LUND UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

From Blind Chickens to Lions

A process perspective on a planned change approach with a communication strategy focus

by

Hanna Groß & Julia Schnittger

25.909 words

Master Thesis

Master's program in Managing People, Knowledge and Change

22th May 2020

Supervisor: Stephan Schaefer

Examiner: Stefan Sveningsson

Abstract

Today's era of digital transformation requires modern organizations to continuously invest in new information technology (IT). Managing an organizational change process always implies challenges and often this process fails to meet its objective. This thesis examines a planned organizational change process of an IT-tool implementation by taking on a process perspective to evaluate the employees' awareness. In our approach, we particularly focus on how the employees understand and interpret the change process' communication measures and how this influences the success of a change. The study is rooted in an interpretative research tradition and follows the abductive research approach. A qualitative in-depth case study within a consultancy was used to identify the employees' understanding and interpretation of the change project. We contribute to the research fields of organizational change and the communication of change at large by investigating the change project. In this study, we develop the communication-value-matrix from our main findings and argue that the communication strategy and the perceived value of the change are two interdependent dimensions. This communication-value-matrix presents the awareness of employees as four 'ideal types' of sensemaking: lions, donkeys, blind chickens, and foxes. Our findings and theoretical contributions also intend to support practitioners in their change management.

Keywords: Change Management, Planned Organizational Change, Process Perspective, Employee Awareness, Communication, Perceived Value, Sensemaking, IT-tool Implementation, In-depth Case Study, Qualitative Research, Abductive Research Approach, Consultancy

Acknowledgments

Throughout the process, we received great support from various people, and thus, we would like to express our sincere gratitude. First, we would like to thank our thesis supervisor Stephan Schaefer from Lund University School of Economics and Management who supported us through the process and whose feedback was of significant value for us and the development of our thesis.

Moreover, we would like to thank our company supervisor, who provided us with the opportunity to conduct research within the change project at Valcom and who organized and scheduled interview partners for us. In this respect, we would like to express our gratitude to all our interview participants, who had taken their time to answer our questions, especially in the current challenging situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, we would like to thank our interviewees as they placed trust in us and thus opened up to answer our interview questions.

Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge the support from our families and friends for continuously motivating, calming, and mentally supporting us throughout the whole process. Furthermore, special thanks to the friends who supported us through proofreading our thesis and by illustrating critical feedback.

Thank you all,
We hope that you enjoy reading!

Hanna Groß & Julia Schnittger
Lund, 22nd of May 2020

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
HC	Human Capital
HCM	Human Capital Management
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
SAP	Systems, Applications, and Products

1. Introduction

In this first chapter, we introduce the reader to the performed study. Starting with the outline of the broader theoretical background of the thesis, followed by the problem statement and purpose. Subsequently, we present our research questions, which will be answered throughout our study. This chapter finalizes with the presentation of the studies outline, to inform the reader on the expected content of the thesis.

1.1. Background

Organizational change is something contemporary society is inescapably confronted with in daily organizational life (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Organizations need to change and/or adapt to maintain continuous performance in today's highly competitive and complex business environment (Todnem By, 2005). Change, nevertheless, challenges organizations and thus, the demand for organizational change management and the importance of understanding change becomes inevitable (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). According to Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020), it is "highly common as well as popular" (p.80) to consider organizational change as the result of analytically conceived plans. Thereby, the implementation of the change follows a plan consisting of a series of successive n-steps (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020; Weick & Quinn, 1999). In this regard, *change* is defined as a process when an organization moves away from its natural stable state to a phase of instability during the time the change occurs (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Afterward, it moves back to its organizational equilibrium (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Although research presents various 'recipes' and guidelines on how to implement change successfully, 70 percent of change initiatives still fail (Balogun, 2006; Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). Thus, it is questionable if a general change plan is applicable to organizations in practice as "local and situational conditions seldom align well with the assumptions upon which the model rests" (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020, p.8). Employees interpret plans and intentions in various ways, depending on the organizational context, background, current situation as well as their own experiences and interests (Dawson & Andriopoulos, 2017; Heracleous & Langham, 1996; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Even though, the n-step models are interpreted and translated in various ways, they still can be used as a guidance of how to initiate change (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020).

Most of the previous research focused on the objectives, processes, and outcomes, whereas more recent researchers are increasingly adopting a process perspective (e.g. Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). This means that they investigate in the understandings and interpretations of the involved employees to gain insights into the events of change processes (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In this regard, the focus is on the diversity of the employees' interpretations and how they, as target individuals, look at the change initiative (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). By taking on a process perspective of change, the aim is to gain in-depth, continuous insights into the change process and thus, being able to outline qualified learnings rather than step-by-step instructions (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Another central aspect of the process perspective is, according to Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020), the importance of the organizational context in which the change occurs and further, how the employees perceive the change, and how they link it to the organizational setting. Change can only be meaningful for employees if they identify their perceived value of the change (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). While this seems to be common sense, change catalysts need to be aware that there are several ways how the change itself, and further, the implementation of change can be assessed when they communicate it.

Typical questions concerning the change process, which will arise for the employees, are questions regarding drivers ("Why is the change necessary?"), content ("What is changing?"), and procedure ("How is the change happening?"), which need to be answered before the change will be implemented (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). This is in line with the statement of Kotter (2012a), who stressed the importance of communicating the change vision and the outline of how it will be achieved. Consequently, the means of communication can be used to convey messages, and generate commitment and understanding for change, which leads to a higher probability of a greater employee reception (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). However, what is communicated, how something is communicated, as well as the person who communicates the message, has a substantial impact on how employees make sense and understand the change (Balogun, 2006; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In this respect, the involvement of the bigger picture is essential, which means that the employees' experiences and backgrounds need to be taken into account when communicating change successfully (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Hence, the transmitter-receiver-model can be used as it addresses the different challenges and influencing factors for the correct coding and decoding process of the transferred message (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). To evaluate the communication process in our case study, we place the employees and their subjective understanding in the center of the change process investigation

to identify how they perceived the communication process around the change. Hereby, the *employees' awareness* is defined as the outcome of sensemaking through processes such as when employees collect and synthesize information (Endsley, 2015; Kilskar, Danielsen & Johnsen, 2020).

This theoretical background builds the foundation of our research to examine the awareness of employees when a process perspective is taken on a planned organizational change process. In particular, how employees understand and interpret the communication measures around the implementation of the change and how this influences the success of a change process. The research was conducted within a consultant company. Due to the agreement of full anonymity, we use the pseudonym *Valcom* for the name of the company and pseudonyms for the names of the interview participants throughout the thesis. The context of the organization was of our particular interest. On the one hand, due to the case study under investigation, the implementation project of an information technology (IT) -tool. On the other hand, since consultancies are identified as pioneers in the organizational society and are subjected to pressure in presenting the implementation of change processes successfully (Khuong, Harindranath & Dyerson, 2014). Additionally, consultancies are defined as knowledge-intensive organizations with the core organizational competence being their highly skilled employees, and the employee's respective professional commitment (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Nevertheless, consultant companies bear similar problems to other organizations, which is why the next section elaborates on the relevance of the study.

1.2. Problem Statement and Purpose

During our research work within the consultant company, we have encountered an interesting *mystery* to study. The project we investigate is the planned implementation process of the IT-tool *Workday,* which was rolled out across all German subsidiaries within Valcom (Document 5). The IT-tool aimed to combine practices executed in various systems into one system (Document 6; Sara, 28.02.2020). Furthermore, in an initial interview with our company supervisor, we received the information that Workday was implemented to serve all employees within the organization and that all employees need to be able to work with the system to a greater or lesser extent (Sara, 28.02.2020). However, this implementation required an individual mindset and behavior change as employees used to work with systems having the same system logic or structure, whereas in comparison, Workday follows a different logic (Sara, 28.02.2020). This includes that administrative tasks such as changing one's home address,

which was mainly done by the human resource (HR) -department before, must now be executed by the employees themselves. While conducting the interviews, we observed that the employees perceived or did not perceive the change according to three different patterns:

1. The employees were aware of the change and understood the perceived value of the IT-tool
2. The employees were aware of the change but did not understand the perceived value of the IT-tool
3. The employees were not aware of the change at all and did not know that the IT-tool exist

Given the above-elaborated aim and implications of the implemented IT-tool, we identified the last two patterns as a mystery. The subsequent questions which emerged during our research are: How was it possible that some employees, especially managers and HR-employees, who were identified as the main target individuals, did not know that a change process took place. Even though the organization-wide change process was implemented according to a plan and included a communication strategy. Moreover, why was the perceived value for the project team members, who supported the implementation phase of the IT-tool not clear, and how did they then communicate the purpose to their colleagues? To understand the outcome of the planned change process, we focus on the communication strategy around the IT-tool and, in particular, how employees understood and interpreted it. Our contribution to the field consists in the identification of four 'ideal types' of sensemaking by combining the communication process with the perceived value of the organizational change process.

Through our in-depth qualitative case study within different departments of the consultancy, we contributed to the existing literature of organizational change and the related communication process. To investigate in the understanding and interpretation of how employees perceived and experienced the communication process around the IT-tool, we take on a process perspective. In this regard, we present a planned organizational change process including the research on the pre-implementation, the implementation, and the after-implementation phase of the change. Therefore, we take on a holistic view of the change process per se. Even though relatively extensive research has been carried out on the topic of organizational change, relatively little research was conducted on the process perspective within a planned organizational change and the influencing factor communication. Therefore, we aim to contribute to the research fields of organizational change and the communication of changes in a consultancy when taking on a process perspective within a planned change approach.

1.3. Research Questions

In consideration of the investigated change process, we formulated two consecutive research questions, which we aspire to answer in order to contribute to the existing literature. Our research approach is not suitable to the gap-spotting method for formulating research questions, but instead, we refer back to the above-described mystery aiming to "challenge different types of assumptions, underlying [the] existing literature" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011, p.247). Besides, the identified mystery, the questions further came up as we took on an abductive research approach. Our initially framed core question, which aimed to analyze the characteristics of a process perspective on a planned organizational change process, remains the foundation of our research. However, the specific formulated research questions rather serve as a guidance and basis for analyzing and discussing our research results:

- What influence does the communication process have within a planned change project?
- How does the communication process influence the employees' understanding and sensemaking and thus, the outcome of a planned change project?

1.4. Thesis Outline

The content of our thesis is structured in six chapters. The first chapter provides the reader with an introduction to the thesis topic on the awareness of employees after a planned change project when investigating the influence of communication. The introduction describes the background, highlights the relevance and the aim of the study as well as outlines the research questions. The second chapter aims to demonstrate the theoretical basis by elaborating on existing literature concerning organizational change and communication as its influencing factor. Within the third chapter, we initiate our methodology. There we delineate our research approach, how we collected the data, and the analysis idea. Furthermore, we present our case study and elaborate on our central aspect of being reflexive, which leads to our study's limitations. Afterward, chapter four presents our empirical findings in the form of narratives and explanations from our interview participants. The subsequent chapter, chapter five, draws on the literature outlined in chapter two and discusses it with the result of our empirical study. In chapter six, as the last chapter, we complete our thesis with the presentation of our main findings, illustrating our theoretical contributions and practical implications as well as suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, we point out the theoretical background which supports our research. First, we investigate on the nature of organizational change, followed by an in-depth elaboration of a planned organizational change approach as our study is of planned origin. Within this section, we explain the most significant n-step model, which shape the literature and practice in the planning field and further present critical points of a planned change process. This criticism leads us to outline perspectives on change and the decision to focus on analyzing our work concerning the process perspective. Afterward, the influence of communication within a change process is examined, where especially the monologic and dialogic approach as well as the transmitter-receiver-model is explained. Furthermore, different challenges during the communication of change processes are underlined, and lastly, the chapter terminates with a summary.

2.1. Organizational Change

In today's fast-changing business environment, organizations are forced to adapt to changes and are required to understand and manage organizational change in order to stay competitive (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020; Todnem By, 2005). Both external and internal triggers can evoke organizational change (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Technological developments, government policies, economic, demographic, and cultural factors, as well as activities and innovations of competitors, are external triggers (Child, 2005). In contrast, low performance, staff turnover, company relocations, or member changes in the management team are of internal origin (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Whereas these triggers are mostly seen as separable, Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020) claim that internal and external triggers are not distinguishable, but are interwoven. Furthermore, when referring to our study, the implementation of a new system can also have impacts on strategy, structure, leadership style, and culture. Therefore, a change in one part of the organization may affect, create, or require changes in other organizational parts as well (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). According to that, a successful change process is complex and demands reflexivity and contemplation rather than following fashionable change trends (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). This represents a challenging responsibility for many managers as they are confronted with a paradox. While Kotter (2012b) suggests that organizations need to operate quickly when changes arise, Bruch and Menges (2010) conversely indicate the risks of having too many

changes happen all at once. Therefore, managers are required to adapt the organizational circumstances to present situations and keep the organization stable (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). At the same time, they need to recognize future changes and prepare the organization for the upcoming changes if necessary (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Even though the challenging factors of a change process seem to be known, the failure rate of initiated changes remains at around 70 percent (Balogun, 2006; Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). Burnes (2004) confirms this by indicating that a fundamental framework of how to implement and manage change is currently unavailable to academics and especially practitioners. Since organizational competitiveness depends on successful change processes, the analysis of these processes prevails an important factor of investigation. This will be examined in our study. In order to understand the bigger picture of organizational change, the next sections describe the characteristics of changes.

Within the existing literature of organizational change, the researcher distinguishes between *continuous* and *episodic change* when explaining the specific stages in the organizational development process (Weick & Quinn, 1999). *Continuous change* describes constantly evolving change processes, which improves work processes and social practices and rather focus on micro or local adaptions (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Tsoukas, 1996; Weick & Quinn, 1999). Changes that are planned, implemented over a more extended period, and include a wider scope change occurred through replacement, are indicators of *episodic change* processes (Ford & Ford, 1994; Mintzberg & Westley, 1992). Furthermore, episodic changes are observed from a macro perspective and are characterized through a short disruption of the organizational equilibrium during the implementation phase of the change, but otherwise remain stable (Weick & Quinn, 1999).

In addition, two dominant categories of how to implement a change process are shaped by existing literature, the *emergent* and the *planned approach* (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). *Emergent changes* are responses to unpredictable situations that all organizations are facing, such as new business occasions, and which are difficult to plan before the changes emerge (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Whereas *planned changes* follow a sequence of steps with a certain order (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). These steps contain measures to achieve a particular purpose and can be associated with n-step models (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In addition, planned changes occur due to external forces, like deliberate managerial decisions, to implement a new software and are rather characterized by a long period (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016). The following paragraph further elaborates on the planned organizational change approach, as our case study is of planned origin.

2.1.1. Planned Organizational Change

The *planned organizational change approach* represents the prevailing concept of organizational change theory and describes how ideas and models can support the management of change work (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Changes, which are planned, are often initiated and designed by managers as adjustments to the changing business framework in order to stay competitive in the long run (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016). According to Weick and Quinn (1999), planned changes are described as episodic, meaning that between changing stages, the organization is in equilibrium. Planned organizational change often is radical and requires an organization-wide perspective on how to enable change (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This aligns with the advice of some researchers who highlight the importance of incorporating and recognizing all organizational sub-systems in the planning phase of the organizational change (Bradford & Burke, 2005; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Meaning that besides including all employees, the strategy, structure, and culture of the organization is further implied as fundamental aspects (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This idea is represented in the n-step models, whereby in the following we explain Lewin's three-step model.

As aforementioned, the planned organizational change approach implies to plan and implement change according to several sequences, which are more or less ordered and have to be processed one after the other (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). In general, all n-step models involve the analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation phases but otherwise vary in the number of steps (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). The *three-step model* by Lewin is the best-known model and fundamental for many more detailed models that followed afterward (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). It is often metaphorically illustrated with an ice-cube and contains the following three stages: *unfreezing, change, refreezing* (Figure 1) (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 2010; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020).

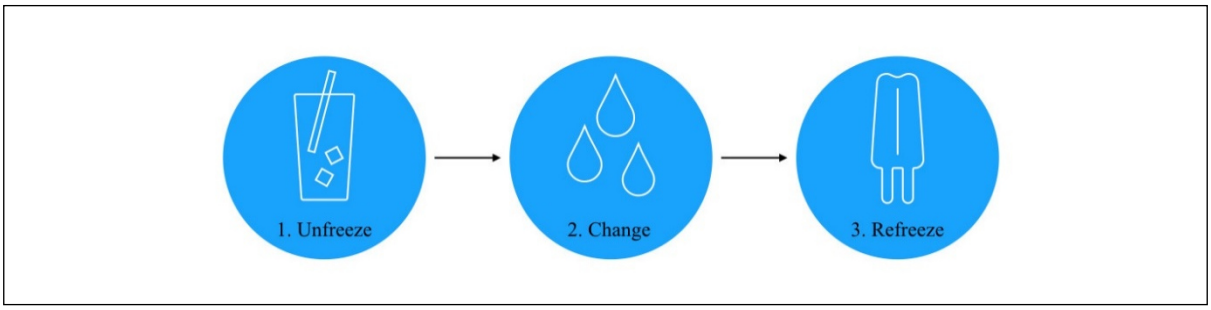

Figure 1: Lewin's Ice-cube Model adapted from Sveningsson & Sörgärde (2020)

The initial step, *unfreezing*, is meant to highlight the urgency of change in order to make employees willing to change by presenting improvements and to ensure long-term survival of the change (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). In this respect, Schein (2010) advices to support employees during the change process by creating a feeling of psychological safety for employees by clarifying their doubts and anxieties. *Changing* is the second step of Lewin's model and implies the initiation of the organizational change itself and therefore, the shift from the current state to the new desired state (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020) emphasize the importance of communication, guidance, managerial support, and required feedback in order to improve and learn from the outcome of the change. In the last step, *refreezing,* it is essential to make sure to embed the new ways of working in the organization and social relations to prohibit employees from moving back to their old ways of working (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Schein (2010) states that these three stages overlap and mostly cannot be separated in practice. When considering all stages of Lewin's model, this entails reducing resistance to change and encourage acceptance and participation of the involved employees (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Considering this, Dawson (2003) suggests strengthening those who support change and convincing the ones who prevent the change.

However, besides the helpful guiding principles to implement a change, the planned change process has also been criticized by researchers. The planned organizational change approach is identified as rather theoretical with n-step models that provide general guidance but assign managers with the challenging task to adapt the change plan to organizational circumstances (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Accordingly, other researchers argue that it is essential to consider the past, present, and future organizational context as well as political, power, and cultural influencing factors and the respective interactions between those factors, when trying to understand change processes (Dawson & Andriopoulos, 2017; Heracleous & Langham, 1996). Ultimately, the importance of conducting change processes from the bottom-up is disregarded in the literature about planned change processes (Collins, 1998). This leads to the problem that employees interpret and make sense of change processes in relatively diverse manners (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016; Dawson, 2003). In accordance with the critique, we contribute to the existing literature in investigating how employees interpret and understand the implemented change. Hereby, our particular focus lies on the communication aspects of the change work, as these factors often neglect in planned organizational change processes, which will be elaborated later. First, we involve a process-oriented view of change.

2.1.2. Perspectives on Change

In accordance with the critical aspects of a change process, Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020) identified three perspectives - the *tool-based perspective*, the *process perspective*, and the *critical perspective* - which discuss the *how*, *what*, and *why* of changes. The purpose of the *tool-based perspective* is to design models on how to implement changes successfully, dealing with the fundamental questions "How can change be accomplished and what are the appropriate tools to use?" (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020, p.41). The *process perspective* on change identifies the understandings and interpretations of the involved employees within the change process to gain more profound knowledge about what is happening (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Therefore, this perspective analyzes how to improve the understanding of the complexity in change processes (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This approach is associated with questions like "What is happening in change processes?" (p.9) or "Why do people interpret a suggested change process in different ways?" (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020, p.42). Lastly, the *critical perspective* suggest investigating the relation of power and politics to understand the individual's interests and intentions of the change process by asking "Why work with change?" (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020, p.9).

Another way to differentiate the three perspectives and therefore, to understand organizational change is to distinguish between the subject and the respective motivations of change work (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This aligns with the concept of *knowledge-interest* established by Habermas (1972), who highlights the importance of different motivations behind knowledge creation and distinguishes between *technical knowledge-interest*, *interpretative knowledge-interest*, and *emancipatory knowledge-interest*. The equivalent of the tool-based perspective on change is the *technical knowledge-interest* (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Its overall ambition is to accumulate knowledge of applications and organizational practices to foster efficiency and economic growth (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In contrast, *interpretative knowledge-interest* is in line with the process perspective on the change to get insights into the complexity of organizations and to receive an in-depth understanding of change processes (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Therefore, language, meaning, and culture are suggested to be key elements in order to understand and interpret change processes (Lyytinen & Klein, 1985; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). The primary purpose of *emancipatory knowledge-interest* is to critically reflect upon organizational practices and uncover power interests and conflicts behind actions, which also represents that processes of organizational change is not in every employee's interest

(Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In this study, we focus on the process perspective of organizational change as our purpose is to investigate the operations of a planned change process. Thereby, we aim to get insides into *what* the organizational change process means in practice by analyzing the pre-implementation, the implementation, and the outcome phase of the change process, while at the same time evaluate the receptions of the employees. This is rooted in the interpretative perspective as we strive to make sense of the receptions, interpretations, and understandings of the employees. Thus, the following section provides the theoretical groundings regarding communication to enable the analysis of the respective meanings behind the change work.

2.2. The Influence of Communication

As mentioned above, we focus on the process perspective to analyze the interpretations and understandings of the employees' receptions behind the planned organizational change process. Especially how the change was communicated and how employees perceive and interpret the respective communication is of particular importance. This is in alignment with Sveningsson and Sörgärde's (2020) statement that communication plays a decisive role in change processes. Thus, it is important to focus on communication because this influences the understanding and the commitment of the employees and is decisive for the success of the change (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Whelan-Berry and Somerville (2010) point out that communication "facilitates employee understanding and engagement" and "addresses employees' questions and concerns through two-way communication, which allows individuals to remain committed to the change. It also ensures that any obstacles are properly identified and removed" (p.181). In the following sections, we outline the monologic and dialogic communication approach, the transmitter-receiver-model by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949), and challenges that can come up during the communication of change processes.

2.2.1. Monologic and Dialogic Communication

According to Jabri, Adrian, and Boje (2008), it is to differentiate between communication as a *monologue* and communication as a *dialogue*. The former is interpreted as one-way communication, meaning that the speaker demands something and expects the audience to execute it accordingly (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). *Monologic communication* often refers to top-down communication without the interaction with other employees in the organization

(Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In this case, employees are identified as recipients who receive information and agree with it, instead of criticizing or being actively involved in the organizational change process (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Consequently, employees are neither engaged in the change process nor committed and therefore, do not contribute to it (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). As long as they are not affected by the change themselves, they will delay expressing their dissatisfaction with the change process (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). However, as soon as these changes affect the employees, they resist in form of not complying and sabotaging (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This leads to unexpected and undesirable consequences, and makes the change process even more difficult to successfully manage (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). The one-way communication approach, resulting from the management level, gives rise to different unexpected interpretations and actions and is therefore, complex to manage and to control (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020).

In contrast, *dialogic communication*, also known as two-way communication, refers to the involvement of employees in the process. It provides them with the opportunity to explain their points of view, give advice and therefore, participate in the process (Ford & Ford, 1995; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). This means instead of providing employees with just inputs of the change process, it is rather important to listen to the involved individuals (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Besides, having dialogues with employees before the implementation, it is essential to maintain the dialog during and after the implementation phase (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). By conducting two-way communication, involving the experiences and knowledge of employees is important, as it leads to more diverse perspectives on the change (Balogun, 2006; Jabri, Adrian & Boje, 2008). Further, Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020) anticipate that dialogic communication enhances a more coordinated and effective change process. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the facilitation of dialogues instead of viewing the change process as a "ready-made product that should be communicated" (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020, p.181).

2.2.2. Transmitter-Receiver-Model

One model which explains the dialogic communication is the so-called *transmitter-receiver-model* established by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949), which is illustrated in figure 2. The transmitter-receiver-model deals with the communication process between at least two individuals and explains what influences it (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). "At the heart of this model, we have a *transmitter* sending a *message* through an appropriate *channel* to a

receiver" (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017, p.209). The success of the communication depends on how the transmitter *codes* the message and how the receiver *decodes* it (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). To ensure the correct decoding of the message, the receiver delivers feedback to the transmitter, which represents the last step of this model (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). According to Buick, Blackman, and Johnson (2018), so-called *change agents* can play a significant role within communication processes to make sure that the employees understand the change, whereby they can be used as transmitters. They support the management team by helping to coordinate the change process in organizations (Rogers, 2003).

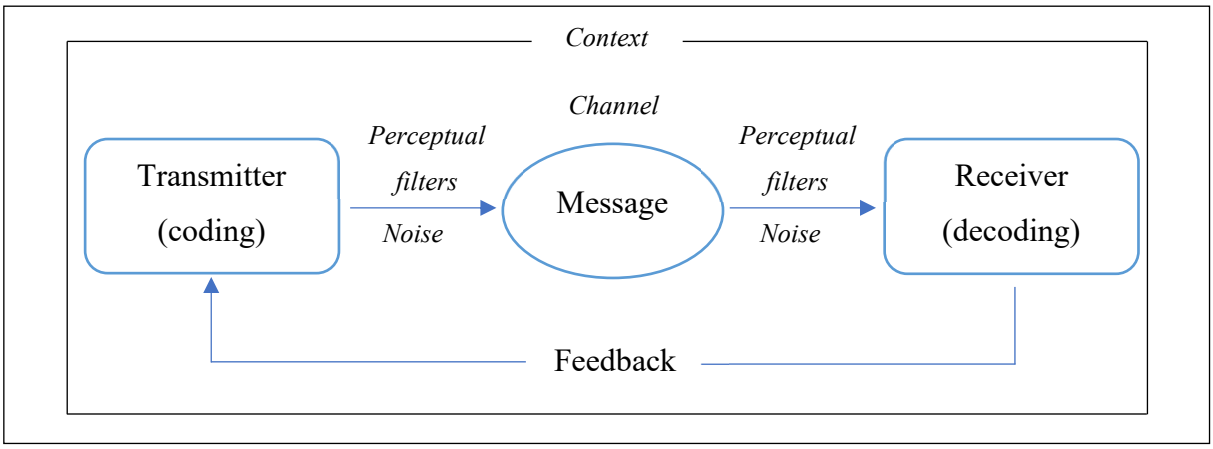

Figure 2: Transmitter-Receiver-Model adapted from Palmer, Dunford, and Buchanan (2017)

The success of the communication process is dependent on various influencing factors, such as *noises, perceptual filters*, the transmission *channel* of the message, and the *context* in which the conversation takes place (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). *Noises* are understood as sounds, conversations of other people, and further difficulties associated with coding and decoding messages such as emotions and stressful situations (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). *Perceptual filters* especially influence the decoding process of messages, meaning for example, if the receiver does not want to hear what the transmitter says (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Additionally, time pressure or frequency of information are examples of individuals' preoccupations, experiences, and the organizational setting they belong to, which are further identified as perceptual filters (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017).

In a communication process, even if the same language is used, it is important to keep in mind, that the transmitter and the receiver have different backgrounds, experiences, and understandings, which further influences the coding and the decoding process of messages (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Another significant role through which messages are communicated is the *channel* (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). The channel functions as a communication medium and refers to electronic media, physical material, or face-to-face

conversations (Lengel & Daft, 1988; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). However, the channel influences the meaning and interpretation of messages and must therefore deliberately be chosen (McLuhan, 1964; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Thus, Lengel and Daft (1988) introduce the *media richness hierarchy*, which explains the richness level of different media and the respective use of it. The richness is measured according to "(1) the ability to handle many items of information at the same time, (2) the availability of rapid feedback, and (3) the ability to establish a personal focus" (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017, p.232). Therefore, face-to-face conversations have the highest richness level, whereas impersonal static media such as flyers have the lowest level (Lengel & Daft, 1988). Whenever something is communicated, the media richness level of the channel should be carefully considered (Lengel & Daft, 1988; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017).

Lastly, it is important to pay attention to the physical, social, or cultural *context* in which the communication process takes place (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Palmer, Dunford, and Buchanan (2017) identified current circumstances within the communication process as one of the significant challenges. Another context can be the history of change processes within the organization (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). When the last change process was successful, the employees were mired open regarding further changes, which can be an important point when the receiver decodes the message (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017).

All the above-mentioned factors influence conversations and can play a decisive role for the success or failure of the communication process between individuals (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the transmitter and the receiver interpret and understand the message of the change process in the same way, which as a consequence, leads to difficulties and challenges within the communication process of changes (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Consequently, we carry out the possible challenges of communication within change processes.

2.2.3. Challenges of Communication

Within the transmitter-receiver-model, different challenges can occur, whereby Nelson and Coxhead (1997) identified three problems when designing the communication strategy: *message overload*, *message distortion*, and *message ambiguity. Message overload* means that the recipients get more information than they can process (Nelson & Coxhead, 1997). This leads to a problem in organizations, where employees receive a lot of information about various

topics or ongoing change processes simultaneously (Geigle & Bailey, 2001, cited in Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Further, *message distortion* indicates the message is misinterpreted, whereas *message ambiguity* explains the situation when messages can be interpreted in different ways (Nelson & Coxhead, 1997). To overcome those problems, it is essential to involve the employees in the change process (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that every kind of meeting and conversation, regardless of whether formal or informal, sends signals and contributes to the understanding of the change process (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Thereby, even unplanned, casual, brief conversations can influence the awareness and creation of ideas with those who participate in the change process (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Additionally, situations of silence during conversations can be interpreted in various ways (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Consequently, when having a conversation, the transmitters of the change need to consider who will receive the messages (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Furthermore, they need to use a coherent language, which is easy to understand and thus, enables interpretations of the message with the desired sense behind it (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Therefore, communication affects the creation of meaning and contributes to sensemaking (Balogun, 2006; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017).

Sensemaking

Sensemaking is defined as a process whereby meaning is constructed and reconstructed in a social context (Lockett, Currie, Finn, Martin & Waring, 2014; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). Individuals "interpret and explain the information that they receive in order to produce what appears to them to be a plausible account of the world to enable action" (Lockett et al., 2014, p.1103). Within the process perspective, the organization's employees are associated as active actors of the change process who shape the change development through their interpretations and understandings of the aforementioned (Balogun, 2006). "We need to move away from reifying change as something done to and played on individuals, and instead acknowledge the role that change recipients play in creating and shaping change outcomes." (Balogun, 2006, p.43). Consequently, the change process depends on how the involved employees' experiences and develop the change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Within this perspective, it is vital to involve the employees by enabling them to generate a better understanding of the change process (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Although the change was planned and formulated by those who initiate the change, it is often understood differently from those who are affected by and involved in the change (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020;

Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). This happens because of the different interpretations based on their background, experiences, interests, dreams, and identity (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). It is central to keep in mind that every involved individual is an active sensemaker, who influences the change process through interpretations and actions (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Isabella, 1990; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). According to Balogun and Johnson (2005), sensemaking can take place within formal communication processes (written and spoken) and informal conversations, such as gossip. Therefore, it needs to be taken into account every time someone communicates something.

The concept of Balogun and Johnson (2005) emphasizes the importance of supporting the process of understanding and interpretation of the employees involved, instead of only focusing on the management of the change process per se. Understanding the employees' thoughts and feelings enables them to communicate in a more detailed way and helps to get insights into how the employees interpret the change process (Mills, 2003). This can result in creating trustworthy relationships and opens up the opportunity to influence the employees' sensemaking process and to evoke greater participation and willingness to change in general (Mills, 2003). Being consistently present as a change manager enhances the creation of a trustworthy relationship and therefore, influences the employees' sensemaking process (Balogun & Johnson, 2005).

2.3. Summary Literature Review

This chapter has reviewed the literature on organizational change processes when following a planned change approach. Organizations are changing when triggered with external or internal factors and can be distinguished depending on the tempo and origin of the change process itself. As successful organizational changes are complex, Lewin designed a three-step model to support the management of change work. This promises to foster the acceptance and participation of the involved employees. The planned organizational change approach provides a rather general guidance, as it often neglects the employees' understanding and interpretation. Therefore, we described the process perspective by focusing on the communication aspects to receive insights into the meaning creation process of employees. As pointed out, communication is one main factor for the successful or failure implementation of a change process. Thereby, it is important to find a balance between monologic and dialogic communication to make sure that the employees of the organization are involved in the change process and consequently reduce the risk of resistance. When it comes to dialogic communication, the transmitter-receiver-model plays a decisive role. Different challenges, such

as the right frequency of communication and sensemaking during communication processes, can arise and can make the process increasingly difficult.

3. Methodology

The objective of this chapter is to present the ontological and epistemological considerations of the underlying study by which we aim to answer our research questions. At first, we outline the research approach, followed by the data collection in which we elaborate on the chosen company and explain how we collected data. Afterward, we lay out the explanation of the data analysis and the case study's contributions and generalizability. Further, we elaborate on the reflections upon the overall research process as well as the general issues of reliability and validity of the study. Lastly, we the chapter terminates with a summary.

3.1. Research Approach

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson, and Jaspersen (2018) explain the importance of understanding the philosophical grounding and the assumptions of a research study, in order to be able to follow the methodology of the researchers. The *methodology* is defined as "a combination of methods used to enquire into a specific situation" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018, p.61). One of the most fundamental philosophical groundings identified in the literature are *ontology* and *epistemology* (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). *Ontology* is associated with the belief about reality, whereas *epistemology* describes the researcher's relationship with the research itself and refers to the "views about the most appropriate ways of enquiring into the nature of the world" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018, p.61). Within the framework of our research, we focused on the interpretation of individuals and therefore were following the assumptions that different individual realities exist (Prasad, 2018). Furthermore, we took on a social constructionism perspective, as we pursue the assumption that reality is constructed by the individual's sensemaking and experiences (Prasad, 2018).

Aiming to understand the planned change process of an IT-tool implementation and the influence of communication on this process, we follow a qualitative approach. As highlighted before, communication plays a significant role within organizational change processes as it influences the individual's sensemaking and is thus essential for successful change (Balogun, 2006; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). According to

Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018), "it is commonly claimed that qualitative methodology serves to understand social interactions and the meaning of social phenomena in the contexts in which they are created" (p.11). Within the framework of our research, a distinction must be drawn between natural and social science (Prasad, 2018). Whereas the former is the examination of biological and natural phenomena, social science emphasizes the knowledge about sociality (Prasad, 2018). Prasad (2018) considers social science to be essential in finding answers regarding organizational and social processes. Therefore, since we aim to investigate employees' understandings and interpretations, we applied the social science approach.

Based on Prasad (2018), different traditions influence qualitative research. Regarding our aim to concentrate on the interpretation of individuals, we focused on the *interpretive tradition* (Prasad, 2018). This tradition views individual perceptions as fundamental for the development of knowledge (Prasad, 2018). By following the interpretive tradition, we took into consideration that the reality to be investigated is based on how individuals create meaning of (social) interactions and how norms and values are constructed (Prasad, 2018). In alignment with the perspective of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), we investigated the irrationalities as part of organizational change processes and their understandings and interpretations. Grounded on these assumptions, Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) describe the so-called *mystery exploration* approach. A *mystery* is the emergence of a phenomenon within an organizational context which cannot be explained by existing literature (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). Therefore, it constitutes the basis for a new research by creating a new concept or expanding an existing concept (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). Hence, we used the abductive approach, which is characterized by the back-and-forth movement between theory and empirical findings (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Besides, we used theory to get a deeper understanding of the topic, and at the same time, attempted to be open-minded regarding the empirical findings we received from our research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were used to analyze the understandings and interpretations of employees within the planned change process and to research the influence of communication. The interviews followed an in-depth approach, interviewing a heterogeneous group of individuals of one specific organization, to gain different perspectives.

3.2. Data Collection

Aiming to answer our proposed research questions, we executed research within the framework of a case study. More specifically, a single case study, as we focused on a selected project within

one organization to gain an in-depth contextual understanding of the change process (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). We studied this project at a particular time, in our case, after the implementation of the change project, which illustrates our decision for a cross-sectional study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Instead of taking on a holistic view by considering the whole organization as one entity, we applied what Yin (2003) labels as an *embedded case study*. This *embedded case study* refers to the conduction of interviews within different departments of the organization and by evaluating the respective employee meanings (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, the decision to analyze a particular case offered us the possibility of choosing from different methods, whereas we were focusing on the conduction of interviews, field notes, and supplementary on the review of documents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Through these types of data collection, we received answers to *why*, *what*, and *how* questions but mainly contributions to the research of explanatory and exploratory origin (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

As aforementioned, we conducted our study within an international consulting company with worldwide locations. However, we have limited our geographic research area to the departments located in Germany to keep the research profound. Furthermore, in our case, it is difficult to make comparisons between countries since the IT-tool under investigation saves sensitive employee data, and each county demands different (legal) requirements for these employee data. Conducting research within the selected organization is based on several reasons, with the main arguments being outlined in the following. Firstly, the change project under investigation was offered to us. Besides, the setting of the project and the organizational context itself was of our interest. By project setting, we refer to how the IT-tool was implemented within all German subsidiaries at the same time, which enabled us to acquire a holistic perspective on a specific planned change process. In this respect, it allowed us to dig deeper into the interconnections, circumstances, and interpretations of a planned change process. The interesting organizational context of a consultancy in the scope of a planned change process was another reason. Consultancies are often identified as pioneers in the organizational society and are somehow subject to pressure in presenting the implementation of change processes successfully (Khuong, Harindranath & Dyerson, 2014). Moreover, consultancies as knowledge-intensive organizations employ highly skilled professionals and rely heavily on their employees' competencies as well as professional commitment (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In order to understand the identified mystery and the underlying employee interpretations, the next two paragraphs explain how we collected the data for our study.

3.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews

Within the framework of a case study, we executed a qualitative study. In particular, we gained our primary empirical data by means of semi-structured interviews. This enabled the interviewees to share their knowledge, personal opinions, stories, and experiences concerning a particular (social) phenomenon and allowed us to get insights into the employees' understandings and interpretations (Boeije, 2010). Conducting semi-structured interviews enabled us to use a predetermined framework of questions and topics, and at the same time, remain flexible questioning (Wahyuni, 2012). Flexibility in this context means to adjust the order of questions and to complement or omit questions during the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Wahyuni, 2012). This enables the interviewee to talk freely about certain topics raised, to explain and elaborate on their answers by providing examples or to share new information (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Wahyuni, 2012). Thus, we designed the interview guideline with generic "open-ended main questions" (Wahyuni, 2012, p.74) and follow-up questions (see Appendix A). The development of the main questions was based on the initial interview with our company supervisor as well as relevant literature and practices. Besides, the follow-up questions were used as a backup to get more detailed explanations of the interviewees' narratives or to keep the discussion flowing (Wahyuni, 2012). After the conduction of the first three interviews, we reflected upon the interview guideline and adjusted the questions in order to deepen our knowledge of the identified findings and to receive answers to questions that were still unsettled at that time. Furthermore, all our interviewees kindly offered us to contact them after the interview if new questions come up or if something remained unclear for us. We made use of this offer by sending an email with questions to two of our interview partners whereupon we received answers which clarified the previously unanswered or unclear situation.

After our company supervisor introduced the investigated change project to us, we discussed about potential interview participants together. As we aimed to get a holistic view on the planned change project, we decided to interview participants from one business unit but various departments and locations within Germany as well as individuals with diverse backgrounds (e.g. education), gender, age, hierarchical positions, and job tasks (Boeije, 2010). Our company supervisor supported us by organizing and scheduling 12 interviews. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, four of the planned interviews were canceled, and no substitution could be organized, which is why we only conducted a total of eight interviews. The interviews were carried out in the time frame of four weeks, except for the initial interview with our company supervisor, which was conducted three weeks before the

time frame. Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic's current travel restrictions, we were not able to conduct the interviews on-site and to execute observations. Therefore, we conducted the interview via the video call platform Google Hangouts. Since it was necessary for our study to gain insights into the interviewee's interpretations and feelings, we guaranteed anonymity regarding their names and the company name before we started with the interview. Thus, according to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2018), we increased the chance of getting honest answers and correspondingly greater insights into the subject. To simplify the analysis process of the gathered data, we asked our interviewees for permission to record the interview with the promise not to pass on the audio file to third parties. Besides the guarantee of anonymity, our company supervisor organized the interviews and established contact with the interviewees for us, which already created a trustworthy basis. Within the next paragraph, we detail how we created a trust-based relationship with our interview participants.

As mentioned above, we executed the interviews using a platform for video calls. Although the interviews were not conducted in person, the video function somehow allowed us to conduct it face-to-face. Furthermore, before we started the official interviewing process, we tried to create a trustworthy atmosphere by conducting small talk with the participants. This trust-based relationship with our interviewees is of particular importance since we aimed to explore their 'inner world', such as feelings, meanings, and interpretations, and to understand the employees' social constructs (Alvesson, 2003). Another aspect, that enriches the originality of the data, is the interview conduction within the participant's natural environment (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Hence, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we interviewed our participants in an environment where they feel comfortable in, as they are forced to work from home.

Additionally, the interviews ranged from 40 to 70 minutes, with the average length being 50 minutes and were conducted in a setting of two interviewers and one interviewee. The conduction of interviews as a team enabled us to view the situation and interview statements from different perspectives (Wahyuni, 2012). Moreover, we divided roles, meaning while one of the researchers guided the interview, the other researcher functioned as an observer who took field notes and observed the interviewee's reactions (Eisenhardt, 1989). This enabled the interview leader to create a "perspective of personal interaction" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.538) with the interviewee, whereas the observer keeps a more distant view. Nevertheless, follow-up questions were asked by both researcher, and roles were changed after each interview. We decided on the record of field notes as non-verbal communication, such as mimic, gesture, as

well as the use of specific language or the tone of the interviewee's voice, sometimes expresses more about their emotions than verbal communication (Knapp, Hall & Horgan, 2013).

3.2.2. Document Studies

As a second data collection source, we reviewed 15 documents in total but identified only six documents as relevant supplementary data to our study (outlined in chapter 4.1.1). Firstly, the documents helped us to obtain a broad knowledge base about the company, including history, background information, industry, company structure, strategy, and organizational culture. Secondly, we studied documents aiming to get a more detailed understanding of the change project and the respective implementation process itself, in order to be able to analyze the process, to understand the background, and further for the development of our interview questions (Bowen, 2009). The last reason for reviewing documents was to understand the different functionalities, the design process, and the background of the IT-tool Workday. This also helped us to develop the interview guideline and to understand the interviewees' statements. Overall, the combination of conducting interviews, taking field notes, and reviewing documents helped us to ensure credible data analysis and to receive in-depth knowledge (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

3.3. Data Analysis

To ensure that the data for our study is valid and reliable, we analyzed and interpreted the collected data throughout the data collection process. Therefore, we used the *template analysis*, mentioned by King and Brooks (2017), which is illustrated in figure 3. This includes the steps *familiarization with data*, *codification*, *clustering*, *producing a first initial template*, *applying and developing the template* and *theorizing* (King & Brooks, 2017). Using a structure or a template to collect the data thematically is frequently used in the scope of qualitative research (King & Brooks, 2017). It also enabled us to receive a more detailed overview of the various topics identified (King & Brooks, 2017).

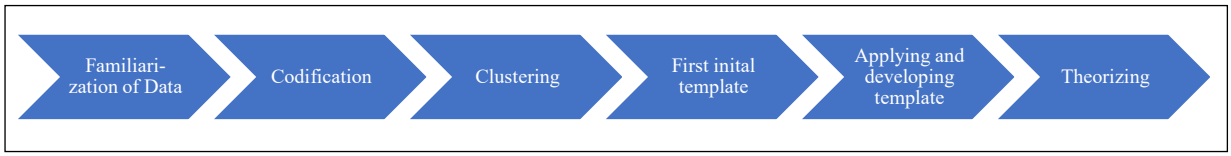

Figure 3: Template Analysis Procedure adapted from King and Brooks (2017)

After collecting the data, we transcribed the interviews in order to use it for the analysis. Each researcher transcribed the interviews she led, meaning that each of us transcribed a total of four interviews. We added the observer's field notes, which contained the interviewees' specific gesture, mimic, and tone of voice. We transcribed everything manually and did not use any specific tool, to gain a deeper understanding of what has been said, and to identify the messages between the lines (King & Brooks, 2017). Afterward, each of us proofread the interview transcriptions of the research partner. By doing so, both of us got a deeper understanding of all conducted interviews, which enabled us to receive *familiarization with the data* (King & Brooks, 2017). After the transcription, we followed the abductive approach to jump between theory and our data collection, aiming to identify a research gap or a mystery. Although we were already having a broad topic and a certain degree of orientation, which is reflected in our broad interview guideline, it did not limit us in our openness to find something unexpected, which Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) labeled as the creation of a mystery. After having identified this mystery, we focused on finding answers to it during our further research. For the *codification* process of our interview transcripts we used the software *MaxQDA*. Coding interviews enabled us to draw connections between the analyzed topics by categorizing them and by identifying metaphors and analogies (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; King & Brooks, 2017; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The interviews were coded regarding specific topics that supported our discovery of a mystery. Therefore, we *clustered* the codes abductively (King & Brooks, 2017) into different groups: company information, Workday, change process, communication, and sensemaking. The codification process was executed individually by each of us and discussed afterward. This allowed us to first think about the codings individually and then meet to discuss and code along with the understanding we both agreed on. In the fourth step of the template analysis, we constructed a first *initial template*, depending on the group of codings (King & Brooks, 2017). Meaning that we drew correlations between the different categories, to create an outline for the thesis. Subsequently, we *developed and modified the first version of the template* and applied this template to additional data conducted, intending to create a second template version (King & Brooks, 2017). The connection of the literature background regarding the change and communication process allowed us to receive a deeper understanding of our research and enabled us to identify what we want to focus in-depth. Further, we reflected again upon our data collection by focusing to answer our research questions. Consequently, we achieved a final template as a basis for our analysis. This included the different steps of a planned change process, before, during, and after the implementation process. Besides, it entailed information about the communication process we received during our interviews.

Theorizing is the last step of the template analysis and refers to the use of the template to emerge and evolve interpretations of the data collection (King & Brooks, 2017).

3.4. Case Study

Since we study a specific change project in one organization, we performed a single case study. According to Eisenhardt (1989), a *case study* "is most appropriate in the early stages of research on a topic or to provide freshness in perspective to an already researched topic" (p.548). We expose "freshness" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.548) by taking on a process perspective when combining the existing literature on the concepts of planned organizational change and the concept of communication. Furthermore, Easton (2010) describes that case studies provide "insights into the nature of a phenomenon" (p.118). This means that the phenomenon under investigation offers a "real-life context" (Tsang, 2014, p.175) and can be evaluated accordingly in its natural environment as well as the social phenomenon around it, which supports our approach of taking on a process perspective (Benbasat, Goldstein & Mead, 1987; Tsoukas, 1989). Our research is of exploratory origin, since we asked *how* and *why* questions and is thus, related to the investigation of case studies (Easton, 2010). Furthermore, case studies enable researchers to analyze multiple dynamics within the same context and are thus of in-depth nature (Eisenhardt, 1989). Another advantage of a case study emerges through the researcher's reflection and challenge of already existing theoretical assumptions (Eisenhardt, 1989). Especially when they are associated with the findings of the case study, it leads to a greater chance of new theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Moreover, novel theory resulting from a case study arises from empirical data rather than the other way around (i.e. confirming or rejecting hypotheses) (Eisenhardt, 1989). On the one hand, this minimizes testability issues and, on the other hand, associates a high probability of validity of theories due to the evidence that emerges within the process of theory formation (Eisenhardt, 1989). By studying a phenomenon, we aim to generalize our findings theoretically. Therefore, we chose to make use of the *grounded theory concept* developed by Glaser (1999). This approach enabled us, as researchers, to contribute to existing knowledge by analyzing our results and further by contributing to prior research through the development of new models or concepts (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Nevertheless, the generalization of theory via case research is often criticized as it lacks the development of a "grand theory" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.547). However, we had little intention to develop a "grand theory" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.547) with our research,

but rather attempted to extend and contribute to existing practical as well as theoretical knowledge.

3.5. Reflexivity, Reliability, and Validity Issues

A central aspect of our research was to be (self-)reflexive, challenge reconsidered assumptions, and thus, create a variety of understandings (Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Alvesson (2003) states that being reflexive is advantageous as it reveals the ambiguity of the phenomenon and enables the reflexive researcher to discover a various set of meanings within the phenomenon and bridges "the gap between epistemological concerns and method" (p.14). The collection of empirical data and the elaboration of conclusions when executing a qualitative research approach are initially distorted or biased by interpretations and therefore, subjective by nature (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This includes our interviewees' contextual understanding as well as our underlying assumptions and pre-understandings, which are influenced by, for instance, our background or study program (Bryman & Bell, 2015). With that in mind, we aspired to question and reflect upon our empirical data, and instead of assuming that our findings are accurate and flawless, we rather aimed to understand the relevant content of our participants' statements. When reflecting upon our research process, we recognized constraints and limitations, as outlined in the following. The main constrain which limited the depth and breadth of our research, to a certain extent, were the constraints of time and resources of both sides, the interviewees, and on our side, as researchers.

When reflecting on the change project itself, we think that the conduction of empirical data over a longer timeframe would have been more appropriate for our study as the change project has already been implemented when we joined. Thus, a longitudinal study would have allowed us to receive an in-depth employee understanding throughout the whole change process. In addition, this would have enabled us to identify the employees' changes in the perception of the change process. Moreover, we could have attended the planning session of the change process as well as workshops for the employees to receive an impression of the content and setting, and to evaluate the situation by ourselves instead of only relying on our interviewees' perceptions.

Furthermore, working as a team of two researchers contributed significantly to the quality of our thesis. Especially within the interview setting, being two interviewers enabled us to create a trustworthy, friendly, and relaxing surrounding that increased the openness of our

interviewees. Due to the fact that we conducted all interviews in English, while the interviewees and we speak non-native English, partly encountered language issues. As mentioned before, we occupied two different positions, one as the interview leader who broadly followed the interview guideline and the other as an observer with a more distant view. This enabled us to increase the diversity of covered topics as we complemented the questions asked by the other. After each interview, we exchanged thoughts, impressions, and observations of the participants' statements and reactions. Besides, we coded the interviews separately and discussed the coding's afterward to reflect on each other's understanding. Both situations, within and after the interview, increased our abundance of meanings and interpretations. In general, throughout the whole thesis process, we communicated our individual experiences, prior understanding, and beliefs, which were mostly of complementing nature but further helped us to reflect on our individual understanding as well as the partner's opinions.

3.6. Summary Methodology

Within this chapter, we outlined the methodology of our research. By taking on a process perspective, we aimed to identify the employees' understandings and interpretations to understand the investigated mystery. This explains why we were following the social science approach and further why we were following the interpretative tradition. In line with the interpretative tradition, we decided to undertake a conceptual study with an abductive research approach. The data for the research was collected in an international consulting company by means of semi-structured interviews and document studies. We were able to conduct eight interviews in total. The transcripts of our interviews constitute the basis of our qualitative dataset. We coded and sorted interviews based on King and Brook's template (2017) for data analysis. Moreover, with the decision to conduct a case study, we were able to gain insights into the natural and social environment of our phenomenon and contribute to existing practical and theoretical knowledge. Besides, the strong human orientation represented in our study methodology, a central aspect of our research was to be reflexive, which we demonstrated by outlining the limitations of our study.

4. Analysis

This chapter deals with the empirical findings and the analysis of our study. Thereby we follow our research questions: *What influence does the communication process have within a planned change project* and *How does the communication process influence the employees' understanding and sensemaking and thus, the outcome of a planned change project.* We start with a short introduction where we explain the background of our case. In the second part of our analysis we present the empirical findings of our interviews. Therefore, we divide this section in three parts by presenting the pre-implementation, the implementation itself and the after-implementation phase. Within these sections we focus on different factors of the change process as well as the communication strategy.

4.1. Case Background

The research of our thesis was conducted within Valcom Germany and therefore, within this section, we provide the reader with background information about Valcom as a network and Valcom Germany. The background information is essential to understand the context, and more precisely, the complexity of the change project itself as well as the communication process. Additionally, we introduce the change project, the IT-tool Workday, and shortly explain the implementation process' plan.

4.1.1. Company

In the following, we outline the company background and therefore identified six documents, in addition to our interview statements, as relevant contributions. In the following table, we present the reviewed documents, including the document name, to provide an idea about the content of the documents since we are not allowed to attach it due to the anonymity agreement.

Document Number	Document Name
1	Company_profile_2019
2	Company_structure
3	Advisory_profile
4	Shaping_the_next_generation_of_HR
5	Workday_Project_Overview
6	Workday_at_Valcom_Germany

Table 1: Overview of the reviewed Documents

The Valcom network is a multinational professional service network of multiple companies, operating as partnerships with the headquarter located in Europe (Document 1; Ina, 24.03.2020). The global network consists of approximately 160 countries with more than 250.000 employees, whereas each country works as an independent member (Document 2). They advise organizations of various industries from financial to health sectors, from non-profit organizations to profit organizations, and irrespectively of the client companies' size, "from global player to local heroes" (Document 1, p.3). All Valcom companies worldwide have the same organizational structure, which they divide in what they call *lines of services* (Document 1): *Assurance* (audit and audit-related services), *Tax and Legal* (tax and legal advice), and *Advisory* (consulting). The worldwide network and the three lines of services are one of the greatest values of the company as it provides them with "boundless opportunities" (Document 1, p.2). This means that they can work on client issues across these service lines (different needs of the client) and across country-borders (different client's location) and make use of their highly skilled employees within these sectors. Another global company characteristic is the hierarchical structure, which is illustrated in figure 4 (Document 2).

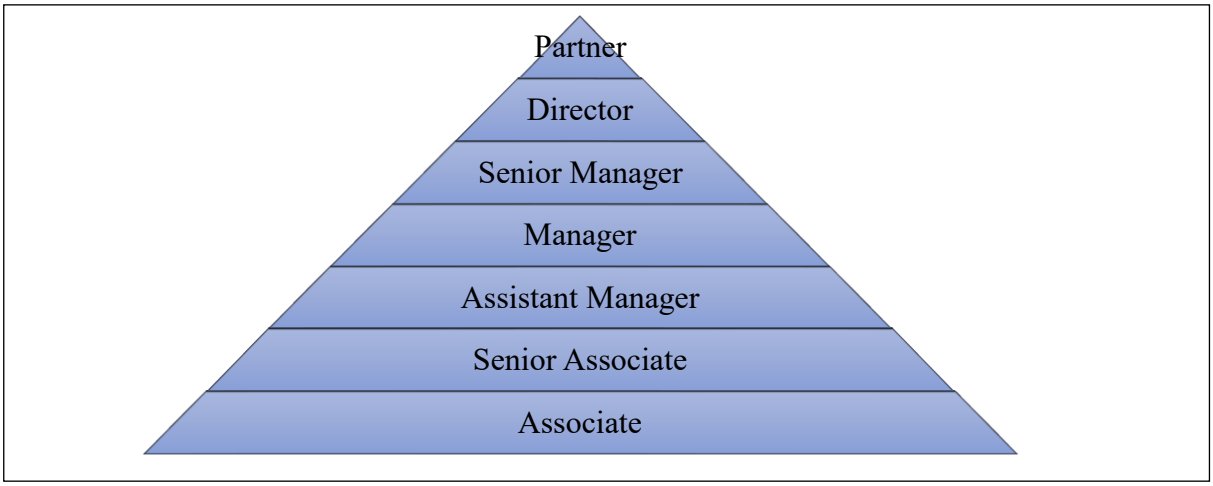

Figure 4: Hierarchical Structure of Valcom adapted from Document 1

One of our interviewees explained to us that within Valcom Germany, they have 600 partners, who run the company together and who are the bosses of the organization (Sara, 28.02.2020). Peter further elaborated on this.

> "*Normally you've got one chief executive officer (CEO), and then you have management levels, and that's it. Valcom consists of 600 partners in Germany, and together they are ruling the company. They make all the major decision. So, by becoming a partner in the company, you are a kind of shareholder. The 600*

> *partners are democratically deciding together who is our CEO."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020).

This statement clearly shows that the partners not only run the company but that major decisions are made top-down, strengthened up the partners' power and influence within Valcom. Referring back to the hierarchical structure in general, some of our interviewees perceived this structure as very "political" (Sara, 28.02.2020; Peter, 19.03.2020; Katharina, 23.03.2020; Ina, 24.03.2020) and as a general "Valcom issue" when it comes to decision-making (Peter, 19.03.2020). Understanding this structure and how decisions are made within Valcom is relevant for our study to understand the change process itself, more specifically the communication process and our research findings.

Valcom has locations all over Germany with 600 partners out of a total of 12.000 employees, whereupon 3.000 employees are highly-skilled consultants working in the advisory line of service (Document 2; Document 3). The advisory sector of Valcom supports economic development processes in various organizations as well as within Valcom itself. Their strategy is to support the development of solutions for change processes, that are "economically and ecologically sustainable and successful in the long rung" (Document 3). One main supporting functionality are changes within the HR field, which are evoked by technological changes. In this context, Valcom highlighted the importance of a human component by stating: "Technological development supports our daily business world and is important to adapt to in order to stay competitive, but we need to focus on human beings in phases of change" (Document 4). That Valcom focuses on the employees working at Valcom is reflected in their company values (acting with integrity, take care of each other, and work together), which they emphasize as fundamental in every work they are doing (Document 1).

A stark characteristic of Valcom Germany is the usage of the German SAP-tools, whereas in other countries, the employees rather use the American Oracle IT-tools (Peter, 19.03.2020). On a global level, this led to a "fight" between the two "communities", as the German employees were not willing to give up their SAP-tools and adapt to an American IT-tool (Peter, 19.03.2020).

> *"All the world had to follow, and we in Germany were unwilling to give up our processes. […] So, it's the people working somehow in Workday, but SAP is our BIG MACHINE that is controlling everything. All major processes like recruitment or time expends were used to be done within our SAP-tools."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

Here, Peter underlines the importance of SAP-tools at Valcom Germany for the employees' daily work by raising his voice when metaphorically referring to the SAP-tools as a "big machine" and further by stating that it controls "everything". This was confirmed by Rieke (20.03.2020) when she explained that in her perspective, Workday – the IT-tool that they tried to implement – was invented for the US market and not for the German market as Germans already have SAP-tools to work with. Thus, it becomes apparent that employees think Workday does not suit the requirements of the German market and further shows that employees are satisfied working with the SAP-tools and in general unwilling to change to another IT-tool. This already illustrates one challenge for the implementation of the IT-tool Workday and in general the suitability for Valcom Germany, on which we elaborate in the next section.

4.1.2. Project Background

The IT-tool *Workday* was launched at Valcom Germany on December 3rd in 2018, after following a change plan for 16 months (Document 6). As stated above, the greatest value of Valcom is their ability to work across service lines and countries collaboratively. The alignment of their business strategy, and the uniformity of tool usage, are of crucial importance for the entire network. The decision for the global implementation of the IT-tool was made by the international management team, consisting of partners worldwide (Document 6). The rollout was done within waves, meaning that it was first implemented within the American countries, followed by Europe, the middle East, Africa and lastly in Asia, Australia, and New Zealand (Nikolas, 20.03.2020; Document 6). The reason for the implementation of Workday in Valcom Germany was to strive for global alignment and cost reduction (Sara, 28.02.2020; Peter, 19.03.2020; Nikolas, 20.03.2020; Ina, 24.03.2020). The next paragraphs elaborate on the functionalities of the IT-tool to understand the cost reduction factor.

The IT-tool Workday is a cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) software that combines practices in human capital management (HCM) and financial management as well as facilitates planning in one system. The software provides time tracking, procurement, employee data, financial accounting, and expense management (Document 5). Workday is an IT-tool that stores employee data and "pushes all the administrative tasks back to the employees" (Sara, 28.02.2020). Meaning that all employees within Valcom have to be able to work with the system, to a greater or lesser extent (Nikolas, 20.03.2020; Ina, 24.03.2020). This resulted in the need to change the employees' mindsets and behaviors. Employees within Valcom were not used doing the administrative tasks, like changing one's home address by themselves as this

was a task performed by the human resource (HR) department (Sara, 28.02.2020). Nevertheless, the employees working in the HR department remain the ones who are supposed to work extensively with the IT-tool. Since Workday combines features from different systems to one entity and that processes can be customized to the needs of the organization, Workday makes sure that the 'right' people are involved in certain business processes (Document 6). As an example, the process of hiring a person was previously done by various HR specialist fulfilling various tasks within different systems, now within Workday, they can collaboratively work on the hiring process of a person within a single system (Katharina, 23.03.2020). Workday itself was identified as a very intuitive IT-tool as it guides the employees through the different processes (Sara, 28.02.2020; Peter, 19.03.2020; Nikolas, 20.03.2020; Ina, 24.03.2020). Furthermore, employees do not have to follow strict step-by-step instructions but can go back and forth between the steps, Sara described the tasks and logic of Workday by using the metaphor of a house:

> *"In Workday, everything is interlinked. I can jump from the living room right into the kitchen, into the cellar, on the roof, without having to take any stairs. That's a MASSIVE benefit in my eyes. It has great supporting opportunities and is super easy to use, compared with other systems."* (Sara, Part of project team, 28.02.2020)

By referring back to the implementation process of the IT-tool, it is essential to mention that the IT-tool was implemented following a step-by-step plan. The decision for the implementation of the Workday was made by the global management team, which included the CEO and another representative from each country (Document 5). Thereupon, a global design team was formed, where the members met in four cities around the world for so-called *design workshops* (Document 5). The design team consisted of HR-managers and directors from each country and various departments who discussed how and what was needed to be done in order to implement the IT-tool successfully (Nikolas, 20.03.2020). The global design team was responsible for the development of an implementation plan and further to customize Workday for Valcom, meaning that they created a prototype of the IT-tool (Document 5).

Afterward, the change plan was taken to the different countries, where the country representatives, who were part of the global design team before, formed a so-called *project team* (Document 5; Document 6). Part of this project team were representatives of the HR department as well as employees from various departments who were responsible for advertising Workday and to execute workshops for colleagues (Document 6). Simultaneously, with the formation of the project team, Workday was released within Valcom (Document 5;

Document 6). Afterward, the project team members received workshops to get familiar with the IT-tool and to understand for what it can be used within Valcom. Before Workday's actual go-live, which describes the day from which on employees were expected to work with Workday, the CEO of Valcom Germany sent out an email informing the employees that the new IT-tool is coming soon (Document 6; Ina, 24.03.2020). Thereupon, all employees received an email with information about the functionalities of Workday in the form of text and video (Document 6; Ina, 24.03.2020). After the initial communication steps, the project team executed so-called *WebEX sessions* for the managers and the employees working within the HR department (Document 6). WebEX sessions are online live meetings, where the participants received live instructions on how to work with Workday and further enabled them to ask questions when something was unclear (Document 6). Besides these WebEX sessions, various workshops in different locations for managers and HR-employees were carried out face-to-face (Document 6; Sara, 28.02.2020). The topics covered in the Workshops were the same as in the online sessions (Document 6). As managers and the HR-employees were identified as the main target group who need to be able to work with Workday, they received "special treatment" (Ina, 24.03.2020). This means that they received online and face-to-face workshops, while for the rest of the employees only e-learning seminars were offered (Document 6). Once all these implementation steps had been completed, the actual go-live took place (Document 6). A couple of weeks later, the managers were asked for feedback in the form of WebEX sessions (Document 6). To visualize the planned change process, we illustrate the process in a timeline (Figure 5).

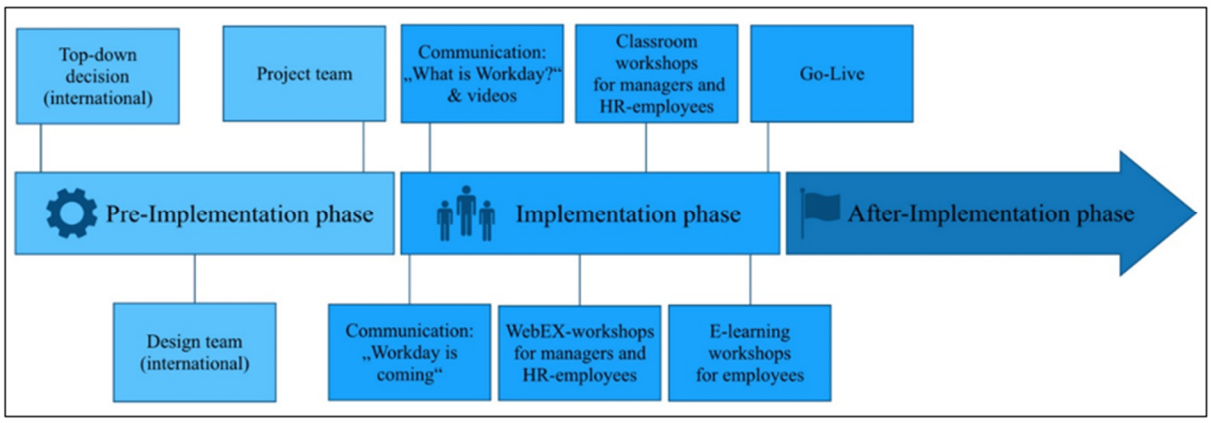

Figure 5: Implementation Process of Workday adapted from Document 6

4.2. Empirical Findings

Based on the research questions, we present our findings of our qualitative material in a narrative form while the quotations are not arranged in a chronologic order but in line with the structure of our analysis. This structure is according to our analysis template, which we pointed out during our methodology. The logical order of our empirical findings is based on this template and the implementation process of the IT-tool Workday. Within our interviews, we received information about the planned change process and how the change process was communicated, which will be our focus during the analysis to answer our research questions. Throughout the codification of our interviews and the creation of our analysis template, we identified three sections of the planned change process: the pre-implementation phase, the implementation phase, and the after-implementation phase. First, we elaborate on the pre-implementation phase, more precisely on the formal objectives and the planning process of the change. In the second section, we discuss the implementation phase of the planned change by focusing on the communication process around Workday. Finally, within the after-implementation phase, we explain how the employees did perceive or did not perceive the implementation of the IT-tool.

We interviewed eight employees from different positions and various hierarchical levels and with different backgrounds, to get various perspectives on the change process. We shortly summarized the employees' backgrounds in the appendix (see Appendix B).

Nr.	Interviewee	Date	Position	Hierarchical level
1	Sara	28.02.2020	Part of project team	Senior Associate
2	Lisa	18.03.2020	Manager	Manager
3	Anna	19.03.2020	Manager	Manager
4	Peter	19.03.2020	Part of project team	Senior Associate
5	Rieke	20.03.2020	HR-employee	Associate
6	Nikolas	20.03.2020	Part of project team	Senior Associate
7	Katharina	23.03.2020	Part of project team	Senior Associate
8	Ina	24.03.2020	Head of project team	Assistant Manager

Table 2: Overview Interview Participants

4.2.1. Pre-Implementation Phase

Within this first part, we illustrate the perceived information about the change project before the IT-tool was launched (Figure 6). Thus, we initially elaborate on the formal objectives of the change project, which means to explain the different triggers for the change. Afterward, we

focus on the planned change process by highlighting the top-down approach. Furthermore, we clarify the impact of the so-called design and project teams within the change process.

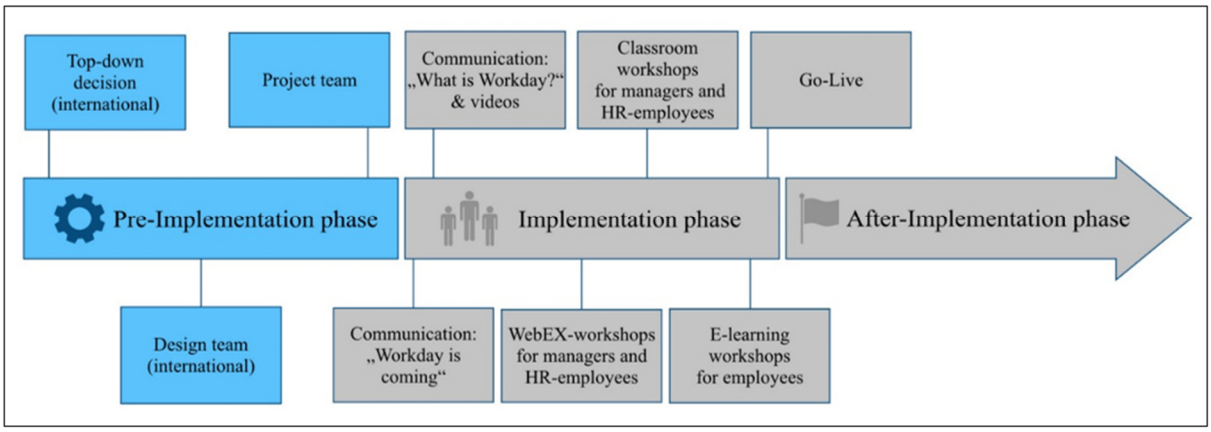

Figure 6: Pre-Implementation Phase of Workday adapted from Document 6

Formal Objectives

During our interviews, we identified different internal and external triggers for the change. Peter and Nikolas, both mentioned the external trigger of technological development. According to Nikolas (20.03.2020), Workday is "the best IT-tool on the market" and should therefore, be used within the consultancy as they are expected to act as a pioneer in the organizational society.

Next to this external trigger, it was clearly outlined by our interviewees that the implementation of the IT-tool was to align the business processes of the various countries and to strive for cost reduction and efficiency. Especially the management's decision for the change due to cost reduction and efficiency reasons were highly criticized by the workforce. Some of them would have wished that more emphasis had been placed on the need of the employees and how they could work in a more efficient way.

> *"We had around 1.000 HR-systems, and the overall strategy is to somehow focus on a selection of IT-tools. Workday, as a core system, leads to the biggest benefit here. For us, it's a trigger for global alignment and cost reduction. […] So, we didn't focus on process efficiency. Our trigger was always cost reduction because this is how Valcom works. It's all about money and efficiency. It's not about employees."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

In his interview, Peter highlighted the internal triggers cost reduction, global alignment, and efficiency as reasons for the implementation of Workday. Interestingly, his ironic undertone touches upon the number of IT-tools, which expresses his incomprehension that within Valcom,

they have to work with far too many systems. In his answer, he was firm with his choice of words while he expressed his conviction about this IT-tool. Furthermore, he explained that Workday is a core system within HR as it combines many processes, which underlines the benefit. He particularly stressed the importance of cost reduction within the consultancy when it comes to change processes and decisions like that and underscored the importance of money within Valcom critically. Peter was disappointed that nobody cares about the staff of the organization. Between the lines, it was possible to hear that he wished that the management would have been more interested in the employees and the efficiency of processes to make the work for them beneficial.

His statement was confirmed by Nikolas (20.03.2020) when he explained the organizational reasons for buying this IT-tool by mentioned cost reduction and global alignment as well. He explained that every location should work with Workday to reduce the number of IT-tools and highlighted the fact that it is important to work globally within the same systems (Nikolas, 20.03.2020).

Planning for Change

The decision for the implementation of Workday was made in the global management team, and afterward, each representative partner needed to implement it within their country. That the decision was made from the top management team was clear to our interviewees. Nevertheless, some of them were disappointed about how Workday was initiated, which Ina's statement further points out.

> *"I think the best practice is if the change goes top-down and if you have strong ambassadors in the board that cascaded down to their partners and their team lead. That's the strongest way you can do it. We did a global top-down decision with a distance far from our partners. And we in the human capital (HC) department had to sell that bottom-up to them without any ambassadors from the business saying, "Hey, we need this. This is important!" Whenever I see change happening in my firm that is cascaded down, it worked far better than the other way around."* (Ina, Head of project team, 24.03.2020)

Within her statement, she clarified the importance of top-down approaches and made clear that out of her personal experience, this approach works best in practice. Regarding the planned change process within Valcom, she underlined, on the one hand, that the decision for the planned change process was made top-down. And on the other hand, explained that this

approach needs strong ambassadors to initiate the change successfully, which was not the case within this particular change process. Ina did not criticize the top-down decision in general, but rather missed the input of change ambassadors. She emphasized that they could communicate the needs of the employees and thus, can influence the employees' awareness. Moreover, in her statement, she expressed her disappointment that, in the end, she and her HR colleagues had to convince the partners higher up in the hierarchy of their perceived value of Workday. It became apparent that the management team who decided on implementing the change did not support the implementation itself. Peter elaborated on how he perceived the top-down decision and the respective implementation of Workday.

> *"It would have been easier to give more freedom for local processes and adaptations. But the guidance was "No, it's like one straight process, and you have to get used to it". And they didn't take care of local needs or requirements for adaptations, like work council approval steps. This, in the end, called frustration and was the BIG mistake."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

He underscored that the top management not even reviewed the local processes. Instead they focused on the US guidance without any adjustment of the processes according to the laws and requirements of the respective countries, such as work council approval steps. Peter describes that the non-adjustment of the processes within Workday led to "frustrations". Further, he emphasized this as the "BIG mistake", when it came to the implementation of the IT-tool. Throughout our interview, it became apparent that a global design team was needed to customize certain processes within Workday, on which we elaborate next.

The implementation process of Workday included design teams consisting of employees who were familiar with the IT-tool and the workflow of the consultancy (Peter, 19.03.2020). Those employees had expert knowledge from different departments, who provided insights into what is needed in Workday. Furthermore, they were responsible for discussing the possibilities and the perceived value of the IT-tool, which is expressed by Peter.

> *"The global design team tried to align certain processes and standards for every module in Workday. It was very American style: high pressure and people had to decide on processes without knowing the IT-tool. Suddenly, people came back to Germany, and one year later, we finalized the improved processes, and everyone was kind of shocked: "Oh my god. It doesn't work in Germany". We had globally standardized workflows, and we didn't have real chances for any local adaptations,*

> *because they didn't come up with it in the workshops."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

Peter talked about the employees' "shocked" moment when they realized that Workday does not work as expected within Valcom Germany as local requirements were not considered. He expressed his disappointment and incomprehension that these local adaptations were "somehow" not included in the global design team workshops. In this situation, he emphasized his misunderstanding with the word "somehow" and by shrugging his shoulders. After we asked what he would have done differently in the implementation process, he answered as following.

> *"Investing in people, in those people who are designing the process and doing the implementation."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

He emphasized the importance of investing in the design team to enable them to enhance and adjust the development of the implementation process in general. After all, the members of the design team require more attention, so that they are able to consider their local needs. This is a way to ensure that the employees of Valcom's worldwide locations could be satisfied. Within this section, it became clear that the planned change process followed a global strategy, which made it more difficult to have a successful implementation within Valcom Germany. As a reaction to that, project teams were established within each country, as highlighted by Ina, the head of this project team in Germany.

> *"We assigned employees from different departments to the project team to execute the communication measures."* (Ina, Head of project team, 24.03.2020)

As pointed out, the project team, consisted of employees from different departments, was responsible for developing communication measures containing the necessary information regarding Workday. The workshops were conducted to inform the colleagues about the IT-tool. The foundation of the project team was the last step in the pre-implementation phase. Next, we elaborate on the implementation phase.

4.2.2. Implementation Phase of Planned Change

In this section, we continue with the implementation phase of the planned change process, illustrated in figure 7. We start by analyzing the communication process around Workday and focus on the initial communication such as emails and physical materials. We continue with the

evaluation of the executed workshops and explain the specific role of change agents. Additionally, we outline the feedback process during the implementation phase.

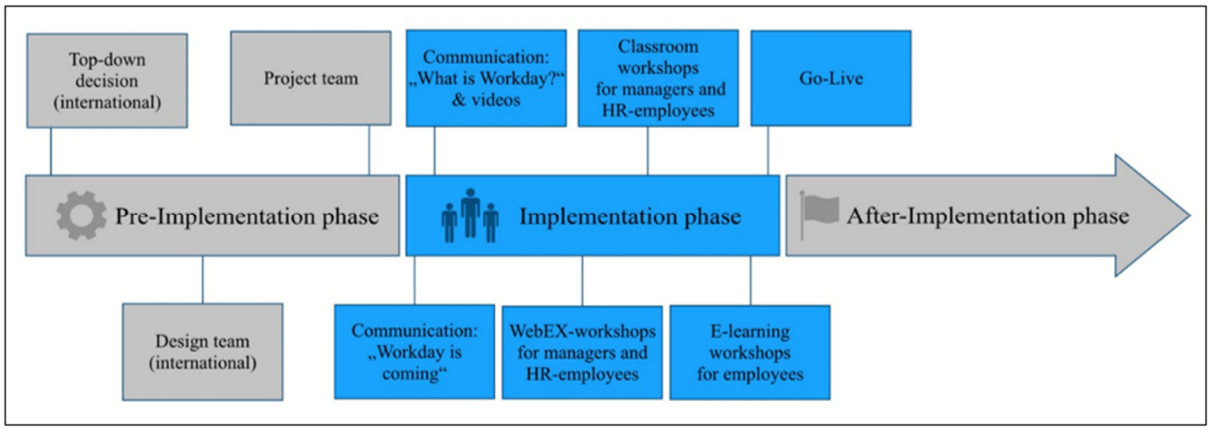

Figure 7: Implementation Phase of Workday adapted from Document 6

Communication Process around Workday

Throughout the change implementation process, different channels were used to communicate the implementation of Workday. The first touchpoint was, according to Anna (19.03.2020), an initial email coming from the CEO with the announcement of "Workday is coming!". Besides, some of our interviewees remembered communication via online channels, such as emails, which was explained by Sara.

> *"At Valcom, such things are communicated globally via email. We have weekly messages about any updates. But such big projects have their own emails. I think it was just an email once it was decided. And a few weeks later, we got an email once it was live."* (Sara, Part of project team, 28.02.2020)

Sara explained the general communication strategy of change processes within Valcom Germany and compared this to the specific procedure during the Workday implementation. By mentioning the "weekly messages" it became clear that the employees received several different emails. Additionally, she pointed out that such "big projects" like the initiation of Workday, are communicated in separate emails. Thus, it is questionable whether those emails are not overlooked. Furthermore, Sara criticized the procedure that "just" sending out an email to employees is not enough for such a big change project which affects all employees. Next to those mentioned online communication channels, Valcom used additional physical material such as flyers and stickers.

> *"Shortly after the implementation in 2018, I was in the office in Luxembourg. They had so much information material about Workday. I still have some stickers because I found them SO nice, let me show you. […] And they had those REALLY nice flyers. They were really cool because they compared the existing IT-tools with Workday and explained what will be replaced by Workday. They had this really nice and easy overview, which we didn't have. So, I was like "That's such a shame. We could have done so much more"."* (Sara, Part of project team, 28.02.2020)

Sara explained the physical material used – or not used – during the change process. She expressed that the change process was differently communicated in the countries when she compared especially the different materials used in Germany and Luxembourg. Two years after her visit in Luxembourg, she was still able to show us the material. Besides, she enthusiastically explained the content of the flyers and the stickers. At the same time, it became apparent through her statement and the shrugging of her shoulders that she was disappointed about the missing physical material in Germany, that could communicate the benefits and functionalities of Workday. Nevertheless, it is questionable why she did not suggest designing more helpful physical material for Valcom Germany, even though she was part of the project team.

Further, Anna explained how it was at Valcom Germany. She did not remember any kind of communication via email but saw flyers in other employees' mailboxes.

> *"In my opinion, Workday was implemented without people knowing. What I remember is that I saw flyers in peoples' mailboxes. And I wondered why I didn't get one. So, some people had flyers, some didn't. I was like "Hm, strange. Maybe that's something internally for HR". Because otherwise, I would have had a flyer too, right!?"* (Anna, Manager, 19.03.2020)

From Anna's perspective, there seemed to be no information about the implementation process. She expressed that she did not notice that the communication process started before Workday was launched. While stating this, her tone of voice suggested a hint of annoyance and discomfort. Anna saw flyers in other employees' mailboxes but expressed disappointed that she did not receive them. Nevertheless, she concluded that it was intentional as only her HR-colleagues need to work with Workday. And then again, she asked herself the rhetorical question, that if she needed to use the IT-tool, she would have received a flyer as well. Anna's statement did not meet with our understanding, as she is employed as a manager and supposed to work to a greater extend with Workday. However, she stated that she got the impression that

Workday is not important for her work. Further, it is questionable how the different communication materials were distributed and if they reached the 'right employees'.

Moreover, it became clear that especially employees who were on maternity leave at the time of the implementation, like Lisa, did not get any further information about the IT-tool after their return.

> *"Ah, there is also a video about "How to use Workday". Okay pretty good. Workday frequently asked questions (FAQ). WOW, very good FAQ, seven pages. "Why should I use Workday". Personal details, vacancies, contact details. Ah, okay."* (Lisa, Manager, 18.03.2020)

While conducting the interview, Lisa searched for the keyword 'Workday' in her email mailbox. She was positively surprised about all the emails she got regarding the implementation of Workday during her maternity leave. While she skimmed through her emails, she read the subject lines out loud and found them helpful without reading the content. Later in the interview, she mentioned that she received around 4.000 emails during her maternity leave and told us that she had no time to read them after her return (Lisa, 18.03.2020). When asking her what she would have expected differently in her case, she expressed that she felt left out and that she would have expected someone who would have updated her. Further, she stated that it would be better to receive the emails after the maternity leave. In contrast, she received everything during her absence, which made it even more challenging to catch up with all information (Lisa, 18.03.2020). Through her statement, it became apparent that there was a lack of communication for employees who were absent during the implementation phase of the change. Further, the absence of employees makes it difficult to catch up with or to identify the most important emails. As mentioned above, after the initial communication phase, workshops were offered for the main target individuals, on which our interviewees further elaborated.

When asking about the implementation process of Workday, the interviewees mentioned the execution of different workshops. Thereby, they focused on different target groups, which is emphasized in the next statement.

> *"Managers and HR had on-site workshops, where I was sitting with them in a big room, explaining to them the processes. For managers, we had additional WebEX sessions, so we had like hundreds of people in one WebEX."* (Sara, Part of project team, 28.02.2020)

Sara gave us more in-depth insights into the workshops with managers and HR-employees because she was one of the trainers who conducted them. She emphasized two different kinds of workshops, face-to-face in classrooms for managers and HR-employees, but also online via the IT-tool WebEX. She elaborated on the WebEX sessions by explaining that these sessions were for many hundred employees (Sara, 28.02.2020). Peter highlighted the different workshops as well.

> *"We had three different focus groups for workshops. First, the workshops for HR-people. Second, managers and third, for regular employees. All of them were trained to work with Workday."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

He explained the three different target groups of the workshop consisted of managers, HR-employees, and "regular employees". Moreover, he outlined insights into the content of the workshops, which was dependent on the target groups. In the interview, he stated that it was essential to show all employees the perceived value of Workday during the workshops. Later in the interview, he explained that the workshops for employees were conducted virtually with around 3.000 participants in each seminar (Peter, 19.03.2020). The workshops functioned to explain the dashboards and the benefits (Peter, 19.03.2020). Furthermore, Peter was obviously very satisfied with the high user rate of the employees when emphasizing "3.000 participants represent 25% of the workforce at Valcom Germany" (Peter, 19.03.2020). Nevertheless, it remains questionable if the employees actively participated in the WebEX sessions, which Peter could not answer. When asked about the effect of WebEX sessions, he mentioned that, especially within consultancies, they are important as consultants are mainly at clients and not in the office (Peter, 19.03.2020). This was confirmed by Lisa (18.03.2020) when she elaborated on her experiences with online workshops and mentioned that this is something she appreciates because she can integrate the workshops flexible in her daily business.

Besides the communication through emails and workshops, change agents were nominated to execute the implementation of Workday successfully.

> *"We picked a couple of 'change agents' from the HR department. They were involved in the last weeks of the implementation, and we trained them to understand the process and Workday itself. And those change agents supported their colleagues. [...] I know two of them. One of them got sick after the go-live, and I don't think that he came back, neither was he replaced. The other one was only working as a Workday change agent. She didn't have her normal tasks anymore.*

> *She really focused only on Workday and was responsible for all the Workday questions in her team. I don't know whether someone really checked, but as she didn't have other tasks after the go-live and Workday was really the MAIN area of her job, I'm sure that she did support her colleagues."* (Katharina, Part of project team, 23.03.2020)

During the interview, it became clear that she liked the idea of assigning change agents to support employees with Workday-related questions and, in particular, to convince them to use the IT-tool. But she also pointed out that it is important to have a closer look at the work of the change agents. Katharina recognized the situation when one change agent got sick and criticized that the open position was not filled again. This points out that nobody on the project team was responsible for supporting the change agents. Besides, Anna (19.03.2020) stated that none of her colleagues knew who a change agent was. This in retrospect gave her the feeling that no change agents were appointed for the Workday implementation. Further, Katharina (23.03.2020) highlighted that being a change agent should become the employee's „MAIN" task and stop doing what they did before, to fulfill their job successfully.

Overall, it became clear that the communication process did not always work out well. Therefore, it is essential to actively request and consider feedback, which is explained by Nikolas.

> *"We sent out a survey after the online workshops to ask people how they experienced it. And that was one of the ways to measure it, to make it quantifiable and tangible. Because I don't know if they watched the video. But if they answer me on a five-point scale, where one is bad, and five is top, and they fill in a four or five that it was useful or extremely useful, then I can assume, as long as I have enough people filling in the survey, that it helped."* (Nikolas, Part of project team, 20.03.2020)

In this statement, he highlighted the importance of feedback and explained how they asked for the employees' feedback. It became clear that surveys are well-functioning measurements to get feedback after online workshops. Nevertheless, Nikolas mentioned that it is just quantifiable if enough people are answering the survey. Through his deep sigh and his tone of voice, he expressed that it was a huge challenge to encourage the workshop participants to fill out the survey.

4.2.3. After-Implementation Phase

After the go-live, the time from which on the employees were expected to work with Workday, we present the after-implementation phase (Figure 8). Whereby, the outcome and thus, the employees' awareness and their respected acceptance of the IT-tool became apparent. We identified three different patterns of employees' awareness. First, the employees were aware of the change and understood the perceived value of the IT-tool Workday. Second, the employees were aware of the change but did not understand the perceived value. Third, the employees were not aware of the change and did not know that the IT-tool exists.

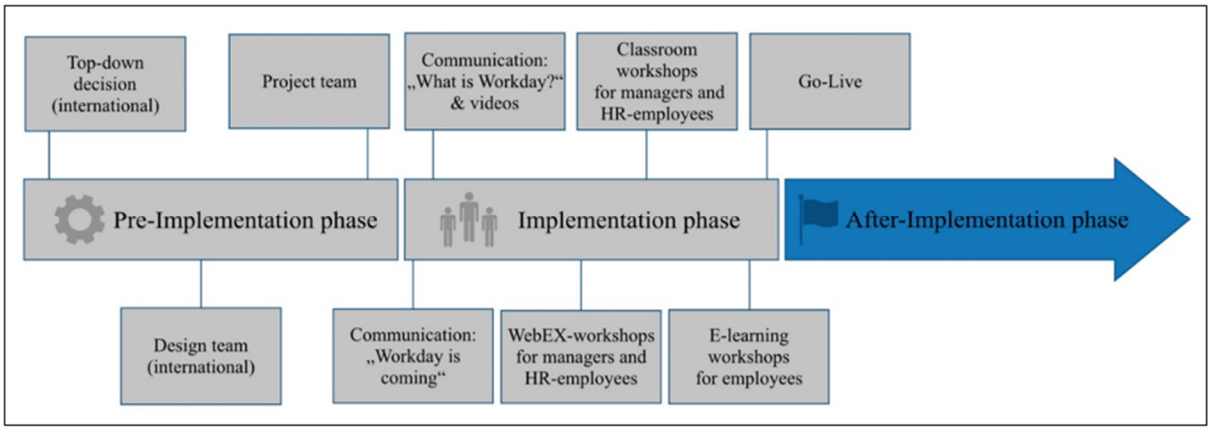

Figure 8: After-Implementation Phase of Workday adapted from Document 6

Employee Awareness and Perceived Value

After the implementation of Workday, it is important to have a closer look at the awareness of the employees and if they understood the perceived value of the change. According to Peter, the employees must see the benefit of the IT-tool.

> *"You need to find out why the employees should use it. […] They just need to find a benefit, and then they are using it. It's always about finding the key selling point for each project and the employees."* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

Peter pointed out that it is important for the employees to see the perceived value of the new IT-tool so that it is used accordingly. He highlighted that as long as employees see the value of Workday, they will not question the change and use it. If the employees will not identify the added value, it is difficult to get them used to it. Thus, it is all about identifying and explaining the perceived value of the IT-tool.

As part of the project team, Katharina emphasized the benefits of Workday for HR-employees within the next statement.

> *„I would say, the most important thing about Workday is that it's not only a database. […] It's more about business processes. Imagine if you want to hire a new employee, there are a lot of things you have to do. You have to enter personal information into your IT-system, which can be accessed by the right employees who are involved in the employment process, and that can all be done in Workday. So, it's not only about storing employee data. I would say business processes are the main functionalities of Workday. Besides, you have a lot of reporting functionalities in Workday. So, it's a lot."* (Katharina, Part of project team, 23.03.2020)

When asking Katharina about Workday's functionalities, she enthusiastically explained that various business processes can be combined within one system, which is a "huge advantage" (Katharina, 23.03.2020). Therefore, she used the example of a hiring process and described the steps of this process and highlighted all these different tasks that can be executed within Workday. As aforementioned, the employees at Valcom Germany were used to work with SAP-tools for various business processes and thus, the need to explain the employees the benefit of the new tool was of great importance. The two different logics between the two systems, Workday and SAP, and consequently the advantage of Workday, was explained by Ina (24.03.2020) with the help of the house metaphor on which we elaborated above. Ina (24.03.2020) underlined the flexibility between processes as a "MASSIVE benefit" of Workday. It is questionable why this metaphor was only communicated within the project team and not to all employees to highlight the benefits of the Workday in comparison to SAP-tools. The managers and the HR-employee we interviewed were not familiar with this metaphor. Nikolas expressed enthusiastically the benefits of Workday.

> *"I think it's a brilliant IT-tool. […] It's very user friendly, so it has a great user interface and user experience. People can easily navigate and find out how it works, so from a front end. People can get familiar with it quite quickly. And from my back end, in my function, it's relatively easy to configure."* (Nikolas, Part of project team, 20.03.2020)

Nikolas described Workday as a "brilliant IT-tool" and elaborated on its benefits. However, it is essential to mention that those advantages were only explained by some but most interestingly, not by all members of the Workday project team. Furthermore, it became apparent that besides the project team members, other employees, including managers and HR-employees, could not identify their perceived value of Workday (Lisa, 18.03.2020; Anna, 19.03.2020; Rieke, 20.03.2020).

Employee Awareness and no Perceived Value

As a member of the project team, Peter did not understand the usage of Workday within Valcom, which is expressed in the next statement.

> *"I mean for us it's a really stupid example, but we don't have a real Valcom phonebook that is working. Suddenly, there was an IT-tool that somehow allows searching for people, viewing a picture, and calling them. People love it (laughing). I mean it's not the intention of the IT-tool, but you only need a benefit. […] We know, Workday is a really wide platform and offers a lot of functionalities, but all these functionalities are not the best on the market. There are better IT-tools for time tracking, recruitment, applicant pools, talent management, stuff like this. But of course, Workday combines all this in a cost-efficient way"* (Peter, Part of project team, 19.03.2020)

In this statement, it becomes apparent that the employees use Workday mainly as a phonebook. This does not associate the actual reason for the usage, but it hints that the employees like to use Workday at least for that purpose. They like the interface, as searching for people when having the intention to call them is very easy, and it provides them with the feature to see the employees picture. Even though the employees do not use it for the actual reason, Peter identified their usage as a phonebook first as a "stupid example" but later in his statement stated this as rather positive, since employees perceive Workday as something "beneficial". While stating this, he laughed which illustrated the irony of the employees' Workday usage. Furthermore, this statement highlighted that even employees who were part of the project team did not understand the added value of the IT-tool. Even though they are aware of the many functionalities Workday entails, he expressed his opinion, and thus contradicted with Nikolas' statement (20.03.2020), that Workday is the best IT-tool on the market.

As mentioned before, one intention for implementing Workday was to replace multiple IT-tools. In the interview with Rieke, she explained that this purpose was not served because other IT-tools were not replaced by Workday.

> *"We're using multiple systems at the same time. It was not the case that Workday came and replaced the previous system. […] People stick to the old system for longer, because it is still there, and they still have the option to use it."* (Rieke, HR, 20.03.2020)

She emphasized that the employees are still able to use the old systems while Workday was already implemented. This makes it even more difficult for the employees to start using a new system for their tasks if they still have the choice to choose between using the old system or the new system. They then instead decide to work with the old system as they know how it works. This is attributable to the fact that "people do not like changes and rather stick to their old systems and working behaviors" (Rieke, 20.03.2020).

Next to this, some of our interviewees highlighted the lack of openness towards new tasks, which is represented in Sara's statement.

> *"I think the implementation of Workday was a BIG deal, because managers tend to do nothing HR-related. Everything should be done by HR. But Workday has a different logic and pushes all those administrative tasks back to the employees and managers. So that HR has a rather administrative role in the organization. But in general, a manager should do that, because they know their people. But they don't do it, which is a big issue, because they say "I'm too expensive to do that"."* (Sara, Part of project team, 28.02.2020)

Sara explained the different logic of Workday in comparison to the previously used SAP-systems. She stated that employees have to do administrative tasks again and underlined the reason why it makes sense that managers execute these tasks. The managers' unwillingness to do these administrative tasks was highlighted as they think they are not worth doing it. By explaining this she became angry, as evidenced by her choice of words. She first said that managers do not execute HR-related tasks as they understand it as something administrative and are not willing to carry it out. Furthermore, she made a pejorative gesture with her hands as she explained that managers think they are "too expensive to do that". This defensive attitude of the managers was confirmed by Ina's statement (24.03.2020) that managers "are here to make money and run the business" instead of doing administrative tasks. During the interview with Rieke, the HR-perspective became visible.

> *"Managers have little time, and they prefer to receive reports quickly and they are used to receive it as Excel sheets. They rather have me download certain data from SAP-tools, then go log themselves into Workday and use the dashboard in there. If there is already a certain kind of restriction on the managers' side, of course employees aren't necessarily open to the system. Because their leaders MIGHT also tell them "Well, that's a shitty system"."* (Rieke, HR, 20.03.2020)

Her statement shows that managers knew that they should collect the data they want to work with by themselves. However, they found excuses like "having little time", and thus pushed back the administrative task to the HR-employees (Rieke, 20.03.2020). In her opinion, the managers' restrictions are a decisive factor of the employees not being open to the change. She assumed that if they do not see the IT-tool's added value, they cannot convince their employees of it. Furthermore, she stated that she also uses the SAP-tool to download the reporting Excel sheets instead of working with Workday. Within this situation, we realized that even the HR department is not using Workday, and that Rieke is not seeing the perceived value of this IT-tool either. She emphasized this in another statement.

> *"Workday is possibly good for reporting as well. I'm not using it extensively so far, as I don't feel like the export function to Excel is working really well. I still mostly stick to our SAP on-premise systems for reporting methods. But I'm aware that it is a big advantage in general that the dashboards are really good. But managers of ours are mostly used to work in Excel. And I find the export, as I said, not entirely suitable."* (Rieke, HR, 20.03.2020)

With Rieke's statement, it becomes apparent that she worked with Workday already, but rather works with her old system as she thinks the functionalities she needs do not work very well. Further, she contradicted herself later, when stating that she is aware of the advantages and that she likes the dashboard. Additionally, she found excuses that managers are the ones who stick to Excel, as they still asked for Excel-reports. Additionally, we asked her if she tried to tell the managers that they should use Workday to download the reports by themselves. She answered that she tried this in the beginning but gave up quickly, because in the end the managers' refused to do it by themselves (Rieke, 20.03.2020). Moreover, it became apparent that she, as explained above, is also not convinced by Workday, and does not use it herself. This made clear that if she is not using it and does not see the perceived value, she cannot convince the managers to work with it. In contrast, we identified interviewees who were not aware of the change process on which we elaborate next.

No Employee Awareness and no Perceived Value

Within our interviews we also found out that different interviewees were not aware of the change process and the implementation of Workday at all. This was especially the case when we interviewed the managers Lisa and Anna.

> *"Actually, I don't even know how to access this IT-tool. Where can I find it? How is it called? Workforce? (laughing). […] Let me see, is it here? (pause) I don't even know how to access it! [...] Actually I don't know what the purpose of Workday is and why I should use it."* (Lisa, Manager, 18.03.2020)

While searching for Workday on her desktop, Lisa asked us for the name of the IT-tool again and thereby laughed embarrassedly, because she realized that she did not even know what to search for. After understanding that we asked about information of an IT-tool she does not even know, she became angry and upset. It became clear, that she did not receive any information that Workday exists. Lisa as well confirmed that she did not receive any information about the implementation of the IT-tool itself. Additionally, she underlined the assumption that without communication, it is not possible to identify the purpose of Workday and thus, force employees to use it. This was supported by Anna's statement.

> *"I didn't really know we had Workday, because no one ever told us. We didn't receive any communication. It was suddenly there. And then I think someone said "Yes, you have to do this in Workday". And then I just clicked through my Valcom bookmarks and then I saw "Ah yes, there is Workday"."* (Anna, Manager, 19.03.2020)

Here, the lack of communication becomes clear as she, as a manger, did not receive any information about Workday. As managers they are supposed to work extensively with the IT-tool and thus, it is questionable why they did not receive any further information about Workday. In contrast to this lack of communication, we also got the information that too many changes happened at the same time.

> *"I only remember an email. And we at Valcom are rolling out a lot of software and hardware IT-tools, for example also Salesforce. So, a LOT of information came to us via email."* (Lisa, Manager, 18.03.2020)

Lisa pointed out the information overload because too many changes were happening at the same time. For example, next to Workday, Salesforce was implemented simultaneously and led to the assumption, that it was difficult for the employees to handle too many changes at once. Thinking back on the communication process and the statement of Peter (19.03.2020), about the projects having their own emails, we can imagine how many of them the employees received about these implementations.

4.3. Summary Analysis

Within this chapter, we first provided the reader with the organizational and project background. The organizational context is laid out since it influences the communication strategy. Due to the fact that the implemented IT-tool Workday required a mindset change of the employees, as it passes back the administrative tasks, we outlined the logic behind it. Afterward, we illustrated our empirical material in the form of a narrative. We described the three different implementation phases of the planned change process and elaborated on the employees' understanding and sensemaking of the communication process. Within the implementation process, various communication measures were provided to inform the employees about the change. However, we observed that the employees perceived or did not perceive the change according to three different patterns. First, the employees were aware of the change and did perceive the value. Second, the employees were aware of the change and did not perceive the value. And third, the employees were not aware of the change and did not perceive the value. Overall, the communication process had a great impact on the planned organizational process and the way employees perceived it. This empirical material provided the foundation for our discussion in a theoretical context, which is outlined in the next chapter.

5. Discussion

Within this chapter, we present and discuss the empirical findings through the lens of our theoretical framework. Simultaneously, we aim to analyze the characteristics of a process perspective on a planned organizational change process. We continuously investigate the employees' understandings and interpretations of the planned organizational change process and evaluate their respective awareness. We start with the demonstration of the organizational circumstances. This is aimed at unfolding and discussing the first research question about the influence of communications on Valcom's planned change project. By doing so, the communication measures in the change process within our case study are evaluated. Following that, the second research question on how the communication process influences the employees' understanding and sensemaking is addressed and thus, the outcome of a planned change project. Finally, we illustrate a model in which we compiled our research findings and strive to contribute to the existing literature, before concluding this chapter with a summary.

5.1. Organizational Circumstances

As demonstrated in our literature review, the success of an organizational change is strongly related to the organizational context and not just on the implementation strategy (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Moreover, our intention of taking on a process perspective was to get insights into the complexity of organizations and to receive an in-depth understanding of change processes (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Thus, we decided to outline the organizational context, the functionalities of the change project Workday, and the interdependence of both, in order to understand the outcome of the change. We identified that the organization strives for worldwide alignments in their business processes and usage of the same systems in order to be able to work collaboratively on cases. This represents one reason why Workday was implemented within Valcom Germany, which became apparent during the interviews with the project team members. While others mentioned cost reduction as the primary purpose of the change, both cost reduction and global alignment represent internal pressures for change (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Our impression during some interviews was that Workday was also initiated to keep up with technological developments as it is currently considered the best IT-tool on the market, which represents an external trigger for change (Child, 2005). In contrast to one interviewee's statement, within one of the analyzed documents the company expresses, that those technological developments are initiated within Valcom to support the employees in their daily work. Consequently, the change was implemented due to both internal and external triggers and cannot be considered as entirely distinguishable, which confirms assumptions from existing literature (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020).

Referring back to the importance of the organizational context in the pursuit of a successful change process, the project team members questioned the process of a cross-country implementation of Workday. They stated that each country bears different legal requirements when it comes to employee data, which was not considered when the international design team planned the initiation steps of Workday. Another major challenge represents that they disregarded their usage of different IT-tools within the various countries. We found that, especially within Valcom Germany, the employees were satisfied and committed to work with the SAP-tools. Some of our interviewees highlighted the different structures and logic between Workday and the SAP-tools. Thus, it was surprising for us, as Valcom can be regarded as a knowledge-intensive firm with employees who have "intellectual and symbolic skills" (Alvesson, 2004, p.21), that the identified challenges were not taken into account when

implementing the change. Overall, we can confirm, through the various challenges outlined during our research, that to successfully implement IT-tools, it is essential to align the business processes to the particular demands of the employees (Harper & Utley, 2001; Legris & Collerette, 2006). In the following, we discuss the plan of the change process.

5.2. Planned Change Process

Within the interviews with the project team members, it was stated that the decision to implement Workday was made within the global management team of Valcom and then released for planning to an international design team. These top-down decisions are identified as a characteristic of planned change approaches (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016). Moreover, Workday was rolled out following a sequence of steps, including a clear communication structure on how to initiate the change. According to Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020), this way of implementing change is associated with a planned change approach. In alignment with what we identified in the documents, Workday was implemented over a longer period, aimed to replace existing IT-tools, and further was of infrequent and discontinuous nature, which are all characteristics of episodic changes (Ford & Ford, 1994; Mintzberg & Westley, 1992; Weick & Quinn, 1999). In addition, we found that the change required employees (especially managers and employees of the HR department) to change their mindset. As aforementioned Workday has a different logic compared to the old systems and thus, changed the employees' work tasks. This mindset change is considered to be of radical nature, and according to the literature, another characteristic of a planned change process (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020).

Through studying documents, it became apparent that the implementation of Workday was executed within three main phases: the pre-implementation phase, the implementation phase, and the after-implementation phase. Parallels can be drawn to Lewin's three-step model: unfreezing, change, refreezing (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 2010; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). According to the literature, the organization is in a rather stable stage within the first and the last step but moves away from its stage of equilibrium to a period of deviation during the second phase, when Workday was implemented (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Besides the formal objectives, our interviewees elaborated on the events within the different phases. During the pre-implementation phase of Workday, the global management team decided to initiate the IT-tool. Moreover, a global design team was formed to customize Workday for Valcom and to develop a change plan, entailing a communication strategy. The local project team within Valcom Germany was then responsible for adjusting the plan according to the local

requirements and afterward to execute the change plan. Some interviewees mentioned that both teams were supposed to work on highlighting the urgency of the change, the respective advantages of Workday, and further to create a feeling of psychological safety for the employees (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017; Schein, 2010). The phase of change illustrates the actual roll-out of Workday, which includes moving away from a previous state to the new desired state (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). During this phase, we identified that different communication and guidance measures took place, which is, according to the literature, required during the changing phase (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Moreover, in this phase, the actual go-live of Workday occurred. In the after-implementation or refreezing phase, the literature highlights the importance of making sure to embed the new ways of working in the organization and to prohibit employees from moving back to their old ways of working (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Within the consultancy, they tried to do so by asking for employees' feedback. Nevertheless, we identified that they did, to some extent, not succeed in prohibiting employees, especially managers, from moving back to their old routines. On this, we elaborate in more detail below.

Although the change plan and especially the communication process was presented very promisingly, several factors and circumstances were either not respected or not known by the time the change plan was developed, which had an impact on the change outcome. In the following, we discuss the communication process when taking on a process perspective.

5.3. Monologic and Dialogic Communication

As mentioned in the literature review, the communication strategy plays an essential role in organizational change processes (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This is consistent with our findings that show the consultancy's developed communication strategy with various communication measures. We distinguish these measures as monologic or dialogic communication and identified that both kinds of communication were used in our case study (Jabri, Adrian & Boje, 2008).

The process of communicating and implementing Workday itself started with a top-down communication of the partners' decision, which illustrates a monologic communication as it does not involve the employees interactions. Some of our interviewees explained the advantages of top-down decisions but criticized how it happened within Valcom since any further communication and support was missing. According to Sveningsson and Sörgärde (2020), monologic communication can only be supportive as long as the employees are not

affected by the process. As Workday is an IT-tool that needs to be used by all employees within the consultant company, they missed to include them in the communication of the decision-making process. Nevertheless, it remains questionable if involving all employees in the communication process of the decision would be possible in a large organization like Valcom. Here, the main questions remain how this consideration would look like and how they would ensure that all employees are involved.

Within the implementation phase, emails with different content, such as FAQs and videos, were sent out to the employees to inform about Workday and to guide on working with the new IT-tool. In addition to that, physical materials were distributed, such as flyers and stickers, to provide further information about Workday. According to the findings, the usage and distribution of this kind of materials was questionable within the employees of Valcom. This became apparent when one of our interviewees emphasized the advantages of the flyers distributed in the office in Luxembourg in comparison to the insignificant content of the flyers at Valcom Germany. As mentioned above, the monologic communication was criticized during the entire change process as the employees did not feel committed to the change. The reasons were the lack of involvement as well as the difficulty to understand the need for the change and to identify the added value of Workday. This is in accordance with Palmer, Dunford, and Buchanan (2017), who emphasized the importance of dialogues in the three different phases: before, during, and after the implementation. The consultancy tried to implement dialogues by setting up design and project teams, appointing change agents, and conducting workshops, which is discussed below.

The interviewees suggested using ambassadors to connect the decision-makers and the employees, which represents a combination of monologic and dialogic communication. We assume that the consultancy tried this with implementing design and project teams, and through the selection of change agents. Within the pre-implementation phase, a dialogue took place when the design and project teams were created. As demonstrated in our literature review, this kind of two-way communication is essential to involve the employees, to use their experience and knowledge to receive a diverse perspective on the change, and to make this change at the end successful (Balogun, 2006; Jabri, Adrian & Boje, 2008). However, the original intention of why the design team was formed is generally questionable as it seemed that the members' experiences, knowledge, and requirements were not considered. One of the main critiques emphasized by the interviewees was the lack of consideration of local needs and adaptations. Therefore, we assume that the design team and the project team members were not able to conduct a dialogue with the partners but were rather established to set on keeping up the

appearances of involving the employees. In our case study, we identified the consequences of employees recognizing that they were not actively integrated and considered in the communication process of the decision. This had a negative influence on the subsequent communication and thus, on the success of the change process. Listening to the employees' opinions and their perspectives on the change implementation could lead to a more coordinated and effective procedure (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). In this case study, some of the interviewees were unsatisfied and confused about being a part of the design and project team, because they did not know what was expected from them. Moreover, they had to make decisions about Workday before being familiar with it. As previously established, change agents can play a significant role in change processes to support the communication and the understanding of the employees (Buick, Blackman & Johnson, 2018; Rogers, 2003). Additionally, our interviewees mentioned, that it is questionable whether the change agents fulfilled their purpose because nobody reviewed their work. Besides, one of our interview participants stated that when one change agent could not fulfill his tasks anymore, his position was left vacant. Most of our interviewees were not aware of the change agents' existence, which demonstrates a lack of communication. This assumption was confirmed in the interviews and is explained by Palmer, Dunford, and Buchanan (2017), who stated the importance of involving the employees through dialogues to get them committed.

The interviewees mentioned different workshops and online sessions during the implementation phase, which correspond to the dialogic approach to convince the employees of the added value of Workday. This is in alignment with different researchers who emphasize the importance of dialogues within change processes, to involve the employees, and foster an atmosphere for expressing concerns (Ford & Ford, 1995; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). When referring to our case study, this means involving the employees in general, because every employee has to work with Workday to a greater or lesser extent. The consultancy followed this theoretical approach by offering workshops for different target groups of employees, such as managers, HR-employees, or 'regular employees', and thereby promoted the two-way communication. Thereby, employees got the chance to get to know Workday and ask questions regarding their everyday usage of it. Finally, according to our literature review, the study supported the importance of the monologic and dialogic communication approach and demonstrated the challenges.

5.4. Transmitter-Receiver-Model

The transmitter-receiver-model helps to gain deeper insights into the course of dialogic communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). The communication process between at least two individuals is explained and highlights the challenges to code and decode messages in the intended way (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). In this process, feedback is considered crucial to ensure the correct decoding of the message (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). One main outcome of our case study was the importance of communication between different individuals. All our employees talked about the different communication processes, which included design teams, project teams, emails, and workshops. The interviewees pointed out that different employees were part of these communication measures and acted as transmitters and receivers. They tried to explain the change and its advantages. It became clear that the more transmitters and receivers are involved in the conversations the more complex the communication process becomes. Furthermore, it was pointed out by one of the interviewees that another challenge in communication strategies is the collection of feedback. Although Valcom tried to receive feedback through surveys after online sessions and workshops, it is unsure whether the number of survey participants was representative. It became clear that communication takes place everywhere and every time during the change process, which was already stated by Palmar, Dunford, and Buchanan (2017).

Our literature review has shown that different factors, such as noises, perceptual filters, the transmission channel of the message, and the context in which the conversation takes place, influence the success of a communication process (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). In knowledge-intensive firms like Valcom, the employees are working under high pressure, which some of our interviewees emphasized when they elaborated that especially the managers have a lot to do and thus have no time to get to know a new IT-tool like Workday. Stressful situations like the described one can be identified as a kind of noise. As pointed out in our literature review, noises are known to have an impact on coding and decoding the messages (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017).

During our interviews, it was revealed that some of the managers were reluctant and sometimes dismissive to work with Workday, expressing that they are too expensive to do such administrative tasks. When the interviewees explained this situation, it became apparent that the manager's attitude influenced the communication process, as they might have to explain Workday to their employees, and thus influenced the acceptance of the new IT-tool. Such circumstances are described as perceptual filters that influence the decoding process of

messages, how the receiver will understand the message, and therefore, impact the communication process (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017).

Another influencing factor within conversations is the communication channel such as electronic media, physical material, or face-to-face conversations (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). In alignment with Lengel and Daft (1988), those channels have different media richness levels and need to be chosen wisely. Face-to-face communication has the highest level of media richness, whereas impersonal material, such as physical material, has the lowest (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Within the initiation process of Workday, different channels were used. We noticed that especially managers received information via different channels, such as emails, flyers, or workshops, to make sure that they are best prepared for the change process and that they identify the perceived value of the IT-tool. This illustrated, on the one hand, the importance of managers within this change process, as the consultancy tried to reach out to them by using different channels. On the other hand, we found that some of the interviewees were confused when they saw flyers in other peoples' mailboxes and questioned why they did not receive any. This points out that it is essential to consider, when using different channels for various target groups, that others are not confused and disappointed when differentiating who receives which kind of material or information. Furthermore, it became apparent that the use of different channels does not automatically mean that employees are well informed. Especially the two interviewed managers did not know anything about Workday, although they received information via different channels.

Moreover, the physical, social, or cultural context is important to consider when thinking about the influencing factors of communication processes (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). According to Palmer, Dunford, and Buchanan (2017), especially the organizational circumstances represent a significant challenge. This was confirmed in our case study when our interviewees criticized the above-elaborated 'SAP-environment' within Valcom Germany.

Finally, we emphasized the complexity of communication within change processes and identified many different transmitters and receivers. This leads us to the assumption that the transmitter-receiver-model is a simplified representation of a conversation and becomes complex in an exchange between several individuals. We pointed out that the success of conversations is dependent on various influencing factors, which makes it even more difficult for the transmitter and the receiver to code or decode the message in the same and intended way (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Thus, different challenges within the communication process were identified, which are discussed in the following.

5.5. Challenges of Communication

As stated in our literature review, three different problems can come up during a communication process. Our findings are consistent with this assumption and confirm the occurrence of one of these problems in organizations: the message overload (Nelson & Coxhead, 1997). Some interviewees criticized the amount of emails received and mentioned that they do not have the time to read and process all of them. Therefore, they were not aware of the change and did not perceive the value of it. The message overload underlines the challenge of recognizing the important information and finding a balance between the amount of emails sent out (Nelson & Coxhead, 1997). This shows that communication always happens and was confirmed by all interviewees when they elaborated on the different communication measures (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Further, we gained an understanding of the importance of communication processes within organizations and the great influence they have on change processes.

According to multiple researchers, communication affects the creation of meaning and contributes to sensemaking (Balogun, 2006; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Within change work, employees shape the development of the change process through their understandings and interpretations. They are responsible to move the change process forward and to make the change through their sensemaking and participation successful (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016; Balogun, 2006; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). Some of our interviewees explained the advantages of the change very well, which demonstrated that they saw the perceived value. On the contrary, others were not aware of Workday and did not see the perceived value. Consequently, they did not use it and maintained using the old SAP-tools.

In our findings, we highlighted the critical role of design and project teams to involve the employees in the change process. Change agents were used to act as transmitters within conversations and to explain the IT-tool to colleagues. Consistent with our expectations, employees are making sense of different situations, based on their experiences and interests, and influence the change process actively through their sensemaking (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020).

Within the interviewees' statements, we identified that the employees tried to explain the distribution of physical materials and did not understand the procedure undertaken. Nevertheless, this emphasizes that even when the employees did not talk to each other and only received physical materials, they made sense of the situation. This influenced their commitment and underlines the assumption, that sensemaking takes place in both written and spoken communication measures (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). Furthermore, some members of the

project team underscored the importance of understanding the employees' interpretations, when trying to explain the significance of the added value of Workday, in order to foster their usage. This is in alignment with the theory of Mills (2003), who focused on the understanding of the employees' thoughts and feelings to get insights into how the employees interpret the change process and therefore, how to conduct the communication best. Accordingly, we developed a model based on our findings to contribute to existing literature, which we present next.

5.6. The Communication-Value-Matrix

In this section, we present our developed model to illustrate our findings on a theoretical level (Figure 9). More precisely, the model combines the outcome of our research questions on the influence of the communication process as well as the question how the employees' understanding and sensemaking form the outcome of the planned change process. First, we explain various dimensions of the model and thereby use the transmitter-receiver-model as a foundation. Second, we outline how our model contributes to the existing literature on planned change, the process perspective, and the influence of communication. Third, we demonstrate how we applied the model to our case study and lastly, we express criticism of the model based on our empirical material. To start with, the model in the form of a matrix consists of two dimensions, with the following meaning:

Communication of the change: The horizontal dimension illustrates the quality of the communication process within the change process from bad to good. This is dependent on how the employees perceived the quality of information obtained as well as their involvement in the communication process rather than the amount of communication measures received. Hence, the assessment is both subjective and objective. Bad communication represents the limited amount of information received and/or the feeling of the employees not having received sufficient information. Moreover, it involves the usage of channels, such as emails, with a low media richness level. Whereas employees who received much information about the change and who were actively involved or the ones who felt that the information received was satisfactory, identified the communication as good. Besides, good communication includes the usage of channels with a high media richness level, such as face-to-face conversations.

Perceived value of the change: The vertical dimension demonstrates the perceived value of the change on a scale from low to high. This is of subjective nature as we assess the employees' understandings and interpretations of the change. In this respect, a high perceived value implies that the employees understand why the new IT-tool was implemented and further

are able to identify the added value for their work and/or the organization itself. In contrast, a low perceived value means that the employees do not see the advantages of the IT-tool concerning their work.

Moreover, how employees identify the perceived value is, according to our findings, dependent on the quality of the communication process around the implementation phase as well as the added value of the IT-tool itself. We identified four different 'ideal types' of sensemaking, which we named as following: *lions*, *donkeys*, *blind chickens*, and *foxes*. Next, we outline the meaning of the four quadrants more detailed.

Lions are defined as recipients of good communication and understand the added value of the change. Here, the transmitter codes the message in the intended way and is able to consider the perceptual filters and noises within the communication process. Furthermore, the communicated message is decoded correctly as the perceptual filters and noises can be faded out or ignored by the receiver.

Donkeys receive good communication but do not see the added value of the change. On the one hand, the transmitter is able to code the message by taking perceptual filters and noises into account. And on the other hand, the receiver is biased by perceptual filters and noises and therefore, cannot decode the message in the intended way.

Blind chickens are characterized as recipients of bad communication and do not understand the added value of the change. In the communication process, the transmitter as well as the receiver, are incapable to code or decode the message in the anticipated manner. Thus, perceptual filters and noises cannot be faded out or ignored.

Foxes are defined as individuals who receive bad communication but can identify the added value of the change. Although the transmitter cannot code the message correctly, the receiver is still capable of decoding the message. Here, the perceptual filters and noises are not considered by the transmitter but, despite that, the receiver can take these into account.

Overall, the matrix needs to be regarded as a dynamic model. As based on our literature and our empirical material, communication and sensemaking play a crucial role and further takes place continuously within change processes (Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017; Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). This implies that the employees' understanding and sensemaking can be influenced by communication and thus can be altered (Balogun, 2006; Palmer, Dunford & Buchanan, 2017). Consequently, this leads to the individuals' development in different 'ideal types' of sensemaking and enables them to move between the four quadrants. Even though when organizational changes are planned, the intended outcome is difficult to achieve since the employees' understanding and sensemaking cannot be anticipated (Alvesson

& Sveningsson, 2016; Dawson, 2003). Based on our empirical material it is essential to request feedback in order to continuously analyze the individuals' understanding and sensemaking throughout the change process. Thus, the matrix functions as a reflexive model to improve the communication process and to achieve the intended outcome of the organizational change.

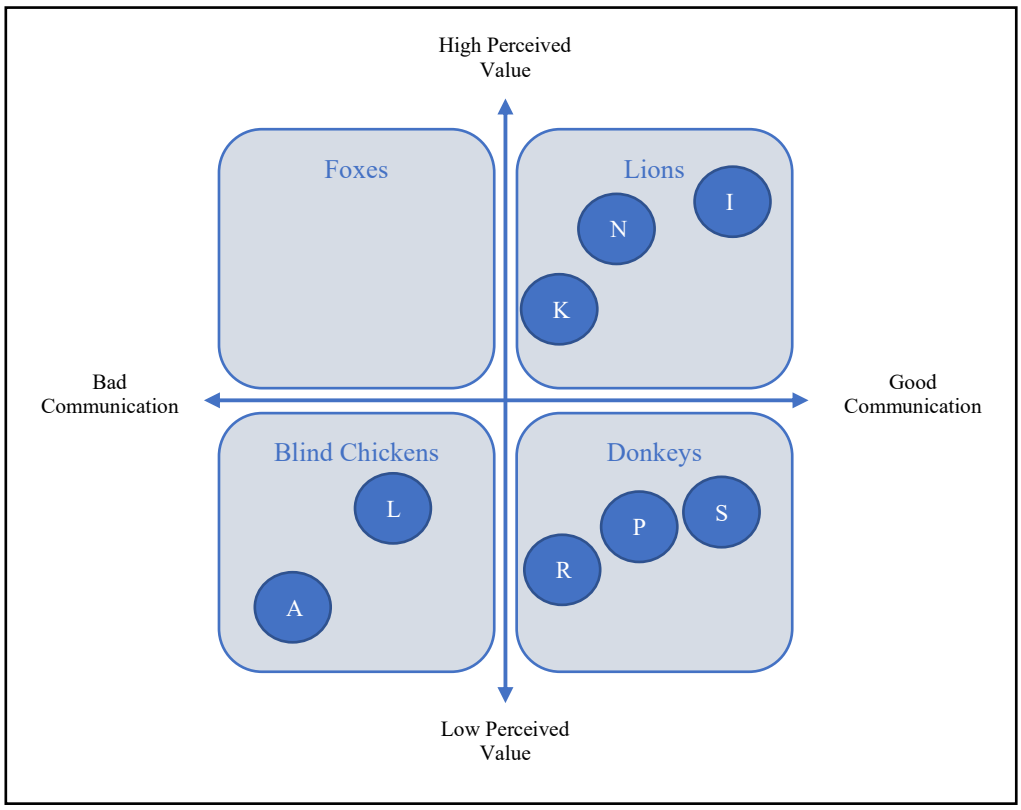

Figure 9: Communication-Value-Matrix

Practical Implication

In this section, we apply the theoretical model to our case study and thus, make it more tangible. We have marked the employee awareness of our interview partners in the model. The various letters are the first letters of our interviewees' names: I-Ina; N-Nikolas; K-Katharina; A-Anna; L-Lisa; P-Peter; S-Sara, R-Rieke.

Based on our perception throughout the interviews, we have assigned Ina, Nikolas, and Katharina to the quadrant of *lions*. All of them were convinced of Workday's added value and perceived the communication process during the implementation of Workday as good. Due to the characteristics of the *donkeys*, we assigned Sara, Peter, and Rieke to this quadrant. They did receive good communication, but however, according to our understanding, did not perceive the added value of Workday within Valcom. Moreover, we identified Anna and Lisa as *blind chickens*. Since through the interviews, we got the impression that they did not remember significant communication measures while Workday was implemented. It became clear that

both did not know that Workday exists and therefore, did not identify the added value. Lastly, based on our data collection, we did not analyze someone to assign to the quadrant of *foxes*. Through applying the matrix on our empirical material, we contribute to existing literature.

Critical Reflection

Based on our empirical material, it is questionable if the transmitter and receiver can identify and consider the perceptual filters and noises while coding and decoding the message within the communication process. Besides, the organizational context in which the conversation takes place was not further considered. Furthermore, we did analyze that none of our interviewees belongs to the quadrants of the foxes. Hence, we criticize if it is possible to see the perceived value of a change without receiving good communication. In general, the assignment of employees into one of the four quadrants is of subjective nature, which needs to be taken into account by applying the communication-value-matrix.

5.7. Summary Discussion

Within this chapter, we outlined the organizational circumstances of Valcom, especially the different triggers for the change and the 'SAP-environment' within Valcom Germany, as we found them to have a significant influence on the employees' awareness. The change was implemented according to a three-step-plan: the pre-implementation, implementation, and after-implementation phase. Thus, we drew parallels to the three-step-model by Lewin and elaborated on the events within the different phases of the change, which included both monologues and dialogues. We stressed the importance of both monologic and dialogic communication and outlined the challenges when employees are actively affected by the change process. According to our empirical findings, when communicating the change, the transmitter-receiver-model took place between multiple transmitters and receivers within the organization. In this process, we identified various problems that influenced the communication process. One main challenge is to consider how the employees understand and make sense of it. Thus, we developed the communication-value-matrix in which we combined the understanding of communication and the perceived value of the change. Here, we identified four different 'ideal types' of sensemaking: lions, donkeys, blind chickens, and foxes. Further, we applied this model to our findings and reflected on it critically.

6. Conclusion

Our research set out to examine employees' awareness within a planned organizational change process. This was done through a case study in a consulting company, in which the implementation process of an IT-tool was subject to our investigation. Our research process centered around our generic question, which aimed to analyze the process perspective on a planned organizational change. Since the planned change approach is subject to criticism, we specifically aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the influence of communication in a broad organizational context. An interpretative, process-oriented perspective was used throughout the research, with the purpose of gaining insights into the understandings and interpretations of employees and their respective awareness. This was achieved through a qualitative research approach that reflected an abductive process by moving back-and-forth between theoretical and empirical findings. Overall, we instead contribute to existing research in the organizational change field and do not fill a research gap. In this chapter, we summarize the main findings and address their implications for theoretical and practical research about organizational change. We conclude this chapter by reflecting on our research process, discuss limitations, and outline suggestions for future research directions.

6.1. Main Findings

Within the next paragraphs, we conclude our main findings. Therefore, we start with our first research question regarding the influence of communication within change processes. In the second part, we come back to our second research question about the employees' understanding and sensemaking.

6.1.1. The Importance of Communication

Through studying a planned organizational change by taking on a process perspective, our findings illustrate the influence of communication when implementing a change project. The results of our first research question on *the influence of the communication process within a planned change project* are as follows: To start, we found that communication plays a crucial role in the change process as it takes place every time and is ubiquitous. Furthermore, we identified communication as the main instrument to foster the employees' involvement, to demonstrate the added value and thus, make them aware of the necessity of the change. This is

especially important when the employees themselves are affected by the change process. Therefore, dialogic communication supports the commitment of the employees and enables them to influence the employees' awareness. It is essential to involve all employees as early as possible in the implementation process. Within our case study, we identified consequences when this is not considered and demonstrated that this influences the communication process and the outcome of the change in a negative way. Thus, the communication strategy must be carefully planned and well-thought-out, as any distribution of information leads to consequences, which can be of negative or positive nature. Besides, the organizational circumstances need to be considered. Consequently, an overall communication strategy is essential but needs to be agile in order to adjust it to the local and individual needs. However, the communication strategy creates space for various employees' interpretations and thus, a process perspective needs to be taken on when implementing a change. The outlined findings confirm previous research and lead us to illustrate the answer to the second research question, which is explained next.

6.1.2. The Employees' Understanding and Sensemaking

Our second research question on *how does the communication process influence the employees' understanding and sensemaking and thus, the outcome of a planned change project* resulted in the following discoveries: Overall, planned change outcomes vary from the anticipated target, since the employees' awareness differ because their understandings and interpretations are of subjective nature. Employees always make sense of every situation and therefore, the understanding and sensemaking is never straightforward but rather interdependent. However, the employees' understanding and sensemaking can be influenced and somehow guided in a particular direction utilizing a good communication strategy. Hereby, the following factors play a crucial role: what is communicated, how is it communicated, when is something communicated, who communicated the message, as well as what are the organizational and individual circumstances. Moreover, through engaging employees in the change, it is more likely to receive greater acceptance, positive awareness, and to facilitate commitment. Correspondingly, we conclude that a planned change process will always lead to subjective interpretations, understandings, and awareness of the involved employees who influence the respective outcome of the change. Overall, we analyzed that a communication process is useful to assess the employees' understandings and interpretations through listening to what they are saying and by taking care of how they are talking about the change. These outlined findings

confirm existing literature. Additionally, we developed the communication-value-matrix to contribute to previous research. Our identified matrix offers an in-depth understanding of the investigation of the connection between communication and the perceived value. Therefore, we analyzed four different 'ideal types' of sensemaking, which is outlined in the next section.

6.2. Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

In alignment with our main findings, we now suggest theoretical contributions and practical implications. The theoretical contributions outline, based on existing assumptions by other researchers, how the empirical data on organizational change can be institutionalized, and how it contributes to the development of research. Whereas practical implications advise companies such as Valcom on how to improve planned change efforts via the practical findings obtained.

6.2.1. Theorizing about Planned Organizational Change

This study illustrates how the communication strategy within a planned change process can influence the employees' understandings and interpretations and thus, how it shapes the outcome of the change work. Due to criticism of the planned change approach, lacking to consider the organizational context, we aimed to take on a process perspective on a planned organizational change (Dawson & Andriopoulos, 2017; Heracleous & Langham, 1996). Extensive research has been conducted on planned organizational change and communication in general, but relatively little research has been done on the influence of communication when taking on a process perspective to a planned organizational change (Sveningsson & Sörgärde, 2020). While the literature on change advices multiple models and influencing factors, which need to be taken into account when initiating change, executing these advices in practice is challenging. Thus, we found an unexpected outcome of a change project in an initial interview with our company supervisor. This led us to the questions how it was possible that some employees did not perceived the value of the change and others did not know that the change process took place. We identified this as a mystery and thus, aimed to contribute to existing research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). Moreover, by investigating the employees' understandings and interpretations during a planned change approach while focusing on the influence of the communication process, we aspired to understand how the mystery arose. By conducting an in-depth qualitative case study within Valcom Germany, we identified communication as an influencing factor of the employees' understandings and interpretations. Our study allows us to provide "freshness" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.548) to already existing

literature on organizational change. Hence, we developed the communication-value-matrix, which refines the understanding of how the communication process influences planned organizational changes. This matrix is applicable to assess employees' awareness throughout the implementation phase of the change project. It helps explaining various challenges that occur between transmitters and receivers and influence the coding and decoding process of messages. Thereby, we particularly focus on the influence of perceptual filters and noises within conversations. Since communication is omnipresent, the employees' understanding and sensemaking can change and thus, the matrix needs to be regarded as a dynamic model. Based on our main findings and our contribution to the literature, we have derived practical implications on which we elaborate next.

6.2.2. Working with a Planned Organizational Change

Throughout our study, primarily through the outline of our result, we illustrate practical implications specifically for Valcom Germany but also for organizations in general. When realizing that planned change approaches are not as straightforward and linear as often presented in the literature, we recommend viewing a planned change process through a realistic lens. This means to use the change plan as a guidance for the implementation of the change rather than a step-by-step plan that needs to be followed. Hence, we suggest applying the communication-value-matrix continuously throughout the change process by requesting feedback from employees, to be able to assign them to one of the four quadrants and thus, to derive countermeasures. Knowing to which quadrant the employees can be classified allows the change initiator to respond to the needs of the employees to illustrate the added value more precisely. We suggest that *blind chickens* and *donkeys* need to get further communication measures to increase their identification of the IT-tool's perceived value and accordingly, their willingness to use it. Besides, *foxes* should receive additional communication measures and greater involvement to increase their willingness to work with the IT-tool and to review their previously identified added value of the change. Lastly, we suggest applying *lions* as change agents or involve them in the project team to execute communication measures and thus, to convince their colleagues of the IT-tool.

Overall, we suggest including further factors: First, different communication measures need to be transparently communicated to avoid that employees create a feeling of confusion and/or misunderstanding. Second, it would have been helpful if the IT-tools which replaced Workday would not have been accessible for employees anymore. This would have fostered

the employees to execute their tasks within Workday and further would have prevented the employees from remaining to work with the previous SAP-tools. Third, the employees who were not active in the organization at the time of the implementation, such as employees who were on maternity leave, need to receive the information and workshops after they return to work. Finally, we suggest executing especially the online seminars with fewer participants to enable them to ask questions and to respond to their individual needs. Within the next section, we are referring back to the limitations of our research, which were already shortly mentioned in our methodology, and outline suggestions for future research.

6.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Overall, our study provides in-depth insights into the employees' understandings and interpretations of a planned organizational change process, in particular, how the communication process influenced their sensemaking. Thus, we complemented the literature on planned organizational change and the concept of communication. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that our study does not come without limitations or that our data offered greater possibilities for further interpretations, which we could not consider due to the limited thesis extent.

The first aspect is the general scope of the thesis. Scope here refers to the limited resources which were at our disposal. We have merely been able to interview some employees, which means that a large number of participants would have provided a more substantiated result. Since the IT-tool under investigation was implemented across the globe, it would have been interesting to investigate how employees within other countries understood and interpreted the planned change process as well as the IT-tool itself. Besides, we only focused on the advisory line of service and thus, the research could be expanded to all three lines of services.

Furthermore, the timeframe of our research presents a second limitation. We conducted research after the IT-tool was already implemented. To gain insights into the employees' understandings throughout the different phases of the change process and further, how their understanding changed, a longitudinal study would have been more suitable. This would have allowed us to conduct interviews and observe situations at different phases, for example after the global design or after the online and face-to-face workshops, before the IT-tool was launched.

The third aspect of limitations is that we only conducted research within one organization. Mainly to conduct in-depth research within one organization and specifically within one

particular planned change process with the aim to gain insights into their employees' understandings and interpretations. We interviewed employees from different locations and departments within Germany to ensure diversity. Nevertheless, the outcome of a planned change process varies as it depends on the organization itself. Therefore, it would have been useful to investigate a similar planned change project in another organization to be able to compare the outcomes and to present a fundamental contribution to existing research.

Fourth, we suggest investigating in more influential factors of planned organizational change processes. Within our study, we only focus on the influence of communication to remain in-depth in the analysis of the understandings and interpretations of employees. However, other influencing factors, such as organizational culture, organizational identity, organizational structure, the role of leadership, or power dynamics, would have been interesting to investigate in a planned organizational change process.

Finally, our developed matrix is a simplified model of a communication process that needs further research. It is essential to apply the matrix to other planned change approaches within various organizations to confirm or adjust the model. Besides, the organizational context needs to be considered in further research when applying the communication-value-matrix. Thereby, it can be tested if the model is substantiated theoretically.

Reference List

Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond Neopositivists, Romantics, and Localists: A Reflexive Approach to Interviews in Organizational Research, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 13–33, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 18 March 2020]

Alvesson, M. (2004). Knowledge Work and Knowledge-Intensive Firms [e-book], Oxford: Oxford University Press

Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2007a). Constructing Mystery: Empirical Matters in Theory Development, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 1265–1281, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 20 March 2020]

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating Research Questions Through Problematization, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 247–271, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 28 March 2020]

Alvesson, M., & Sköldberg, K. (2018). Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research, 3rd edn, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2016). Changing Organizational Culture: Cultural Change Work in Progress, 2nd edn, New York: Routledge

Balogun, J. (2006). Managing Change: Steering a Course between Intended Strategies and Unanticipated Outcomes, *Long Range Planning*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 29–49, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 5 April 2020]

Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2004). Organizational Restructuring and Middle Manager Sensemaking, *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 523–549, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 19 March 2020]

Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2005a). From Intended Strategies to Unintended Outcomes: The Impact of Change Recipient Sensemaking, *Organization Studies*, vol. 26, no. 11, pp. 1573–1601, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 26 March 2020]

Benbasat, I., Goldstein, D. K., & Mead, M. (1987). The Case Research Strategy in Studies of Information Systems, *MIS Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 369–386, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 16 March 2020]

Boeije, H. (2010). Analysis in Qualitative Research, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method, *Qualitative Research Journal (RMIT Training Pty Ltd trading as RMIT Publishing)*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 27–40, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 16 March 2020]

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational Learning and Communities-of-Practice: Toward a Unified View of Working, Learning, and Innovation, *Organization Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 40–57, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 28 March 2020]

Bruch, H., & Menges, J. I. (2010). The Acceleration TRAP, *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 88, no. 4, pp. 80–86, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 25 March 2020]

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). Business Research Methods, 4th edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Buick, F., Blackman, D., & Johnson, S. (2018). Enabling Middle Managers as Change Agents: Why Organisational Support Needs to Change, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 77, no. 2, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 4 April 2020]

Burnes, B. (2004). Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organisational Dynamics, 4th edn, Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall

Child, J. (2005). Organization: Contemporary Principles and Practice, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd

Collins, D. (1998). Organisational Change: Sociological Perspectives, London: Taylor & Francis Ltd.

Dawson, P. (2003). Understanding Organizational Change: The Contemporary Experience of People at Work, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Dawson, P., & Andriopoulos, C. (2017). Managing Change, Creativity and Innovation, 3rd edn, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., Jackson, P. R., & Jaspersen, L. J. (2018). Management & Business Research, 6th edn, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Easton, G. (2010). Critical Realism in Case Study Research, *Industrial Marketing Management*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 118–128, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 27 March 2020]

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 532–550, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 28 March 2020]

Endsley, M. R. (2015). Situation Awareness Misconceptions and Misunderstandings, *Journal of Cognitive Engineering and Decision Making*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 4–32, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 22 March 2020]

Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W. (1994). Logics of Identity, Contradiction, and Attraction in Change, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 756–785, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 2 April 2020]

Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W. (1995). The Role of Conversations in Producing Intentional Change in Organizations, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 541–570, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 2 April 2020]

Glaser, B. G. (1999). The Future of Grounded Theory, *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 9, no. 6, pp. 836–845, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 7 April 2020]

Habermas, J. (1972). Knowledge and Human Interests, Boston: Beacon P.

Harper, G. R., & Utley, D. R. (2001). Organizational Culture and Successful Information Technology Implementation, *Engineering Management Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 11–15, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 3 April 2020]

Heath, H., & Cowley, S. (2004). Developing a Grounded Theory Approach: A Comparison of Glaser and Strauss, *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 141–150, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 1 April 2020]

Heracleous, L., & Langham, B. (1996). Strategic Change and Organizational Culture at Hay Management Consultants, *Long Range Planning: International Journal of Strategic Management*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 485–494, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 3 April 2020]

Isabella, L. A. (1990). Evolving Interpretations as a Change Unfolds: How Managers Construe Key Organizational Events, *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 7–41, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 1 April 2020]

Jabri, M., Adrian, A. D., & Boje, D. (2008). Reconsidering the Role of Conversations in Change Communication: A Contribution Based on Bakhtin, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 21, no. 6, pp. 667–685, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 4 April 2020]

Khuong, L.-N., Harindranath, G., & Dyerson, R. (2014). Understanding Knowledge Management Software-Organisation Misalignments from an Institutional Perspective: A Case Study of a Global IT-Management Consultancy Firm, *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 226–247, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 28 March 2020]

Kilskar, S. S., Danielsen, B.-E., & Johnsen, S. O. (2020). Sensemaking in Critical Situations and in Relation to Resilience – A Review, *ASCE-ASME Journal of Risk and Uncertainty in Engineering Systems, Part B: Mechanical Engineering*, vol. 6, no. 1, p.010801–010801-10, Available online: https://asmedigitalcollection.asme.org/risk/article/doi/10.1115/1.4044789/975491/Sensemaking-in-Critical-Situations-and-in-Relation [Accessed 18 March 2020]

King, N., & Brooks, J. M. (2017). Template Analysis for Business and Management Students [e-book], London: Sage Publications Ltd., Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 19 April 2020]

Knapp, M. L., Hall, J. A., & Horgan, T. G. (2013). Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction, Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, Available online: https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=rWoWAAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Knapp,+M.+L.,+Hall,+J.+A.+%26+Horgan,+T.+G.+(2013).+Nonverbal+Communication+in+Human+Interaction,+8th+edn,+Boston:+Cengage+Learning&ots=4RwuSUmRhv&sig=vbniANzCw5DNjdItUwfVb4a4B7k#v=onepage&q&f=false [Accessed 15 March 2020]

Kotter, J. P. (2012a). Leading Change [e-book], Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 10 April 2020]

Kotter, J. P. (2012b). ACCELERATE! (Cover Story), *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 90, no. 11, pp. 44–58, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 25 March 2020]

Legris, P., & Collerette, P. (2006). A Roadmap for IT Project Implementation: Integrating Stakeholders and Change Management Issues, *Project Management Journal*, vol. 37, no. 5, pp. 64–75, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 10 April 2020]

Lengel, R. H., & Daft, R. L. (1988). The Selection of Communication Media as an Executive Skill, *The Academy of Management Executive (1987-1989)*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 225–232, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 5 April 2020]

Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in Group Dynamics: Concept, Method and Reality in Social Science; Social Equilibria and Social Change, *Human Relations*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 5–41, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 2 April 2020]

Lockett, A., Currie, G., Finn, R., Martin, G., & Waring, J. (2014). The Influence of Social Position on Sensemaking about Organizational Change, *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 1102-1129, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 7 April 2020]

Lyytinen, K. J., & Klein, H. K. (1985). 12 The Critical Theory of Juergen Habermas as a Basis for a Theory of Information Systems, *Research Methods in Information Systems*, pp. 207–226, Available online: https://ifipwg82.org/sites/ifipwg82.org/files/Lyytinen.pdf [Accessed 17 April 2020]

McLuhan, M. (1964). Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Mills, J. H. (2003). Making Sense of Organizational Change [e-book], London: Routledge, Available Online: https://books.google.tg/books?id=uoO6lwfxsK4C&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [Accessed 5 April 2020]

Mintzberg, H., & Westley, F. (1992). Cycles of Organizational Change, *Strategic Management Journal (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)*, vol. 13, no. S2, pp. 39–59, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 28 March 2020]

Nelson, T., & Coxhead, H. (1997). Increasing the Probability of Re-Engineering/Culture Change Success Through Effective Internal Communication, *Strategic Change*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 29–48, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 25 March 2020]

Palmer, I., Dunford, R., & Buchanan, D. A. (2017). Managing Organizational Change: A Multiple Perspectives Approach, 3rd edn, New York: McGraw-Hill Education

Prasad, P. (2018). Crafting Qualitative Research: Beyond Positivist Traditions, 2nd edn, New York: Routledge

Rafferty, A. E., Jimmieson, N. L., & Armenakis, A. A. (2013). Change Readiness: A Multilevel Review, *Journal of Management*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 110–135, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 23 March 2020]

Rennstam, J., & Wästerfors, D. (2018). Analyze! Crafting Your Data in Qualitative Research, Lund: Studentlitteratur

Rogers, E. M. (2003). Diffusion of Innovations, 5th edn, New York: Free press

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2012). Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 3rd edn, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

Rouleau, L., & Balogun, J. (2011). Middle Managers, Strategic Sensemaking, and Discursive Competence, *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 953–983, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 27 March 2020]

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to Identify Themes, *Field Methods*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 85–109, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 20 March 2020]

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). Research Methods for Business Students, 5th edn, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited

Schein, E. H. (2010). Organizational Culture and Leadership, 4th edn, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). The Mathematical Theory of Communication, Illinois: University of Illinois Press

Sveningsson, S., & Sörgärde, N. (2020). Managing Change in Organizations, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Todnem By, R. (2005). Organisational Change Management: A Critical Review, *Journal of Change Management*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 369–380, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 16 March 2020]

Tsang, E. W. K. (2014). Case Studies and Generalization in Information Systems Research: A Critical Realist Perspective, *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 174–186, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 13 March 2020]

Tsoukas, H. (1989). The Validity of Idiographic Research Explanations, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 551–561, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 18 March 2020]

Tsoukas, H. (1996). The Firm as a Distributed Knowledge System: A Constructionist Approach, *Strategic Management Journal (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)*, vol. 17, pp. 11–25, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 25 March 2020]

Wahyuni, D. (2012). The Research Design Maze: Understanding Paradigms, Cases, Methods and Methodologies, *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 69–80, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 14 April 2020]

Weick, K. E., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). Organizational Change and Development, *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 361–386, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 4 April 2020]

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking, *Organization Science*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 409–421, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 8 April 2020]

Whelan-Berry, K. S., & Somerville, K. A. (2010). Linking Change Drivers and the Organizational Change Process: A Review and Synthesis, *Journal of Change Management*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 175–193, Available through: LUSEM Library website http://www.lusem.lu.se/library [Accessed 11 April 2020]

Yin, R. K. (2003). Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix

Appendix A - Interview-Questions

Ice-breaker questions:

- How are you?
- Thank you for taking the time for this interview, it will last for approximately 45 minutes.

Introduction:

- Introduction of us.
- We would like to investigate the implementation process of the IT-tool Workday.
- All the empirical material (including your name, company's name) will be anonymized.
- We would like to record this interview to simplify our work – Is this okay for you?
- The audio files will be deleted after our analysis and will not be handed over to third parties.
- We will follow a broad guideline divided into categories:
    - In the beginning we will ask you about your background and your position. If you do not feel comfortable answering these questions, let us know – we will respect it.
    - After this, we will continue with questions about the change process of the IT-tool implementation.

Demographics:

- How did you become the person you are today? (e.g. childhood, academic background)
- Position
    - Job Title
    - Department
    - Job Description
- Years
    - In company
    - In industry

Change / IT-Implementation:

1. How would you describe the IT-tool Workday?
    a. For what do you use it?

Thinking about the implementation phase of Workday

2. Can you remember how it was implemented in 2018? Think about communication, support, guidance and so on.
    a. Communication: How well did you feel informed?
    b. How was the communication around Workday?
    c. By whom were you informed and how?
    d. Did you feel encouraged and supported during the implementation and after?

3. If you think about the completed implementation process - Is there something you would have done or expected differently or in addition?

Thinking about the phase after the implementation of Workday

4. Do you remember your first touchpoints with Workday?
    a. How did you perceive it?
    b. Was it easy to understand and to use? Is it necessary to have specific technical understanding?
    c. Were there any technical issues with the IT-tool itself?

5. Is it beneficial for you to use Workday? - Why / Why not?
    a. Personally & in your work tasks?
    b. Which responsibilities or roles do you have in relation to Workday?

Final**:**

6. Is there anything we have not covered/ that you would like us to know?

Thank you for your participation in this interview.

Appendix B: Background information about interviewees

Sara is employed as a senior associate at Valcom for two years until now. As a part of the people and organization team, she is responsible for the implementation of Workday at clients by advising and supporting them in their change process. Besides, she was part of the project team at Valcom and mainly conducted workshops for her co-workers. Before Sara started to work, she studied the bachelor´s degree Business Administration with a focus on international affairs and finished her master´s degree in the program Managing People, Knowledge and Change. Moreover, Sara was our company supervisor for our master thesis.

Lisa works as a manager at Valcom and is responsible for internal transformation projects. She studied communication science in her bachelor´s degree. Afterward, Lisa completed her master´s degree in Literature, Law, and Communication Science. Before starting to work at Valcom five years ago, she worked in the music entertainment industry for four years. Furthermore, while Workday was implemented at Valcom, Lisa was on maternity leave.

Anna is employed as a manager at Valcom for two and a half years until now. As a consultant, she is part of the digital consulting and change management team and thus responsible for rolling out IT-systems at clients. Before she started her professional career, she studied Sociology, Communication Science, and Psychology. After Anna received her diploma, she worked in the field of business development, with a focus on marketing, public relations, communication, and sales within various industries. Anna started working at Valcom as a management consultant in the customer relationship management and then changed her position to the current one.

Peter works as a senior associate at Valcom. He is assigned to the internal HR transformation team, which is focusing on the implementation process of IT-tools related to HR processes, such as Workday. Thus, he also was a member of the project team for the initiation of Workday. Peter started his career as a bank clear and afterward did a bachelor´s degree in International Business. After his studies, he gained experience in the field of HR and HR project management while doing an internship and thereafter started to work at Valcom three years ago.

Rieke is employed as an associate at Valcom for three years until now. She executes mainly strategic related HR topics in the human capital department. Rieke studied Psychology in her bachelor's degree and then moved to England to study the master's program Arts Management with a major in People and Organization. After doing an internship at Valcom, she started her

career within the consultancy. Before she joined her current team, she worked as a management consultant for nearly two years. Besides, in her current position, Rieke is working with partners and business unit leaders within Valcom extensively.

Nikolas works as a senior associate at Valcom. He is assigned to the internal HR transformation team, where he focuses on the connection between HR technology transformations and the people involved. Before Nikolas started working, he did a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management and two master's degrees, one in Strategic Human Resource Management and the second in Business Administration. His vision is to "leave the company in better shape than how he found it before" (Nikolas, 20.03.2020) and therefore started to work as a consultant at Valcom three and a half years ago.

Katharina is employed as a senior associate at Valcom for two years until now. She is part of the people and organization team and responsible for the change management of Workday at clients. Before starting her professional career, Katharina received a bachelor´s degree in Business Administration and a Master´s degree in Human Resource Management. Between her bachelor and master studies, she worked in the field of recruiting and HR marketing in another consultancy. Furthermore, during her master´s degree, she was employed at an insurance company in the people and development department.

Ina works as an assistant manager at Valcom. She studied psychology in her bachelor´s and master´s degree. After she did an internship at Valcom five years ago, she stayed at the company. Today Ina is head of the project team of Workday and is assigned to be the representative for Germany, who joined the global design team in London. After three years, she returned to Berlin and started the implementation process of Workday at Valcom Germany. Together with other employees, they form the project team and are responsible for the implementation process. Besides, Ina serves as a contact person for Workday related questions.