointed out some steps in this model. Kotter (1996, p. 23–24) adds that it is important to go practically to change processes; for example, skipping one stage can increase problems in later stages. That can cause things not to develop or be built naturally. That can affect later negatively. There is no power to effect change, resistance, and reasons that lead to change resistance. Appelbaum et al. (2012, p. 776) point out that Kotter's 8-step model presents actions in practical order. According to Galli (2018, p. 126–127), step three, creating vision, is important because change is not successful without well-developed strategic ideas. Employees need to know why changes are needed. Step four communication in change vision is important because if communication is not handled properly, it will cause resistance to change.

Although Lewin's three-step model has dominated change management theory and practice for a long time, Burnes (2004A, p. 977) criticizes that Lewin's model is only suit-

able for small change projects. Galli (2018, p. 127) criticizes Lewin's model for not detailing how to handle employees' part in change. Resistance could influence the organization if it is not managed properly.

Lewin is interested in resolving social conflict through behavioral change within organizations and across wider society. Lewin has identified two points about success. The points analyze and understand social grouping, which forms, motivates, and maintains. Another point is the behavioral changes of social groups (Burnes, 2004A, p. 986). Kotter places greater emphasis on people's feelings during the change process. Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 142) notice that Kotter advises that it is important to affect people's feelings during change processes. That is because people's behavior follows their perceptions, experiences, and changes according to patterns. It is important to make people interested in the subject. After that, people are open to changes.

When we want to think deeper about how to manage social conflicts and understand social grouping. We can develop our perspectives by researching Schein's organizational culture and leadership theory. Schein's organizational and leadership theory is one perspective of organizational change. Schein's model focused on organizational culture and how culture affects individuals and their behaviour. According to Kotter (1996, p. 155–156), the culture of change comes last, not first. He criticized models that suggest cultural change happens first, making the rest of the change project easier. His idea is that it is easier to change culture after people act in a new way. On the other hand, Schein & Schein (2016, p. 41–139) thought that understanding how culture evolves and where it comes from leads to something concrete that affects people's behavior. People mustn't overlook existing cultural conditions. Cultural conditions exist to make changes possible.

Schein & Schein (2016, p. 32–34) describe culture as the collected and shared learning of a group. Which is used, for example, when we need to solve problems of external

adaptation. Culture has an important role in opening components that influence the values, identity, and behavior of organizations. Culture has also influenced how groups interact and cooperate with their environments.

Like Lewin's model, Schein's theory also includes three levels. Schein (1999, p. 43) notes that organizational culture includes three levels. The first level is artifacts. Artifacts are structures and processes that are visible and feelable. The second level is espoused beliefs and values. That level includes ideas, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies, and rationalizations. The third level is basic underlying assumptions. That level includes unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values.

What do these three levels include? Schein & Schein (2016, p. 43–44) explain that artifacts are something that you can feel, see, or hear when you are meeting a new group with a strange culture. The most important thing about this level of culture is that it is easy to observe but very difficult to interpret. Some objects can mean different things to other cultures than they do to others.

Second-level espoused beliefs and values include, according to Schein & Schein (2016, p. 44–45), that all group learning mirrors someone's beliefs and values. When a group has some challenges, for example, new tasks, the first solution suggested to deal with them considers someone's own ideas about what will work. People who can prevail and can affect other people to adopt a certain approach to the problem in this kind of situation will be later recognized as a leader. If the leader can convince the group that the solution is what the leader has successfully worked on, employees can forget the old habit. It is important to note that all beliefs undergo that kind of change. Only empirically tested values will become renovated into norms.

The third and final level consists of basic underlying assumptions. Schein & Schein (2016, p. 48–51) note that culture defines for us which things we need to pay attention to or

what things mean. Culture also explains emotional reactions to something and how different situations affect them. Culture is also one explanation for who people are and how to behave. The fact that the assumptions are shared and reinforced by each other is the power of culture. Significantly, assumptions often relate to fundamental aspects of life. Schein & Schein (2016, p. 49) point out one example that culture can explain how we think about people who sit behind their desks. Another thought is that individuals are lazy; another can be that individuals solve problems in their heads.

Lewin, Kotter, and Schein form a foundation for planned organizational change. Lewin introduced the change process as a three-step model and provided a basis for understanding change. Kotter expanded this idea into an eight-step model, which points out structural actions. Schein complements both models by explaining the cultural aspects of organizational change. These models indicate that change can be guided by clear directions and steps that assist the process. Although all three models are linear, it is important to note that Kotter's and Lewin's models follow a straightforward plan for change, whereas Schein's model is not a strict plan. It is more of a complementary framework. Schein's model serves as a psychological process framework, focusing on the individual side of change. Kotter's and Lewin's models are most effective when change is clear and can be planned. The model's weakness lies in its limited flexibility in dynamic situations. This analysis shows that the best way to use these models is to combine them and use them as complementary to each other.

2.3 Moving towards more non-linear and emergent methods to change

This chapter introduces three dynamic and emergent models of organizational change. These theories offered three different and critical perspectives on how the effects of differing views on organizations can be understood. These theories point out how change expands through practise and communication rather than pre-clear steps. The themes, for example, addressed include continuous adaptation and the sensemaking

process. These models offer a complementary perspective to classical approaches by highlighting flexibility, context, and employees' activity. These models challenge the linear thinking of planned change by viewing change as a continuous process. Some dynamic models of organizational change criticized some classical models of organizational change. For example, Burnes (2004A, p. 989) refers to Pettigrew's text from 1990. Pettigrew criticized Lewin's model for not paying enough attention to analyzing organizational change.

Pettigrew's processual approach is one way to think about organizational change. Pettigrew (2012, p. 1305–1306) notes that he is interested in how decisions are made, how organizational cultures are born and maintained, and the connection of continuity. Pettigrew is also interested in the relationship between human behavior and the changing situation, and how they are linked. One of the goals is understanding behavioral, social, and organizational phenomena. Quite the same line represents Burnes. Burnes (1992, p. 28) notes that the human relations approach differs from classical perspectives, because humans are first emotional and then an economic-rational being. Another and third difference concerns organizations. Organizations are social systems, not only mechanical, and people create the organization's norms and rules.

Pettigrew (2012, p. 1308) notes that strategic change is a product of a legitimization process. This process is shaped by radical changes affected by the perspective of the firm and by political and cultural considerations inside the firm. Pettigrew & Whipp (1991, p. 27) add that strategy does not move forward directly and does not go through easily identifiable stages. Because change is complicated and not a linear process, Burnes (1992, p. 180) states that there is no all-inclusive theory of management change. These two perspectives present that organizational change is connected to both the environmental conditions and individual behavior. Burnes (2005, p. 73) defines complexity theories as a higher-level term for many theories, ideas, and research programs. Complexity theories seem increasingly useful to understand and change organizations.

Burnes (1992, p. 152) adds that it is important to understand human psychology, which can be discussed with theories of management education.

Regarding understanding strategic changes, Pettigrew & Whipp (1991, p. 26) present three essential dimensions: content, context, and process. Content includes assessment and choice of product and markets, objectives and assumptions, and targets and evaluation. Context includes resources, capabilities, culture, and politics. Processes include changing managers, the model of changes, formulation, implementation, and pattern through time.

There are five central factors for managing change. The first one is an environmental assessment. It is important to understand the organization's environment. Second is leading change. Leadership depends on context and creates possibilities for change. The third is to create a link between operational and strategic change. Fourth is human resources as assets and liabilities. The fifth and last factor is coherence in the management of change. This factor is the most complex factor for these fifth factors, which are mentioned (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991, p. 105–281). From another perspective, Burnes (1992, p. 153) limits examination to the three schools of thought that form the basis of change management theory. These three schools of thought are the individual perspective school, the group dynamics school, and the open systems school.

The researchers pointed out the individuals and the environment's meaning for leading changes. According to Pettigrew & Whipp (1991, p. 165–281), leading changes requires action by people at each stage of the business. It is important to build an environment where people are receptive to change, and it is important to build opportunities for change. It is also remembered that leadership depends on context. There are no general laws for leading change. Burnes (1992, p. 153–157) highlighted also the individual's perspective. The Individual perspective is focused on the individuals, but this school of thought has two shared parts: Behaviorist and the Gestalt-Field psychologicistic. Behavior is learned in behavioristic theory, and the individual is a passive receiver of objective

and outside data. The group dynamics school focuses on their behavior and learning. The open system school considers organizations as a whole structure, which includes several organized sub-structures. That means that all parts of change affect each other (Burnes, 1992, p. 153–157).

Burnes & James (1995, p. 15) refer to Burnes' earlier text about the model of change management, which includes nine elements, which are separated into two groups. The first group is elements that create the conditions or environment in which the change happens. Another group includes the actual points or stages of the change process. There are links between these groups. The environment affects how relevant changes feel and how the changes are planned and implemented. The effect also works the other way around. These two are connected to each other. About creating a good environment for change, Burnes (1992, p. 182–183) mentions an example about the importance of openness and communication. G K Printers Limited has planned some big changes for the business. Managers decided to discuss with employees about changes. Managers expected resistance, but they encouraged the new idea.

When we want to make more sense about individuals' actions, we can use Weick's sense-making theory. Weick's sensemaking process main idea by himself "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Weick, 1995, p. 18). Weick himself (1995, p. 86) adds that central sensemaking is about seeing what one believes and overlooking how one does not believe. Weick (1995, p. 4) writes that sensemaking is well named because it basically means making sense. Sensemaking is defined differently by researchers. One way to define sensemaking is a thinking process that uses demonstrative reasons to explain surprises. Another way to explain sensemaking is that it involves identifying motivations within some kind of frame. Helms Mills et al. (2008, p. 21) add that sensemaking encourages us to focus on organizational change as a sense of situation. It is something which is both an explanation and an outcome of explanation. According to Weick & Sandelans (1990, p. 324), sensemaking is important in organizations because the environment in organizations needs meaningful and justifiable behavior.

Weick's sensemaking process includes seven basic elements. Elements are identity construction, retrospective, sensible environments, social, ongoing, focused on, and extracted cues, and the last element is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995, p. 17).

What do these seven elements include? Identity construction includes how people understand their circumstances depending on their roles, identities, and values. Second element retrospective is not just a crucial subject of sensemaking, it is also an enormous subject about organizational structure. Basically, it means things or happenings are interpreted by looking at them in reverse. The third element of the sensemaking process is enactive of sensible environments. Enactive of sensible environments is that people construct the environment by their own actions, and they try to understand situations that they have created at least partly. The fourth element is social. Sensemaking is a social process. Shortly, building a meaningful process is a social process that shapes explanations and understanding. The fifth element is ongoing. Sensemaking never starts because it is an ongoing process. People are always in the middle of something. If we want to understand sensemaking, we need to be sensitive to how people catch flashes about endless streams and isolate signals from these moments (Weick 1995, p. 38–43).

Weick (1995, p. 49–62) describes that the sensemaking sixth element is focused on and extracts cues. Sensemaking often happens fast. That means that people deal with puzzles that challenge sensemaking, puzzles can be some kind of paradox, dilemmas, and incredible actions. It is important to pay attention to people's observations. It is also important to notice that people also find clues, complement clues, and pay attention to them. Sensemaking's seventh element is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. It is important to know enough that people can go on with their project, but it is not important to know everything. That basically means that knowledge is sufficient and plausibility, but they are before accuracy.

Storytelling is an important aspect of sensemaking. Storytelling goes by special order, and sequencing is an important aspect for sensemaking. Storytelling can help manage pressures and improve sensemaking through emergencies. Preventing emergency stories can be even more helpful, because it helps plan how to act in different situations (Weick, 1995, p. 129–131). Sensemaking is one way to engage people in an organization, because Weick (1995, p. 105) notes that engagement with the process can decline if people feel no sense of their process. All is between sense and senselessness.

Weick, Pettigrew, and Burnes, and their perspectives, presented organizational change as a more flexible and socially constructed process. Individuals react to something that managers or organizations did. If leaders and organizations can create an environment where individuals are open to change, resistance to change might be less. These models highlighted more about communication, sensemaking, and adaptation, and are focused on individuals' reactions to change. Emergent and non-linear models are useful nowadays because changes are quick and unpredictable in the business world. These models are challenging because they are not easy to plan beforehand.

2.4 Conclusions for the theoretical background

In summary, the change models that are presented differ notably in how they conceptualize change and resistance. Planned change models normally view resistance as a barrier to be reduced through planned processes. Emergent approaches highlight sensemaking and the informative processes that influence resistance. Emergent approaches present change more non-linearly than planned change models.

Based on the analysis, emergent and non-linear models are useful nowadays in a fast-changing business world. These models are more flexible than planned and linear. However, it is important to plan change, but at the same time reach flexibility. This suggests that the best way to use different models is to combine them.

3 Individual resistance to Organizational change

Organizational change occurs at the individual level. The success of organizational change depends on how employees behave towards the changes. Understanding individual resistance to change is crucial for explaining why organizational change succeeds or fails. This chapter introduces a framework for individuals' reactions, behaviour, and actions during the organizational change process. This chapter addresses the research questions: In what ways does individual resistance change show within organizations? How and why does individual resistance evolve during organizational change processes?

3.1 Conceptual framework of individual Resistance to change

Resistance change has been introduced in many ways in organizational research. Resistance reactions can be negative or positive. Understanding individual resistance, we use the cognitive-affective-behaviour framework. Oreg (2006, p. 76) notes that resistance to change has three different components: affective (how one feels about change), cognitive (what people think about change), and the behavioural (how people act in response to change). These components linked to others. See Figure 1.

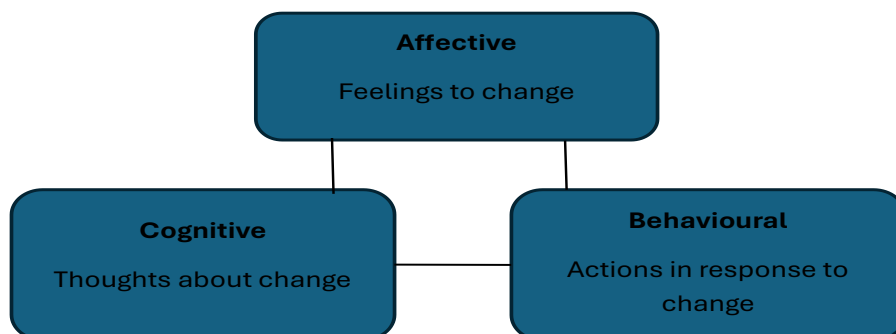


Figure 1: Dimension of Change Resistance

Resistance to change does not show evenly. It is important to notice all these dimensions and separate them; for example, thoughts and feelings can cause different reactions. Thoughts say that something is wise, and feelings say it is not wise. By researching these dimensions, we can better understand resistance to change and lead change more effectively.

3.2 Dimensions of individual resistance to change

Oreg (2006, p. 76) shares dimensions of resistance to change in three different components: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. The next three subchapters introduced these dimensions. This categorization of dimensions supports the research question of how resistance emerges in cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. This helps clarify how resistance is conceptualized and how it can be managed.

Smollan (2011A, p. 832) mentions that resistance to change can build on many dimensions. These dimensions could overlap and are not easy to notice. Furst & Cable (2008, p. 453) add that employees react and respond to changes differently. That may be due to how managers present changes to employees. According to Talmaciu (2014, Conclusion), if people are offered a destination, they will accept and support changes. They have felt that their co-workers are also on the way to achieving their goal, and that there is a goal that awaits them at their destination.

3.2.1 Cognitive dimensions for change resistance

Cognitive dimensions are about what people think and make clear about change (Child et al. 2000, p. 358). According to Burke (2018, p. 112), some people can have ideological resistance to changes. They believe that it is wrong to make changes. Oreg (2003, p. 608)

notes that noted change resistance could be cognitive rigidity. Individuals can be rigid and closed-minded, and that's why they find it hard to accept changes. They can also be difficult to willing the changes. Oreg (2003, p. 608) adds that the reason for resistance could be individuals' intolerance. They have psychological resilience to accept new situations. Child et al. (2000, p. 358) complement this by saying that people can resist changes if they observe that change affects them negatively. People can feel that change affects them negatively, for example, their payment, job security, or working conditions. Burnes & James (1995, p. 17) mention that if organizations lead changes that are against the employees' attitudes, they face resistance. This can be avoided if employees change their minds; this is possible only if people believe that they can effect change in some way.

3.2.2 Affective dimensions for resistance change

Individuals' feelings could be strong, and feelings affect us every day. Child et al. (2000, p. 358) mention that affective dimensions are what people feel about changes. Alolabi et al. (2021, p. 2) add to this that change has affected people's emotions.

Most of the researchers accepted that fear is a strong feeling during the organizational change process. One point of resistance is the fear of losing control. People can resist changes because changes are imposed and they can't be self-initiated (Oreg 2003, p. 608). According to Schein & Schein (2016, p. 297–298), fear of incompetence could be one reason for resistance to change. Learning new habits is incomplete, and old ones must give way. Oreg (2003, p. 608) notes that some people do not want to give up old habits. All people need innovation. If people have lower levels of stimulation, they can resist change. Schein & Schein (2016, p. 297–298) note that other fears which can affect resistance to change are fear of punishment, fear of loss of personal identity, and fear of loss of group membership. Hubbart (2023A, p. 3–4) supports these previously men-

tioned reasons and noted that people's resistance changes because of fear of the unknown, fear of losing control, and fear of moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Oreg (2003, p. 608) adds an example that sometimes individuals find it hard to admit that past particulars were faulty. That will cause psychological resilience.

One affective dimension is trust. According to Juuti & Virtanen (2009, p. 141), one reason people do not change their acts is that they do not trust their leaders. Ford & Ford (2010, p. 33) point out this same trust problem. Employees who feel that they have been betrayed by leaders would be less productive and cooperative.

Stress is one reason that affects the change in resistance. Employees can think that change unpleasantly affects their job, which causes stress. After that, in turn, stress caused resistance to change (Gilgeous & Chambers, 1999, p. 46).

3.2.3 Behavioural dimensions

Child et al. (2000, p. 358) note that behavioural dimensions are how people behave to changes. Behavioural dimensions can be shared into two categories: active or passive.

Time pressure is one reason for resistance, according to Ford & Ford (2010, p. 27), which sometimes causes people to resist change, because they have too much to do. People have responsibility for the results of their old job, but they must change. Gilgeous & Chambers (2010, p. 27) agree with Ford's idea and noted that if a change proposal is introduced for people who already full timetable, it can be impossible or difficult.

According to Child et al. (2002, p. 357), resistance to change can be caused by feeling that change is a disturbance and interference with their routines. This applies not only to employees, but also to supervisors. Direct supervisors can resist changes because they think that there are risks that changes can risk smoothing projects by changing

something. Burke (2018, p. 112) adds that people can be politically resistant to changes. They believe that they lose something important, for example, income. According to Gilgeous & Chambers (1999, p. 46), employees' low self-esteem can also cause a change in resistance.

Alolabi et al. (2021, p. 7) refer to Ross & Nilsson's (2020) work and say that employees tend to fear changes. That is the reason leaders must involve employees in the change process and keep them updated about changes. When leaders fail to engage and inform employees, the employees may experience increased fear, become disengaged from the change process, and show greater resistance. Burke (2018, p. 111) mentions that it is called blind resistance. That means that some people are afraid and are intolerant of any change.

Change resistance is not always bad. It would tell important things to leaders. Ford & Ford (2010, p. 30) note that people who react strongly and loudly to changes are often those who care most about how things and changes are made. They are also often people who seem to have all possible problems with changing plans. Sometimes, when change gets support, O'Connor (1993, p. 30–36) mentioned that it can cause problems. People can resist change even more when they notice that someone is supporting changes.

3.2.4 Comparison of cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions

The analysis shows that cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions are connected to each other. Child and Oreg have noticed the connection between all dimensions. Almost all sources highlight that trust is one main point and is affected in all dimensions.

All dimensions explain why and how resistance is born. They only explain it in different ways. Because the analysis pointed out that all dimensions are strongly connected to

each other, it is important to examine and notice them all during change processes. For example, if leaders only act when they meet behavioural dimensions, they must notice the affective and cognitive dimensions behind the behavioural dimensions.

3.3 Why is change resistance born in organizations?

Where does change resistance come from? According to Nemanick (2019, p. 1), change resistance comes from people's emotional responses of fear, uncertainty, and doubt. Emotions can drive away logical thoughts. Burke (2018, p. 112) adds that resistance is a natural human reaction and a defence mechanism. So, it must be respected. It is also important to remember that resistance tells us that people care about something. Hackselius-Fonsèn (2017, p. 19) adds that change is more difficult for people who are engaged in a situation before the change.

The resistance is a natural reaction, and it must be respected. However, Andriopoulos & Dawson (2009, p. 295) add that individual resistance and conflicts are problems that require resolution. These problems occur at different levels within the organization. Resistance and problems at the individual level may arise from personality clashes, task allocations, skill development, and training issues. At the group level, conflicts can be linked to leadership, areas of responsibility, and unwillingness to cooperate

Waddell & Sohall (1998, p. 544) note that resistance to change is a multiple effect that can be caused by many different reasons. Resistance is not the enemy of change. It can play a useful role in organizational change and would be helpful for the company in making changes. Child et al. (2000, p. 358) repeat this by saying that if the right people make resistant changes, it could be good for the organization. Hubbart (2023A, p. 1) adds that change resistance is quite common and affects how organizational change success is achieved, and although there is progress has been made in organizational changes, there is always change resistance.

Kotter & Schlesinger (1979, p. 108) note that one reason for resistance to change is misunderstanding. For example, one leader's experience of misunderstanding: The organization planned to implement a flexible working schedule. After the publication of rumors about flexible time began. Employees think that flexible work means that they must work when their leaders ask, for example, on weekends and evenings.

Bruckman (2008, p. 213) notes that one main reason for change resistance is personal perception and organizational stress. There is a direct relationship between physiological changes in employees and the amount of change in an organization. If an organization has too many changes in a short time, employees are stressed.

Analysis pointed out that resistance to change can be caused by several reasons. One main reason is fear, which is a natural reaction. People can feel strongly, and fear is a defense mechanism. It is important to think that fear is a natural reaction and try to understand it. One main point is that if individuals are engaged in a situation, it would be hard to make changes; they may think that this is the only way to do things. They have planned the current situation and its threat to their expertise to change anything.

3.4 Consequences and outcomes of resistance

Individuals could have a strong influence during change. This chapter examines how individuals react to changes and how they behave during the change process. This chapter helps answer the research question about how and why individual resistance evolves during organizational change processes.

According to Arikoski & Sallinen (2007, p. 41), when organizations present their change plans, managers often expect employees to look forward to the future. Employees feel tense about upcoming changes. They are not always resistant to change itself; instead,

they resist the outcomes. Change can be a crisis for individuals because it is natural for people to try to stabilize their routines and base their lives on them. When things change, people need to find themselves again and try to adapt (Hackselius-Fonsén, 2017, p. 19).

What is the most common reaction to changes? Change can awaken different feelings in employees. Basic feelings during change are fear, anger, sadness, and joy. During the change process, fear and sadness are often out of sight. Anger and joy are more visible feelings (Arikoski & Sallinen, 2007, p. 57). *Surviving change a manager's Guide* (2009, p. 80–81) claims that during the change process, individuals have four stages in reaction to change. First is shocked. People feel threatened by change, and they can deny that change exists. The second stage is defensive retreat. People get angry, and they try to grip past. The third stage is acknowledgment. At this stage, people feel grief and liberation. The fourth stage is acceptance and adaptation. In this stage, people adapt and move on. Almost all go through all stages. The difference is how fast people go through the stages. From another perspective, Bruckman (2008, p. 213) argues that the most common reaction to changes is defence. If an organization has a lot of changes in a short time, people are not receptive to changes. Other feelings can cause another feeling. Arikoski & Sallinen (2007, p. 59) state that an individual can be angry when he feels fear. That is logical. When humans or animals feel threatened, it can lead to attacking and fighting. It is important to note that according to Bruckman (2008, p. 213), organizational changes can cause health problems for employees.

One main point that can cause resistance is the feeling of betrayal. According to Ford & Ford (2010, p. 33), if people feel that they have been betrayed, that can affect their behaviour. People, for example, are less productive, work quality is poorer, or they can behave aggressively. According to Arikoski & Sallinen (2007, p. 68–70), actions against change can always be visible or invisible. Invisible resistance is sabotage, neutralization, and acceptance. More visible actions are resistance, giving up, doing, co-operation, and engagement. These actions can organize, order sabotage, resistance, giving up, neutral-

ization, doing, co-operation, and engagement. According to *Surviving change a manager's Guide* (2009, p. 39–40), reactions to change can be passive or active. Passive resisters do not sabotage resistance; they only do not help the movement move forward.

What helps individuals during change? Time is one answer. Individuals need time for change. Flamholtz & Randle (2008, p. 233–238) state that the change process needs time. In most cases, change plans don't include enough time for the change to happen. That can cause resistance to change. Arikoski & Sallinen (2007, p. 68–70) note that the change process includes three basic elements: change resistance, unlearning, and learning new. This idea can be compared to Lewin's three-step model, which includes three stages: unfreezing, movement or transition, and refreezing.

Employees are a valuable resource for organizations. It is important to give employees time to adapt to new methods and help their adaptation process during the change. During the change process, we can use Weick's sensemaking model. If the change process makes sense for employees, it would be easier to complete. If individuals make sense of their actions, they will go through the change process faster.

Criticism is one way to react to changes. However, Ford & Ford (2010, p. 27–28) comment on a study about Total Quality Leadership in the U.S. Navy. That study noticed that criticism keeps people talking about change and gives ideas for leaders. The resistance generated new understandings about the change

We can notice that one main point of resistance to change is fear. Fear causes different reactions: anger, maybe trust problems, and feelings of betrayal. These three reactions are connected to each other. Thinking about organizational change and emotions, one important theory is Schein's organizational culture and leadership. Schein's theory explains what people feel when they meet a strange culture.

3.5 Synthesis: Cognitive, affective, and behavioural insights

The literature shows that individual resistance emerges through interconnected cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes. These elements affect how individuals understand changes, how they feel about them, and how they act. This could be a complicated process. We can notice that one main point of resistance to change is fear. Fear causes different reactions: anger, maybe trust problems, and feelings of betrayal.

Thinking about organizational change and emotions, one important theory is Schein's organizational culture and leadership theory. Schein's theory explains what people feel when they meet a strange culture. For example, some things could mean different things for other cultures. From this analysis, we can point out that one main point during the change process is time. Time helps in understanding the change process and gives individuals time to accept their feelings during the process. Analysis pointed out that change wakes up different feelings, thoughts, and behaviour during the change process. If managers give enough time to all these dimensions during the process, it helps to get the best possible result.

Individuals' behaviour during the change process can change, and one way to affect them is by using change models. There are different ways to help individuals during the change process. The next chapter handled how organizations can recognize, manage, and leverage these reactions.

4 Managing and leveraging resistance to change

This chapter builds on the previous chapters and addresses the research question of how organizations can manage resistance to change and leverage it as a resource. Resistance is often identified as a barrier to change. This chapter researches resistance as one source of information and learning. This chapter outlines three areas: recognizing resistance, managing resistance, and leveraging resistance as a resource.

4.1 Recognizing Individual Resistance in Organizational Change

There are some ways in which leaders can try to identify potential resisters and try to redirect them. First, leaders can use some questions. First need to ask where and how the change causes pain in the organization. Second think to need to do is recognize people who lose something and think about how they would react to change (Surviving change a manager's Guide, 2009, p. 38–39). Smollan (2011B, p. 14) highlights that it is important to notice that there are winners and losers in the change process. People are not actually resistant to change; they hate losing. Kotter & Schlesinger (1979, p. 107) expand on previous mentions of ideas that even leaders who have a lot of experience sometimes have long-term notice of resistance and individuals who resist change. Sometimes leaders overlook resistance by assuming that a certain group always resists change.

Change wakes up different feelings in employees. Basic feelings during change are fear, anger, sadness, and joy. During the change process, fear and sadness are often out of sight. Anger and joy are more visible feelings (Arikoski & Sallinen, 2007, p. 57).

When the need to recognize individuals' resistance in organizations is important, it is important to understand the organization's environment. The importance of the environment of an organization is emphasized in many theories of organizational change. For

example, Pettigrew mentioned that it is important to understand the organizational environment. Schein noted the importance of organizational culture, and Burnes the importance of the environment where change happens. Understanding organizational culture and environment would help identify individuals' resistance and potential opponents to change.

Thinking about revealing the resistance to asking questions, and Smollan thought about who the loser is and who the winner is, would be a dilemma. Earlier notice that if an individual has trust problems, they do not reveal their real feelings, and they try to hide them. Before using these ways, the organization must have a trust culture.

4.2 Managing resistance to change

Managing resistance to change requires understanding the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. These dimensions affect how individuals behave during changes. Understanding dimensions helps manage changes. According to Schein & Schein (2016, p. 299–300), the reason why change fails is that change does not create the eight conditions. These eight conditions provide a compelling positive vision, provide formal training, involve the learner, train relevant groups, provide resources, provide positive role models, provide support groups in which learning problems can be aired and discussed, and remove barriers and build new supporting systems and structures.

According to Augier & Teece (2006, p. 402), most management-related issues are dynamic in nature. Earlier mentioned that according to Augier & Teece (2009, p. 418), organizations' central processes covered, created, and strengthened organizations' resources and practices. These resources and practices are based on individuals' skills and experiences. That is one reason why the organization's change process is dynamic, and because it is dynamic, it is also easily affected by individuals and their reactions.

It is important to consider why people do not change their behavior, even when someone with higher education or in a higher position asks them to do so (Juuti & Virtanen, 2009, p. 141). Furst & Cable (2008, p. 459) add that employees' resistance to changes can depend on what kind of relationship they have with their leaders. Communication between leaders and employees is important in many ways. According to Alolabi et al. (2021, p. 7), if leaders can make employees understand the consequences of the changes on the work environment, employees accept changes easily. *Surviving change a manager's Guide* (2009, p. 38–39) adds that it is important that leaders explain to resisters why change is important and what the benefits of it are. According to Kotter & Schlesinger (1979, p. 109–110), an organization can prevent resistance to change for educated employees beforehand. This is one way to be supportive.

Smollan (2011B, p. 12) argues that when leaders are unable to achieve their goals, they often become frustrated and tend to blame employees for failures, interpreting resistance primarily as a negative force in the change process. That information obtained from resistance to change would be, according to Ford & Ford (2010, p. 28–35), an important reason when looking for reasons why change is successful. It is important to give resistance and try to interact with the reactions that happen. Interaction is important because it is a way to guarantee that reactions serve a useful purpose. If all resistance to change is removed, then missed changes to learn how to complete change successfully.

We have already learnt that trust is important for individuals. If employees do not trust their leaders and betray them in some way, it would be a problem. Ford & Ford (2010, p. 33) note that if employees think that they have been betrayed, they would be repairing their trust if they get apologies. Apologies need to be authentic; if apologies are not authentic, people will think that betrayal has happened again. That will cause problems with change processes and leaders. Burnes & James (1995, p. 15) refer to Burnes' earlier text, which states that if an organization has a trust culture, change is the norm, and there are expectations that less involvement of positive results is less needed to involve

employees in the change process. It is also expected that employees will be more receptive to changes.

The findings point out that the leaders' tactics, which they use, are important (Furst & Cable, 2008, p. 459). Because if employees are involved in changes, Gilgeous & Chambers (1999, p. 56) note that it helps to get support for the changes. Bruckman (2008, p. 215) adds that one of the things leaders can do during changes is understand people's fears. One common mistake in change management is that leaders underestimate people's fear response and potential resistance to change. One point is that leaders must notice employees' perspectives. Leaders need to understand employees better so that they can plan their actions better.

Surviving change a manager's Guide (2009, p. 39) mentions that leaders can make resisters active partners in change and give them some control over them. This would help when people fear losing control of the work. It is important to notice that an individual's behavior and feelings are based on culture. Schein's organizational culture theory explained that culture is one main point explaining why individuals react in a certain way.

Arikoski & Sallinen (2007, p. 29) state that sometimes managers must discuss their employees' position on an individual basis. This helps managers get constructive feedback. This is an important stage for managers to respond to the feedback. If managers fail this, it can lead to a crisis at work. Smollan (2011B, p. 14) adds that leaders need to participate with their employees for change. This might help make better decisions and make compromises.

Schein's organizational culture and leadership theory is based on understanding how culture evolves and where it comes from. That is important when we want to understand which things affect people's behavior. Culture has an important role in how people cooperate with their environment. Hackselius-Fonsèn (2017, p. 90–93) states that it is important to choose a partner who has the same values and whose skills complement your

own skills. Is important to take care of your organizational networks and engage your partners in your strategy.

Weick's sensemaking theory is based on Weick's (1995, p. 18) idea, "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" That is important when leaders tell employees about change. Hackselius-Fonsèn (2017, p. 44–45) adds that everyone in the organization needs to know the reason why the organization works as it does. Leaders need to tell employees exactly what is changing in the vision.

Managing change is a complicated process. Communication is key to managing resistance successfully; for example, Alobi et al., *Surviving change a manager's guide*, and Kotter highlighted the importance of communication. If leaders have a bad relationship with their employees, resistance would be a bigger problem. If leaders can get through this phase, making people sense why change is important, it would lead to less resistance to change. If leaders want to make their employees sense about change, they must also understand employees' culture and organizational behavior.

Based on the analysis, different ways of managing changes work in different situations. When leaders try to manage resistance, they need to understand all three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. When comparing different references, we can notice that it would be complicated to decide what kind of approach we need to use when trying to manage resistance. No single method alone is sufficient. For the successful management of change, it is important to combine different methods.

4.3 Leveraging Resistance as a Resource

Resistance can serve as a valuable source of insight, revealing concerns and improvements that need to be made to help strengthen both the change process and its results. Smollan (2011B, p. 12) notes that leaders need more knowledge about resistance so that

its value can be appreciated and it is perceived less negatively. According to Arikoski & Sallinen (2007, p. 28–29), sometimes resistance and criticism appear when individuals want to develop and to take more responsibility.

Galli (2018, p. 129) agrees with the idea that not all resistance is bad because it can help organizations and leaders check their strategies. Resistance can also help leaders get information about their employees' feelings. Ford & Ford (2010, p. 24–27) add that resistance is feedback, and it could be useful, and sometimes, when change starts, any kind of talk keeps the change process alive. It does not matter if the talk is negative because resistant communication can deepen the discussion about the change process.

Resistance can give important information. Resistance to change can give information about direction and effort. That is why it is important to try understanding resistance sources, motives, and positive core (Surviving change a manager's Guide, 2009, p. 91–92). Smollan (2011B, p. 12) adds that in some cases, employee resistance can prevent an organization from making expensive mistakes. For example, the Auckland University of Technology came close to combining with Unitec. Stakeholders' resistance to that idea was canceled. If the idea had been realized, AUT would have suffered because it had linked a polytechnic with distinct resources, reputation, and history.

If we interpret resistance as a form of feedback, Gilgeous & Chambers (1999, p. 56) note that it is important to give and get feedback. This helps reduce resistance to change because employees are more convinced about the value of the organization. O'Connor (1993, p. 30–36) added that it required courageous employees to give feedback to their leaders or organizations. Feedback helps find resistance more easily. Sometimes resistance is not found because nobody gives feedback. When organizations have poor communication, this problem often occurs. Ford & Ford (2010, p. 34) point out that if one misses what the resisters have to say about change, one can miss changes to strengthen changing processes. Blaming resistance for failures or difficulties can create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Communication problems can also cause other problems.

Subchapter 3.3 mentions that Ford & Ford (2010, p. 27–28) prefer a study about Total Quality Leadership in the U.S. Navy. That study noticed that criticism keeps change alive and creates new ideas about change. Kotter & Schlesinger (1979, p. 106) state that it is understandable that fear changes, but the environment changes rapidly. That is why organizations cannot afford not to change. A leader's main assignment is applying change, and that involves overcoming resistance to it.

Observing and reporting during a crisis is important. *Surviving change a manager's Guide* (2009, p. 114–115) notes that it is important that every crisis is reported and that notes about the crisis are taken. These notes can be valuable in the future. Kotter & Schlesinger (1979, p. 113) add that it is important to observe change during the process. Only by observing the process is it possible to react to problems fast and at the right time.

Leveraging resistance as a resource can note some important factors. Resistance can be one way to notice people who want to take more responsibility. These kinds of employees are often engaged in the organization. Different sources, for example, Ford & Ford, Galli, *Surviving change a manager's Guide*, and Gilgeous & Chambers, pointed out that resistance can be a useful tool, and a good way to give and get feedback. This study pointed out that feedback is an important way to develop the organization and its strategy.

Resistance would be one way an organization fixes its strategy and changes the way of change. For example, if organizations make a massive digital transformation and the transformation fails. It would be necessary to try to understand people's feelings and make more sense to employees. This would also help organizations notice if the changes are going the wrong way. This would help organizations save money and avoid wrong investments.

4.4 Synthesis for managing and leveraging resistance

This research approach shows that an effective response to resistance demands understanding of change and the cognitive-affective-behavioural compaction and its effects on individuals.

Thinking about the impact of the resistance to change, it is important to note the reason for resistance. Resistance to change can tell leaders important things about employees. Ford & Ford (2010, p. 30) say that if people react strongly to changes, they care about their job. This is one way for leaders to find these employees who care about the organization's success. Resistance would be the way to find employees who are ready to take more responsibility at work.

This study indicates that organizations can manage resistance to communication and participation, and make sense for actions. Organizations can use resistance as a valuable resource. It is a way for individuals to give feedback. These notes give answers to the research question about how organizations can manage resistance to change and leverage it as a resource.

5 Conclusion

The last chapter of the thesis offers the conclusions about this thesis and supplies the answers to the research questions that were presented at the beginning of this thesis. The thesis has addressed the resistance and management of resistance change. The focus of this thesis was to research how individuals react to changes and how they can reduce resistance to change. The conclusions are based on the literature of the previous chapter of this thesis.

The conclusion chapter introduced the first summary of the findings and answered the research questions. The second chapter presented suggestions about future research.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The main research objective of the bachelor's thesis is to understand why and how people's resistance changes and to deepen the understanding of resistance to change. The thesis's primary research question is: How and why does individual resistance to organizational change develop and evolve, and how can organizations leverage it as a resource? To reach the objective, three sub-questions were recognized to help examine the research question.

The first sub-question examines how individual resistance changes show within organizations. The study showed that an individual's resistance is formed in three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. These components affected others. Cognitive dimensions tell us what individuals think about change. Individuals can feel that they lose something when a change happens, they have difficulty accepting changes and new situations and they have a skeptical attitude toward the benefits of change. The affective dimension highlighted to us how individuals feel about change. The affective dimension

also highlighted to us how fear, trust problems, and insecurity affect the change resistance. The behavioral dimension shows us how individuals act, and it can be active or passive. These three dimensions highlighted that change resistance is not one reaction. It is a complicated process that includes lots of information.

The second sub-question examines how and why individual resistance evolves during organizational change processes. One main point for starting to change resistance is the individual's emotional response to something. Resistance is a natural reaction. Normally, an individual can go through many feelings during the change process. Process includes three basic elements: change resistance, unlearning, and learning new things. Almost all people go through these feelings, and time is the best way to help individuals during the change process and make sense to them about change.

The third sub-question examines how organizations can manage resistance to change and leverage it as a resource. First, it is important to identify potential resisters. When leaders identify with them, it is easier to lead them. Communication is important when trying to manage change. Good communication helps understand change and the consequences of change. Good communication and trust help employees when they want to give feedback. Feedback is a good way to develop organizational actions and would help avoid big mistakes. Leveraging resistance as a resource is possible. Resistance can tell who cares about the organization, and it can help organizations check their strategies.

This research addresses the main question: How and why does individual resistance to organizational change develop and evolve, and how can organizations leverage it as a resource? The evolution of resistance to change is a complicated process that is based on cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. These dimensions affect how people react to changes and how their reactions evolve during the change process. Trying to manage and leverage the resistance to communication is important.

Together, all these research questions reveal that resistance to change is an important factor. It can be an important part of the organizational change process. It is not a reason why change fails if leaders can use it effectively. Leaders must have good communication skills and the ability to receive and respond to feedback. If leaders are unable to handle criticism, it can cause problems. Resistance and change evolve hand in hand during the change process, highlighting that resistance is a natural and expected response to change. When change evolves, it is important to communicate about resistance and let it evolve too. If organizations and leaders can use resistance as a valuable source of information, it can help organizations aim for their goals. Resistance can give valuable insights and information, and even help avoid wrong investments.

It can be argued that resistance to change is a multidimensional phenomenon. It includes cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements, which affect an individual's response to change. Thinking about leveraging resistance as a resource is important to notice organizational and individual factors and combine these factors. Understanding this process requires good communication and combining different strategies and models. If we want to leverage resistance as a resource, we need to be open-minded and ready to combine different thoughts and strategies.

5.2 Suggestion for further research

This sub-chapter includes outlines for future research. The subject of resistance to change, or change resistance, is wide. It has been widely studied, and there is a lot of information and studies about this subject. However, this subject needs to continue studying because change is always coming and everything evolves all the time. Organizations face new challenges all the time and always need solutions for these.

This research examines how individual resistance from cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions occurs, but does not research how outside communication, for example, social media, can affect these dimensions. The role of social media and how it affected resistance could be one research gap. This would be fascinating because social media is continuously growing and can affect individuals' feelings, behaviour, and beliefs. Future research could examine how social media interactions either strengthen or lower resistance. This kind of research can complement this research, linking individuals' reactions with social media reactions.

Another possible idea for future research is research on resistance between levels of management. This thesis focused on how individuals' resistance to change, but does not research how resistance differs between levels of management. This is a research gap because different levels of management have different roles and responsibilities, which can affect their reactions to change. Future research can compare the differences between management levels to complement this thesis and give a view of how organizational hierarchy affects reactions to change.

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Appendix 1. Use of AI

Artificial intelligence (Grammarly) was used in this thesis as a language care support tool.