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Perceived Effects of Power Distance on Organizational Change in a Multicultural Organization

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Walden University
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Abstract

Perceived Effects of Power Distance on Organizational Change in a Multicultural

Organization

by

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Master of Science in Organizational Development, United States International

University, 2010

Bachelor of Science in Information Sciences, Moi University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

Organizational change researchers have reported an accelerated rate of change in modern organizations, with as many as 70% of them reportedly failing to deliver expected results. Change management scholars and practitioners have yet to reach consensus on the main contributors to this high rate of failure, despite having evaluated a variety of organizational change success factors. The purpose of this qualitative single case study of a multinational financial organization was to explore the concept of power distance with an aim to increase understanding and general awareness of its perceived effects on the process of an organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. The conceptual framework was based on Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions that differentiates cross-border business in terms of cultural differences. Of the six cultural dimensions, this study focused on the power distance dimension. Data were collected from in-depth telephone interviews with 10 key informants from a multinational financial organization. A six-phase elaborate thematic data analysis was conducted, including: (i) familiarization with data, (ii) descriptive coding, (iii) themes identification, (iv) themes review, (v) themes labelling, and (vi) producing the report. The findings revealed that the cultural aspect of power distance has an impact on the various elements of cross-border organizational change, such as utilization of hierarchy, relationships and interactions, power balance, organizational structure, and change communication. This study will potentially contribute to positive social change by promoting a value-for-money change process in intercountry multicultural organizations through design and implementation of sustainable change programs supported by increased understanding of the power distance aspect of the change process.

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Dedication

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to my lovely daughters, Dr. Donata Kendi, Mitchell Gakii, and Durlinne Karimi for their priceless love and spirited cheerleading at every step of this challenging but rewarding journey. This is for you! To motivate you to pursue excellence in all spheres of your lives. Claim your space!

Acknowledgments

To God be the glory! It is through God's favor and endless grace that my doctoral journey has come to a successful end. Special gratitude to my family for making huge sacrifices including enduring my extended absence just so I could achieve my doctoral dream. Thank you for your selfless support and empathy. I believe this collective effort will be rewarded with joyful moments in the coming days. To my revered accountability team including Moses, Kennedy, Lincoln, Linet, Callista, Donata, Mitchell, and Durlinne, thank you for standing in the gap in myriad ways and for being my emotional anchor throughout this challenging journey.

I am greatly indebted to the Walden University Faculty for their unwavering support throughout the dissertation process. Although it is impossible to thank personally all those who dedicated their time, resources, and knowledge to this study, I wish to express special gratitude to the Chair of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Kenneth Levitt, for his inspiring mentorship and patience throughout the research process. Special gratitude to my second Committee Member, Dr. Stephanie Hoon, and my University Research Reviewer (URR), Dr. Robert Levasseur, for their insightful coaching and relentless support throughout the dissertation journey. Without the support of you all, this doctoral journey would not have been completed. I am forever grateful. God bless you all!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

With as low as 30% of organizational change initiatives deemed successful (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Church & Dawson, 2018), seeking to understand the reasons behind the 70% failure rate has become one of the top priorities among researchers. The organizational change process is a capital-intensive undertaking and becomes even more expensive when two-thirds of the initiatives fail to achieve the expected results. While navigating the different behaviors of change participants in a single country is hard enough, adapting diverse behaviors to different countries' culture is a daunting task. While a blessing in some instances, diversity can present significant challenges to organizational change in cross-border organizations because "when organizational members experience a large-scale organizational change—fraught with uncertainty and equivocality—the pressures to deal with diversity add another layer of complexity to their work" (Kim, 2018, p. 6).

Among other elements of cultural diversity, a successful implementation of organizational change across national boundaries would require a deep understanding and awareness of the cultural aspect of power distance. Moonen (2017) described power distance as the level of acceptance of an uneven distribution of power. In high power distance cultures, people readily accept an unequal distribution of power while those from low power distance cultures strongly oppose inequality in power distribution. Rao and Pearce (2016) emphasized the importance of understanding power distance because power process is a key consideration in the success of critical organizational processes including the organizational change process. A number of researchers have cited a dearth

of literature in diversity and distance-related research (Hutzschenreuter, Kleindienst, & Lange, 2016; Lo, Waters, & Christensen, 2017). This qualitative study helps reduce the gap in literature by increasing understanding and general awareness of the potential influence of power distance on the organizational change process in a multicultural setting.

Background of the Study

Nging and Yazdanifard (2015) defined organizational change as "the transformation of an organization from its current state to its desired future state" (p. 1130) in the quest to remain competitive in the fast-changing environment. With the ensuing rapid organizational change because of increased turbulence in the organizational environment, partly due to increased globalization, change management is gaining prominence among organizational development researchers and practitioners. The authors argued that organizational change keeps an organization competitive and helps it to remain sustainable in a turbulent and competitive environment.

Straatmann, Kohnke, Hattrup, and Mueller (2016) reiterated the importance of diagnostic assessments at every stage of the change management process and proposed a theory-based framework that considers all the elements of management of change, especially the reactions of employees to change. The authors underscored the importance of systematically identifying relationships between factors of management and the specific reactions to the change process. Some of the variables that would affect employees' reaction to change especially in global organizations is power distance. Understanding how power distance influences the outcomes of change initiatives would

help managers of global organizations to design sustainable change programs guided by sound relationships between managers and their subordinates.

Daniels and Greguras (2014) described power distance as a value that differentiates individuals, groups, organizations, and nations based on the degree to which inequalities are accepted in the expression and application of power, and it is one of the five elements described in Hofstede's (1980) framework of cultural values. Hameed Aldulaimi and Saaid Sailan (2012) underscored the importance of cultural values in predicting the behavior of an organization towards a change initiative as it would help change leaders to design appropriate change strategies that would be robust enough to withstand resistance. The authors referenced Hofstede's model, which is a well-known and respected model of cultural classification, in their examination of the influence national values would have on individual readiness and commitment to organizational change. In this regard, the credibility of the findings of this study was high.

Cole, Carter, and Zhang (2013) suggested that organizations should encourage individuals in leadership and supervisory positions to become more aware of teams' power distance preferences, and to the extent the context allows for it, modify and adapt their own behaviors to better match the values shared by their subordinates. Awareness of power distance preferences is even more critical when there is turbulence in an organization undergoing change. There is significant need for studies that provide an analytical framework of the cultural elements that influence an organization's commitment and willingness to change in a multicultural environment. This framework can guide the change agents in developing a strategic approach that balances the national

culture of the host country and those of other countries in which the organization operates to improve the outcome of the change program.

Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013) argued that only a few researchers have probed the effects of cultural values on organizational change implemented in an international setting. Most of the studies that have examined the influence of power distance on organizational change have narrowed their scope to national, regional, and continental organizations, and not much attempt has been made to investigate how power distance affects change initiatives in global organizations. For example, Hameed Aldulaimi and Saaid Sailan's (2012) investigation of the influence national values would have on an organization's commitment and readiness for change in view of Hofstede's (1980) elements of cultural values relied on data that were exclusively from Qatar. In such cases, generalization of the findings is not feasible. There is need for further research in which the case study includes other regions and continents to get the larger picture of how cultural dimensions influence organizational change across national cultures in different continents.

Problem Statement

An estimated 70% of all organizational change initiatives fail (Church & Dawson, 2018) despite evidence of proliferation of studies that sought to evaluate factors that drive successful organizational change. This failure rate could be even higher for global organizations where organizational change would take place in an environment with diverse national cultures because "when organizational members experience a large-scale organizational change-fraught with uncertainty and equivocality-the pressures to deal with diversity add another layer of complexity to their work" (Kim, 2018, p. 6). While

navigating the different behaviors of change participants in a single country is hard enough, adapting diverse behaviors to different countries' cultures is a daunting task. Among other elements of cultural diversity, a successful implementation of organizational change across national boundaries would require a deep understanding of the cultural aspect of power distance.

The general problem is that while many of organizational change success factors may have been evaluated, there is evidence in literature that only one-third of organizational change initiatives succeed, and this rate could be lower in global and multicultural organizations. A study by Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012) revealed an accelerated rate of organizational change in modern organizations, and citing a variety of authors, they argued that only one-third of global organizations registered a successful change process. The specific problem is that global and multicultural organizations could continue losing more precious resources to unproductive organizational change initiatives unless a deliberate effort is made to increase understanding and awareness of the effects of the cultural and geographical diversity to change processes, particularly the power distance aspect of diversity.

Despite the increased globalization and proliferation of organizations that have decentralized their operations across national boundaries, several researchers, for example Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) and Lo et al. (2017), argued that only few studies have probed the effects of cultural values, cultural diversity, and cultural distance on organizational change implemented in an international setting. More studies need to be done for a better understanding of some of the factors that influence success of cross-border

organizational change to shield organizations from continued loss of scarce resources to unfruitful capital-intensive change undertaking.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative single case study of a multinational financial organization was to explore the concept of power distance with an aim to increase understanding and general awareness of its perceived effects on the process of an organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. Describing power distance as the level of acceptance of an uneven distribution of power, Moonen (2017) suggested that people from cultures with a high power distance respect hierarchy and authority and readily accept an unequal distribution of power, while those from cultures with a low power distance are quick to question inequality in power distribution and demand to have it equalized. These cultural dynamics of power need to be well understood and well-managed, especially when a multicultural organization is implementing an organizational change initiative.

Research Question

The central research question for this study was:

RQ: What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational change initiative in a global environment?

Conceptual Framework

This section highlights insights from various literature on the concepts related to power distance in relation to organizational change implemented in a global and multicultural environment. It further highlights the linkages and variations across these

concepts as cited by a variety of researchers. Drawing from arguments by renowned authors, Lawrence (2015) argued that organizational change was nonlinear and that organizations would rarely return to their original position after turbulence considering organizations are systems influenced by forces from multiple sources and directions. In a complex system such as in an organization, Lawrence argued, change would arise from interactions within multiple systems and among the different systems, which makes it hard to control. Consequently, it would be advisable to frame an organizational change initiative as a continuous process instead of as a set of intermittent actions.

Describing distance as the degree of differences between two countries (in the international business context), Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) underscored the importance of distance-related research in the realm of global organizations arguing that distance is one of the critical factors that determine the way international business is conducted. Despite the paramount importance of understanding distance in international business, the authors decried the dearth of in-depth research in this subject.

As a result of increased globalization, Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013) observed an increased number of organizations that were operating across national boundaries with multiple subsidiaries across the world and operating with diverse workforce. They provided insights into cultural influence on change communication and highlighted specific factors that need to be considered when planning change communication strategies in transnational settings, including power distance.

Describing culture as one of the landmarks to adaptability and arguing that the capacity and capability to change determines organizational survival, Teng and

Yazdanifard (2015) argued that organizational change is perceived differently across the globe because of diverse cultures. Arif, Zahid, Kashif, and Sindhu (2017) argued that amid rapid globalization, the success of an organization is not only determined by proper usage of resources and broad strategies, but also organizational culture plays an important role in achieving organizational goals.

Nature of the Study

This study followed a qualitative approach and adapted a single case study design to allow participation of the staff of the targeted multinational financial organization in the study in their day-to-day real-life setting (see Yin, 2017). Qualitative case study was deemed most appropriate for the examination of implications of power distance in organizational change because cultural dimensions as advanced by Hofstede (1980) are largely behavioral, and it is not feasible to measure behavioral aspects quantitatively. The unit of analysis was the staff of one of the affiliated agencies of this multinational financial organization the composition of which is largely multicultural.

The choice of a single case study was informed by the understanding that given that the operations of this multinational financial organization take place in a highly multicultural environment with virtual teams dispersed across the globe, it was essential to narrow down the study to a manageable scope in the specific natural setting (see Sarma, 2015). In this regard, therefore, the study focused on the selected agency of this multinational financial organization and was bounded by the massive reorganization of this agency that began in 2014.

The sources of data for this qualitative study were staff in this multinational financial organization's selected agency offices worldwide that were divided into five regions for the purposes of this study: America, Africa, Latin America & Caribbean, Asia & the Pacific, and Europe. Interviewing was the main method of data collection to acquire perspectives of internal individual staff who were purposefully selected to provide specific knowledge on how power distance was managed across multicultural work groups during implementation of a change program in the selected agency of this multinational financial organization. Power distance is a cultural aspect, thus, in examining the implications of power distance on organizational change, most of the views are to do with an individual's experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Power distance varies across cultures and has been described by researchers as a cultural value that reflects the degree to which people accept an unequal distribution of power (Daniels & Greguras, 2014; Janicijevic, 2014; Rao & Pearce, 2016).

Lapan, Quartaroli, and Riemer (2012) suggested that case study research uses description of programs, events, or other phenomena to construct a complete portrayal of a case for interpretation and possible action. Thus, for this qualitative study, the interview questions on power distance were formulated around the implications of power distance on transformative programs in areas of this multinational financial organization's selected agency programs, projects, activities, and leadership styles concerning the reorganization process that began in 2014. The case study design provided an opportunity for in-depth investigation using multiple sources of evidence (see Rose, Spinks, & Canhoto, 2015) from across the selected agency of a multinational financial organization.

As the main mode of data collection for this qualitative dissertation on power distance implications on change initiatives was interviewing, the process of data analysis started with transcription to convert all the interview data into text. Interviewees' responses were recorded in text, which included transcribing those that were captured using digital data capture tools (audio and video devices). Once all the collected data had been transformed into text, text coding was done, mainly using manual coding supplemented with some computer-assisted coding using NVivo software, to manage the data collected through interviews. Coding was directed by the research question and the interview protocol as is advised by Patton (2015).

Definitions

Power distance: "Power distance is a cultural value that reflects the degree to which people accept an unequal distribution of power and which varies across countries and cultures" (Daniels & Greguras, 2014; Moonen, 2017; Rao & Pearce, 2016).

Change agents: "Change agents sponsor, promote, and define the environment for organizational change initiatives, and often play the role of catalysts in persuading their organizations to support the change initiatives" (Klonek, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Kauffeld, 2014; Sonenshein, 2016; Specht, Kuonath, Pachler, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2018).

Cultural distance: "Cultural distance is the degree of difference in cultural values between expatriate's country of origin and that of his/her coworkers' country of origin" (Kossek, Huang, Piszczek, Fleenor, & Ruderman, 2017).

Geographical diversity: "Geographical diversity is the degree to which members of an organization are distributed across the multiple locations" (Kim, 2018).

Assumptions

Assumptions are the preconceived ideas researchers bring into the research without investigating further to confirm their perceived impact on the study. As observed in research, "constructs come preloaded with social, historical, political, and cultural assumptions that anticipate how research problems are framed and solutions formulated" (Wolgemuth, Hicks, & Agosto, 2017, p. 131). Some of the assumptions for this qualitative case study were that there would be easy access to participants and that they would be willing to provide answers to the interview questions. Secondly, it was assumed that the interview questions and documents reviewed were adequate to provide comprehensive evidence to answer the research question. The third assumption was that the research sample was of sufficient size to reach data saturation. Finally, as the key instrument for executing all aspects of this study including data collection, I assumed I would be in good health, have enough financial resources, and could maintain a good work-research balance to complete this study within the stipulated time.

Scope and Delimitations

The unit of analysis was the staff of one of the affiliated agencies of a multinational financial organization the composition of which is largely multicultural. I followed a qualitative approach and adapted a single case study design to allow participation of the staff of this agency in the study in their day-to-day real-life setting (see Yin, 2017). In research, "a case is a unit, entity or a phenomenon with defined boundaries that the researcher can demarcate or fence in, and therefore determine what will or will not be studied" (Gaya & Smith, 2016, p. 533).

To gather a wide range of perspectives on power distance in the context of a multicultural change, the selected Agency X of the multinational financial organization was divided into five regions including America, Africa, Latin America & Caribbean region, Asia & the Pacific region, and Europe. Key informants were drawn from Africa, America, Asia, and Europe. A minimum of 12-16 in-depth interviews were anticipated at the design of the study, but in the end, saturation was achieved after 10 in-depth interviews with key informants. For a well-represented sample and balanced viewpoints on the influence of power distance on the outcome of organizational change, the participants included managers and nonmanagers. Key informants were drawn from four of the five regions and interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved.

Limitations

This study was limited to a single organizational culture as it focused on the selected multinational agency, which is only one of the many multicultural and global institutions that have undergone change. This presented significant implications on the transferability and dependability of the study findings. As a qualitative case study, this research is contextual; thus, the findings are confined to the uniqueness of the phenomenon of power distance in the context of the selected multinational financial organization's organizational change processes (see Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019), which presents a challenge in determining the applicability of the findings in other contexts.

Another limitation was inability to use mixed methods for this study due to time and resource constraints. Mixed methods would potentially have increased the rigor of the study. As argued by Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, and Gonzalez (2018), use of a single

approach, method, and research technique exposed this study to mistakes that would otherwise have been avoided by use of mixed methods. Additionally, I was not able to collect data in different periods of time due to time constraints for this dissertation despite confirmation from Abdalla et al. (2018) that this would have resulted in a richer and more detailed description of the phenomenon of this study. This limited use of the triangulation technique to employing multiple data sources and multimethod analysis of data.

To address the above limitations, triangulation was used and explicit description of the methodology was provided to enable replication by other researchers. Abdalla et al. (2018) described triangulation as a technique that enables the researcher to look at the same phenomenon, or research problem, through multiple data sources. Beyond the perspectives that were gathered through interviews, which was the primary data collection method, additional viewpoints were sought from other sources of data including review of primary documents related to this multinational financial organization's recent change process. However, I was not in a position to use multiple researchers to gather different perspectives that could have significantly improved the validity of the research findings.

As an observer-participant and an interviewer in this qualitative case study, I had a direct interaction with the respondents; thus, every action that I took had consequences for the participants involved in the study. There was risk of potential researcher bias that would not only have compromised objectivity but also adversely impacted the quality of the research findings. I strived to be as transparent as possible about my beliefs and preconceptions to reduce researcher bias, and was equally transparent about the

mitigation strategies against all foreseen biases so as not to influence the research

outcome. From the onset, I practiced reflective awareness and explicitly revealed all

preconceptions and beliefs, both personal and professional, that could have affected this

dissertation study. Reflexivity, as suggested by Teusner (2016), helped me think upon the

context of this dissertation study and my relationship with the participants that would

have affected the dissertation process as well as the subsequent results.

<div align="center">**Significance of the Study**</div>

The aim of this qualitative study was to explore the perceived effects of power

distance on the outcome of organizational change initiatives in global organizations with

a hope to increase understanding and general awareness of this concept.

Significance to Practice

Despite the widespread recognition of the cultural aspect of power—power

distance—as a significant success factor in cross-border organizational change processes,

it has hardly been studied in depth in extant literature. For the few studies that have

examined the concept of power distance in relation to organizational change, there were

always issues with the context, scope, and methodology. Aslam, Muqadas, Imran, and

Saboor (2018) decried the dearth of organizational change studies that consider emerging

organizational parameters choosing to stick to traditional concepts of change, for

example, "resistance, cynicism, politics, injustice, job insecurity, power, stress, anxiety,

fatigue, support, improper information, rewards, influence, commitment and withdrawal"

(p. 1085), which is limiting. This concentration on the most known organizational

concepts has been done at the expense of equally important organizational aspects such as power distance.

While organizational transformation initiative would have been easier to design and implement in a single-country organization, it would be more complex in a multinational organizational context as change managers have to grapple with a diversity of priorities, expectations, social concerns, and perceptions that differ across borders. Yet, as pointed out by Acquier, Carbone, and Moatti (2018), few researchers have attempted to find a solution to the challenge of reconciling global integration and local adaptation during implementation of change processes in international business.

In addition, the findings of a content analysis by Stahl and Tung (2015) revealed a tendency by researchers and authors to emphasize the negative effects of cultural diversity on international business at the expense of its positive contribution. This imbalanced viewpoint, as argued by Stahl, Miska, Lee, and De Luque (2017), has prevented organizations from fully understanding the factors and processes that organizations should adopt to reap optimal benefits from cultural diversity in designing and implementing its various programs. This is a potential source of bias, hence the need for more research such as this study on the perceived effects of power distance on organizational change in the context of cultural diversity. Overall, this qualitative study helps reduce the gap in literature by increasing understanding and general awareness of the potential influence of power distance on the organizational change process in a multicultural setting.

Significance to Theory

Increased understanding and awareness of the potential influence of power distance on the organizational change process in a multicultural setting could make a significant contribution to the body of management knowledge by providing a framework that may help change managers to better understand this influence on the outcomes of change initiatives in global organizations. This additional knowledge on effective use of power in a change process could contribute significantly to the design and implementation of sustainable change programs that are driven by sound relationships between change managers and their subordinates.

Significance to Social Change

This case study will potentially contribute to positive social change by promoting a value-for-money change process in intercountry multicultural organizations through design and implementation of sustainable change programs that are supported by increased understanding of the power aspect of the change process. This value-for-money culture could result into a more cost-effective change process and reduce unnecessary wastage of resources on unproductive change processes. The organization could use the salvaged resources to produce additional or improve production of goods and services for better livelihoods of their constituent societies.

<div align="center">

Summary and Transition

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The organizational change process is a capital-intensive undertaking and becomes even more expensive when two-thirds of the initiatives fail to achieve the expected results. While navigating the different behaviors of change participants in a single

country is hard enough, it is even harder adapting these diverse behaviors to different countries' cultures. With as low as 30% of organizational change initiatives deemed successful (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Church & Dawson, 2018), seeking to understand the reasons behind the 70% failure rate has become one of the top priorities among researchers. This is particularly critical in transnational organizations that operate in contexts that are characterized by geographical and cultural diversity.

Among other elements of cultural diversity, a successful implementation of organizational change across national boundaries would require a good understanding of the concept of power distance. Rao and Pearce (2016) emphasized the importance of understanding power distance because how power is used is a key consideration in the success of critical organizational processes including the organizational change process. Describing distance as the degree of differences between two countries (in the international business context), Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) underscored the importance of distance-related research in the realm of global organizations arguing that distance is one of the critical factors that determine the way international business is conducted. Despite this paramount importance, the authors decried the dearth of in-depth research in this subject.

The importance of culture cannot be overemphasized, particularly in global and multicultural organizations during organizational change. Describing culture as one of the landmarks to adaptability, Teng and Yazdanifard (2015) argued that organizational change is perceived differently across the globe because of diverse cultures. This qualitative study helps reduce the gap in literature on cross-border cultural diversity and

distance-related research by increasing understanding and general awareness of the potential influence of power distance on the organizational change process in a multicultural setting.

The literature review in Chapter 2 has covered in detail the various concepts related to power distance in relation to organizational change implemented in a global and multicultural environment, including cultural diversity, geographical diversity, organizational change, change management, and change agents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Parry, Kirsch, Carey, and Shaw (2014) described change as one of the core

competencies of the 21st century organization, while Chen, Yang, Dou, and Wang (2018)

described it as a factor of strategic importance that influences an organization's

performance by enhancing adaptability. Yet, there are several claims that an estimated 70%

of all organizational change initiatives fail (Church & Dawson, 2018) despite evidence of a

proliferation of studies in which researchers seek to evaluate factors that drive successful

organizational change. This could be worse for global organizations owing partly to the

complexity that may arise from the cultural and geographical diversity in which they

operate. A study by Shin et al. (2012) revealed an accelerated rate of organizational change,

and citing a variety of authors, they argued that most of the organizational changes failed

with only one-third of global organizations registering change success.

In global and multicultural organizations, this low change success rate could

translate into continued loss of precious resources to unproductive change initiatives

unless a deliberate effort is made to increase awareness and knowledge of the effects of

culture-related and geographical diversity to change processes, particularly the power

distance aspect of diversity. Despite proliferation of organizations that have decentralized

their operations across national boundaries, Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013)

argued that only few studies have probed the effects of cultural values on organizational

change implemented in an international setting. The purpose of this qualitative single

case study of a multinational financial organization was to explore the perceived effects

of power distance on organizational change initiative in a global and multicultural

environment with an aim to increase understanding and general awareness of this concept in the said context.

Literature Search Strategy

Considering the significance of literature review, the diversity of its purpose, and the complexity of its development, especially in a rigorous dissertation process, I endeavored to remain focused and highly structured in my literature review approach. Literature review forms the heart of every research as it sets the basis for identification of research gaps and guides researchers towards making relevant contribution to the body of knowledge in their respective research areas. Serra (2015) described literature review as the foundation of the whole article that serves a critical role of shaping the author's conceptual model and propositions. As an important component of this dissertation, I approached literature review as a process that required well-crafted strategies that were backed up by elaborate and realistic mitigation plans.

For this literature review process, I followed the six steps suggested by Machi and McEvoy (2016) including (a) select a topic, (b) develop the tools of argument, (c) search the literature, (d) survey the literature, (e) critique the literature, and (f) write the literature. In acknowledging the complexity of developing a successful literature review, Machi and McEvoy (2016) suggested use of diverse skills and tools to guide the researcher through the critical steps of identifying a research topic, organizing, arguing, and writing the review.

I engaged in continuous literature search and mainly targeted peer-reviewed journal articles as the primary source of information. However, to build the background of this study and get clear insights on the methodology, a few secondary sources of information

were considered including those on case study design by Yin (2017) and those on

qualitative research and evaluation methods by Patton (2015). However, the latter was kept

to the minimum. This approach of continuous review and critique was informed by the

understanding that the dissertation process is not a one-off event that requires one-off

reading; rather, it is a discovery process that requires continuous researching.

To get the most relevant literature for this study, I tried as much as possible to

widen the scope of the sources of literature. I not only relied on what I got from the

Walden library, but I also visited other libraries including in my workplace and reached

out to my dissertation committee, faculty, classmates, and external peers for suggestions

on other sources of literature relevant to the study topic. Although occasionally I cited an

old publication, I endeavored to search for peer-reviewed articles published not more

than 5 years ago except in cases where I had developed annotated bibliographies on older

articles provided by my instructor. This practice was driven by the belief that using recent

articles would give more credibility to the dissertation findings. Knowledge becomes

obsolete very fast, and the knowledge that was useful 10 years ago may not be useful in

the current context. In addition, the world of management is changing fast, and

knowledge that could support certain arguments 10 years ago may not remain relevant in

the current management discourse.

I searched several databases focusing mainly on business and management;

Walden Library had a list of 39 databases under this category. The Business Source

Complete database was particularly comprehensive in hosting not only multidisciplinary

journals but also case studies and many other types of publications including conference

papers and reports. As a scholar-practitioner, I often search the Emerald Insight and Sage Premier for insights in management research. With this dissertation study focusing on global organizations, I benefited from ABI/IMFORM Collection for insights on international business, trends in management practice, and strategies organizations use to remain competitive in cross-border operations. Google Scholar and Library Genesis (LibGen) also provided useful resources whenever I could not find current literature related to this dissertation in the other databases. For wider results, I often searched multidisciplinary databases and benefited from Academic Search Complete, which was very helpful as my dissertation topic crosses several subject areas.

My search strategy was quite structured and well-informed by the main concepts in the proposed research topic. Apart from using key words drawn from the research topic, I limited my results further by checking the "Scholarly Peer-Reviewed Journals" box as well as limiting the publishing date from 2015 to 2019 to ensure that all the journals cited were peer-reviewed and not older than five years by the time of completion of this study in 2020 as was anticipated. To obtain more precise and relevant search results from the online databases, I used Boolean operators "and", "or", and "not".

The search key words and phrases that I used as related to the main concepts of the proposed research topic included: *power distance*, *transformative leadership*, *organizational change*, *change management*, *change agents*, *multinational organizations*, *globalization*, *international organization*, *organizational development*, *multicultural setting*, *multicultural environment*, *cultural diversity*, *geographical diversity*, *virtual teams*, *multicultural teams*, *models of culture*, and *organizational change models*.

Conceptual Framework

This section highlights insights from various literature on the concepts related to power distance aspects of organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. It further highlights the linkages and variations across these concepts as cited by a variety of researchers. The key concepts that formed the foundation of this study included organizational change, change management, change agents, power distance, multicultural environment, cultural and geographical diversity. Researchers have made efforts to define organizational change capturing its many characteristics, for example:

> A complex, chaotic process that can be managed on an ongoing basis as it unfolds, with interventions and actions based on the current stage and state of the project and aimed at providing ongoing course corrections, steering it towards a successful outcome. (Parry et al., 2014, pp. 101)

From a different pair of lenses, Preget (2013) described change management as a social process involving high levels of ongoing and fragmented interaction with others constituted through language use and interactional practices. Preget argued that discourse shapes organizational change and that conversation, stories, and narratives are very important aspects of the change process.

Drawing from arguments by renowned authors, Lawrence (2015) argued that organizational change was nonlinear and that organizations would rarely return to their original position after turbulence considering organizations are systems that are influenced by forces from multiple sources and directions. In a complex system such as

in an organization, Lawrence argued, change would arise from interactions within multiple systems and among the different systems, which makes it hard to control. It would therefore be advisable to frame an organizational change initiative as a continuous process instead of as a set of intermittent actions.

Altmann and Lee (2015) shared similar views as Lawrence (2015), and they considered organizational change as a two-cycle cyclical process featuring managerial cognition, organizational capabilities, and organizational resources. Using a theoretical model of organizational change that reflected the reciprocal relationship between managerial cognition, organizational capabilities, and organizational resources, they argued that organizational change is achieved through accumulation, combination, and exploitation of various organizational resources, especially those that are considered valuable, scarce, unique, and nonsubstitutable.

As a result of increased globalization, Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013) observed an increased number of organizations that are operating across national boundaries with multiple subsidiaries across the world and operating with diverse workforce. These cross-border operations have increased border-related uncertainties, and as suggested by Caliskan and Isik (2016), this uncertainty is worsened by the increasing competition across borders. With most players in the global organizations operating in a culture other than their own, it complicates organizational practices including organizational change. For example, Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013) suggested significant adjustments to change communication because of cultural influence

when planning change communication strategies in transnational settings. They recommended a comprehensive review of cultural factors such as power distance.

Viewed as the degree to which power and hierarchical interactions are considered critical in some cultures, power distance marks the scope of acceptance of an unequal distribution of power in organizations. Some of the characteristics of a high power distance are extensive use of formal rules as well as highly centralized decision-making structures. Conversely, in low power distance cultures, chains of commands are seldom used (Moonen, 2017). Describing distance as the degree of differences between two countries (in the international business context), Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) underscored the importance of distance-related research in the realm of global organizations, arguing that distance is one of the critical factors that determine the way international business is conducted. Despite this paramount importance of understanding distance in international business, the authors decried the dearth of in-depth research in this subject, including research on power distance.

Describing culture as one of the landmarks to adaptability, and arguing that our capacity and capability to change determine organizational survival, Teng and Yazdanifard (2015) argued that organizational change is perceived differently across the globe because of diverse cultures. Amid the ensuing rapid globalization, the success of an organization is not only determined by proper usage of resources and broad strategies, but also culture (Arif et al., 2017). The importance of culture cannot be overemphasized particularly in global organizations during organizational change. In their longitudinal study aimed at providing insights into human dynamics that influence global

relationships, Siakas and Siakas (2015) reiterated the importance of incorporating cultural knowledge and intelligence on partners' diverse contexts in global transactions because it would bring added value to global partners.

From a variety of research, it is clear there is no one single approach that is sufficient to drive organizational change across organizations as each organization operates in a unique context. Even in global and multicultural organizations, a change process will vary from one organization to another because, even if they are operating from the same external environment, their internal environments vary. Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) argued that each type of organizational change initiative is unique and thus each requires a unique methodology in order to achieve positive outcomes. They urged change managers to align their change initiatives with their organizational context as determined by the type, enablers, and methods of organizational change.

Regardless of the contextual nature of organizational change, there exists two cross-cutting critical success factors including competent change agents and a holistic approach. It does not matter whether change is being implemented in one or multiple countries. Organizational change is a highly political process and change agents play a key role of intermediaries to reduce resistance and encourage their colleagues to adopt new way of doing things. They are expected to frame a predetermined outcome of the change initiative (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Lawrence, 2015). Change agents are "catalysts of organizational development who strategically use a combination of material, discursive, psychological and ethical resources available to them to build alliances to

generate organizational transformation along one or more critical dimensions" (Tatli, Nicolopoulou, Özbilgin, Karatas-Ozkan, & Öztürk, 2015, p. 1245).

For organizational change taking place in a multicultural environment, I would add cultural intelligence as a success factor. Sufficient understanding of the cultural aspects of organizational change, including power distance, is critical. Siakas and Siakas (2015) argued that global relationships were especially susceptible to cultural mismatches. These mismatches need to be addressed during the change process to avoid compromising the outcome. For example, citing a number of studies on cultural fit theories, Siakas and Siakas (2015) suggested that cultural fit positively influenced the outcome of cross-border acquisitions and mergers.

To succeed, an organizational change process requires total commitment and buy-in from the organizational leadership. Leaders play a critical role of providing an enabling environment for change in regard to moderating internal and external power balance, controlling the processes of legitimacy, order, authority, and opposition (Soulsby & Clark, 2013). The top management teams should be part of the change leadership team and proactive change agents. Overall, every organization should strive for an integrated approach to organizational change that takes into account the varying organizational structures, systems, strategies, human resources, and change methodology (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Overall, as suggested by Will (2015), evidence of mutual benefits from the change initiative is key to reducing resistance and increasing acceptance to change.

Literature Review

Recent research has revealed growing interest in organizational change and a proliferation of consulting establishments keen on providing advice to organizations on how to design and implement a successful organizational change initiative. This could be an affirmation of the growing recognition of organizational change as a key success factor of an organization just like capital (Cinite & Duxbury, 2018; Packard, 2017). As submitted by Nging and Yazdanifard (2015), organizational change keeps an organization competitive and helps it to remain sustainable in a turbulent and competitive environment. This claim is shared by Parry et al. (2014) who argued that organizations that are capable of successfully designing and implementing a change process have an edge over their competitors. After all, organizations do not operate in a vacuum. Their very existence and survival are affected by not only their internal capabilities, but also the events in their external environment, politically, economically, socially, culturally, technologically and legally.

Citing credible empirical research, Sikdar and Payyazhi (2014) described business process reengineering as one of the most critical processes of management, which creates sustainable competitive advantage and delivers business success. Business process reengineering and other types of organizational change processes help an organization to adapt to the rapidly changing organizational environment. Ability to change determines the survival of an organization in the current turbulent environment. Researchers have argued that "in dynamic environments characterized by change, uncertainty and ambiguity, the future of organizations that fail to sense environmental change and to

conceive and implement internal changes in strategies, systems, procedures and structures in response to these changes, seems rather bleak" (Lofquist & Lines, 2017, p. 417). Change is not a mere option but a necessity for an organization's survival, and as argued by Daher (2016), innovation is one of the organizational survival's critical factors.

While necessary, change can be brutal, painful, hurting, and in some few instances rewarding, but it is mostly associated with pain. Pointing out that organizational change is usually a product of an organization's external environment as well as its internal capabilities, Bunea, Dinu, and Popescu (2016) contended that organizational change was hard to achieve. This could be attributed to the fact that while an organization may have some control over its internal capabilities, the events and elements in the external environment are largely unpredictable. These are some of the factors that have compelled researchers such as Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) to place the rate of organizational change success at a paltry 30 percent.

In their qualitative study of more than 150 Romanian organizations aimed at understanding the reasons for failure of some of Romanian organizational change processes, Predișcan, Roiban, and Biriescu (2016) argued "that outside environment where organizations operate is becoming more and more unpredictable and the influences manifested by external factors are difficult to estimated" (p. 960), and full of uncertainties. Navigating these external uncertainties with sometimes scarce resources and limited time would significantly delay launch of a much-needed process of change and ultimately compromise its results. Besides the challenge of navigating the organization's environment, Lofquist and Lines (2017 suggested that organizations

lacked sufficient understanding of exactly what capacity for change entails, yet, they need adequate change capacity to succeed in their organizational change endeavors.

This apparent complexity of organizational change process could perhaps explain widespread claims in literature that most organizational change initiatives have failed to deliver expected results. Reflecting on a variety of research consulted for this study, it is seemingly more complex implementing organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. This complexity emanates partly from the cultural and geographical diversity in which global organizations operate (Arif et al., 2017; Janicijevic (2014); Kim, 2018). Caliskan and Isik (2016) observed a growing need for organizations to adapt to the emerging new global world, which is characterized by increasing uncertainty of operating in an international environment with diverse national cultures. Cultural diversity has given rise to a multicultural environment in which there is amalgamation of cultures leading to continuous cross-cultural exchanges (Shahwan, 2016), including during organizational change.

It can never be easy implementing an organizational change process across multiple countries as one has to consider different cultures. While navigating the different behaviors of change participants in a single country is hard enough, it is even harder adapting these diverse behaviors to a different countries' culture. Largely, "national culture has an impact on the way in which an organization changes, and that the matching of national culture and a change strategy will improve the efficiency of the change process" (Janicijevic, 2014, p. 3). Combining different national cultures during change in a global and multicultural organizational change process can be an uphill task. In this

scenario, many factors would have to be examined to explore their influence on the effectiveness of a change strategy including the cultural aspect of power distance. What might appear reasonable power relations between followers and leaders in the host country may be totally unacceptable to the in-coming change participants. Therefore, leaders have an extra burden of reconciling this diversity in addition to implementing the already-complex change process.

While a blessing in some instances, diversity can present significant challenges to organizational change in cross-border organizations. These challenges could emanate partly from the need to adjust an organization's operations to fit the culture of the host country. According to Dalby, Lueg, Nielsen, Pedersen, and omoni (2014), "transferring the business model from the company's home country to a new country is prone to fail" (p. 466), owing to the country-specific differences in culture. It is suggested that "when organizational members experience a large-scale organizational change-fraught with uncertainty and equivocality-the pressures to deal with diversity add another layer of complexity to their work" (Kim, 2018, p. 6).

Rao (2014) concurred with the above argument and suggested that organizational change can be a very intimidating process especially in organizations operating in high cultural diversity environments. Reflecting on works by other researchers, Rao raised concerns about scarcity of studies on dynamics of managing cultural diversity during cross-border organizational change. Yet, in multicultural environments, we would expect more complexity including in terms of resistance to change. Lack of adequate literature

and guidance on the way around this complexity adds to the challenge. This is one of the areas in which this study wishes to make a contribution.

This diversity-related challenge of cross-border change management has raised the curiosity of scholars to dig deep into diversity factors that are most critical during a globalized organizational change effort. Some researchers have proposed strategies that could help to effectively navigate the diversity challenge. While acknowledging the complexity of change describing it as a process fraught with resistance, Tatli et al. (2015) submitted that it requires sustainable and well-resourced programs. Among other essential elements, they proposed inclusion of equality and diversity officers whose main role would be to initiate, promote, and negotiate change. These officers are even more critical during a cross-border organizational change process.

Despite their critical role as drivers of change in diversity-oriented environment, Tatli et al. (2015) lamented that diversity officers and their work have hardly been given consideration in diversity management literature. For an organizational change happening in multiple cultures, I believe the effectiveness of diversity officers would be influenced by among other factors, their power distance orientation.

Among other elements of cultural diversity, a successful implementation of organizational change across national boundaries would require a good understanding of the concept of power distance. Rao and Pearce (2016) emphasized the importance of understanding power distance because how power is used is a key consideration in the success of critical organizational processes including the organizational change process. Power distance varies across cultures and has been described by researchers as a cultural

value that reflects the degree to which people accept an unequal distribution of power (Daniels & Greguras, 2014; Janicijevic, 2014; Rao & Pearce, 2016).

While people from cultures with a high power distance are perceived to respect authority and voluntarily accept an uneven distribution of power, those from cultures with a low power distance are often suspicious of those in authority, are quick to question authority, and would like to be involved in making decisions that affect them (Helpap, 2016; Janicijevic, 2014). Global organizations operate in a highly multicultural environment with virtual teams dispersed across the globe. With these diverse cultures, there are people from cultures with high power distance and others from cultures with low-power distances. These cultural dynamics of power need to be understood and well-managed especially when a multicultural organization is implementing a change initiative.

In a related research, Anand, Vidyarthi, and Rolnicki (2018) reiterated the importance of the concept of distance in shaping interpersonal interactions in organizations, yet it remains one of the least understood constructs. Describing leadership as a process of social influence, Anand et al. (2018) placed distance in the core of leadership effectiveness as it influences the way the followers perceive and react to the attributes, reactions, and behavior of their leader during organizational processes such as organizational change. A good understanding of the power distance orientation inherent in a leader is one of the effective means of understanding leader-follower social distance and its implications on organizational processes. Daniels and Greguras (2014) posit that understanding power distance is especially important in organizational research because

power is fundamental to all relationships, is inherent in hierarchical organizations, and affects many organizational processes and outcomes including organizational change.

Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) underscored the importance of distance-related research in the realm of global organizations arguing that distance is one of the critical factors that determine the way international business is conducted. Describing distance as the degree of differences between two countries (in the international business context), they suggested that these disparities often disrupt the information flow between the organization and its stakeholders, among other challenges of achieving organizational goals in cross-border business. Part of the complexity emanates from the need to reconcile diverse cultures across geographical boundaries. As suggested by Dana, Mukaj, and Vishkurti (2016), when operating in a multicultural environment, foreign organizations have an additional task of comparing their own cultural profiles with the national beliefs, norms and values of the host country. Despite this paramount importance of distance in international business, Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) submitted that there is no in-depth research in this subject.

The above sentiments were echoed by Lo et al. (2017) pointing to a huge gap in literature on transnational culture with an observation that "culture and cross-cultural differences remain under-researched in management and organization studies" (p. 53), in spite of their importance. They argued that researchers, including the academia, have neglected the global essence of business in their research, almost three decades after Hofstede's model of culture was established. To validate their claim on inadequate literature on cultural distance, Lo et al. (2017) cited a literature review by Tsui, Nifadkar,

and Ou (2007) of cross-cultural research by leading management publications over a period of ten years, whose findings revealed that 16 leading management journals yielded only 93 articles on cross-cultural differences. This represents about half an article per each of these journals in a year.

The dearth of literature on cultural distance identified in this study could adversely affect an organizational change process implemented in a global and multicultural environment. There is credible evidence from research that successful organizational change as well as other organizational processes largely depend on the level of cultural fit, among other factors. This is especially important for global organizations where diverse cultures are at play. Disparities exist in management practices across cultures (Rao & Pearce, 2016) in alignment with the cultural orientation of the host country.

Therefore, management practices, including organizational change, would be more successful when well-aligned with societal culture. Conversely, as attested by Rao and Pearce (2016), a lack of cultural fit often creates dissonance and frustration in organizational processes. Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013) observed that global organizations were becoming more complex, which has increased demand for change management processes. They proposed an international approach to organizational change, which among other factors, carefully considers the cultural aspect of diversity, that is, power distance.

In support of cultural considerations during organizational change in a global organization, Arif et al. (2017) maintained that the success of any organization is not only

determined by proper usage of resources and broad strategies, but also organizational culture. Globalization has given rise to an organizational culture in which managers are expected to contend with the variations inherent in the diverse manpower owing to workforce diversity because organizations are increasingly recruiting diverse manpower under one roof, presenting different norms and values.

Findings of a study to explore the influence national culture would have on strategies for organizational change suggested a close correlation in that "national culture assumptions and values determine the way in which members of all organizations belonging to a particular national culture will understand the organization itself and, thereby, the adequate way to change it" (Janicijevic, 2014, p. 3). Describing culture as one of the landmarks to adaptability, and arguing that our capacity and capability to change determine organizational survival, Teng and Yazdanifard (2015) argued that organizational change is perceived differently across the globe because of diverse cultures.

With the rise of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) for instance, China has become a significant destination for European companies considering cross-border mergers and acquisitions. People from the European companies entering into China markets, for example, have to adapt to the Chinese high power distance culture (Chen, Werle, & Moser, 2016), while most of them originate from low power distance cultures. With the proliferation of interorganizational alliances as organizations struggle to beat rising competition, there has been a rise in international businesses. Successful creation of these alliances requires effective negotiations. Among the factors that determine success or failure of these cross-border negotiations, power distance has been identified

as one key factor. Therefore, there is need for increased awareness and knowledge on power distance in the context of organizational change.

Malik and Yazar (2016) cited several researchers who have argued that cultural distance, including that related to power, significantly complicates the negotiation process during formation of an international alliance. Chen et al. (2016) blamed this challenge on the unfamiliarity of foreign countries with the host country's distinctive business, socio-cultural, regulatory and legal environment. Although there a is good number of researches on the way culture influences performance of acquisitions and mergers, there is seldom any research on the exact role of power distance on transnational mergers and acquisitions. Yet, as argued by Chen et al. (2016), culture has a huge impact on cross-border acquisitions and mergers.

In their qualitative case study of ASICS, a Japan-headquartered multinational corporation, Acquier et al. (2018) sought to learn how multinational companies were achieving integration in global corporate social responsibility (CSR) and local adaptation of CSR. Their findings revealed major differences in CSR approaches between the headquarters in Japan and the subsidiary in Europe, with the European subsidiary having no other choice but to combine different institutional approaches and adapting it into a new form to fit its operating context, which is far different from the Japanese context geographically, economically, socially, and culturally. While organizational transformation through such a CSR initiative would have been easy to design and implement in a single-country organization, this study revealed that it would be more complex in a multinational organizational context as change managers have to grapple

with a diversity of priorities, expectations, social concerns, and perceptions that differ across borders. Yet, as pointed out by Acquier et al. (2018), hardly any researchers have attempted to find a solution to the challenge of reconciling global integration and local adaptation during implementation of change processes in international business.

In their exploratory study aimed at identifying managerial activities that influence different phases of business process workflow redesign, Sikdar and Payyazhi (2014) concluded that softer aspects such as top management support, project champions, effective change communication, and inter-departmental collaboration are just as important as the business corporate strategy. For a global organization that is undergoing change, the list of these soft aspects of an organizational change process grows to include the cultural aspect of power distance.

The importance of deeper understanding of how power distance would influence the outcome of change process in a global organization cannot be overemphasized. As a cultural value, power distance has profound influence on how different people in an organization react to organizational change. It particularly influences the effectiveness of change leaders who must maintain a good relationship with every member of the change team. As key change agents, change leaders are a critical resource during organizational change process with their main role being to frame a predetermined outcome of the change initiative (Lawrence, 2015). Change agents' role becomes more complex in global organizations where they have to contend with cultures other than their own.

During an organizational change process, Soulsby and Clark (2013) described the role of senior management as one to provide an enabling environment for change in

regard to moderating internal and external power balance, controlling the processes of legitimacy, order, authority, and opposition. Owing to this recognition of balance of power as a key ingredient for successful organizational change, it is imperative that change leaders fully understand all aspects of power including power distance.

In their study to examine the effect of transformational leadership behavior on followers' affective commitment to change, Abrell-Vogel and Rowold (2014) suggested that leaders' behavior plays a critical role in promoting employees' commitment to an organizational change initiative. This view was echoed by Agote, Aramburu, and Lines (2016) who suggested that the reactions of change recipients are key determinant of success and failure of an organizational change initiative. They therefore submitted that leaders' transformational behavior contributes positively to employees' commitment to organizational change. Therefore, there should be harmony between the change leaders and their followers in their perception of power during an organizational change process.

Recognizing every type of organizational change presents significant discomfort to employees, Thakur and Srivastava (2018) placed the critical responsibility of providing the requisite support to employees on the organization's top leaders. Due to the uncertainty that always surrounds organizational change, employees look up to their leaders for direction. "Whenever there is a change, the employees come under the umbrella of uncertainty and here they take the leader's behavior as a reference point" (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018, p. 236). Will (2015) concurred and suggested that change managers can avert resistance to change by triggering self-interest to change among staff.

The quality and amount of communication is also a critical determinant of the outcome of a change initiative. It reflects the relationship between change leaders and change recipients, and depending on its quality, communication can be an enabler or an obstacle to sound organizational change. Managing communication amid turbulence and uncertainty of change is a challenging undertaking. It is very important that factors that determine effectiveness of communication during change are understood clearly. For example, power dynamics between managers and employees could adversely affect the communication process particularly during implementation of a cross-border organizational change because of the influence of power distance. Of all the factors blamed for failure of most of the change initiatives, researchers seem to have consensus "that how well employees understand the change, perceive it as having value, and are provided proper support and guidance during the implementation of the change, influences their ability to perform their critical link function to successful implementation" (Parsells, 2017, p. 47).

As a concept based on human interactions, it is even more challenging managing a communication process during organizational change in a global and multicultural organizations. In this setting, you are not only dealing with the complexity of human interactions, turbulence and uncertainty, but also with several other factors including cultural diversity and power distance. The findings of an experimental study to explore the influence communications had on commitment and resistance to change among German employees who were lower in hierarchy revealed that "employees were more likely to commit to the change vision when the leader's communication approach met the

employees' expectations regarding their power distance orientation" (Helpap, 2016, p. 5). This is a critical finding because as pointed out by Parsells (2017), employees are key interface between the organization and its goals, and determine if the outcomes of these goals will be successful, including organizational change goals.

In fact, Beyene, Teklu, and Hailu (2016) suggested that resistance is sensitive to culture and the strategies for addressing resistance have varying outcomes across cultures. For instance, agreements and negotiation are effective strategies to enlist buy-in from those who are likely to resist the proposed change in low power distance societies. On the other hand, manipulation and coercion would work well in high power distance contexts in which leaders possess huge amounts of power and subordinates hardly have a chance to exercise autonomy. It is critical therefore that change managers are fully aware and understand the reasons for their subordinates' motivations to resist change to help them devise effective strategies to overcome resistance because, as Wang (2015) argued, the quality of employees' support determines the success of organizational change. Besides, Gurd and Gao (2016) emphasized the importance of understanding the triggers of resistance to change terming it as challenging and complex.

In related research, Klonek et al. (2014) examined how change agent and recipient behavior dynamically unfolds in interdependent patterns over time. They suggested that the outcome of a change initiative was influenced by the approach with which necessary changes were communicated to the employees whose work lives would be affected by the change. They further argued that the responsibility to communication change lay in the hands of change agents who have a basic role to sponsor and promote change initiatives

in organizations. The type of power distance orientation would likely affect the effectiveness of this communication during an organizational change initiative being implemented in global and multicultural organizations. This is partly because as submitted by Anand et al. (2018), social distance has implications on the degree of closeness, quality of communication, and extent of information sharing between leaders and followers during an organizational process.

During organizational change, employee commitment is a key ingredient for success. This commitment can be achieved only when a sound relationship exists between the employees and management of the organization that is undergoing change. The degree of acceptance of the way power is distributed and exercised would likely be among the factors that determine the health of this relationship. Sharif and Scandura (2014) submitted that organizations needed undivided support from employees during organizational change and suggested that leaders played a central role of providing guidance to employees regarding critical issues related to change. In their argument, Sharif and Scandura (2014) made a strong case for managerial transparency and direct involvement of employees in the change process because, the former reaffirms the leader's ethical nature while the latter increases employees' trust for their leader making it easier for them to voice their views and allowing them greater sense of control.

As change agents, leaders have a significant influence on employees' behavior and reaction during organizational change. Oreg, Bartunek, Lee, and Do (2018) have emphasized the importance of focusing attention on employees during the change process considering the growing interest among researchers on the change recipients and their

experiences. Change recipients are no longer passive receivers; thus, it is imperative that their perspectives are fully understood to increase success rate of a change initiative. Yet, as indicated by Cinite and Duxbury (2018), employees' attitude to change often remains unknown to their employers and managers because they may not be necessarily reflected in day-to-day employees' behavior.

It is critical that change leaders have a full understanding of employees' likely reaction to a change process because as observed by Cinite and Duxbury (2018), their attitudes towards an organizational change initiative may range from enthusiastic support to strong resistance. Some of this reaction may be triggered by the degree of power distance between the respective leaders and employees. How close or far the employees may feel from their leaders during a change process will determine if they support or resist it.

Despite the widespread recognition of the cultural aspect of power—power distance—as a significant success factor in cross-border organizational change processes, it has hardly been studied in depth in extant literature. For few studies that have examined the concept of power distance in relation to organizational change, there are always issues with the context, scope and methodology. Aslam et al. (2018) decried the dearth of organizational change studies that take into account emerging organizational parameters choosing to stick to traditional concepts of change, for example, "resistance, cynicism, politics, injustice, job insecurity, power, stress, anxiety, fatigue, support, improper information, rewards, influence, commitment and withdrawal" (p. 1085), which is limiting. This concentration on the most common and known organizational concepts has

been done at the expense of equally important organizational aspects such as power

distance and the related diversity concepts.

Aslam et al. (2018) are concerned about the huge gap in literature on cultural

aspects of change as most organizational change processes seem to be implemented in

developed countries' context, yet, developing countries such as Pakistan thrive in a

culture largely influenced by power distance, collectivism and political influence. While

a number of organizational change studies would have been deemed credible at a glance

for referencing highly respected and well-known Hofstede's model of cultural

classification and examining the concept of power distance, a lot need to be done in terms

of scope and methodology.

In addition, the findings of a content analysis by Stahl and Tung (2015) revealed a

tendency by researchers and authors to emphasize the negative effects of cultural

diversity on international business at the expense of its positive contribution. This

imbalanced viewpoint, as argued by Stahl et al. (2017), has prevented organizations from

fully understanding the factors and processes that organizations should adopt to reap

optimal benefits from cultural diversity in designing and implementing its various

programs. This is a potential source of bias, hence the need for more research such as this

study on the perceived effects of power distance on organizational change in the context

of cultural diversity.

Most of the studies that have examined the influence of power distance on

organizational change have narrowed their scope to national, regional, and continental

organizations, and not much attempt has been made to investigate how power distance

affects change initiatives in global organizations. Others have used a research approach that may not be suitable for a behavioral-oriented study. For example, although a study by Hameed Aldulaimi and Saaid Sailan (2012) revealed a connection between national values and an organization's commitment and readiness for change, the authors used a quantitative approach, which may not be appropriate because cultural dimensions advanced by Hofstede are largely behavioral and it is not feasible to measure behavioral aspects quantitatively. This study also narrowed its scope to public organizations in Qatar, which may not be representative of several national cultures, thus, hard to generalize.

Other studies, such as that by Beyene et al. (2016), used a descriptive case study to investigate the effects of national culture on a transnational and multicultural organizational change initiative. Although part of their methodology allowed collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, numbers used in quantitative approaches may not add much value to the analysis and interpretation of findings from qualitative concepts such as power distance. This too narrowed its scope to the African Union Commission, which may raise questions of ability to draw conclusions and generalize.

From these discussions, it is clear that organizational change process is a complex one. There are so many factors to take into consideration and these become even more diverse for a change process that is taking place in a global and multicultural organization. Parry et al. (2014) reiterated the complexity of an organizational change process attributing it to a variety of internal and external factors some of which change managers have no control over. In addition, the process of change relies heavily on human interactions, which can be very volatile during turbulence and uncertainty. Preget

(2013) described change management as a social process involving high levels of ongoing and fragmented interaction with others constituted through language use and interactional practices. Preget further argued that discourse shapes organizational change and that conversation, stories, and narratives are very important.

Research has also portrayed organizational change as a highly political process whose success depends largely on the level of leadership support, effectiveness of change agents, and quality of interactions between the leaders and the recipients of the outcome of change. Change leaders play a key role of intermediaries to reduce resistance and encourage their colleagues to adopt new ways of doing things (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Lawrence, 2015). The role of change leaders is far more complicated in a global organizational context, and as observed by Acquier et al. (2018), this is especially so for those operating away from their organization's headquarters and thus far from organizational authority. Among other factors, the amount of authority in cross-border organizations is influenced by power difference orientation because as described by Kossek et al. (2017), power distance is an aspect of hierarchy, relationship, leadership, and authority.

The findings of a study by Krause, Filatotchev, and Bruton (2016) to demonstrate the role of customers in influencing CEOs' power revealed a higher recognition of powerful CEO by customers from high power distance contexts than those from societies with low power distance. Thus, a CEO, who is also leading an organizational change process in a country with high power orientation is likely to enjoy higher legitimacy and his/her change suggestions accepted more than those of his/her counterparts in countries with low power distance. This does not however automatically result into successful

change outcomes as it would all depend on the viability of the suggestions. Perhaps the outcome of the suggestions from the powerful change leader would improve with inputs from other people in the organization. This is more possible in low power distance cultures where subordinates often question authority without fear of reprisals. It could be harder in higher power distance cultures where subordinates are expected to accept suggestions from authority without asking questions. In case of the latter, the outcome of a change initiative would risk missing opportunities for improvement with diverse and innovative ideas from subordinates.

Despite the challenges however, organizational change is so critical to organizational success that every organization that is aspiring for sustainability must undertake from time to time. In fact, Teece, Peteraf, and Leih (2016) described organizational agility as an immutable quality and advocated for continuous organizational transformation. This is reiterated by Gao (2018) with a claim that change has become a universal consciousness of the people across all types of organizations. Organizations are increasingly embracing continuous transformation as a powerful stimulant of employee's enthusiasm, a tool for economic improvement, and a potent catalyst for social change. Wang (2015) viewed organizational change as a critical undertaking that promotes optimization of the organizational structure and keeps the organization grounded in the ensuing turbulence and fierce competition.

Almost every organizational change researcher seems to acknowledge the critical role of organizational change as a potent tool for maintaining organizational stability amid the ensuing turbulence in the organizational landscape. Král and Králová (2016)

described adaptation and change as necessary ingredients of an organization's survival, and Heckmann, Steger, and Dowling (2016) described it as a critical factor for organization's success and survival in the ensuing competitive and turbulent organizational environment. As critical as it is however, organizational change is a process fraught with challenges that cannot be ignored.

Owing to its importance therefore, organizations need to do everything possible to achieve positive results from their change initiatives. It is not as easy as it sounds though because several factors affect a change outcome including change implementation method; nature of the change and its complexity; and socio-cultural and behavioral factors such as how people react to the respective change. To sum it all, Beyene et al. (2016) suggested that the outcome of a change initiative is usually influenced by two key factors including the environment in which change is taking place and the nature of the actual implementation process. All these come at a cost and organizations should strive for a cost-effective process.

Summary and Conclusions

A number of themes emerged from the review of literature including the realization that organizational change is very much based on context on which it is being implemented and this contextual nature is reflected in the outcomes of the process. Several studies such as those by Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) and Teng and Yazdanifard (2015) acknowledged the contingency nature of organizational change and called on organizations to consider a unique methodology for each change to ensure close alignment with the respective organization's organizational structure, systems, strategies,

and human resources. A good alignment would increase chances of achieving positive results from the change initiative.

Whether in one country or across multiple countries, organizational change is a highly iterative process that's hardly linear. Drawing from arguments by renowned authors, Lawrence (2015) argued that organizational change was non-linear and that organizations would rarely return to their original position after turbulence considering organizations are systems that are influenced by forces from multiple sources and directions. In a complex system such as in an organization, Lawrence argued, change would arise from interactions within multiple systems and among the different systems, which makes it hard to control. It would therefore be advisable to frame an organizational change initiative as a continuous process instead of as a set of intermittent actions. It is for this reason that Sikdar and Payyazhi (2014) suggested a holistic approach to organizational change to ensure coordination and integration of cross-functional activities across the organization.

Despite the unprecedented growth of global organizations, Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2013) observed that only a few studies focused on change management from an international perspective to investigate how cultural values and norms affect the operation of transnational companies. Yet, the cultural dimensions provided by Hofstede such as individualism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance form and determine the values, attitudes and behavior of a person, and that depending on a high or low level of individualism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance, a culture will hold different value systems.

Diversity of cultural value systems affects the outcome of a change initiative in a global organization. Overall, the selected change strategy is determined by how the organizational leaders and their followers "understand the world around them, the organization, the relations within it, and the ways considered to be suitable and effective for it to undergo change" (Janicijevic, 2014, p. 4). By investigating the perceived effects of power distance on the outcome of organizational change initiatives in global organizations, this qualitative study helps reduce the gap in literature by increasing understanding and general awareness of the potential influence of power distance on the organizational change process in a multicultural setting. It makes significant contribution to the body of management knowledge by providing a framework that may help change managers to better understand this influence on the outcomes of change initiatives in global organizations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative single case study of a multinational financial organization was to explore the perceived effects of power distance on the process of organizational change in a global and multicultural environment with an aim to increase understanding and general awareness of this concept in the said context. Describing power distance as the level of acceptance of an uneven distribution of power, Moonen (2017) suggested that people from cultures with a high power distance respect hierarchy and authority and readily accept an unequal distribution of power, while those from cultures with a low power distance are quick to question inequality in power distribution and demand to have it equalized. These cultural dynamics of power need to be well-understood and well-managed, especially when a multicultural organization is implementing an organizational change process.

Research Design and Rationale

The central research question for this study was:

RQ: What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational change initiative in a global environment?

This study followed a qualitative approach and adapted a single case study design to allow participation of the staff of this multinational financial organization in the study in their day-to-day real-life setting (Yin, 2017). Qualitative case study was deemed most appropriate for the examination of implications of power distance in organizational change because cultural dimensions as advanced by Hofstede (1980) are largely behavioral, and it is not feasible to measure behavioral aspects quantitatively.

The unit of analysis was the staff of one of the affiliated agencies of this multinational financial organization the composition of which is largely multicultural. A case is defined as "a unit, entity or a phenomenon with defined boundaries that the researcher can demarcate or fence in, and therefore determine what will or will not be studied" (Gaya & Smith, 2016, p. 533).

The choice of a single case study was informed by the understanding that given that the operations of this multinational financial organization take place in a highly multicultural environment with virtual teams dispersed across the globe, it was essential to narrow down the study to a manageable scope in the specific natural setting (Sarma, 2015). In this regard, therefore, the study focused on one of the five agencies of this multinational financial organization and was bounded by the massive reorganization of the selected agency that began in 2014.

The characteristics of this study aligned well with Yin's (2017) description of a case study in that it is an empirical inquiry (verified by experiences of this multinational financial organization's staff), it investigates a contemporary phenomenon (agency's organizational change that started in 2014) within its real-life context (multinational financial organization's staff day-to-day experience with the change process) without clear demarcations between the context and the phenomenon (staff engaging in usual work and the change is taking place) in which multiple sources of evidence are used (interviews and documents review).

In their study aimed to critically examine and promote the use of an in-depth single case study design by qualitative researchers, Gaya and Smith (2016) argued that

this kind of design and approach does not only complement research but also provides rich data the analysis of which is in-depth enough to enable deep understanding of issues in their natural life context. Determined to divert the preference of researchers from quantitative to qualitative research, they maintained that a qualitative single case study design offered significant strategic advantages to management researchers. For example, the combined approach has ability to accommodate more dimensions and flexibility while remaining systematic, rigorous and innovative.

The alternative approach I would have considered for this qualitative dissertation study of the implications of power distance on multicultural teams is phenomenology. Phenomenological researchers seek to understand how a group of participants make sense of their lived experiences centering around a common phenomenon, idea, or concept (Mohajan, 2018). Being in a multicultural environment, every team member of the selected agency has lived and experienced power distance, and in this study, each had some perception of its impact, or lack of it, on the outcomes of the agency's recent reorganization. Thus, they would have a lot to share with me and guide me to distil individual experiences to an essential concept of the organizational change perspective of power distance. However, I determined I would be more successful using a case study approach that has more defined boundaries and parameters and thus would be much easier to complete within the constrained timeframes for this academic dissertation.

Although phenomenology would likely have yielded a more comprehensive account of power distance as a phenomenon, a phenomenological design would have made the research too broad and complex, and it would have taken a very long time to

complete. Based on the description by Eddles-Hirsch (2015), a phenomenological study goes beyond mere narration of the lived experience and seeks the core meaning of these experiences through in-depth descriptions and analysis of the phenomenon under study. For this study, therefore, it would have thus meant describing the meaning of the perceptions of several individual staff members of the selected agency about their lived experiences of power distance during the recent organizational change process. As the goal of phenomenology is to express an individual's experiences with a phenomenon in terms of common essence (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015), to focus on what all the participating individuals in this multinational financial organization's agency have in common as they experience power distance during change would be a prodigious undertaking.

Role of the Researcher

Given that this study followed a qualitative approach, as the researcher, I was the key instrument for data collection and for executing all other aspects of this study. Lehnert, Craft, Singh, and Park (2016) described qualitative research as a collaborative and iterative process in which researchers and participants jointly explore the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, qualitative researchers hardly use instruments prepared by other researchers as they themselves are the primary instruments for collecting data from documents, through observations and interviews, and by conducting data analysis (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In this study therefore, I was an observer-participant.

Achieving credibility in qualitative research is therefore a challenge because as suggested by Abdalla et al. (2018), the researcher's own actions are critical to what is produced, particularly regarding ethical integrity considerations during data collection, data

analysis and presentation of results. As an observer-participant and an interviewer in this qualitative case study, I had a direct interaction with the respondents; thus, every action that I took had potential consequences for the participants involved in the study. Consequently, there was risk of researcher bias that would not only have impacted the quality of the research findings but also the respondents. Understandably, the researcher's position in the research process as well as diversity of methods predispose qualitative research to bias.

Considering the potential risks of bias and other researcher interferences that could have compromised the integrity and credibility of the results of this qualitative research, it was imperative that I designed and implemented strategies that could help achieve a significant level of objectivity. I subscribe to Patton's (2015) assertion that all research needs to be credible for it to be useful, and thus I undertook data collection without any preconceived notion. As instructed by Patton, a researcher should be neutral and set out for the study without preconceived theory or predetermined results to prove. I therefore strived to be as neutral as possible.

I also strived to be as transparent as possible about my beliefs and preconceptions to reduce researcher bias, and I was equally transparent about the mitigation strategies against all foreseen biases so as not to influence the research outcome. Abdalla et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of researchers making explicit their beliefs in the research report as these beliefs may influence decisions in the research process including selection of research methods and rationale for selection of one research approach over another. I also discussed personal theories that may not have been confirmed by data and

as much as possible, provided a detailed methodological description of this study to enable the reader to gauge the quality of the data.

Triangulation was used to increase objectivity of the research findings, and a combination of key informant and documents review to corroborate the claims from key informants. Participants were purposefully selected from different tiers of staff in the selected agency to reduce the possibility of bias that could arise from picking key informants from only one level, which might risk receiving a single-sided viewpoint on the perceived effects of power distance in an international setting.

Besides mitigation against bias, there were critical ethical considerations for this research. According to Kara and Pickering (2017), ethical issues related to data collection are receiving interest in ethics literature, perhaps because participant well-being forms the core of formal ethical regulation. Researchers have underscored the critical role of upholding high level of ethics, not only during research interviews, but in all qualitative data collection methods because most or all of the data collection process takes place in a natural setting. Participants are directly involved in the research, and their feelings need to be protected. I endeavored to identify and understand potential ethical issues in the research process including ensuring informed consent, recruitment of participants, extent of confidentiality, gatekeeping, acceptable levels of anonymity, and ethical regulation procedures.

As interviewing was the main method of data collection for this qualitative dissertation, a predesigned interview protocol was used to seek consent for the interviews from potential interviewees and provide critical information on what they should expect from the interview session. Castillo-Montoya (2016) recommended use of a predesigned

interview protocol, which provides the researcher with a plan for the actual interview as well as a means to record information collected during an observation or an interview. A well-constructed interview protocol equips a researcher to "elicit rich, focused meaningful data that capture, to the extent possible, the experiences of participants" (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 812). With a definite plan that also included a predesigned interview protocol, only the information required to answer the research question was collected without burdening the interviewees unnecessarily.

Ethical considerations go beyond acquiring participants' consent and ensuring confidentiality of data. They cut across every aspect of the interaction between the researcher and participants. For instance, for this study, I (a) fully informed participants about the purpose, methods, and intended uses of this dissertation study; (b) ensured research participants were taking part voluntarily; (c) avoided harm to participants at all cost; (d) made the independence of research clear and ensured any conflicts of interest were made explicit as early as possible; and (e) generally ensured integrity, high quality standards, and transparency. I endeavored to be as flexible as possible in preparing to address ethical concerns as the study evolved. I continuously sought guidance from my dissertation chair and committee member on ethical matters that were not clear to me.

Methodology

This section provides a detailed plan that was followed in conducting this qualitative case study and describes in depth key aspects of the research plan related to participants' selection logic, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the research results.

Participant Selection Logic

Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon (2015) defined sampling as "the selection of specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives" (p. 1775), and they submitted that sampling means different things in different research scenarios. For instance, it means "where to go to obtain data" in grounded theory; "choosing informants" in phenomenology; and "selecting cases and data sources" in case study. The study population for this qualitative case study was staff of the selected agency of a multinational financial organization whose composition is largely multicultural. In terms of geographical scope, the study focused on one of the five arms of this organization, whose staff are spread across five regions worldwide including America, Africa, Latin America & Caribbean, Asia & the Pacific, and Europe.

Interviewing was the main method of collecting perspectives of internal individual staff who were purposefully selected to provide specific knowledge on how power distance manifests across multicultural work groups during implementation of a change program in the selected agency of multinational financial organization. Purposeful sampling was an appropriate technique for this qualitative dissertation study, which is a case study, and thus requires in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of this study, that is, power distance. Purposeful sampling enabled selection of cases that were rich in information for a deep and detailed study (Patton, 2015). The sampling technique enabled selection of individuals with in-depth knowledge of the selected agency's recent reorganization process and allowed for in-depth exploration of the perceived effects of power distance on its outcome.

Owing to this in-depth examination, the findings from this case study could be relevant to other global institutions that operate in multicultural environments similar to that of the selected multinational financial organization. While I am optimistic that the conclusions from this study would be suitable for global application, as a qualitative researcher, my intention was to explain, describe and interpret the concept of power distance in the context of its perceived effects on the outcome of an organizational change intervention and not to draw generalizations from the sample to be applied to the population. Ishak and Abu Bakar (2014) described the purpose of a sample in qualitative research as one to illuminate the social life or the phenomenon under investigation. The specific cases, events, or actions collected are meant to expand the researcher's understanding of the respective phenomenon.

A research sample can be described as a smaller collection of units from a population that is studied to determine facts about that population in view of the research topic. Gentles et al. (2015) observed that whereas quantitative research requires sufficiently large sample sizes to produce statistically precise quantitative estimates, qualitative research calls for smaller samples. They argued the reason for smaller sample sizes in qualitative research is that the general aim of sampling in qualitative research is to acquire information that is useful for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon rather than to represent populations as in quantitative research.

Moreover, Boddy (2016) argued that if a sample is very large it will not allow the in-depth, case-oriented analysis that is the core purpose of a qualitative investigation. Although determining the size of a research sample is not as direct in qualitative

investigation as it is in quantitative investigation, for this study, it was prudent to identify

the specific target for data collection to facilitate resources and budget allocation; inform

my proposal to Walden University's review board; and enable me to conduct rigorous

and systematic study (see Guetterman, 2015).

The size of this study sample was guided by the scope of the study, nature of the

research topic and the choice of research design. Blaikie (2018) listed several factors that

determine the required sample size for a study including the problem statement, the

research context and purpose, type of the research questions, participants' characteristics,

nature of the phenomenon being studied, and researcher's level of creativity in managing

the research process. Despite these guiding elements, the research fraternity has made

peace with the complexity around determining what comprises the appropriate sample

size in qualitative investigation because it is contingent to context and the scientific

paradigm the respective research subscribes to (Boddy, 2016). In these circumstances,

researchers have largely relied on evidence from previous research to select a range of the

sample size that might be suitable for their study (Blaikie, 2018).

Researchers have also relied on saturation to determine the sufficient sample size.

Mainly used in grounded theory research, Guetterman (2015) described saturation as the

point at which a qualitative researcher stops seeing new information in the research data

as exhibited in the themes, codes or theory. For this case study, saturation was not the

exclusive indicator of the most appropriate size of the sample because the sample was

determined before data collection. However, only a range of least number of participants

from among managers and nonmanagers was determined before data collection, and interviews were conducted until saturation was achieved.

Boddy (2016) pointed out that the saturation concept would be very useful when conceptualizing the research but would be hardly of any help in determining actual sample sizes before data collection. Despite the impracticability of saturation in this qualitative case study, Boddy (2016) argued that when saturation is reached, there are high chances that some degree of generalization can be drawn from the study results.

For this qualitative single case study, guidance on sample size was borrowed from Boddy's (2016) synthesis of arguments on qualitative sample sizes. For a single organization such as the multinational financial organization that was targeted by this study, Boddy argued that saturation would start becoming evident at six in-depth interviews and certainly evident at 12 in-depth interviews. For this study therefore, a minimum of 12-16 in-depth interviews were anticipated but 10 interviews were conducted by the time saturation was achieved. For a well-represented sample and balanced viewpoints on the influence of power distance on the outcome of organizational change, the participants included managers and nonmanagers. Key informants were drawn from four of the five regions of the targeted multinational financial organization, that is, Africa, America, Asia, and Europe, and interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved.

Participants were involved mainly through interviews that were conducted mainly through telephone. Follow up sessions were conducted through e-mails and telephone as was deemed convenient for the participants. To get divergent views on the subject of

power distance and to gain insights from both the leaders and followers, key informants

were drawn from among managers and nonmanagers.

Table 1

Participants in Staff Categories Across Regions

Staff category	Multinational financial organization region
Managers	America
	Africa
	Latin America & Caribbean
	Asia & the Pacific
	Europe
Nonmanagers	America
	Africa
	Latin America & Caribbean
	Asia & the Pacific
	Europe

Instrumentation

Interviewing was the main method of data collection for this qualitative case

study dissertation to collect perspectives of internal individual staff of a multinational

financial organization's agency on specific knowledge on the perceived effects of power

distance on the agency's change programs. To facilitate the data collection process, data

collection tools suitable for interviewing were developed including the interview

questionnaire, the interview guide, and the interview protocol. The interview guide

provided a snapshot of the interview including my commitment to informed consent,

guiding interview questions, and closing remarks informing participants of the next steps

alongside expressing gratitude for their time and information. Flick (2018) described the

role of an interview guide as one to support the narrative sequence developed by the each

of the interviewees.

A predesigned interview protocol was used to partly seek consent for interview from participants and provide critical information on what they should expect from the interview session. Described as a pre-designed form used to record information collected during an observation or an interview, a pre-designed interview protocol provided me with a plan for the actual interview and enabled me to collect only the information required to answer the research question without overburdening the interviewees with demands for unnecessary information (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Castillo-Montoya (2016) described interview protocol as an instrument of inquiry that helps the researcher to ask questions to elicit specific information associated with the purpose and aim of his/her study, and as an instrument for conversation about someone's life, an idea/concept, or experiences.

The Interview Protocol Matrix developed by Castillo-Montoya (2016) was adopted to develop the interview protocol for this study. Given that the research question was only one and did not have sub-questions, in adapting the matrix to this study, the first row of the matrix was populated with the main concepts/elements of the research question instead of "Research Question 1", "Research Question 2", and "Research Question 3" as is with Castillo-Montoya's matrix (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 821). These were replaced with "Change Orientation", "Hierarchy", "Communication", and "Leader-Member Relations". This matrix enabled me to align the interview questions with the research question and ensured all key concepts of the research topic were described adequately from the participants' experiences and knowledge. Below is an example of the Interview Protocol Matrix that helped mirror the interview questions to the research question.

Table 2

Interview Protocol Matrix

	Background information	Research concept 1 (change orientation)	Research concept 2 (hierarchy)	Research concept 3 (communication)	Research concept 4 (leader-member relations)
Interview Q1	X				
Interview Q2	X				
Interview Q3		X			
Interview Q4		X	X		
Interview Q5			X		
Interview Q6			X	X	
Interview Q7				X	X
Interview Q8		X	X	X	X
Interview Q9	X				X
Interview Q10	X				

Adapted from Castillo-Montoya (2016) pg. 821

Table 3

Some Indicators of Power Distance Levels During Organizational Change

Indicator/parameter	Low power distance	High power distance
Level of focus	Employee/people-centered (focus on the change initiative itself)	Change manager/leader-centered (focus on hierarchy and order)
Nature of change communication	The change manager/leader expects the employee to initiate communication on various aspects of the organizational change	Employee expects the change manager/leader to initiate communication on various aspects of the organizational change
Planning for change	Change manager/leader expects employee to participate proactively in the planning and implementation of the organizational change	Employee expects the change manager/leader to provide the organizational change plan and guide step-by-step in the implementation
Level of consultation	Change manager/leader is open to criticism and new ideas regarding the organizational change from employee	Employee is expected to be a passive recipient of the organizational change outcome. He/she is not expected to contradict the views of the change manager/leader
Effectiveness of the change process	Effectiveness of the change process is a product of a two-way input of the employee and change manager/leader	Effectiveness of the change process is purely determined by the quality of inputs from the change manager/leader

A demonstration to make it easier for participants to understand the concept of power distance

The interview questions were guided by the research purpose, research design and research question. This case study had only one central research question:

RQ: What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational

change initiative in a global environment?

Following the proposition that research interviews are designed to allow the researcher to

see things from the meaningful and knowledgeable perspective of the interviewee,

interview questions were framed in a way that they spoke directly to the research topic.

The interview questions were framed in a manner that they were easily understood by the

interviewees. Researchers are advised to draw from their "knowledge of contexts, norms,

and every-day practices of potential participants, to write interview questions that are

understandable and accessible to participants" (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 813).

Researchers ordinarily formulate their research questions in a jargon-ridden

language, but the interview questions usually adopt the everyday language of the

interviewees (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Patton (2015) argued that the success or failure

of the interview rests on the skills and knowledge of the researcher. Therefore, a

framework was developed in which the interviewees were comfortable and willing to

provide information-rich responses to the interview questions. The framework contained

a strategy to open the interview session with questions that allowed the interviewees to

freely open up and talk, and end the session with probing questions to lead to additional

information on the topic. Borrowing from Castillo-Montoya's suggestions of the types of

interview questions, the framework comprised of four categories of questions including

(i) introductory questions, (ii) transition questions, (iii) key questions, and (iv) closing

questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 822).

The documents belonging to this multinational financial organization were reviewed and analyzed to gain further understanding, discover meaning and additional insights relevant to the study topic. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) equated documentary material to interviews and observations and suggested that one requires specialized research skills and intuition in order to effectively find them and interpret their data. They suggested that documents include personal papers, public records, physical material, popular culture documents, visual documents, and artifacts.

Among other documents, a request was made for the organizational change strategy that guided the recent reorganization of this multinational financial organization and in particular the selected agency and other related non-confidential documentation. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described data as bits and pieces of information found in the environment and that their possibility of becoming data in a study is contingent on the interest as well as perspective of the researcher.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Due to the geographical diversity of the target participants, diverse interview techniques were utilized to collect their knowledge, experiences and perspectives on power distance in the context of the recent reorganization of one of the agencies of a multinational financial organization. Key informant interviews were mainly through telephone and follow up sessions were conducted through e-mails and telephone with some of the key informants.

Considering I am a former staff of this multinational financial organization, I approached some of my former colleagues to help me recruit the study participants from

among the managers and nonmanagers. Reference was made to this multinational financial organization's organogram in mapping the participants (classified into two staff categories—managers and nonmanagers—for the purposes of this study) to ensure a balanced representation of the various teams and subject areas. I was strategic and as practical as possible in the recruitment process because "as an active part of the research process, recruitment influences research results" (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015, p. 722).

A variety of recruitment strategies were combined starting with writing a formal request to this multinational financial organization to allow me access potential respondents and to permit them to participate in the interviews. Once the request was granted, mediators were used, as described by Kristensen and Ravn (2015), from among my former colleagues at this multinational financial organization to assist me with the recruitment. Having worked at this multinational financial organization before, I had a chance to approach some of the potential participants directly.

Considering the key informants were spread in this multinational financial organization's offices globally, to a large extent, snowballing technique was utilized to reach individual participants from this multinational financial organization offices that I had not interacted directly with, and yet, they were rich sources of data for this study. In this case, snowballing was not used for sampling but as a means to access hard-to-reach participants. Marcus, Weigelt, Hergert, Gurt, and Golléri (2017) argued that "snowball sampling has become very popular in organizational research, especially for recruiting informant samples for multisource studies" (p. 636), among other research procedures.

Etikan, Alkassim, and Abubakar (2016) described snowballing technique as particularly useful when the target population is hard to reach, which makes it very difficult for the researcher to compile a list of potential participants. Kristensen and Ravn (2015) argued that snowball sampling refers to two distinct procedures (i) as a strategy to estimate sample size where populations are accessible, and (ii) as a participants' recruitment strategy in cases where populations are less accessible. The latter was the case for this study and as a remedy, the recruitment process started with a few of my former colleagues to help contact the rest of the potential respondents in the two staff categories (managers and nonmanagers) as listed in the sampling frame.

Most of the interview questions (about 90 percent) were open-ended and phrased to extract a better understanding of power distance in relation to its perceived effect on the outcome of the recent reorganization of one of the agencies of a multinational financial organization. Time was built into the interview sessions to allow for follow-up questions to interviewees' responses that were not fully understood (Patton, 2015). A precise strategy was followed in applying the different types of interview questions including open, closed, hypothetical, and mirror questions, at the different stages of the question sequencing, as was adapted from Castillo-Montoya suggestions of the types of interview questions including introductory level questions; transition level questions; and closing level questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Before embarking on interviewing, interview questions were first aligned with the different elements of this qualitative dissertation study. Guided by the purpose of this dissertation study, interview questions were formulated as subsets of the research

question with the intention to seek knowledge and perspectives of the selected

multinational financial organization's staff regarding manifestation of power distance

during the recent organizational change process. This was informed by my conviction

that interviewing is much more than just asking questions and receiving answers from the

study respondents. Data collection procedures usually have significant implications on

the research result. For instance, "rigorous development of a qualitative semi-structured

interview guide contributes to the objectivity and trustworthiness of studies and makes

the results more plausible" (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016, p. 2954).

Therefore, I endeavored to be as strategic as is required in developing interview

questions and in developing and testing the data collection tools. Patton (2015)

recommended alignment of all aspects of the research aspects including across various

aspects of the methodology. I thus endeavored for a close alignment between data

collection tools and the overall research design. Guidance was drawn from good

interviewing practices prescribed by Patton (2015) including asking open-ended

questions with the right amount of probing, being empathetic, listening attentively, being

clear in questioning, and being fully present throughout the interview interaction.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis is described as "a process of the description, classification and

interconnection of phenomena with the researcher's concepts" (Graue, 2016, p. 8).

Therefore, data analysis is the core of research as it gives meaning to data and helps

present findings in a manner that makes sense to potential users of your research. Without

data analysis, you have no research. Akinyode and Khan (2018) underscored the

importance of data analysis and advocated for a sound understanding of the process to ensure the results of the qualitative research are properly interpreted to enable constructive implementation of the research recommendations. Qualitative data analysis has largely been described as a transformative process that does not only give meaning to data but also increases its authenticity, which subsequently increases validity of your research findings.

For this qualitative case study, data analysis was a two-steps process that included data cleaning (data management through coding) and giving data meaning (interpretation). Given that the main mode of data collection for this qualitative dissertation on power distance implications on change initiatives was interviewing, the process of data analysis started with transcription to convert all the interview data into text. Meredith (2016) described transcription as the first step of qualitative data analysis. Interviewees' responses were recorded in text, including transcribing those that were captured using digital data capture tools (audio and video devices).

Meredith (2016) noted a prevalence of use of audio data in qualitative research with transcription becoming popular for both audio and video data. For quality results, the four principles of transcription that were suggested by Meredith were followed including adequate reflection of the appropriateness of the methodology, easy to read, easily accessible, and easy to use. Meredith advised that the transcript should reflect the analytical method and research question; it should be selective as to include only content that speaks to the goals of the research; it should be comprehensible by other researchers in the related fields; and should be useful for current and future analytical interests.

Once all the collected data had been transformed into text, coding was done, mainly manual coding supplemented with a bit of computer-assisted coding using NVivo software, to manage the data collected through interviews. There are a number of strategies that a qualitative researcher can use to overcome the challenge of complexity of the data analysis process. Coding is one of these critical strategies. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) described coding as deep reflection about and, thus, deep analysis and interpretation of the data's meanings. They viewed it as data condensation task that enables the researcher to retrieve the most meaningful material, to assemble chunks of data that go together, and to further condense the bulk into readily analyzable units. They thus suggested that codes are used to retrieve and categorize similar data chunks so the researcher can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct or theme. This process sets the stage for further analysis and drawing of conclusions.

Maxwell (2013) described coding as the main categorizing strategy in qualitative research. Identification of themes and patterns from the data collected in view of the research question helped save time as I did not have to analyze all the data collected. I believe coding made it easy for me to analyze and interpret the findings and overall increased the validity of this qualitative case study. Some color code was established following common key words from participants' responses to avoid mixing up themes as I progressed. NVivo, which is a computer-based software for data analysis was used to ease the challenge of having to go through huge amounts of data by hand. From my previous experience with NVivo, one of the main advantages of using a computer

software to code data in qualitative research is that the results are neat and easier to follow. It is also easier to store data coded on computer software than hand-coded data on paper. It is also easier to make adjustments to actions taken when using computer software than when coding on paper.

I followed a strategic approach to data analysis for this qualitative dissertation. A pre-coding plan was developed and included a coding structure in advance. After the Dissertation Prospectus was approved and I embarked on writing literature review, I started identifying common words and phrases that I used to create a keywords tree. These keywords gave me a good structure from which advance themes were developed and revised once data collection was completed. A pre-plan for data analysis, which included advance thinking on the potential categories of data, helped reduce potential data overload. Miles et al. (2014) argued that a researcher needs roughly three to five times as much time for processing and ordering the data as the time he/she needed to collect it. Therefore, strategies were carefully devised to reduce time for data processing. A pre-coding plan was one of these strategies as unstructured coding would likely have increased instances of data overload during analysis.

Good data management practices are not only critical at the data collection and analysis stages, but also at the research report writing stages. The ability to quickly retrieve specific information are critical when compiling research findings, arguments, and recommendations. As suggested by Miles et al. (2014), good data management ensures that the data are of high quality and accessible; only relevant data are analyzed; and that the retention of data and associated analyses after the study is complete.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The researcher has a responsibility to persuade others of the quality of his/her research in terms of principles, standards, and strategies, and especially in reporting the research findings. Research quality and research rigor are used interchangeably in research literature, with terms such as trustworthiness and validity dominating the discussions. The researcher has responsibility of establishing rigor, which is described as a process that "involves the systematic approach to research design and data analysis, interpretation, and presentation" (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk, 2016, p. 173) to achieve trustworthiness of research results, which can be determined through a set of criteria that includes dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility, which refers to internal validity of the research, is described as "the overall believability of a study or the degree to which research outcomes seem accurate based on the research process" (Hays et al., 2016, p. 174). I was fully aware that poor quality standards would have compromised the credibility of the results of this dissertation study, which would make it difficult to convince others to use the research findings in imparting positive social change. Being a qualitative case study and considering data were collected from people and about their perceptions, exposed this dissertation study to a number of issues that would have affected credibility of the results. I strived to anticipate, document, and mitigate these diverse issues including those related to ethics.

To illuminate the research problem and increase objectivity of the findings of this dissertation study, for instance, triangulation technique was used. Abdalla et al. (2018) described triangulation as a technique that enables the researcher to look at the same phenomenon, or research problem, through multiple data sources. At the data collection level, beyond the perspectives gathered through interviews, which was the primary data collection method, additional viewpoints were sought from other sources of data including review of primary documents related to this multinational financial organization's organizational change process.

This is what Abdalla et al. (2018) refers to as methodological triangulation, through which a variety of methods were used to obtain more detailed and complete data about the phenomenon of power distance in the context of multicultural organizational change process. Methodological triangulation has been described as the "use of multiple methods as a way of obtaining more complete and detailed data about the phenomenon" (Abdalla et al., 2018, p. 73) and it is argued to be the most popular among triangulation techniques, with the main objective to avoid the biases of a single method strategy.

More than one method of data analysis were used combining traditional and modern computer-aided data analysis. Computer-based programs for data analysis are becoming popular in the field of qualitative research. Woods, Macklin, and Lewis (2016) alluded to the potential impact of computerized analysis on the research results. They advised researchers to seek full understanding of the influence of software use on the research process and outputs as this would affect credibility of their research findings. Triangulation did not only improve validity of the research findings, but also helped me

obtain new knowledge on the concept of power distance in the context of a multicultural change initiative through new viewpoints. Vergara (2015) shared the viewpoint that triangulation helps improve validity of qualitative research alongside helping find new knowledge through new perspectives.

Transferability

Transferability is external validity, which would be described as "localized generalizability to participants, settings, and time frame similar to those in a study" (Hays et al., 2016, p. 74). As qualitative research is contextual, thus the findings are confined to the uniqueness of the social construct under study (Bell et al., 2019), it is a challenge determining the applicability of the findings in other contexts. Apart from the contextual confinement, Sarma (2015) associates this challenge with the usually small size of the sample in qualitative research arguing that a qualitative research sample would not be considered a representative sample of any population considering it ordinarily comprises of a small number of participants.

Researchers have however proposed strategies that could improve transferability of qualitative research findings including triangulation and explicit description of methodology to enable replication. In fact, Cavalcanti (2017) advises qualitative researchers to minimize their worries about their inability to produce generalizable results and instead think of their replicability arguing that "good qualitative research should focus on producing transferable ones" (p. 475.), within the limitations of the study.

From the onset, I was clear about the specific population of this study; acknowledged restrictions to data from key informants because of internal information

confidentially policy; disclosed the specific number of participants; disclosed the specific methods of data collection used; disclosed the number and length of data collection sessions; disclosed the time period of data collection; and the specific data analysis methods and procedures that were used. This way, the potential users of the findings of this study can gauge the extent to which they can generalize the study findings and the degree to which they can be transferred to other similar contexts.

This strategy was guided by a suggestion that as a qualitative researcher, one "should focus on providing evidence that will allow readers to make comparisons and possibly transfer some of these findings to other similar contexts if they wish to do so" (Cavalcanti, 2017, p. 475). This can only be achieved with adequate description of the methods and data to enable potential users make judgement on potential transferable similarities. Triangulation was utilized as a method to enable transferability of the results as suggested by Abdalla et al. (2018) that data from multiple sources improve the potential of reproducing the qualitative findings in other similar contexts.

Dependability

Dependability is a description of how consistent research findings are across time period and researchers (Hays et al., 2016), and unlike reliability in quantitative research where we can statistically predict the potential of similarity of results when the study is replicated in similar settings, it is impractical to do similar predictions for qualitative studies due to the fluctuations of the context and phenomena under investigation. Sarma (2015) however argued that when the research is credible, dependability would be

assured to a large extent. For this study, multiple sources of data were used to not only improve credibility of the findings, but also increase dependability.

From the instrumentation perspective, as explained in the preceding sections, a pre-designed interview protocol, interview guide and well-structured interview questions were used to not only guide the data collection process but also ensure the results were credible. Drawing from a suggestion of overlapping methods by Sarma (2015), individual interviews were combined with documents review to enhance credibility, hence, dependability of the results. A comprehensive description of the study methods and process was prepared to enable reproduction of this study.

As submitted by Abdalla et al. (2018), to make this study more dependable, "processes and methods must be described in detail, which will enable another researcher to reproduce the work and not necessarily obtain the same results, but to move forward in other contexts and situations" (p. 88). This study would therefore be adopted as a prototype. Sarma shared similar views advocating for development of a protocol arguing that "developing a protocol of the research design detailing sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods, enhance the transparency and subsequent dependability of the study" (Sarma, 2015, p. 185), and its detailed description would increase possibility of other researchers using the prototype model in similar context and obtain similar results.

Confirmability

Confirmability and objectivity are used interchangeably in qualitative research to describe accurate reflections of participants' perspectives without interference of findings by researcher's views (Hays et al., 2016). I followed the advice by Abdalla et al. (2018)

that it is imperative for every qualitative researcher to devise mechanisms to ensure

conclusions derived from the study findings are drawn from the experiences and ideas of

the research participants and not from the researcher's personal preferences.

Some of the mechanisms that were utilized to ensure confirmability of this study

included reporting explicitly my beliefs that would have informed decision-making at the

different stages of the dissertation process including choice of a research methodology,

providing rationale for my choices, discussing any of personal theories that lack

confirmation from data, and providing a detailed methodological description to help the

reader gauge the quality of the data. From the onset, I practiced reflective awareness and

explicitly revealed all preconceptions and beliefs, both personal and professional, that

could have affected this dissertation study. Reflexivity, as suggested by Teusner (2016),

helped me think upon the context of this dissertation study and my relationship with the

participants that would have affected the dissertation process as well as the subsequent

study results.

For example, I am a former staff of this multinational financial organization, thus

I had some understanding of what to expect from the study participants. While this

position could have been perceived as potential source of bias, I continuously conducted

self-examination to avert potential bias. Considering NVivo, which is a computer-based

software for data analysis was used, though only to a small extent, reflexive assessment

of the potential impact of this computerized tool on this dissertation study process and

findings was conducted. In this context, "reflexivity incorporates an awareness of the

impact of the software on judgments and actions, including the ways in which it

structures qualitative research practice, and the phenomena their architecture might conceal, disclose or prefigure" (Woods et al., 2016, p. 387).

Triangulation was used to reduce personal and methodological biases (Abdalla et al., 2018) that would otherwise have exposed validity of the findings to doubt and decreased the chances of having them reproduced and applied. Respondent validation was conducted to test the level of similarity between the findings and the viewpoints and experiences of the study participants. Bell et al. (2019) described respondent/participants validation as a process through which a researcher provides research participants with an account of his/her findings with the purpose to corroborate the account that he/she (researcher) has arrived at. At the early stages of data analysis, telephone calls were made to some of the participants with highlights of the key findings from interactions with them seeking their confirmation of experiences. Relevant documents belonging to this multinational financial organization were reviewed to validate the preliminary findings.

Ethical Procedures

While most research literature would ordinarily confine their discussion on trustworthiness of qualitative research on the four-point common criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, some, such as Hays et al. (2016) have added other critical elements to the criteria including substantive validation and ethical validation. The latter two are concerned with one of the most sensitive aspects of qualitative research, which is the target population. While substantive validation determines the extent to which the research results provides meaningful benefits to the society and the profession, ethical validation is a marker of the extent to which

participants are handled with dignity and recognized as more than just sources of data. Hays and team underscored the importance of ethical validation and argued that rigor is an ethical issue in qualitative research as poor research design would likely compromise interpretation, which would increase the chances of harming participants in the process.

Considering the interpretive nature of qualitative research and the lengthy interaction with participants, qualitative research is fraught with ethical and personal issues (Kara & Pickering, 2017). Walden University responded to this reality by establishing an Institutional Review Board (IRB) made up of staff and faculty members from across major research areas to oversee compliance with Walden University's ethical standards, the United States' federal regulations and other international guidelines throughout the research process.

A sound plan to address ethical concerns in this dissertation study was critical, more so because it is a qualitative research thus all the data collection processes took place in a natural setting. People were directly involved and therefore ethical protection of the participants was paramount. Marshall and Rossman (2014) suggested that the researcher need to illustrate his/her awareness of ethical issues and describe the strategies he/she will follow to ensure that the study is trustworthy.

Several ethical measures were adopted during the course of this qualitative dissertation in accordance with the established qualitative standard practices and in adherence to Walden University's IRB requirements. To protect and enhance the well-being, privacy, and human rights of the participants, a detailed description of the study was provided so that the research team and participants were fully informed about the

purpose, methods, and intended uses of this dissertation study. A pre-designed interview

protocol was used to seek consent for interview from the participants and inform them of

the structure and substance of the interview session. Measures were put in place to ensure

participants took part in the interviews voluntarily; avoiding harm to them at all cost;

making the independence of the research clear; and ensuring any conflicts of interest

were made explicit as early as possible.

Potential risks and benefits were highlighted early on, which was critical

considering this dissertation study is a single case study that was conducted in a highly

prestigious and international public institution that is under continuous scrutiny by the

public worldwide. In this regard, measures were taken to safeguard the reputation of this

multinational financial organization including signing confidentiality clauses to avoid any

instances of social or economic losses arising from the proposed data collection methods.

As participants were responding to questions that related directly to their employment, I

refrained from collecting data that could damage their employment. Great effort was

made to keep the interview transcriptions anonymous, keep the interviewees' identity

details confidential, and in cases where interviews were recorded using a digital recorder,

the recording device was switched off during personal introductions.

High levels of integrity in data management were maintained, ensuring high

quality standards and transparency in the data collection processes in terms of letting the

interviewees fully understand the tools and process of data collection. As the key

informant interviews involved investigation of issues of power (power distance), which

directly touches on leadership, made it a very sensitive matter. I was cognizant of the fact

that there was a chance for participants to be cagey about their real feelings about the nature of power distribution and its perceived effects on the change process for fear of reprisal by their leaders. To avert this, they were assured that data from the interviews would be transcribed anonymously such that the responses cannot be traced back to them.

Summary

Credibility begins through thorough investigation of the theory and prior research supporting and surrounding the phenomenon of inquiry (Patton, 2015). Diligence in research design should be established, with strong alignment across the research question, research design, research methodology, and research analysis. This includes strong hypothesis exploration, an in-depth information search, and diligent information validation to set up the study. Transparency throughout the research process is critical to establishing credibility, and this applies to this study too.

Methods such as triangulation support quality in research by enabling collection of data from multiple sources and reliability can be established by having more than one coder organizing data sets and more than one researcher analyzing the data (Abdalla et al., 2018). Quality is determined by the extent to which the study advances knowledge and understanding pertaining to the phenomenon of inquiry. To ensure trustworthiness of the findings from this qualitative case study, a combination of evidence was used to bring forth credibility and allow potential users to feel confident about the observations, interpretations, and the conclusions of this study. This dissertation study has been anchored on an extensive literature review to improve the rigor of the research process.

Despite these promising strategies to improve credibility of this study, I am well aware of a potential backlash from critics of constructivism philosophy, but I have a rational justification. Given that this dissertation study sought to probe the perceived influence of power distance on organizational change in a global environment, it focused on the respondents' perceptions on this phenomenon and absolutely had no intention of establishing an objective truth about it. I adopted what Barnham (2015) refers to as a "phenomenological stance" and a "social construction of reality".

This study purely represents the reality of this multinational financial organization's staff in regard to how power distance manifests itself in the process of organizational change. I simply invited the key informants to say what experience they had, or did not have, with power distance during the massive reorganization of the selected agency of this multinational financial organization since 2014, and simply describe their perceptual judgement about it. As argued by Cavalcanti (2017), the aim of this study was "not to claim for objective truth, rather, it reflects a concern with producing plausible, credible, or meaningfully coherent research accounts to an intended audience" (p. 476), within the study scope.

Overall, I strived to establish rigor throughout this research by adopting a systematic and in-depth approach to data collection; being systematic and meticulous during data analysis; by demonstrating skill and experience as the researcher; and staying in tune with the philosophical beliefs and perceptions of the potential users of the research findings in regard to the value of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2015).

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the perceived effects of power distance on the process of an organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. Despite the widespread recognition of organizational change as one of the core competencies of the 21st century organization (Parry et al., 2014) and a factor of strategic importance that influences an organization's performance by enhancing adaptability (Chen et al., 2018), organizational change processes often do not seem to achieve their intended goals. Reportedly, 70% of all organizational change initiatives fail (Church & Dawson, 2018) despite evidence of a proliferation of studies in which researchers have sought to evaluate factors that drive successful organizational change.

From diverse research reviewed for this study, this failure rate is likely higher in cross-border organizations and its cause has not been adequately studied. For instance, there is limited in-depth research on the influence the cross-border factor of power distance could have on the outcomes of an organizational change process (Hutzschenreuter et al., 2016; Lo et al., 2017). Yet, as argued by Rao and Pearce (2016), how power is used is a key consideration in the success of critical organizational processes including the organizational change process. This study aimed to increase understanding and general awareness of potential effects of power distance on an organizational change process taking place across country borders.

The central research question that directed this study was:

RQ: What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational change initiative in a global environment?

I adopted a single case study design with the unit of analysis being the staff of a multinational financial organization whose composition was largely multicultural. The main source of data were key informants drawn from among managers and nonmanagers and interviewed by phone. This was augmented by data mined from review of primary documents related to my partner organization's recent change process.

This chapter summarizes the research setting and describes the key informants in terms of their demographic characteristics. It further describes the procedures that were used for data collection and analysis including a summary of codes and themes that were identified from raw data that were drawn from responses from the key informants regarding the five indicators of power distance (level of focus, nature of change communication, planning for change, level of consultation, and effectiveness of the change process). Finally, the chapter highlights procedures that were followed to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

Research Setting

The data collection took place through phone interviews between April and June, 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the key informants of the study were in the frontline fighting the coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) worldwide. This affected interview scheduling with multiple adjustments of some of the schedules, and I had to follow up relentlessly to ensure they happened. Consequently, most of the interviews were conducted over the weekends and during the Easter and Labor Day public holidays, as well as some late in the night owing to the differences in time zones.

Additionally, my key informants had relocated their work stations to their homes and some of our interviews were occasionally interrupted by children and/or a spouse who needed attention or a domestic worker who needed feedback. There were also interruptions due to connectivity issues with some of the calls dropping multiple times during the interview session as I was interviewing from Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa, where connectivity is usually a challenge.

This notwithstanding, my data collection could not have happened at a better time. It happened at the height of a major global change occasioned by COVID-19, which necessitated significant behavior change in all aspects of life. Key informants identified with my study and welcomed it as a timely intervention that would help individuals and organizations to navigate the new world order that had been introduced by the pandemic. They were categorical that our cultural orientation significantly influences our behavior and reaction to events including emergencies such as COVID-19, as well as our overall effectiveness in adapting to the new world order caused by these events. They were, however, under immense pressure to deliver the COVID-19 emergency projects, which meant some of my key informants allocated much shorter interview time than they had initially anticipated. They were also psychologically distressed, which might have influenced their responses, but generally they felt the study had come in at the right time.

Participants' Demographics

Pursuant to the eligibility criteria set out in the study design in Chapter 3, participants were purposefully selected from different tiers of staff in my partner organization. Ten key informants from among the managers and nonmanagers

participated in the study by the time data saturation was achieved. I strived to be as strategic and as practical as possible in the recruitment process to ensure that my key informants were diverse in terms of cultural backgrounds, nationalities, gender, geographical representation, and hierarchical levels, with a mix of both managers and nonmanagers as well as diverse technical backgrounds.

This approach ensured a balanced representation of the various teams and viewpoints from different subject areas. It reduced the risk of collecting narrow-sided viewpoints on the perceived effects of power distance in an international setting. Table 4 below presents the summary of the individual key informants' demographic characteristics (key informant = KI-).

Table 4

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

	Staff category	Region	Gender	Background	Years in Agency XYZ
KI-1	Nonmanager	Africa	Male	Finance	6
KI-2	Nonmanager	Africa	Female	Operations analysis	18
KI-3	Manager	America	Male	Economics Statistics Evaluation	12
KI-4	Nonmanager	Africa	Female	Human resources Analysis	15
KI-5	Nonmanager	Africa	Male	Economics	8
KI-6	Nonmanager	Africa	Female	Information management	5
KI-7	Manager	Asia	Male	Water management	15
KI-8	Manager	Europe	Female	Public health Evaluation	8
KI-9	Nonmanager	Africa	Male	Finance	11
KI-10	Nonmanager	Africa	Female	Communications	3

Data Collection

Following approval of my application for the study by the Walden University's IRB on October 16, 2019, conditional upon approval by my research partner organization (IRB approval no. was 10-16-19-0581966), I proceeded to seek approval to collect data from my partner organization, which was granted on December 10, 2019. Initially, data collection was meant to commence on February 15, 2020, but the timeline shifted to April 01, 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and my partner organization joined the frontline in the emergency response against coronavirus. The participants who had confirmed the interviews postponed by at least a month, and some indefinitely. I continued recruiting new participants while I waited for reconfirmation from the ones who had postponed their interview sessions. In the first week of April, I conducted four interviews. The last interview was on May 30, 2020, and I continued follow-up phone calls to July 30, 2020, for clarification of some data during transcription.

Review and Approval of Interview Materials

With interviewing as the main method of data collection, I developed data collection tools suitable for interviewing including the interview questionnaire, the interview guide, the interview protocol, and an e-mail invitation. In preparation for application to the Walden University's IRB for approval, my interview materials were reviewed by my dissertation committee led by my committee chair. The materials were updated to incorporate the committee suggestions before they were sent to the IRB for review and approval, alongside the data collection ethical procedures.

Recruitment of Participants

Participants' recruitment procedure started off with writing a formal request to my partner organization to allow me access potential respondents and to permit them to participate in the interviews. With permission granted, I reviewed my partner organization's organogram to draw an initial map of my key informants, classified into two staff categories (managers and nonmanagers) for the purposes of this study. From the map, I identified 18 potential key informants. Initial mapping of key informants was followed by checking through their LinkedIn profiles as well as their profiles in my partner organization's website to acquaint myself with their backgrounds and the length of service at my partner organization. This helped me to gauge the eligibility of each of them to participate in my study. The website and LinkedIn reviews provided other information including their e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

After the LinkedIn and website profiles review, the initial number of potential key informants reduced to 13. As a former staff of my partner organization, I knew some former colleagues who I approached directly to participate. Reaching out to selected former colleagues yielded four additional commitments, who were excited about the subject of my study and would later refer me to some of their colleagues who they considered would provide invaluable insights. The referrals yielded three more potential key informants.

With 20 key informants purposefully selected, I made an initial contact by sending to each of them an invitation to participate in the study accompanied by the approval note from my partner organization and a comprehensive predesigned interview

protocol through which I sought their voluntary consent to participate in the interview. The interview protocol also informed participants of the structure and substance of the interview session.

Initial contact was mainly through e-mail and some participants had asked to be sent the invitation through LinkedIn. Interviews and follow ups were conducted by phone. For my former colleagues who were already aware of my academic journey, I first called them up on phone for an informal briefing and let them know that I would be sending to them an e-mail invitation. Some suggested I could send the invitation to them via LinkedIn instead. I sent them the consent form as well as the clearance from my partner organization to collect data alongside the invitation e-mail that had been cleared by the Walden University's IRB.

Out of the 20 initial invitations that were sent out, five did not respond, and three declined. When COVID-19 pandemic struck, two managers who became heavily involved with the COVID-19 emergency response withdrew from the study as their schedules had become constrained while two key informants rescheduled their interviews that were initially scheduled for April by 60 days subject to their participation still being relevant. I managed to interview the latter two on May 23, 2020, and May 30, 2020. Fortunately, data saturation was achieved even before concluding interviews with the 10 who had confirmed, so I did not have to do a second round of recruitment. Once I had a commitment from a potential key informant, I checked on them regularly to ensure lines of communication remained open until the interview materialized and follow ups were done to confirm some aspects of the collected data.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted on phone between April 01, 2020 and May 30, 2020, with follow up phone calls extending to July 30, 2020. Every key informant interview session consisted of 11 interview questions (Appendix) that were developed on the basis of the interview protocol for this study. The Interview Protocol Matrix (Table 2) developed by Castillo-Montoya (2016) was adopted to design the interview protocol.

This interview protocol matrix guided development of interview questions aimed at probing the main concept of this study—power distance in the context of organizational change—in terms of (a) level of focus, (b) nature of change communication, (c) planning for change, (d) level of consultation, and (e) effectiveness of the change process. The interview questions reflected four key aspects of an organizational change undertaking, namely (a) change orientation, (b) hierarchy, (c) communication, and (d) leader-member relations. The matrix enabled alignment of the interview questions with the research question and ensured that all key concepts of the research topic were described adequately from the key informants' experiences and knowledge.

At the start of every interview session, I took 10-15 minutes for an overview to demystify the main subject of the study considering the complexity of the concept under study, that is, power distance. I also explained the ethical procedure as part of the process to build confidence in my key informant that he/she was totally protected. This included spelling out my duties and responsibilities to protect him/her as well as the legal and academic repercussions for non-compliance on my part and the recourse he/she could pursue. In addition, I explained to them the purpose of the study as well as the plans for

data utilization and reporting. I also explained the mode of interviewing, which was not

merely questioning but a conversation with my key informant. Once I had captured

his/her attention, a conversation ensued to the extent that some of them sought to educate

me on the concept of power distance from their own practical experiences as soon as they

understood its substantive meaning. Some even made proposals on the other elements of

power distance that I should examine and offered advise on how to go about it.

I invested heavily in deeper probing and I would recap the conversation at various

points, highlighting the main points to gauge if I understood my key informant's

responses and if we were reading from the same page. This added more time to the

interview and took a lot of time to transcribe, but it minimized the number of follow ups I

would do to clarify the various points. It also filled a critical gap because, being a phone

interview, I missed an opportunity to read and interpret non-verbal cues and gestures and

only relied on interpreting the tone of voice from the other end of the phone.

On average, the interviews took 1-1.5 hours, but a few went on for 2 hours and for

three of them, we had to compress them to 45 minutes due to COVID-19 constraints.

These constraints further affected some of the interview schedules. For instance, KI-3's

interview was rescheduled by a month and run for only 45 minutes instead of the 1-1.5

hours as earlier anticipated. KI-5 rescheduled his interview three times (May 1, 2020,

May 4, 2020, and May 7, 2020) while the interview with KI-7 was conducted in two

sittings across two days as he had to attend to an unforeseen emergency meeting on

COVID-19 that came up mid-way the interview session. Additionally, I had to rush

through the interview with KI-2 has she had to leave the office for her house before the

government curfew hours.

Each of the 10 interviews was audio recorded using Mi Phone model Mi 9T Pro

and all the recordings were subsequently manually transcribed into Microsoft Word files

by the researcher. All the recordings were backed up in two laptop computers and an iPad

just in case the original recordings on phone got damaged or the phone stopped working

or got misplaced.

Respondent/Member Validation

Respondent/member validation was conducted to test the level of similarity

between the findings and the viewpoints and experiences of the key informants. This

happened through a series of recaps during the interview session and a post-interview

follow-up with some of the key informants for points that were found to be in need of

clarity during transcription. In addition to the series of recaps I did during each of the

interviews, I followed up with five of the key informants to discuss the transcripts over

phone as I needed to clarify some of the points. I updated the transcripts with the

clarification I received on the respective points. In addition, relevant documents

belonging to my partner organization were reviewed to validate the preliminary findings.

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Data Analysis

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To give meaning to the data collected and present findings in a way that makes

sense to the potential users of my research study report, data were analyzed in a two-steps

process that included data cleaning (data management through coding) and giving data

meaning (interpretation). Coding helped me to break my raw data into analytically viable

version and from this version, I was able to query my data further and get some relevant

meaning out of it. This was in line with Saldana's (2016) recognition of qualitative codes

as essential elements of my research narrative that, if I grouped them together in view of

their similarity and patterns, they would help me develop categories and analyze their

thematic connections within the scope of my study.

With interviewing as the main mode of data collection for this qualitative

dissertation on power distance implications on change initiatives, the process of data

analysis started with transcription to convert all the interview data into text. This was

informed by Meredith's (2016) description of transcription as the first step of qualitative

data analysis. I had recorded each of the 10 in-depth interviews with my key informants

as well as the brief follow up calls on Mi Phone model Mi 9T Pro, and each of these was

manually transcribed into Microsoft Word text file. Alongside the digital recording, some

of my key informants' responses were recorded in text in a notebook as back-up in the

event that my digital recordings got damaged. As much as the latter were in short-hand,

they were invaluable inputs during data analysis as in some instances, a key informant's

response inspired forward thoughts that I recorded in my notebook including points to

follow up during triangulation, some potential recommendations, areas of further research

and text that could be used in the conclusion.

During transcription, I adhered to the principles of transcription suggested by

Meredith (2016) to ensure that each of my transcripts reflected my analytical method and

research question; was as selective as possible to include only content that spoke to the

goals of my research; would be comprehensible by other researchers in the field of my

study subject; and would be useful for current and future analytical interests. With all the collected data converted into text, I embarked on data cleaning through coding, which was conducted manually and assigned descriptive codes. I only used NVivo software to identify any important keywords that I may have skipped inadvertently, but it did not yield much. I strived to maintain a strategic approach to data analysis and I started planning for it early on in my dissertation process.

A pre-coding plan was developed with some forward thoughts on the coding structure. Right after my Dissertation Prospectus was approved and I embarked on writing literature review, I started identifying common words and phrases that would likely be useful in creating a keywords tree as I progressed. The keywords were revised once data collection was completed. My pre-coding plan was also significantly informed by the Interview Protocol Matrix (Table 2) that I developed in Chapter 3 to guide development of interview questions to ensure that they were aligned with the research question and that all key concepts of the research topic were described adequately from the key informants' experiences and knowledge.

In the next chapter, the results of the analyzed data reflect the Interview Protocol Matrix and in significant ways, mirror the four key aspects of an organizational change, namely (i) change orientation, (ii) hierarchy, (iii) communication, and (iv) leader-member relations. It captures responses that reflect elements of power distance in the context of organizational change in terms of (i) level of focus, (ii) nature of change communication, (iii) planning for change, (iv) level of consultation, and (v) effectiveness of the change process. Advance thinking on data analysis helped a lot in reducing data overload. This

approach was inspired by the assertion by Yin (2017) that having a strategy for data analysis beforehand could potentially reduce prospective analytical hurdles.

The coding exercise generated statements and phrases that formed categories. I compared the various statements and phrases to identify relationships that helped me combine the related categories into five themes from which I interpreted the results of the data. Throughout the process of synthesizing the collected data from its raw form to themes with more refined meanings, I paid careful attention to the linguistic expressions from each of my key informants, and deeply reflected on the patterns emerging from them and their meaning in terms of my key informants' experiences with the organizational change under review. This was premised on Saldana's (2016) suggestion that a theme could be derived from a coding process, categorization or analytical reflection.

As a novice qualitative researcher, I struggled to be selective in coding because all the collected data seemed to answer the research question in one or the other. I therefore followed Saldana's (2016) advice that novice researchers should consider coding all the collected data, and so I coded all my transcribed data. Therefore, I did not use coding to reduce my data, rather, it primarily helped me to condense my data for ease of interpretation. Before I started coding, I made effort to familiarize myself with every piece of my data including highlighting all sections that had key information that responded to my research question. In-depth understanding of my data ensured that I did not lose critical insights that have significantly enriched my research findings. Overall, my two-steps analysis helped me identify patterns in my data and further identified ideas that explained the rationale behind the identified patterns and themes.

Table 5 – Table 15 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from extracts of responses to interview questions 1-11; Table 16 presents categories and sub-categories that were derived from the analysis of the various codes; while Table 17 presents themes that emerged from the categories and their corresponding sub-categories presented in Table 16. The identification of the themes and their respective sub-themes was arrived at by examining the frequency of occurrence of the respective categories (Table 17 and Figure 1).

Interview question 1. "Briefly describe your experiences with the recent organizational change in Agency X." Table 5 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 1.

Table 5

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 1

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"It was a supply-driven process with most of the decisions made at the top and little effort to consult on critical aspects of the change."	Supply-driven Decisions Consultation	Inclusive approach Top-down decision-making Stakeholders' engagement
KI-2	"The change was initiated from the headquarters thousands of miles away from the regions. Even managers of the regions got information second hand."	Headquarters Regions Information	Distance from power Top-down decision-making Access to information Stakeholders' engagement Inclusive approach
KI-3	"I feel that they just wanted some change and the leadership may not have thought of meaningful long-term change. It was more about changing the face of the organization rather than the underlying structures."	Decisions Leaders Change type	Impact of change Inclusive approach Top-down decision-making Nature of change
KI-4	"The managers were dealing with something big and difficulty. Something for which they were not skilled to do, used to doing, or trained and supported to do it. This prompted panic and fear, and people were destabilized as they figured ways to deal with it."	Difficulty Managers Uncertainty People	Nature of change Change success factors Impact of change Inclusive approach
KI-5	"Like with any change process, the first thing that came to our minds when we heard about the change was immense fear. Everyone was worried about how their normal way of doing work would be disrupted."	Uncertainty Anxiety	Nature of change Impact of change
KI-6	"In itself, I think it was not a bad change given the need to bring the innovative technologies and innovative thinking that we had into the designing of exciting projects."	Innovation Technology New projects	Drivers of change Impact of change Nature of change
KI-7	"If you are letting go of the people who have the technical knowledge, then you are retraining the people who are doing the lending, it means that you are putting more weight on lending and disbursement. So, you have already shown your preference."	People Change type Preference	Drivers of change Enablers of change Stakeholders' type Inclusive approach Nature of change
KI-8	"What I can say is that the vision was very good in terms of marrying the lending and non-lending arms, but implementation and the roll out of that vision is what did not happen the way it should have."	Change type Vision Implementation	Drivers of change Enablers of change Components of the change process Nature of change
KI-9	"The writing was on the wall and we all saw it coming but most of us were in denial. Information was available in the various platforms and the new structure was being discussed openly. There were some people who either did not heed or were afraid to make some certain bold moves such as, you know, leaving the team altogether."	Information People Decisions People leaving	Awareness creation Access to information Stakeholders' engagement Impact of change Inclusive approach Nature of change
KI-10	"It was a difficult experience. The implications of it were revealed in bits and pieces, making it very stressful for people to understand the full import of what was going to happen."	Difficulty Implications People	Nature of change Awareness creation Access to information Impact of change

Interview question 2. "To what extent did Agency X's formal hierarchy influence the change process?" Some of the sub-questions included: (a) What are your views about the way hierarchy was utilized during the change process? (b) How would you describe the change process in terms of the degree of centralization and/or decentralization of the various aspects of the process? (c) How would you describe the level and/or amount of participation of nonmanagers in decision-making during planning for the change process; designing the change program; and implementing the change program? and (d) What are your views about the way managers delegated change-related important tasks to the nonmanagers during the change process at Agency X? Table 6 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 2.

Table 6

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 2

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"The new change has come with a more devolved structure and devolution of authority to the regions and countries."	Devolution Authority Country office	Decentralized authority Distance from power Impact of change Nature of decision-making
KI-2	"Some colleagues got emails to the effect that their contracts had ended. Even if they wanted to forward to the staff association to help them, they could not because the e-mails had been encrypted. The decision had already been made at the top."	Staff E-mails Staff association Decisions	Stakeholders' engagement Access to information Top-down decision-making Nature of decision-making Inclusive approach Change communication
KI-3	"The effects of change for someone in the headquarters was different from someone in the country office. In the country office, there is so much that you are not aware of that the people in the headquarters may know about."	Effects Headquarters Country office Awareness	Distance from power Impact of change Types of stakeholders Access to information Nature of decision-making Inclusive approach Change communication
KI-4	"I didn't think there was a lot of disruption and destabilization of people in the headquarters as they were close to the center of power."	Disruption People Headquarters	Impact of change Distance from power Nature of decision-making
KI-5	"There is no hierarchy to speak of because, yes there is of course you know, this is the boss and this is who so and so reports to, but there are no hard lines saying that you cannot talk to so and so without talking to me."	Hierarchy Boss Reports	Reporting lines Democratic leadership Nature of decision-making
KI-6	"The hierarchy mattered as far as not being consulted or allowed to initiate communication was concerned, but it didn't matter much as both managers and nonmanagers had something to lose from this change, especially their jobs."	Hierarchy Consultation Impact	Top-down vs participative communication Impact of change Change communication
KI-7	"We have an open-door policy and one can easily access whoever they need to access in a very open manner. Those who were willing to go out there and get information got it regardless of their positions."	Open-door policy Information Positions	Democratic leadership Access to information Nature of decision-making Change communication
KI-8	"Managers in the regions were not adequately supported. Resources were available in the headquarters on career changes and financial planning, but they could not tap into them for their staff when it mattered most. That was a big disconnect."	Regions Headquarters Resources Managers Staff	Distance from power Access to resources Nature of decision-making Change resources
KI-9	"Nonmanagers acted on orders barked from the top down to them."	Nonmanagers Orders Top down	Power and authority Top-down management Nature of decision-making
KI-10	"The flow of change messages was debilitatingly bureaucratic. The top had access to critical information in time, but how it trickled down was determined by the relationship between the regions and the center of power in the headquarters."	Messages Bureaucracy	Access to information Bureaucratic management Distance from power Nature of decision-making Change communication

Interview question 3. "From your observation and experiences, what was the focus of the recent organization change at Agency X? Was the concentration more on employees, the change managers/leaders or the change initiative itself?" Table 7 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 3.

Table 7

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 3

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"Implementation of the change seemed to take a regional direction. Geographical structures were broken down."	Implementation Structures Organogram	Organizational structure Decentralized structures
KI-2	"The employees were short-changed in the whole of the change process. It was all about scoring points for those in power to say we changed structures during this time."	Employees The powerful Structures	Inclusive approach Organizational structure
KI-3	"The change was more on management side and not much about the operations side. Not much tangible effects on operations."	Operations Management	Organizational structure Inclusive approach
KI-4	"I think the structure of engaging staff needed to be more real. It was not a humanized process, and as much as I think there was genuine intention to fix the institution, strong people's interests, ambitions and agendas led to power games."	Structures Staff Institution Interests	Stakeholders' engagement Organizational structure Inclusive approach Personal interests
KI-5	"You cannot prioritize the institutional framework over the people and you cannot prioritize the people over the institutional framework and the delivery mandate that has been given to the institution. They go hand-in-hand."	Framework People	Organizational structure Inclusive approach
KI-6	"It is a change process that started off with institutional goals but very much so tried to bring in the people."	Goals People	Organizational structure Inclusive approach
KI-7	"In my opinion, this was a very internally-driven change. It might have been conceptualized with views from some other peer global players, the institutional Board, and top leadership, but I doubt sectoral views from our main partners and counterparts were taken on board."	Internally-driven Stakeholders Partners	Organizational framework Inclusive approach Organizational structure
KI-8	"Factors like economic sense and resource management determined the direction of the change and especially on which jobs should go. One's pay grade determined whether they would be retrenched."	Resources Job holders Organogram	Organizational structure Inclusive approach
KI-9	"It was more of a re-organization of how we worked and delivered. In the lending arm, it created new positions to cater for the new structure and livelihoods were not adversely impacted. In the non-lending arm, many jobs were lost."	Structures Job holders	Organizational structure Inclusive approach
KI-10	"The organization was thinking about its shareholders, especially their big shareholders. It was about them and not the employees."	Shareholders Employees Organogram	Organizational structure Inclusive approach

Interview question 4. "How would you describe the type, amount, process, and effectiveness of communication during the recent organizational change at Agency X?" Some of the sub-questions included: (a) Who initiated the communication? (b) Were you expected by your manager to initiate the communication? (c) Did you expect your manager to initiate the communication? and (c) To what extent in each case? Table 8 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 4.

Table 8

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 4

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"Although managers attended the management meetings, decisions were passed down to them. It was not a two-way feedback session."	Decisions Feedback Participation Equality	Top-down decision-making Communication process Inclusive approach Participative communication
KI-2	"They were not being honest in what they were doing, hiding behind abstract terminologies, e.g. right sizing, or scaling down, or making it technically appropriate, verifying the numbers, business needs, etc. These terminologies can sound abstract but in reality, end up meaning we are laying off."	Terminologies Honesty Decisions	Communication content Informed decision-making Elements of communication
KI-3	"Those in headquarters had access to more information than those in the country offices. Yet, equity in access to information during change is critical as it is important not to have communication vacuum when the uncertainty is high."	Headquarters Country offices Information Equality	Access to information Communication process Inclusive approach Communication stakeholders Elements of communication
KI-4	"Staff were just recipients of messages that were channeled by managers who only did what they were told to do. We were not contacted and we were not engaged in putting these messages together."	Staff Messages Managers Involvement	Communication process Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement Participative communication Communication stakeholders
KI-5	"Communication was continuous, which provided some sense of comfort. There were adequate communication channels and opportunities to speak up. We did staff surveys to get staff feedback."	Continuous Channels Feedback	Communication process Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement Elements of communication
KI-6	"Managers in the regions passively conveyed change communication to the staff just as it had been passed on from the headquarters without questioning."	Managers Regions Staff Headquarters Passive	Communication process Inclusive approach
KI-7	"I think all the regions were getting official information at the same time. Of course, depending on the networks that you have with headquarters, you could get some information beforehand."	Official Information Networks	Type of communication Source of information Communication channel Access to information Elements of communication
KI-8	"The way the communication was handled made both the managers and their staff kind of powerless and incompetent. Managers were not adequately prepared to pass on the message to their staff."	Managers Staff Power Competence Message	Communication process Communication stakeholders
KI-9	"With information trickling down from the top, before we got it in the regions, we were already hearing rumors in the pipeline."	Information Rumors	Source of information Type of information Communication process Elements of communication
KI-10	"Communication featured two sides - producers of the communication (at headquarters level) and passive consumers of the communication (at the regional level)."	Producers Consumers Passive	Communication process Communication stakeholders Two-way feedback Elements of communication

Interview question 5. "To what extent did you participate/were you expected to participate in the planning of the recent change process at Agency X?" Some of the sub-questions included: (a) Did you make decisions related to the organizational change? (b) What type of decisions did you/were you expected to make? (c) What factors enabled your decision-making? and (d) What factors hindered your decision-making? Table 9 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 5.

Table 9

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 5

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"We were just passive consumers of the change plans. We were more worried about protecting our jobs and what would happen to us with the incoming change."	Plans Consumers Outcome	Ownership and buy-in Top-down decision-making Engagement and consultation Impact of change
KI-2	"The change began with a rumor, which was actually confirmed and formalized. In the regions and country offices, we were just told to implement it."	Rumor Regions Country offices	Top-down decision-making Engagement and consultation Ownership and buy-in
KI-3	"Being in the headquarters, I had access to advance information on the change and an opportunity to add inputs during team meetings."	Headquarters Information Opportunities	Access to information Engagement and consultation
KI-4	"Despite it being such a big and complex change, people didn't know where it was heading. You see where the pain is? We were not involved in designing it and we did not know its implication."	Awareness Involvement	Ownership and buy-in Engagement and consultation
KI-5	"I don't think everyone was involved, but again, that is the way change systems work. You mandate a few qualified individuals who have the strategic vision of the organization to develop something that would be good for the organization. So, they might not have been involved, but of course, they must have been considered."	Involvement Systems Strategies	Engagement and consultation Nature of change Change stakeholders
KI-6	"We had an opportunity to make our contribution to the process through staff surveys. I can't tell how much of it was included in the plans."	Opportunities Plans	Engagement and consultation
KI-7	"With such a big institution as ours undergoing such a humongous change, you might not be able to bring everyone to the table, address all the concerns, and provide a clear picture to everyone in terms of how every person would be affected."	Humongous Involvement Stakeholders	Size of institution Magnitude of change Engagement and consultation Change stakeholders Nature of change
KI-8	"Ours is not an open institution and the culture is so tied with certain individuals, and yet decisions are made that impact thousands of people overnight."	Culture Decision maker People	Organizational culture Change stakeholders Engagement and consultation
KI-9	"The evaluation and decisions about who got to keep their jobs was done at the top and merely conveyed to us to take it or leave it."	Decisions Job holders	Top-down decision making Stakeholders' engagement
KI-10	"It appeared like the process involved everyone through various communication platforms, and maybe some of the initial plans were amended at some point to factor in comments raised by the teams."	Involvement Plans Teams	Engagement and consultation Stakeholders' engagement

Interview question 6. "How would you describe the level and/amount of consultation during the change process at Agency X?" Table 10 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 6.

Table 10

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 6

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"If we had been consulted, we would have proposed a different approach for the change in our region. Critical programs were closed just to respond to the change without consideration of the benefits those programs provided to our beneficiaries."	Proposals Programs Beneficiaries Benefits	Inclusive approach Democratic decision-making Cost-benefit analysis Engagement and consultation
KI-2	"It was all already decided and controlled and everybody was just playing their roles. They were not thinking about consultation but merely to be able to report that consultation was done. Whether that feedback was completely taken is another question."	Decisions Feedback Everybody	Top-down decision-making Inclusive approach Engagement and consultation
KI-3	"The staff surveys covered high level management strategies. I felt the conversation should have moved to the individual level and let them know what was being done, why it was being done, how it was being done, and how it affected them."	Strategies Conversation Individuals	Engagement and consultation Stakeholders' engagement
KI-4	"There were staff meetings where the managers gave updates, which was only to inform us on what was happening. There was no real engagement to take in our views."	Updates Engagement	Top-down decision-making Inclusive approach Engagement and consultation
KI-5	"We must appreciate that given the size of the organization and the number of levels of the hierarchies that we have within the organization, it might not have been feasible to bring in every other opinion on board, from the very junior staff to the very senior staff."	Hierarchy Opinions Staff	Size of institution Engagement and consultation Change stakeholders
KI-6	"Staff were not consulted upfront; this was the decision from the top, which was then conveyed during larger organizational forums simply as a done deal."	Engagement Decision	Engagement and consultation Top-down decision-making Inclusive approach
KI-7	"At the very least, we got continuous updates in terms of where things were going, what was going to be discontinued and what new opportunities were coming up."	Updates Opportunities	Elements of communication Engagement and consultation
KI-8	"The platforms to ensure that the information was relayed from the bottom-up and decisions were made in such a way that they included everyone's sentiments, were there. How well those tools and platforms were used, is another question."	Platforms Information Decisions	Elements of communication Engagement and consultation

Table continues

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-9	"Changing the organization's structure was something already predetermined at the headquarters and only communicated downwards. Technically, people just fitted within the new structure."	Decision Engagement People	Engagement and consultation Top-down decision-making Inclusive approach
KI-10	"The way I saw it being implemented is that the various team leads would discuss within the specific units and relay any concerns or suggestions that the teams had further up. There might have been a disconnect in the sense that whatever concerns you were relaying to your immediate team leader was likely to be dropped or misinterpreted along the way."	Team leader Concerns Teams	Information sharing Engagement and consultation Stakeholders' engagement

Interview question 7. "To what extent did the managers and nonmanagers interact freely during the change process at Agency X?" Table 11 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 7.

Table 11

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 7

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"Managers had their reservations towards nonmanagers. They used the various platforms that were disguised as change meetings to take care of their interests. It was never about the nonmanagers."	Mistrust Interests Stakeholders	Strained relationships Personal interests Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement
KI-2	"There was a lot of mistrust as staff felt short-changed by managers. There was no mechanism to enable managers and nonmanagers to work together for the change to work for everybody."	Mistrust Interests Stakeholders	Personal interests Strained relationships Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement
KI-3	"The whole management was being reorganized and the change had more implications for the top management prompting a mass exodus at the top. Managers were scrambling to save their jobs."	Uncertainty Interests Managers	Personal interests Impact of change
KI-4	"Lack of clarity from managers impacted on staff in a very bad way. The staff were very angry and asked managers very tough questions, which led to great discomfort and embarrassment."	Mistrust Stakeholders	Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement Strained relationships
KI-5	"There were opportunities, either personally initiated or the team meetings during which the senior most person would provide progress summary. There was also a question-and-answer session that was open to everyone, and staff were free to ask their managers questions."	Updates Question and answer	Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement
KI-6	"There were strained relations between our region and the headquarters. This meant little or no interest to support us, and the last thing on our managers' minds was what was happening to their people. They were busy fighting back a war to save themselves and their jobs.	Mistrust Interests People	Strained relationships Personal interests Inclusive approach
KI-7	"There was psychological burden to the ones being laid off, and the ones who remained did not trust the organization fully. They had seen how their colleagues had been treated, and the question at the back of their mind was 'am I next?'"	Mistrust Colleagues Uncertainty	Impact of change Strained relationships
KI-8	"There was sense of powerlessness. It was not in our place to argue for retaining a particular number of staff because we were given numbers to shave off. We did not trust each other."	Powerlessness Staff Mistrust	Personal interests Impact of change Strained relationships
KI-9	"We had good ideas but we were afraid to share with our managers, lest they came back to haunt us."	Ideas Fear Mistrust	Information sharing Engagement and consultation Inclusive approach
KI-10	"There was tension everywhere with staff repositioning themselves for new roles in case their current ones were scrapped. It was hard to tell if the interactions were genuine."	Anxiety Mistrust	Personal interests Strained relationships

Interview question 8. "To what extent were your views sought/taken in during the change process at Agency X?" Some of the sub-questions included: (a) Were the change managers/leaders open to criticism? and (b) How would you describe the process of criticism? Table 12 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 8.

Table 12

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 8

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"Africa teams were not consulted for their views on the effects of change to their programs, and even if they were, the change managers in headquarters would not have listened to us."	Teams Views Effects Programs	Inclusive approach Democratic decision-making Stakeholders' engagement Nature of decision-making
KI-2	In the regions, information trickled down from the headquarters and I think even when opinions were sought, it was in a way likely to have serious pushback from staff."	Information Opinions Staff	Access to information Bureaucratic management Stakeholders' engagement Inclusive approach
KI-3	"Staff expressed frustrations about the organizational strategy and top management through staff engagement surveys. I am not sure the issues were addressed as they touched mainly on top management and not much on the operations."	Staff Frustrations Engagement Issues	Inclusive approach Democratic decision-making Stakeholders' engagement Nature of decision-making
KI-4	"A lot of noise was made about the benefits of the change (it would be progressive, forward-looking, people would work together, we would have a better solution to meet the needs of our clients) but we were not asked how we would carry that through."	Lobbying Benefits consulted	Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement Engagement and consultation
KI-5	"There were open platforms that we could use to share our views. They were accessible and if one felt uncomfortable using them openly, they could do so anonymously without being perceived as having ulterior motive."	Platforms Views	Information sharing Access to information Stakeholders' engagement Inclusive approach
KI-6	"I think it was the President, the Vice Presidents, and Directors who made all the decisions. It was a top-down approach and we just saw the communication. Even our managers just consumed the communication. There was no decision-making or anything like that from them."	Leaders Decisions Bureaucracy	Access to information Top-down decision-making Distance from power Communication process Bureaucratic management Inclusive approach Nature of decision-making
KI-7	"Leaders at the top felt all too powerful to make decisions that everyone was expected to embrace without caring about what happened to them."	Leaders Power Decisions	Top-down decision-making Engagement and consultation Inclusive approach Nature of decision-making
KI-8	"Both managers and staff were not adequately consulted. It was just a copy-paste process from some other's change mindset."	Managers Staff	Inclusive approach
KI-9	"The intention of the organization was with finality when it came to layoffs. They just let one go and that's it! There was no discussion about that. We saw even managers were let go after they had let go of the people below them."	Intention Discussion People	Top-down decision-making Engagement and consultation Stakeholders' engagement Inclusive approach Nature of decision-making
KI-10	"Not all voices were heard because of the long bureaucracy. It would have worked better if everything was done at a flatter level."	Voices Bureaucracy	Distance from power Equality and equity Stakeholders' engagement Inclusive approach Nature of decision-making

Interview question 9. "What are your views on the way leaders/managers exercised power around issues related to the recent organizational change at Agency X?" Table 13 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 9.

Table 13

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 9

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"If it is just one group of people who decide this is the way things are going to go, it won't auger well with so many people. That's what happened in our case."	Leadership People Elites	Leadership style Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement Equality and equity
KI-2	"It was never a discussion between equals but of one in power versus one over whom the power was being wielded. We just followed through and no amount of flattering or noise from us below could change anything."	Discussion Leader Follower	Leadership style Equality and equity Inclusive approach
KI-3	"Those close to the center of power were at an advantage and were more informed. It was very difficult for those away from the headquarters to grasp how the organization worked."	Leaders Information	Equality and equity Inclusive approach
KI-4	"The managers were held hostage in a process they didn't understand and were not equipped for. It placed them in a very awkward position as we looked up to them and they didn't have the answers for us."	Powerlessness Leaders Followers	Engagement and consultation
KI-5	"Depending on who your immediate supervisor was and their perception of authority, they could either sugarcoat or change the messages you conveyed through them to avoid issues. This determined the way the messages were being received at the top and the extent to which concerns from staff were reflected in the change process."	Leaders Messages Feedback Followers	Engagement and consultation Inclusive approach Leadership style
KI-6	"There was a big issue of power, with some managers feeling entitled and full of legitimate authority to make all the decisions however lopsided the outcomes would be."	Power Authority Decisions	Quality of decisions Leadership style
KI-7	"Communication was top-down and suggestions from lower in the management ladder were treated as opinions instead of critical feedback that would have probably changed the course of the intended change."	Suggestions Opinions Feedback	Top-down decision-making Engagement and consultation Inclusive approach
KI-8	"Leaders wanted to dictate the process for their own individual benefits and selfish interests, and they used the power of their positions to do so."	Leaders Selfishness Positions	Leadership style Personal interests Equality and equity Inclusive approach
KI-9	"Managers were hardly thinking about work, the interventions they were making and productivity. They were on survival mode trying to figure out where they would be next and just about saving their jobs."	Leaders Selfishness Anxiety	Personal interests Inclusive approach
KI-10	"We were literally on our own. A small powerful clique was advancing their interests and thriving through the change. Our own managers could not even look beyond their shoulders to understand what help they could offer to their people as they too were going through the change."	Clique Selfishness Leaders People	Leadership style Personal interests Inclusive approach

    Interview question 10. "How would you describe the level of acceptance and/or resistance to the recent organizational change at Agency X?" Table 14 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 10.

Table 14

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 10

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"People did not resist openly but could have resisted internally in their hearts and kept it to themselves for fear of reprisal."	Resistance Apprehension Reprisal	Overt vs covert resistance Fear of retaliation Incentives and sanctions
KI-2	"There was a lot of resistance and everybody was apprehensive. We had not been fully explained and internalized why it needed to be done and in a hurry."	Resistance Apprehension Clarity	Overt vs covert resistance Change communication Incentives and sanctions
KI-3	"Management was reorganized and budget cuts introduced at the same time. People may have complied with the change for fear of losing their jobs to budget cuts."	Uncertainty Apprehension	Overt vs covert resistance Losses and gains Incentives and sanctions
KI-4	"I think it went very badly and it affected many people badly. The management will never know the impact of their inability to support staff and what it finally did to them and their families; destabilization, the pain, the anger."	Outcome Unsupported Pain Anger	Overt vs covert resistance Incentives and sanctions
KI-5	"I would say it has been accepted given that everyone settled in their new roles and looking at the way the institution is delivering. There have been some minor changes within the larger change process, but I wouldn't say it is something that has not been accepted."	Acceptance New roles Minor changes	Ownership and buy-in Incentives and sanctions
KI-6	"Both managers and staff had something to lose. Most managers were worried about their jobs as the change included re-organization of management. Staff did not necessarily buy into the change, but they just went along with it because projects were going on and they needed to be paid."	Loss Apprehension Payment	Incentives and sanctions Ownership and buy-in
KI-7	"Managers really suffered. They were kind of hostages of a situation which was bigger than what they could deal with. This led to anxiety and disquiet. External HR experts could have been hired to help them unpack the change, explain it, be candid, be upfront, be forthright."	Suffered Apprehension External expert	Incentives and sanctions
KI-8	"Livelihoods were at stake because jobs were at stake and people's incomes were at stake. I think there is no greater threat to a human being than loss of livelihood, which would happen and directly impact their sustenance. That was major!"	Losses Threat Livelihoods	Incentives and sanctions
KI-9	"People needed a job and when told to jump, they asked how high and jumped. They did not ask questions. So, it is difficult to know whether somebody complied because they agreed with the change or just so they didn't face retaliation that would have led to job loss."	Jobs Compliance Retaliation	Incentives and sanctions Ownership and buy-in Overt vs covert resistance
KI-10	"The loss would have been more for managers as they would lose most benefits (job, house, driver, diplomatic status) if their jobs were scrapped. That's why they went along with the change even if they didn't believe in it."	Losses Benefits	Incentives and sanctions Ownership and buy-in Overt vs covert resistance

Interview question 11. "What is the one thing that you would change about the recent reorganization process at Agency X? Why?" Table 15 below presents the specific codes and categories that were derived from examples of extracts of responses by key informants to interview question 11.

Table 15

Sample Data Extracts and Codes from Interview Question 11

	Data extracts	Codes	Categories
KI-1	"The change was founded on a very weak foundation as there was no situational analysis to clearly define its goals and benefits to every stakeholder. It didn't capture the complete picture of its impact."	Analysis Goals Benefits Stakeholders Impact	Cost-benefit analysis Inclusive approach Drivers of change Enablers of change
KI-2	"We lacked honesty and openness in the whole change management process and that led to unnecessary mistrust, yet, we all know that change is inevitable."	Honesty Mistrust Impact	Drivers of change Enablers of change Inclusive approach Stakeholders' engagement
KI-3	"We should have separated reorganization from budgeting. It was overwhelming to communicate when budget cuts got everybody worried. There were too many messages going on about the change.	Reorganization Budgeting Communication Messages	Drivers of change Stakeholders' engagement Access to information
KI-4	"I would bring in change management experts. I would seek to understand intellectually what the change really means to the people and its likely impact on them. What are the experiences of staff going to be? I don't have to do it by myself."	Experts Analysis People Impact	Enablers of change Cost-benefit analysis Stakeholders' engagement
KI-5	"It is never easy getting everyone aligned in the same direction. So, I would improve the communication element of the change. To cut out rumors, I would make sure that the information coming out of this process was of high quality and was distributed in a timely manner across all the involved individuals."	Communication Rumors Information Quality Timeliness People	Enablers of change Access to information Stakeholders' engagement
KI-6	"The change would have been more positive if it was a third party who was articulating the views of the management."	Third party Views	Enablers of change Stakeholders' engagement
KI-7	"I would advocate for more due diligence in terms of what is it that we are trying to achieve if we change from X to Y, what is it that we are losing if we are going to remain at X and not going to Y?"	Due diligence Benefits Losses	Enablers of change Cost-benefit analysis
KI-8	"I think if we had taken time to engage one of these consulting firms to critically analyze the impact of the change decision, it would have posted higher success results."	Consultants Analysis Results	Enablers of change Cost-benefit analysis
KI-9	"The change was hurried and was not adequately thought through. It was not well-informed and led to scrapping of some of the critical roles and recruited for them again, adding unnecessary costs."	Due diligence Well-informed	Enablers of change Cost-benefit analysis
KI-10	"The biggest challenge was the timeliness and control of the change information. It would have been easier to control if it came from a specific source. For credibility, let people know that the information has been deliberated and agreed upon, and not just suggestions flying from all over the place."	Information Timeliness Control Credibility People	Access to information Enablers of change Stakeholders' engagement

Table 16 below presents categories and sub-categories that were derived from the analysis of the various codes listed in Table 5 – Table 15.

Table 16

Categories and Subcategories

	Categories	Subcategories
Interview Question 1	1. Inclusive approach 2. Nature of decision-making 3. Access to information 4. Nature of change	1. (a) Stakeholders' engagement (b) Stakeholders' type 2. (a) Top-down decision-making (b) Distance from power 3. (a) Awareness creation 4. (a) Long-term vs short-term change (b) Change success factors (c) Impact of change (d) Drivers of change (e) Enablers of change (f) Components of the change process
Interview Question 2	1. Nature of decision-making 2. Impact of change 3. Inclusive approach 4. Change communication 5. Change resources	1) (a) Decentralized authority (b) Distance from power (c) Top-down decision-making (d) Reporting lines (e) Democratic leadership (f) Power and authority (g) Top-down management (h) Bureaucratic management 2) (a) Stakeholders' engagement (b) Types of stakeholders 3) (a) Access to information (b) Top-down vs participative communication 4) (a) Availability of resources (b) Access to resources (c) Equality and equity in resource allocation
Interview Question 3	1. Organizational structure 2. Inclusive approach	1. (a) Decentralized structures (b) Organizational framework (c) Organogram 2. (a) Stakeholders' engagement (b) Personal interests
Interview Question 4	1. Communication process 2. Elements of communication	1. (a) Top-down decision-making (b) Inclusive approach (c) Participative communication (d) Frequency of communication (e) Two-way feedback 2. (a) Communication content (b) Source, type and access to information (c) Communication stakeholders and their engagement (d) Type of communication (e) Communication channel
Interview Question 5	1. Ownership and buy-in 2. Engagement and consultation 3. Nature of change	1. (a) Top-down decision-making (b) Inclusive approach 2. (a) Inclusive approach (b) Access to information

	Categories		Subcategories
			(c) Change stakeholders
			(d) Stakeholders' engagement
		3.	(a) Size of institution
			(b) Magnitude of change
			(c) Organizational culture
			(d) Impact of change
Interview Question 6	1. Inclusive approach	1.	(a) Democratic vs top-down decision-making
	2. Engagement and consultation		(b) Cost-benefit analysis
		2.	(a) Stakeholders' engagement
			(b) Change stakeholders
			(c) Elements of communication
			(d) Information sharing
Interview Question 7	1. Strained relationships	1.	(a) Personal interests
	2. Inclusive approach		(b) Impact of change
		2.	(a) Stakeholders' engagement
			(b) Information sharing
Interview Question 8	1. Inclusive approach	1.	(a) Stakeholders' engagement
	2. Nature of decision-making		(b) Access to information
			(c) Information sharing
		2.	(a) Democratic vs top-down decision-making
			(b) Bureaucratic management
			(c) Equality and equity
Interview Question 9	1. Leadership style	1.	(a) Equality and equity
	2. Inclusive approach		(b) Access to information
			(c) Top-down decision-making
		2.	(a) Stakeholders' engagement
			(b) Personal interests
Interview Question 10	1. Overt vs covert resistance		(a) Fear of retaliation
	2. Incentives and sanctions		(b) Change communication
	3. Ownership and buy-in		(c) Losses and gains
Interview Question 11	1. Drivers of change		(a) Cost-benefit analysis
	2. Enablers of change		(b) Inclusive approach
			(c) Stakeholders' engagement
			(d) Access to information

Table 17 below presents themes that emerged from the categories and their corresponding sub-categories presented in Table 16. The identification of the themes and their respective sub-themes was arrived at by examining the frequency of occurrence of the respective categories (Table 17 and Figure 1).

Table 17

Categories, Frequencies, and Themes

	Categories	Frequency	Emergent themes
Interview Question 1	1) Inclusive approach 2) Nature of decision-making 3) Access to information 4) Nature of change	6/10 3/10 3/10 8/10	1) Hierarchy and its influence on inclusivity, change ownership and buy-in.
Interview Question 2	1) Nature of decision-making 2) Impact of change 3) Inclusive approach 4) Change communication 5) Change resources	9/10 4/10 2/10 5/10 1/10	1) Overbearing control of the headquarters and its impact on ownership and buy-in. 2) Inadequate support and resources for those in the regions. 3) Influence of the quality of relationship between the headquarters and the regions.
Interview Question 3	1) Organizational structure 2) Inclusive approach	10/10 9/10	1) Emphasis on organizational hardware at the expense of its employees. 2) Organizational framework vs people balance key ingredient of inclusivity.
Interview Question 4	1) Communication process 2) Elements of communication	8/10 6/10	1) Critical factors that influence change communication strategies in transnational settings.
Interview Question 5	1) Ownership and buy-in 2) Engagement and consultation 3) Nature of change	3/10 9/10 2/10	1) Limited engagement during planning and its implications on ownership and buy-in.
Interview Question 6	1) Inclusive approach 2) Engagement and consultation	5/10 10/10	1) Feedback mechanisms and their effectiveness in fostering engagement and inclusivity.
Interview Question 7	1) Strained relationships 2) Inclusive approach	7/10 6/10	1) Strained relationships between managers and employees as result of mistrust and selfish interests.
Interview Question 8	1) Inclusive approach 2) Nature of decision-making	10/10 6/10	1) Emphasis on top-down decision-making hindered participation.
Interview Question 9	1) Leadership style 2) Inclusive approach	6/10 8/10	1) Power imbalance hampered fairness and inclusivity.
Interview Question 10	1) Overt vs covert resistance 2) Incentives and sanctions 3) Ownership and buy-in	6/10 10/10 4/10	1) Acceptance to change was directly proportional to the amount of potential loss.
Interview Question 11	1) Drivers of change 2) Enablers of change	3/10 9/10	1) Internal and external drivers and enablers of change.

Content for my data analysis was drawn from interview transcripts, my

dissertation journals, reviewed partner organization documents, and my extensive

literature review. The data analysis process was directed by my research question,

interview questions, conceptual framework, and Interview Protocol Matrix. The

Interview Protocol Matrix was informed by Hofstede's (1980) framework of cultural values, a model that seeks to demystify cross-border business in terms cultural differences. Systematic coding helped me to identify repetitive patterns from my key informants' responses, which subsequently enabled me to synthesize my data into five distinct themes, which made it easier to interpret. According to Saldana (2016), one of my core goals as a coder is to find recurring patterns of action and consistencies in my key informants as documented in my data.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The researcher has responsibility of establishing rigor to persuade others of the quality of his/her research in terms of principles, standards, and strategies, and especially in reporting the research findings. Rigor is described as a process that "involves the systematic approach to research design and data analysis, interpretation, and presentation" (Hays et al., 2016, p. 173) to achieve trustworthiness of research results. To establish rigor and trustworthiness of this research, I adopted a systematic and in-depth approach to data collection and analysis while staying in tune with the philosophical beliefs and perceptions of the potential users of my research findings (Patton, 2015).

This included a clear description of the strategies and process of participants' recruitment; the steps I followed to engage with participants throughout the data collection process including my interviewing procedures, audio recording, audio back-up, transcription, and member-checking; as well as the elaborate thematic analysis that mirrored the six phases described by Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017)

including: (i) familiarization with my data, (ii) descriptive coding, (iii) identification of

themes, (iv) themes review, (v) labelling themes, and (vi) producing the report.

Before I started coding, I made effort to familiarize myself with every piece of my

data including highlighting all sections that had key information that responded to my

research question. In-depth understanding of my data ensured that I did not lose critical

insights that have significantly enriched my findings. Overall, I followed the four-point

criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely dependability, credibility,

confirmability, and transferability, to illustrate rigor and trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility

Credibility begins through thorough investigation of the theory and prior research

supporting and surrounding the phenomenon of inquiry (Patton, 2015). A number of

strategies were considered to strengthen credibility of this case study including anchoring

the study on Hofstede's (1980) model, which is a well-known and respected model of

cultural classification, in my examination of the perceived influence power distance

would likely have on organizational change in a multicultural organization. Diligence in

research design was established by ensuring strong alignment of all key components of

the study including the research question, research design, research methodology, and

research analysis.

An in-depth literature review was conducted to enhance understanding of the

concept of power distance in the context of multicultural organizational change.

Cognizant of the fact that knowledge gets obsolete very fast and that what was useful ten

years ago may not be useful in the current context, I have endeavored to cite mainly peer-

reviewed articles published not more than 5 years ago. I believe using recent primary journal articles gives more credibility to my dissertation findings considering that the world of management is changing fast and knowledge that could support certain arguments ten years ago may not hold water in the current management discourse.

To illuminate the research problem and increase objectivity of the findings, multiple data sources were used through triangulation technique that Abdalla et al. (2018) described as a technique that enables the researcher to look at the same phenomenon, or research problem, through multiple data sources. Beyond the primary perspectives that were gathered through interviews with key informants, additional viewpoints were sought from other sources of data including review of primary documents related to my partner organization's organizational change process. Overall, data were drawn from interview transcripts, journal articles, primary partner organization documents, and my extensive literature review.

Key informants were purposefully selected to ensure in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of power distance. Yin (2017) called for extensive and in-depth description of a phenomenon for findings of a case study to be considered relevant. Purposeful sampling enabled selection of key informants who had rich information for a deep and detailed study (Patton, 2015) of potential effects of power distance on a multicultural organizational change. Key informants were drawn from different tiers of staff in my partner organization to reduce the possibility of bias that could arise from picking key informants from only one level and risk receiving single-sided viewpoints.

Respondent/member validation was conducted to test the level of similarity between the findings and the viewpoints and experiences of the key informants (Bell et al., 2019). This happened through a series of recaps during the interview session and a post-interview follow-up with some of the key informants. I strived to be transparency throughout the research process by explicitly explaining the steps I was taking.

Transferability

Transferability refers to external validity, which is the potential to apply the findings of the case study in other similar settings (Yin 2017). As qualitative research is contextual, thus the findings are confined to the uniqueness of the social construct under study (Bell et al., 2019), it is a challenge determining the applicability of the findings in other contexts. To navigate this challenge, I endeavored to provide evidence that would enable the users of my study to at least compare and maybe transfer some of my findings to similar contexts (Cavalcanti, 2017). I have explicitly described the specific population of the study and how recruitment was done; highlighted potential restrictions to data from key informants because of internal information confidentially policy; disclosed the specific number of participants and the specific methods of data collection used; disclosed the number and length of data collection sessions as well as the time period of data collection; and the specific data analysis methods and procedures.

Hopefully, this explicit description of methodology will enable replication of this study's findings. My personal reflections in multicultural settings as an international development practitioner injected vigor in scrutiny of data to respond to the research question. Triangulation was also utilized as a transferability strategy as suggested by

Abdalla et al. (2018) that data from multiple sources improves the potential of reproducing the qualitative findings in other similar contexts.

Dependability

Dependability is a description of how consistent research findings are across time period and researchers (Hays et al., 2016), and unlike reliability in quantitative research where we can statistically predict the potential of similarity of results when the study is replicated in similar settings, it is impractical to do similar predictions for qualitative studies due to the fluctuations of the context and phenomena under investigation. Sarma (2015) however argued that when the research is credible, dependability would be assured to a large extent. I endeavored to achieve this by (i) grounding my conceptual framework on Hofstede's (1980) model, which is a well-known and respected model of cultural classification (ii) extensive literature review (iii) triangulation (iv) rigorous purposeful sampling (v) explicit description of my participants, their recruitment and engagement (vi) explicit description of methodology (vii) respondent/member validation; and (viii) proper preservation of all records obtained in the course of this study. All this was done with an aim to enable reproduction of this study.

From the instrumentation perspective as explained in earlier sections, a pre-designed interview protocol, interview guide and well-structured interview questions were used to not only guide the data collection process but also increase the chances of acceptance by other researchers. If researchers accept the methodology and outcomes of my study, it is likely that they will replicate it in other similar settings. To make this study dependable, I drew insights from Abdalla et al. (2018) who submitted "processes

and methods must be described in detail, which will enable another researcher to reproduce the work and not necessarily obtain the same results, but to move forward in other contexts and situations" (p. 88).

Confirmability

Confirmability entails mechanisms that the researcher employs to ensure conclusions derived from the study findings are drawn from the experiences and ideas of the research participants and not from the researcher's personal preferences, views, opinions, imaginations, or experiences (Hays et al., 2016; Patton, 2015). At the different levels of my dissertation process, I endeavored to explicitly report my beliefs that informed decision-making including choice of my research methodology, providing rationale for my choices, discussing any of personal theories that lacked confirmation from data, and providing a detailed methodological description to help the reader gauge the quality of my data. From the onset, I practiced reflective awareness and explicitly revealed all my preconceptions and beliefs, both personal and professional, that could affect this dissertation study. Reflexivity helped me think upon the context of this dissertation study and my relationship with the participants that would affect the dissertation process as well as the subsequent results (Teusner, 2016).

For example, I am a former staff of my partner organization, thus I had some understanding of what to expect from the participants. While this could have been potential source of bias, I averted it by continuously conducting self-examination. Because I used NVivo to doublecheck any keywords I might have skipped during manual coding, I engaged in reflexive assessment of its potential impact on my dissertation study

process and findings. In this context, "reflexivity incorporates an awareness of the impact of the software on judgments and actions, including the ways in which it structures qualitative research practice, and the phenomena their architecture might conceal, disclose or prefigure" (Woods et al., 2016, p. 387).

Triangulation was used to reduce personal and methodological biases (Abdalla et al., 2018) while respondent validation was conducted to test the level of similarity between the findings and the viewpoints and experiences of the study participants (Bell et al., 2019). I invested in open-ended questions to allow my key informants room to describe their lived experiences without limitations.

Study Results

This qualitative single case study was designed to rigorously explore the concept of power distance with an aim to increase understanding and general awareness of its perceived effects on the process of an organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. The central research question was "What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational change initiative in a global environment?" The conceptual framework for this study was based on Hofstede's (1980) model of cultural dimensions that differentiates cross-border business in terms of cultural differences. Using a six-point cultural model, Hofstede (1980) argued that transnational business operations varied across six cultural dimensions including individualism – collectivism, power distance, masculinity – femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term - short term orientation, and indulgence - restraint. This study primarily focused on the power distance dimension.

In-depth interviews with key informants from a multinational financial organization enabled me to obtain comprehensive descriptions of their lived experiences with the recent change in their organization in light of power distance. To grasp meaning from my collected data, I invested time and energy in manual descriptive coding to record and classify the wide range of opinions from my ten key informants (Saldana, 2016). My two-step coding procedure enabled me to meticulously filter the critical features of my data, which then helped me to generate categories, sub-categories, and main themes that would shed light on the potential influence of power distance on transnational organizational change. By methodically reviewing each of my interview questions and connecting it to a piece of evidence from my collected data, I was able to address the central research question of my study (Yin, 2017).

The Interview Protocol Matrix (Table 2) that was developed in Chapter 3 mirroring the four key aspects of an organizational change, that is, (i) change orientation, (ii) hierarchy, (iii) communication, and (iv) leader-member relations, provided me with a descriptive framework (see Yin, 2017), which made my data analysis a lot easier. The descriptive framework provided me with critical filters that helped me comprehend my data and directed its interpretation (see Saldana, 2016). The Interview Protocol Matrix was informed by Hofstede's (1980) framework of cultural values, a model that seeks to demystify cross-border business in terms cultural differences. The results reflect elements of power distance in the context of organizational change in terms of (i) direction of focus, (ii) nature of change communication, (iii) planning for change, (iv) level of consultation, and (v) effectiveness of the change process.

Data analysis took into account all data that were collected for this case study including those from interview transcripts, my dissertation journals, relevant partner organization documents, and my extensive literature review. The data analysis process was directed by my research question, interview questions, conceptual framework, and Interview Protocol Matrix. An elaborate thematic analysis consisting of six phases, that is, (i) familiarization with my data, (ii) descriptive coding, (iii) identification of themes, (iv) themes review, (v) labelling themes, and (vi) producing the report (see Nowell et al., 2017), yielded five themes from my key informants' responses. The five themes reflected the key elements of my descriptive framework captured in the Interview Protocol Matrix (change orientation, hierarchy, communication, leader-member relations).

Figure 1 below presents a synthesis of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the categories and sub-categories presented in Table 16 and Table 17. The 14 emergent themes that were identified and listed in Table 17 were further condensed into five themes and 12 sub-themes with the theme on hierarchy illuminated by four sub-themes. Each of the other four themes was illuminated by two sub-themes as presented below.
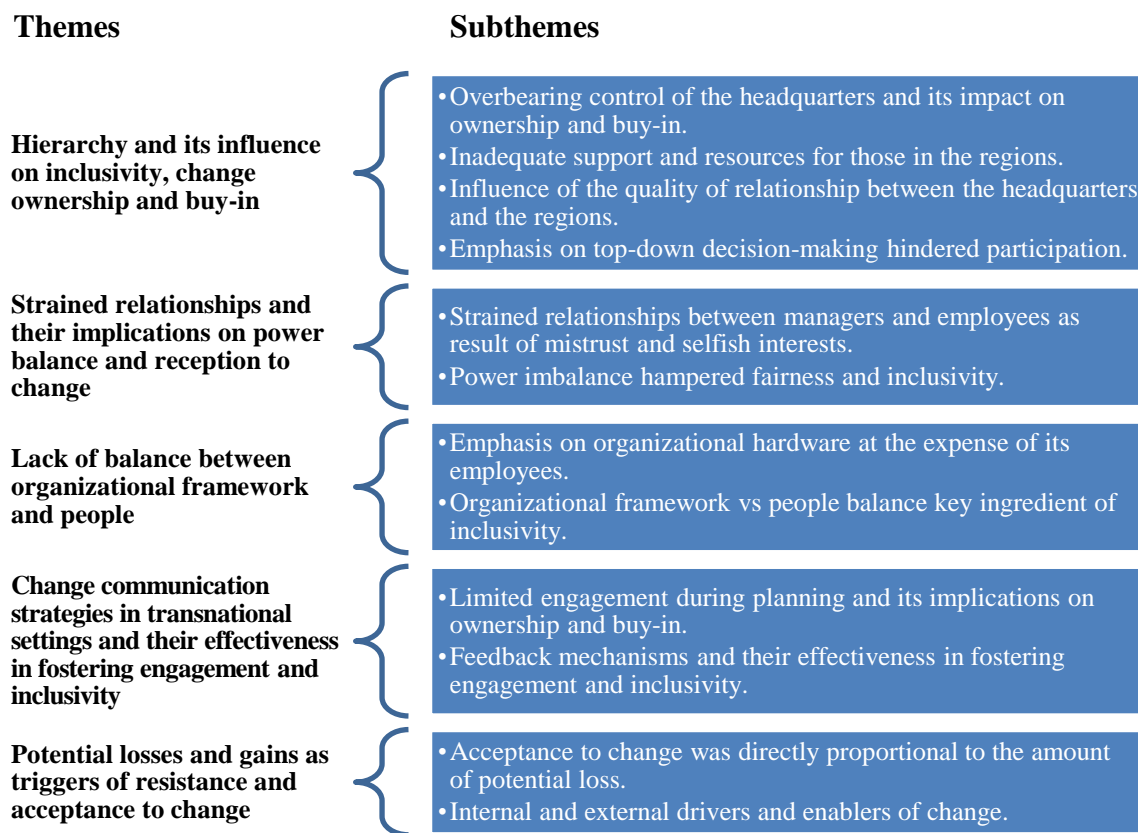
Themes   **Subthemes**

Hierarchy and its influence on inclusivity, change ownership and buy-in

- Overbearing control of the headquarters and its impact on ownership and buy-in.
- Inadequate support and resources for those in the regions.
- Influence of the quality of relationship between the headquarters and the regions.
- Emphasis on top-down decision-making hindered participation.

Strained relationships and their implications on power balance and reception to change

- Strained relationships between managers and employees as result of mistrust and selfish interests.
- Power imbalance hampered fairness and inclusivity.

Lack of balance between organizational framework and people

- Emphasis on organizational hardware at the expense of its employees.
- Organizational framework vs people balance key ingredient of inclusivity.

Change communication strategies in transnational settings and their effectiveness in fostering engagement and inclusivity

- Limited engagement during planning and its implications on ownership and buy-in.
- Feedback mechanisms and their effectiveness in fostering engagement and inclusivity.

Potential losses and gains as triggers of resistance and acceptance to change

- Acceptance to change was directly proportional to the amount of potential loss.
- Internal and external drivers and enablers of change.

Figure 1. Themes and subthemes.

Theme 1: Hierarchy and its Influence on Inclusivity, Change Ownership and Buy-in

This theme speaks to the influence hierarchy had on the process of change for the different regions. Respondents depicted hierarchy as a stumbling block that stifled inclusivity and significantly decreased ownership and buy-in of the outcomes of the organizational change. This is a critical finding for this study of power distance and its influence on organizational change as research has found a correlation between the amount of authority and power distance orientation in cross-border organizations. For instance, Kossek et al. (2017) asserted that power distance is an aspect of hierarchy,

relationship, leadership, and authority. A number of key indicators from key informants'
responses brought this theme to life, among them, stakeholders' type, level of
stakeholders' engagement, nature of decision-making, distance from power and level of
awareness across the hierarchy.

Hierarchical influence on inclusivity and ultimately on the level of ownership and
buy-in was captured strongly in the responses to interview questions 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9. In
response to interview question 1, KI-2 presented hierarchy as an aspect of distance from
power stating that "The change was initiated from the headquarters thousands of miles
away from the regions. Even managers of the regions got information second hand."
Similar sentiments were expressed by KI-4 in response to interview question 2 with the
statement that "I didn't think there was a lot of disruption and destabilization of people in
the headquarters as they were close to the center of power." In this sense, hierarchy
disenfranchised those in the regional and country offices during the change process. This
was summarized by KI-3 and KI-8 with their responses to interview question 2. KI-8 was
of the view that "Managers in the regions were not adequately supported. Resources were
available in the headquarters on career changes and financial planning, but they could not
tap into them for their staff when it mattered most. That was a big disconnect."
Additionally, KI-3 was convinced that:

> The effects of change for someone in the headquarters was different from someone
> in the country office. In the country office, there is so much that you are not aware
> of that the people in the headquarters may know about.

Key informants perceived hierarchy as one of the key factors that curtailed inclusivity, yet, inclusivity is considered a key success factor in cross-border change management. In a multinational organizational context, change managers have to grapple with a diversity of priorities, expectations, social concerns, and perceptions that differ across borders. In spite of this fact, responses to interview question 3 and interview question 8 demonstrated missed opportunities in achieving inclusivity. In his response to interview question 8, KI-1 lamented that "Africa teams were not consulted for their views on the effects of change to their programs, and even if they were, the change managers in headquarters would not have listened to us."

KI-2 viewed the way information was shared as a stumbling block for inclusivity in that it denied people in the regional and country offices equal opportunity at the change decision table. While responding to interview question 8, she pointed out that "In the regions, information trickled down from the headquarters and I think even when opinions were sought, it was in a way likely to have serious pushback from staff." The challenge of inadequate inclusion during the change was summarized by KI-7 with his response to interview question 3 in which he stated:

> In my opinion, this was a very internally-driven change. It might have been conceptualized with views from some other peer global players, the institutional Board, and top leadership, but I doubt sectoral views from our main partners and counterparts were taken on board.

This theme also portrayed hierarchy as an organizational element that can be misused for selfish gains during organizational change, often with dire consequences.

This was exemplified by KI-6, KI-8 and KI-9 in their responses to interview question 9. According to KI-6, "There was a big issue of power, with some managers feeling entitled and full of legitimate authority to make all the decisions however lopsided the outcomes would be." This was echoed by KI-8 with her statement that "Leaders wanted to dictate the process for their own individual benefits and selfish interests, and they used the power of their positions to do so." In his response, KI-9 painted a picture of misplaced priorities with his observation that "Managers were hardly thinking about work, the interventions they were making and productivity. They were on survival mode trying to figure out where they would be next and just about saving their jobs."

This demonstrates lack of empathy for those lower in the authority ladder. It led to a "them" versus "us" situation in which employees felt shortchanged by their superiors, which significantly diminished ownership and buy-in for the change. This was better described by KI-1's response to interview question 1 that "It was a supply-driven process with most of the decisions made at the top and little effort to consult on critical aspects of the change." In other words, there was little ownership of the change in terms of both the process and its outcomes.

Three discrepant perspectives emerged in responses to interview question 2 by KI-5, KI-6 and KI-7. KI-6 observed that "The hierarchy mattered as far as not being consulted or allowed to initiate communication was concerned, but it didn't matter much as both managers and nonmanagers had something to lose from this change, especially their jobs." Moreover, KI-7 indicated that "We have an open-door policy and one can easily access whoever they need to access in a very open manner. Those who were

willing to go out there and get information got it regardless of their positions." To cap it all, KI-5 was of the opinion that:

> There is no hierarchy to speak of because, yes there is of course you know, this is the boss and this is who so and so reports to, but there are no hard lines saying that you cannot talk to so and so without talking to me.

Overall, hierarchy was found to have more influence on change communication than on the other elements of organizational change. It affected the way information was shared in terms of the process, type, quality, quantity, source, timeliness, etc. Those closer to power and high up in the organizational ladder got it better than their subordinates. However, in terms of the other elements of the change, both superiors and subordinates had more or less similar experiences. The latter was illustrated by KI-6 in her response to interview question 10 that:

> Both managers and staff had something to lose. Most managers were worried about their jobs as the change included re-organization of management. Staff did not necessarily buy into the change, but they just went along with it because projects were going on and they needed to be paid.

Theme 2: Strained Relationships and Their Implications on Power Balance and Reception to Change

This theme illustrates the potential consequences of strained relationships on power balance and acceptance of the change. The quality of relationships between the change leaders and change recipients can be an enabler or an obstacle to sound organizational change. During organizational change, employee commitment is a key

ingredient for success. This commitment can be achieved only when a sound relationship exists between the employees and management of the organization that is undergoing change. As observed by Thakur and Srivastava (2018), every type of organizational change presents significant discomfort to employees and as such, it would help if change leaders maintained a good relationship with every member of the team.

The key indicators for this theme were leader-member relations, hierarchy and acceptance-resistance, which were derived from responses to interview question 2 by KI-2, KI-9, KI-10; interview question 3 by KI-2 and KI-4; interview question 4 by KI-7, interview question 5 by KI-9, interview question 7 by all key informants; interview question 8 by KI-3, KI-7, and KI-9; interview question 9 by KI-1, KI-2, KI-4, KI-5 and KI-10; interview question 10 by KI-2, KI-4, KI-5, and KI-7; and interview question 11 by KI-2. With key informants highlighting the issue of relationships in almost all the 11 interview questions, it is clear that the importance of quality relationships during organizational change cannot be overemphasized. There should be harmony between the change leaders and their followers in their perception of power during an organizational change process because as suggested by Agote et al. (2016), the reactions of change recipients are key determinant of success and failure of an organizational change initiative. Research has demonstrated that the transformational behavior of leaders contributes positively to employees' commitment to change.

Despite the critical need for high quality relationships during organizational change, responses from key informants reflected disharmony during the change in this multinational organization as was manifested in (a) overbearing control of the

headquarters; (b) strained relationships between managers and employees, which were occasioned by widespread mistrust and selfish interests; (c) power imbalance, which hampered fairness and inclusivity; (d) emphasis on top-down decision-making, which hindered participation; and (e) limited engagement and ineffective feedback mechanisms. The poor state of leader-member relations was demonstrated by KI-2 in her response to interview question 2 with her testimony that:

> Some colleagues got emails to the effect that their contracts had ended. Even if they wanted to forward to the staff association to help them, they could not because the e-mails had been encrypted. The decision had already been made at the top.

> Poor relationships resulted into skewed support and inequality in distribution of

resources as illustrated by KI-6 with her response to interview question 7. She stated that:

> There were strained relations between our region and the headquarters. This meant little or no interest to support us, and the last thing on our managers' minds was what was happening to their people. They were busy fighting back a war to save themselves and their jobs.

The amount of power and authority as well as position in the hierarchy were seen as key determinants of the quality of relationships between subordinates and their superiors. According to KI-7 in his response to interview question 8, "Leaders at the top felt all too powerful to make decisions that everyone was expected to embrace without caring about what happened to them." There was debilitating fear of authority as attested by KI in his response to interview question 7 that "We had good ideas but we were afraid to share with our managers, lest they came back to haunt us." KI-2 summarized these

viewpoints with her response to interview question 9. She stated that "It was never a discussion between equals but of one in power versus one over whom the power was being wielded. We just followed through and no amount of flattering or noise from us below could change anything."

Change recipients are no longer passive receivers, thus, it is imperative that their perspectives are fully understood to increase success rate of a change initiative. Employees' attitudes towards organizational change, says Cinite and Duxbury (2018), may range from enthusiastic support to strong resistance. Some of this reaction may be triggered by the degree of closeness between the respective leaders and employees, and how close or far the employees may feel from their leaders during a change process will determine if they support or resist it. This notwithstanding, KI-10 expressed disappointment in her response to interview question 9 that:

> We were literally on our own. A small powerful clique was advancing their interests and thriving through the change. Our own managers could not even look beyond their shoulders to understand what help they could offer to their people as they too were going through the change.

Owing to this recognition of balance of power as a key ingredient for successful organizational change, it is imperative that change leaders fully understand all aspects of power and their influence on employees' response to change. Yet, as indicated by Cinite and Duxbury (2018), employees' attitude to change often remains unknown to their employers and managers as they may not be necessarily reflected in day-to-day

employees' behavior. In her response to interview question 10, KI-4 agrees with this statement. She stated that:

> I think it went very badly and it affected many people badly. The management will never know the impact of their inability to support staff and what it finally did to them and their families. Destabilization, the pain, the anger.

This lack of empathy for subordinates resulted into costly resistance, which could have been averted if managers had taken time to understand the needs and fears of their staff. According to KI-2 in her response to interview question 10, "There was a lot of resistance and everybody was apprehensive. We had not been fully explained and internalized why it needed to be done and in a hurry." This misunderstanding had a ripple effect that could linger on for a long time to come as was attested by KI-7 in his response to interview question 7. He stated that:

> There was psychological burden to the ones being laid off, and the ones who remained did not trust the organization fully. They had seen how their colleagues had been treated, and the question at the back of their mind was "am I next?"

Theme 3: Lack of Balance Between Organizational Framework and People

This theme puts into perspective the importance of a balance between organizational framework and people as key to enhancing inclusivity during organizational change. Whether happening in one or multiple countries, research has underscored the need for a holistic approach that takes into account both the organizational structure and its people during change. Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) advises every organization to strive for an integrated approach to organizational change

so as to consider diverse organizational structures, systems, strategies, human resources, and change methodology. This theme interrogates orientation to organizational change and what it portends for the level of inclusivity and acceptance of the change. Insights were drawn from responses to interview question 1 by KI-3 and KI-8; interview question 3 by KI-1, KI-5, KI-6, KI-8, KI-9, and KI-10; interview question 5 by KI-4 and KI-7; and interview question 6 by KI-9.

Responses to the interview questions revealed an imbalance between organizational framework and people during the change in this multinational organization. Key informants felt that there was more emphasis on the organizational hardware at the expense of its employees. According to KI-1, "Geographical structures were broken down." Responding to interview question 6, KI-9 stated that "Changing the organization's structure was something already predetermined at the headquarters and only communicated downwards. Technically, people just fitted within the new structure." In interview question 3, he was of the view that "It was more of a re-organization of how we worked and delivered. In the lending arm, it created new positions to cater for the new structure."

In her response to interview question 3, KI-8 observed that "Factors like economic sense and resource management determined the direction of the change and especially on which jobs should go. One's pay grade determined whether they would be retrenched." These views were summarized by KI-3 in his response to interview question 1 with his statement that "I feel that they just wanted some change and the leadership may not have thought of meaningful long-term change. It was more about changing the face of the organization rather than the underlying structures."

While some such as Wang (2015) may view organizational change as a critical undertaking that promotes optimization of the organizational structure to navigate turbulence and fierce competition, overlooking organizational staff could lead to failure. If staff feel shortchanged, they could get frustrated and likely sabotage the change process. This is exemplified by KI-4 in her response to interview question 5 in which she expressed frustration that staff were not adequately informed of the change, meaning they were not adequately involved. She stated that "Despite it being such a big and complex change, people didn't know where it was heading. You see where the pain is? We were not involved in designing it and we did not know its implication." According to KI-10 in her response to interview question 3, "The organization was thinking about its shareholders, especially their big shareholders. It was about them and not the employees."

Despite the imbalance between structure and people, some key informants saw something good with the approach. In her response to interview question 1, KI-8 stated that "the vision was very good in terms of marrying the lending and non-lending arms, but implementation and the roll out of that vision is what did not happen the way it should have." Others rationalized the imbalance, for instance, in his response to interview question 5, KI-7 submitted that:

> With such a big institution as ours undergoing such a humongous change, you
> might not be able to bring everyone to the table, address all the concerns, and
> provide a clear picture to everyone in terms of how every person would be affected.

Discrepant viewpoints emerged from responses to interview question 3 by KI-5 and KI-6. According to KI-6, there was an attempt at integrated approach between the

organizational goals and its people. She described it as "a change process that started off with institutional goals but very much so tried to bring in the people." Overall, KI-5 was of the view that "You cannot prioritize the institutional framework over the people and you cannot prioritize the people over the institutional framework and the delivery mandate that has been given to the institution. They go hand-in-hand." This is consistent with the suggestion by Sikdar and Payyazhi (2014) that a holistic approach to organizational change would ensure coordination and integration of cross-functional activities across the organization.

Theme 4: Change Communication Strategies in Transnational Settings and Their Effectiveness in Fostering Engagement and Inclusivity

This theme highlights critical factors that take center stage when planning change communication strategies in transnational settings in order to strengthen leader-member relations and increase acceptance. Communication reflects the relationship between change leaders and change recipients, and depending on its quality, it can be an enabler or an obstacle to sound organizational change. Managing communication amid turbulence and uncertainty of change is a challenging undertaking, thus the need for a clear understanding of the factors that determine its effectiveness. Of all the factors blamed for failure of most of the change initiatives, Parsells (2017) says there is consensus among researchers that the degree of success of implementation of change depends on the level of employees' understanding of the change and their perception of its value. Sound communication strategies are critical tools for providing requisite guidance and support during change design and implementation.

Despite its critical role during change, responses from key informants revealed communication strategies that were anything but supportive. For the better part, the amount and quality of communication were skewed with those in the regional and country offices getting a raw deal. Responding to interview question 2, KI-10 stated that "The flow of change messages was debilitatingly bureaucratic. The top had access to critical information in time, but how it trickled down was determined by the relationship between the regions and the center of power in the headquarters." Similar sentiments were expressed by KI-3 in his response to interview question 4 that "Those in headquarters had access to more information than those in the country offices. Yet, equity in access to information during change is critical as it is important not to have communication vacuum when the uncertainty is high."

With early access to information, those at the headquarters had an opportunity to provide inputs to the change process ahead of their colleagues in the regional and country offices. There was however no certainty that their contributions were taken into account as was expressed by KI-6 in her response to interview question 5 that "We had an opportunity to make our contribution to the process through staff surveys. I can't tell how much of it was included in the plans."

In this theme, change communication is explored from a number of indicators including communication process, engagement and feedback mechanisms, hierarchy, content, tools and platforms, and the nature of communication approach. The communication process was found to be largely ineffective with key informants citing

significant flaws ranging from its content to presentation. To some, it appeared as a

rumor and noise as was described by KI-2 while responding to interview question 5 that

"The change began with a rumor, which was actually confirmed and formalized. In the

regions and country offices, we were just told to implement it." From KI-4's perspective,

the communication process was incomplete, with emphasis on messages about the

benefits of the change without defining how that would be achieved. She stated that "A

lot of noise was made about the benefits of the change…..but we were not asked how we

would carry that through."

In terms of content, the change communication was criticized as having lacked

integrity with KI-2 describing it as one devoid of honesty. Responding to interview

question 11, she lamented that "We lacked honesty and openness in the whole change

management process and that led to unnecessary mistrust, yet, we all know that change is

inevitable." Responding to interview question 4, she summarized the integrity issue with

a statement that:

> They were not being honest in what they were doing, hiding behind abstract
>
> terminologies, e.g., right sizing, or scaling down, or making it technically
>
> appropriate, verifying the numbers, business needs, etc. These terminologies can
>
> sound abstract but in reality, end up meaning we are laying off.

However, respondents acknowledged existence of requisite platforms and tools

that enabled change communication throughout the process. Diverse platforms were cited

including unit meetings, video conferences, group meeting calls, question and answer

sessions, staff engagement surveys, facilitated team feedback sessions, and online

websites. Responding to interview question 8, KI-5 stated that "There were open platforms that we could use to share our views. They were accessible and if one felt uncomfortable using them openly, they could do so anonymously without being perceived as having ulterior motive." This was echoed by KI-8 while responding to interview question 6. She stated that "The platforms to ensure that the information was relayed from the bottom-up and decisions were made in such a way that they included everyone's sentiments, were there." She however could not confirm the extent of their use and concluded that "How well those tools and platforms were used, is another question."

Despite the availability of a wide array of platforms, their efficacy as tools for stakeholders' engagement and feedback gathering attracted wide criticism. Key informants expressed doubt that the communication platforms achieved the intended results. The criticism ranged from lack of clarity to selective application of the received feedback. Responding to interview question 7, KI-4 complained about lack of clarity stating that "Lack of clarity from managers impacted on staff in a very bad way. The staff were very angry and asked managers very tough questions, which led to great discomfort and embarrassment." KI-3 doubted that feedback perceived to criticize top management was ever utilized. Responding to interview question 8, he suggested that "Staff expressed frustrations about the organizational strategy and top management through staff engagement surveys. I am not sure the issues were addressed as they touched mainly on top management and not much on the operations."

Respondents further portrayed communication as a process that was fraught with discrimination. Key informants were of the view that the communication platforms

benefited top management and those at the headquarters more than the regional and country offices. Hierarchy was found to have exacerbated discrimination. In response to interview question 8, KI-7 suggested that "Communication was top-down and suggestions from lower in the management ladder were treated as opinions instead of critical feedback that would have probably changed the course of the intended change." Similar sentiments were expressed by KI-10 in response to interview question 8. She stated that "Not all voices were heard because of the long bureaucracy. It would have worked better if everything was done at a flatter level." These sentiments were summarized by KI-5 in his response to interview question 8 that:

> Depending on who your immediate supervisor was and their perception of authority, they could either sugarcoat or change the messages you conveyed through them to avoid issues. This determined the way the messages were being received at the top and the extent to which concerns from staff were reflected in the change process.

Discrepant views were expressed by KI-5 who felt that the process involved everyone and that there were sufficient opportunities available to everyone to engage. Responding to interview question 4, he observed that "Communication was continuous, which provided some sense of comfort. There were adequate communication channels and opportunities to speak up. We did staff surveys to get staff feedback." In interview question 7, he added that:

> There were opportunities, either personally initiated or the team meetings during which the senior most person would provide progress summary. There was also a

question-and-answer session that was open to everyone, and staff were free to ask their managers questions.

Despite the many challenges cited above, communication provided critical support to the organizational change in this multinational finance institution. Responding to interview question 6, KI-7 expressed gratitude that "At the very least, we got continuous updates in terms of where things were going, what was going to be discontinued and what new opportunities were coming up." Additionally, in interview question 5, KI-10 was of the view that "It appeared like the process involved everyone through various communication platforms, and may be some of the initial plans were amended at some point to factor in comments raised by the teams."

Theme 5: Potential Losses and Gains as Triggers of Resistance and Acceptance to Change

This theme explains some of the factors that influenced acceptance and/or resistance to the organizational change in this multinational organization. To succeed, an organizational change process requires total commitment and buy-in from all stakeholders. Most importantly, there should be harmony between leaders and employees. While leaders play a critical role of providing an enabling environment for change, employees are key interface between the organization and its goals (Parsells, 2017). They determine if the outcomes of these goals will be successful, including organizational change goals.

Key informants expressed reservations towards the organizational change that took place. They cited a number of reasons for their viewpoint including bureaucratic approach,

discrimination, skewed information sharing, inadequate capacity, lack of equity in resource

distribution, power imbalance, and lack of empathy, among others. Decisions on the

change were largely made at the top with little or no regard for the views from those at the

lower levels in the organizational ladder. The headquarters was found to exert overbearing

control over those in the regional and country offices. According to KI-9 in interview

question 8 "The intention of the organization was with finality when it came to layoffs.

They just let one go and that's it! There was no discussion about that."

Employees felt shortchanged by their managers, which led to strained relationships.

To a large extent, employees viewed their managers as traitors who would stop at nothing

to betray them as long as their jobs were guaranteed. Responding to interview question 9,

KI-10 stated that "We were literally on our own. A small powerful clique was advancing

their interests and thriving through the change. Our own managers could not even look

beyond their shoulders to understand what help they could offer to their people."

Employees were apprehensive that they were left out of decision-making for the change,

yet it had life-changing implications for their livelihoods. They were unhappy about the

blatant entitlement displayed by their managers. In interview question 9, KI-6 stated that

"There was a big issue of power, with some managers feeling entitled and full of legitimate

authority to make all the decisions however lopsided the outcomes would be."

In addition to power imbalance, the headquarters was accused of discrimination in

allocation of resources that seldom benefited the field offices. As summarized by KI-8 in

interview question 2, "Managers in the regions were not adequately supported. Resources

were available in the headquarters on career changes and financial planning, but they

could not tap into them for their staff when it mattered most." In interview question 4, KI-3 stressed that "Those in headquarters had access to more information than those in the country offices." They were also faulted for showing preference for those in the lending arm over those in the non-lending arm. KI-7 summarized this in interview question 1 with his statement that "If you are letting go of the people who have the technical knowledge, then you are retraining the people who are doing the lending, it means that you are putting more weight on lending and disbursement." These examples point to strained relationships between the headquarters and the regions, which according to KI-6 in interview question 7 "meant little or no interest to support us."

Uncertainty and threat of job loss stood out as key factors that worked against buy-in of the change. There was widespread belief that managers would lose more by virtue of the privileges bestowed upon them by their positions. In interview question 10, KI-9 submitted that "The loss would have been more for managers as they would lose most benefits (job, house, driver, diplomatic status) if their jobs were scrapped." This was contrary to the views by KI-6 in interview question 10 that "Both managers and staff had something to lose. Most managers were worried about their jobs as the change included re-organization of management. Staff…went along with it because projects were going on and they needed to be paid." These views were summarized by KI-8 in interview question 10. She stated that:

> Livelihoods were at stake because jobs were at stake and people's incomes were at stake. I think there is no greater threat to a human being than loss of livelihood, which would happen and directly impact their sustenance. That was major!

Evidence of mutual benefits from the change initiative, says Will (2015), is key to reducing resistance and increasing acceptance to change. From the foregoing examples however, the change seemed to benefit some group of people at the expense of another. However, some discrepant viewpoints were identified. In interview question 1, KI-6 was in favor of the change. She stated that "In itself, I think it was not a bad change given the need to bring the innovative technologies and innovative thinking that we had into the designing of exciting projects." On his part, responding to interview question 10, KI-5 was of the view that that change was accepted across the board. He stated that:

> I would say it has been accepted given that everyone settled in their new roles and looking at the way the institution is delivering. There have been some minor changes within the larger change process, but I wouldn't say it is something that has not been accepted.

Summary

This chapter has summarized the research setting and described the key informants of my study in terms of their demographic characteristics including the category in which they fall (manager or nonmanager), the region they hail from, their gender, their professional background, and the length of service in my partner organization. It further described the procedures that were used for data collection and analysis including a summary of codes and themes that were identified from raw data that were drawn from responses from the key informants in regard to the five indicators of power distance (level of focus, nature of change communication, planning for change, level of consultation, and effectiveness of the change process).

The data analysis process was directed by my research question, interview questions, conceptual framework, and Interview Protocol Matrix. The Interview Protocol Matrix was informed by Hofstede's (1980) framework of cultural values, a model that seeks to demystify cross-border business in terms cultural differences. Systematic coding helped me to identify repetitive patterns from my key informants' responses, which subsequently enabled me to synthesize my data into five distinct themes, which made it easier to interpret. Finally, the chapter highlighted procedures that were followed to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

In the following chapter 5, I have presented the interpretation of my findings on the basis of the five themes that emerged in chapter 4. I further discussed the relationship of my findings with knowledge in extant literature regarding how power distance manifests during transnational organizational change. The chapter also highlighted the limitations of my study, recommendations and opportunities for further research. I also discussed the implications of my findings for positive social change and managerial practice, as well as methodological and institutional implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this single case study of a multinational financial organization was to explore the concept of power distance with an aim to increase understanding and general awareness of its perceived effects on the process of an organizational change in a global and multicultural environment. The nature of the study was qualitative and was designed to answer one central research question:

RQ: What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational

change initiative in a global environment?

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Hofstede's (1980) model of cultural dimensions that differentiates cross-border business in terms of cultural differences. Hofstede challenged the widespread assumption that management principles and practices can be universally applied across the world (Jackson, 2020). Using a six-point cultural model, Hofstede argued that transnational business operations varied across six cultural dimensions, namely (a) long term–short term orientation, (b) individualism–collectivism, (c) power distance, (d) masculinity–femininity, (e) indulgence–restraint, and (f) uncertainty avoidance. This study primarily focused on the power distance dimension.

An elaborate thematic data analysis yielded five themes from the responses provided by my 10 key informants. They included (a) hierarchy and its influence on inclusivity, change ownership, and buy-in; (b) strained relationships and their implications on power balance and reception to change; (c) lack of balance between organizational framework and people; (d) change communication strategies in transnational settings and their effectiveness in fostering engagement and inclusivity; and

(e) potential losses and gains as triggers of resistance and acceptance to change. The five themes provided the foundation for interpretation of the findings of this study.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study confirmed the testament in extant literature that the role of culture in shaping organizational processes, including organizational change, cannot be overemphasized. Culture plays a pivotal role in managerial processes, and it is critical for decision-makers to fully understand organizational culture to understand their organization better, identify its peculiarities, and better predict its reaction to their various decisions (Ogîgău-Neamțiu & Antonoaie, 2019). This understanding is even more important in global organizations that must grapple with understanding diverse cultures from different countries during an organizational change process (Göktürk, Bozoglu, & Günçavdi, 2017).

Increased globalization has resulted in a proliferation of organizations that have decentralized their operations across national boundaries. These organizations are served by heterogenous teams from different nationalities who are characterized by diverse cultural backgrounds, values, and behaviors. These peculiarities dictate the way things are done as they determine the quality of relationships, interactions, and perceptions during organizational processes such as organizational change (Demmler, Ortiz Ayala, & Urbiola Solís, 2018). Among the elements of cultural diversity, a successful implementation of organizational change across national boundaries requires a deep understanding and awareness of the cultural aspect of power distance. Understanding

how power distance impacts people would aid understanding and anticipating their

reaction to organizational change (Rao & Pearce, 2016).

Table 18 below presents a snapshot of the responses to the interview questions

from which the five themes emerged.

Table 18

Coverage of the Respective Themes by Responses to the Different Interview Questions

Theme	Interview questions with responses that illuminate the respective themes										
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Hierarchy and its influence on inclusivity, change ownership and buy-in	■	■	■					■	■		
Strained relationships and their implications on power balance and reception to change	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lack of balance between organizational framework and people	■		■		■						
Change communication strategies in transnational settings and their effectiveness in fostering engagement and inclusivity	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Potential losses and gains as triggers of resistance and acceptance to change	■	■		■		■	■	■	■		

Q1-Q11 (Interview question 1 – Interview question 11) ■ *Question where theme is addressed*

Hierarchy and its Influence on Inclusivity, Change Ownership, and Buy-in

As it emerged in the findings of this study, when power resides in the hands of

few people, the organization becomes less innovative (Ogîgău-Neamțiu & Antonoaie,

2019), and any attempt at change may not yield positive results. Centralization of power

is an indicator of high power distance. The findings of this study portray hierarchy as a stumbling block to successful organizational change as it was found to stifle inclusivity, which ultimately decreased ownership and buy-in of the outcomes of the change. There was lack of empathy for those lower in the authority ladder and employees felt shortchanged by their superiors. Those closer to power and high up in the organizational ladder received better attention and more resources than their subordinates. Regional and country offices were denied equal opportunity at the change decision table as all key decisions were made in the headquarters.

Generally, hierarchy disenfranchised those in the regional and country offices as well as those in the lower rungs in the authority ladder. This theme portrays hierarchy as an organizational element that can be misused for selfish gains during organizational change, often with dire consequences. Schirmer and Geithner (2018) blame this outcome on mainstream literature that often present organizational change as an elitist undertaking that should be driven exclusively by the top leadership of the organization.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of prior research that have portrayed organizational change as a highly political process the success of which depends largely on the level of leadership support, effectiveness of change agents, and quality of interactions between the leaders and the recipients of the outcome of change (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Lawrence, 2015). The amount of power and authority displayed across the hierarchy determine the level of acceptance or resistance to change, with change leaders expected to be effective intermediaries (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Lawrence, 2015). The role of change leaders is far more complicated in a global

organization and especially so for those operating away from their organization's headquarters and thus far from organizational authority (Acquier et al., 2018).

Key informants perceived hierarchy as one of the key factors that curtailed inclusivity, yet, inclusivity is considered a key success factor in cross-border change to manage diversity of priorities, expectations, social concerns, and perceptions that differ across borders. Among other factors, the amount of authority in cross-border organizations is influenced by power difference orientation. While people from cultures with a high power distance are perceived to respect authority and voluntarily accept an uneven distribution of power, those from cultures with a low power distance are often suspicious of those in authority, are quick to question authority, and would like to be involved in making decisions that affect them (Helpap, 2016; Janicijevic, 2014). While the findings of the current study point to high power distance tendencies in the way key informants perceived power and authority during the change, there is need for further studies to ascertain whether they voluntarily accepted the unequal distribution of authority or just did so because they did not have other choices.

Strained Relationships and Their Implications on Power Balance and Reception to Change

Despite the critical need for high quality relationships to navigate uncertainty during change, this theme presents evidence of disharmony during the change in this multinational organization that was manifested in (a) overbearing control of the headquarters; (b) strained relationships between managers and employees occasioned by widespread mistrust and selfish interests; (c) power imbalance, which hampered fairness

and inclusivity; (d) emphasis on top-down decision-making, which hindered participation; and (e) limited engagement and ineffective feedback mechanisms. To improve leader-member relations, there should be harmony between the change leaders and their followers in their perception of power during an organizational change process. Leaders' behavior plays a critical role in promoting employees' commitment to an organizational change initiative (Abrell-Vogel & Rowold, 2014) as reactions of change recipients determine its success and failure (Agote et al., 2016).

In the current study, the amount of power and authority as well as position in the hierarchy were seen as key determinants of the quality of relationships between subordinates and their superiors. As revealed by key informants, poor relationships resulted into skewed support and inequality in distribution of resources; debilitating fear of authority; and a general lack of empathy for subordinates. This resulted into costly resistance, which could have been averted if managers had taken time to understand and address the needs and fears of their staff. Every type of organizational change presents significant discomfort (Aslam et al., 2018), which could be complicated by poor relationships. Finding some balance in the way power is exercised during change can achieve some level of good relationships between leaders and their subordinates.

Owing to this recognition of balance of power as a key ingredient for successful organizational change, it is imperative that change leaders fully understand all aspects of power and their influence on employees' response to change. Yet, as indicated by Cinite and Duxbury (2018), employees' attitude to change often remains unknown to their employers and managers as they may not be necessarily reflected in day-to-day

employees' behavior. This is consistent with the findings of this study that revealed a general lack of empathy for employees. Key informants held the view that the management did not understand the negative impact the change had on the employees. Yet, Thakur and Srivastava (2018) place the critical responsibility of providing the requisite support to employees on the organization's top leaders because their behavior becomes employees' reference point during uncertainty.

Research has demonstrated that the transformational behavior of leaders contributes positively to employees' commitment to change. Change recipients are no longer passive receivers, thus, it is imperative that their perspectives are fully understood to increase success rate of a change initiative. Employees' attitudes towards organizational change, said Cinite and Duxbury (2018), may range from enthusiastic support to strong resistance. Some of this reaction may be triggered by the degree of closeness between the respective leaders and employees, and how close or far the employees may feel from their leaders during a change process will determine if they support or resist it. The findings of the current study revealed significant resistance attributed to the cluelessness of managers who did not know how to treat the employees.

There is growing interest among researchers on the change recipients and their experiences. It is increasingly emerging that leaders have a significant influence on employees' behavior and reaction during organizational change, and emphasis is being placed on the importance of focusing attention on employees during the change process (Oreg et al., 2018). This theme was illuminated by responses across all the 11 interview questions of this study. This is a clear indication that the quality of relationships is a key

determinant of the outcome of an organizational change process. This is especially more important for transnational organizational change as the relationships are influenced by the national cultures of the participating change actors.

Lack of Balance Between Organizational Framework and People

This theme points to a leaning towards organizational framework. Responses to the interview questions revealed an imbalance between organizational framework and people during the change in this multinational organization. Key informants felt that there was more emphasis on the organizational hardware at the expense of its employees. This is contrary to the teachings in the existing literature that organizational change should consider all aspects of the organization including its people, structure, technology, processes, culture and resources (Aslam et al., 2018). Whether happening in one or multiple countries, research has underscored the need for a holistic approach that considers both the organizational structure and its people during change.

Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) advises every organization to strive for an integrated approach to organizational change so as to consider diverse organizational elements including structures, systems, strategies, human resources, and change methodology. This is echoed by other researchers such as Janićijević (2017) who submits that organizational change is a combination of hard components (organizational structure, organizational control) and soft components (organizational culture, organizational leadership) that must be balanced for change to be successful.

However, the findings of this study revealed more focus on institutional goals, economic sense, resource management, reorganization of the organogram, and

reconstruction of the organizational structure. From the findings, there is evidence that employees' welfare was ignored in favor of the organization's big shareholders. The change focused more on sustaining the institution's capital investment and much less on employees' welfare. Key informants found the change process to be inhuman and one that was characterized by unfair ambitions, selfish interests, and power games.

While organizational change is a critical undertaking that promotes optimization of the organizational structure to navigate turbulence (Wang, 2015), overlooking the needs and aspirations of employees could lead to failure. If employees feel shortchanged, they could get frustrated and likely sabotage the change process. In their exploratory study to identify managerial aspects that influence business process workflow redesign, Sikdar and Payyazhi (2014) concluded that softer aspects such as top management support, project champions, effective change communication, and inter-departmental collaboration are just as important as the business corporate strategy. For a global organization that is undergoing change, the list of these soft aspects grows to include the cultural aspect of power distance. The focus on organizational goals and structure in this study is an indication of high power distance orientation. In low power distance situations, the change would have been more employee-centered.

Change Communication Strategies in Transnational Settings and Their Effectiveness in Fostering Engagement and Inclusivity

Managing communication amid turbulence and uncertainty of change is a challenging undertaking, thus the need for a clear understanding of the factors that determine its effectiveness. Of all the factors blamed for failure of most of the change

initiatives, there is consensus among researchers that the degree of success of implementation of change depends on the level of employees' understanding of the change and their perception of its value (Parsells, 2017). Sound communication strategies are critical tools for providing requisite guidance and support during change design and implementation. However, this theme revealed communication strategies that were anything but supportive. For the better part, the amount and quality of communication were skewed with those in the regional and country offices getting a raw deal.

With early access to information, those at the headquarters had an opportunity to provide inputs to the change process ahead of their colleagues in the regional and country offices. There was however no certainty that their contributions were taken into account. The communication process was found to be largely ineffective with key informants citing significant flaws ranging from its content to presentation. To some, it appeared as a rumor and noise, while to some, the communication process was incomplete, with emphasis on messages about the benefits of the change without defining how that would be achieved. In terms of content, it was criticized as having lacked integrity and honesty. These findings are cause for concern because the quality and amount of communication is also a critical determinant of the outcome of a change initiative. A number of researchers have argued that the outcome of a change initiative is significantly influenced by the approach with which necessary changes are communicated to the employees whose work lives would be affected by the change (Helpap, 2016; Klonek et al., 2014).

While respondents acknowledged existence of diverse communication platforms and tools (unit meetings, video conferences, group meeting calls, question and answer

sessions, staff engagement surveys, facilitated team feedback sessions, and online websites), they could not confirm the extent of their use. Their efficacy as tools for stakeholders' engagement and feedback gathering was widely criticized, ranging from lack of clarity to selective application of the received feedback.

Key informants expressed doubt that feedback perceived to criticize top management was ever utilized. The communication process was found to be discriminatory, benefiting only top management and those at the headquarters. Hierarchy was found to have exacerbated discrimination. Research has provided evidence that a more inclusive communication strategy provides opportunity to change recipients to participate proactively in the organizational change process (Helpap, 2016; Aslam et al., 2018).

The type of power distance orientation likely affected the effectiveness of communication. Anand et al. (2018) submitted social distance has implications on the degree of closeness, quality of communication, and extent of information sharing between leaders and followers during and organizational process. According to Helpap (2016), one's power distance inclination influences their reaction to change communication because power distance impacts the relationships between managers and their subordinates. People do not evaluate change communication in a uniform way because power distance manifests in someone's attitudes, assumptions and behavior, all which vary from person to person. This may explain the discrepant finding in this study whereby some key informants felt that the communication process involved everyone and that there were sufficient opportunities available to everyone to engage, while majority criticized it for lack of inclusivity. This is consistent with Helpap's (2016) submission

that people follow distinct interpretation schemes to decipher change communication based on their power distance orientation.

Potential Losses and Gains as Triggers of Resistance and Acceptance to Change

Organizational change literature has unequivocally recognized stakeholders' commitment, ownership and buy-in as critical success factors for organizational change. Most importantly, there should be harmony between leaders and employees. While leaders play a critical role of providing an enabling environment for change, employees are key interface between the organization and its goals (Parsells, 2017). They determine if the outcomes of these goals will be successful, including organizational change goals. Change leaders play a key role of intermediaries to reduce resistance and encourage their colleagues to adopt new ways of doing things (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Lawrence, 2015). Their role is much more complicated in a multinational context and especially so for those operating away from their organization's headquarters, and thus far from organizational authority (Acquier et al., 2018).

Stakeholders' buy-in and commitment translates into acceptance of the change outcomes. Resistance increases conflicts that jeopardize uptake of the change (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). However, this theme portrays significant resistance to the organizational change that took place in this multinational organization. Respondents attributed their source of unhappiness to the bureaucratic approach, discrimination, skewed information sharing, inadequate capacity, lack of equity in resource distribution, power imbalance, and lack of empathy, that characterized the change process. Evidence provided by key informants revealed that decisions on the change were largely made at

the top with little or no regard for the views from those at the lower levels in the organizational ladder. The headquarters was found to exert overbearing control over those in the regional and country offices.

In addition to power imbalance, the headquarters was accused of discrimination in allocation of resources that seldom benefited the field offices. They were also faulted for showing preference for those in the lending arm over those in the non-lending arm. Yet, research has demonstrated that evidence of mutual benefits from the change initiative is key to reducing resistance and increasing acceptance to change (Will, 2015). However, in this case, the change seemed to benefit some group of people at the expense of another.

Employees felt shortchanged by their managers, who they largely viewed as traitors who would stop at nothing to betray them as long as their jobs were guaranteed. They were apprehensive that they were left out of decision-making for the change, yet it impacted their lives in significant ways. They were unhappy about the blatant entitlement of their managers. These examples point to strained relationships between the headquarters and the regions, and between managers and their subordinates. Literature has acknowledged the overwhelming discomfort that accompanies organizational change due to uncertainty that often leads to insecurity, depression, and stress. Consequently, researchers call for a rigorous investigation to identify enablers of organizational change to reduce resistance (Aslam et al., 2018). Advancing this discourse, Will (2015) suggested that change managers can avert resistance to change by triggering self-interest to change among staff. In the current study, managers fell short of this requirement.

This seemingly autocratic change approach that was followed by this multinational organization could have drawn inspiration from the widespread assumption in extant management literature that the steering role in organizational change belongs to the management (Schirmer & Geithner, 2018). This mindset ought to be changed because employees too must have an equal position on the change decision table, otherwise there will be resistance. Power distance orientation might have influenced the relationships between managers and employees. Those from countries with high power distance orientation may view managers as people who know it all and will unlikely question their decisions, while those from low distance contexts will want to be involved actively.

Beyene et al., (2016) suggested that resistance is sensitive to culture and the strategies for addressing resistance have varying outcomes across cultures. In low power distance societies, agreements and negotiation are effective strategies to enlist buy-in from those who are likely to resist the proposed change. Conversely, manipulation and coercion would work well in high power distance contexts in which leaders possess huge amounts of power and subordinates hardly have a chance to exercise autonomy.

It is critical therefore that change managers are fully aware and understand the reasons for their subordinates' motivations to resist change to help them devise effective strategies to overcome resistance. Wang (2015) argued that the quality of employees' support determines the success of organizational change. Besides, Gurd and Gao (2016) emphasized the importance of understanding the triggers of resistance to change terming it as challenging and complex.

From Figure 2 below, it is clear that power distance manifests itself more prominently in issues related to organizational hierarchy, in the way people interact and relate, as well as in the way people communicate during change. Key informants highlighted these aspects in their responses across all the 11 interview questions. There is need to conduct further studies to interrogate the exact ways in which power distance orientation affects utilization of hierarchy, relationships, and communication during a transnational organizational change process.
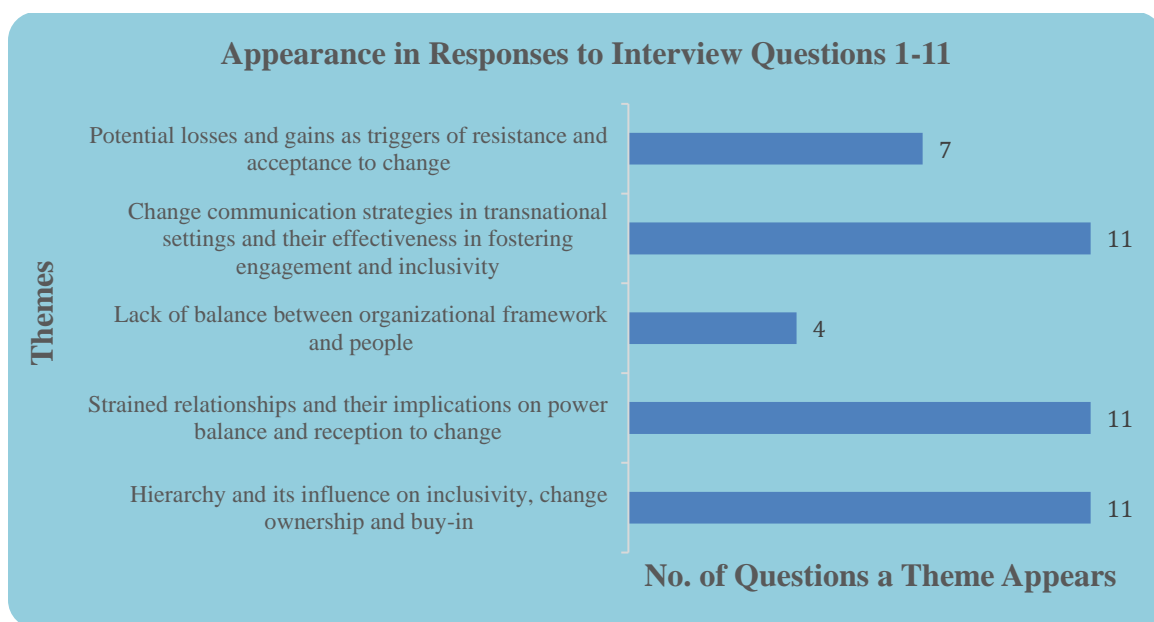

Figure 2. Number of questions in which a theme appears in responses to interview questions.

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on only one multinational agency, which is only one of the many multicultural and global institutions that have undergone change. This presents significant implications for the transferability and dependability of the study findings. As a qualitative single case study, this research is contextual, thus the findings are confined

to the uniqueness of the phenomenon of power distance in the context of the organizational change process in this particular multinational financial organization (Bell et al., 2019). It would be a challenge determining the applicability of the study findings in other contexts.

Data were collected from in-depth interviews with only 10 key informants, which would be considered insufficient to represent a larger population and set grounds for generalization of the study findings to other global institutions that operate in multicultural environments (Yin, 2017; Sarma, 2015). Guidance on sample size was drawn from Boddy's (2016) synthesis of arguments on qualitative sample sizes. For a single organization such as in this study, Boddy argued that saturation would start becoming evident at six in-depth interviews and certainly evident at 12 in-depth interviews. I had anticipated a minimum of 12-16 in-depth interviews but stopped at 10 interviews as saturation had started becoming evident at the fifth interview and no new information was emerging at the 10th interview. The key informants were selected using purposeful sampling technique to enable collection of rich information and in-depth exploration of the perceived effects of power distance on the change process in this multinational financial institution (Patton, 2015).

Use of a single case study exposed this research to mistakes that would otherwise have been avoided by use of mixed methods. However, due to time and resource constraints for my dissertation, I did not have an opportunity to use mixed methods or collect data in different periods, which would have potentially increased the rigor of this

study (Abdalla et al., 2018). To address this limitation, triangulation was used but was limited to use of multiple data sources and multi-method analysis of data.

Despite the methodological, contextual and sample size challenges to generalization, this in-depth study produced findings that are likely to be relevant to other global institutions that operate in similar multicultural environments. While I am optimistic that the conclusions from this study are suitable for global application, as a qualitative researcher, my intention is not to draw generalizations from the sample (key informants) to be applied to a global multinational population. Rather, my intention is to explain, describe and interpret the concept of power distance in the context of its perceived effects on the outcome of an organizational change intervention. This is consistent with Yin's (2017) advice that a case study researcher's concern should be analytical generalizations and not generalizations from a sample to the population. In fact, Cavalcanti (2017) advises qualitative researchers to minimize their worries about their inability to produce generalizable results and instead think of their replicability within the limitations of the study. I believe my study has provided strong evidence that will enable other researchers to compare and probably transfer some of my findings to similar contexts.

Recommendations

Despite my optimism that the findings of this study are likely to be relevant to other global institutions that operate in multicultural environments, I experienced some limitations that could be addressed with further research such as the ones recommended in the section that follows.

Methodological Recommendation 1: Qualitative Longitudinal Study

One of the key limitations of the current study is that data could not be collected over different time periods for a richer and more objective exploration of the impact of power distance elements on organizational change. Due to time and resource constraints for my dissertation, I did not have an opportunity to use mixed methods or collect data in different periods, which would have potentially increased the rigor of this study (Abdalla et al., 2018). A broader study that traverses time periods and covers more than one multinational organization in different countries need to be conducted to empirically address the issues of attribution and contribution of power distance elements during a change process. A qualitative longitudinal study would allow the researcher to track how power distance manifestation in the participants' lives changes over a period of time and gain a better understanding of the triggers of that change at the different times (Farrall, Hunter, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2016).

Impact on an organization cannot be attributed to a single change process. Repeated data collection would help identify the dynamic elements of power distance that influence the behavior and reaction of people during a change process in their respective organizations (Farrall et l., 2016; Sanip, 2020). The evidence would be even richer if the study includes a counterfactual analysis to speculate the outcome of the change if the respective power distance elements had manifested differently. Engagement with key informants over longer periods would enable the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of power distance from the perspectives of participants from diverse countries and backgrounds (Sanip, 2020).

Methodological Recommendation 2: Qualitative Replication

The findings of this study were informed by data from only one multinational organization, hence the reflections on power distance are limited to a single organizational culture. There is need to study other multinational organizations that operate in multicultural environments to compare their perceptions of the effects of power distance during organizational change with the current findings. From a variety of research, it is clear there is no one single approach that is sufficient to drive organizational change across organizations as each of them operates in a unique context. Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) argued that each type of organizational change initiative is unique and thus each requires a unique methodology in order to achieve positive outcomes. Teng and Yazdanifard (2015) agreed arguing that organizational change is perceived differently across the globe because of diverse cultures.

Even in global and multicultural organizations, a change process will vary from one organization to another because, even if they are operating from the same external environment, their internal environments vary. This would likely affect how power distance elements manifest during change from one organization to another. Power distance is a cultural aspect that varies across country borders. Siakas and Siakas (2015) reiterated the importance of incorporating cultural knowledge and intelligence on diverse contexts during a global change process to avoid cultural mismatches. They suggested that cultural fit positively influences the outcome of cross-border transactions. Additional studies in different multinational organizations operating in different cultures would significantly enrich the existing knowledge on the perceived influence of power distance

on outcomes of a multicultural organizational change. This would help change managers to better align their change initiatives with their organizational context.

Recommendations for Future Research

The themes that have emerged from my current study have provided opportunities for more studies to boost understanding of some of the factors that influence success of cross-border organizational change, in order to shield organizations from continued loss of scarce resources to unfruitful capital-intensive change undertakings. Additional case studies that include multiple multinational organizations in multiple regions and continents would provide a larger picture of how cultural dimensions influence organizational change across national cultures in different continents.

Power distance–sensitive participatory approaches and tools to improve leader-member relations. The theme on "strained relationships and their implications on power balance and reception to change" indicated significant disharmony during the change in this multinational organization. This hampered inclusivity, hindered participation and undermined the relationships between managers and employees. When the relationships are strained, there is reduced ownership and buy-in from those lower in the hierarchy. This increases resistance to change. Every type of organizational change presents significant discomfort to employees and as such, it would help if change leaders maintained a good relationship with every member of the team (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). This can be achieved by improving inclusivity and involving everyone as much as possible at every stage of the change process.

Although it might not be possible to reach the consensus with everybody, it would be helpful to at least try achieving a significant level of consultation by utilizing participatory approaches and tools to reach as many stakeholders as possible. There is need for further research to identify participatory approaches and tools that could enable both managers and nonmanagers to work together and have the change work for everybody regardless of their power distance orientation. This harmony is critical because research has acknowledged that employees' attitudes towards organizational change is triggered by the degree of closeness between them and their leaders Cinite & Duxbury, 2018). The proposed study could be in form of an exploratory research to identify tried and tested strategies that may be utilized to stimulate behavioral and mindset change to increase inclusive participation during an organizational change process.

How power distance manifests at the different levels of the hierarchy during organizational change. The theme "hierarchy and its influence on inclusivity, change ownership and buy-in" depicted hierarchy as a stumbling block that stifled inclusivity and significantly decreased ownership and buy-in of the outcomes of the organizational change. Hierarchical issues featured prominently in responses to all the interview questions and its influence was detected across the five themes that emerged. Across the five themes, hierarchy was found to perpetuate centralization of power, which manifested mainly in top-down decision-making. It prevented value-adding consultation, leaving all key decisions pertaining to the change in the hands of those in authority. Centralized power had negative influence on the outcome of the change process as it decreased ownership and buy-in. When power resides in the hands of few people as it emerged in

the findings of this study, the organization becomes less innovative (Ogîgău-Neamțiu &

Antonoaie, 2019) and any attempt at change may not yield positive results.

Generally, centralization of power is an indicator of high power distance. There is

need for a further in-depth study to explore how much of the hierarchical influence

during the change in this multinational organization was as a result of the cultural aspect

of power. Other factors might have influenced the way hierarchy was utilized, which can

only be confirmed by further research. The research should aim to respond to the

questions such as "how does power distance manifest at the different levels of the

hierarchy during organizational change?" or "does power distance manifest differently at

the different levels of the hierarchy during organizational change?" While the findings of

the current study point to high power distance tendencies, meaning respondents respect

hierarchy and authority and readily accept an unequal distribution of power (Moonen,

2017), it is important to conduct further studies to ascertain whether they voluntarily

accepted the unequal distribution of authority or just did so because they did not have

other choices.

Implications

This study was exploratory and provides an account of perceptions of power

distance in the context of a multicultural organizational change. Although the key

informants were drawn from a single multinational financial organization, the study

covered a much broader population context compared to previous studies that focused

their examination of power distance on a single country or a single continent. It drew

from a global organization with viewpoints related to different countries and continents.

It was meant to answer one central research question: What is the perceived influence of power distance on an organizational change initiative in a global environment?

The findings have revealed that power distance has an impact on the various elements of cross-border organizational change including utilization of hierarchy; relationships and interactions; power balance; organizational structure; and change communication. These findings have implications for positive social change and managerial practice as well as methodological and institutional implications.

Significance to Practice

Despite the widespread recognition of the cultural aspect of power—power distance—as a significant success factor in cross-border organizational change processes, it has hardly been studied in depth in extant literature. For few studies that have examined the concept of power distance in relation to organizational change, there are always issues with the context, scope and methodology. (Aslam et al. (2018) decried the dearth of organizational change studies that take into account emerging organizational parameters choosing to stick to traditional concepts of change, for example, "resistance, cynicism, politics, injustice, job insecurity, power, stress, anxiety, fatigue, support, improper information, rewards, influence, commitment and withdrawal" (p. 1085), which is very limiting. This concentration on the most known organizational concepts has been done at the expense of equally important organizational aspects such as power distance.

Straatmann et al. (2016) reiterated the importance of diagnostic assessments at every stage of the change management process and proposed a theory-based framework that considers all the elements of management of change especially the reactions of

employees to change. They underscored the importance of systematically identifying relationships between factors of management and the specific reactions to the change process. (Aslam et al. (2018) concur that it is imperative to conduct a thorough inquiry to identify organizational factors that make organizational change successful. The current study has identified power distance as one of the variables that would affect employees' reaction to change in international organizations. Understanding how power distance influences the outcomes of change initiatives would help managers of global organizations to design sustainable change programs guided by sound relationships between managers and their subordinates.

The findings of this study have revealed that power distance has an impact on the various elements of cross-border organizational change including utilization of hierarchy; relationships and interactions; power balance; organizational structure; and change communication. They have recognized balance of power between managers and employees as a key ingredient for successful organizational change, hence it is imperative that change leaders fully understand all aspects of power (including power distance) and their influence on employees' response to change. Yet, as indicated by Cinite and Duxbury (2018), employees' attitude to change often remains unknown to their employers and managers as they may not be necessarily reflected in day-to-day employees' behavior. This is consistent with the findings of this study that revealed a general lack of empathy for employees.

Key informants in the current study also revealed that the management did not understand the negative impact the change had on the employees. Yet, Thakur and

Srivastava (2018) place the critical responsibility of providing the requisite support to employees on the organization's top leaders because their behavior becomes employees' reference point during uncertainty. The evidence from the current study will inspire managers to critically consider the elements of power distance when designing and implementing cross-border organizational change.

While organizational transformation initiative would have been easier to design and implement in a single-country organization, it would be more complex in a multinational organizational context as change managers have to grapple with a diversity of priorities, expectations, social concerns, and perceptions that differ across borders. Yet, as pointed out by Acquier et al. (2018), hardly any researchers have attempted to find a solution to the challenge of reconciling global integration and local adaptation during implementation of change processes in international business. Drawing from Hofstede's) framework of cultural values that seeks to demystify cross-border business in terms of cultural differences, my study has made a contribution by identifying power-sensitive cultural factors that would affect multicultural organizational change.

Significance to Theory

My study was partly inspired by persistent claims in existing management literature that researchers, including the academia, have neglected the cultural essence of transnational business almost four decades after Hofstede's (1980) model of culture was established (Lo et al., 2017). I took up the challenge and sought to practically test the application of some of the aspects of Hofstede's model on an actual cross-border organizational change process. I based the conceptual framework of my study on Geert

Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions that differentiates cross-border business in terms of cultural differences. Of the six cultural dimensions, my study focused on the power distance dimension. The study findings have revealed that power distance has an impact on the various elements of cross-border organizational change including utilization of hierarchy; relationships and interactions; power balance; organizational structure; and change communication.

Hofstede challenged the widespread assumption that management principles and practices can be universally applied across the world (Jackson, 2020). This is because organizational operations are sensitive to culture and culture varies across national boundaries. This viewpoint is echoed by a number of diversity researchers such as Rao and Pearce (2016) who believe disparities exist in management practices across cultures and there is need for alignment with the cultural orientation of the host country. My study contributes to Hofstede's (1980) theory of cultural dimensions by identifying some of the aspects of power distance that could potentially influence the outcome of a transnational organizational change as reflected in the five themes that emerged in the study findings. It adds voice to Yüksek and Bekmeier-Feuerhahn's (2013) call for an international approach to organizational change, which among other factors, carefully considers the cultural aspect of diversity, that is, power distance.

Change management processes in global organizations are made more complex my cultural diversity. To enhance inclusivity during organizational change, different country settings require different change strategies that are consistent with their unique cultures (Stoermer, Bader, & Froese, 2016). Citing a number of studies on cultural fit

theories, Siakas and Siakas (2015) suggested that cultural fit positively influenced the outcome of cross-border organizational change such as acquisitions and mergers. There is credible evidence from research that successful organizational change as well as other organizational processes largely depend on the level of cultural fit, among other factors. This is especially important for global organizations where diverse cultures are at play.

Therefore, management practices, including organizational change, would be more successful when well-aligned with societal culture. Conversely, as attested by Rao and Pearce (2016), a lack of cultural fit often creates dissonance and frustration in organizational processes. I believe the findings of my study will make a significant contribution to change management practice by helping managers to develop practical strategies to manage people with diverse power distance orientations during a transnational change process.

The findings of a content analysis by Stahl and Tung (2015) revealed a tendency by researchers and authors to emphasize the negative effects of cultural diversity on international business at the expense of its positive contribution. This imbalanced viewpoint, as argued by Stahl et al. (2017) has prevented organizations from fully understanding the factors and processes that organizations should adopt to reap optimal benefits from cultural diversity in designing and implementing its various programs. The current study makes a significant contribution in addressing this biased approach by objectively examining the various aspects of power distance that are likely to affect cross-border organizational change including change orientation, hierarchy, change communication, and leader-member relations.

Increased understanding and awareness of the potential influence of power distance on the organizational change process in a multicultural setting could make a significant contribution to the body of management knowledge by providing a framework that may help change managers to better understand this influence on the outcomes of change initiatives in global organizations. This additional knowledge on effective use of power in a change process could contribute significantly to the design and implementation of sustainable change programs that are driven by sound relationships between change managers and their subordinates.

Significance to Social Change

The findings of this study have revealed that power distance has an impact on the various elements of cross-border organizational change including utilization of hierarchy; relationships and interactions; power balance; organizational structure; and change communication. These findings have implications for positive social change at individual, organizational, and societal levels.

Individual level social change. Key informants interviewed for this study described the study as a timely intervention that would help individuals and organizations to navigate the new world order that has been created by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Among other aspects, they observed that COVID-19 has necessitated significant behavior change in all aspects of life. An understanding of cultural implications is a key ingredient for successful behavior change because as my key informants argued, our cultural orientation significantly influences our behavior and reaction to events including emergencies such as COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of my study provide insights of

some of the cultural elements that would affect an individual's behavior and reaction during transnational organizational change. This is a significant contribution as literature has revealed that behavior change is a complex undertaking that requires a sound mechanism to direct and measure it (Church & Dawson, 2018).

Organizational level social change. Organizational change keeps an organization competitive and helps it to remain sustainable in a turbulent and competitive environment (Nging & Yazdanifard, 2015). However, organizational change succeeds only if all the elements of change are applied meticulously. For the organization that is operating in the rapidly globalizing world, Arif et al. (2017) argued that its success is not only determined by proper usage of resources and broad strategies, but also organizational culture plays an important role in achieving organizational goals.

Globalization has given rise to global organizations that are operating across national boundaries. These cross-border operations have increased border-related uncertainties and as suggested by Caliskan and Isik (2016), this uncertainty is exacerbated by the increasing competition across national borders. With most players in the global organizations operating in a culture other than their own, it complicates organizational practices including organizational change. Consequently, globalization has given rise to an organizational culture in which managers are expected to contend with the variations inherent in the diverse manpower owing to workforce diversity as organizations are increasingly recruiting diverse manpower under one roof, presenting different norms and values.

Consequently, Hutzschenreuter et al. (2016) underscored the importance of distance-related research in the realm of global organizations because distance is one of the critical factors that determine the way international business is conducted. There is need to reconcile diverse cultures across geographical boundaries. The findings of my study provide an analytical framework of the cultural elements that influence an organization's commitment and willingness to change in a multicultural environment. This framework can guide the change agents in developing a strategic approach that balances the national culture of the host country and those of other countries in which the organization operates, to improve the outcome of the change program.

Societal level social change. My case study has potential to contribute to positive social change by promoting a value-for-money change process in intercountry multicultural organizations through design and implementation of sustainable change programs that are supported by increased understanding of the power distance aspect of the change process. This value-for-money culture could result into a more cost-effective change process and reduce unnecessary wastage of resources on unproductive change processes. The organization could use the salvaged resources to produce additional or improve production of goods and services for better livelihoods of their constituent societies. With an estimated 70% of all organizational change initiatives regarded as unsuccessful (Church & Dawson, 2018), a promise by my study to contribute to increased cost-effectiveness is good news.

Conclusions

Change is endless; it is the way of life. A modern manager needs to be equipped

adequately with certain competencies about change.

This study has been conducted at a monumental period in the human history when

a lot is shifting in the contemporary organization due to, among other factors, the ongoing

COVID-19 global pandemic; rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

(BRICS); increased alliances, mergers and acquisitions; and technological revolution.

These have given rise to a global organization and heightened the need for continuous

organizational change to enable adaptability. As observed by Dana et al. (2016), most

organizations are now operating in a multicultural environment, thus, foreign

organizations have an additional task of comparing their own cultural profiles with the

national beliefs, norms and values of the host country. COVID-19 has caused a major

global change and affected the way organizations, especially the global ones, operate.

Global organizations are served by heterogenous teams from different

nationalities who are characterized by diverse cultural backgrounds, values and

behaviors. These peculiarities dictate the way things are done as they determine the

quality of relationships, interactions and perceptions during organizational processes such

as organizational change (Demmler et al., 2018; Lehmberg & Davison, 2018). It is also

important to be sensitive to the context of the organizational change because as submitted

by Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015), each organizational change initiative is unique and

thus each requires a unique methodology in order to achieve positive outcomes.

Therefore, change managers must align their change initiatives with their organizational context as determined by the type, enablers, and methods of organizational change.

This study provides anecdotal evidence that the cultural aspect of power distance has an impact on the various elements of cross-border organizational change such as the nature of hierarchy and decision-making approaches (Lehmberg & Davison, 2018. Its findings contribute to increased awareness of the concept of power distance and the parameters to interrogate to determine the extent to which it could affect the change process, and in what ways. The findings have revealed that power distance has an impact on utilization of hierarchy; relationships and interactions; power balance; organizational structure; and change communication. Regardless of the power distance orientation, there are key considerations that would enable successful organizational change such as ensuring that the change is needs-driven; following an approach that will strengthen ownership and buy-in; and being thoughtful and selective with the change process. Most important of all, it is critical to ensure that the outcomes of the change are useful to the organization and its various stakeholders. Utility is the key measure of success.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

1. Briefly describe your experiences with the recent organizational change in Agency X.

2. To what extent did Agency X's formal hierarchy influence the change process?

   a) What are your views about the way hierarchy was utilized during the change process?

   b) How would you describe the change process in terms of the degree of centralization and/or decentralization of the various aspects of the process?

   c) How would you describe the level and/or amount of participation of nonmanagers in decision-making during planning for the change process; designing the change program; and implementing the change program?

   d) What are your views about the way leaders/managers delegated change-related important tasks to the nonmanagers during the change process at Agency X?

3. From your observation and experiences, what was the focus of the recent organization change at Agency X? Was the concentration more on employees, the change managers/leaders or the change initiative itself? Why do you say so? Why do you think it was so?

4. How would you describe the type, amount, process, and effectiveness of communication during the recent organizational change at Agency X? Who initiated the communication? Were you expected by your manager to initiate the communication? Did you expect your manager to initiate the communication? To what extent in each case?

5. To what extent did you participate/were you expected to participate in the planning of the recent change process at Agency X? Did you make decisions related to the organizational

change? What type of decisions did you/were you expected to make? What factors

enabled your decision-making? What factors hindered your decision-making?

6. How would you describe the level and/amount of consultation during the change

   process at Agency X?

7. To what extent did the managers and nonmanagers interact freely during the change

   process at Agency X?

8. To what extent were your views sought/taken in during the change process at Agency

   X? Were the change managers/leaders open to criticism? How would you describe the

   process of criticism?

9. What are your views on the way leaders/managers exercised power around issues

   related to the recent organizational change at Agency X?

10. How would you describe the level of acceptance and/or resistance to the recent

    organizational change at Agency X?

11. What is the one thing that you would change about the recent reorganization process

    at Agency X? Why?