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Exploring Subcultural Perceptions That Influence Change Success Within a Hybrid Organization

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Kevin M. Sorbello

MA, Naval War College, 1999

BS, California Maritime Academy, 1979

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

Global change-failure rates remain over 70%, despite over a half-century of research, theory development, and mitigation strategies. Although researchers studying the problem of change failure recognize that subcultural perceptions influence change success, especially in hybrid organizations where subcultural differences are more profound, the perceptions that predispose a subculture to support or resist organizational change remain relatively unknown. The purpose of this exploratory case study was to address the problem of the high cost of change failure by identifying perceptions that influence change success within a maritime organization. The study's conceptual framework was founded on the interpretive paradigm and social constructivist epistemology, leveraging insights from change, conflict, social identity, attachment, cultural, and construal level theories. Data were collected from 20 shipboard workers attending a maritime institute through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and face-to-face interviews. Manual and software assisted analysis of the data revealed potentially influential perceptions related to trust, value, communication, inclusiveness, and respect that are worthy of future research and quantitative analysis, particularly in relation to their situational context and net combined influence. Researchers and change designers may use insights and methods from this study in developing future studies on subcultural perceptions. More successful perception-mitigating change designs could support positive social change by reducing operational costs associated with change failure and fatigue, as well as organizational stress and frustration associated with directed change.

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Dedication

  This study is dedicated to my parents, who always believed that I would one day earn an advanced degree and perform research for the benefit of society; especially to my mother, who while working as an assistant county librarian would keep the library open until 2:00 a.m. so that I and other students in the seventh and eighth grade could work on science projects before the advent of the Internet. Her thirst for knowledge and joy in reading inspired me, and my only regret is that neither she nor my father lived long enough to witness the fulfilment of their desire to see me succeed as a scholar.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Roger Chappell, Dr. Jacobs, Dr. Howard Thor, Chief Engineer Fred Stevenson, Chief Engineer William Hyde, Mr. Al Milani, Mr. Lon Denison, and Captain Jeffery Siepert for the roles they played as mentors and friends throughout several important stages of my life.

I would also like to acknowledge my oldest friend, Donald Valentine, whose constant questioning of natural phenomena and thirst for knowledge have been nothing less than infectious.

I want to thank my committee chair, Dr. Kenneth Sherman; committee member, Dr. David Gould; and the numerous teachers, friends, and peers who never expressed any doubt in my abilities or determination. I also want to thank those senior managers at the Military Sealift Command who sent me to the Naval War College to earn my MA, which paved the way for my PhD at Walden.

Finally, the person I would like to thank most of all is my wife, Herminia, for her faith and patience while quietly allowing my attention to be focused on my studies instead of other activities that would have more directly involved us both. She has been my faithful companion and confidant for over 38 years, and I simply could not have made it this far without her love, compassion, and understanding.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Organizations must change in response to emergent requirements and to ensure profitability, sustainability, and longevity (East, 2011). Although change is necessary, over 70% of organizational changes fail (Decker et al., 2012), and despite losses in the trillions of dollars (V. Grady & Grady, 2013) and ongoing research since the mid-20th century, change failure is on an upward trend (Kuipers et al., 2014). Advances in technology, increased globalization, and hybridization have resulted in a widening gap between change magnitude and the ability of organizations to effectively manage change (Jorgensen, Bruehl, & Franke, 2014).

A significant percentage of change failures are the result of change designs whose creators did not consider the potential positive or negative influence on success attributable to cultural and subcultural perceptions (Aguirre, Von Post, & Alpern, 2013; Hornstein, 2015; Niemietz, De Kinderen, & Constantinidis, 2013). Organizational cultures often contain subcultures that result from national, occupational, professional, or other social affiliations (Schein, 2010). Subcultures are, therefore, smaller identifiable groups embedded within the organizational culture sharing values and norms distinct from the larger culture to which they belong and can often exert overpowering influence on the formal system (Crough, 2013).

Although an important contribution to studying change, recognition of subcultural influence on change success phenomenon does not provide the necessary details to identify specific subcultural perceptions that might influence change success. These unknown perceptions represent a gap in knowledge for change designers trying to

mitigate negative subcultural influences, and change researchers trying to quantify the influence of specific individual or combined perceptions (Decker et al., 2012).

This qualitative exploratory case study addressed the gap in knowledge that Decker et al. (2012) identified as involving the subcultural perceptions that influence change success. I sought to identify subcultural perceptions that influence change success in a hybrid organization. The identification of such perceptions supports the proposition that better-informed change designs improve change success rates. Improved change success rates would have a positive social effect by improving organizations' sustainability, promoting stability in the workforce and community.

Described in Chapter 1 are the problem, purpose, importance, and significance of exploring subcultural perceptions for researchers and change designers, as well as a rationale for the study's conceptual framework, qualitative methodology, scope and delimitations, and exploratory case study design. This chapter also contains definitions of key concepts, summaries of informational theories, descriptions of methodological limitations and weaknesses, a discussion of the study's potential contribution in promoting positive social change, and a summary transition to Chapter 2.

Background of the Study

Seventy percent of all organizational changes fail, and despite ongoing research, theory development, and reduction attempts, have done so since the mid-20th century (East, 2011). Some recent studies have shown the rate of implementation failures to be as high as 93% (Decker et al., 2012), and higher for corporate mergers, with 70% to 90% of $2 trillion worth of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) failing (Appelbaum, Roberts, &

Shapiro, 2013; Pervaiz & Zafar, 2014). A significant percentage of these implementation failures have been the result of change designs that failed to consider the influence of cultural and subcultural perceptions (Hornstein, 2015; Niemietz et al., 2013).

Changes often fail in the implementation phase, where blockages may be created by the people most affected by the change (East, 2011), or where failures may be attributable to cultural perceptions and influence (Pervaiz & Zafar, 2014). Makhlouk and Shevchuk (2008) argued that cultural differences, whether national, ethnic, organizational, or occupational, were a common cause of failure among M&As. The common thread to each of these positions is the notion of cultural conflict and perceptual influences on change success.

The concept of subcultural influence on change success is particularly noteworthy when considering the growth of hybrid organizations, where differences between hierarchical organizational subcultures are often compounded by membership in multiple overlapping subcultures, subcultural bias, and shifting perceptions (Greenwood, 2013; Jay, 2013). Hybrid organizations include social enterprises that incorporate profit and nonprofit units; multinational businesses that operate in areas containing conflicting cultures; agencies that contain military, civilian, and commercial workers; and organizations with competing logics, whose subcultural measures of success, norms, values, and expectations vary greatly from one another (Eldar, 2017; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Hajjar, 2014). The New York City bakery is a good example of a hybrid organization combining a social welfare model for workforce development with a

revenue-generation model that creates a revenue stream (Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012).

Freeman and Hasnaoui (2011) noted how inherent differences in hybrid organizational measures of success, goals, needs, control, retirement systems, and corporate social responsibility collide with national, religious, educational, regional, and other biases. Faller and De Kinderen (2014) noted how differences in subcultural paradigms within hybrid organizations have a substantial negative impact on change. The increasing number of hybrid organizations and growing data on how subcultural differences affect organizational performance suggest an increasing need to understand and appreciate the perceptions of each subculture whose potential reaction and predisposition to change affects change success (Battilana et al., 2012; Marks, Mirvis, & Ashkenas, 2014).

Review of the literature indicates that there are several known causes of change failure. Schein (1996) and others have argued that an inability to analyze, evaluate, understand and fully appreciate organizational cultures is the primary cause of these failures (National Defense University, 2014; Schein, 1996). Hirsch (2015) described issues resulting from conflicting cultures as being chronically misunderstood and underappreciated, regardless of national origin. Theorists agree on the primary cause of these failures yet are unable to explain the unpredictability of designs and methods attempting to address those causes. Perkov, Perkov, and Papic (2014) attributed this unpredictability to a lack of understanding or appreciation of how a subculture's perceptions determine or influence the outcome of those attempts.

There is a gap in knowledge, in that researchers and change designers know that subcultural perceptions may influence change success but do not know *which* perceptions need study or consideration (Hajjar, 2014). This knowledge gap was recognized by Decker et al. (2012), who attributed the lack of improvement in change success to a lack of studies focused on the identification of subcultural perceptions that influence change success.

I conducted this study to address the need for additional research on change failure cited by Decker et al. (2012). In contrast with most studies on change failure, I employed an exploratory case study approach. My approach was similar to that used by Niemietz et al. (2013) to explore the role of subcultures in the enterprise architecture process. Faller and De Kinderen (2014) used a similar approach to explore how differences between organizational subcultures influenced the effectiveness of the enterprise architecture function. Using concepts from multiple fields of study related to human behavior and change, I collected perceptual data directly from those implementing the change and analyzed the data in the context of the subculture's subjective perception of reality.

Problem Statement

Failed organizational change initiatives are costly and hinder attempts to maintain and improve productivity, profitability, and sustainability (Greenwood, 2013). Despite attempts by change designers and researchers to improve change success, global organizational change-failure rates above 70% have remained relatively constant since the mid-20th century (Decker et al., 2012). Such high failure rates represent a general

management problem with worldwide related costs in the trillions of dollars per year (Harrison-Broninski & Korhonen, 2012). Although changes may fail for various reasons, researchers on change have proposed that most change failures are attributable to the influence of subcultural perceptions (Hajjar, 2014).

Despite literature supporting the proposition that subcultural perceptions frequently influence change, researchers have not identified influential perceptions for change designers to mitigate; this represents a gap in knowledge (Hajjar, 2014). Observing the increasing prevalence of hybrid organizations, the greater differences in their subcultural perspectives, and the substantial negative impact that those differences have on change, researchers have suggested that the problem will escalate if not addressed (Battilana et al., 2012; Faller & De Kinderen, 2014; Gibson, 2013; Greenwood, 2013; Madlock, 2012). The specific management problem is change failure attributable to the influence of unidentified subcultural perceptions of a shipboard-worker subculture in hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters. (Bhattacharya, 2015; Decker et al., 2012; Maurizio, 2013; Shea, 2005). This problem, associated with the gap in knowledge and the potential for its escalation, was addressed by conducting a study designed to identify influential perceptions for change designers to mitigate (Decker et al., 2012).

This qualitative exploratory case study was specifically designed to allow researcher identification of subcultural perceptions that influence change success within a change-recipient subculture of hybrid organizations operating ships in near coastal or international waters. The target population are members of the Shipboard Worker

subculture; an operator subculture most frequently subjected to externally directed change (Rodgers, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to identify shipboard worker subcultural perceptions that influence change success within hybrid organizations operating ships in near-coastal or international waters. The research paradigm of this study was based in the postpositivist argument that reality is a construct of perceptions held by the individual, and the best way to discover perceptions that might influence change is to ask questions of subcultural members in context with the phenomenon being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The identification of these perceptions was accomplished by the collection, analysis, and triangulation of data. Questionnaires, focus groups, and semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to explore group bias, perceptions of externally directed change, and subculture members' perceived role as change agents (Rodgers, 2014).

Although the issue of subcultural effects on organizational performance and change success has received some attention, there has been little research examining the influence that hybrid organizational subcultures have on change success (Crough, 2013). The findings of this study address gaps in knowledge and may inform change strategists and assist in theory building related to the influence of perceptions on change success, particularly within a hybrid organizational subculture (Madlock, 2012).

Research Question

This study's research question directly addresses the research problem of change failure attributable to the influence of unidentified subcultural perceptions by focusing on a shipboard worker subculture within hybrid organizations operating ships in near-coastal or international waters. Although there are identifiable subgroups within the shipboard worker subculture, the relative isolation of shipboard workers from other organizational subcultures suggests the proposition that their perceptions are more internally aligned and organization divergent (Sampson, 2004). This proposition was addressed by coding collected data to allow for subgroup pattern checking.

The research question was as follows: What perceptions within the shipboard worker subculture influence change success? This research question provides focus on any directed change that needs to be implemented at the shipboard level or requires the support of shipboard members to succeed. The answer to this research question provides information necessary to address the gap associated with unknown perceptions that influence change success. Payne (1980) argued that directly posing open-ended questions such as this study's research question to participants would simply solicit an opinion based on a combination of contributory biases without understanding the contributory biases. Providing a direct answer to a complex question would also require participants to form cognitive evaluations based on their interpretations of the intent and focus of the question, as well as of the person posing the question (Hasan, 2013). In either situation, a direct response to a complex question might not provide the insight required to mitigate the underlying biases that create the influential perception.

Hasan (2013) suggested decomposing complex questions into a series of simple or related questions. This method allows contextualizing questions into areas whose bias contributes to the formation of perceptions influencing change success, eliminating the need for the participant to form a conscious conclusion based on subconscious variables (Newell & Shanks, 2014). Questions based on such decomposition could allow contextualization of complex responses, yet if used alone, would impart bias toward the decomposed areas and potentially miss important data related to the research question. The questions developed to explore the research question, therefore, included those directly related to the research question and others associated with the decomposed subcategories related to known biases affecting change.

Researchers of change and group dynamics have suggested that three types of bias have a significant influence on how a subculture responds to change: group bias (Abrams, 2015; Rogers & Senturia, 2013), change bias (V. Grady & Grady, 2013; Shea, 2005), and role bias (Abrams, 2015). Considering the arguments of Hasan (2013), Newell and Shanks (2014), and Abrams (2015), I decomposed the research question into subcategories designed to explore each of the biases, providing identification and better understanding of the perceptions that influence change success.

Group bias, based on subcultural identity and work environment, is an important consideration in a hybrid organization where work assignments and working environments are often unique to each subculture (Gerras, Wong, & Allen, 2008). Group bias, also known as *in-group bias*, can be negative or positive toward other groups and

may significantly influence how the in-group responds to actions and espoused intentions of other groups (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011).

Questions related to group bias are designed to gather data on how a subculture's members perceive nonmembers' motivations and intent (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011). Exploration of subcultural identity and perceived subcultural differences, whether due to work assignments or environment, may reveal a subcultural group bias that affects how members make sense of the organization and how they perceive that they are valued in the organization (Hatch, Schultz, & Skov, 2015; Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico, & Gonzàlez-Romà, 2014). Perceptions associated with social identification and self-categorization could bias the subculture's reaction to change of any type, regardless of its benefit or method of implementation (De Dreu, 2014).

Questions associated with change bias are designed to gather data related to how a subculture reacts toward different types of change (Greenwood, 2013). Cultural and change researchers have provided little information on how subcultures in a hybrid organization view different types of change, or whether the source of the change is relevant (Greenwood, 2013). Researchers have suggested that unilateral change strategies focused solely on results, such as teleological changes, encounter more resistance than cooperative strategies, yet there is little information on whether the type of change strategy is perceived as more important than the source (Janićijević, 2012). There is also an unresolved conflict between culture theory and conflict theory in that the former predicts greater change success when there is less conflict between subcultures, while the latter indicates that such conflict can result in greater success due to increases in internal

group cohesion and innovation (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015; Coser, 1957).

Consideration of these opposing views suggests that questions designed to discover how

the subculture perceives external change, in context with its identity bias, may provide

insights into how the subculture perceives and is predisposed to reacting to these changes.

     Questions associated with how members of the shipboard worker subculture

perceive their role as change agents are designed to provide data on how subcultural

members perceive their role as change agents engaging, supporting, or resisting change.

Answers could provide insights on how role bias influences the subculture's

predisposition to actively support or oppose any change or disengage from the process

entirely, which would be valuable for change strategists (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015;

Lockett, Currie, Finn, Martin, & Waring, 2014). The collective answers in each of these

subcategories could assist in contextualizing responses to the research question.

Conceptual Framework

This study supports recommendations calling for additional research to address a

known gap in knowledge and theory building associated with the problem of change

failure caused by unidentified subcultural perceptions (Crough, 2013; Madlock, 2012).

Unknown subcultural perceptions influencing change success, inductively derived from

research and practice, may be identifiable with an exploratory case study, which is,

therefore, an appropriate method and design to achieve the study objective and aid in

theory building (Ridder, Hoon, & McCandless Baluch, 2014).

The study's conceptual framework was founded on the interpretive paradigm and

social constructivist epistemology, which indicates that people are qualitatively different

from natural events and construct a reality based on their subjective perceptions (Andrews, 2012). These perceptions interact together to construct artifacts and knowledge for one another that differ from those of nongroup members (Andrews, 2012). I used this study to explore the perceptions that make up the decision-making process of a specific group's members in a hybrid organization containing three major subcultural groups.

The relevant premise of this framework is that people make decisions based on their subjective understanding, biased by the meanings of their cultural and subcultural symbols, and based on interpretations supported by social interaction with other members of their group (Abrams, 2015). Informed by research related to culture, social psychology, and change, this study supports the qualitative exploration of subcultural perceptions within a shipboard subculture that influence change success in a hybrid organization. Billups (2011) took a similar approach when exploring university administrators' perceptions of their culture and other campus subcultures.

The conceptual framework of this study, illustrated in Figure 1, was used in exploring perceptions that influence change success for directed changes originating from outside the target subculture by collecting data related to group bias, change bias, and role bias of shipboard workers in hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters. A conceptual framework using an approach informed by multiple fields of research provides greater breadth of context by integrating important insights and perspectives from different theorists, ensuring that the phenomenon is explored through a variety of lenses (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Kuipers et al. (2014) argued that

researchers should use the strengths of different theoretical lenses in future studies within

the field of change management. Moon, Quigley, and Marr (2012) argued that

exploration employing multiple theoretical lenses allowed simultaneous consideration of

individual and group dynamics. These arguments have been supported by other change

theorists who have recognized that the actions of a group are greater than the sum of its

individual members, reinforcing the need to understand the effect of perceptual net-bias

of subcultural membership (Moon et al., 2012).
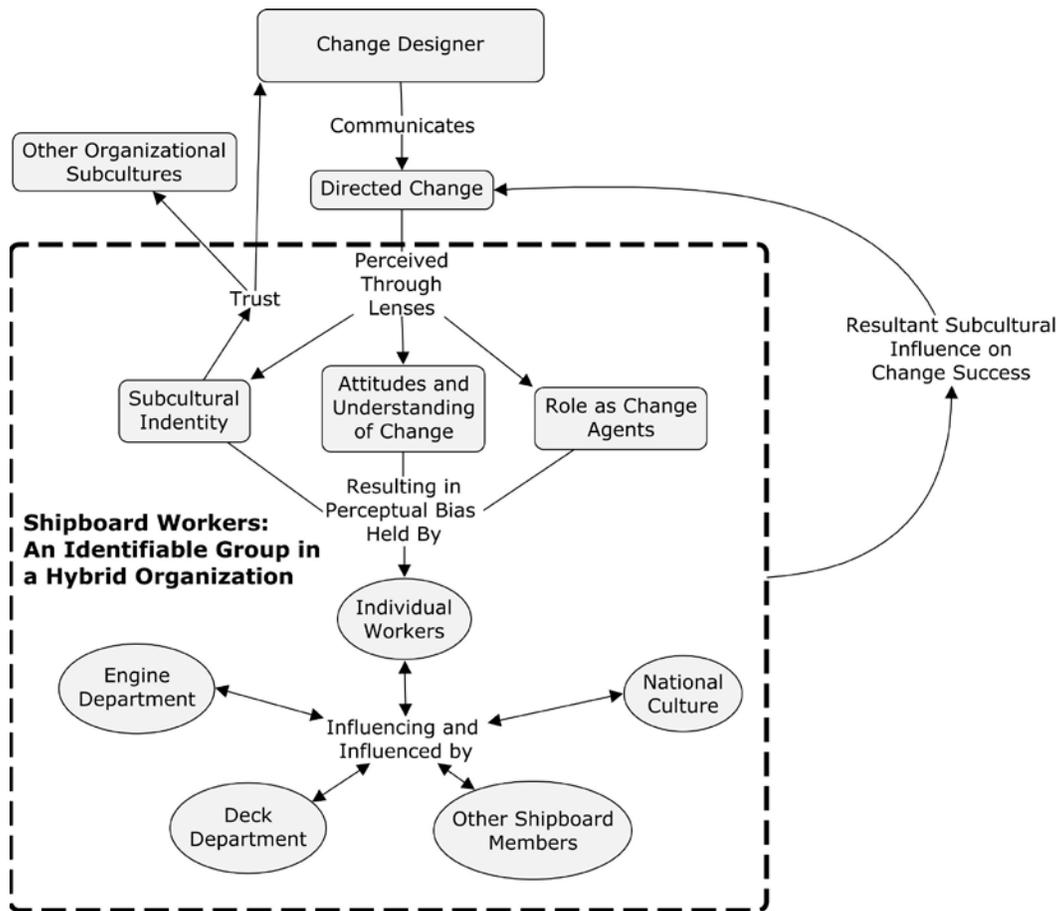
Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

My decision to draw concepts from various social fields was supported by the work of Lyon, Nadershahi, Nattestad, Kachalia, and Hammer (2014), who asserted that a case study using a multiple-frame model is the most effective approach to explore the dynamics of change from a subcultural perspective. Cultural researchers assert that subcultural perceptions are reinforced by group dynamics against alternative perceptions (Tajfel, 1982). Group identification and association constitute a ubiquitous phenomenon inherently predisposing individuals to compare the differences between their group and all other groups in a self-promoting way (Tajfel, 1982). The use of a conceptual

framework that considers these dynamics provides a broader, more holistic approach to understanding how the members of a hybrid organization's subculture perceive the requirement to implement changes originating from outside their subculture (Lyon et al., 2014).

Using a multiple-lens/frame approach in this study (Kuipers et al., 2014; Lyon et al., 2014; Moon et al., 2012) allowed me to leverage insights from change theory (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015), conflict theory (Coser, 1957), social identity theory (De Dreu, 2014), attachment theory (V. Grady & Grady, 2013), cultural theory (Tajfel, 1982), and construal level theory (Wilson, Crisp, & Mortensen, 2013). Each of these theories contributed concepts related to how individuals and groups make sense of the world around them and suggested potential questions whose answers might reveal perceptions that might ultimately answer this study's overarching research question. Change theory contains concepts related to change in general (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015). Conflict theory incorporates the effect of group perception of conflict and risk in promoting internal alignment and innovation (Coser, 1957), while suggesting that intergroup hostility arises because of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources (Tjosvold, Wong, & Chen, 2014) or the perception of victimization (Tropp, 2015). Social identity theory suggests that group identities influence sensemaking in the individual (De Dreu, 2014). Attachment theory suggests that an individual or group's reaction to the loss of the status quo is like a reaction to the physical loss of something to which the individual or group was psychologically attached (V. Grady & Grady, 2013). Cultural theory provides insight into cultural dynamics and group-think (Tajfel, 1982), and

construal level theory explains the relationship between distance and levels of abstraction (Wilson et al., 2013).

Nature of the Study

This study involved an exploration of the phenomenon of change failure resulting from subcultural perceptions. An exploratory case study was used to identify perspectives that influence change success within a shipboard worker subculture, with shipboard workers being the unit of analysis. Identifying subcultural perceptions of planned change that influence change success requires a study design that allows for collecting and analyzing perceptual data directly from those experiencing the phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

A quantitative method would have been inappropriate for this study because specific perceptions influencing change success are yet unknown. Qualitative methods allow researchers to capture subcultural perspectives on phenomena directly from subculture members within their natural setting (Crough, 2013; Kuipers et al., 2014; Yazan, 2015). This approach is also consistent with exploring contextual conditions of contemporary events when behaviors cannot be manipulated (Lyon et al., 2014; Moon et al., 2012) and is the appropriate method when a triangulated, holistic approach is required (Stake, 2008).

Types of case studies range from nuanced descriptions of phenomena and inductive/interpretive studies to case studies used to build theory in a positivist fashion (Ridder et al., 2014). Exploratory case studies can be designed to provide researchers with the conceptual breadth and subject proximity required to address complex social

influences by allowing the contextual identification of potential influences rather than

quantification of influences suggested by those outside the subculture (Liu, Meng, &

Fellows, 2014). I employed a case study as an exploratory perspective, where causal

relationships are sought instead of causal mechanisms, which Ridder et al. (2014) argued

was the prevalent practice for case studies in the field of management. Establishing a

basis for future empirical studies focused on theory building is the anticipated

contribution of this study.

Less appropriate qualitative approaches for this study included historical study,

which encompasses noncontemporary events; an experiment, which separates a

phenomenon from its context; and phenomenological study, which explores lived

experiences of a phenomenon rather than the factors that influenced them (Yin, 2014). A

grounded theory approach was also considered less desirable because the intent of the

study was to identify—rather than explain—the subcultural perceptions that influence

change success (Yazan, 2015).

Support for this approach can be found in Bhattacharya's (2009) case study.

Bhattacharya argued that qualitative data analysis can reveal patterns that are at least

partially quantifiable for comparison by successfully employing case study to reveal

significant differences in perspectives on change between shipboard workers and their

managers. Bhattacharya's identification of a major gap between intended and perceived

purposes supported this study's approach to answering three research subquestions

covering similar causal factors within a similar subculture (2009). Bhattacharya

suggested that shipboard workers perceived change as a threat to job security, which

created a low-trust environment that reduced organizational support. Bhattacharya's (2009) study indicates that perceptual differences may exist between shipboard workers and their shore managers, yet identifying shore manager perceptions was considered unnecessary because their perceptions are inseparable from the change they designed. This study, therefore, only focused on identifying shipboard worker perceptions that influenced success.

The research question was answered by collecting and analyzing data from representative members of all shipboard-worker subcultural subgroups with NVivo software. Data collection occurred through questionnaires, focus groups, and personal interviews and involved a cross-section of subcultural members, ensuring representation of all subgroups comprising the subculture. Shipboard-member subgroups share a common perspective due to their work environment (mechanical solidarity; Kaur, 2016). However, unique positions within the organization, external affiliations, and subgroup diversity do result in tolerated variations of perception within the shipboard subculture's organic solidarity (Kaur, 2016; Maurizio, 2013; Zilber, 2012).

Data analysis might reveal patterns suggesting internal influences on perception and patterns that suggest a larger influence on change success attributable to one or more specific perceptions. Data collected from individuals before and after focus group sessions were used to address the potential influence that group discussions may have on individual perceptions. Figure 2 illustrates the data collection protocols from one of four major geographical areas of operation.
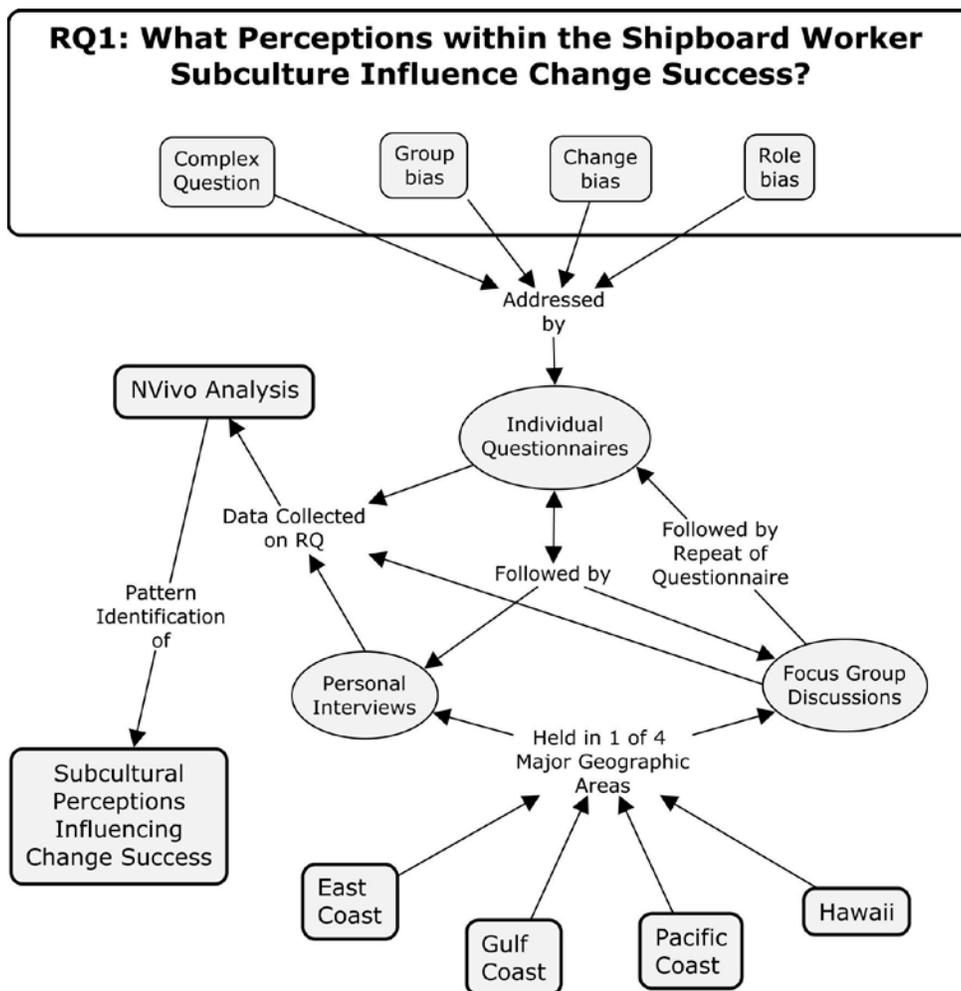
Figure 2. Research question and data collection from shipboard workers.

Data collection using questionnaires, focus groups, and personal interviews can provide insights into the potential influence of groups, group association, and variations in subgroups and individuals. Further, these data sources may add detail to explain variations in perception among groups and group members.

Definitions

Hybrid organization: An organization that mixes value systems (e.g., religious, ethnic, or sexual orientation), sectors of society (e.g., military, public, private, or

voluntary), action logics (e.g., profit or nonprofit), national membership, or other elements in sufficient number to represent distinct groups or subcultures within the organization (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014).

Merchant mariner: Any licensed or unlicensed mariner certified by a nation's recognized maritime administrators, such as the U.S. Coast Guard, regardless of their employment in public, nonprofit, or private industry (U.S. Merchant Marine, 2016).

Shipboard worker subculture: A subculture defined by members repeatedly assigned to a vessel for extended periods or as a fundamental part of their career (Maurizio, 2013).

Assumptions

Assumptions represent concepts that the researcher believes to be true without proof, which are necessary for the study's relevancy (Simon & Goes, 2013). The first assumption supporting the focus of this study was that individual and group perceptions bias the target subculture in ways that influence change success within the hybrid organization. This assumption was based on research suggesting a direct connection between subcultural perceptions and change success (Tobias, 2015).

Propositions necessary for the methodology of this study included the concept that subcultural perceptions influencing change success are identifiable and that the design of this study supported their identification. Another proposition was that group bias, change bias, and role bias are significantly influential on subcultural perceptions, and the perceptions of subgroups within a shipboard worker subculture are generally aligned. These propositions were based on previous research in which exploratory case

studies were used to identify subcultural perceptions and specific biases were noted as being significantly influential, as well as studies of maritime subcultures indicating a general alignment of perceptions (Crough, 2013; Nandan & Verma, 2013).

The second assumption was that the study results would promote positive social change; this assumption was supported by researchers who suggested that improvements to change success promote worker security and positive social change (DeTienne, Agle, Phillips, & Ingerson, 2012).

The third assumption was that vessels operated by commercial or U.S. government organizations represent an appropriate platform from which to explore subcultural perceptions in hybrid organizations. This assumption was necessary to justify my identification of the study's target population, whose members potentially include government and civilian mariners working for government or civilian senior leaders and managers of government or commercial organizations owned and operated by U.S. or foreign companies (Hajjar, 2014).

The fourth assumption was that my familiarity with the unique work environment, industry vernacular, and social norms and taboos experienced by members of the target population would promote positive and accurate data collection and analysis, which were necessary to ensure dependability. This assumption was supported by researchers who argued that when collecting perceptual data from a target population, it is necessary to avoid researcher-induced bias associated with perceived external threats (Shea, 2005).

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study encompassed the identification of shipboard worker subcultural perceptions that influence change success in hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters. The scope was delimited because the problem associated with the gap in knowledge (involving the ways in which perceptions held by any subculture in any organization influence change success) was too broad. Delimitations are researcher-defined limits placed on a study to ensure that the scope of the study remains practical and focused (Simon & Goes, 2013). The focus of this study was also delimited to perceptions held by change recipients, because studying change-designer perceptions or bias would only have served to substantiate the existence of a known part of the problem, without addressing the gap in information to resolve or mitigate the rest of the problem.

The problem of unknown subcultural perceptions influencing change success is not limited by subculture, geography, organizational design, or time, and differences between subcultural perceptions can be large or small (Lockett et al., 2014). Exploring every possible type of organization or subculture is impractical, so this study targeted a single subculture within a hybrid organization, where differences between subcultural perceptions were more pronounced (Liu et al., 2014). Although the sample population size was controlled by practical limitations in collection, transcription, and coding semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, the sample size was appropriate for an exploratory cross-sectional case study (Leung, 2015).

Although the scope of this study was limited by practical considerations, the design may be applied to similar subcultural research in any organization, and the findings may be used to inform other studies (Liu et al., 2014). The concept of transferability, introduced in the seminal work of Guba and Lincoln (1985), involves the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to empirical studies or other settings. The concept of transferability is the qualitative equivalent of external validity in quantitative research. Applying Guba and Lincoln's argument, the design of this study is transferable as a model for studying subcultural perceptions in any organization. This study's findings are transferable as a starting point for the quantification of influential perceptions. The support for this conclusion was based in the postpositivist argument that reality is a construct of perceptions held by the individual, and the best way to discover those perceptions is to ask the individual questions in context with the phenomenon being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

The target population for this study was limited to shipboard workers aboard vessels operating in near-coastal or international waters. These shipboard workers represented one of three major subcultures within their respective organizations. Shipboard workers were chosen because they are often the recipients of directed change initiatives and share more in common with each other than they do with members belonging to their organization's other land-based subcultures (Maurizio, 2013). The shipboard worker subculture is unique in that its members share a common living and working environment for the majority of each year, are physically separated from their families and shore-based command structure, and are instrumental in change success or

failure (Maurizio, 2013). Although unique due to members' working environment on the sea, the subculture shares similarities with other subcultures whose members experience similar periods of isolation, multiple identifications and allegiances, individual and organizational requirements, and competition (Ogbonna & Harris, 2015).

Subcultural perspectives span a wide range of topics and are inherent in all organizational subcultures. From a time and resource perspective, it would be impractical to explore all perceptions of all organizational subcultures in an attempt to identify those perceptions that might influence change. The conceptual framework of this study, therefore, limited the focus to a single subculture and limited the types of perceptions explored to those associated with directed change, the subculture's environment, and the perceived role of subcultural members as change agents.

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Limitations

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Qualitative studies may have limits to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). Limits to credibility include data accuracy, participant engagement, bias, and honesty (Shenton, 2004). Limits to accuracy can be mitigated, but not eliminated. Accuracy limits can be mitigated by ensuring that the questions seek answers relevant to the research question and that participants are provided an opportunity for posttranscription review. Some questions, however, may only indirectly address the research question, and participants may be unavailable or unwilling to participate in such review (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Limits associated with participant bias and honesty can be mitigated with iterative questioning, negative case analysis, data triangulation from a representative sampling of participants, and viewing

data variations and inconsistencies as insight opportunities (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014).

Participant bias and honesty limits cannot, however, be eliminated; it is impossible to

guarantee that an individual's response accurately represents his or her true perception, is

devoid of peer pressure, is not a product of repetitive response phenomenon, or is not

contrived to distort collected data (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004).

Some limits to transferability exist due to the unique nature of the study's target

population; influential perceptions of shipboard workers in a hybrid organization might

differ greatly from perceptions of workers in other hybrid organizations, as well as from

perceptions held by members of other subcultures within the same organization

(Schwandt, 2015; Shea, 2005). The study findings and methodology, however, may be

transferable to future empirical studies as a starting point for quantification and a model

for studying other subcultural perspectives in hybrid organizations, and they may suggest

topical perceptions for further study (Gunkel, Schlägel, & Engle, 2014; Ruvio, Shoham,

Vigoda-Gadot, & Schwabsky, 2014; Wittig, 2012).

Dependability, the qualitative equivalent of quantitative reliability, refers to the

degree to which future researchers could repeat the study, even if different results are

obtained (Shenton, 2004). To mitigate possible limits on dependability, I documented

contextual changes that might affect data collection or analysis and noted that

organizational events between studies could result in variations in collective perceptions

(Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Shea, 2005).

Limits to confirmability include researcher bias and the interpretation of data

(Shenton, 2004). Because collected data were not used to support a hypothesis, researcher

bias was limited to data collection instruments and collected data analysis. Pattern identification and coding could be affected by researcher bias, so a data-oriented approach was employed. This approach, coupled with researcher admission of beliefs and assumptions, provided insights into researcher bias and a step-by-step method for peer review (Shenton, 2004). Potential researcher bias during focus group discussions was mitigated by post-focus-group participant surveys on perceived researcher influence during the discussions (Burnes & Jackson, 2011) and inclusion of responses in opposition to the majority view (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014).

Data collection limitations resulting from participant or organizational policies, such as prohibition of the use of recording devices in focus groups or personal interviews, were not an issue, in that all participants agreed to being recorded, and potential limitations were mitigated during the triangulation of data from questionnaires and transcriptions of focus group discussions and personal interview audio recordings (Yazan, 2015).

Significance of the Study

Researchers attribute a persistent 70% organizational change failure rate to change designs that do not mitigate the influence of subcultural perceptions on change success (Ravishankar, Pan, & Leidner, 2011). Change planners, designers, and theorists may be hindered in their ability to develop mitigating strategies because perceptions potentially influencing change success remain unidentified, representing a significant knowledge gap (Hajjar, 2014). This study addressed that knowledge gap by identifying potential perceptions for change strategists to mitigate and researchers to quantify.

Answers to the research subquestions may provide insights on perceptions whose combined influence creates a positive or negative net influence on change success. Such insights might provide a unique contribution to the literature by introducing the concept of a variable's net-influence dependent on change type, source, or perceived role as change agent.

Significance to Practice

Change designers and implementers informed by this study can use the insights toward developing mitigation strategies that offset the potential negative bias in the key areas of trust, transparency, credibility, and cooperation noted in this study. Improvements to design and implementation strategies improve the likelihood of change success, resulting in appreciable savings and improved worker satisfaction.

Significance to Theory

Unlike previous studies focusing on verification without identification, and questions designed for change designers rather than the subculture responsible for executing the change, this study focused on data collection directly from members of the subculture involved (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Contextual data collection from within the subculture benefits researchers by providing a new approach for studying change in multinational organizations, which often exceed the subcultural complexity of a hybrid organization composed of a more nationally homogeneous workforce (Madlock, 2012; Vaara, Sarala, Stahl, & Björkman, 2012; Yazan, 2015).

Significance to Social Change

From a practice and positive social change perspective, this study benefits change designers by providing insights that could aid in generating mitigation strategies and improved success rates (Decker et al., 2012). Increased success rates may promote positive social change by increasing worker satisfaction and organizational longevity (Bernerth, Walker, & Harris, 2011; V. Grady & Grady, 2013; Madlock, 2012).

Summary and Transition

Despite significant research, theory building, experiments, and change methodologies, unidentified subcultural perceptions have contributed to organizational change failure rates at or above 70% since the mid-20th century (Decker et al., 2012; Tobias, 2015). Although researchers have identified the influence of subcultural perceptions of planned change as a frequent cause of change failure, the specific perceptions are unidentified and represent a significant gap in knowledge for change theorists and designers trying to develop mitigation strategies (Burnes & Jackson, 2011).

Chapter 1 included the basis and background for the research topic, the problem and purpose statements, the research question, and the study's conceptual framework. The chapter also presented details on the nature of the study, definitions of key terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations. Chapter 1 concluded with details on the significance of the study to address a gap in knowledge and better inform strategists seeking to improve the predictability and statistics of change success within hybrid and conventional organizations (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011).

Chapter 2 includes a review of the relevant literature on change, conflict, and culture. The purpose of the literature review is to examine existing research in these areas, identify approaches to qualitative exploration of the topic, and discover gaps in knowledge that contribute to the problem of change failure. Chapter 2 contains information to substantiate and validate the need to explore the influence of subcultural perceptions on change success. Chapter 2 also contains information supporting the choice of an exploratory case study approach and indicating why the study's research question addressed the knowledge gap and associated problem of change failure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature associated with the problem of a global change failure rate that has remained above 70% for over 50 years (Decker et al., 2012). The specific problem addressed by this study was change failure attributable to the influence of unidentified subcultural perceptions of a shipboard worker subculture in hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters.

Researchers have argued that the influence of negative subcultural perceptions is a frequent and significant cause of change failure, yet existing studies fall short of identifying potentially influential perceptions (Decker et al., 2012; Kash, Spaulding, Johnson, Gamm, & Hulefeld, 2014). Unidentified influential perceptions represent a gap in knowledge preventing the incorporation of effective mitigation strategies into change designs (Hajjar, 2014). The increasing prevalence of hybrid organizations, which exhibit greater differences in subcultural perspectives than non-hybrid organizations, suggests that addressing this gap in knowledge might reduce current failure rates and prevent even greater change failure rates resulting from increased organizational hybridization (Battilana et al., 2012; Greenwood, 2013; Faller & De Kinderen, 2014; Madlock, 2012). This study addressed the current gap in knowledge in a way that appreciates the growth of hybrid organizations by identifying perceptions that might influence change success within a hybrid organization.

Chapter 2 contains four sections, which present (a) the literature search strategy, with a focus on general concepts related to the study; (b) a conceptual framework based on the phenomenon of change failure; (c) a topical review of the literature synthesizing

existing research and the study's methodology; and (d) a chapter summary and conclusions section on key concepts, the need for this study, and how this study addressed the gap in knowledge.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy focused on the general concepts of organizational change, culture, conflict, and hybrid organizations. The search methodology involved finding relevant articles, dissertations, commentaries, books, and studies available online by using the Walden Library, Google, and Google Scholar search engines and the following databases:

- ABI/INFORM Complete
- Academic Search Complete
- Business Source Complete
- Dissertations & Theses
- Dissertations & Theses at Walden University
- EBSCOhost and ebooks
- Emerald Management
- LexisNexis Academic
- Military & Government Collection
- ProQuest Central
- PsycINFO
- SAGE Premier

The search included dissertations, research articles, industry reviews, and commentaries within the fields of management, sociology, and psychology that supported the theories directly related to this study. Google and Google Scholar searches provided a broad, inclusive search method, although retrieving a relevant article often required using Walden Library and journal-specific supported searches, particularly when I sought recent international journal articles.

The search strategy involved the use of key words and phrases to identify material containing scholarly, international, and industry insights and perspectives. Initial key words and phrases included *organizational change, change theory, change failure, culture, culture theory, subculture,* and *cultural perception*. These words and phrases evolved during the literature search to include *social conflict, social identity theory, organizational stratification, hybrid organization, mergers and acquisitions, conflict theory*, and *case study design*. The search yielded relevant works by foundational theorists, change and cultural studies by scholars and practitioners, and study designs used for similar research.

The first step in refining the literature search strategy was to find relevant articles on change theory and change success to identify concepts that researchers considered a factor in change failure and success. Studies on organizational change revealed that success rates had not increased in decades despite the research on how to improve them, suggesting an unresolved gap in knowledge (Kuipers et al., 2014).

Researchers have offered different reasons for change failure yet have agreed that perceptions of organizational subcultures are often a significant factor in change success

(Decker et al., 2012; Kash et al., 2014). Studies on organizational cultures and subcultures have suggested that social identity and conflict are instrumental in establishing cultural perceptions (Besharov, 2014; De Dreu, 2014). Studies on cultures and subcultures have also suggested that hybrid organizations exhibit greater differences in subcultural perceptions because hybrid organizational subcultures often exist independent of the organization (Madlock, 2012).

The information gained in the general literature searches resulted in a more narrowed focus on five basic concepts associated with subcultures, perceptions, and change failure; concepts related to change theory, change success, culture theory, social identity theory, and conflict theory. Searches within these concepts and theories focused on studies and papers on organizational subcultures, mergers and acquisitions, hybrid organizations, and case studies on organizational change. The use of this search strategy provided a means to offset the lack of current research on subcultural influences on change success or dedicated to identifying subcultural perceptions that might influence change success. Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of the study's literary source types.

Table 1

Sources for Literature Review

Journal articles	Electronic articles	Scholarly books	Dissertations & theses	Papers & reports	Founding theorists	Total
115	6	24	9	9	(5)	163

Table 2

Key Terms With Corresponding Year of References

Term	2016/17/18	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010 >	Total
Change theory	1	3	7	2	1	1	1	16
Change failure	0	2	3	1	2	6	2	16
Culture/subculture	2	9	12	11	10	6	10	60
Hybrids	1	2	2	5	2	1	6	19
Social conflict	0	4	2	0	2	1	2	11
Qualitative design	3	6	7	4	3	3	15	41
Total	7	26	33	23	20	18	36	163

The second step was to review the source of referenced material within each item considered relevant to this study and repeat the process until the sources proved redundant, less credible, or less relevant due to age. Non-peer-reviewed material was used when it was based on relevant industry experience or peer-reviewed material that included insights from practitioners. Cultural and subcultural perspectives are of particular interest in an increasingly globalized marketplace, and although peer-reviewed articles and research are important from a scholar's perspective, industry articles and papers were also included because they provided insights and perspectives from those closest to the phenomenon.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was based on the phenomenon of change failure attributable to the negative influence of subcultural perceptions. Researchers on change and organizational subcultures have concluded that most change plans fail and

that hybrid organizational subcultures exist, and they have argued that perceptions and biases that negatively influence change success are identifiable (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Hornstein, 2015; Tobias, 2015; Zia-ul-Haq & Kamran, 2015).

The conceptual framework of this study was grounded on an interpretive paradigm, postpositivism, and social constructivist epistemology. Researchers adopting this epistemology posit that people are qualitatively different from natural events, construct a reality based on their subjective perceptions, and interact together to construct artifacts and knowledge for one another (Ridder et al., 2014; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). The relevant premise is that people make decisions based on their subjective understanding, which is biased by the meanings of their cultural and subcultural symbols and based on interpretations supported by social interaction with other members of their collective (Abrams, 2015). The exploration of subcultural perceptions related to intergroup relationships, change, and their role as change agents should provide insights as to how members perceive their environment and are predisposed to react to prospective changes originating from outside their subculture.

Subcultural perceptions are the result of biases generated by environmental, individual, and group influences (Ellemers, van Nunspeet, & Scheepers, 2014). The following are a few of the influences that can affect bias:

- Self-identification—How the subculture perceives itself and reacts to others (Lockett et al., 2014).
- Change origin—How changes originating from inside and outside the subculture are perceived or treated differently (Kuipers et al., 2014).

- Role and Influence—Whether members believe that they have a supporting or

  resisting role, and whether they perceive that they have any influence on

  change success (Wittig, 2012).

- Avoidance and outcome—Whether change is perceived as inevitable or

  avoidable, necessary or unnecessary, with inevitably positive or negative

  outcomes (Wittig, 2012).

A synthesis of researcher conclusions suggests that differences in subcultural

perceptions within an organization lie on a continuum. Extremes vary from minor

differences found in a very homogeneous organization, to more significant differences

where national origin, purpose, measures of success, motivation, job description,

location, and the full spectrum of individual identifiers are present (Alvesson, 2013;

Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990; Pervaiz & Zafar, 2014; Rodgers, 2014).

Authors of change theories have attempted to explain the various subcultural factors that

affect change success, yet their conclusions have often been in conflict (Hornstein, 2015).

One area of agreement, however, is that a qualitative study is the best method to explore

and identify factors related to a social phenomenon. Aligned with this conclusion, the

conceptual framework of this study was modeled on a qualitative exploratory case study

approach using direct and indirect questions and the triangulation of data to identify

potentially negative influential perceptions related to change success.

A similar direct/indirect approach was used to explore the influential relationship

between a ship's culture and marine accidents, where the researcher concluded that

subcultural perceptions would prevent valid responses to direct questions due to

subconscious bias (Shea, 2005). That study's researcher used cluster sampling of

maritime institute students and members of professional maritime organizations dispersed

around the world. Similarly, my study focused on clusters of shipboard workers attending

a maritime institute, yet unlike the previous study that included mariners of different

nationalities, the population of my study consisted of U.S. citizens only. This difference

was not considered significant because the focus of this study was the identification of

influential perceptions within a specific subculture that could later be compared to similar

studies on a more global scale.

A similar case study methodology was used to examine the alignment between

subcultural perceptual alignment and change success (Ravishankar et al., 2011).

Underlying assumptions mirrored those of this study; specifically, that subcultures exist,

influence change success, and are identifiable, and that a significant gap exists related to

the influence of subcultures on change success. A significant difference between the

Ravishankar et al. (2011) study and this study was the assumption that perceptual

alignment would result in higher change success rates; in this study, I simply sought to

identify perceptions that might have a negative influence on change success, unrelated to

perceptual alignment between organizational subcultures.

Although this qualitative case study did not have a theoretical foundation, theory

informed the conceptual framework and propositions, and provided insights into how

perception influences change behavior in complex and often unexpected ways. Kuipers et

al. (2014) identified a gap between theoretical perspectives and suggested leveraging the

strengths of different theoretical approaches in future studies on change. The conceptual

framework of this study complied with the Kuipers et al. suggestion by employing a more holistic approach in exploring how members of a hybrid organization's subculture perceive and react to changes originating from outside their subculture (Lockett et al., 2014).

Using a multiple-lens/frame approach in this study (Kuipers et al., 2014; Lyon et al., 2014; Moon et al., 2012) made it possible to leverage insights from change theory (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015), conflict theory (Coser, 1957), social identity theory (De Dreu, 2014), attachment theory (V. Grady & Grady, 2013), cultural theory (Tajfel, 1982), and construal level theory (Wilson et al., 2013). Each of these theories contributed concepts related to how individuals and groups make sense of the world around them and suggested rival explanations and potential future questions and research based on the findings of this study. Such an approach was consistent with other related studies (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Lyon et al., 2014; Okhuysen & Bonardi, 2011).

This study's focus on the identification of subcultural perceptions that might influence change success differed from yet built upon previous research focused on confirming the existence of subcultures, the role that subcultures have in change success, the potential influence of subcultural perceptions, and the sometimes counterintuitive nature of conflict. The approach of the study also differs from those of other studies by focusing on the identification of influential perceptions within a shipboard worker subculture in hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters. Hybrid organizations include social enterprises that incorporate profit and nonprofit units; multinational businesses that operate in areas containing conflicting cultures; agencies

that contain military, civilian, and commercial workers; and organizations with competing logics, whose subcultural measures of success, norms, values, and expectations vary greatly from one another (Eldar, 2017; Haigh & Hoffman, 2014; Hajjar, 2014).

Previous research on hybrid organizations focused on verifying their existence and relevance in an increasingly globalized and multinational business environment, particularly where profit, nonprofit, and voluntary organizations are on the rise (Battilana et al., 2012). The conceptual framework of this study recognized the increasing prevalence of hybrid organizations yet differed from previous studies by not focusing on the nature of hybrid organizations (Kaiserfeld, 2013). The conceptual framework of this study recognized that potentially greater differences in subcultural perception might make influential perceptions easier to identify, while employing a methodology easily transferable to other hybrid or nonhybrid organizations. A shipboard worker subculture was chosen for this study because it was not unique to the target organization, worked in an environment physically separated from the rest of the organization, represented a subculture distinct from other organizational subcultures, and was likely to have significant differences in perception from other subcultures within the same organization.

Literature Review

The following review of the literature on change success covers the historic low success rate of organizational change, the existence and role of subcultural perceptions that might influence change success within an organization—especially within hybrid organizations—and the reasoning behind the choice of a case study design. The intent of

this review is to cite and synthesize literature that supports the assumption that change

success is influenced by subcultural perceptions and are identifiable with an exploratory

case study approach. The literature review is organized by conceptual topic to provide

contextual justification for an exploratory case study designed to address a significant gap

in research on the potential influence of subcultural perspectives on change success in

hybrid organizations.

　　Research is cited that validates the existence of organizational subcultures, the

phenomenon of their influence on change success, the need for further research

considering failed attempts to improve change success, and the choice of study design

(Yin, 2016). Consideration of the more general phenomenon in context with a lack of

research on change success in hybrid organizations allowed the formation of a clear,

researchable problem statement. Understanding how researchers had previously explored

the phenomenon provided insights into forming questions that would specifically address

the research problem and a methodology that supported triangulation of data.

Organizational Change

　　Research on organizational change and change management in the mid-twentieth

century focused on the nature of change to address change failure. Initial research

resulted in foundational concepts associated with the how change is perceived, received,

and adopted or resisted. Lewin's 1947 model of change, depicting change as a

mechanical process of unfreeze-change-refreeze was revised by Schein (1996) to include

contextual dissatisfaction with the status quo and the emotional components of

conversation (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015). That model focused on episodic rather than

continuous change, and regardless of which type of change, treated change as a

mechanical process independent from those responsible for carrying out and sustaining

the change (citation). Lewin's model was considered by researchers in the 1990s to be

too restrictively linear and static to explain the continuous process of change, and did not

consider the influence of individual or group psychology and personality (Bartunek &

Woodman, 2015; Hiatt & Creasey, 2014). Contemporary researchers take a broader,

more comprehensive consideration of continuous, temporal and relational dynamics.

       Change theory continues to evolve and incorporate psychological elements to

understand the social dynamic imparted by change agents (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015).

Hiatt and Creasey (2014) argued that a convergence of thought is ongoing between the

engineer's focus on the mechanical aspects of change and the psychologist's focus on the

human aspect of change. The result of this convergence led to the field of change

management (Hiatt & Creasey, 2014).

       Most models for conducting organizational change focus on methods to create a

standard set of steps and processes required to implement change. These processes

include Kotter's (1995) eight-step strategy, which includes establishing a sense of

urgency, forming a coalition, creating and communicating a vision, empowering others to

act on the vision, creating short-term wins, consolidating improvements and

institutionalizing new approaches. Kotter's approach, like other theorists before him, was

to detail steps that needed to be completed and identified potential issues along the way,

yet did not provide insights into how individuals and groups influence the success of the

individual steps, and treated change as an event rather than an ongoing process (Tobias, 2015).

Twenty-first century researchers focused on the importance of language, complexity theory, and the synergistic relationships between structures, processes and perceptions held by various stakeholders and change agents (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015). Perhaps the most important development in organizational and change studies is the rejection of objective reality in lieu of perceived reality and its variability between subcultures to address change in its various forms (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015). The rejection of objective reality is the foundation of social constructivist epistemology that posits individuals construct a reality based on their subjective perceptions, and interact together to construct artifacts and knowledge for one another (Ridder et al., 2014; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014).

Change Failure

Advances in technology, increased globalization and hybridization have resulted in a widening gap between change magnitude and the ability of organizations to effectively manage change (Jorgensen et al., 2014; Kalkschmidt, 2013). Organizational change researchers studying change failure since the late 1960's speculate this widening gap is responsible for the recently upward trend of the 70% failure rate that had remained relatively unchanged since the mid-20th century (Kuipers et al., 2014). Mid-20th century researchers initially attributed the high failure rates to a poor understanding of change dynamics. However, research and attempts to improve change methodology and success rates since the late 1960's have proved ineffective (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Tobias, 2015).

The lines between change research and research on change failure are blurred. Researchers focused on the processes of change must simultaneously consider potential reasons for failure (Tobias, 2015). Research beginning in the last quarter of the 20th century gathered insights from other areas of the social sciences and psychology, particularly in identity theory and perception in the hope of finding a link between the change process and the individuals responsible for change success or failure (Tobias, 2015).

Change researchers identified various underlying factors in change failure, including an inability or individuals and organizations to respond to disruptive technologies (Huesig, Timar, & Doblinger, 2014). However, a more significant cause is the failure of change designers to understand and appreciate the influence of subcultural perspectives on change success (Koller, Fenwick, & Fenwick Jr, 2013). This lack of understanding and appreciation results in change plans designed without consideration of the subcultural perspectives that could adversely affect change success (Decker et al., 2012). An example of good intentions producing a negative result is seen in the Eastern parable of the Monkey and the Fish, where a monkey sees a fish struggling in the water, assumes it is drowning, and pulls the fish out of the water to save it. Although a simple parable, the point is clear: Changes based on biased assumptions can result in disaster to those most affected by the change.

A portion of the failure to understand these perspectives is related to communication issues within middle management, since they serve as the nexus between all levels of the organization (Raelin & Cataldo, 2011). If middle management fails to

understand the various cultures existing within the organization, communication between those cultures will be biased and potentially misunderstood. Such misunderstandings can seriously affect organizational change success by failing to remove ambiguity or make sense of the impending change to all stakeholders (Raelin & Cataldo, 2011).

Review of the literature on change success reveals it is a complex phenomenon previously approached with either an overly broad or a very narrow focus, and explained with conflicting theories (Greenwood et al., 2011). Researchers studying commitment to change and resistance to change have conflicting views on the effects resistance to change has on change success, with more recent researchers arguing some resistance to change is good, while blind obedience can result in change failure (Carlstrom & Olsson, 2014; Koller et al., 2013; Ming-Chu & Meng-Hsiu, 2015; Muo, 2014).

Although the issue of subcultural effects on organizational performance has received attention, there is little research on how hybrid organizational subcultures influence change success. The findings of this study provide theory expansion and refinement important to more specific theory building related to the influence of hybrid organizational subcultures on change success. Rather than study the phenomenon of change failure to verify failure rates or underlying causes, the design of this study explores perceptions within a hybrid subculture that influence change success (Madlock, 2012). Specifically, this study explored how members of hybrid organizations' shipboard worker subculture perceive their own and other subcultures, mandated changes originating from outside their subculture, and their role in change success. The answers to these three questions may provide researchers insights into how subcultural perception

influences the way a group reacts to externally mandated changes, which in turn influence change success.

Influence of Perception

Successful change requires reaching a sustainable threshold of cooperation and support from those involved with the change initiative (Perkov et al., 2014). Cooperation, as opposed to compliance, requires a mutual understanding of the problem and the proposed solution, and a desire to achieve the expected goals from those involved or affected by the change (Hornstein, 2015). Shared understanding requires a shared perception of the underlying reality. However, from a social constructivist perspective, reality is not objective, it is interpreted or perceived through personal and cultural lenses, and implying perfect alignment of perception may be impossible (Andrews, 2012). Whether perfect alignment is possible, the perceived reality of stakeholders must be taken into consideration when communicating the reasoning involved in order to achieve any level of shared understanding (Muo, 2014).

Perception has personal and historic components and people tend to base their analysis of given situations and change initiatives on personal experience, past practices, events, decisions, and perceptions of fairness and job satisfaction (Liu, 2012; Sušanj & Jakopec, 2012). How an individual independently responds to a change initiative depends on myriad factors internal and external to the work environment. Researchers have argued that current organizational change and work stress models inadequately address the subjective experience of employees at a time when work stress, technological, social, and organizational change are increasing in intensity and frequency (Bernerth et al.,

2011; DeTienne et al., 2012). Hofstede (1984) discussed how the perception and

expectations regarding quality of life was culture-dependent. The perceived effect of any

change initiative, therefore, may be distorted if the individual's expectations and

pressures—on and off the job—predispose them to resist any additional change. Koller et

al. (2013) argued that few theorists and researchers have offered a comprehensive model

to explain perception-based influence on individual behavior during strategic

organizational change.

Perception is also affected by subcultural influences (Abrams, 2015). If most

subcultural members perceive the change as positive, the individual who would otherwise

be against such change, may accept the change out of peer pressure or an actual shift in

perception due to subliminal group realignment. The implication for change managers is

that they need not get lost in endless personal details of specific individuals if those

individuals are not key members of the subculture; if they are key members, the manager

can focus on satisfying the needs of a select few to move the larger population towards

supporting the change initiative. However, such actions still require an understanding for

and appreciation of the perspectives of the subculture and its key members (Kastanakis &

Voyer, 2014).

Organizational Subcultures and Subcultural Identity

Culture has been defined as a set of values and assumptions shared by a group, a

combination of artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions (Giorgi,

Lockwood, & Glynn, 2015; Schein, 1996). Organizational culture is often defined as a set

of shared meanings collectively accepted within a group at a given time (Crough, 2013).

Alvesson (2013) argued that what is commonly defined as organizational culture is the ideals and visions prescribed by senior management. Whether discussing culture, subculture, or organizational culture, the unifying thread is a group that sufficiently shares perspectives that result in a set of assumptions and espoused values distinguishable from other groups (Schein, 1996). De Dreu (2014) suggested social identity theory explains how individuals form these groups.

Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, developed in the mid-20th century, suggests individuals categorize others as members or non-members of their group—us or them, in-group or out-group—using three mental processes: Social categorization—subcultures or social categories such as race, ethnicity, or social class; social identification—association or personal identification with a group; and social comparison—comparison of member group to other groups (Abrams, 2015). Although an individual may identify themselves as belonging to a group, they may only do so contextually and to varying degrees. This subjectivity creates problems when a group's membership is assumed to be perfectly aligned or predictable. As group membership changes, the potential for shifts in group behavior and perceptions change according to the predominance of ideals held by its members, yet group categorization is always socially comparative to other social groups (Mackie & Smith, 2015). Kreiner, Hollensbe, Sheep, Smith and Kataria (2015) introduced the concept of *identity elasticity*, where social tensions stretch the bounds of identity, yet remain sufficiently intact to preserve group membership.

Stratification theory suggests social, hierarchical, professional/trade, and departmental groups create subcultures within a single organizational culture (Askin, Bothner, & Lee, 2015). These subcultures are contextual within the organization and members may belong to more than one identifiable subculture (Abrams, 2015). Campbell's realistic conflict theory suggests stratified groups often have incompatible goals and inherently compete for power, control, and resources, resulting in the varying degrees of intergroup conflict (McKenzie & Twose, 2015). Other researchers have expanded upon realistic conflict theory—which originally considered competition between groups of equal status—by exploring how differences in power equality between groups modifies group dynamics in the competition for limited or shared resources (Zia-ul-Haq & Kamran, 2015).

Although there is an implied relationship between social identity theory and realistic conflict theory, there is a noted lack of evidence on causality of bias and hostility between them. Specifically, where social identity theory posits group identification causes out-group bias and hostility, and realistic conflict theory posits out-group hostility causes in-group identification. Regardless of what factors create the common identity with a group, group decision-making tends toward group, rather than personal benefits, biased against out-groups (Abrams, 2015). Positive relations between groups requires the removal of perceived threats to each group and the potential success of subordinate group goals (McKenzie & Twose, 2015). This does not negate the existence of individual-group discontinuity, where individual responses differed from their collective responses as a group.

Some researchers accord organizational cultures the power to significantly alter the intended impact of organizational changes (Crough, 2013). Although organizational cultures are often ill defined, most researchers recognize the existence of organizational cultures and agree they are often a reflection of the collective espoused values of the organization. It is, however, not uncommon for the organizational culture to be something other than advertised and follow values far different than those espoused in the organization literature. Such organizations experience high turnover when employees discover a mismatch between espoused and actual values (Porter, 2013). Organizational culture, therefore, provides a background upon which organizational subcultures actively support it, run counter to it, or exist somewhere in between the two extremes.

Since each culture, or subculture, may have a different perception of reality, their perception of the problem/situation, environment, resources, goals, measures of success, appropriateness of decisions, commitment, strategy, or communication, may differ to the point of conflict and vary depending on the context of the change initiative (Coser, 1957; Gerdhe, 2012; Howard, 2006; Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014; Madlock, 2012). It is important, therefore, to understand the perceptions, values, and goals of the subcultures that exist within an organization. Armfield and Dixon (2007) warned that simply typing subcultures is insufficient because it falls short of understanding their influence on organizational activities. The better approach is to recognize that cultures are inherently resistant to change and control, and identify cultural perceptions that influence how the subculture reacts to change and attempts at external control. Such an approach allows

mapping the cultural terrain to produce a guide on how to reduce errors in judgment and change design (Alvesson, 2013; Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014).

Another consideration is the size of the subculture. Coser (1957) argued smaller subcultures tend to have higher participation and a more rigid identity, whereas larger, more inclusive subcultures tend to show less individual involvement where ideological content can more readily change in response to diverging and conflicting internal issues. This is an important concept when attempting to analyze a subculture that is a collection of smaller identifiable subcultures, as is the case in the maritime industry where differences in duties between shipboard worker departments create variability within the larger subculture (Shea, 2005).

Culture can act as an obstacle to change and problem resolution, especially when change designers fail to appreciate the cultural component of organizational environments (Crough, 2013). Several researchers noted how past organizational culture research suffered from management-centric biases, suggesting that even researchers are guilty of ignoring the potential effect of subcultural perspectives on change initiatives. Schein (1996) argued that researcher inattention to an organization's social system results in underestimating of the importance of culture, shared norms, values, and assumptions in organizational success. Hogan and Coote (2014) recognized this continued gap in the knowledge base regarding organizational cultures and subcultures and suggested the need for further research to better define those factors that affect organizational dynamics.

Gilbert's (1997) research focused on a military family's perspective, yet offered only a single view into how other subcultures were perceived. Despite focused and

general research on subcultures in the last decade of the twentieth century, Soeters, Winslow, and Weibull (2006) noted a significant gap in knowledge regarding military culture and its perception of other subcultures. Gerras et al. (2008) also noted a researcher tendency to emphasize certain facets of military culture, while deemphasizing others, creating a distorted perspective of how military culture compares to their civilian counterparts. The resulting information on subcultural perspectives in the military and their hybrid organizations is insufficient beyond noting the existence of military culture and its possible influence on its parent culture and change in general.

Hybrid organizations, such as shipping organizations which may have military, civilian service, and private sector components, represent an extreme version of subcultural diversity due to their unique work environment. Communication accommodation theory suggests the outcome of conflict in culturally heterogeneous workgroups depends upon the degree each subcultural attempt to understand the issue and perspective of the other subcultures, and the degree of conflict between groups is related to the degree of differences between the groups. As such, understanding tends to produce productive conflict, while speech interruptions, indicative of disrespect, creates a potential for destructive conflict. Improving effective communications within heterogeneous workgroups is, therefore, a prerequisite to reducing conflict, yet requires understanding and appreciating similarities and differences between the subcultures comprising those workgroups (Giorgi et al., 2015). Schwarz, Watson, and Callan (2011), using elements of social identity theory with language and social psychology, proposed the way employees communicated as a group about planned changed could be used to

recognize eventual change failure. Communication is based on perception, and as such, answers to questions seeking perceptions on change are important in content and context.

Although organizational stratification, departmental association, and professional membership may create minor subcultures, the major subcultural affiliations fall along externally recognized lines. Military members are part of the military subculture regardless of their organizational assignment; civil servants are part of the public servant subculture regardless of their assigned agency; and private sector professionals are affiliated with their professions, irrespective of their employer. Differences in retirement systems, pay schedules, risk, measures of success, career goals, lifestyles, cultural idioms and acronyms, all serve to create distinct perspectives that are generally associated with their subculture (Gulbrandsen, 2011).

Influence of Conflict

Smith, Gonin, and Besharov (2013) suggested four types of conflict tensions are inherent in hybrid organizations: Performing Tensions—associated with goals and measures of success; Organizing Tensions--structures, practices and roles; Belonging Tensions—identity and purpose; Learning Tensions—lessons based on perspective. These tensions, prevalent in any organization, can be more significant or noticeable in hybrid organizations due to the degree of subcultural differences. Smith et al. (2013) argued the relevance of paradox theory in understanding the benefit of sustaining competing demands, while warning the way individuals respond to tensions could create vicious or virtuous cycles. Smith et al. suggested that research into how organizations

could promote effective responses to paradoxical tensions—applicable to subcultural perspectives—would be beneficial to understanding subcultural dynamics.

Social conflict theory, realistic conflict theory, and realistic group conflict theory suggest that intergroup hostility results from competition for limited resources, powering innovation and unit cohesion when facing a common threat (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). Tjosvold et al. (2014) warned against assuming all conflict results from competition, yet agreed that conflict, regardless of causation, could inspire innovation. Several social scientists have posited the perception of an out-group threat increased in-group solidarity and awareness of in-group identity, whether threat was real or imagined (Brief et al., 2005). These perceptions can affect former relationships, as in the case where an employee transitions from interpersonal to group, to intergroup contact, and can result in situations where former allies perceive one another as enemies during intergroup conflict (Liu, 2012; Moon, Moon et al., 2012).

Gelfand, Leslie, Keller, and de Dreu (2012) argued that organizational subcultures were sources of inevitable conflict and confrontation, therefore, based on realistic conflict group theory, it is often assumed that intergroup conflict inevitably has a negative effect on one or more groups, and possibly the entire organization. However, De Dreu (2014) and Coser (1957) saw such intergroup conflict as a motivator towards in-group cooperation and innovation. Coser (1957) went further, arguing that organizations would stagnate from lack of innovation and evolution if there were no perceived threats within or external to the organization. The positive or negative effect of intergroup conflict may

ultimately depend on the degree of the conflict and the perceived degree of resources at risk.

Organizational alignment theorists have argued that organizational conflict decreases performance (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Conflict theorists have disagreed with organizational alignment theorists, suggesting a certain degree of conflict from misalignment may increase performance and innovation (Coser, 1957). Conflict can be a driving force behind motivation, and a reduction of conflict could have dysfunctional consequences by removing the stimulus for innovation, resulting in organizational stagnation (Coser, 1957). External threats could result in increased internal cooperation, or result in productive collapse if the threat was perceived to be too great (Coser, 1957). The opposite was also perceived to be true; a lack of external threats could result in atrophy and stagnation (Coser, 1957).

Productivity, sustainability, and adaptability, are not synonymous, and a lack of innovation may decrease productivity and lead to organizational failure due to an inability to adapt to changes in the environment Koller et al., 2013). However, significant differences in cultural expectations, motivations, management styles, work ethic, moral development, and other variables can result in conflicts that are counter-productive (Koller et al., 2013).

Consideration of a synthesis of alignment and conflict theories can lead to a proposition that both are necessary for innovation and productivity, while extremes of either can be counterproductive. De Dreu (2014) argued that in-group primacy would bias a group towards leveraging cooperation in their favor, as noted in behavioral game

theory; apparent alignments may be transient and shallow. While certain alignments may temporarily increase productivity, such as groups cooperating towards a common goal, if one or both groups are able to manipulate events and end up with a greater margin of profit, the result could produce a situation where conflict becomes destructive, reducing productivity (De Dreu, 2014). By implication, alignment as a goal may never provide the expected results, whereas understanding the nature of conflict may allow leveraging human nature towards greater productivity.

The implication of these knowledge gaps and theory conflicts related to cultural and subcultural dynamics for change managers is that there is no single formula for success and no clear method to ensure change success. Change managers must be able to recognize and appreciate the existence of organizational subcultures, their own cultural bias, and the need for some degree of conflict and cooperation between organizational subcultures. Change managers need more information and insight into how subcultures react to different types of change before they can develop more effective change plans. Increased awareness, appreciation, and knowledge is a prerequisite to perceiving the organization, its environment, and its problems through multiple cultural lenses. A lack of such awareness, appreciation or knowledge risks continued failure due to the effect of culture-bias and cultural tunnel-vision in change plan design.

Literature Related to Method

The nature of this case study is exploratory, with the unit of analysis being the subculture comprised of shipboard workers. A case study is consistent with exploring contextual conditions of contemporary events when behaviors cannot be manipulated and

is the appropriate method when a triangulated, holistic approach is required (Stake, 2008).

Jin, Robey, and Boudreau (2015) used an exploratory case study on a hybrid community of open source software user groups, arguing that constructs are subjective and contextual, requiring qualitative interviews. Valentine, Fleischman, and Bateman (2015) used an exploratory study to assess the relationships between ethical standards, ethical values, and budgeting orientation, surveying 290 managers from a variety of businesses operating in the western part of the US. Accordingly, case study exploration of a single subculture's perceptions within a hybrid organization is a method that provides insights on motivational triggers, expectations, goals, and measures of success, and qualitative data analysis can reveal quantifiable patterns for comparison. The focus of analysis, therefore, was the identification of subcultural perceptions that influence change success. Insight into these perceptions better inform strategists seeking to improve the predictability and statistics of change success.

Literature Contrasting Method to Other Methodologies

Quantitative methods are limited to studying previously identified variables. The results of Altaf's (2011) quantitative study to determine how cultural dimensions affect organizational effectiveness supported the theory that some aspects of culture have a measurable impact on organizational effectiveness—power distance and collectivism— yet provided no new insights explaining how or why.

Denzin (2009) commented on how qualitative research is often accused of a lack of evidence-based conclusions, specifically in the area of ensuring quality. Denzin

favored flexible guidelines not driven by quantitative criteria, yet warns that qualitative research is inherently perceived to be more subjective than quantitative research, and as such, the qualitative researcher needs to ensure their data is carefully considered and presented with acknowledgement of potential researcher bias. Denzin also notes that the choice of qualitative approach should be carefully considered.

Since the research questions seek to identify unknown variables, a qualitative approach was chosen (Yazan, 2015). All qualitative approaches were considered, yet only the exploratory case study was deemed effective in addressing the research questions related to this study. Specifically, historical studies encompass non-contemporary events; experiments separate a phenomenon from its context; ethnographic studies focus on cultural groups who interact over time; and phenomenological studies explore lived experiences of the phenomenon, rather than the factors that influenced them (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014). A case study approach, however, allows the capture of perspectives on a phenomenon from members within a single subculture in a short period, providing answers directly related to the research questions (Tellis, 1997).

An exploratory case study approach, using hybrid methodologies, was chosen as it provides the coverage and focus suggested by Armfield and Dixon (2007), who argued scholars of culture have failed to progress from categorization to an understanding of organizational subcultures because they have not developed the tools or methodologies necessary to detect and assess the functions of organizational subcultures and the impact of subcultural perceptions on the organization. Subcultural elements are interdependent; studying isolated cultural elements tends to produce a distorted and limited understanding

of culture, while approaches that fail to delimit the concepts tends to blur specific

contributions of cultural paradigms (Trice & Beyer, 1984). Sellin (2015) argued that

different groups had different conduct norms—rules that reflect the attitude of the group

to which the individual belongs—which could conflict with one another. Primary conflict

arising as a conflict between cultures, and secondary conflict arising when a single

culture evolves into subcultures (Sellin, 2015). Subculture interdependence and variations

across psychological and sociological lines, therefore, suggests a need to apply a more

holistic approach that links and studies those concepts considered most relevant to the

distinctive cultures.

Schein (1996) argued that an underestimation of the importance of culture within

an organization leads to research aimed at measuring culture rather than observing it.

Hofstede's attempt to measure culture at the individual level (Yoo, Donthu, &

Lenartowicz, 2011) is an example of how researcher attempts to measure culture fail to

capture the effect of culture on organizational phenomenon. Schein suggested this failure

to treat culture as a significant influence on organizational behavior stemmed from the

methods of inquiry, which put a premium on abstractions rather than direct observation of

organizational phenomenon.

Promoting a hybrid methodology, Armfield and Dixon (2007) suggested the

results of prior research confirm the existence of sub-cultures without providing a full

understanding on how they affect or influence organizational life. Armfield and Dixon

(2007) criticized researchers who misidentify organizational groups associated by

behavior and tasks as organizational subcultures; stating that even when a subculture is

properly identified, current qualitative and quantitative research often validates their existence without providing understanding as to how they influence organizational interactions, due to the limits of the chosen methodology. As such, they suggested that a hybrid approach reduces such limitations and provides the best method for exploring how subcultural perceptions in a hybrid organization influence change success.

Construal level theory suggests the perspective of the individual is affected by several forms of distance (Henderson, Wakslak, Fujita, & Rohrbach, 2011), such as psychological, spatial, temporal, and social distances. Consequentially, implied contextual reality shapes and affects individual and group behavior (Wilson et al., 2013). This theory informs the design of data collection methodology, where identical questions were asked of target populations spatially separated at varying distances from the organization's headquarters. Gathering and comparing such data allowed contextualizing and comparing responses to determine if construal level phenomenon exercises any noticeable differences in perceptions.

Summary and Conclusions

Organizations must change to ensure profitability, sustainability, and longevity (East, 2011), yet despite ongoing research since the mid-20th century, the historically persistent change failure rate of 70% (Decker et al., 2012) is on an upward trend (Kuipers et al., 2014). Researchers attribute a large portion of these failures to change designs that do not account for the negative influence of subcultural perceptions and the upward trend to increasing cultural diversity associated with globalization and organizational hybridization (Hornstein, 2015; Jorgensen et al., 2014; Latta, 2015; Niemietz et al., 2013;

Perkov et al., 2014; Schein, 2010; Zia-ul-Haq & Kamran, 2015). Researchers attribute the lack of improvement in change success to a lack of studies addressing the gap in knowledge associated with not knowing which subcultural perceptions influence change success (Decker et al., 2012; Hajjar, 2014; Locke & Guglielmino, 2006). Concepts such as social identity theory, social conflict theory, intergroup emotion theory describe how groups form, perceive and influence one another, yet fall short of identifying the specific perceptions that negatively influence change success (Abrams, 2015; Latta, 2015; Liu, 2012).

Perceived differences between groups can create tension and conflict that positively or negatively affect group interaction, innovation, and change, yet not all theorists agree on whether differences or conflicts always result in negative influences (Coser, 1957; Locke & Guglielmino, 2006). Although differences in perception between change designers and recipients may result in designs unacceptable to change recipients, certain perceptions held by those recipients may contextually predispose support or opposition to any attempt at directed change. Knowing how a subculture perceives other subcultures in the organization could reveal a negative or positive bias towards communications and changes originating from that subculture (Mackie & Smith, 2015). Knowing how a subculture perceives externally directed changes could suggest methods to mitigate negative perceptions and reinforce positive ones (Barrios, 2013). Knowing how a subculture perceives their role as change agents could reveal a predisposition to support, ignore, or oppose changes, regardless of change origin or type (Latta, 2015).

The significance of differences between subcultural identities and perceptions depend on the degree of cultural complexity within the organization; the greater the complexity, the greater the difference and potential influence on change success (Hajjar, 2014). Since researchers conclude hybrid organizations often contain subcultures with significant differences in identity and perception, exploration of perceptions within a hybrid organization should provide a venue where influences on change success might be more readily identified (Schein, 2010).

The need to identify potential perceptions that might influence change success suggests a single qualitative exploratory case study methodology targeting a subculture within a hybrid organization. The research question is explored through questionnaires, focus groups, and individual interviews, allowing triangulation of data to identify perceptions that partially address the gap in knowledge, provide a qualitative model for similar studies in other organizations, and perceptions for other researchers to quantify.

Chapter 3 provides details related to this study's research design, tradition and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a chapter summary.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to identify the perceptions of a shipboard worker subculture that influence change success within hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters. The data from this study contribute increased knowledge and insights for change designers to consider and researchers to explore and quantify. The findings of this study may be used by practitioners who lead social change initiatives to improve change designs meant to reduce worker stress from change fatigue and increase organizational efficiency and profitability through fewer change failures.

This chapter has five main sections. In the first section, which covers the research design and rationale, the research question and related concepts are restated, the phenomenon of the study is defined, and the research tradition is identified with a supporting rationale. The second section addresses my role as the researcher, the previous relationship I had with the target organization's subculture, and potential biases. The third section contains details on the research methodology, participant selection and recruitment, instrumentation, and data collection. Issues of trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, are discussed in the fourth section. The final section is a chapter summary containing a synopsis of the chapter's main points with a transition into Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question posed in this exploratory case study was inherently qualitative: What subcultural perceptions within the shipboard worker subculture

influence change success? Abrams (2015) recommended deconstruction of such open-ended questions into smaller influential parts, because a direct answer requires participants to form a conscious conclusion based on their subconscious biases. To ensure a more holistic approach to gathering general and contextual data, questions based on deconstructed concepts such as group, change, and role bias were asked in addition to the open-ended question posed by the research question (Abrams, 2015; V. Grady & Grady, 2013; Hasan, 2013; Newell & Shanks, 2014; Rogers & Senturia, 2013; Shea, 2005). This approach allowed analysis of the validity of the proposition that group, change, and role bias are significant influences on perception, while avoiding exclusion of data that did not directly relate to that proposition.

The assumption that organizational change is influenced by unknown contextual perceptions of organizational cultures was central to this study (Zia-ul-Haq & Kamran, 2015). A qualitative approach was chosen based on the Kash et al. (2014) argument that cultures need to be observed rather than measured, and Woodman's (2014) comments on the difficulties associated with internal validity and replication in quantitative designs in the study of change management. Of the various qualitative approaches, an exploratory case study design provides a multiple-lens approach to explore phenomena in context with contemporary events and the participant's point of view when behaviors cannot be manipulated and variables are unknown (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014).

Other qualitative approaches, such as historical, phenomenological, ethnographic, and grounded theory, were considered inappropriate or less effective (Yin, 2014). For example, researchers use historical studies to encompass noncontemporary events;

phenomenological studies to explore lived experiences of a phenomenon, rather than the factors that influenced them; ethnographic studies to explore a culture's characteristics, rather than perceptions of factors that might contribute to a phenomenon; and grounded theory studies to develop theories on phenomena of interest, rather than to explore and identify possible influences that may contribute to phenomena.

The results of an exploratory case study support theory building by providing initial data to form the basis of descriptive or explanatory studies that focus on determining how and why certain perceptions have such influence. An exploratory case study can also be sufficiently quantifiable to serve to prioritize or filter for the most prevalent perceptions to undergo quantitative analysis in a future study. Liu et al. (2014) employed such a design in their exploration of how cultural perceptions influence risk management. Similarly, the data obtained from this study reveal certain perceptions that influence change success that can later be quantified by studies designed to focus on the predictive relationship between specific perceptions and change success.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher in this study was that of a research instrument collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Researchers in qualitative studies must reveal potential biases and assumptions and try to compensate for them (Yin, 2014). I was a member of the target subculture and other related subcultures within the maritime industry. Such multiple subcultural membership should neutralize most single-subculture bias by making it possible to understand multiple perspectives within the industry. Any residual bias was mitigated by using an exploratory

design, rather than an explanatory design, and avoiding exclusion of data. Familiarity with the target subculture also allowed more accurate analysis of responses in a context more likely to answer the research questions, further compensating for possible bias. Exit interviews and questionnaires provided a method for assessing how I and study were perceived, which provided additional insight into how the collected data should be interpreted (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2017).

Methodology

The methodological approach employed in this study was based on a constructivist paradigm, where truth is relative and dependent on the perspective of the individual. The proximity of researcher and participants in this case study allowed the participants to share their perception of reality so that a better understanding could be obtained. This is particularly important because the phenomenon of perception is contextual, so the studied phenomenon must be defined within the context of the perceived reality or risk misinterpretation related to the researcher's perceived reality (Yazan, 2015).

Participant Selection Logic

A purposeful selection strategy was planned because that approach promotes maximum variation in responses by selecting participants most likely to answer the study's research questions from different perspectives and closely match expected industry demographics in age and gender (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). It was anticipated that data saturation could be achieved with a minimum of 12 participants willing to take the questionnaire, six personal interviews, and a six-member focus group

discussion. There were, however, a limited number of personal interview and focus group discussion volunteers; thus, I was forced to take a convenience sampling approach. Although using all available participants from among shipboard-worker volunteers amounted to a convenience sample, the cross-section of participants matched the intended distribution planned for the purposeful selection strategy, and data saturation was achieved.

Shipboard workers include U.S. Coast Guard-certified officers and crew, and foreign officers and crews certified by agencies outside the United States. These general groups can be further divided by membership within various shipboard departments, such as the deck or engine department. Figure 3 is a visualization of the general composition of shipboard workers and their relationship to other identifiable subcultures internal and external to the organization (Meyer et al., 2014; Thatcher & Patel, 2012).
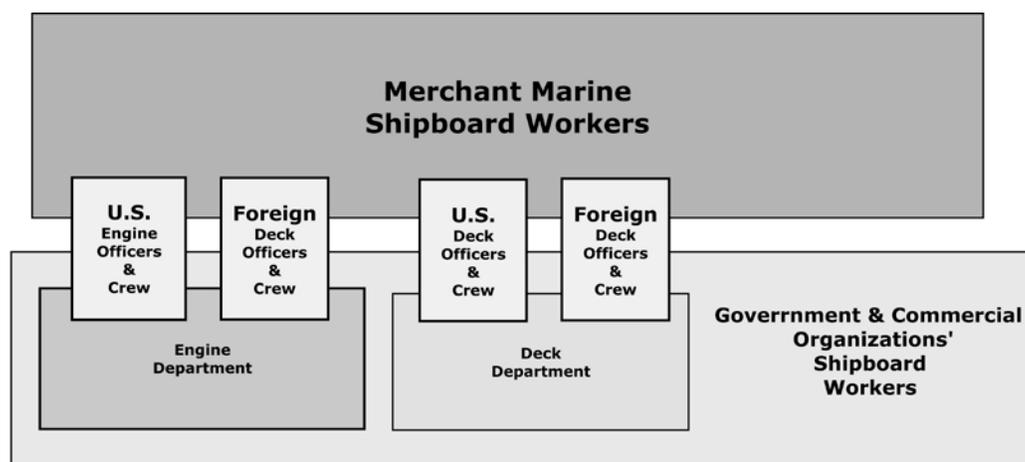
Figure 3. Composition of shipboard workers.

The criteria for participant selection depended on the available subgroup within the data collection strategy, which in this case consisted of officers and crew within the

deck department attending a maritime industry school. A visual representation of the

recruitment, selection, and data collection strategy is provided in Figures 4 and 5.
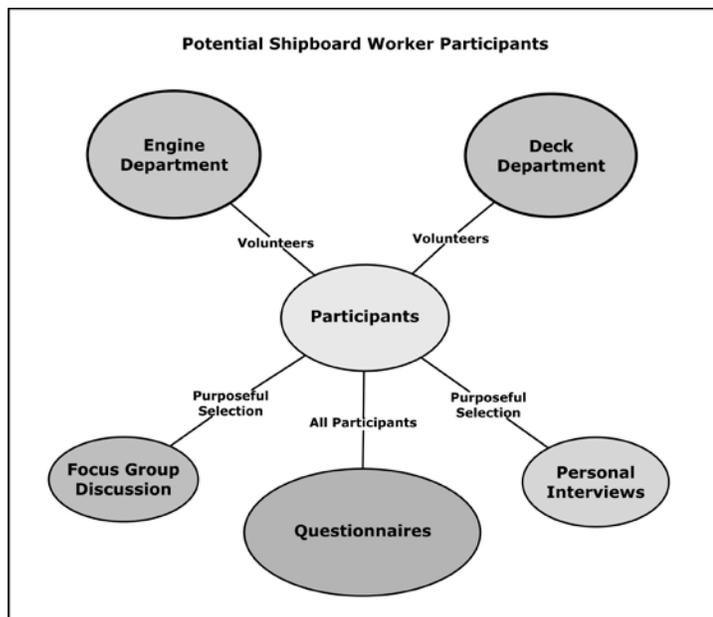
Figure 4. Shipboard worker selection strategy.
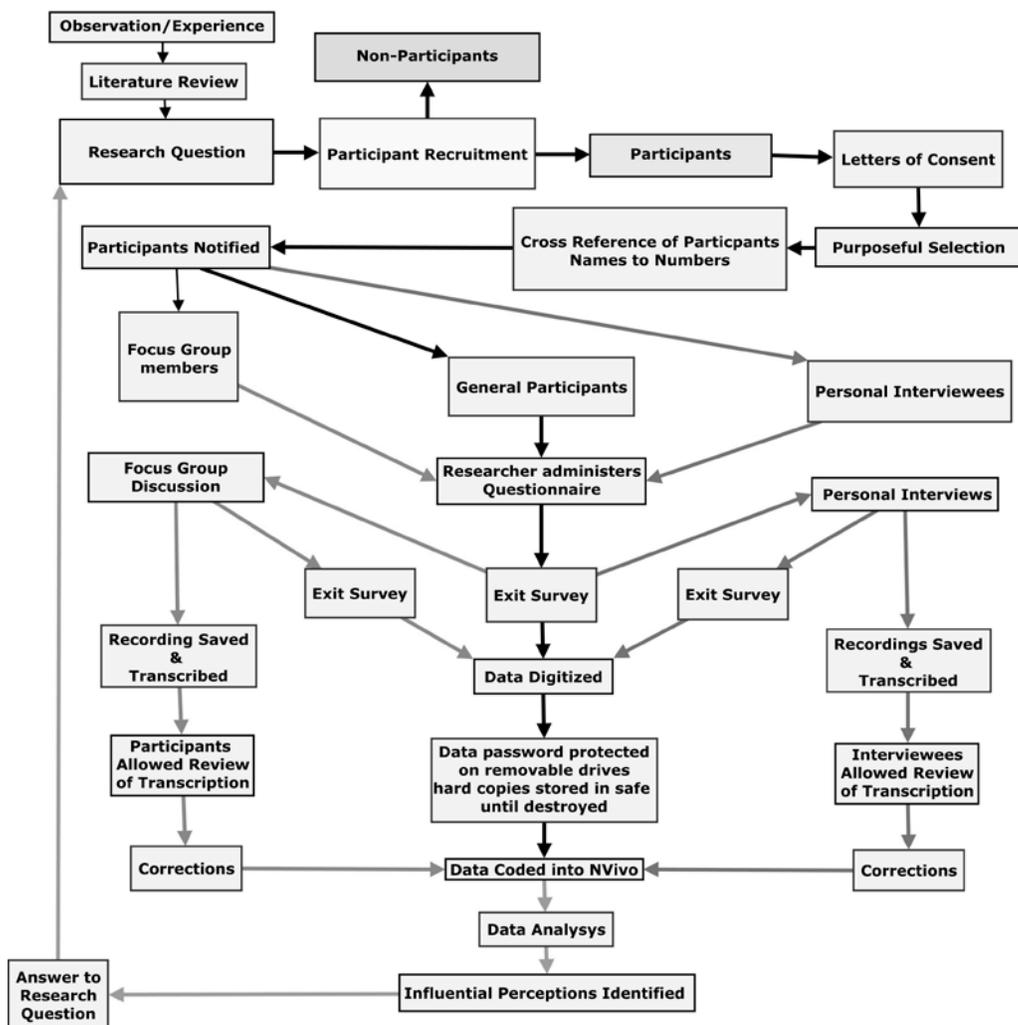
Figure 5. Recruitment and data collection strategy.

Maritime tradition is strongly hierarchical, and senior officers have inherently dominant personalities that could potentially influence junior officers (Shea, 2005). Although such influence might exist in a shipboard venue, data collection at the training site among junior and senior officers not in a subordinate or supervisory role allowed an open exchange of perspectives without fear of reprisal. Because the population of volunteers consisted almost exclusively of deck officers, no participant was excluded from focus group discussions or personal interviews. Although junior and senior officers were included in the focus group, the comments suggested independence of thought and little influence of the group on the individual.

The strength of this participant selection strategy was that it allowed triangulation of data with the widest span of perceptions while minimizing the number of focus group and interview samples requiring transcription and in-depth analysis. Data collection in a studious, nonthreatening environment also provided a venue better suited for personal reflection and honest responses (Guest et al., 2017). The weakness of this approach is insufficient data collection to support establishing the relative prevalence of specific perceptions across subgroups.

Instrumentation

I was this study's preferred data collection instrument, using questionnaires, focus group discussions, and personal interview questions derived from group bias, change bias, and role bias concepts mentioned in the literature review as the method of collection (Yin, 2014). These three methods allowed the collection of data relevant to the phenomenon from individuals within the environment influencing their perceptions and

ultimately change success. Although my familiarity with the subculture assisted me in developing and administering questionnaires as well as protocols for focus groups and personal interviews, the questionnaires and discussion topics for focus groups and personal interviews underwent prior field testing.

Field Testing

Field testing is critical when the test instruments are created by the researcher and used to obtain subjective answers, especially when checking for cultural context, assessing the acceptability of an interview protocol, identifying or resolving ethical issues, and uncovering other issues that could hinder a study (Kim, 2011). California State University at Long Beach cited such testing as being the third step in the development of instrumentation—a step that allows the researcher to check and correct clarity and bias issues, establish time requirements, and validate that responses provide data aligned with the research question (California State University at Long Beach, n.d.).

This study's test instruments underwent field testing by a Walden instructor and four former members of the target subculture who worked for various shipping organizations. Initial responses by field testers indicated a need for revision to remove potential bias, simplify the questionnaire, reduce the number of questions, and rely more on true/false and fill-in-the-blank-type questions. The feedback from the field test validated the need for conducting such a field test to ensure clarity and avoid questions perceived as biased, prejudicial, inappropriate, or misleading (Hilton, 2015; Presser et al., 2004; Yin, 2016).

The questionnaires contained true/false and fill-in-the-blank questions that explored the general concept of the research question and areas associated with one of this study's propositions related to group, change, and role bias (Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Hofstede et al., 1990; Kaplan & Duchon, 1988). Group bias questions focused on worker self-perception, organizational worth, and perception of other organizational subcultures. Change bias questions focused on changes originating external to the target subculture. Role bias questions focused on how the individual and subculture perceived themselves as change agents, and whether those perceptions might influence change success. Taken together, perceptual data gathered in these three areas sufficiently supported triangulated data analysis and revealed subcultural perceptions that might influence change success.

Semi-structured, open-ended focus group discussions and personal interview question protocols guided the process to explore the same three areas in greater depth (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Personal interviews followed a script and provided an opportunity for follow-up questions that allowed the participants to elaborate on responses. Member checking was offered to allow participants an opportunity to review comments to ensure that the transcriptions accurately captured what they meant to say; this offer was universally declined (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Members of the target subculture live and work aboard ships for most of their career. Subcultural members tend to stay aboard ship even when the ship is in port; thus, shipboard members either assigned to ships currently in port at the time of data collection, between ship assignments, or serving in other capacities ashore formed the

pool from which participants were recruited. Potential volunteers were provided a description of the study, its purpose, its voluntary nature, the important role they might play as anonymous participants, and details on the three methods of data collection. I verbally conveyed the purpose of the study and informed potential volunteers that participation in the study was voluntary and that their responses would remain anonymous. I provided unsealed envelopes to each potential participant containing a written description of the study and a consent form with a sample of the questions posed in the questionnaire. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and they were provided details on time requirements, methods of selection notification, and postinterview transcription reviews. I explained that the participants could also volunteer to participate in a focus group discussion or a personal interview by checking the appropriate boxes when signing their consent form. I informed the group of potential participants that those not wishing to participate could simply return an unsigned consent form, while those wishing to participate should return their signed consent form to their respective envelope, seal it, and hand it back to me before leaving the room. I locked the collected envelopes in a briefcase until I was able to secure them in a locked safe after digitizing. All hardcopy materials have been stored in a locked safe, where they will remain until destroyed. All digital data are in password-protected files in encrypted removable drives kept under lock and key.

Each volunteer's unique serial number was used for questionnaires, the focus group discussion, and personal interviews; the reference list crossing names to serial numbers is maintained in a password protected removable drive, stored separately from

collected data. Due to the limited size of the potential participant pool, all volunteers were allowed to take the questionnaire (Appendix A). The number and type of volunteers for the focus group discussion and personal interviews promoted a balanced input and a wide span of perceptions, which aligned with the anticipated distribution within the department, allowing all volunteers to participate, avoiding potential issues related to perceived favoritism in the selection process. I coordinated time and location for taking the questionnaire, attending the focus group discussion, and personal interviews with each participant.

Participants were encouraged to ask for clarification while entering their demographic data and taking the questionnaire, and were informed they could leave any question unanswered if they chose to do so. I provided each participant a serialized envelope containing a similarly serialized questionnaire, exit survey, and a pen. I advised the participants not to sign or put their name on the questionnaire or exit survey to ensure third party anonymity of the data. The exit survey allowed feedback on how participants perceived the questionnaire, why they decided to participate in the study, and whether they had any concerns regarding the confidentiality of their responses. I instructed each participant to put their completed questionnaires and exit surveys back into the numbered envelope, seal it, and return the sealed envelope to me when finished. Limits associated with participant bias and honesty were mitigated with iterative questioning, negative case analysis, exit survey reviews, and data triangulation from a representative sampling of participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Yazan, 2015).

Focus group participants were posed questions in accordance with the focus group protocol, which can be found in Appendix B. They were asked not to use personal names in their responses and were reminded their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time, and as vocal or silent during the discussion as they desired. I introduced discussion topics for the focus group and asked them to freely discuss the topic. I redirected, restated, or revised questions when it appeared they had drifted too far from topic or might need more context to the question. All participants agreed to have the discussion digitally recorded and later transcribed. Although they were offered an opportunity to check the accuracy of the transcription, they each declined to do so. Participants were reminded that the recording of their discussion would be held on password-protected removable drives and be kept in a locked safe separate from the removable drive containing the index of names. I asked each focus group participant to fill out a serialized exit survey once the discussion was ended. This allowed them an opportunity to provide feedback on the focus group process.

I coordinated times and locations for personal interviews with each volunteer, and advised each participant how the information they provided in their responses would be used towards accomplishing the study's purpose. Each participant was reminded they could withdraw from the survey without penalty at any time by notifying me verbally or in writing they wished to withdraw from the study. Although no participant asked to leave the study, I was prepared to provide a written statement to participants who wished to withdraw from the study indicating their name and data would not be used or retained and would have attached a copy to the participant's letter of consent.

Personal interviews followed the protocol found in Appendix C. Personal interviews consisted of focused and open-ended questions covering the main topics covered in the questionnaire, with follow-up questions based on their responses. I explained to each participant that questions might be restated or contextualized if it appeared they were misunderstood or a response strayed too far off topic. Participants were thanked for their participation and asked if they wished to provide any additional comments or wished to clarify any of their previous statements. Each participant declined an offer to review a transcription of their interview to ensure accuracy, yet agreed to complete a serialized exit survey on the interview process. Exit surveys were later digitized and securely stored along with other research data. All exit survey templates can be found in Appendix D.

Data/participant anonymity is maintained by numerical indexing and separation of data from the index linking the data to specific individuals. Data will be retained for 5 years following the study and kept in an encrypted removable drive stored in my combination safe, after which the drive containing the data will be reformatted. Data access is restricted to only those needing access and who have signed nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements, such as transcribers or peers performing data/analysis review.

Data Analysis Plan

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to identify the perceptions of a shipboard worker subculture that influence change success within hybrid organizations operating in near coastal or international waters. Qualitative data is inherently subjective; more so when that data is based on participant perceptions that

undergo review, inferences, and coding based on researcher perceptions. Of Yin's (2014) five analytic techniques for conducting qualitative data analysis, I chose pattern matching for this study. The goal of pattern matching in exploratory case studies is the development of ideas for further study (Yin, 2014). Pattern matching supports the hypothesis-generating process based on the prevalent perceptions identified in this study (Yin, 2014).

Digital recordings of focus group discussions and personal interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word using Dragon Speech Recognition Software™, then manually reviewed and corrected to ensure accuracy of the transcription. Audio and transcribed files are password-protected and stored in a removable drive retained in my safe. No additional assistance was required to accomplish the transcription.

Member checking reviewed transcriptions of personal interviews would have provided an additional check for accuracy, credibility and validity of the transcriptions, however, participants declined the offer to review the transcriptions (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Responses to questionnaires and transcribed data from focus group discussions and personal interviews were coded into NVivo 12 Pro™ software. Appendix E contains questionnaire responses and Appendix F contains transcriptions of focus group discussion and personal interviews. Initial coding was based on a priori themes and evolved over the course of the study as responses suggested other codes were required due to collected that did not fit within the initial coding matrix (Saldana, 2009). The use of a codebook in qualitative research is often cited as the initial, and potentially, most critical step in the

analysis of data; this is especially true of interview data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Codes are tags or labels that categorize data such as phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that constitute a specific meaning or concept. MacQueen, McLellan, Kay and Milstein (1998) suggested codebooks should contain six elements: Code names/labels, brief and full definitions, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and examples, whether a codebook contains six elements, or fewer elements that consolidate these concepts.

Codes generally fall into three categories: theory-driven (a priori), data-driven (emerging from raw data), and structural (emerging from research goals and questions). Data-driven and structural codes are derived from data examination, whereas the development of theory-driven codes result from constant theory re-visitation; therefore all codes are subject to iterative data or theory review (Baxter & Jack, 2008; DeCuir-Gunby, Marshal, & McCullock, 2011; Yazan, 2015). Since codebooks contain a set of codes, definitions, and examples subject to an iterative process or revision, codebooks too are subject to the same iterative revision. Coding, whether open or axial, allows data reduction and simplification, data expansion by making new conceptual connections, transformation by converting data into meaningful units, and reconceptualization through revision of theoretical associations (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is idiographic and emic, rather than nomothetic and etic, and the qualitative researcher seeks a kind of knowledge to which quantitative notions of validity are poorly suited. The focus of this study was on establishing qualitative credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, instead of quantitative

internal and external validity, and reliability. Exit surveys were administered to participants as an additional method to assess credibility and confirmability of the data.

Credibility

Credibility reflects the degree to which the phenomenon represents the experiences perceived by the participants (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Credibility is established in this study through manual verification of transcription accuracy and triangulated data analysis (Yazan, 2015). A threat to credibility is my previous prolonged contact with the target subculture, however, Maxwell (2013) and Roller (2012) supported triangulation as a method to increase credibility and improve confirmability by mitigating the potential threats of interviewer bias, reflexivity, and validity. Potential researcher bias is mitigated by previous membership in multiple subcultures during my extended career in the industry. This multiple-membership provides insight into how each subculture is understood and misunderstood by one another, reducing the net effect of researcher bias, while recognizing the potential of reflexivity. Potential researcher bias associated with propositions was mitigated by temporarily ignoring the propositions during the collection and analysis of data (Yin, 2016).

Data saturation was achieved by purposeful sampling and multiple collection strategies across each of the major areas of job description and stratification (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The administration of questionnaires to all volunteers produced a broad foundation of perceptions from participants who might not otherwise have an opportunity to share their perspectives, while focus groups were of sufficient size to experience the effect of individual perspectives and group dynamics. Personal interviews conducted

from the representative cross-section within the demographic promoted in-depth data collection from within the target subculture. The triangulation of data from these three sources provided suitable data saturation for this exploratory case study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Transferability

Transferability is partially established by thick description and variation in participant selection. Thick description, one of the most common ways to achieve credibility and transferability, relates to the multiple layers of culture in which participant experiences exist. Understanding the maritime culture, and the subcultures in which the participants operate, assists in putting participant comments into context for readers existing outside this unique culture and subculture. The ability to provide a contextual framework and understanding of industry specific terms increases the potential transferability of this study within the maritime community.

While somewhat transferable within the maritime community, the study results are potentially transferable to other hybrid organizations due to the nature and purpose of the study, rather than the details of its findings. Specifically, exploring subcultural perceptions that influence change success within the target population provided insights into how subcultural perspectives influence change success in any organization, regardless of its hybridization.

Dependability

Dependability exists when researcher decisions can be followed by other researchers (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The dependability of this study is established

through consistent and transparent data collection methods and analysis techniques. The process of data collection, analysis, and derivation of findings is repeatable and consistent with this qualitative analysis methodology. This repeatability comes from the creation of audit trails that documented research activities and processes, influences on emerging themes, changes in research or question design, and potential influences on data collection and interpretation/analyses. The basic questions, themes, and codes are likewise applicable to similar studies, and the audit trail covering member checking, triangulated data analysis and treatment methodology allows follow-up questioning of participants for post-study verification (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013).

Confirmability

While it is important to recognize any research is somewhat subjective (Maxwell, 2013), it is also important to remember that a study's findings should represent the phenomenon being studied and not the biases of the researcher. Asking the participants for their opinion on which perceptions influence change success reduces threats to confirmability that would exist if the researcher dismissed perceptions believed unrelated to change success. Recognizing the potential effect of reflexivity on focus groups and personal interviews mitigates its actualization. External auditing of collected data by an expert in qualitative data analysis also increases confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

Research was approved in advance by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and responsible members in charge of the target population that formed the participant pool for the intended research. The mission of the IRB is to ensure their institution only

conducts research in which potential benefits outweigh potential risks through regulation

compliance and the application of sound research design. The three ethical pillars to this

are justice—the fair distribution of risks and rewards associated with research,

beneficence—maximize benefits, minimize harm, and respect for persons—acknowledge

autonomy and protect those with diminished autonomy. Once IRB approval was granted,

a Letter of Cooperation and Date Use Agreement was obtained from the appropriate

authority in charge of the research site. The targeted organization was provided a copy of

research proposal prior as part of their approval process.

Participant recruitment followed a presentation made to the pool of potential

participants, where the study's purpose, duration, relevance to the potential participants,

and the anonymity of its participants were explained in great detail. Participants were

advised they could receive hard copies of the IRB approval document, their consent form

and confidentiality agreement. Treatment of data and collection details were

communicated and all potential participants were provided an opportunity to have any

questions answered before deciding whether to participate.

Electronic data will be retained for 5 years following the study in a password-

protected removable drive stored in my safe, after which the drive containing the data

will be reformatted. Access to the data is restricted to myself and those needing access

who have signed non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements, such as other researchers

or peers conducting data/analysis review.

Summary

This chapter opened with a summary of the research method, design and rationale, where my role as the researcher was described and participation selection logic presented. I was identified as the collection instrument for questionnaires, focus group discussions, and personal interviews and the procedures for recruitment, participation and data collection were detailed, and a data analysis plan was provided. Issues of trustworthiness were discussed on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The chapter concluded with ethical procedures regarding access to participants and data, the treatment of participants, data collection and treatment.

My role as the researcher in this study was to develop questions and topics, serve as the collection instrument, and analyze collected data. The participant selection, data collection, treatment and analysis plans conform to the highest ethical standards in justice, beneficence, and respect for persons. Data security, audit trails, and a deep respect for personal privacy form the ethical foundation for this study.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the data collection setting, the participants, the data analysis, coding categories developed, and evidence of research trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to identify shipboard worker subcultural perceptions that influence change success within hybrid organizations operating in near-coastal or international waters. The research question addressed the purpose of the study by asking what perceptions within the shipboard-worker subculture might influence change success.

Chapter 4 is organized into seven sections, presenting the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study results, and a chapter summary. The research setting section contains details on the organization, location of data collection, and conditions that might have affected participants at the time of the study, or the interpretation of the study results. The section on participant demographics contains details and a summary of participant characteristics relevant to the study. The section on data collection indicates the number of participants from whom each type of data was collected; the location, frequency, and duration of data collection for each data collection instrument; and a description of how the data were recorded. The section on data analysis contains details on the process used to move from deductive coding derived from the philosophical framework to inductive coding emerging from participant discussions. This process produced broader representations including categories and themes; a description of the specific codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data; and details on how discrepant cases were factored into the analysis. The section on trustworthiness includes a discussion on elements and

issues relevant to this qualitative study. The section on study results contains the details of the study answering the research question, followed by a summary of findings.

Research Setting

Data were collected from shipboard-worker volunteers attending courses at a maritime school on the East Coast of the United States. This venue was chosen because it allowed data collection from subcultural members in an educational environment removed from participant workplaces and worker-peer influences at a time when they were not otherwise focused on their daily shipboard duties. Collecting data at a time and place separated from their normal routine was meant to reduce the emotional aspect of responses associated with specific employees, such as charismatic or dominating shipboard members, and peer intimidation. Removing fear of group reactions that might have influenced responses from individual volunteers was another potential benefit. Collecting data in such a nonthreatening environment is better suited for personal reflection and honest responses, promoting a more accurate interpretation of the data during analysis. In situ data collection might have identified the influence of specific subcultural members on a group; however, the focus of this study was identifying influential perceptions, not the effect on perception attributable to influential shipboard workers. Analysis of data collected in this setting also allowed consideration of how participants perceived the study and my motives through exit interviews and questionnaires, which provided additional insight into how the collected data should be interpreted.

Demographics

Table 3 provides participant demographics relative to the 20 participants in this study. The percentage of female officer participants, 15.8%, was within the 13.2% and 19.6% span experienced at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA, 2018). Half of the participants had varying amounts of military service, 85% possessed college degrees, and 35% were senior officers. All but one participant were members of the deck department; the other participant was a chief engineer.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Age group	Gender		Department		Officer status			Military experience	Education		
	M	F	D	E	Sr	Jr	Non		M+	A+	ND
18-25	0	1	1			1		1		1	
26-35	6	2	8			8		4		8	
36-45	4	0	4		2	2		1		4	
46-55	2	0	2		1	1		1		1	1
55+	5	0	4	1	4		1	3	2	1	2
Total	17	3	19	1	7	12	1	10	2	15	3

Note. D = deck, E = engine, Sr = chief mate/chief engineer/captain, M+ = master's or PhD, A+ = associate's or bachelor's, ND = no college degree.

The ship's chief engineer and members of the deck department have the most interaction with management ashore, and most changes are communicated to shipboard workers through their department and the ship's chief engineer. The participant pool represented those who were closest to directed changes and had the greatest influence on how these changes were presented to the balance of the shipboard workers. All but one participant had greater than 5 years of experience in the industry and included maritime

company employees and maritime union workers, with many having experience with both.

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

All 20 participants completed the study questionnaire, six participated in personal interviews, and six took part in focus group discussions. Review of triangulated data from all sources showed response saturation across all demographics. The shaded section of Figure 6 represents the five participants who contributed data in all collection methods.

20 Participants (ksorxxxx)

Questionnaires

1001	1005	1009	1010	1011	1012	1013
1015	1016	1018	1027	1028	1029	

Personal Interviews		Focus Group Discussions
1002	1003 1004 1006 1014 1030	1007
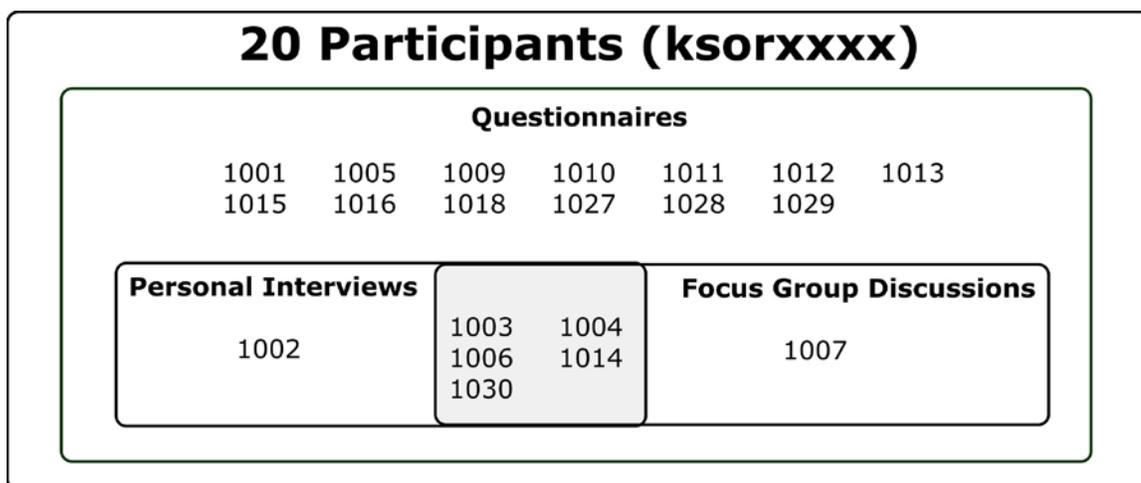
Figure 6. Participant participation by collection method.

Participant recruitment and data collection were completed in a 4-day period at a maritime school specializing in advanced education of professional mariners. The school administrators provided an opportunity to solicit volunteers from among more than 80 students enrolled in four classes and members of the school faculty who were current or former shipboard workers. I presented a brief summary of the study subject and goal, and the voluntary nature of participation, and then provided 30 sealed packets containing additional details and a numbered letter of consent to be completed by those wishing to

participate. Participant letters of consent were numbered such that subsequent forms, questionnaires, and digital recordings could be retained and associated with participants without revealing participant identities.

I returned to each class and collected all packets for review on Day 1, which resulted in 20 signed letters of consent, which were scanned into a single file and saved on an encrypted hard drive. Packets returned without signature indicated an unwillingness to participate in the study and were retained for record continuity. Because all 30 packets were consecutively numbered from ksor1001 to ksor1030, the 10 numbers not used created gaps in the sequence; Figure 6 shows the assigned numbers of the 20 participants in this study.

I privately reminded those who signed the letters of consent of the voluntary nature of their participation and gave them a numbered packet matching the number now associated with their identity. I informed the participants that this second packet contained a demographic form, questionnaire, and exit survey, and I asked them to fill out the form, complete the questionnaire and survey, reseal everything back in the packet, and return the packet directly to me at their earliest convenience. All but six questionnaires were collected on Day 2, with the remaining six collected at the start of Day 3.

Personal interview and focus group discussions were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. Only six of 11 personal interview and six of eight focus group volunteers actually participated due to schedule conflicts and time constraints due to assignments related to their scheduled classes. The focus group discussion and all but

two personal interviews were held and digitally recorded in a small conference room provided by the school's administrator for that purpose; two interviews were conducted and digitally recorded in the participants' private offices. Participants were reminded prior to commencing the interview or focus group discussion that their participation was voluntary and that the study was not connected with the school, nor would their participation have any influence on their grades. I informed the participants that the session was going to be digitally recorded and that they could withdraw their participation at any time during the interview or focus group discussion without repercussion.

Three personal interviews were conducted on Day 2, one was conducted on Day 3, and two were conducted on Day 4. The average time for personal interviews was just over 24 minutes, which was close to the 30 minutes estimated in my proposal. The focus group discussion was conducted on Day 3 with six participants. The discussion lasted just over 41 minutes, which was within the 30 to 60 minutes estimated in my proposal. Participants were asked at the end of the focus group discussion and each personal interview to complete an exit survey designed to collect data on how they viewed the interview or discussion in regard to my potential bias or neutrality and the environment in which the data were collected.

Demographic data forms, questionnaires, and exit surveys were scanned and saved on an encrypted external hard drive with file names representing the numbers associated with the participants' letters of consent. Personal interviews and focus group discussions were digitally recorded and saved on an encrypted external hard drive with

file names representing the number assigned to the participant or indicating a focus group discussion.

Demographic data and questionnaire responses were transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for later import to NVivo software. Digital recordings of personal interviews were initially transcribed with Dragon Professional version 15.3 software; however, the error rate was significant, such that each transcription was manually edited to ensure accuracy. The digital recording of the focus group discussion was too complex for transcription software; thus, the recording was manually transcribed. Although participant error checking was offered to interview and discussion participants, they indicated no desire to do so. Transcribed recordings were saved to an external encrypted hard drive and kept in a secure location apart from participant information.

The original data collection plan was to collect data from engineer and deck department shipboard-workers; however, the venue used for data collection was overwhelmingly populated with deck department members. Although this varied from the original collection plan, it provided a more focused perspective from the department that has the most interaction with decision makers ashore and is usually responsible for implementing directed changes aboard their ship. The data are therefore limited in span of perception, yet more focused in the most influential group among shipboard workers.

Because the number of personal interview and focus group volunteers represented the minimum number of participants believed necessary to achieve data saturation, I was unable to apply the purposeful participant collection strategy outlined in Chapter 3. Although a purposeful selection was not possible, the demographics of personal interview

and group discussion volunteers fortunately mirrored the distribution of gender, experience, and age I would have used for purposeful selection.

Data Analysis

As noted in Chapter 3, the use of a codebook in qualitative research is often cited as the initial and potentially most critical step in the analysis of data; this is especially true of interview data. The codebook for this study contained six elements: code names/labels, brief and full definitions, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and examples. The initial set of codes were theory-driven/a priori codes. Data-driven and structural codes emerging from raw data and research goals and questions were added during the analysis of questionnaires, personal interviews, and focus group discussions. A priori codes were grouped by category under overarching themes related to the research question. Codes added during data analysis were associated with related categories or under new categories suggested by the analysis. The three a priori themes were suggested by decomposing the complex research question into smaller conceptual units that theorists indicated were the major contributors to perceptions on change: perception of organizational identity, perception of directed change, and perceived role as agents of change.

Theory-driven codes underwent revision as the codes were considered in context with collected data. Structural codes were directly associated with perceived subcultural influences on change success. Data-driven codes emerged from the analysis of focus group and personal interview discussion transcripts. Codes, whether developed a priori from theory, data, or structure, underwent iterative revision based on analysis of

relevance of open codes and axial codes that emerged from code-to-code associations. Just as the codes were revised, so too were their definitions, inclusions, and exclusions. The final step in code development was the determination of reliability. Codes open to more than one interpretation or inconsistently applied required contextual revision and/or division into more than one code.

Figure 7 is a CMap illustrating the sources of the codes used in my codebook and the subsequent development of my final set of codes. This study explored perceptions, so the codes needed to clearly identify objective elements apart from subjective/perceptual elements. Although the postconstructivist position of the study acknowledges the validity of an individual's perceived reality, codes based on objective verification had to be defined so that they were not confused with subjective data. Demographic data, for example is not considered subjective, whereas questions asking for opinions are extremely subjective and had to be coded in a way that clearly recognized that subjectivity.

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┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│  Theory Driven  │      │   Data Driven   │      │   Structural    │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
         │                   ╱         ╲                   │
         ▼                  ╱           ╲                  ▼
┌─────────────────┐  ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐  ┌─────────────┐
│   a priori      │  │Focus Group │ │ Interview  │  │  RQ Review  │
│Based on Relevant│  │Data Review │ │Data Review │  └─────────────┘
│   Theories      │  └────────────┘ └────────────┘         │
└─────────────────┘         ╲           ╱                  ▼
         │                    ▼         ▼          ┌────────────────┐
         ▼              ┌────────────────┐         │Identify Potential│
┌─────────────────┐    │Identify New    │         │ RQ Based Codes │
│ Review & Revise │    │    Codes       │         └────────────────┘
│  Codes within   │    └────────────────┘                │
│ Context of Data │            │                          │
└─────────────────┘            ▼                          │
         ╲            ┌────────────────┐                 ╱
          ──────────▶ │ Create/Revise  │ ◀──────────────
                      │  Categories    │
                      └────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                      ┌────────────────┐
                      │   Establish    │
                      │  Reliability   │
                      └────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
┌──────────────┐      ┌────────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│Organizational│ ◀─── │ Associate with │ ───▶ │   Role as    │
│  Identity    │      │     Theme      │      │ Change Agent │
└──────────────┘      └────────────────┘      └──────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
              ┌────────────────────────────────┐
              │ Perception of Directed Change   │
              └────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 7. Steps for codebook development.

Theory-driven codes used in my study were related to biases associated with perceptual themes related to organizational identity, directed change, and the target subculture's role as change agents. Structural codes added to a priori codes based on specific areas of interest, while data-driven codes provided information that allowed addition and revision of a priori codes based on the focus of participant responses.

I revised initial codes by first becoming familiar with the data. Creating a matrix containing the responses to the questionnaire provided an opportunity to become familiar

with the general direction of the perceptions related to change success. Manual editing of personal interview and focus group discussion transcriptions provided greater depth to the questions and additional context to consider in the analysis. Insights gained from increased familiarity allowed the creation of new codes and the subdivision of existing a priori codes. The new set of codes allowed for the generation of new themes, refocusing the analysis along broader conceptual lines. These themes were in turn subjected to revision based on patterns revealed by further review. Specifically, transcript review and analysis revealed patterns allowing an inductive move from smaller, structurally driven coded units to larger representations including categories and themes related to the research question.

Initial coding focused on perceptions of self and managers ashore revealed patterns related to trust; however, these patterns suggested a contextual relationship with perceptions on the nature of change and groups or specific individuals ashore. Data-driven codes on perception of self and those ashore resulted in categories related to trust, measures of success, organizational identity, and inclusivity revealed the complexity of subjective perceptions involved in change processes.

Initial coding of perceptions on directed-change suggested additional codes associated with communication, influences, resistance, support, success, and reasons; collectively suggesting potential improvements to change processes. These codes also added to a priori area of participants' perceived role as change agents, resulting in patterns reflecting how perceptions on change influenced perceptions on participant roles as change agents.

The a priori node on identity was divided into two nodes related to perceptions of self-identification among members of the participants' subculture and other organizational members ashore. Nodes related to these concepts included contrasting measures of success, mission, trust and budget. The a priori node related to change included how participants perceived change and their role as change agents. Data-driven nodes under this a priori node included nodes on communication, improvements, collaboration, influences, and change fatigue.

Perceptions overlapped a priori themes, revealing a complexity and contextuality in regard to how participants perceived themselves, organizational managers, and directed change. Influence is a good example, where perceptions on their role as change agents and directed change were subject to multiple influences. Since all perceptions are subject to multiple influences, comments coded as influences were considered across thematic lines.

When asked questions related to measures of success, participants stressed the importance of the ship's mission, focusing primarily on the safe operation to transport cargo. "Well, primary mission is get onboard, do our jobs safely, and go home safe. I mean personal safety is probably the biggest key, is ensuring safety for yourself, others and then the vessel….our purpose right now is to transport cargo" (ksor1002). The focus group stated, "Safely get the ship from point A to point B….safe, efficient operations….safety of the ship, safety of the environment, best on time, then budget." Although trust was an a priori code related to perception of personnel ashore, collected data suggested trust in the development of the change was also a consideration. "Trust

and confidence, you know, I'd say it's a mixed bag. The more explanation you have, I think it's directly tied to it, the more confidence you have, and that's my major hang-up on a lot of changes" (ksor1006). "If the person who had designed the change was somebody I trusted, if he was just the messenger it would mean little to nothing. (ksor1003). "If there is a lack of trust that could negatively influence the change's success? Yes." (ksor1006). The nature of trust in those ashore and in the nature of the change showed significant elements to warrant the creation of a separate code for trust in change.

Comments on communication, influences, collaboration, improvements, and fatigue resulted in data-driven codes. In regard to communication, "basically, you know, it's a two-way street. The relationship needs to be developed, you know, between people that are effecting the change and people who are trying to pass it down linearly" (ksor1004). "I think people are more likely to support something if they understand the rationale behind it" (ksor1006). "We do things because we've always done them that way. It's not an acceptable answer, but changing something and not giving an explanation and the reasoning behind it is also not really acceptable, and that's where they falter and die" (ksor1030).

Table 4 provides details on the a priori, structural, and data-driven codes derived from the research question and collected data.

Table 4

Themes, Categories and Associated Codes

Theme	Definition	Categories	A priori codes	Structural & data-driven codes

			Identity ashore	No additional codes
Organizational identity	Perception of self and others in the organization	Identity	Identity onboard	
		Perception of personnel	Measures of success	Mission
			Trust	Workers afloat Workers ashore
Directed change	How shipboard workers perceive directed change	Change	Perception Success Reason	Communication Improvements Collaboration Influences Fatigue Trust
Role as change agent	Perceived role in change implementation	Active Passive	Support Resist Benign neglect No role	Influences

NVivo 12 software was used to code and analyze open-ended questions and transcriptions of personal interviews and the focus group discussion. Pattern identification and theme association were the result of project mapping and data queries validating saturation and a broad inclusion of participant responses. Boolean responses to focused questions were subjected to manual analysis in MS Excel matrices. These responses were triangulated against interview and focus group responses to test alignment and response consistency. All data were analyzed against demographic information to check for relevant response patterns. Demographic relevance was confined to gender, military experience, age group, and senior/junior officer position. Exit survey results were analyzed to gage potential bias resulting from perceptions related to the researcher,

the nature study and its difficulty, the request for their participation, and the importance of their participation.

The Data

      Three types of data collection methods were used in this study: The questionnaire posed 22 closed and 14 open-ended questions, and the personal interviews and focus group discussion posed semi-structured questions within three parts aligned to a priori themes that resulted in narratives providing more depth and context. The questions posed during the personal interviews were based on the protocol established in the proposal, while each subsequent interview allowed variation in follow-on questions based on emerging concepts from the previous interviews. The focus group discussion also followed a protocol of anticipated topics, although emerging concepts were allowed to be expanded upon by the group as the discussion proceeded. Exit surveys were conducted following each stage of data collection to determine possible influences imparted by the researcher, test questions, or venue, and to capture participant perceptions that might pertain to the study question in general.

      Questionnaire and exit survey responses were manually entered into MS Excel where they were sorted and arranged to assist transference of open-ended questions into NVivo 12 software. Recordings of personal interviews and focus group discussions were initially transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking 15 software, then manually reviewed and corrected to ensure accurate transcription. All transcriptions were entered into NVivo 12 software for coding analysis. Paper copies of data collection instruments and data were transferred to a fire safe for retention. All digital copies of data, test

instruments, recordings and transcriptions were held in an encrypted external hard drive for long term retention.

Demographic information was collected for all participants and keyed to serial numbers to preserve participant anonymity. Serial numbers between ksor1001 through ksor1030 were created for the study, of which 20 serial numbers were used. Demographic information included gender, age group, shipboard department, U.S. Coast Guard license status, country of birth, former military service, Senior/Junior office status, level of education, years in the industry, and geographic home zone. These demographics were used to determine whether demographic patterns could be identified within responses.

Table 5 shows the secondary coding structure in a thematic matrix, with the associated theme and protocol part, category, code and frequency within each data collection instrument. The frequency of some codes, such as perception, is high due to the questions posed on various ways participants might perceive directed change. These questions were related to the perceived nature, benefit, purpose, and inevitability of directed change. All 20 participants provided questionnaire data; personal interview and focus group participants (ksor10XX) 02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 14 and 30 provided narrative data on all three themes.

Table 5

Secondary Coding, Thematic Matrix, and Coded Frequency

Theme	Categories	Codes	Frequency		
			Q	PI	FG
		Identity ashore	0	6	2
Organizational identity (Part I)	Identity	Identity onboard	38	10	5
	Perception of personnel	Workers afloat	19	12	3
		Workers ashore	55	19	2

			Q	PI	FG
		Trust those ashore	39	11	0
		Measures of success	20	6	2
		Mission	19	3	3
		Perception	120	21	2
		Success	19	13	2
		Fatigue	0	3	1
Directed change (Part II)	Change	Reason	38	7	3
		Communication	0	14	3
		Improvements	38	12	3
		Collaboration	27	6	1
		Trust	0	13	0
		Influences	19	17	3
Role as change agent (Part III)	Active	Support	38	17	1
		Resist	39	10	0
		Influence	97	19	3
	Passive	Benign neglect	20	0	1
		No role	20	0	0

Note. Q = questionnaire, PI = personal interview, FG = focus group.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility reflects the degree to which the phenomenon represents the experiences perceived by the participants. Limits to credibility, such as data accuracy, participant engagement, bias, and honesty, were mitigated, but not eliminated. Mitigation was established by ensuring the questions sought answers relevant to the research question, data were subjected to triangulation analysis, and digital recordings were subjected to manual transcription or editing. Participants declined the offer of post-transcription review, so member checking could not contribute to data accuracy. Limits associated with participant bias and honesty were mitigated with iterative questioning, negative case analysis, exit survey reviews, and data triangulation from a representative sampling of participants. A total of 32 exit surveys were conducted; 31 of 32 exit surveys

indicated participants perceived me as a neutral party, and all participants believed their

responses honest and valuable.

Transferability

The concept of transferability is the qualitative equivalent of external validity in

quantitative research. The design of this study and subsequent findings are transferable as

a starting point for quantification of a model for studying other subcultural perspectives

in any organization. Although the specific perceptions noted in this study may be unique

to the maritime industry, they represent social concepts relevant to any organization, and

therefore represent valid perceptions to investigate in other studies related to subcultural

perceptions that might influence change success.

Dependability

Dependability, the qualitative equivalent to quantitative reliability, refers to the

degree in which future researchers could repeat the study, even if different results are

obtained. Letters of consent, demographic forms, questionnaires, exit surveys and topics

posed in personal interviews and group discussions were designed to allow their use

within any maritime venue, so future researchers could use these data collection

instruments to repeat the study, regardless of venue.

Dependability exists when researcher decisions can be followed by other

researchers. The dependability of this study was established through consistent and

transparent data collection methods and analysis techniques, where influences on

emerging themes are explained, and potential influences on data collection and

interpretation are documented. The decision to allow two personal interviews be

conducted in the participant's private offices was based on my intent to improve response honesty by maximizing participant comfort and privacy.

Confirmability

Limits to confirmability include researcher bias and the interpretation of data. Since collected data were not be used to support a hypothesis, researcher bias was limited to data collection instruments and collected data analysis. Three methods of data collection were used to allow subsequent triangulation analysis. Confirmability was improved by removing potential researcher bias with the decision to include all participant opinions on perceptions that might influence change success, regardless of whether I believed they were related to change success. Recognizing the potential effect of reflexivity on focus groups and personal interviews mitigated its actualization, and a data-oriented approach was used for pattern identification and coding. Potential researcher bias during focus group discussions was mitigated by post-focus group exit surveys on perceived researcher influence during the discussions, and inclusion of responses in opposition to the majority view. Exit surveys indicated participant answers were not influenced by the researcher.

<div align="center">

Study Results

</div>

This study was designed to answer the research question asking what perceptions within the Shipboard Worker subculture influence change success. Analysis of the collected data suggests several perceptions that influence change success to a greater or lesser degree, either alone or in conjunction within one another. Personal interview and focus group discussion responses suggest influential perceptions contribute to an overall

support or resistance to change, where certain negative or positive perceptions can be

mitigated or overruled by other perceptions depending on the situation.

Organizational Identity

     Self-identification. Figure 8 represents how all participants provided input in the

areas of identity and group perception. Participants unanimously indicated they belonged

to the shipboard worker subculture, and although they did not mention their rank or

position when identifying themselves in a non-work environment, identified themselves

by rank or position while onboard a ship. All focus group participants replied with

position or rank alone, two of six personal interviewees put their name before their

position and four of six only referred to the title of their position.
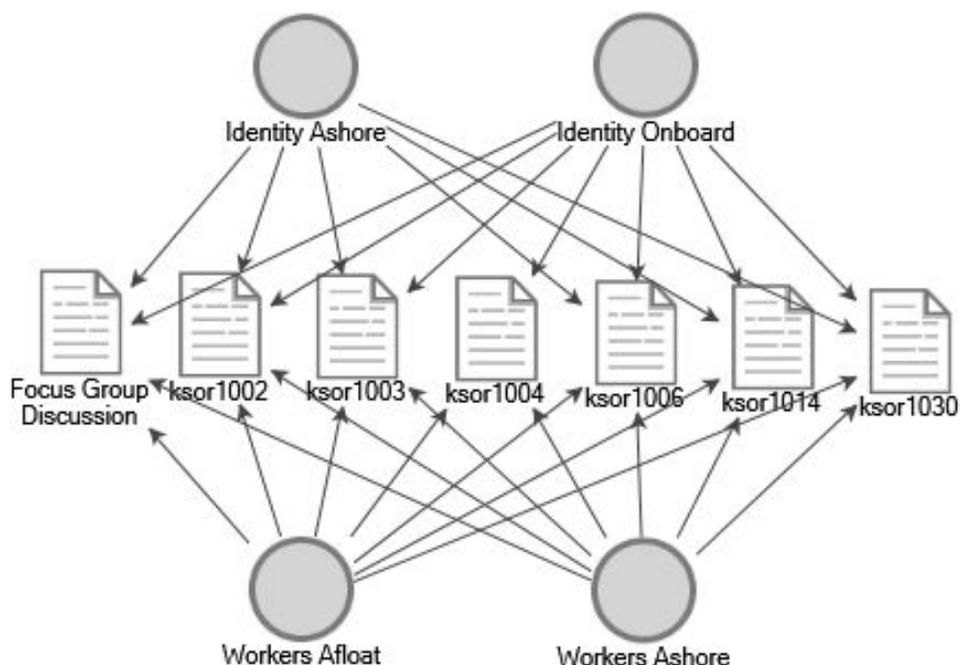
Figure 8. Participant contributions related to identity perceptions.

     Questionnaire responses to the same question resulted in 25% providing their

name before rank or position, 45% with rank or position alone, 15% with rank of position

before their name, and 15% with other responses. There were no patterns associated with gender or military experience. Rank or position was included in 85% of responses.

Perception of personnel. Most participants indicated a belief in shipboard worker importance to the organization, saying, "ships can't run without us" (ksor1016), "I'm the ship's navigator; you can't sail without me" (ksor1006), "We safely and efficiently move cargo around the world" (ksor1009), and they "lay out tracks, establish communications for shore side to ship" (ksor1014), "in charge of cargo ops" (ksor1005), "tasked with implementing policy" (ksor1002), "responsible for operation of machinery" (ksor1011), with others mentioning their drive, knowledge, initiative, experience, and work ethic (ksor1004, 07, 12, 13, 15, 18, 29, 30). One participant, however, indicated a counterview, saying shipboard workers were "not important, easily replaced" (ksor1010).

Personal interview and focus group discussions, however, provided additional qualifications to the general belief in their value by adding comments suggesting a reluctance to communicate honestly with those ashore. Comments such as "people at the top don't want to rock the boat as much as people at the bottom….when senior officers go into the office they got their Sunday-go-to-meeting on, they're putting the best face forward they possible can….I think a lot of mariners fear the kneejerk reaction if people are too honest (FG Participant). One participant said of fellow shipboard workers, "they're not people of the highest integrity or moral courage...most people pretty much want to get on the ship, do a good job, and get off the ship with as little problem or fanfare of any kind as possible" (ksor1003).

Participant perceptions of workers ashore were less favorable. Table 6 provides a breakdown of questionnaire responses on how participants perceived managers ashore where the responses were overwhelmingly negative. On whether managers ashore understood and shared the participant's perspectives, all but one of the participants responded in the negative, yet 75% of the participants indicated managers ashore have a better understanding of the big picture (Questionnaire, Part 1, Question 8). Table 6 provides a summary of responses on the topic of understanding the big picture by demographic.

Table 6

Participant Responses on Understanding Big Picture by Demographic

Managers ashore better understand the big picture		
Total	No	Yes
	4	15
Age		
55+	2	3
46-55	0	2
36-45	1	3
26-35	1	7
18-25	0	0
Gender		
Female	0	2
Male	4	13
Military experience		
Yes	2	7
No	2	8

When asked to describe managers ashore, responses included: People who haven't worked on ships (ksor1009); out of touch with shipboard operations (ksor1010); operationally inexperienced (ksor1015); approximately 62% as intelligent as they think

they are, and approximately 21% as moral; definition of mediocrity (ksor1004); money driven; unqualified; unintelligent; unaware how policies affect us onboard (ksor1030); well-intentioned but uninformed on ship operations (ksor1006); progressive, but very short sighted (ksor1014); and personnel with no prior maritime experience (ksor1028). When asked how they were treated by managers ashore, responses included: Poorly (ksor1012); with nearly complete disregard (ksor1003); as a bother (ksor1030); as if we don't matter (ksor1010); subpar (ksor1013); like numbers (ksor1028); good when they need a favor then forget (ksor1007); below them (ksor1029); [with] salutary neglect (ksor1006); as a commodity (ksor1004); like we are the problems that need to be fixed (ksor1008); and as positions not people (ksor1018).

Participant comments on trust were similarly negative. When asked if they believed their employer had their best interests in mind and if they could believe what they were told by managers ashore, 85% indicating they did not believe their employer had their best interests in mind and 70% indicated they did not believe what they were told by managers ashore. Table 7 contains summary data related to trusting their employer to have their best interests in mind by demographic.

Table 7

Participant Responses on Trusting Employer Interests by Demographic

I trust my employer to have my best interests in mind		
Total	No	Yes
	17	3
Age		
55+	3	2
46-55	2	0
36-45	4	0
26-35	7	1

18-25	1	0
Gender		
Female	3	0
Male	14	3
Military experience		
Yes	8	2
No	9	1

Table 8 contains summary data related to trusting what shipboard workers are told

by managers ashore by demographic.

Table 8

Participant Responses on Trusting Managers Ashore by Demographic

I believe most of what I am told by managers ashore		
Total	No	Yes
	14	5
Age		
55+	3	2
46-55	2	0
36-45	3	1
26-35	6	2
18-25	0	0
Gender		
Female	2	0
Male	12	5
Military experience		
Yes	7	2
No	7	3

Directed Change

Directed change elements related to perception, success, fatigue, reason,

communication, improvements, collaboration, trust and influences were identified in

questionnaire, personal interview and focus group discussion responses.

Table 9 contains questionnaire response details related to the subject of change by demographic, with 60% of participants indicating changes coming from managers ashore were usually unnecessary. Table 10 contains questionnaire response details on whether most organizational changes were perceived as fads, where 75% of the participants indicated most changes were not fads.

Table 9

Participant Responses on Necessity of Change by Demographic

Changes coming from managers ashore are usually necessary		
Total	True	False
	8	12
Age		
55+	4	1
46-55	0	2
36-45	0	4
26-35	3	5
18-25	1	0
Gender		
Female	1	2
Male	7	10
Military experience		
Yes	5	5
No	3	7

Table 10

Participant Responses on Whether Changes Are Fads by Demographic

Most organizational changes are fads		
Total	True	False
	5	15
Age		
55+	0	5
46-55	1	1
36-45	0	4
26-35	4	4
18-25	0	1
Gender		
Female	1	2
Male	4	13
Military experience		
Yes	2	8
No	3	7

Tables 11 and 12 contain questionnaire details related to the perceived inevitability of change and its focus; 85% indicated changes coming from managers ashore were inevitable and 90% indicated such changes were focused on saving money.

Table 11

Participant Responses on Inevitability of Change by Demographic

Changes coming from managers ashore are inevitable		
Total	True	False
	17	3
Age		
55+	4	1
46-55	2	0
36-45	4	0
26-35	6	2
18-25	1	0
Gender		
Female	3	0
Male	14	3
Military experience		
Yes	8	2
No	9	1

Table 12

Participant Responses on Changes Based on Money by Demographic

Most organizational changes focus on saving money		
Total	True	False
	18	2
Age		
55+	4	1
46-55	2	0
36-45	4	0
26-35	7	1
18-25	1	0
Gender		
Female	3	0
Male	15	2
Military experience		
Yes	9	1
No	9	1

Table 13 contains questionnaire details on whether participants believed most organizational changes would benefit someone else.

Table 13

Participant Responses on Change Benefit by Demographic

Most organizational changes benefit someone other than me		
Total	True	False
	9	11
Age		
55+	1	4
46-55	2	0
36-45	2	2
26-35	3	5
18-25	1	0
Gender		
Female	3	0
Male	6	11
Military experience		
Yes	5	5
No	4	6

Review and analysis of personal interview and focus group discussion transcriptions indicated the participants commented on eight significant areas associated with change: Influences, improvements, perception, reason, support, resistance, success, and communication. Figure 9 is a project map indicating significant participant contribution to these eight themes.
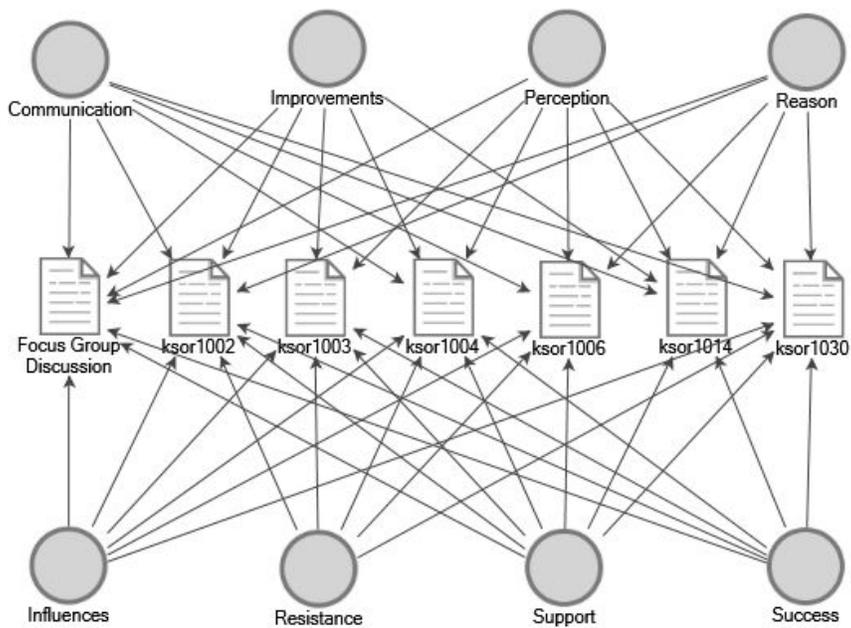
Figure 9. Participant contributions to eight change-related themes.

Although these areas may appear as discreet concepts, participant commentaries revealed the complexity of the interrelationship and subjectivity that exists in context with multiple considerations. Comments on support or resistance were related to how the change was communicated, before, during and after its design. Focus group discussion and personal interview responses centered on three aspects of communication: Feedback, distribution of information, and collaboration. This relationship can be seen in comments such as "you need feedback…you need interaction and all parties have to have some kind of agreement" and "when you get that feedback…people are showing you where those roadblocks are, where you might be wrong on something…may have overlooked something" (ksor1002). Communication also relates to support, as illustrated in the comment, "I think people are more likely to support something if they understand the rationale behind it" (ksor1006).

The desire for more and better communication is countered by the lack of trust and a perception that communicating honest feedback can be difficult when responses are biased by how such feedback may affect their position within the company. Comments such as "you get a lack of honest feedback from mariners, particularly with senior people…all they want to do is anticipate what the office wants…to make the office happy and not rock the boat" (FG Participant). These comments indicate the participants recognized the difficulty in soliciting and receiving honest communication based on their perception of what those ashore want to hear and how shipboard workers fear honest feedback could negatively affect their career. A lack of trust in how management ashore treats negative feedback affects communication, undermining the ability of those ashore to consider the actual perceptions of shipboard workers. Communication related comments and responses suggest a desire to understand, accept and support directed changes, mixed with inherent suspicion of motives and a general lack of trust. This antithetical relationship is, however, mitigated by comments on communication that suggest participants believe communication "increases the chances of success or it increases the understanding or awareness of…why we are doing this…knowledge is key to everything" (ksor1002).

Despite inherent trust issues, participant responses associated with collaboration and improvements, such as "I think there should be a collaboration between the shore-side group that clearly has its own set of goals, and shipboard management, who understands the difficulties of living onboard a ship" (ksor1030) suggest increased collaboration might mitigate issues on trust and promote understanding and support. The

predominant perception, however, was that collaboration rarely exists, as evidenced in the comment, "In 23 years of sailing in various aspects of the business, I have almost never seen a crew consulted in terms of changes coming down from the office" (FG Participant). The lack of collaboration, or perceived lack of collaboration is, therefore, a perception that influences whether participants support or resist directed change.

Associated with collaboration is the notion of having managers ashore actually visit the ships during the process of collaboration and when communicating the change. Comments such as "It's all about building relationships with those that are going to effect the change; they need to get their butts down onto the ships and ride with us port to port somewhere and talk to everybody; having a personal face-to-face…it makes a big difference….and make a physical appearance on the ship and talk to people of all levels…say, I'm making this decision, but I want to know what you think first" (ksor1004) indicate a lack of face-to-face contact between shipboard workers and change designers or implementers.

Role as Change Agent

Active support, resistance, and influence. All but one male participant in the 46-55 age group with prior military experience believed it their responsibility to try and make changes succeed, yet only 30% believed they should support all changes equally; Table 14 provides details by demographic.

Table 14

Participant Responses on Equality of Change Support by Demographic

We should support all organizational change efforts the same		
Total	True	False
	6	14
Age		
55+	0	5
46-55	1	1
36-45	2	2
26-35	3	5
18-25	0	1
Gender		
Female	0	3
Male	6	11
Military experience		
Yes	0	10
No	6	4

Questionnaire true/false and open-ended question responses provided additional context to the question of support, where only 15% indicated support was tied to personal gain, and 80% indicating their support was most influenced by positive elements such as safety, cost benefit to the organization, communication, understanding, fairness, merit, efficiency and how it was explained and implemented. Table 15 provides questionnaire details related to whether support was based on personal gain.

Table 15

Participant Responses on Change Support With Gain by Demographic

The support I give to a change plan depends upon how much I will personally gain from the change		
Total	True	False
	3	17
Age		
55+	1	4
46-55	0	2
36-45	1	3
26-35	1	7
18-25	0	1
Gender		
Female	0	3
Male	3	14
Military experience		
Yes	2	8
No	1	9

Table 16 provides summary data on whether support was most influenced by positive or negative elements. Each table shows distribution of responses by demographic, where those choosing negative elements indicated they were more influenced to resist change when negative elements were present, and those choosing positive elements were most influenced to offer support by virtue of the positive aspects of the change.

Table 16

Participant Responses on Change Support Influence by Demographic

My support of a change is most influenced by: (negative or positive aspects)		
Total	Negative	Positive
	3	16
Age		
55+	0	5
46-55	0	2
36-45	1	2
26-35	2	6
18-25	0	1
Gender		
Female	1	2
Male	2	14
Military experience		
Yes	3	7
No	0	9

Note. Choices indicate whether participant support was most influenced by positive or negative aspects associated with the change.

Response to questionnaire section on change resistance revealed 79% of participants believed they had a right to resist changes perceived as counterproductive or would reduce their quality of life; Table 17 provides details by demographic. All but one male participant in the 36-45 age group without prior military experience believed it their duty to speak out or resist changes perceived to cause more harm than good.

Table 17

Participant Responses on Change Resistance by Demographic

I have a right to resist change in the workplace that I feel is counter-productive or reduces our quality of life		
Total	True	False
	14	5
Age		
55+	5	0
46-55	1	1
36-45	2	1
26-35	5	3
18-25	1	0
Gender		
Female	3	0
Male	11	5
Military experience		
Yes	9	1
No	5	4

Personal interview and focus group data provided additional context to change support and resistance, as evidenced in comments such as "I definitely think I need to take an active role in promoting or resisting, depending how the change affects the accomplishment of the mission of the ship, the safety of people on the ship, and quality of life on the ship" (ksor1003). In regard to their perceived duty to support change that is not harmful or counterproductive, comments such as "unless there's a safety risk with implementing said change that's going to put my license or livelihood or reputation at risk, I'll do the change because that's what I'm paid to do" (ksor1004). The qualification to prerequisites on change support is echoed by the comment in response to whether all changes should be supported, where a participant said, "No, because it's not in their best interest" (ksor1030). Participant willingness to support change in general can be seen in

comments such as "I would say that I would go with it, whether I support it or am against it, either way I still go with that change. Not because I have to, but I want to see how it works out….I'm actually all for change; I'm a very progressive person" (ksor1014).

Of significant participant concern was how the change would affect crew and ship safety, and whether the change was a thoughtful response to an incident or a reaction with little forethought, as noted in the comment on changes addressing a negative event: "a kneejerk reaction to something that happened aboard a vessel, a lot of changes roll out quickly and the reasoning behind them is vague…a quick fix to a problem" (FG Participant). Another response suggested even such changes probably had good intentions: "…most of the changes that come from our outfit, they are trying to change; they see a problem and they're trying to fix it" (ksor1014). This suggests shipboard workers understand the need to address a situation with a change yet believe many such changes lack the level of consideration needed prior to implementation.

While many changes were recognized to be regulatory or safety related, the participants perceived both changes being motivated by budgetary issues: "I think most of it is budget driven" (ksor1030), "…you got regulatory compliance, you got safety, which is a huge organ, and safety ties into money, so at the end of the day it all comes down to money" (ksor1002). The perception that changes represent cost savings by the company at the expense of the mariner, increases change resistance. If the change is required by a regulatory body, the level of resistance attributable to the believe changes were rooted in attempts to cut costs is insufficient to overcome the perceived need and inevitability of the change.

Participants were asked when they should resist change and provided three types of responses: When it affected crew and ship safety, when it was handed down "like they're an act of God" (ksor1006), and when it would negatively impact their daily life aboard ship. Some participants perceived "a conservative sort of resistance [to change] in the maritime industry that's probably greater than other industries" (ksor1003). This perception contrasts with responses on the inevitability of changes from managers ashore collected by the questionnaires.

Participants indicated their resistance could be instigated by how the change was implemented, as noted in, "If they're just handed down like they're an act of God, people resist that" (ksor1006). Another trigger to resistance was the perceived outcome of the change, as noted in such comments as, "When it's counterproductive" (ksor1003) and "If it's going to negatively impact their safety, maybe there's an unintended consequence that wasn't evaluated….it's not unfair to resist it if it's going to really, negatively impact your daily life on a ship" (ksor1006).

Participants also indicated their support or resistance to a change could be the result of the person promoting or designing the change, noted in such comments as, "personality helps people generate buy-in" (FG), "If I trust this captain to have good judgment, and he's in full support…the crew tends to go with that….if it is a disliked captain, often the change is written off because they just don't want to listen to the person it's coming from" (ksor1030). Another comment sums up a general consensus in regard to directed changes from managers ashore: "A lot of mariners don't trust change if it comes from shore-side and it comes from a specific person" (ksor1014), however, some

added, "I would initially go with that gut instinct if I trust the person bringing it down to

me" (ksor1030). Some went so far as to indicate they would support a change even if it

did not seem positive if they trusted the person who designed or implemented the change,

as in, "If the person who had designed the change was somebody I trusted, if he was just

the messenger, it would mean little to nothing" (ksor1002, 1003, 1006). The common

tread to these comments is the degree of trust perceived in the change designer,

communicator and implementer. One participant indicated support or resistance by

individuals might be based on intelligence, saying, "Room temperature IQs will base

their decision …on the merit of the change itself, and not what a quote, 'charismatic

boatswain' or captain has to say" (FG Participant).

Review of questionnaire data indicated all 20 participants believed it was their job

to tell management what was wrong with a change, and all but one female participant in

the 26-35 age group without prior military experience indicated they would not ignore an

organizational change simply because they believed it would fail.

Responses to two questions on whether participants had control over change

success and could make changes succeed or fail, all but one male and one female in the

26-35 age group with prior military experience believed they had control of over change

success and failure.

Although 95% of the participants indicated they had control over success or

failure, only 85% indicated they could influence success or failure. Table 18 provides the

related questionnaire details by demographic.

Table 18

Participant Responses on Change Influence by Demographic

I can often influence whether a change succeeds or fails		
Total	True	False
	17	3
Age		
55+	5	0
46-55	2	0
36-45	3	1
26-35	7	1
18-25	0	1
Gender		
Female	2	1
Male	15	2
Military experience		
Yes	9	1
No	8	2

Participants indicated in personal interviews and focus group discussions that influence was perceived to be the ability to convince others to support or resist change, as opposed to an individual's ability to control change success by their own actions or inactions. Participants indicated they are often influenced by their superiors, charismatic crewmembers, and their peers. One participant's reply when asked what they thought most contributed to a change's success was, "Leadership support…from the Captain, Chief Mate and other officers down…if you don't have support at that level…you're not going to have the support of the crew" (ksor1006). Participants indicated the most influential person aboard the ship is usually, but not always, the one in charge, as noted in the comments, "the most influential would be the captain of the ship…then the various department heads…[others] may not have a position of leadership, or whatever, but they can win over a crew… the person the crew holds in most regard…they can also have a

negative impact" (ksor1002), "everybody's been on a ship, or in a group of people where the person sitting in the biggest chair doesn't have the most influence" (ksor1004), and "it really depends on how charismatic that person is. I mean there are some individuals that people follow no matter what" (ksor1006). Although several participants indicated support by their senior officers could translate into their support, others suggested that supervisor support could also result in a negative response to change: "…with some other Captains, the fact that he was behind it would increase the skepticism of the crew" (ksor1003).

Participant responses suggested Issues of perceived lack of trust of shore personnel, their motivations, and the communicated impact of change, are further affected by mission, measures of success, and peer influences. Figure 10 illustrates the relationship of participant contributions in these areas.
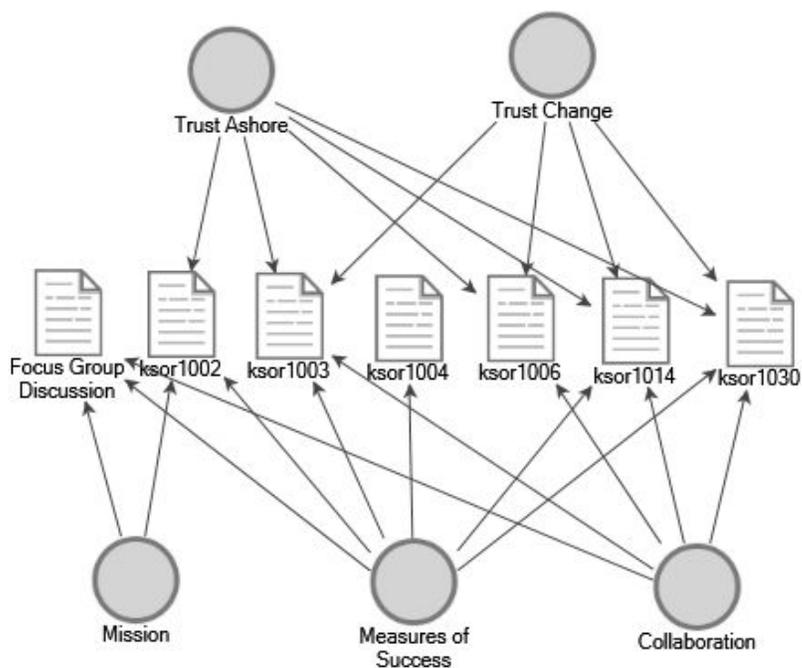
Figure 10. Personal interview and focus group contributions to change-related themes.

Perceived Reasons and Roles

When asked why changes usually fail, the participants provided comments related to a lack of communication, collaboration, understanding of the change by shipboard workers, understanding of the shipboard culture by managers ashore, interest by ship or shore personnel, difficulty of the change, changes that made the job more difficult, or changes with a perceived bad outcome.

Summary

The research question was designed to identify perceptions within the Shipboard Worker subculture that might influence change success. The complex question was decomposed into three themes: Identity, directed change, and perceived role as change agent. Analysis of the collected data suggests it is a combination of several key

subcultural perceptions under these three themes that ultimately leads a shipboard worker to support or resist a specific change.

Review of the collected data also revealed directed change falls into two categories: Regulatory and non-regulatory body requirements. Participants indicated regulatory body inspired changes are generally accepted irrespective of other considerations. As such, influential perceptions identified in this study primarily relate to non-regulatory body inspired changes.

Chapter 5 reintroduces the purpose, nature, and reasoning behind this study, summarizes and interprets key findings, describes study limitations, recommendations for further research, presents implications for positive social change, and includes a conclusion that captures the essence of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to identify shipboard worker subcultural perceptions within hybrid organizations that influence change success, thereby addressing the problem associated with the high cost of change failure resulting from change designs that fail to mitigate or alleviate those perceptual influences.

Key Findings

Review and analysis of the collected data led to the identification of trust, value, communication, commitment, inclusiveness, and respect as potentially influential perceptions under the three basic themes that change designers and implementation strategists should address to improve change success statistics. Data analysis supported the initial premise that the shipboard worker subculture had a strong perception of its identity as a specific subculture, separate and unique from their other organizational members ashore. Rank or position was included in 85% of responses to questions asking participants how they would identify themselves while aboard a ship, strongly suggesting that their identities are directly tied to their function aboard the ship. The data clearly suggest that shipboard workers have a strong subcultural identity related to their function and position while aboard ship that sets them apart from those ashore. The strong sense of identity and subcultural membership was a key factor in how they trusted non-subcultural members. These perceptions support social identity and realistic conflict theory elements related to trust.

Trust-related perceptions were associated with the trust participants had in those designing, communicating, promoting, or supporting the change. Value-related

perceptions were associated with the positive or negative benefit to the shipboard worker's safety, workload, and quality of life, as well as the ship's mission. If the change was in response to a regulatory requirement, the participants believed that they would support it, regardless of how it was implemented, unless the regulatory requirement was not self-evident. Such universal support for regulatory-inspired changes suggests that changes may fall into two distinct categories: changes in response to regulatory requirements and changes originating from some other organizational need. For non-regulatory required changes, participants indicated that their support or resistance was also based on perceived value or merit, method of communication, perceived commitment, and support or resistance by influential personalities. The influence of perceived value or merit was evident in comments such as "compliance or resistance is a function of the merits of the change" (ksor1003) and "I would wait to see the merit of the change" (ksor1004).

Method-of-communication-related perceptions were associated with how the change was communicated, the level of detail contained in the communication, and the timing of the communication. Perceived inclusiveness related to whether participants believed that they had been able to contribute to or be involved in the design of the change prior to its implementation. Perceived commitment was associated with the level of commitment by organizational managers and shipboard leaders to complete or enforce the change. Respect-based perceptions were related to the respect given to influential personalities, whether afloat or ashore, who promoted support or resistance to the change.

Influential personalities included those whose support might inspire support or resistance, depending on how they were perceived by the shipboard worker.

Perhaps the most important finding was that no single perception could be credited or blamed for change success or failure. The level of influence in each area can vary, and the net effect of all perceptions ultimately results in support or resistance to change.

Interpretation of Findings

Review of the collected data supports the concept that shipboard workers comprise an identifiable subculture tantamount to a total social institution (Maurizio, 2013). Review of the data also suggests that the strength of shipboard workers' subcultural identity, lack of trust, mission misalignment, and communication difficulties are created by their physical geographic separation from counterparts ashore, supporting similar findings from prior research in the field (Abrams, 2015; Gerdhe, 2012; Liu, 2012; Moon et al., 2012; Torres & Bligh, 2012; Wilson et al., 2013). The unique nature of the shipboard worker subculture, where mariners are separated from their families and counterparts ashore for months at a time, exacerbates subcultural differences in perception existent in any hybrid organization (Shea, 2005). The negative perceptions revealed in this study confirm previous study findings cited above and are, therefore, to be expected in varying degrees based upon the physical or virtual separation that exists between a subculture and its parent organization.

Identity

Perhaps the most obvious theory supported by the data in this study is cultural theory. Specifically, this theory suggests that the shipboard worker subculture, by virtue of the environment, industry, credentialing and employment systems, has a specific and unique cultural identity. As part of an organization, its members represent a very specific subculture. Although their subculture can be further divided into groups, the shipboard worker subculture identity is an overarching one. Data supporting this include the way in which shipboard workers identify themselves when ashore and when working onboard the vessel. Participants did not mention their rank or position when ashore, yet all personal interviewees and focus group participants, and 85% of those who took the questionnaire, either included their rank/position with their name or indicated their rank/position alone. This indicates a strong identity associated with their position and a significant difference in cultural identity from those working ashore.

Participant comments also support Tajfel's (1982) work on group identification, where individuals are inherently predisposed to comparing the differences between their group and others in a self-promoting way. Comments such as "ships can't run without us" (ksor1016) and "I'm the ship's navigator; you can't sail without me" (ksor1006) are in stark contrast to comments describing managers ashore as "out of touch with shipboard operations" (ksor1010), "operationally inexperienced" (ksor1015), "approximately 62% as intelligent as they think they are, and approximately 21% as moral … definition of mediocrity" (ksor1004), and "money driven … unqualified … unintelligent … unaware how policies affect us onboard" (ksor1030).

Responses to participant identity also supported the subcultural bias predicted by social identity theory, where group identities influence sense-making in the individual (De Dreu, 2014). Comments such as "it's the typical us versus them. It's 'us' are the people at sea, and 'them' are the people who are not at sea" (sorb1002) affirm Tajfel and Turner's work on SIT with the categorization of managers and workers ashore as being nonmembers of their subculture. Comments such as "you got that mindset between the office, that us versus them mindset" (ksor1004) indicate that this is also how the participants believe they are perceived by those ashore. This was especially evident in perceptions related to comparison of the shipboard worker group with those ashore, where comments such as that workers ashore "do not understand the demands of shipboard life" (ksor1030), "have little understanding of what it is like to sail" (ksor1018), "have no clue what it is like to work 24 hours a day for 2 weeks" (ksor1029), and "are out of touch with shipboard operations" (ksor1010) indicate that shipboard workers believe only those who have experienced such a lifestyle can truly understand them. The combination of perceptions on how shipboard workers perceive and are perceived by shore personnel represent a significantly negative bias and general lack of trust in the competency and motivation by those directing the change, which have a direct influence on organizational social tensions and how directed changes from shore personnel are perceived, supported, or resisted.

Participants' responses recognized stratification within their subculture by rank or position. Although stratification was recognized, there was evidence of *identity elasticity* predicted by Kreiner et al. (2015), where the social tensions between stratified groups

aboard ship allowed their subcultural identity to remain sufficiently intact to preserve group membership. Comments such as "where the person sitting in the biggest chair doesn't have much influence" (ksor1004) imply that influence is not based on rank alone. The implication is that disagreement between stratified groups aboard ship based on power and influence is insufficient to fracture group cohesion and identity. Collected data suggest that the identity of shipboard workers as a subculture supersedes internal conflict between stratified groups within the culture, which supports the *identity elasticity* predicted by Kreiner et al. (2015).

There was no evidence of innovation related to Coser's conflict theory or Campbell's realistic conflict theory in the data; however, the existence of conflict that might inspire such innovation was evident in the data related to trust and identity. Apart from the innovation component of these theories, there was evidence to support the potential for causality of bias and hostility suggested by Tajfel and Cambell, where social identity theory's group identification causes out-group bias and hostility, and realistic conflict theory's premise that out-group hostility causes in-group identification. While neither theory may act alone, it is possible that bias and hostility are reinforced under these two theories.

Cultural theory's position that group decision making tends toward group benefit is supported by 85% of the participants indicating group benefit, not personal gain, was a significant factor in their decision to support a change. However, Table 13 shows that there was a near-balanced response as to whether participants would benefit from the change. The only significant demographic pattern to the responses was in those aged 55

years and older, where 80% believed that most changes were beneficial to them. Table 15 shows that 70% of the participants indicated that their support was most influenced by positive, group-wide aspects associated with the change, such as safety, mission, and quality of life; 30% indicated that the negative aspects held greater influence over their decision.

My analysis of study data did not result in information that could lend support to the applicability of attachment theory within the participant group, in that participants did not mention any significant degradation of the status quo that had any significant effect on their psyche. There was, however, some degree of affirmation attributable to construal level theory in that some participant comments suggested that those who have more direct contact with those ashore might have a better appreciation and understanding of the ashore manager's perspective; "I've benefitted maybe working a lot closer with shore-side management" (FG Participant).

Participant comments such as "there is a gross lack of communication" (ksor1013), "listening more to the crew" (ksor1005), and "listening to seagoing personnel" (ksor1011) indicate a lack of effective communication and collaboration. The frustration exhibited in such comments supports the concepts of communication accommodation theory, where improving communications might reduce conflict by contributing to a greater understanding and appreciation of workgroups (Giorgi et al., 2015). Understanding that subcultural members perceive managers ashore as "competent, but sometimes out of touch with seagoing personnel" (ksor1011) should provide a

valuable insight to change designers and implementers trying to gain support for their changes.

Change-Related Perceptions

Triangulated data analysis revealed that trust, merit, value, understanding, benefit, and commitment were key factors in participant decision-making related to change support or resistance. In-depth analysis of elements related to these perceptions suggests that individual perceptions interact with one another to either strengthen support or resistance to specific changes, or override negative or positive biases. An example would be a change that appears beneficial yet is strongly resisted due to a lack of trust in the designer, promoter, or communicator. Similarly, a change that appears questionable might be fully supported if there is sufficient trust in those who designed, promoted, or communicated the change.

The data also revealed conflicting perceptions by individual participants, illustrating the subjectivity of perception. Perceptual subjectivity is acknowledged in the conceptual framework of this study, which adheres to a social constructivist epistemology acknowledging that participant reality is a construct based on subjective perceptions that interact to construct artifacts and knowledge for one another (Ridder et al., 2014; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). In that the combination of all relevant perceptions results in support or resistance to change, it is not difficult to understand that the same applies to contextual biases and tendencies that are the net effect of these multiple perceptions.

Analysis of triangulated data suggests that the desire to believe what is communicated from those ashore is affected by how the communication is delivered, how

much trust the receiver has in the transmitter, how others perceive the communication, and other perceptions that could support or negate that desire. This might explain responses that indicated both trust and distrust in what participants were told by managers ashore. For example, recollection of a specific event might have changed the response to either of the similar questions posed, or a comment made during a focus group discussion might have resulted in a different net effect.

Negative perceptions related to the value, competency, trust, and integrity of managers ashore and how shipboard workers believed they are perceived represent a negative bias that exerts some degree of influence on communications and changes coming from those ashore. Although the general perception of those ashore might be negative, participant responses indicated that there could be some managers ashore who are well respected and trusted by some or all of those aboard the organization's ships. This situation was mentioned several times by participants who qualified their statements such that their general perceptions were not always applicable: "Generally speaking it would be no ... trust but verify comes to mind … [however,] if the person who had designed the change was somebody I trusted …" (ksor1003). The complexity of perceived trust can be seen where participants indicated a lack of trust in what they were told by shore management on the questionnaire, then indicated during their personal interview that they would trust what they were told about a change: "I'd have no reason not to" (ksor1004). Conflicting perceptions on trust, illustrating the complex nature of perceived trust, were conveyed by another participant who indicated trust in what they were told by managers ashore in a questionnaire response, yet replied "no, no" and "[yes]

for the most part" (ksor1014) when asked similar questions during the personal interview. These contrary responses illustrate that the concept of trust is variable and contextual, but relative to change success.

The same was true in regard to changes promoted by senior officers onboard, where the general consensus was that support of a change by the ship's commanding officer usually resulted in support by the crew, while noting that support from a commanding officer held in low regard could result in resistance by the crew. While generalizing how the subculture perceived certain organizational elements or shipboard managers, the perceptions common to these various elements are trust and confidence in the most influential individual advocating support or resistance to the change, and the weight of their influence compared to other perceptions on the change. Framed differently, a charismatic shipboard member may exert a greater influence on the success or failure of a change than a senior manager onboard or ashore, yet the former's influence alone may be insufficient when considered in combination with other perceptions related to the change.

Of particular interest was the noted difference in perceptions on whether a change was necessary and beneficial to the shipboard worker between those above or below age 55. Analysis revealed that 80% of those in the 55-and-older age group indicated that most changes were necessary, while 100% of those in the 36-to-55 age group indicated that most changes were unnecessary. The difference in perception in the 55-and-older demographic suggests that those with more industry experience may have a more positive view on the necessity of change or may be more understanding of managers ashore. The

positive perception in these two areas by those over age 55 suggests a need for further study to determine the reason behind the difference. Such a study might explore whether the difference was based on time in the industry, more interactions, greater familiarity or better rapport with those ashore, or an internal resignation or rationalization from having experienced more directed changes. Regardless of why those in this age group had a more positive perception of change, members of this group might represent positive agents of change onboard if held in high regard by the crew, or they might work against change success if they are held in low regard. Knowing how they are perceived by their subordinates would allow change implementers to target onboard supporters of change more effectively.

In regard to the reasons for change, participants indicated changes fell into two categories: regulatory-mandated changes and changes originating from managers ashore in response to economic conditions or safety related incidents. Support for regulatory-mandated changes was nearly universal, regardless of how the change was communicated or implemented. This support was not surprising since the focus of participants responses to questions on why changes should be implemented focused on industry standards and safety. Support for non-regulatory required changes meant to address a safety related incident was not as universal, with responses indicating many such changes were made with little forethought or collaboration with those who would be affected by the change. Although the first two types of changes were considered reasonable responses to a need, the majority of directed changes were perceived to be based on economics. Participants perceived the reason for most changes to be an effort to cut costs, often at the shipboard

worker's expense. This perception is of significant importance to change designers, in that changes not related to safety or regulatory body requirements are seldom perceived with a negative bias. Participants indicated they examined changes with an eye towards how the change would affect safety of the ship and its personnel; how it would affect the shipboard workers quality of life; how it would affect their workload; and whether it would actually result in greater mission efficiency or efficacy. Participants did not believe managers ashore took a similar approach when formulating a change. The insight and implication is that change designers need to understand the need to provide supporting rationale when communicating directed-changes.

Role as Change Agents

Analysis of triangulated data revealed communication was considered a critical influence on change support and crew involvement. Communication factors were related to how the change is communicated; whether it is proactive or reactive; and whether those affected by the change are involved in its design and implementation. The influence of perceived commitment was associated with whether those ashore or aboard ship showed signs of supporting the change in the long-term or were merely proposing the change with few signs of any real commitment. Participants perceived their counterparts ashore communicated in only one direction: top-down. Although they acknowledged those ashore would sometimes ask for input and feedback, the consensus was that such solicitation was for appearances only; participants indicated input and feedback seldom resulted in any change to the original plan. This is an important consideration for change designers and managers to understand. Change designers and managers who develop and

implement plans that incorporate a greater degree of bilateral communication and collaboration might mitigate shipboard worker perceptions of being ignored or dismissed, thereby improving the chance of change success.

While shipboard workers recognize the inevitability of change, they also recognize they have an inherent resistance to change. Although participants indicated that it is their duty to provide feedback on proposed changes, they also perceived honest feedback could have negative consequences or be ignored. These perceptions create a situation where honest feedback may not occur, even though participants believe it is their duty to provide such feedback. The conflicting perceptions were reflected in comments such as "You need feedback…you need interaction….when you get that feedback you're already getting the negatives" (ksor1002) and "What I have seen more often is you get a lack of honest feedback from mariners, particularly with senior people, and all they want to do is anticipate what the office wants, or what can I do to make the office happy and not rock the boat or rub anybody the wrong way" (FG Participant).

The complexity associated with how the simultaneous influence each of these areas of perception contribute towards involvement, support or resistance of a change should not be underestimated. The perception that a change is inherently valuable to those affected by the change could overcome any negative perceptions related to trust, communication, or commitment. The same, however, could be said of a change that seemed inherently beneficial, yet there was so little trust in those promoting it or the way in which it was communicated that those affected by the change would perceive the change as too good to be true, and by extension, a change to resist.

In spite of participant comments about negative changes and the perceived cause of most changes, the general response indicated changes were inevitable and support or resistance for each change would be based on its perceived merit. When asked if there was a sense of change-fatigue, participants indicated there was probably some change-fatigue, yet did not believe it was a significant influence on support or resistance to any specific change.

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative studies may have limits to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). Limits to credibility include data accuracy, participant engagement, bias, and honesty (Shenton, 2004). Although participants were provided an opportunity for post-transcription review, all declined, creating a limit to data accuracy. Limitations to participant engagement were minor; personal interviews were candid, and the focus group discussion showed full engagement by all participants. Limitations to bias and honesty appeared to be minor; although impossible to guarantee an individual's response accurately represents their true perception, exit survey comments suggest their answers were truthful, unbiased by the researcher, devoid of peer pressure, not a product of repetitive response phenomenon, nor contrived to distort collected data.

The limited number of interviewees and the unique nature of the study's target population represent limitations to transferability. Additionally, the influential perceptions of shipboard workers might differ greatly from workers in other hybrid organizations and from perceptions held by other subcultures within the same

organization (Schwandt, 2015; Shea, 2005). Another limit to transferability is that the participant pool was limited to U.S. citizens belonging to the deck department. This limitation provides an opportunity for repeating the study with participants from other countries, shipboard departments, or unlicensed crewmembers. Comparison of the results between this and subsequent studies would provide a more comprehensive picture of how groups within the shipboard worker subculture either support or conflict with others on the subject of directed change.

Limits to dependability are minor since the study questions were clearly defined and all follow-on questions documented, allowing future researchers to repeat the study, even if different results are obtained (Shenton, 2004). Similar results would suggest a pattern of perception across the industry, whereas different results would support the need for contextual assessment within a specific organization.

Limits to confirmability include potential researcher bias in the interpretation of data (Shenton, 2004). Since personal interviews and focus group discussions required several follow-on questions and clarifications, it is possible that some researcher bias affected the collected data, although exit surveys suggested the participants were not influenced by me or responses in opposition to the majority view were included, there is still a chance of subconscious influence (Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). The subjective nature of the study also suggests there could be some researcher bias in pattern identification and coding, even though a data-oriented approach was be employed.

Recommendations

The complexity of perceptions that influence change success and how the perceptions combine with one another suggests a need for shore managers to become more familiar with shipboard workers and how they perceive the world. If shipboard workers have great trust in the person communicating the change, or supporting the change, they might support it even when they see it decreases their quality of life or makes their job more difficult. Conversely, a lack of trust in the person communicating or supporting the change could cancel the perceived benefit of the change. This is, however, not an absolute; if the value of the change is considered high and self-evident, the person communicating or supporting the change may not have a significant influence on the decision to support or resist the change.

Although several participants indicated support by their senior officers could translate into their support, others suggested supervisor support could also result in a negative response to change; "with some other Captains, the fact that he was behind it would increase the skepticism of the crew" (ksor1003). These contrary responses suggest supervisor support does not universally translate as positive support by the crew, and the position held by charismatic crewmembers can be more influential than those higher in the chain of command. The only way to know the impact these multiple perceptions may have on change success is through honest communication and familiarization. Those ashore need to better understand the environment and personalities involved within the shipboard workforce. Managers ashore also need to seek and receive details on how

shipboard workers perceive potential changes, and why they intend to support or resist the changes.

The results of this study suggest subsequent qualitative and quantitative investigations focusing on how different perceptions influence one another and to what extent that influence results in support or resistance to change. Logical follow-ons to this study include similar qualitative exploratory studies that include members of other shipboard departments and unlicensed crew, non-US officers and crews, or a similar study that focused on the perceptions held by a maritime organization's management ashore. The results of such studies would allow a broader, more comprehensive view of perspectives based on a more inclusive shipboard population. The inclusion of data from a similar study conducted on managers ashore could put this study's data into an organizational context where the perceptions held by both sides could be compared. Such studies would provide information valuable to those afloat and ashore, in a broad but detailed context, further closing the gaps in perception by allowing each to better understand their counterpart's perceptions.

Repeating this study in a different venue or comparing the results of a multiple case study approach where the perceptions held by union workers were compared to those working directly for a shipping company would also be a recommendation. While such studies would be limited to the maritime industry, they would serve to inform the maritime industry's change designers who are most often geographically separated from the shipboard workforce.

These studies could collectively provide the foundation for future studies on non-maritime hybrid organizations, especially those where geographical or sociological separation between organizational subcultures exist. Hybrid organizations are increasing in number, so determining the influence various perceptions have on change success in other hybrid organizations is an important undertaking. Separate qualitative studies could focus on the influence associated with organizational relationships between subcultures separated physically or virtually from central senior management. Organizations that reflect virtual separation include hybrids where differences in cultural groups are significant enough to create organizational groups that have extremely different perceptions, in spite of being in close physical proximity (Wilson et al., 2013). Conducting similar studies on hybrid organizations whose workers are physically or virtually separated from those designing and directing change would provide comparative data. Analysis of such data in concert with data collected in this and other maritime related studies could lead to theory building across multiple industries on the subject of influences on change success. Such studies would either indicate the influences of shipboard worker subculture perceptions are unique or shared by other hybrid organization subcultures.

Conducting a quantitative follow-on study could focus on quantifying the effect each perception has on the combined effect and explore whether the combination of some perceptions create a synergy where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Other quantitative studies could focus on the prevalence of perceptions, and decompose more complex perceptions into smaller elements to be quantified in number and influence. For

example, since trust was a significantly influential perception identified in this study, follow-on studies could explore how perceived trust is gained or lost by change recipients. Studies focused on trust could test whether increased communication or collaboration increases or decreases trust, or whether the natural tendency to distrust those belonging to a different subculture cannot be mitigated by change design (Torres & Bligh, 2012). The results of such follow-on studies would provide change designers and managers insights into how to better address trust issues prior to executing directed change attempts.

Other studies could explore the relationship between change resistance and innovation (Coser, 1964; Nepstad, 2005), where subcultures find alternative solutions rather than implement the directed change. This and other studies have identified a significant percentage of change failures that did not result in the company's demise yet did not explore what happened after the change failure. An exploratory study could focus on why change failures did not result in organizational failures, or whether innovation by those who resisted the change created a better solution.

Experimental studies could use the results of this study to inform change designers of potential negative perceptions and measure whether subsequent designs attempting to mitigate those perceptions were able to increase change success. Such experimental studies could include post-change data collection and analysis on how the shipboard workers perceived the new change design and implementation strategy. This approach could become part of a strategy of continuous process improvement for a single

organization, while providing updated information, insights, and strategies to be tested in other organizations.

Studies designed to develop a revised theory on change could incorporate the findings of the studies cited above into a coherent theory on how perceptions directly and indirectly influence change success. The identification of potentially influential perceptions was the first step towards developing such a theory. The results of this study, however, suggest such a theory would need to address the subjective nature of perceptions in concert with the perceived value of the change by those in a position to support or resist the change. In the end, understanding of the dynamic nature of change support may require more than a single comprehensive theory, or require a grand unifying theory that includes the various theories that informed the conceptual framework of this study.

Implications

The identification of potentially influential perceptions for change success provides change researchers and designers a starting point from which to explore perceptions in greater detail or breadth, and to develop new change designs that mitigate the negative influence these perceptions have on change success. Perceptions identified in this study can also inform change theorists on where to focus future studies to collect data necessary to update existing theories on change or form new theories on how perception influences change.

This study has real world implications for maritime organizations. Shipboard workers participating in this study believed most changes were unnecessary and driven

by a desire to save money rather than improve their ability to safely perform their mission or quality of life. They also had negative perceptions of their managers ashore in regard to the perceived lack of bilateral communication, collaboration, and cooperation. These negative perceptions need to be considered and addressed by international maritime organizations and maritime shipping companies in ways that reflect an understanding and appreciation of the shipboard worker's role in change success. Towards this end, study results could be a topic of interest at maritime symposiums held by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) or the U.S. Naval War College where change management is often included in discussions on the implementation of maritime change strategies. The 2019 International Conference on Future Trends in the Maritime Industry and the California Leadership Symposium are two examples of maritime venues where difficulties associated with change management are discussed without the insights provided by this study, and Global Maritime Hub's Crew Connect Global welcomes articles related to challenges and opportunities to improve the maritime industry. Management conferences outside the maritime industry, such as those held by the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP), could also benefit from this study's insights on how geographically separated elements of a hybrid organization can be affected by the key perceptions and biases identified in this study.

The connecting element to these negative perceptions appears to be a lack of connectivity with those ashore, and the perception that shipboard workers are not as valued as they should be when it comes to change decisions. Change designs better communicating the need for and impact of the change, with collaboration in a real sense,

rather than appearances, would likely stand a better chance of success. Identifying key promoters for the change that are respected and trusted by shipboard workers would also enhance the chances of change success.

The potential effect for positive social change in the industry is significant, because the organizational changes required to implement mitigating strategies would inherently improve organizational processes and cooperation, apart from improving the chances of change success. Improved transparency of purpose, more direct contact between subcultures, and inclusive communication and decision-making strategies would provide opportunities for each subculture to better know the other. Improved communication and collaboration would aid in making organizational members perceive themselves an included part of the organization, rather than an antagonistic element in competition for limited resources. Changes that succeed in such an environment create a positive workplace, improving the shipboard workers' sense of organizational value and appreciation, while removing the potentially negative perceptions held by management ashore of shipboard workers who seemed to work against their directed change. An increase in worker satisfaction on both sides reduces work stress and promotes a positive work environment.

Shipboard workers spend months at a time away from family and friends. Work related frustrations and anxiety follows the shipboard worker home, often adversely affecting their families and social connections. Families await the return of their mariner expecting a happy reunion, yet often mirror the frustrations their family member brought home with them (Abrams, 2015; Maurizio, 2013). Improving the work environment

aboard ship results in a more positive mariner, less likely to bring home their frustrations and anxieties. This in turn promotes a happier, healthier family and social network, all of which promotes positive social change.

This and follow-on studies benefits change designers in the increasing number of hybrid organizations, where the greatest subcultural differences in areas critical to change success are often found. While communication options are expanding, the manner in which information is transmitted, the language, the often lack of non-verbal cues for context, and the increasing need for speed must be weighed against the benefits associated with due diligence, collaboration, and a better understanding of the diverse subcultural perceptions and perspectives. This study revealed the dangers of top-down communication, especially when there is a physical or virtual distance between managers and workers, or between subcultural elements within the organization. Understanding and recognizing the existence of these perceptions, without placing blame, must be a priority not just to promote change success, but to improve organizational efficiency and efficacy.

From a financial standpoint, an increase in change success is an increase in organizational efficiency, profitability, adaptability, and sustainability. However, the effort required to explore differences in subcultural perceptions within an organization may represent an unexpected and unwanted cost. It is, therefore, imperative that organizational leaders understand the long-term benefits associated with near-term costs and take positive measures to ensure there is a true paradigm shift, rather than just an acknowledgement of the differences without remedial action.

From a research standpoint, analysis of study data shows perceptions are identifiable and collectively influence change success. The social constructivist epistemology was reflected in the responses provided by participants, where their perceptions defined their reality. Perhaps more importantly in the context of shipboard workers is the notion that their separation from all other subcultures for months at a time creates a situation where perceptions that run counter to theirs are not present and cannot mitigate some of the more significantly negative perceptions. This situation is not mirrored ashore since managers ashore are faced with a variety of perspectives outside their workplace. Although there has been some research on maritime workers, there is a lack of recent research focusing on perceptions in an age where communication is ubiquitous afloat and ashore. The modern shipboard worker can receive communication and broadcasts that offer different perspectives, but what effect virtual conversations and exposure to society as compared to physically present ones has not been investigated and could be the basis for further study.

Communication was a significant perception in this study, so another implication is the need to identify how different cultures within an organization react to physical and virtual communication. When an employee does not look a manager in the eye, is it because of their culture or is it out of fear? Do employees prefer virtual communication to face-to-face communication? Do they look for brief emails or ones with more detail? Do different cultures have different expectations in communicating? Do employers use email, text messaging, voice mail, or other methods of communication, and how do

workers and managers respond to the varying types, especially in hybrid organizations? These are relevant questions inspired by this study that require further investigation.

Conclusions

This qualitative exploratory study was designed to identify subcultural perceptions that influence change success within hybrid organizations. The purpose of such identification was to provide change designers insights into how to mitigate negative perceptions and improve change success. The study's conceptual framework was founded on the interpretive paradigm and social constructivist epistemology, leveraging insights from change, conflict, social identity, attachment, cultural, and construal level theories. Data were collected through questionnaires, a focus group discussion, and individual interviews focusing on subcultural group perceptions on directed change. Triangulation of data with NVivo software revealed influential perceptions related to trust, value, communication, commitment, inclusiveness, and respect were worthy of future research and quantitative analysis. Researchers and change designers informed by this study benefit from the identification of these key perceptions. Knowing which perceptions are potentially influential assists efforts on how best to target and study subcultural perceptions in other organizations to improve change designs. More successful change designs would support positive social change by reducing operational costs associated with change failure, reduce organizational stress and frustration associated with change, and improve worker job satisfaction.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire Protocol

Background

Seventy percent of all organizational changes fail, creating frustration in the workforce and losses in the trillions of dollars. Researchers have determined workforce perceptions have a significant influence on change success or failure, yet have not identified which perceptions are worthy of further investigation. This study conducts research designed to identify those perceptions. Identification of influential perceptions is the first step in developing change strategies that have a greater chance of success, thereby reducing costs to the organization and stress to those most affected by the intended change. Your participation will greatly benefit the advancement of science on the subject of change, and those participating should feel proud of contributing their unique insights towards promoting positive social change.

Questions and Discussion Topics

Perceptions are complex, requiring identification by exploring influential aspects that in turn influence those perceptions. The questions and discussion topics presented in this study are of a general nature designed to explore perceptions that influence change success. While some questions may seem irrelevant to the focus of the study, each question should be answered as openly and honestly as possible; there are no right or wrong answers.

A few basic guidelines:

1. Volunteers may remove themselves from this study at any time; participation is voluntary. There is no penalty for non-participation or decisions to withdraw from the study.

2. Do not write your name on the questionnaire; questionnaires are numbered to ensure anonymity. The questionnaires will be scanned, and the originals will be shredded. The scanned documents will be numbered to allow follow-up questions and association with your demographic information, all of which will be kept separate and secure from your questionnaire. This information will be retained for 5 years and will not be shared with your employer.
3. If there is a need for clarification on a question, or a question appears unanswerable, raise your hand. Do not discuss questions with other volunteers; the researcher will provide and answer to your question, and when appropriate, will provide the answer to everyone participating in the questionnaire.

4. If you are taking the questionnaire in a group setting and need to be excused prior to completing the questionnaire, hand in your questionnaire to the researcher and let them know whether you will return to complete the questionnaire.

5. Upon completing the questionnaire, please complete the exit survey and place both documents into the envelope and hand it in to the researcher, or submit your response electronically.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains two (2) types of questions:

1. True/False: Check either True or False

2. Descriptive: Fill in the blank:

   For example: "What I like most about my job is:

   _____ "

The questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes to complete, but you may take as much time as you need. Questions are randomly posed to ensure each response is independent of the previous question. Please, do not include names as part of your response. This study poses no appreciable risk or discomfort to participants; your information will be secure and the responses you provide to the questionnaire, focus group discussions, or personal interviews will be coded for patterns, rather than specifics, and held in encrypted external drives assessable only to the researcher.

<u>Demographic Data:</u>

Participant Number: _____

Age: ☐18-25 ☐26-35 ☐36-45 ☐46-55 ☐55+ **Gender:** ☐ Male ☐Female

Department: ☐ Deck ☐ Engine

USCG: ☐Licensed ☐ Unlicensed

Country of birth: _____

Current/Prior Military or Reserves: ☐ Yes ☐ No

CO/Master or Chief Engineer? ☐Yes ☐No

Highest level of education:☐ MA/MS/PhD ☐ AA/BA/BS ☐College, no degree

☐Trade school ☐High School grad/GED ☐High School, no graduation or GED

Years going to sea: ☐ 0-1 Year ☐1-3 Years ☐3-5 years ☐ 5+ Years

Home: ☐North East US ☐South East US ☐Midwest US ☐SouthWest US ☐

NorthWest US ☐Alaska/Hawaii ☐Outside US _____

Shipboard Worker Questionnaire

Part 1: The first series of questions will explore: **how you perceive** yourself and others

in the organization.

For questions 1 through 6, fill in the blank

1. Those who work ashore:

   _____

   _____

2. For the purposes of this next question, your name is Billie Smith and your position aboard the ship is the same as the position you currently hold. If someone came aboard the ship and asked you "who are you?" what would be your response?

   _____

3. My Most shore-side decision makers are:

   _____

4. I am an important part of my organization because:

   _____

5. Organizational managers ashore treat us: _____

6. Organizational staff and managers could improve their change-making process by:

   _____

   _____

   _____

For questions 7 through 11, circle True or False

7. I trust my employer to have my best interests in mind: ☐ True ☐ False

8. Shipboard workers have a better understanding of the big picture: ☐True   ☐ False

9. Organizational managers ashore understand and share our perspective: ☐True   ☐ False

10. I make change support decisions based on input from others on the ship: ☐True ☐
    False

11. I believe most of what I am told by managers ashore: ☐ True   ☐ False

Part 2: The second series of questions will explore how you perceive changes coming

from managers ashore.

For questions 1 through 7, circle either True of False

1. We should be involved in designing changes that affect us: ☐True ☐ False

2. Changes coming from managers ashore are usually necessary: ☐True   ☐False

3. Changes coming from managers ashore are inevitable: ☐True ☐False

4. Most organizational changes are fads: ☐True   ☐False

5. Most organizational changes focus on saving money: ☐True   ☐ False

6. Most organizational changes benefit someone other than me: ☐True   ☐False

7. I can usually tell when a change is going to fail even before it starts: ☐True   ☐
    False

For questions 8 through 11, fill in the blanks

8. I think most organizational changes succeed or fail because:

    _____

    _____

9. What most influences how I react to organizational change is usually:

    _____

    _____

10. If management wanted to increase their chances of change success, they should:

    _____

11. If a change fails it's probably because:

    _____

    _____

Part 3: The third series of questions will explore how you perceive your role in change success.

For questions 1 through 11, circle True or False

1. I have no control over whether a change succeeds or fails: ☐True ☐False

2. I can make changes fail, but can't make changes succeed: ☐True☐False

3. I can often influence whether a change succeeds or fails: ☐True☐ False

4. I have a responsibility to try and make changes succeed: ☐True ☐False

5. I have a right to resist change in the workplace that I feel is counter-productive or reduces our quality of life: ☐True ☐False

6. It is our duty to speak out against or resist changes we feel cause more harm than good: ☐True ☐False

7. The support I give to a change plan depends upon how much I will personally gain from the change: ☐True   ☐False

8. We should support all organizational change efforts the same: ☐True☐False

9. It is not our job to tell senior management what is wrong with a change: ☐True   ☐ False

10. I ignore most organizational changes because they'll probably fail: ☐True   ☐False

For questions 11 through 14, fill in the blank

11. I base my decision on how much I will support or resist change on:

_____

12. _____ should get credit for change success.

13. I would provide more support to a change if:

_____

_____

_____

14. My support of a change is most influenced by:

_____

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Protocol

The Focus Group Discussions will be an open forum facilitated by the researcher, where each participant can provide their own perspectives. Each participant will be reminded that there are no right or wrong answers or positions, yet the discussion needs to stay on topic and titles, rather than names, should be used when commenting on individuals. Participants will be reminded the discussions will be digitally recorded, transcribed, and retained for a period of 5 years.

The discussions will have four parts facilitated by the researcher. In each case, the researcher will pose questions and ask the participants to discuss the perceptions that form the basis of their answer or position:

Part 1: The first topic will explore how shipboard workers perceive themselves and other groups.

Part 2: The second topic will explore how shipboard workers perceive directed changes originating from shoreside workers.

Part 3: The third topic will explore how shipboard workers perceive their role in change success.

Part 4: The fourth part will be an exit survey.

The following will form the basis of the discussions in each part:

Part 1:

Self-Identification: Do we as individuals tend to define ourselves in context with our environment? In other words, do we identify ourselves differently depending on where we are or to whom we are speaking? What do you think?

Group Identification: If you told someone you worked for your current employer and they indicated they knew someone who worked in the organization's office, would you ask if the person worked on a ship or in the office? Do you feel you belong to the same group as those who work ashore? Do you consider your shipmates members of your same group, or are you more likely to associate yourself with your department? Would you take a comment more personally if it were made against your organization, department, your rating, or your ship? How do you feel about negative comments made about your organization's employees afloat and ashore?

Inter-Group Relations: How you do relate to those who don't work on ships? Do you feel they are on the same team? Do you share the same motivations, goals, and perspectives? Why or why not? How you perceive your organization's employees that work ashore? Do you think they understand what it is like to be a shipboard worker? Do you think you understand what it is like to be an office worker? Do you think employees ashore help or hinder your work aboard ship? Do you think you tend to cooperate better with other ship departments when you perceive the office as a partner or adversary? How much impact do employees ashore have on your life at sea? Do you think employees ashore consider how their actions might affect those who work on ships?

Part 2: Changes

Changes originating from the office: How do you normally react when you hear there will be a change and are told the change was developed by someone ashore? Do you think it makes a difference that the change originates ashore? Does it make a difference if you had no say in the change? Do you inwardly hope the change will work or fail? If you don't know what the change is going to be, what are your first assumptions? Do most changes coming from shore staff benefit the shipboard worker, or someone else? Do most changes make life better or more difficult for those who work on ships? Do you trust employees ashore to make good decisions? Do you trust what employees ashore say about an upcoming change? Do you trust what your shipmates say about an upcoming change?

Changes originating from the ship: How do you normally react when you hear there will be a change and are told the change was developed by someone aboard your ship, or on another ship. Does it matter whether it came from your ship or another ship? Does it matter if it came from another department? Which is better, a change originating from a ship or one originating from an employee ashore?

The Inevitability of Change: Is change inevitable? Is change inherently good or bad? What makes a change good or bad? How do you deal with changes that have a perceived negative impact on how you work or live? Do you think changes that hinder your operation can often lead to innovation in an attempt to circumvent the negative result of a change? Do you think most changes succeed or fail? Why? Do you think your preconceptions on change influence your support?

Part 3: The Role of the Shipboard Worker in Change Success

Support: Do you believe you have a responsibility to support changes, regardless of where they originated? Do you believe you have a responsibility to resist changes you believe are not in your best interest? What do you believe is your role in the change process? Is it better to speak your mind or go with the flow?

Influence: Do you believe you can influence change success? On what would you base support or resistance? Do you believe a change could be made to succeed or fail by a single person? A single department? A single ship? Do you think your opinion has any effect on change success? Do you think management wants to hear your opinion?

Cooperation: On what do you base your cooperation in supporting changes? Do you believe you have sufficient say in changes prior to their execution? Do you think most changes are made with an understanding of how they will affect the workers, or appreciate how the worker will see the change? Do you believe management wants to hear or appreciates your real opinion on changes?

Change failure: Why do you think changes succeed or fail? What perceptions do you think most influence how you react to changes? What perceptions do you think are most likely the cause of change failure? Of change success?

Exit Question: Do you believe your discussion was affected by the presence of the researcher? If so, why; if not, why not?

Part 4: Exit Survey

Focus Group participants will then fill out an exit survey.

Appendix C: Personal Interview Protocol

The Personal Interviews will use semi-structured questions where each participant can provide their own perspectives. The participant will be reminded that the interview will be digitally recorded and asked if they are willing to proceed. Those choosing to not participate will be excused. The interview will proceed and the last question of the interview will allow general comments about the subject and the interview itself.

The Interview questions will focus on three areas: self and subcultural identification, how the participant perceives change, and the perceived role as change recipients. The researcher will ask questions and follow-on questions to ensure the main points of three main topics are covered.

Area 1: Identity

1. How would you identify yourself to someone you met:

    a. At a party

    b. In your organization's office?

    c. Aboard ship?

2. How would you describe your organization's employees afloat and ashore?

3. Are there identifiable groups within your organization, and if so, what are they?

4. To which organizational group do you belong?

5. Do you think shipboard workers represent an identifiable group, separate from organizational managers and shoreside staff?

6. Do you think shipboard workers share the same perspectives, goals, and measures of success as organizational managers and shoreside staff?

7. Describe the trust and confidence you have in decisions and explanations made by organizational managers and shoreside staff.

Area 2: Changes

1. How do you perceive change?

    a. Is it inevitable?

    b. Is it beneficial?

    c. Who should design it?

    d. Should those affected by change have a chance to provide input?

2. How do you view changes originating from shore management?

    a. Do you trust what you're told about the change?

    b. Do you think it will help more than harm?

3. What is your initial reaction when you hear a change is coming?

4. What do you think most contributes to a change's failure or success?

5. What perceptions most influence change success?

Area 3: Role as Change Agent

1. How do you see yourself as an agent of change success or failure?

    a. Does your support or resistance affect change success?

    b. Do comments from shipboard workers usually support or resist change?

    c. Do you feel shipboard workers should always support change?

    d. When should a shipboard worker resist change?

    e. Is it your duty to provide feedback, good or bad, on changes being made?

2. Can shipboard workers make a change succeed or fail?

    a. Does the combined support or resistance of shipboard workers affect change success?

    b. Does a ship's CO have a major influence on change success?

    c. Are certain charismatic shipboard workers able to influence shipboard consensus on change issues?

3. How can change originators create better change strategies?

    a. Should they increase involvement by those most affected?

    b. Should they better communicate the need for change?

    c. Should they ask for comments by those affected before implementing?

4. Having taken the questionnaire and been part of the personal interview, are there any other insights you can provide on perceptions held by shipboard workers that influence change success?

The participant will then fill out the following exit survey on the interview process.

Appendix D: Exit Survey Templates

Questionnaire & Focus Group Exit Survey)

Participant Number: _____

1. Did the researcher explain the confidentiality of your participation? (Yes/No) ___
2. Did the researcher remind you that you could remove yourself from participation at any time? (Yes/No) _____
3. Did you feel pressured to participate? (Yes/No) _____
4. Did you feel intimidated or coerced by the questions the researcher posed or topics discussed? (Yes/No) _____
5. Do you feel the researcher was a neutral party? (Yes/No) _____
6. Do you believe your participation will aid research on this topic? (Yes/No) _____
7. Do you believe your answers will be kept confidential? (Yes/No) _____
8. Do you believe your responses were accurate, honest, and valuable? (Yes/No) ___
9. Was the process **easier** or **more difficult** than you imagined? _____
10. How could the researcher improve the process or questions?

   _____

   _____

   _____

11. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Personal Interview Exit Survey

Participant Number: _____

1. Did the researcher explain the confidentiality of the interview and how you would be provided an opportunity to review the transcript made from the recording to ensure accuracy? (Yes/No) _____

2. Did the researcher remind you that you could remove yourself from participation at any time? (Yes/No) _____

3. Did you feel intimidated or coerced by the questions the researcher posed? (Yes/No) _____

4. I was comfortable with the interview process. (Yes/No) _____

5. I was comfortable with the interview location. (Yes/No) _____

6. Do the way the questions were posed affect your answers? (Yes/No) _____

7. Do you feel the interviewer was a neutral party? (Yes/No) _____

8. Do you believe your answers will be kept confidential? (Yes/No) _____

9. Were you confused by any of the questions? (Yes/No) _____

10. Do you believe your responses were accurate, honest, and valuable? (Yes/No) ___

11. Was the interview **easier** or **more difficult** than you imagined? _____

12. How could the interviewer improve the interview process or questions:

    _____

    _____

13. Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding the way the personal interview was conducted or suggestions on how to improve upon it?

    _____

    _____

    _____

Appendix E: Questionnaire Results

Responses to False/True Questions:

I trust my employer to have my best interests in mind	False	True
	17	3
55+	3	2
46-55	2	0
36-45	4	0
26-35	7	1
18-25	1	0
Female	3	0
Male	14	3
Military Yes	8	2
Military No	9	1

I believe most of what I am told by managers ashore	False	True
	14	5
55+	3	2
46-55	2	0
36-45	3	1
26-35	6	2
18-25	0	0
Female	2	0
Male	12	5
Military Yes	7	2
Military No	7	3

Organizational managers ashore understand and share our perspective	False	True
	19	1
55+	4	1
46-55	2	0
36-45	4	0
26-35	8	0
18-25	1	0
Female	3	0
Male	16	1
Military Yes	9	1
Military No	10	0

Managers Ashore better understand the big picture	False	True
	4	15
55+	2	3
46-55	0	2
36-45	1	3
26-35	1	7
18-25	0	0
Female	0	2
Male	4	13
Military Yes	2	7
Military No	2	8

I make change support decisions based on input from others on the ship	False	True
	3	16
55+	1	4
46-55	1	1
36-45	0	3
26-35	1	7
18-25	0	1
Female	0	3
Male	3	13
Military Yes	2	8
Military No	1	8

Part 1: Identity (first 3 questions)

Participant	Those who work ashore	Who are you	Most shore side decision makers are
1001			
1002	Sometimes make decisions without knowing the impact these decisions will have on shipboard operations	Captain of the vessel	Trying to do the right thing
1003	I generally, based upon approximately 25 years of experience in various aspects of the maritime industry, hold maritime company "shoreside" personnel, management and ownership in very low regard	If asked just like that, it would be: "who am I? wo the hell are you and where is your ID?	Approximately 62% as intelligent as they think they are, and approximately 21% as moral
1004	For the most part make decisions without adequate due diligence	Billie Smith, Captain	Definition of mediocrity
1005	Should feel good	I am the chief mate and name	People; who don't have a lot of maritime experience
1006	Soft and disconnected from day to day life at sea	2nd Mate	Well intentioned, but uninformed on ship operations
1007	Do so because it was the most natural path for them to take	I'm the navigator	non-licensed or minimal seagoing experience
1009	Don't like going to sea	Second officer Billie Smith	People who haven't worked on ships
1010	Are out of touch with shipboard operations	The second mate	Too far removed from how decisions impact shipboard operations
1011	Do not like extended time at sea	Chief Engineer	Competent, but sometimes out of touch with seagoing personnel

Participant	Those who work ashore	Who are you	Most shore side decision makers are
1012	Many do not have a vessel operational background	tell them	From the engine department
1013		2nd Officer	Office Personnel
1014	Have a tough time understanding shipping and logistics is a 24 hour business	I'm X, I work as the second mate	Progressive but very short sighted
1015	Mostly disconnected from my workplace	3rd mate	Operationally inexperienced
1016	Are people in a complex organization that affects my job in many ways, but is not directly similar	I am the 2nd mate	Making decisions for shoreside problems
1018	Have little understanding of what is like to sail. If they did sail, I wonder if they forgot	hi, I'm Billie, one of the A/Bs	Forget where they may have started
1027	Are trying to stick to a budget	The 2nd mate or the 3rd mate	concerned with dollars
1028	In most cases are working with the companies interest in cutting cost and are rarely aware of what actually goes on at sea	Billie Smith, Second Officer	Office personnel with no prior maritime experience
1029	Have no clue what it is like to work 24 hours a day for 2 weeks	I would say I'm capt or my position and my last name	Not qualified
1030	Do not understand the demands of shipboard life	Billie Smith, 2nd mate	Unaware of how policies affect us onboard

Part 1: Identity (last 3 questions)

Participant	I am an important part of my organization because	Organizational managers ashore treat us	Organizational staff and managers could improve their change making process by
1001			
1002	I am tasked with implementing policies	As a component in the organizational structure	Having people with sea service knowledge involved in their change making process
1003	Of what I do	with nearly complete disregard	Actually stepping aboard their ships and having some interaction with mariners other than that with masters and chief engineers, when they absolutely have to
1004	Add value	As commodity until they learn hard way	Soliciting feedback and moving toward a more of a support mindset
1005	I am in charge of cargo ops and enjoy it	with respect	listening more to the crew
1006	I'm the ship's navigator, you can't sail without me	Salutatory neglect, only interact when there is an issue	Requesting input from shipboard personnel and explaining the rationale behind new policies
1007	my drive, knowledge and initiative	Good when they need a favor, then forget	Limited their managed employees to a smaller number to have a better understanding of them
1009	We safely and efficiently move cargo around the world	Fairly	By having more opinions made by the people the change is actually affecting
1010	not important-easily replaced	As if we don't matter	Including operational personnel in decision making process
1011	Responsible for operation of machinery	Important part of organization	Making trips onboard vessels they manage. Listening to sea going personnel

Participant	I am an important part of my organization because	Organizational managers ashore treat us	Organizational staff and managers could improve their change making process by
1012	My experience and expertise	Poorly	Asking first for advice and has it been tried before
1013	I give 110% effort	Sub par	Communication; there is a gross lack of communication
1014	Lay out tracks establish communications for shoreside to ship	Fair	Consulting with seasoned and new captains and Chengs about crew rotations, pay disputes, EEO policy changes, shipping risks, etc.
1015	We execute the job	insignificantly	Including onboard personnel in the decision making, seek input before releasing new rules
1016	At the moment, ships can't run without us	Like we are the problem that needs to be fixed	Stop making changes that have no value to our ships. Most changes are made to give someone a name in the company, not because there was anything wrong with the way it was done aboard the ship
1018	I do my job	as positions, not people	including the unlicensed people during ashore decision making
1027	I can properly operate a ship		Becoming more knowledgeable about the process they are trying to change and seeking out input from people within every echelon of the organization
1028	I am boots on the ground. Essentially, I am a life that means more than saving/making money	like numbers	Asking the vessels/captains input to whether or not the change can successfully be implemented without making the mariners job harder or unsafe
1029	I am hard working, willing to try new techniques in buy usage	As if we are below them	Asking boat workers input
1030	I am a safety leader with 30 people under my care everytime I take the watch	a bother	visiting vessels, spending time onboard, NOT exhibiting a knee-jerk reaction to all issues

Part II: Directed Change

Participant	I think most organizational changes succeed or fail because	What most influences how I react to organizational change is usually	If management wanted to increase their chances of success they should
1001			
1002	People (workers) feel the change is valid and achievable (or not)	If it is company policy then I implement the policy, with the proviso that it will eventually change again	Involve those whom the change will impact
1003	They are driven by legal counsel or business objectives and are not supported with an adequate understanding of shipboard reality and consequences	The particular substance of the actual change itself	Acquire a more sophisticated understanding of the merchant marine
1004	Merit and leadership of direct supervisor to enact change	merit of change	Generate engagement and buy in
1005	Money and safety standards get compromised	safety to crew and environment	get more input from crew
1006	Support from middle management (shipboard officers)	Whether it increases my workload, and if it does, if that is an efficient use of my time	Explain why it's necessary, i.e. new regulations, past experience
1007	The idea sounds good on paper but in practice creates more work in an overloaded industry	How logical it makes sense in the onboard use	Work closer with who they are changing to implement it
1009	Of how they are implemented	How the superiors aboard ship react	Come aboard the vessel and help make the change
1010	The people who are impacted don't see how the change will benefit them	The benefit that I see for myself or organization (as long as it doesn't make my job more difficult)	Show how it will benefit the worker that the change impacts

Participant	I think most organizational changes succeed or fail because	What most influences how I react to organizational change is usually	If management wanted to increase their chances of success they should
1011	Of preconceived ideas/opinions	How it is presented	Explain truthfully and in detail
1012	Failure of group to buy into the change	Why the change is presented	Ask before implementing and explain why
1013	Lack of communication	The way, or lack thereof, its presentation	involve shipboard personnel in decision
1014	I think most changes succeed if the organization gives the change time to make a difference	It depends on who was involved and who was consulted on the change	Make everybody feel like they're part of that change
1015	Onboard vessels they succeed because we have no other option, audits ensure this	The manner I learn of the change	Provide explanation for change/seek input
1016	The "fad factor" people want to be innovators and make a name for themselves by saving money for the organization. On our level these changes not only won't benefit us, but generally are very detrimental on the ground	Is it going to improve my or my coworkers lives - will it make the ship better, will the change help ease fears of the future of the industry. Will it directly benefit anyone besides a few higher ups in the company?	Make slow deliberate changes based on real world need - you find that out from the people you are trying to change
1018	Managers are time focused and don't have or don't take time to look at longer term issues	The way it is proposed to me	Have more representational input
1027	The make sense or don't to the organization	How those around me that I look up to are reacting	incentivize the process of the change
1028	They are based on the company's budget	Fairly annoyed because sailors are creatures of habit; change usually means more work and more distractions	Give the changes time. The changes are constant.

Participant	I think most organizational changes succeed or fail because	What most influences how I react to organizational change is usually	If management wanted to increase their chances of success they should
1029	The change is not decided by shoreside and boat people, usually just one component decides	Perceived as a negative by shoreside	Include all employees
1030	The reason behind the change is never explained, it feels like a punishment	How the company "trains" us for it (they won't)	Come aboard the vessel and help make the change answer questions, follow up

Part III: Role as Change Agent

Participant	I base my decision on how much I will support or resist change on	Who should get credit for change success	I would provide more support to a change if	My support of a change is most influenced by
1001				
1002	Ease/Benefits of change	All employees	I felt it had a better chance of succeeding	My feeling that the change will have an overall positive effect. Likewise, if the change can be implemented without significant upheaval
1003	The nature of the change, its safety, fairness and efficacy	The appropriate party	if it were a good one	The nature of the change, its safety, fairness and efficacy
1004	Merit of change	Direct leadership	Reasoning is sound and effects are effective	merit and effectiveness
1005	If the change is working well for the ships crew	Everyone	The change is supported by office, management, and crew all working together	How the changes make it a safer environment to work in

Participant	I base my decision on how much I will support or resist change on	Who should get credit for change success	I would provide more support to a change if	My support of a change is most influenced by
1006	How it affects me or my job prospects long term	Project Manager	I received an explanation of its end goal and why it is perceived to be necessary	Its effect on my daily routine and workload on the ship, and whether I've received an adequate and plausible explanation of the reason for the change
1007	If the change is logical, in line with standard procedures	Everyone	It followed industry norms, or benefitted the norms	How the change comes down the line to us, if it is positive, makes sense
1009	How important it is to the ship	Crew	It was explained better by shoreside personnel	How important it is to the ship
1010	Perceived benefit (perception can be changed through explanation)	People who have to implement the change	I viewed it as necessary or making my job/life easier	Perception of a change being beneficial as opposed to being counterproductive. Continuous improvement vs change for the sake of change
1011	How it is presented	Whoever makes it work	none	How my subordinates receive it. How management presents it. Is it necessary?
1012	Communication from management	All	Properly communicated	Directness of approach and communication
1013	Value added	everyone	it's clearly explained	my interpretation or understanding

Participant	I base my decision on how much I will support or resist change on	Who should get credit for change success	I would provide more support to a change if	My support of a change is most influenced by
1014	The overall attitude of the crew or organization	The person who suggested change	If the overall pros outweighed the cons	How it benefits overall majority of the crew and myself. Example, does it increase moral? Does it decrease accidents?
1015	The perceived value to myself and company	everyone	I understand the reasons and it is sound business practice	How I perceive it
1016		Everyone	The changes made sense	If I can see how the change will be beneficial
1018	Do I think it will work and not harm others	Everyone	Some of them were presented prior for input (if major) and not authoritatively implemented	My analysis of cost benefit to the organization and its members
1027	If the change seems like a good idea	Those changing	I could see tangible results	My superiors and peers that I admire, my personal opinion on the intent of the change
1028	If the change makes sense for me and my crew to complete our job and return home safely	The crews/vessels	I knew it was made to make us safer and more efficient	The change itself. Some changes are good and make sense, most do not.
1029	Whether the change is realistic and will help	Everyone involved	I was asked my feelings on the change	Whether it actually helps
1030	Safety! Often this is ignored (i.e. vessel banning knives)	The team	Explained, directions are given, it improves onboard life (safety)	Safety, sorry to be repeating myself, but this is everything to me