

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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2013

Exploring Effective Communication for Organizational Change

by

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MS, Grand Canyon University, 2009

BA, Grand Canyon University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to explore experiences and perceptions of organizational leaders regarding organizational change communication to improve change results in an organizational setting. Building on a conceptual framework of organizational theory, 25 full-time online faculty at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States participated in open-ended interviews. The participants were referenced using a coding system of P1 to P25 to protect identities. Data were analyzed for like terms, coded, and prioritized to identify prevalent themes. The most prominent themes included that (a) face-to-face communication was preferable for important information and e-mail was appropriate for less important information, (b) continuing communication was important for long-term change endeavors and frequent communication was effective for communicating about short-term change processes, and (c) effective communication of organizational mission and values allowed employee-organizational ethical congruency to develop. Participants indicated that communication modality affected an employee's perception of organizational change. Business practices can improve because of this study as the findings identified opportunities for leaders of higher learning institutions to lessen the communication difficulties often associated with organizational change. The implications of these findings will promote social change in the form of increased understanding of how to communicate successfully in any organization.

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Dedication

To Twiga, who taught me to always expand upon my thoughts and to love the research process.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my Chairperson, Dr. Peter Anthony for his tireless efforts to help me work through the doctoral study process. To my colleagues, I am grateful for your enduring support, and your willingness to let me vent now and again. To my department heads, thank you for your support in my educational endeavors.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Organizational leaders are facing increasing pressure to implement change initiatives to respond effectively to growing competition and fluid operational environments (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). Change often entails organizational restructuring, developing new job functions, or creating new organizational departments (Mahesh & Suresh, 2009). Comparatively, effective communication of organizational change has increasingly become important in the modern operational environment (Jain, 2011). Although the need for organizational change is often recognized at higher levels in organizations, developing strategies on how to communicate successfully change programs has not been forthcoming (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011; Nelissen & van Sale, 2008; Parent & Levitt, 2009; Petrou & Demerouti, 2010). The focus of this study was on the process of communicating organizational change, but more specifically, on the development of effective organizational communication strategies to improve organizational change outcomes.

Background of the Problem

As issues such as competitiveness and operational complexity are constantly examined in organizational operations, organizational leaders have found it increasingly necessary to adapt traditional modes of functioning to a change-oriented operational paradigm (Arevalo, 2010; Nelissen & van Sale, 2008; Weiner, 2009). Organizational leaders are compelled to implement operational changes based on existing marketplace trends and projected marketplace trajectories (French & Holden, 2012). Because businesses are composed of individuals, an escalating need exists to develop

organizational change communication strategies emphasizing employee participation (Cutcher, 2009; Palmer & Dunford, 2008; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012). Developing effective change communication strategies could create an organizational culture and workforce more willing to undertake the substantive task of developing and implementing operational change.

Achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage correlates with developing effective communication within organizations (Peus, Frey, Gerkhardt, & Traut-Mattausch, 2009). A divide exists between the need for change and the ability of organizational leaders to develop communication change strategies to engender positive outcomes (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). Though organizational change poses significant challenges, understanding the multidimensional processes of effective organizational change communication could lead to more successful change strategies and techniques to mitigate resistance to organizational change (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009).

Problem Statement

The escalating level of competition has caused organizational change to become an increasingly salient issue. However, organizational leaders often do not communicate in an effective manner the need for organizational change (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). As such, a need exists to study how organizational leaders can communicate change effectively to increase the percentage of successful change initiatives (Arif, Jan, Marwat, & Ullah, 2009; Boga & Ensari, 2009). The lack of clear communication causes approximately 70% of change initiatives to fail to achieve desired results (Burnes &

Jackson, 2011). A general business problem facing organizational leaders is communicating change to employees (French & Holden, 2012). The inherent fluidity of organizational operations has caused communicating change in a successful manner to become increasingly important (Boga & Ensari, 2009). The specific problem, was determining communication strategies to improve organizational change outcomes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study with case study design was to explore how organizational leaders can communicate change to improve change outcomes. Data collection included 25 semistructured interviews with employees from a population of 105 full-time online faculty members at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. This population was appropriate for research regarding the effects of organizational change communication given the rapidly evolving marketplace of the industry, and the diverse population provided varied feedback (Wood, Tapsall, & Soutar, 2005). Additionally, the research site and the population were close by, affording expedient access.

Organizational change is a multifaceted and complex process (Shin et al., 2012). The purpose of the study was to research the communication of organizational change. As communication is often a vehicle to change, developing an increased understanding of organizational change communication could improve organizational change processes (Johanass & Heide, 2008). The findings of this study indicated possible social changes including, helping leaders develop egalitarian changes strategies to transcend traditional

business paradigms as well as demonstrating how operational change affects the organization and its stakeholders.

Nature of the Study

Because the study required fieldwork, the qualitative method was appropriate. The study required conducting research in a real-world setting, rather than testing an experimental hypothesis as in the quantitative method (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, and Symon (2007) noted, the application of qualitative method in management research presents the complexities of the cultural and symbolic attributes of organizational functioning and culture during change circumstances.

The qualitative method entails exploratory research with patterns, meanings, and perceptions emerging continually during the process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The qualitative method was appropriate for the focus of this study on the continual reactions of employees concerning organizational change communications. Using the qualitative method allowed research to occur in a real-world setting such as the research site, which was an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. Data gathered from the study could help to increase understanding of individuals' perceptions and experiences to a set of actions, events, or processes in a specific social context (Johnson et al., 2007). Specifically, the qualitative research method revealed how employees react to change communications within their organization.

This study used a case study design. As indicated by Yin (2009), the central benefit of the case study is the design allows researchers to explore how individuals construct meaning concerning events, programs, or processes, in a time-bound manner in

a specific social context. A case study design was appropriate because the focus of this study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of participants regarding change communications occurring in an organizational setting. The case study design was preferred to an ethnographic research design because of time constraints, and over a narrative design for reasons of abstraction (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; White & Drew, 2011).

Research Question

Yin (2009) indicated the purpose of the research question in qualitative research is to explore perceptions or meanings research populations attach to a particular event or process as experienced by the population. The central research question of this study was: How does communication of organizational change affect an employee's perception of organizational change? The interview questions are listed below, and in Appendix A. These interview questions served to collect data needed to answer the research question.

Interview Questions

1. How effective were organizational leaders in explaining the reasons behind the creation of the position of full-time online faculty?
2. Was the amount of information you received concerning your position as a full-time online faculty adequate, please explain?
3. Has the requirements and responsibilities of the position been communicated in a clear manner, please explain?
4. What has been the most effective communication modality (e-mail, newsletter, face-to-face) concerning your position and your positional responsibilities?

5. How important is continuing communication, regarding possible changes to your positional requirements and responsibilities?
6. Have you thought you have been able to provide feedback regarding your position as a full-time online faculty to organizational leaders (managers, directors, etc.)?
7. Do you believe your feedback has been included based on communication you received or through job function change related to your position, please explain?
8. How has the communication you have received from organizational leaders shaped your perception of the organizational culture and values?
9. How could you communicate to new full-time online faculty the nuances about their position? What is the interchange like between coworkers?
10. To what extent have you been able to implement communication regarding your position received from organizational leaders into your day-to-day function?
11. How has the communication you received regarding your positional responsibilities, requirements, and changes differed from communication you received while employed in previous positions?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was organizational theory, which has expansive qualities, rather than a reductionist paradigm (Pearce, 2008). An essential aspect of organizational theory is organizations are complex and interconnected entities in which information sharing has symbiotic qualities (Stacy, 2007). A conceptual framework that included complexity and interconnectivity was appropriate for this study because communication within an organization tends to reverberate through the

organization (Raukko, 2009). As the emphasis of the research was on perceptions, using a conceptual framework that explored the connectivity and adjustment of employees regarding change and communication was relevant. The expansive qualities of organization theory provided congruence with the research question (Schallock, 2009). Further, the incorporation of organizational theory into the conceptual framework of the study permitted the exploration of perceptions and meanings in a holistic manner (Palmberg, 2009).

Definition of Terms

The terms that require definition in this study are:

Change valence: The importance the organizational exhibits toward change implementation and an increase in change valence correlated positively to progressive attitudes by employees regarding change (Weiner, 2009).

Common goal: A commonly desired state of operations and reciprocity predicated on cooperation (Lopes, Santos, & Teles, 2009).

Continuing communication: Communication that concerns long-term issues and is ongoing (Peus et al., 09).

Critical reflective organization systems: Organizational systems that encourage lifelong learning, the growth of knowledge through sharing, the prioritizing of critical thinking abilities, citizen capabilities, ecological wisdom, and environmental literacy (Arevalo, 2010).

Divers: Employees who have reduce standing within the organization after organizational change (Parent & Levitt, 2009).

Frequent communication: Daily contact that employees have with organizational leaders (Jain, 2010).

Goal congruence: The correlation of personal goals with workplace objectives stated and clearly understood (Machin, Forarty, & Bannon, 2011).

Hard systems: The scientific measurements of the environmental effect organizational leaders create through operations (Burja & Burja, 2009).

Holistic: The ability to synergize disparate aspects of an event, movement, or situation, and alchemize such aspects with previously held knowledge to attain a complete or near complete understanding of the information presented (Pearce, 2008).

Humanism management paradigm: A management paradigm predicated on the need to fulfill higher levels of human needs and to lead in a transformational manner (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009).

Mean-making: The ability of individuals to integrate challenging or ambiguous situations into an internal framework based on a value-based reflection (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schreurs, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2009).

Member-belonging: The attachment employees have to immediate peer-groups (Illia, Bonaiuto, Pugliese, & van Rekom, 2011).

Operation change: Change related to the employees' day-to-day operations within the organization (Bao, 2009).

Strategic change: Organizational-wide change instituted to create a competitive advantage (Arevalo, 2010).

Primes: Action- or inaction-oriented statements meant to bring forth previously held beliefs toward certain activities or ideas (Albarracín & Handley, 2011).

Renewed darwinian theory: This theory consists of the development of the brain through natural selection and through group selection toward developing the mechanisms to make complex decisions regarding multiple aspects of life (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009).

Salient effect: Changes occurring during the organizational change process that have a significant effect on employee perception, function, or emotional state (Vaara, Sarala, Stahl, & Bojorkman, 2012)

Sensemaking: Sensemaking is the ability of employees to engender spatial, emotional, cognitive, and functional adjustments during periods of organizational change (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008).

Social information processing: The process by where the social environment influences the perception of communication by the individual (Qian & Daniels, 2008).

Soft systems: The tacit perceptions, both intra and interorganizational, concerning the effect the organization has on the environment as well as its reputation concerning environmental issues (Burja & Burja, 2009).

Sustainability: Balancing economic, environmental, and social needs on multiple scales and considering the associated costs when developing operational processes, practices, and policies (Pearce, 2008).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

At a fundamental level, assumptions are intuitive in the research process because failure to account for a researcher's assumptions would prohibit the development of effective research questions and would misrepresent aspects pertaining to the research processes and findings (Dumay, 2010). To prevent misrepresentation of research data, researchers must address possible assumptions (Fisher & Stenner, 2011). For this study, there was the assumption that within qualitative research meaning develops within an organizational context (Driver, 2009). An assumption existed that questions I developed were relatable to the meanings or perceptions concerning participants' experiences (Wikman, 2006). A further assumption was communication processes are nonlinear and iterative, and participants would be able to communicate these abstract processes in an effective manner (Raukko, 2009). An additional assumption included participants' ability to internalize and understand the change process, and to convey their perceptions and experiences through a semistructured interview instrument (White & Drew, 2011). Another assumption was participants could remember experiences accurately to construct a truthful account concerning organizational change communication (Hibbert, Coupland, & MacIntosh, 2010). A final assumption was personal beliefs, prejudices, and experiences would be detached from the representation of the information and data collected.

Limitations

The requirements for qualitative methodology provided many of the limitations to this study (Brod, Lesler, & Christensen, 2009). The semistructured nature of the questions may not have been specific enough to prompt complete and honest recollection of experiences (Chaudhry, Coyle-Shapiro, & Wayne, 2011). The participants were from the same organization and same geographic location, which might have limited the variety and independence of experiences, perceptions, and meanings collected in this study. The shared experience between the interviewee and myself could have biased the interviewee's responses as the interviewee may have provided information he or she believes only I would think is favorable or useful (Yin, 2009).

Delimitations

The delimitations of the study included garnering and disseminating effective change communication and perceptions of employees to related communication. The purpose of this study was not to discover methods that individual participants could use to gain advantage over others within the organizational context. Rather, the purpose was to explore how organizational leaders could develop effective change communication and how participants view such communication in a natural social setting (Ahmend, Shield, White, & Wilbert, 2010). This type of research focus differed from research centered on developing organizational change processes that would benefit a group of individuals within the organization over another group (Jones et al., 2008). The focus of this study was to garner optimal organizational change communication strategies neutral to individuals within the organizational. To be included in the study participants were

required to have worked for the organization for a minimum of one-year as this requirement ensured participants were familiar with the organization. Participants were required to have taught ground-based courses to contrast online teaching from face-to-face teaching and ensure they had received communication concerning the respective positions.

Significance of the Study

Reduction of Gaps

A gap in research exists in the literature regarding organizational change and the process of developing effective organizational change communication. The majority of the literature is about external pressures such as governments, nongovernmental organizations, supply chain partners, and shareholders (Becker, Carbo, & Langella, 2010; Illia et al., 2011). The focus of much of the literature concerned various organizational processes necessary to achieve and maintain optimal operations, organizational leadership during change periods, and marketplace and industry pressures (French & Holden, 2012; Shin et al., 2012; Tudorescu, Zaharia, Zaharia, & Zaharia, 2010). There is a gap in research relating to studies about the communication of the change process, the development of effective change communication practices, and perceptions concerning organizational change based on the communication of the change process (Gill, 2011).

An advantage of the case study design is the researcher can explore in-depth how employees perceive the organizational change communication process, starting with perceptions of motives behind change communication, moving to perceptions of communication relating to the implementation process, and culminating with perceptions

of the change communication process. Improving organizational leader's understanding of employee perception of change communication could improve organizational change processes as employee perceptions are included in communication strategies. An increased understanding of employee perceptions could assist leaders in designing change communication strategies to increase successful change results. This application might improve the change communication process as organizational leaders view change communication in a holistic manner, which is central to developing workable and sustainable change processes (Pearce, 2008).

Implications for Social Change

As issues such as complexity and competitiveness continue to increase, organizational leaders have found it necessary to adapt traditional modes of functioning to a strategic paradigm-oriented to communicating organizational change in an effective manner (Arevalo, 2010; Grant & Marshak, 2011; Pearce, 2008). Because organizations are composed of individuals, the need to develop strategic communication to promote organizational change beyond operational change has become apparent (Cutcher, 2009; Gill, 2011). Communication strategies should demonstrate the necessity for organizational change effectively and consider the perceptions of employees to catalyze organizational change (Palmer & Dunford, 2010). As Johanass and Heide (2008) indicated, communication is an organizational tool, and a socially constructed and socially transformational process. An effective change communication strategy helps integrate organizational change by delineating the motivations and processes entailed and defining the new organizational sociocultural milieu (Kandlousi, Ali, & Abdollahi, 2010).

The findings from the study were applicable toward two areas of social change. The first was improving change communication strategies in the organizational change process. Employees have often been dismissive of organizational change based on the deficiency of communication relating to the change process (Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). By accepting that employee involvement is central to the organizational change communication process and the subsequent shaping of change outcomes, organizational leaders should become more willing to include a diverse collection of opinions and concerns in the process (Lamm & Gordon, 2010). Change communication could improve because the diverse skill sets, perspectives, and experiences of the involved individuals could resolve possible contentious issues early in the change process (Choi & Ruona, 2011).

To ensure these benefits, communication systems must include dynamic and resilient processes, a respect for organizational culture and symbolism, language, and metaphors (Griffin, 2008; Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008; Kalyani & Sahoo, 2011). Communication systems should contain storytelling and narratives to promote dialogue among employees and between employees and organizational leaders (Cutcher, 2009; Driver, 2009). Communication systems should include diverse communication modalities, such as nonverbal communication and other nontraditional organizational systems of communication to create a more holistic change communication process (Pearce, 2008; Riggo, Riggo, Salinas, & Cole, 2003; van den Heuvel et al., 2009).

The second significant potential for social change related to organizational employment and organizational change. Improving the organizational change process

could help organizational leaders make internal adjustments with less disruption to operations. An increased understanding of employee perception of change could improve organizational leaders' ability to respond to marketplace changes through effective change communication. Improving responses to change might reduce the threat of workforce reductions and increase the likelihood of expanding the organizations' workforce (French & Holden, 2012). Organizational change takes significant organizational resources to bring to fruition, and a lack of an effective strategy could lead to an inefficient use of resources (Saari & Talja, 2009; Weiner, 2009). Given the increasingly competitive marketplace, developing optimal change communication strategies might lessen the likelihood organizations will restructure reactively by reducing the workforce (Kalyani & Sahoo, 2011). Through developing more inclusive and responsive communication change systems, employees with a working knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the organizations could contribute his or her unique perspective about details of operational processes to improve organizational leaders' change communication strategies (Law, 2009).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Organizational leaders are under increasing pressure to implement change (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). The ability to implement organizational change rests primarily on the ability of organizational leaders to communicate the need for organizational change, change processes, and to garner the perceptions and experiences of employees concerning organizational change. Organizational leaders have struggled to communicate the need for change (Jain, 2011). This inability to communicate has often caused failure

in the change process. Failure to establish effective communications has been the impetus for employee resistance to organizational change as change often entails uncertainty and insecurity (Saari & Talja, 2009). The following literature review is comprised of three main themes regarding organizational change. The first section includes an overview of general strategies for implementing organizational change. The second section contains the various communication strategies for catalyzing organizational change. The third section includes an overview of how employees interpret organizational change communication and the change process.

Implementation of Organizational Change

This first section includes literature about the organizational change implementation process. Despite the need for organizational change, communication about the change is often ineffective. The communication of organizational change processes necessitates clear and effective organizational change communication strategies (Jain, 2011). Organizational change may require reorganization of the workforce, integration of technology, delineation of tasks, reorganization of the organizational structure, and change in operational location. Each of these attributes necessitates an effective communication strategy because these changes will have a significant affect on the daily function of employees (Dam, Oreg, & Schyns, 2008).

Fuchs (2011) noted employee perception of organizational justice could have a salient influence concerning willingness to engage in organizational change processes. The importance many employees attach to his or her organizational identity directly effects organizational change, and organizational leaders' ability to executing change.

Perceptions of organizational justice include distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Fuchs, 2011). Employees who believe the change process has not satisfied these justice paradigms are likely to exhibit antichange behaviors.

Organizational leaders focusing on meeting these justice paradigms are more likely to create an environment in which employees' exhibit prochange behaviors (Bernerth, Walker, Walker, & Hirschfeld, 2011). The establishment of procedural and distributive justice during change periods had a significant effect regarding employee perception of organizational change while interaction justice has a lesser effect. The perceptions and effect of interactional justice correlated to employee perception of managers and organizational leaders (Fuchs, 2011). Employees who held positive relations with management and organizational leaders were more likely to indicate higher levels of interactional justice than employees who did not hold such perceptions. Although perceptions of procedural and distributive justice within the organizational context related to the employees perception of the change initiative in isolation, perceptions of interactional justice related to opinions of managers and organizational leaders (Fuchs, 2011). To integrate change successfully, organizational leaders need to meet both procedural and distributive justice demands, and establish positive relations to ensure interactional justice is palpable.

Organizations are complex entities containing diverse groups. Accounting for organizational diversity in promulgating change communication is critical for successful change fruition (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). Organizational change can produce ambiguity, but employee resistance to change can lessen when managers are available to

listen to his or her concerns (Gilley et al., 2009). The change process often disrupts the functions within the organization, which could lead to conflict (Jain, 2011). To promote adaptations to new functionalities, functions need to be rapidly clarified (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007). Effective change processes could also incorporate conflict within the change process as conflict can engender constructive criticism (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). Although the guidelines presented in the study are fundamentally sound, they are overarching principles not applicable to every organization.

External pressure groups often advocate for organizational leaders to develop change initiatives (Arevalo, 2010). Arevalo described how organizations develop into critical reflective organizations during change operations by understanding how public and private pressure groups interact and form pressure points compelling organizations to develop change-oriented paradigms. Though Arevalo advocated for a holistic understanding of the pressures concerning change, in the organizations studied, change operations occurred in a voluntary manner, and the research did not include strategies in which organizational leaders were compelled to engage change based on mandates or regulations.

Organizational leaders should engage board members when creating an organizational culture and matrix system concerning the adoption of change initiatives (Alänge & Steiber, 2009). Alänge and Steiber outlined issues such as board meeting dynamics, and the board as a provider of critical resources. As change is continual and organizational milieus remain in a fluid state, adopting organizational strategies allowing

the board to have a significant role in developing a positive change orientation is critical. Organizations' with boards-oriented to change initiatives are more liable to see change initiatives implemented whereas organizations with less involved boards will likely have higher initiative failure rates. Though Alänge and Steiber noted the potential groupthink among board members, they did not indicate strategies to overcome this possibility.

Gilley et al. (2009) stipulated actions by organizational leaders could affect an organizations' ability to change. Given that organizational change has become important to the organization the actions of organizational leaders concerning change has also increased in importance. Although organizational change can be episodic or continual, the behaviors and actions exhibited by organizational leaders must be consistent, regardless of change (Gilley et al., 2009). Several central attributes identified as change-oriented by Gilley et al. included coaching, communicating, involving others, motivating, rewarding, and promoting teamwork. A case study analysis revealed three main points. First, employees rarely see leaders as implementing change in an effective manner. Second, the attributes listed above are critical to the change process. Finally, the research indicated a significant correlation between leadership behavior and actions and the successful implementation of change initiatives.

Given that past operational paradigms focused on profit maximization, Aras and Crowther (2009) noted implementing a paradigm more oriented toward change often requires organizational leaders to redefine optimal operations. Organizational leaders need to redesign organizational change paradigms to have operational flexibility.

Although Aras and Crowther posited a need to change certain organizational performance matrices, the study did not include the specifics on how to implement new matrixes.

As the continuation of organizational operations is often dependent on supply chains, Becker et al. (2010) examined the importance of developing intraorganizational change initiatives. The main emphasis entailed building flexible implementation models to tolerate changing conditions, and focusing on aligning human capital with organizational change. Accordingly, implementation models should include supply chain partners (Becker et al., 2010). To implement an intraorganizational change model, Becker et al. noted the need to align organizational change strategies with the supply chain needs. Though Becker et al. noted the possible synergetic benefits of aligning supply chain operations, the processes of aligning the disparate entities in the supply chain were not clear.

Ristovska (2010) outlined the difficulties business leaders face when implementing change initiatives. Leaders have often placed costs into the public sphere while emphasizing profit maximization. Furthermore, managers have often been encouraged to develop policies and practices to outsource internal costs into the ostensibly free public sphere (Ristovska, 2010). Integrating organizational change often requires organizational leaders to internalize previously externalized costs into operations. The reactive or proactive stance organizational leaders take have a significant effect on the cost of change. Proactive leaders will lessen costs through holistic implementation of change-oriented values, whereas reactive leaders often increase costs through lobbying and litigious actions to maintain the status quo (Ristovska, 2010). The

initial stance an organization takes regarding issues of change can influence the implementation process.

The changing functionalities inherent in a new organizational milieu necessitate the creation of knowledge units to produce change (Mahesh & Suresh, 2009). Knowledge units are cross-departmental entities comprised of employees, who, while maintaining day-to-day functionalities, are also part of ad-hoc workgroups who share accumulated knowledge across intraorganizational departments. These units are responsible for improving knowledge sharing within the organization and easing the organizational change process. As the importance of knowledge in the organizational operational environment increases, the ability to aggregate diverse sets of knowledge can help organizational leaders implement change processes.

Pearce (2008) stipulated that during periods of economic degradation, the relevance of organizational change is paramount. Pearce noted the interconnectivity of the modern organization necessitates a holistic understanding of change operations. Change does not only affect internal operations; such intraorganizational change initiatives must factor in the social, economic, and environmental cost on different scales. Employees do not implement change programs in a vacuum as multiple partners need engagement to develop and implement optimal practices.

Organization change can influence four parts of the organization: strategy, technology, structure, and employees (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). Organizational leaders must develop multifaceted change strategies to account for affected entities. Change directly affecting employees requires a more substantive and holistic management

approach as employees desire to maintain status quo operations. Agboola and Salawu noted employee resistance to change could develop in diverse ways. Psychological resistance occurs when an employee opposes any change to his or her functionality. A systems model of resistance is when employees express unhappiness with proposed functionality changes. Institutionalized resistance entails resistance innate within the organizational system. Though resistance to change does not surface in standardized ways, Agboola and Salawu outlined several methods for overcoming change resistance, such as education and communication, open communication, participation, and involvement, facilitation, and support, negotiation, cooption, and implicit and explicit coercion.

Palmberg (2009) noted improvements in information technology, interconnectedness, transparency, and symbiotic attributes of the modern organization have created organizational complexities. Organizational leaders must promote complex adaptive systems regarding change within the organizational managerial apparatus to improve change results. Palmberg's approaches to managing complex entities include visioning, feedback, experimentation and reflection, tension, and simple rules. Although hierarchical models might have been applicable when organizations functioned in a less complex environment, the emerging, coevolving, and self-organizing characteristics of the modern organization necessitate new and adaptive styles of management and organizational change (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). Though Palmberg delineated the tenets of complex adaptive systems, the findings did not include strategies relating to managing a complex environment.

Burja and Burja (2009) posited that to develop change-oriented practices successfully, organizational leaders should develop hard and soft matrix systems rewarding willingness to change. Hard systems refer to the scientific measurement of the environmental effect organizational leaders create through operations. Soft systems refer to the tacit perceptions, both intra and interorganizational, concerning the effect the organization has on the environment as well as its reputation concerning social issues. Organizational leaders can gain more accurate change feedback by incorporating hard and soft systems. As feedback rates increase, organizational change outcomes can improve (Burja & Burja, 2009). However, organizations operating in a distributed environment or in multiple industries might have difficulty standardizing change matrices.

Sharing information within the organizational construct is primarily a trading process necessitating a reciprocal reward paradigm in which intraorganizational entities receive significant benefits for sharing information (Barachini, 2009). A reward paradigm is required because departments within the organization tend to conceal information. To promote organizational change, departments need to concede the traditionally held belief that information and knowledge equate to political power, and organizational leaders must present significant inducement to intraorganizational entities to share information (Burja & Burja, 2009). Organizational leaders need to develop goals and subgoals to reward information sharing activities by departments to promote a sharing culture (Barachini, 2009). Organizational leaders also need to develop nonmonetary recompense systems to reward sharing, and satisfy psychological, cognitive, and existence needs of

sharing entities (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). A traditional command and control system of power is not conducive to the sharing of information and knowledge in knowledge-based organizational environments. Therefore, traditional paradigms need replacement by developing operations conducive to sharing knowledge and information as well as promoting evolutionary qualities (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009).

Kalyani and Sahoo (2011) initially posited an organization's proclivity to change significantly affected future organizational change initiatives. As organizational leaders become familiar with organizational change, the integration of future organizational change initiatives should garner increased support (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Kalyani and Sahoo stipulated initial support for change initiatives did not stimulate future change programs. These future change initiatives lacked support because organizational leaders oriented to change took a proactive stance to change initiatives by implementing change in a gradual manner thereby lessening the effect to employees (Kalyani & Sahoo, 2011). Organizational leaders prepared for systemic change are less prone to initiate change programs because they have already developed internal and organic operations to anticipate and respond to outside and environmental influences demanding change. Though the strategies presented in the research are germane, the findings did not include variants that exist across industries as different marketplaces exhibit different change pressures and processes.

Sonenshein (2010) asserted that given the increasing complexity of the organizational operational environment, Lewin's classic three-stage theorem of organizational change might no longer be relevant. Organizational change has become

less about governing structures and has tended to focus more on how individuals and how they internalize and perceive change initiatives. Lack of information often causes managers to present idiosyncratic messages in which some managers present a steady-state scenario of change, whereas other managers present a dynamic move-away from current operations (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). A dichotomy also exists between communication and interpretation of change: some individuals internalize change as positive, and others internalize change as negative. Furthermore, as some employees view the change as inconsequential while others view the change as substantive. These communication inconsistencies could cause divergent viewpoints about organizational change to arise (Sonenshein, 2010). Though the research included significant information about the cause of organizational divergence regarding change initiatives, strategies to overcome such divergences were not included.

Establishing employee commitment and trust during organizational change is crucial to engender positive change outcomes (Zeffane, Tipu, & Ryan, 2011). To promote commitment and trust during periods of organizational change, frequent communication between managers and employees is essential. Communicating in an effective manner is a precursor to establishing trust in an organizational environment (Zeffane et al., 2011). As periods of change interrupt an employee's perceived position within the organization, trust in management becomes paramount (Reissner, 2010). Employees who indicated they had a high level of trust in their managers were favorable to organizational change compared to employees with low levels of trust. To implement change organizational leaders also need a committed workforce (Zeffane et al., 2011). Employees who received

frequent communication from his or her manager had higher levels of commitment to his or her organization as well as to the organizational change initiative. Frequent communication between managers and employees is a precondition to developing trust and commitment (Kovorr-Misra, 2009). Communication during periods of uncertainty such as periods of organizational change is important to maintain trust and commitment. Managers should work toward establishing frequent communication with his or her employees to promote trust and commitment in prechange periods to lessen employee resistance during change periods. The findings were limited to an organization, which could present issues of transferability.

Khalid and Rehman (2011) noted the frequency of organizational change is increasing. This increase has caused many organizational leaders to interpret change as a continual process to be included in operational strategies. Developing managers with competencies concerning managing during change is an essential for change readiness (Khalid & Rehman, 2011). Such competencies should include analytical, insightful, influential, emotional, interpersonal, political, and technical attributes (Khalid & Rehman, 2011). Managers must be analytical to understand the change process, insightful to understand an individual's feelings, and influential to affect change processes (Boga & Ensari, 2009). Managers also need to exhibit self-confidence, be politically perceptive, and be process-oriented (Khalid & Rehman, 2011). Although the management of change and the development of managers are critical to produce successful change initiatives, few organizations have succeeded in developing these competencies (Khalid & Rehman, 2011). This situation could account for the high rate of change failure. To lower change

rate failures, organizational leaders must develop competent managers and manage change processes in an effective manner (Boga & Ensari, 2009).

Transformational leadership helps communicate successful progress of organizational change when organizational changes alter operational modes (Boga & Ensari, 2009). The ability of organizational leadership to communicate change can significantly influence the outcome of changes endeavors. Transformational leadership could have advantages over transactional leadership as transformational paradigms focus on change. During organizational change, employee morale can lessen as uncertainty causes stress. Transformational leadership can lessen uncertainty as transformational leadership focuses on the external and internal needs and desires of employees (Nasim, 2011). Transformational leadership focuses on creating support and positive perceptions of organizational actions, and as such, transformational style leadership can develop significant support for organizational change during change periods as well as positive perceptions of change outcomes in postchange periods. Transformational leadership styles, however, could hinder organizational changes that do not fundamentally change organizational operations, as the charismatic nature of the transformational style might not be appropriate for minor changes (Boga & Ensari, 2009). Boga and Ensari indicated transformational leadership is beneficial to organizational change, but the research was limited to one organization, presenting questions of transferability.

Organizational culture, whether strongly or weakly ingrained, can have a significant effect on the ability to integrate change within the operational construct (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009). The power of organizational culture is critical regarding

change integration. Organizations with strong cultures and externally focused paradigms are better able to adapt change than organizations with weaker cultures and an internal focus (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009). The internal structure of the organization is significant concerning change. Agnew and VanBalkom noted structures function on three levels: micro, meso, and macro. Microstructures involve the day-to-day interaction between organizational leaders and employees. Mesostructures entail how policies and procedures are fashioned and implemented. Macrolevel structures contain the ability of the organization to function within the social and cultural milieu. The ability of organizational leaders to shape organizational culture is critical for integrating change (Summers, Humphrey, & Ferris, 2012). Organizational change is not simply a divergence from the operational status quo; rather, it should encompass both implicit and explicit actions of the organization. Although Agnew and VanBalkom provided general theorems of organizational change, they did not synthesize managerial techniques to reorient organizational leaders to become favorable to change.

Vaara et al. (2012) noted an organization's cultural could have a significant effect on organizational change implementation. Organizations open to integrating change and integration can adapt with less disruption than organizations with cultures dismissive of new operations (McCabe, 2010). The culture of an organization can shape how employees reconcile prechange identities with identities congruent with the postchange organization (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Failure to develop an overarching culture is often the causation for conflict because employees tend to create intraorganizational groups that form group-specific identities, which can narrow the employee's perspective (Vaara

et al., 2012). Organizational change can disrupt knowledge sharing as sharing is often developed through trust (Barachini, 2009). The design of information sharing technologies is therefore crucial. As Vaara et al. stipulated, poorly designed organizational change processes can cause divergent behavior. To implement change in an effectual manner, organizational leaders and managers need to understand the various subcultures existing within the organization (Parent & Levitt, 2009). By using an inclusive management paradigm and including different organizational interests when planning and implementing organizational change, the ability to institute organizational change increases (Vaara et al., 2012). Strategies to reduce intraorganizational cultural differences were not included in the findings.

An organizations' readiness for change can significantly influences the change implementation process (Weiner, 2009). Organizational leaders who prudently develop change-orientation a culture are more likely to have employees who proactively implement change than organizational leaders who do not promote a change-oriented paradigm (Weiner, 2009). Central aspects of organizational readiness include change valence, commitment and efficiency to change, the effort put toward change, and the effectiveness of change implementation (Weiner, 2009). Change valence relates to the importance the organizational exhibits toward change implementation and an increase in change valence correlated positively to progressive attitudes by employees regarding change. The efficiency that stakeholders of an organization carry through with change initiatives also has a significant effect on change outcomes (Weiner, 2009). Weiner indicated change occurs in an efficient manner when there is minimal disruption to

employees. Organizational leaders' efforts regarding change endeavors were important concerning how organizational change progressed. Organizations with leaders who encouraged change were more likely to hold positive opinions concerning organizational change. The ability of organizational leaders to communicate new and emerging initiatives was important to frontline employees as communication simplify the process (Gill, 2011). Though research indicated how change could affect employees, the singular organizational population involved in the study might present questions of transferability.

Herzig and Jimmieson (2006) posited uncertainty is a significant barrier to implementing organizational change. Reducing uncertainty is paramount for successful organizational change. Involvement and communication are two central strategies that can help alleviate uncertainty during organizational change periods (Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006). Communication strategies that included employee perception tended to lower employee resistance to organizational change. To lessen uncertainty, organizational leaders can engage employees in the preimplementation, implementation, and postimplementation processes (Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006). By creating a holistic engagement process employees perceived their concerns and questions helped shape the progress and outcome of organizational change. Assuaging uncertainty is central to lessen employee stress and uncertainty during organizational change periods (Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006). Although the research indicated the importance of engagement processes, the relatively small sample size presented a question of transferability toward organizations with diverse populations functioning within a dynamic milieu.

Measuring the pre and postorganizational change attitudes of employees is essential in producing successful change results (Gray, Gray, Yodice, Rezai, & Fless, 2011; Jones et al., 2008). Organizational leaders can broaden support during prechange periods and intensify support in postchange periods through incorporating pre and postchange attitude analysis (Gray et al., 2011). To determine prechange attitudes of employees Gray et al. interviewed individuals at different levels in the organizational hierarchy. Ascertaining opinions of individuals within the organization prior to change can allow leaders a holistic understanding of perceptions within the organization (Lamm & Gordon, 2010). The postchange analysis involved reinterviewing individuals to decipher how organizational change affected individuals at different levels within the organization (Gray et al., 2011). Although the prechange results indicated higher level positions held positive attitudes toward change (with the reverse being true), postchange analysis revealed perceptions in the upper echelons remained constant, whereas perception at lower levels varied (Gray et al., 2011). The level of intensity regarding change of work functionality could account for this discrepancy in lower levels of the organization. Individuals who perceived organizational change had improved their status were in favor, whereas individuals who perceived a negative outcome were consistently adverse (Gray et al., 2011). Organizational leaders must develop change initiatives that benefit all levels within the organizational to improve change outcomes (Peus et al., 2009). Although the study's findings indicated the potential benefits to various organizational levels, Gray et al. did not specify how to communicate organizational change that does not intrinsically benefit lower-level departments.

Werkman (2009) noted previous paradigms toward creating successful organizational change efforts have failed because past paradigms tended to position organizational change into contextual or process-oriented strategies. Though the development of such strategies has added to the construction of organizational change strategies, the complexity associated with organizational change requires a more expansive strategy (Werkman, 2009). Although contextual change strategies have focused on the varying environments that organizational leaders confront during epochs of change, the transferability and generalization of such strategies have not produced desired outcomes (Werkman, 2009). Comparatively, process-oriented change strategies developed more transferable paradigms; however, these strategies neglected the nuances of specific organizational operations (Werkman, 2009). These paradigms, when operating in isolation, have failed to overcome the complexity of organizational change. As such, organizational change strategies need to account for diverse viewpoints including innovational-oriented, systemic-oriented, skeptical-oriented, and cynical-oriented, within the organizational construct (Jones et al., 2008). Organizational leaders should combine both contextual and process-oriented change paradigms to develop change strategies to improve change processes (Werkman, 2009). Contextual and process issues can be included in the organizational change process strategies by creating an expansive strategy.

Lonqvist, Kianto, and Sillanpaa (2009) noted in the knowledge-base economies, intellectual capital is central for optimal functioning organizations. Intellectual capital is also central to organizational change as sharing of both latent and explicit knowledge

helps organizational change endeavors (Bao, 2009). Knowledge-based economies contrast to traditional economies in which the implementation of hard assets and new skill sets was paramount. To implement organizational change in knowledge-based economies, organizational leaders must encourage information sharing and skill development because these are the cornerstones of intellectual capital (Barachini, 2009). The development of intraorganizational intellectual capital is crucial in the change process as intellectual capital helps to align organizational knowledge with strategic change goals (Lonnqvist et al., 2009). Managing intellectual capital can be challenging, as traditional modes of management have not concentrated on this process (Lonnqvist et al., 2009). To help facilitate change, organizational leaders need to develop reward systems to encourage learning as well as the sharing of information, to encourage managers to develop strategies that focus on developing intellectual capital within the organizational workforce

Communication of Organizational Change

This second section of the literature review includes the communicational processes of organizational change. Communicating the need for organizational change in an effective manner is crucial to implement change (Qian & Daniels, 2008). A divergence exists concerning the frequency and level of communication shared with employees and the proper delivery modalities (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). Given the improvements of communication and information sharing technologies, organizations have more resources though communicate change. The complexities of the process combined with human emotions can complicate the change process (Bisel, Messersmith,

& Keyton, 2010). Effective communication also entails an understanding of the nuances of organizational operations as well as the organizational culture (Summers et al., 2012). Communication strategies that work well in one organization are not necessarily transferable to other organizations (French & Holden, 2012). Although no communicational principles universally apply, the following section provides an overview of organizational change communication paradigms.

Whittle, Suhomlinova, and Mueller (2011) stipulated change communication is a process of mediating, not a process of intermediating. The intermediating approach entails addressing issues from an inert state, whereas the mediating approach involves interpreting and reinterpreting ideas and processes in a linear protracted fashion (Whittle et al., 2011). As organizational change rarely happens in a prescriptive manner, the ability of employees to reposition themselves within the context of the changing organization is important (Lamm, Gordon, & Purser, 2010). Employees begin to perceive the process from multiple viewpoints by establishing discourse concerning organizational change (Gambarotto & Cammozzo, 2010). This discourse helps employees to find emerging positions within the changing organization, and because the discourse is discursive, employees can reposition themselves (Whittle et al., 2011). As organizational change continues, employees develop an internal translation of the change process based on experience as well as the experiences shared by other employees. Though this process can benefit organizational change, if the translations have positive effects, the process can hurt organizational change if discourse is negative (Whittle et al., 2011). The research did

not indicate how to create or promote intraorganizational communication systems conducive to positive and discursive discourse.

Organizational change can have a significant effect on employee perception of organizational identity (Kovorr-Misra, 2009). Organizational change has become increasing common given the fluidity of the operational environment (Palmberg, 2009). The frequency of organizational change often leads to a crisis of organizational identity among employees. Although organizational change can create a sense of threat among employees, an optimal presentation of change can also create opportunities for employees to recreate his or her organizational identities (Kovorr-Misra, 2009). An employee's perception of his or her organizational identity differs from organization identity. Organizational identity entails perceptions the organization within the organization while perceptions of organizational identity factor in interorganizational influences (Kovorr-Misra, 2009). To create positive perceptions or perceptions of opportunity among employees during organizational change, organizational leaders need to frame organizational change as an opportunity to enhance for employees' to enhance their skills, and provide direction for the postchange organization (Nelissen & van Sale, 2009). Employees may react in a negative manner toward change, and idealize the prechange organization. Organizational leaders should communicate with employees perceptions of the organization that exist outside the organizational milieu, which can generate a desire to change based on comparisons to competing organizations (Kovorr-Misra, 2009). By communicating a holistic description of the environment the organization is operating within, organizational leaders can lessen resistance to change as employees perceive the

need to change as an organic process brought on by external forces and see the opportunity for growth within the postchange organization.

Organizational change involves dualities, contradictions, and paradoxes based on the complex nature of the organizational change process (Stoltzfus, Stohl, & Seibold, 2011). To overcome these issues, organizational leaders must assume paradoxes are inevitable during change, exist on multiple levels within the organization, and require proactive solutions (Stoltzfus et al., 2011). Contradictions arise when the stated goal of the organizational change runs counter to current operations. During change periods, organizational leaders must realign value and reward systems to lessen the potential influence of contradictions (Dam et al., 2008). Dualities emerge through the complexity in the organizational change process and the competing interest of groups involved in the process (Stoltzfus et al., 2011). Though certain organizational entities will view organizational change as a positive endeavor, other organizational entities will view change negatively. Communication regarding the potential benefits of organization change should incorporate the needs of divergent powers within the organization to lessen resistance (Stoltzfus et al., 2011). Results from the qualitative analysis indicated organizational leaders should provide open and honest information regarding the effect of organizational change. The findings noted entities favoring change and entities not favoring change indicated positive responses concerning open communication. Although assuaging the concerns and meeting the desires of all intraorganizational entities is difficult, open and honest communication regarding the effects of organizational change tended to mitigate these concerns (Jain, 2011). Stoltzfus et al. indicated the influence of

dualities, contradictions, and paradoxes in the organizational change process, but the research did not indicate the application of such strategies in different industry settings.

Kira, van Eijnatten, and Balkin (2010) noted employees who use personal resources during times of organizational change function optimally in the postchange organization. Given the fluidity of the organizational milieu, adapting to change has become an important skill for employees (Choi & Rouna, 2011). Using personal resources to reconstruct an employee's organizational narrative is often central to function in a rapidly changing organizational environment (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). An employee must be able to use personal resources to contextualize inner and external conceptions of his or her position with the organization and remain adaptable to continual changing demands (Kira et al., 2010). Although past paradigms of existence in the organizations focused on maintaining status within a steady state of operations, current and future paradigms should focus on adaptability and change (Choi & Rouna, 2011). For employees to function in changing environments, employees' need to craft sustainable work abilities (Kira et al., 2010). The attributes of sustainable work abilities include conscientious, behavioral, cultural adaptation, and social readjustment qualities (Kira et al., 2010). Central to adopting these qualities is an acute perception of both personal and social competencies relating to the employees' positions within the organization; this often requires substantive organizational learning abilities. Organizational learning occurs when the employee relate experiences to current transitional requirements to develop personal resources (Kira et al., 2010). To promote organizational learning, organizational leaders should create organization communication networks to promote

frequent contact between employees to encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration (Barachini, 2009). As most organizational work occurs in a postindustrial environment, knowledge sharing is requisite for optimal organizational operation and for engendering support for organizational change (Kira et al., 2010).

Organizational leaders should develop storytelling abilities and encourage employees to develop narratives during organizational change (Law, 2009). Literature that focuses on organizational change strategies have typically only covered the change process, but neglected the effect such changes have on employees (Bao, 2009). Organizational change necessitates an environment of trust, loyalty, ongoing learning, enthusiasm, and positivity (Law, 2009). Establishing this environment involves leaders developing vignettes of the change process as organizational improvement, and allowing employees develop personal change narratives (Schallock, 2009). As Law noted, storytelling is a powerful vehicle for organizational change as storytelling can encompass macro and microattributes of the experience. The communication of the change process requires several perspectives: visual representation, a distillation of experiences, and innovative conjecture (Law, 2009). The central thesis is storytelling is crucial to successful organizational change. As organizations are comprised of individuals from different backgrounds, organizational leaders need to tell stories related to the change initiative and allow space for employees to develop personal change initiative narratives (Law, 2009).

Langer and Thorup (2006) posited trust building during organizational change periods is essential to successful change. Central to the trust building process is

communication, which often takes the form of storytelling or narratives (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Although organizational leaders have attempted to instill a monophonic type communication, organizational change necessities polyphonic communications as organizations are diverse entities (Schallock, 2009). Allowing multiple storylines to formulate is essential in diverse environments (Whittle et al., 2011). Organizational leaders can attempt to shape diverse narratives in a manner congruent to organizational change. Organizational should encourage multiple storylines, but storylines should contain similar narratives (Langer & Thorup, 2006). Organizational leadership must facilitate and coordinate communication rather than dictating it (Russ, 2008). Although Langer and Thorup noted the importance of tolerating diverse narratives during organizational change epochs, the research did not specify particular techniques necessary to coordinating diverse storylines.

During organizational change, there is often a discrepancy between managers and employees concerning change communication (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2011). The complexity of change can cause multiple narratives to emerge during the change process (Thurlow & Mills, 2009). Although one group within the organization can interpret communication as effective, other groups may find communication ineffective. Mazzei and Ravazzani (2011) noted the majority of managers in their study believed they delivered effective and frequent communication during change periods, whereas the majority of employees perceived the communication they received as ineffective and infrequent. This divergence can lead to incomplete organizational change and the misalignment of organizational resources (Erwin & Garmen, 2010). Mazzei and

Ravazzani (2011) found four crucial areas of disagreement between managers and employees. Though managers believed they used official sources to communicate change, most employees perceived such sources as outside their daily communication realm. Employees tended to focus on how change would affect his or her individual position, managers focused on universal concerns conversely. The perception among employees was the communication they received was prejudicial toward showing the change in a positive manner, although managers believed they were communicating strategic goals (Parent & Levitt, 2009). To help eliminate the trust deficiency during organizational change, organizational managers must work toward establishing trust and reciprocity prior to organizational change (Lopes et al., 2009). Although Mazzei and Ravazzani noted the divergences and potential solutions concerning the lack of trust, strategies to develop trust between employees and managers were not included in the findings.

Nelissen and van Sale (2008) noted communication strategies significantly affect the perception of employees concerning change processes. Effective communication of organizational change can help employees change cognitive attitudes and emotional attitudes (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). The effect of communication during organizational change contrasts depending on employee perception (Lamb & Gordon, 2010). Employees who rated communication as highly effective tended to have a positive perception about organizational change, whereas employees who perceived communications as ineffective held a negative perception (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). Evolutionary adjustment, work-team support, and individual change-oriented tendencies all have a substantive role in an

employee's ability to adapt to organizational change, indicating effective communication played a minor role in shaping employee perception (Meyer, Shrinivas, Las, & Topolnysky, 2007). Although communication during change can be critical to successful change, communication is not a panacea to the challenges of organizational change (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). Though Nelissen and van Sale noted change perceptions could change over time, the singular measurement used does not provide validation for an evolutionary perception change for employees.

Employee memory is significant during organizational change periods as it often dictates how organizational leaders should construct and communicate organization change (Gill, 2011; McCabe, 2010). Organizational experiences and culture often affect the employee's memory (Driver, 2009). Resistance to organizational change can stem from employee memory of negative change processes and outcomes. Alternatively, employees who hold positive memories of organizational change initiatives express positivity change initiatives (McCabe, 2010). Memories of organizational change can vary depending on the employee's position within the organization as well as his or her involvement in the development and implementation of change (Jones et al., 2008). Employees regularly involved in change processes tended to hold positive memories, whereas employees not included tended to hold negative memories. Ascertaining these embedded memories of change experiences is often difficult for organizational leaders to decipher and synergize with organizational change strategies (McCabe, 2010). Involving employees in the change process extending beyond functional change toward mindset and attitudinal change can help lessen the effect of negative memories (Lamm & Gordon,

2010). Organizational leaders should focus on their employees' memories and develop change processes that factor in experiences and organizational culture (McCabe, 2010). Though McCabe indicated the salience of employee memory, study was in an organization, raising questions of transferability.

Communication skills among organizational leaders should extend beyond traditional skill sets such as personality traits, sociability, extraversion, and assertiveness, to include nonverbal capabilities (Riggo et al., 2003). Given the complexity of organizational communication, the quality of communication is important (Allen et al., 2007). The ability of an organizational leader to convey nuanced communication can depend on his or her dexterity at communicating through multiple modalities (Riggo et al., 2003). This communication entails using a diverse set of communication skills. Organizational leaders can convey poignant information in a holistic manner through using nonverbal communication (Riggo et al., 2003). During organizational change, communicating the complexities and nuances inherent in the change process is central to successful change (Gilley et al., 2009). Organizational leaders have focused on transactional rather than transformational communicational paradigms, which have been problematic (Riggo et al., 2003). To implement organizational change programs, organizational leaders must exhibit a diverse set of communicational that include different communicational modalities and nonverbal communicational. Riggo et al. noted the importance of organizational leaders' using nontraditional communication skills to inform change, but did not indicate strategies for developing these skills.

Gill (2011) noted storytelling is an underused communication strategy during organizational change. The complexity of organizational change has necessitated organizational leaders use strategies outside the traditional model of communication (Riggo et al., 2003). Storytelling is potentially an effective modality to engender support for change initiatives. Given the personal meaning many employees attach to their organizational standing and setting, communicating organizational change through storytelling can personalize the change process and include the employee's sense of self-identification within the organization (Choi & Rouna, 2011). Storytelling can help employees develop an introspective sense of the changes taking place to reformulate organizational identification in the postchange organization (Gill, 2011). Storytelling also presents the opportunity for organizational leaders to posit the organizational change in a narrative sense. As Gilley et al. (2009) noted, narratives help establish attachment to the organization, and attachment to the organization is paramount for gaining support for organizational change. During organizational change, organizational leaders need to mitigate the potential negative effect organizational change can have on employee. The research indicated storytelling methods used by organizational leaders in change processes to personalize change improved change results (Gill, 2011). Though Gill noted the importance of storytelling during periods of organizational change, a potential limitation to the study was the lack of research concerning organizations with diverse populations.

Raukko (2009) stipulated employees' reaction to organizational change contrast, depending on the change process. The two main factors in the organizational change

process involved communication during the change process as well as communication of new functionalities. Raukko noted the communication of organizational change should focus on two main issues: organizational change and organizational transformation. Employees receiving more communication regarding the process are more likely to express positivity concerning organizational change compared to employees receiving less information (Bond & Seneque, 2013). Central organizational actors in general have more access to change related information, whereas peripheral organizational actors have less access (Jones et al., 2008). Communicating a need for commitment on a personal basis lessened the discrepancy between organizational actors (Raukko, 2009). Though Raukko (2009) detailed the differing aspects of the organizational change process, the research did not present workable strategies to develop organizational functionalities and cultures more inclusive in the change process.

Different types of information necessitate specific types of intraorganizational communication (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). Given the improvement of information and communication sharing technologies, organizational leaders have used these technologies based on their perceived time and monetary benefits (Barachini, 2009). These technologies might not always provide the subtle nuances needed when communicating organizational change. Organizational change involves two aspects of organization life: the change in operational task and the change in position (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). Communication that applies to many employees within the organization is appropriate for electronic communication, whereas communication that affects employees' standing and job function within the organization require face-to-face contact (Kandlousi et al., 2010).

Computer-aided communication sharing technologies can disseminate communication in a rather efficient manner, but such communication can lack the intimacy of human interaction (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). Change communication dealing with specifics regarding organizational change necessitates a personal approach, whereas general information concerning change can be less personal and use information sharing technologies. The population studied in this article consisted of members of an organization, which presents issues of transferability.

Allen et al. (2007) stipulated many organizational change programs fail to provide employees with adequate information concerning the change process, which causes employees to seek information from other sources in an attempt to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty can influence negatively the workforce in terms of organizational goals including, as issues of deficiencies, decreased productivity, and anticompany attitudes increase (Allen et al., 2007). To lessen uncertainties organizational leaders must establish inclusive change communication strategies to increase confidence (Jain, 2011). Many organizational change programs have failed to achieve incorporative communication regarding change, which results in suboptimal outcomes (Burns & Jackson, 2011). To promote change integration, organizational leaders need to establish a symbiotic form of communications to achieve a higher level of trust with employees (Dam et al., 2008). The symbiotic style of communication allows organizational leaders to include employees in the development stages, the integrative stages, and in the establishment of new organizational functioning (Allen et al., 2007). Allen et al. outlined the communication processes concerning the inclusion of employees in the change process, but the research

did not include the type of communication modality and level of intensity required in different organizational change programs.

Clear communication between managers and frontline employees is crucial to implement organizational change (Ahmend et al., 2010). Communications during change is central toward establishing intraorganizational trust, which is necessary for integrating organizational change (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). Clear communication is not analogous to information dissemination. Although information dissemination can be important, communications help establish relationships, provide feedback, and is both formal and informal (Russ, 2008). To help eliminate ambiguity and reduce employee stress, change communications must delineate explanations of the change process, and allow employees to provide feedback. Including the feedback component helps facilitate dialogue between employees and managers, which is central to creating shared values (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). Shared values can help assuage minor issues through informal communication and significant issues through formal communication (Pearse, 2010). To promote organizational change, communications between managers and employees needs to be fair, clear, concise, formal, and informal to help expedite the transition process (Ahmend et al., 2010). Ahmend et al. provided strategies for establishing effective communications between employees and managers, but did not indicate how the diversity of organizational change process can require differing strategies.

Communication during change processes is crucial for process completion, yet communication is often static and focuses on a predetermined path of organizational change (Jabri et al., 2008). Conversations become monologic practices in which only the

overarching or dominate viewpoint is expressed (Jabri et al., 2008). Change communication programs have focused primarily on verbal communications and have failed to account meanings associated with nonverbal communication (Riggo et al., 2003). These limitations cause organizational leaders to silence the opinions of the employees responsible for implementing change (Grant & Marshak, 2011). Silence may indicate falsely consensus concerning how the implementation of organizational change is proceeding (Jabri et al., 2008). Given the lack of inclusion in the change process, closed communication strategies fail to include diverse viewpoints and tend to be hidebound. Jabri et al. argued for creating dialogue in which diverse viewpoints can exist to promote organizational change. As organizational change will remain constant, organizational leaders should develop inclusive change strategies incorporating polylogic communication practices, including nonverbal and open dialogue communication (Grant & Marshak, 2011).

Nasim (2011) noted transformational leadership styles more successfully implemented change programs than did transactional leadership styles. In fact, transformational styles were more likely to engender a deep-seeded employee commitment to organizational change (Nasim, 2011). Specific leadership traits among leaders, however, were often more predictive of successfully change outcomes than a particular leadership paradigm; certain leaders seem intrinsically predisposed to leading during change epochs than other leaders (Boga & Ensari, 2009). In terms of implementing organizational change, both paradigm, and trait attributes were less important than organizational history or culture (Palmer & Dunford, 2008).

Employees often perceive sharing efforts as disadvantageous for increasing organizational standing. Organizational leaders should implement a reward system encouraging sharing of information and knowledge to counter employee reticence to sharing actions (Summers et al., 2012). The fluctuation of the organizational marketplace demands the sharing of knowledge to implement change within the organization (Barachini, 2009). To promote sharing, performance matrices should include a sharing criterion. Including sharing of information and knowledge as job functions increases the likelihood employees will share information and knowledge in a holistic manner than using monetary rewards alone (Summers et al., 2012). Summers further described the central characteristics within the organization leading to information sharing including reward characteristics, organizational structure, team structures, and differentiation between employees. Organizational matrices should reward sharing to promote an open and honest culture-oriented to change (McCabe, 2010). Although monetary incentive programs can produce significant results in terms of sharing knowledge and information, organizational leaders must produce an overarching organizational proclivity for sharing, which is more likely to produce a sharing-centric paradigm within the workforce (Summers et al., 2012).

Griffin (2008) noted organizational language and metaphors are central elements of organizational change. Language is significant in the development of relationships between employees as well as defining the organization culture (Griffin, 2008). The language used is important in the organizational leaders' abilities to implement change. Organizational metaphors are important in the change process as they relate to the values

of the organization (Lamm et al., 2010). Griffin posited language and metaphors are crucial to engaging personalizing the change process. Organizational language and metaphors humanize the change process by treating employees as valued members of a community rather than as interchangeable components of the organizational apparatus (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). By placing value in the employee and creating a holistic sense of organizational belonging, organizational leaders can moderate resistance when integrating organizational change (Griffin, 2008).

Michel, Stegmaier, and Sonntag (2010) indicated the importance of cooperation among employees during organizational change. Organizational leaders need to develop and implement organizational practices to foster cooperation, rather than competition (Michel et al., 2010). Establishing procedural justice within the organization is a central tenet in creating a cooperative culture (Bernerth, et al., 2011). Employees who perceive his or her organization has fair decision-making processes are more likely to cooperate with fellow employees and identify psychologically with the organization. The promotion of organization identification requires a congruency of employee values and organizational values predicated on the perception of equality within the organization (Michel et al., 2010). Establishing organizational procedural justice can promote organizational identification, which is fundamental to establish a cooperative culture-oriented toward organizational change (Bernerth et al., 2011). An employee who contextualize his or her position within the organization as significant and who perceive the organization as an egalitarian entity is more apt to cooperate with fellow employees during change periods and show more support for organizational change (Michel et al.,

2010). Nurturing support for organizational change extends beyond a reward or punishment paradigm to a psychological and sociological paradigm in which the need for belonging and participation of egalitarian principals is paramount (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). Michel et al. noted the importance of establishing a fair and inclusive organization though the findings did not indicate strategies to establish a managerial program to produce procedural justice and organizational identification among employees.

Management entails motivating individuals to work together and communicate in a systemic fashion (Christensen, Marx, & Stevenson, 2006). The nuances of organizational histories and cultures often necessitate diverse change communication strategies based on the organizational setting (Palmer & Dunford, 2008). Christensen et al. stipulated organizational cultures consist of two matrices: agreement on desired goals and agreement on strategies to achieve desired goals. To manage change in an effective manner, organizational managers must decipher the nuances of an organization's culture and decide the correct management strategy for the organization (Christiansen et al., 2006). Christiansen et al. indicated the saliency of understanding organizational culture through consensus matrices, but did not specify strategies for developing managerial paradigms to differing organizational consensus.

Arif et al. (2009) asserted communication is central to organizational change and establishing a competitive advantage. Communication within the organizational context is multidimensional (Mills, 2010). Developing optimal communication between dimensions is central as each dimension encompasses a unique attribute within the organization (Arif et al., 2009). Communication must extend beyond traditional

modalities of written and verbal communication and factor in a nonverbal communication allotment (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011; Riggo et al., 2003). Effective communication is crucial in garnering the support of senior management, collecting organizational data, developing strategies for organizational problems, and contributing to change evaluation (Arif et al., 2009). To establish effective communication within the organization acknowledging the organization's unique history and culture is critical (Palmer & Dunford, 2008). Although various forms of communication could work well in certain organizations, communication strategies are not necessarily transferable between organizations and the structure of change communication should change based on the unique aspects of organizational cultures (Arif et al., 2009). The findings did not indicate how organizations with diverse and transnational operational locations could communicate in an effective manner the need for organizational change.

As telecommunicating has become an increasing popular option for organizations to access skilled workers in geographically disparate locations, organizational change processes have been complicated as workers are no longer involved in the socialization process that occurs in traditional centralized organizational environments (Neufeld, Wan, & Fang, 2010). To communicate organizational change in an effective manner, organizational leaders must adapt communication techniques more appropriate to workplace settings where employees are remote and come from diverse cultures (Jain, 2011). Communicating organizational change via online communication is one way to overcome the lack of physical proximity (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). Online communication requires organizational leaders use unambiguous language concerning

organizational change accounting for the lack of organizational socialization (Neufeld et al., 2010). Organizational leaders should strive to produce change correspondence to define clearly organizational change goals as well as how employee functions will change. Advances in communication and information sharing technologies have improved the communicating of organizational change processes to remote employees (Neufeld et al., 2010). The potential remains for remote employees to refuse to conform to organizational change based on lack of connectivity to the organization as well as to coworkers.

The delivery modality of change communication can have a salient effect on employee perception of change communication (van der Kleij, Schraagen, Werkhoven, & De Dreu, 2009). Although communication typically occurs during face-to-face contact, organizations are increasingly using online communication. As organizations continue to depend on virtual teams to perform many essential tasks, the use of virtual teams is likely to increase (Bao, 2009). The use of virtual teams and online communication can have a significant effect on organizational change communication. Traditional face-to-face communication relies on nonverbal cues as well as socially constructed norms in which participants understand implicit information (Dam et al., 2008). Online communication lacks nonverbal communication, and socially constructed nuances (Varra et al., 2012). The lack of nonverbal nuanced communication creates challenges for organizational leaders as change communication often relies on explicit knowledge. A crucial factor to mitigating the difficulties associated with online communication during periods of organizational was the familiarity of virtual team members prior to organizational change

(van der Kleij et al., 2009). Virtual teams who previously worked together showed increased capacities to handle the difficulties of communicating complex information online. To help improve organizational change success rates, organizations relying on virtual teams should work toward establishing virtual team familiarity prior to organizational change (van der Kleij et al., 2009). A limitation of the study was the lack of strategies for developing virtual team rapport during change periods.

Leadership paradigms and leadership communication styles leaders' exhibit during change periods are salient concerning change success (de Vries, Bakker-Pieper, & Oostenveld, 2010). Communication styles can vary between frequent and infrequent communication. Leadership paradigms included charismatic, human-oriented, and process-oriented. Although charismatic and human-oriented paradigms entailed frequent communication between leaders and frontline workers, process-oriented leadership tended to have less communication. During periods of change, the frequency of communication can have a substantive affect on change outcomes (Gilley et al., 2009). Communication can often assuage employee resistance to change as information regarding change helps lessen employee apprehension (Peus et al., 2009). Frequent communication exhibited by leaders who operated on charismatic and human-oriented paradigms tended to produce positive change results while process-oriented leaders produced negative results (de Vries et al., 2010). Charismatic and human-oriented leadership styles also encouraged knowledge sharing as behavior exhibited by leaders indicated open communication within the organization was valued. As Bao (2009) indicated, knowledge sharing is crucial to promote a change-oriented organization. To

promote organizational change, organizational leaders should adopt charismatic or human-oriented leadership paradigms to encourage the frequency of communication and knowledge sharing within the organization.

Russ (2008) noted two fundamental paradigms to change communication: programmatic and participative. Programmatic change communication is a top-down approach whereby communication emanates from the upper echelons of the organization (Russ, 2008). The programmatic change paradigm focuses on promulgating a defined plan for organizational change in an effort to solidify organizational values toward change. Programmatic change communication entails formal meetings, memos, newsletters, charts, dashboards, and formal communication. The central purpose of programmatic communication is framing organizational change as organizational improvement (Russ, 2008). The problems with this paradigm are that communication occurs within a static and sequential mode of organizational change, does not allow input from frontline employees, and does not include the fluidity of the operational environment (Russ, 2008). The participatory change communication paradigm is more inclusive as it engages multiple viewpoints and disseminates information from different sources within the organizational construct (Russ, 2008). The participatory paradigm solicits opinions and advice from multiple stakeholders and is less formal. A significant benefit is the participatory paradigm has multiple narratives included in the formation of intraorganizational communication, and develops more of a census approach to implementation (Russ, 2008; Schallock, 2009). Weaknesses in the participatory paradigm exist. For example, the process of implementing the participatory communication strategy

is less structured and developing needed strategies is protracted and less adept at meeting marketplace concerns (Russ, 2008). The findings did not include strategies to synergize paradigms or examples of how various paradigms are congruent to diverse organizations.

Schallock (2009) stipulated the importance for organizational leaders to create a space for alternative perspectives and experiences during organizational change. To communicate organizational change in an effective manner, radical new perspectives and experiences need inclusion into the organizational construct to change status quo operations (Soonsawad, 2010). Organizational leaders must encourage diverse entities within the operational milieu to participate in the change process (Werkman, 2009). The development of intraorganizational dialogue with divergence narratives enables a holistic understanding of how organizational change affects diverse organizational stakeholders (Pearce, 2008). Different perceptions of organizational change are valued, and divergent perceptions do not need commonalities with dominate organizational change narratives. Organizational leaders can encourage creativity and innovation within the communication sphere by promoting diversity, which can help optimize the organizational change processes (Schallock, 2009). Schallock noted the importance of diverse narratives within the organizations; however, the research did not approach how to synergize radically different change narratives.

Engendering a transformational organizational culture during organizational change is crucial to successful change implementation (Soonsawad, 2010). Soonsawad focused on operations at a Taiwanese organization after significant domestic disruptions to the economic status quo and found using organizational artifacts was essential when

examining an organizations' culture. As organizational culture progresses, unique histories, and symbolisms develop, both of which must be included when developing change narratives (Law, 2009; Palmer & Dunford, 2008). Drawing from Lewin's Planned Change Model, Soonsawad noted the style of communication should change during different stages of organizational change. During the unfreezing stage, communications should focus on aligning organizational entities to a prescriptive model based on the need for change. The moving stage of organizational change necessitates the need for inclusive communication regarding the benefits of past organizational transformations. During the refreezing stage, communication should revert to developing conformity though positing shared experience and commonalities within the organization during current and past organizational functionalities. The central feature of the refreezing stage entailed realigning employee motivation to the new status quo. Although this change strategy might seem sequential in operations, the modality of communication varies (Soonsawad, 2010). The first and third stages encourage face-to-face interaction, whereas the second or moving stage requires written communication (Soonsawad, 2010). Though this study described the various stages of organizational change communication and creating a change-oriented culture, the focus on an organization in a specified geographic locale creates concerns regarding transferability toward other organizations in differing locations and cultures.

Listening when communicating information regarding organizational change can improve the change process (Bodie, Worthington, & Fitch-Hauser, 2011). Failure to listen in an effective manner can lead to miscommunication and a lack of productive

feedback (Bodie et al., 2011). Critical attributes concerning effective listening included the evaluation of content, understanding the meaning behind the conversation, understanding and remembering the communication, evaluating the communication, and following any instructions indicated within the communication (Arif et al., 2009).

Effective listening is central to change as it allows both communication senders and communication receivers to interpret the information distributed in intraorganizational communication correctly (Bodie et al., 2011). An understanding of organizational culture is also critical to effective listening and communication (Lamm et al., 2010). As organizations are socially constructed milieus, they develop a localized vernacular, and understanding this vernacular is elemental to communicate and receive organizational change information (Bond & Seneque, 2013). Although the four attributes listed are critical components regarding effective listening, listening occurs within a socially created sphere in which subtle communication might confuse individual not socialized into the organization (Bodie et al., 2011). The findings did not indicate how organizational leaders could improve their employees' listening abilities during periods of organizational change.

Communication in the organizational context has coevolutionary qualities (Lee & Monge, 2011). The interconnectedness of organizational entities is the basis for coevolution (Stacy, 2007). The distribution of communication to different organizational units causes the communication to evolve based on the differences between units (Lee & Monge, 2011). The diversity of units also has a significant effect on the perception of communication messages, as the implicit and explicit meaning of communication will

vary (Jones et al., 2008). Interorganizational entities have an effect on the evolution of organizational communication. Given that most organizations have extensive supply chains or outside vendors, interorganizational entities can affect the organizational communication process (Lopes et al., 2009). Organizational communication has both exogenous and endogenous evolutionary structures, which tend to create dynamic communication relations (Lee & Monge, 2011). Organizational leaders should create knowledge and information sharing structures and technologies focusing on internal and external communication (Barachini, 2009). Given the interdependent nature of the marketplace, the issues of developing optimal communication systems with coevolutionary abilities will remain important (Lee & Monge, 2011). Although Lee and Monge noted the importance of knowledge sharing capacity and communication between both intra and interorganizational entities, findings were limited in scope and did not cover issues pertaining to the protection of proprietary information.

Christensen and Cornelissen (2011) posited corporate communications is significant in organizational communication. Corporate communication refers to a manner of behaving, thinking, and knowing that forms the attributes of the organization. Organizational communication is often ambiguous and polyvocal, whereas corporate communication presents organizational values and definitions in a consistent and unambiguous manner to those inside the organization (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). Corporate communication relies significantly on both metonymy and metaphor to convey clear and concise communication; corporate communication is a type of closed language known to those inside the organization specifically (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011).

During organizational change, corporate communication can be important in communicating the change process to intraorganizational entities. Based on shared organizational culture, organizational leaders can use metonymy and metaphor to engender support for organizational change and increase organizational reciprocity (Langer & Thorup, 2006). Corporate communications also permits collective sensemaking (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Problems with corporate communication during organizational change are communication is sender based, communication lacks specificity concerning various audiences, suborganizational cultures are ignored, receiver support is assumed to be unequivocal, and parochial managerial interests are overemphasized (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). Corporate communication has become more expansive and participatory regarding organizational change (Thurlow & Mills, 2009). The ability of corporate communication to transmit information during organizational change has made this communication paradigm useful in rapidly changing environments (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011).

Employee Experience

The third section of the literature review includes research regarding how employees experience organizational change. Experiences can vary significantly because some employees thrive during organizational change periods while other employees suffer (Parent & Levitt, 2009). Although individual employee attributes concerning change often developed prior to his or her change experience, this phenomenon was not universally true as change processes, communication, and outcomes often shape employee experiences (Meyer et al., 2007). Though strategy development and change

implementation are often the main focus of organizational change, the following literature provides a more human-centered perspective on the change process (Prison & Lawrence, 2009). The variances in employee change experience can have a profound effect on organizational change outcomes, given that organizations are comprised of diverse individuals (Choi & Rouna, 2011; Driver, 2009). This area of organizational change most likely deserves further research.

Daub and Scherrer (2009) noted the lack of research connecting the sociological discipline with the communication and reception of organizational change. Though the lack of collusion between business practices and sociology exists for many reasons, the need to develop a workable change strategy may help link the two disciplines (Daub & Scherrer, 2009). The cooperation between the two disciplines entails the interests of the organization will be secondary to results (Daub & Scherrer, 2009). Cooperation could allow organizational leaders to use research concerning change communication practices based on the interests of various stakeholders within the organization milieu (Chaudhry et al., 2007). Although Daub and Scherrer noted the inherent issues associated with developing relations between disparate disciplines, their research did not specify strategies for applying sociological principals in the business construct.

Erwin and Garman (2010) stipulated significant operational and cultural barriers exist creating organizational change resistance. Engendering communication strategies to overcome change barriers is problematic (Cutcher, 2009). The various change-resisting issues exist at macro- and micro-organizational levels, making the development of a universal solution or strategy difficult (Parent & Levitt, 2009). The change barriers noted

in the study included personality differences, communication issues, agent-employee relations, process change techniques, internal management proclivities, organizational history, and intraorganizational interaction styles (Erwin & Garman, 2010). Though Erwin and Garman provided extensive background regarding the issues confronted by organizational leaders attempting organizational change initiatives, a lack of development and integration techniques existed.

Lüscher and Lewis (2008) noted the importance of sensemaking for middle managers implementing change. Although middle managers are often the central raconteur between organizational leaders and frontline employees, middle managers are rarely cognizant of the nuanced aspects concerning change initiatives. Lüscher and Lewis stipulated the disconnect presents a paradox in the organizational milieu; individuals responsible for implementing change lack an understanding concerning the change impetus. Through a series of open communicative sessions with organizational leaders and employees, middle managers can develop a dialogue to overcome the paradoxes of performing, belonging, and organizing to produce optimal organizational results (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). Though Lüscher and Lewis outlined the process of organizational sensemaking, the research was limited to an organization, which presents issues of transferability.

Understanding how the organizational environment influences employees' abilities to adapt to organizational change is critical to communicating change (Lamb & Gordon, 2010). Although previous management literature focused on employee attributes regarding organizational change (Fugate & Kinicki, 2009), the change process and the

organizational culture have a substantive role concerning change implementation. Change processes must be psychological empowering (Reissner, 2010). Lamm and Gordon argued psychological empowerment is positively associated with behavior supportive of change. Employees who believe they can affect the change process are likely to view change as a positive undertaking, whereas employees who perceive change as ineffective or detrimental are likely to view change negatively (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). The findings indicated the creation of a psychological environment that promoted employee empowerment was more effectual to producing change and change-oriented attitudes within the organization than employee predisposition regarding change (Lamb & Gordon, 2010). Critical aspects of the research indicated organizational change is a psychological and functional process. Participants in the study were graduate students in the business field, which might skew such findings and limit transferability.

Letiche and Lissack (2009) stipulated the need for accommodations, or affordances, between individuals and the organizational environment during change. As individuals interact within their environment, they create an affording space for operational realignment (Letiche & Lissack, 2009). At optimal levels, these affordances produce symbiotic outcomes benefiting both individuals and organizations as organizational change becomes reciprocal. This requires deliberate action by the employee as well as an organizational design paradigm that employs multiple feedback systems and displays self-organizing properties. The study, however, did not include operational strategies (Arevalo, 2010).

An organization's competitive advantage correlates to the internal capacity to communicate change and innovation, rather than physical resources or production abilities (Peus et al., 2009). As organizations are comprised of diverse individuals, organizational leaders' abilities to communicate change and innovation relates to employee's ability to change and innovate (Machin et al., 2009). Employee resistance to change and innovation exists for various reasons including fear of failure, uncertainty, and disruptions in sensemaking (Peus et al., 2009). Consequences of resistance can include lower levels of job satisfaction, withdrawal from organizational activities, increased absenteeism, and lower levels of job commitment (Qian & Daniels, 2008). Peus et al. noted two primary driving factors regarding the outcomes of change initiatives: employee variables to change, and organizational change characteristics. Individual employee variables consisted of the need for advancement, change-related self-efficiency, and disproportional favorability to change. Organizational change characteristics consisted of the frequency of change and the magnitude of change (Peus et al., 2009). Organizations with high levels of trust in management, organizational justice, and communication were likely to bring change initiatives to fruition (Bernerth et al., 2011). Although organizational leaders might lack the ability to change individual employee variables concerning change, the likelihood of successful organizational change increases when the characteristics of change processes factor in employee resistance to change (Peus et al., 2009).

Organizational inertia is a significant barrier to implementing organizational change (Pearse, 2010). As employees' become familiar with organizational tasks and

settings, the difficulty for organizational change implementation increases (Dam et al., 2008). Organizational inertia occurs on three separate levels (Pearse, 2010). Individual-level organizational inertia involves an employee's fear of the unknown, job insecurity, loss of organizational standing, and decrease in recompense. Group-level organizational inertia relates to resistance to change based on suborganizational group belonging, whereas organizational-level inertia stems from an organizations' culture being static and change resistant. Though these resistance levels present organizational leaders with substantive issues, the development of intraorganizational social capital can help alleviate change barriers at multiple resistance levels. Social capital is the formation of community within the organizational setting (Pearse, 2010), through frequent communication, an open exchange of ideas, and a promulgation of shared organizational experiences (Barachini, 2009; French & Holden, 2012; Law, 2009). Organizational leaders should promote social capital by elucidating opportunities, associations, and motivations for organizational change at multiple levels within the organization (Pearse, 2010).

The role of value systems in organizational change has becoming increasingly important (Marginson, 2009). To overcome organizational inertia, the culture of an organization must become change-oriented (Lamm et al., 2010). Aligning value systems can help organizations develop cultural congruence to change (Raukko, 2009). Engineering new value systems oriented to change can provide organizational leaders a useful mechanism for conveying the need for change to multiple organizational actors (Marginson, 2009). The promotion of new value systems aligns purpose and values, communicates the course of change implementation, and the intended effects of change.

Aligning purpose and values facilitates changing the organizational mindset and establishing a set of shared values. Implementation modes can include new mission statements, intraorganizational communication, strategy sessions, and dialogue between managers and frontline workers. The intended effects of new value systems are to increase value congruence as well as relax existing hierarchies. Leaders can develop a change-ready culture by promoting a new organizational values system (Marginson, 2009). Potential issues exist with promoting new value systems. Organizational actors may resist new value systems, core activities may become neglected, and the organizational environment can become polarized. Marginson noted to overcome these potential issues, the promotion of new value systems should be part of a comprehensive organizational change strategy. A limitation to the study was the narrow focus on purpose, implementation, and effects of value system realignment.

Oreg and Sverdlik (2011) stated employee perceptions about change are more complex than previous studies noted. Employee perception of change concerns two areas: the proposed change and the change agent. Because these two concerns, employees can hold conflicting views about proposed change initiatives (Oreg & Sverdlik, 2010).

Although an employee could be positively predisposed to organizational change, he or she might hold a negative view about the change agent, and vice versa. The diversity of factors affecting change orientation has caused the complexity of organizational change communication to increase (Machin et al., 2009). Employees who hold contrasting views are ambivalent about organizational change (Driver, 2009). Past measurements of change predisposition focused on employees either in favor of organizational change or against

change, but these findings might have left out a population who held ambivalent views (Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). Organizational leaders should focus on how to motivate ambivalent employees rather than focusing disproportional energy on resistant employees. A cost-benefit analysis might indicate motivating an ambivalent employee is a cost-effective strategy (Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). Oreg and Sverdlik did not include the schematics relating to developing a cost-benefit analysis to engage ambivalent employees, however.

Bao (2009) posited employees are often resistant to organizational change as change is disruptive. Homeostatic environments, such as organizational milieus have strong dispositions for developing equilibrium and maintaining the status quo; innovation and change threaten these two conditions (Bao, 2009). Change resistance has an almost intrinsic attribute in homeostatic environments (Allen et al., 2007). Resistance regarding change consists of two categories: nonadaptation and outright resistance (Bao, 2009). Nonadaptation is a resistance attempting to maintain the status quo based on a perceived lack of benefit from the innovation, whereas outright resistance occurs based on a perceived threat to an employee's status (Petrou & Demerouti, 2010). Organizational leaders can counteract the perceived lack of benefit by inspiring motivation regarding the change or innovation, expanding the opportunities to be included in the process, countering perceived threats with potential benefits, and developing change adaption abilities within the organization (Bao, 2009). Although Bao noted the potential threats to organizational change, limitations were the research did not include the variation of

potential threats to organizational change based on whether the change was radical or incremental.

Management theory and practice concerning organizational change based on an economic paradigm needs to change toward a paradigm known as humanism (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). Past economic-based management theories tended to fulfill low-level human needs, but a humanism-based framework would allow organizational leaders to fulfill higher level needs, and produce a more change-oriented workplace (Davis et al, 1997). Employees who have higher level needs met will perceive the organization as ethical and will be more willing to contribute and participate in change initiatives (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). The limitations of the study included an absence of information regarding how organizations can develop and implement management strategies to produce higher levels of employee emotional and ethical satisfaction.

Saari and Talja (2009) posited managerial paradigms developed for an industrial-based economy lack effectiveness in a postindustrial and change-oriented, knowledge-based economy. Emerging management paradigms should focus on the cerebral attributes of the employee as employee knowledge is central to organizational success (Barachini, 2009). Although command and control structures might have been appropriate in a factory setting in which procedures and products were standardized, the specialization and complexity of organizational tasks have increased, which has necessitated knowledge employees have more freedom to maneuver (Saari & Talja, 2009). A tension still exists between managerial control and employee freedom. Saari and Talja noted establishing a dialogue between knowledge workers and managers is necessary to develop amicable

relationships. Developing strategies that account for the needs of managers to complete short-term projects and the desire of knowledge workers to accrue knowledge for a long-term basis are necessary to overcome time orientation paradoxes (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008).

Employee resistance concerning organizational change often relates to the perceived threat to the employee's narrative of self, which consists of both spatial and temporal narratives (Cutcher, 2009). As employees progress in their organizational lives, they begin to build self-identities within the organizational construct based on interactions with other employees and familiarity with workplace settings (Inalhan, 2009; Lamm & Gordon, 2010). Significant organizational change directly threatens the organizational field the employee has developed, which creates resistance to organizational change (Cutcher, 2009). Organizational leaders attempting to engender organizational change confront the challenge of remolding an employee's discursive organizational identity (Grant & Marshak, 2011). The process of organizational change should include a sense of workplace identity and develop strategies to allow the employee to retain his or her current organizational identity while concurrently developing and fashioning a new identification (Cutcher, 2009). Though the study indicated latent employee motivations could produce change resistance, findings did not indicate how managers and organizational leaders could develop change strategies that factor in these motivations.

van den Heuvel et al. (2009) noted the importance for individual employees to make sense of changes organizational change. Sensemaking is the ability to make

meaning out of challenging or ambiguous developments (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Given the increasing complexity of workplace tasks, as well as continual and dramatic change, developing an organizational culture oriented to change has become essential to implement organizational change (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). To construct a change-oriented culture, employees need to participate in the development of organizational meaning as failure to take part in the process often leads to rejection of change (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). A discrepancy exists between the experience of meaning and the creation of meaning (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). The experience of meaning is a passive activity in which the employee reactively experiences meanings, whereas mean creation is a proactive action in which the employee actively participates in sensemaking through value-based reflection. Creating meaning rather than experiencing meaning is more conducive to coping with organizational change (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Employees with superior mean-creating attributes indicated high levels of self-efficiency, optimism, and personal mastery. The findings did not indicate strategies organizational leaders could use engendering mean-creating abilities within the organizational setting.

Palmer and Dunford (2008) noted organizational leaders often make assumptions about change processes, which can create intended outcomes, partially intended outcomes, and unintended outcomes. The differing outcomes necessitate specific management strategies regarding controlling the change process and shaping change perception (Palmer & Dunford, 2008). Intended outcomes require controlling the process, and directing and shaping the perception by coaching. Partially intended outcomes require navigating the controlling aspect and an iterative and interpretive paradigm

relating to shaping perceptions. Unintended outcomes require a caretaking control method and a nurturing perception process. Assumption-based outcomes often confront resistance that requires management to formulate strategies to overcome change inertia. The directing mode uses force to mitigate resistance and to move the process forward. This requires a coaching-style management in which managers instruct and elucidate the importance of organizational change toward change resisters. The navigation mode involves identifying and recruiting organizational actors who hold power. The caretaking mode involves using subtle communication to promote change in a systematic and piecemeal fashion (Palmer & Dunford, 2008). A limitation in the study, as Palmer and Dunford indicated, was actionable change management would differ depending on organizational cultures and operational milieus. No prescriptive formulation exists concerning the management of change processes, as alchemizing change strategies could be necessary to produce substantive organizational change.

Chaudhry et al. (2011) explored the use of *sensemaking* by employees to develop psychological contexts during organizational change. Psychological contexts consist of two primary elements: contextual factors and cognitive factors (Chaudhry et al., 2011). Within the contextual realm, factors such as novelty, discrepancy, conscious deliberation, uncertainty, and personal influence were central concerns. Novelty related to the newness of the organizational change. Discrepancy is the dichotomy between predictive and perceived outcomes of organizational change. Conscientious deliberation concerns the sensemaking element of organization change in which employees reposition themselves in a new organizational construct. Uncertainty consists of the level of trust employees

have about the communication they receive from the organizational leaders. Personal influence relates to how the change affects the individual's function within the organization. The research indicated intentionality was a central aspect regarding cognitive factors to organizational change (Chaudhry et al., 2011). Intentionality is the perception that the genesis of change needs correlates to change outcomes. The ability to foresee relates to the perception employees held to the need and desire for organizational change. Justifiability of organizational change indicated employees perceived a need and benefit from organizational change (Chaudhry et al., 2011). Including the psychological context when communicating organizational change is critical to implementing organizational change programs (Lamm et al., 2010). Frequent communication by organizational leaders concerning change can help employees build psychological contexts positive toward change (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Continual communication must account for both contextual and cognitive perceptions by employees (Chaudhry et al., 2010). Though the study provided a thorough review of the various psychological constructs developed by employees during organizational change, it did not specify information relating to perception constructs occurring during postchange epochs.

Cognitive and emotive prompting can affect how individuals perceive change (Albarracín & Handley, 2011). The prompting process allowed employees to recall attitudes regarding organizational events that elicited negative or positive feelings (Albarracín & Handley, 2011). Prompting differed as action-oriented prompts tended to solicit quick memory retrieval whereas inaction-prompts tended to delay the retrieval process. The type of prompting strategies organizational leaders' apply can influence the

speed with which employees internalize organizational change (Gill, 2011). As action or inaction, prompts alter employee response to change communication, prompt type should vary depending on the change occurring. Although action-prompts solicited rapid memory retrieval, whether positive or negative, the energy displayed by such retrievals had a shorter time horizon. Comparatively, inaction-prompts exhibited slower memory retrieval, though the effects tended to last longer (Albarracín & Handley, 2011).

Concerning organizational change, providing a forewarning for rapid and episodic change could warrant more action prompting communications, whereas long-term and piecemeal organizational change initiatives favor communications that use inaction prompting (Albarracin & Hadley, 2011). Although Albarracin and Hadley noted the differences between action prompts and inaction prompt, the findings did not outline the development of a cohesive change communication strategy related to prompt-oriented communication.

Employee commitment to organizational change is critical to the success of change (Meyer et al., 2007). Employees often hold diverse motives for supporting organizational change (Gilley et al., 2009). Employees might be motivated to support organizational change based perceived benefits, a sense of obligation, or negative economic costs associated with not supporting change (Meyer et al., 2007). The first two motivations listed describe effective commitment and normative commitment; the latter entails continuance commitment. Although the study indicated all three types of commitment engendered a positive correlation to support for organizational change, effective and normative commitments promoted intense commitment. Motivating

commitment factors and the corresponding effects concerning successful integration seemed to differ across organizations and cultures, which raises questions of transferability. However, effective and normative commitment indicated a greater propensity to garner successful change results than continuance commitment regardless of culture or organizational size (Meyer et al., 2007).

Resistance to organizational change involves organization work contexts, change process characteristics, and individual employee characteristics (Dam et al., 2008). The work context aspect involves leader-member exchange and perceived development climate. Change process characteristics include information, participation, and trust in management. Individual employee attributes include openness to job changes and the role of self-efficacy (Dam et al., 2008). The main hypothesis of the study noted positive leader-member exchanges and positive development climates were conducive to implementing organizational change. Regarding change process characteristics, the study premised frequent information dissemination, full employee participation, and high levels of trust in management would decrease employee resistance to change. Dam et al. further posited individual attributes such as willingness to change job descriptions and employee self-efficiency, would lessen resistance to organizational change. The quantitative analysis indicated the majority of hypotheses correlated to the ability of organizations to push through organizational change. Employee self-efficacy did not indicate a positive correlation, which stands in contrast to previous studies (Dam et al., 2008). Dam et al. indicated leading questions regarding organizational change, but the results were from one organization, which leads to questions of transferability.

Qian and Daniels (2008) noted employee cynicism to organizational change is a significant barrier to change implementation. Cynicism can develop in three areas: perceived communication quality, communication between employees, and trust in management (Qian & Daniels, 2008). When employees believe communication regarding organizational change is poor, cynicism is likely to increase. This cynicism grows exponentially within the employee's social context creating a sociocultural environment in which cynicism is palpable (Qian & Daniels, 2008). Absence of trust in management also contributed to increased levels of employee cynicism (Dam et al., 2008). This tripartite of cynicism makes the process of organizational change difficult. Change communication strategies should focus on communicating change within the organization, develop strategies to reduce cynicism, and promote trust within the organizational environment (Qian & Daniels, 2008). To minimize resistance, communication strategies must account for divergent attitudes and behaviors (Erwin & Garmen, 2010). Though Qian and Daniels noted critical aspects of change resistance and change strategies, their focus on an organization brings questions about transference to other organizations and industries.

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) stipulated the dispositional measure of employability correlated with an employee's ability to integrate organizational change. The central attributes in the dispositional measure of employability included, openness to changes at work, career resilience, career motivation, and work identity (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Openness to change at work measured an employee's willingness to engage in continual learning activities and the ability to recognize emerging workplace opportunities. Career

resilience related to an employee's ability to react successfully to operational changes. The proactive measurement concerned the employee's ability to engage actively in acquiring new information regarding his or her position within the organization. Career motivation measured the ability of employees to seek out new opportunities and positions within the organization (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). The work identity aspect of the measurement related to how attached the employee was to the organization as well as the correlation of employee-organizational goals and ethics (Lamm et al., 2010). The quantitative analysis indicated high levels of employability correlated to an employee's ability to adapt to organizational change. The study was limited to an organization.

Interrelatedness exists between organizational change and organizational learning (Bauer & Gruber, 2007). As organizations' leaders implement change, employees are required to change with the organization. This requires change at both macro and microlevels. Macrolevel change occurs at the organizational level where changes affect departmental designs, operational procedures, policy, and public perception. Microlevel change occurs on a localized level within work teams and by individual employees (Bauer & Gruber, 2007). The complex nature of organizational change requires employees to develop multifaceted adaptive abilities to survive change (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). These abilities include the competence to adapt to new and emerging work situations, the ability to handle novel situations, and the ability to apply of previous knowledge to emerging situations and challenges (Bauer & Gruber, 2007). To gain competencies in repositioning themselves during organizational change employees must become lifelong learners and behavior rapidly (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Repositioning

often requires reactive and proactive experiential learning, in which knowledge reforms employee behavior and competences (Bauer & Gruber, 2007). Though Bauer and Gruber focused on the changes employees undergo during organizational change, the findings did not include how the sociocultural environment of the organization affects the change process.

Organizational leaders often ignore how employees make sense of organizational change in terms of future positioning within the organization's hierarchy (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Central to assuaging employee resistance to change is establishing discursive discourse within the organizational construct (Jones et al., 2008). A significant problem with intraorganizational discourse, though, is the lack of understanding regarding the purpose of discourse (Jain, 2011). Though organizational leaders have attempted to communicate change, such communication paradigms are typically top-down and one-way conduits in which organizational leaders dominate change narratives (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Adding multiple viewpoints to change narratives through discourse can improve organizational change communication (Kandlousi et al., 2010). Change processes can improve through protracted discourse whereby employee support for organizational change is increased, and the transfer of knowledge for future organizational change processes are optimized (Barachini, 2009). Strategies for decreasing the divide between employees who favored organizational reformulation and employees who favored a static-state of organizational operations were not included.

Gambarotto and Cammozzo (2010) noted organizational leaders often disregarded or failed to incorporate employee voices during periods of organizational change. A

partial reason for lack of attention resides with management's refusal to incorporate employee feedback into the organizational change process (Khalid & Rehman, 2011). Another crucial reason was a lack of participation by employees (Driver, 2009). The perception speaking up will have negative consequences is a major cause of silence by employees during change periods (Gambarotto & Cammozzo, 2010). Employees confront intra and interpersonal motivations for not lending their voices to the organizational change process as organizational culture also contributes to the lack of employee communication. Organizational leaders with authoritarian leadership styles discouraged employee participation based on fear of negative repercussions (Gambarotto & Cammozzo, 2010). Transactional-based organizations failed to elicit employee voice because the lack of incentive regarding participating toward change endeavors (Alänge & Steiber, 2009). Employee silence tended to exist across organizational paradigms. Although certain organizational settings discouraged employee voice based on negative consequences, other organizational settings lacked employee voices based on indolence by the employee (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). To lessen employee silence, organizational leaders need to encourage knowledge transfer and develop reward systems to encourage knowledge transfer (Gambarotto & Cammozzo, 2010). The study indicated developing employee functionalities encouraging communication between coworkers increased abilities to implement change. Though Gambarotto and Cammozzo noted the lack of employee voices could differ across organizations, the findings did not indicate how to address the individual characteristics affecting employee willingness to become extroverted in change situations.

Also of concern is the ability of employees to handle organizational change (Parent & Levitt, 2009). A partial issue is organizational change interrupts the static environment to which employees have become accustomed (Erwin & Garmen, 2010). The change-oriented traits exhibited by employees relate to his or her ability to function in organizational change periods. During organizational change, employees fall into categories such as survivors, divers, and thrivers (Parent & Levitt, 2009). Divers tend to fail during periods of organizational change. Survivors continue throughout organizational change periods maintaining their positions. Revivers can reformulate their organizational positions within the new operational milieu and, in certain circumstances, can benefit based on the new environment. Comparatively, thrivers make significant gains during organizational change periods as they adapt rapidly to new standards and have intrinsic adaptabilities to reorient their positions and functionalities to the new organization paradigm. A discrepancy regarding employee change attributes and positive relations about organizational leaders exists (Parent & Levitt, 2009). Though employees who have good relations with organizational leaders in prechange periods would seem likely to transfer such relations to the postchange organization, this was not universally true (Dam et al., 2008). Employee position during organizational change does not transfer explicitly as change can benefit certain employees while harming others regardless of prechange employee-leader relations. As the sociocultural and functional aspects of the organization change, the standing of employees changes, as well (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Although change can pose a threat to organizational standing, it often gives employees an opportunity to increase their organizational positions (Parent & Levitt, 2009).

Reissner (2010) noted that during periods of organizational change, an employee often reconstructs his or her meaning of self through the reshaping organizational identity. Given the frequency of organizational change, the adaptability of employees to function in a new environment and fulfill new functions has become essential. This transition often requires employees engage in sensemaking actions, develop new narratives, and form new identities to survive organizational change (Lamm & Gordon, 2010; Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). The ability of the employee to work through this iterative and multilayered process often correlates to whether the employee holds positive or negative attitudes about organizational change (Driver, 2009). The construction of self-identification develops from the employees' sociocultural interaction within the organizational milieu (Inalhan, 2009). Reissner noted an employee's current actions in relation to the future, control over actions, value, justification of self, and his or her perceived self-worth synergize to constitute an employee's organizational identity. Employees who derive meaning during organizational change will likely thrive in the postchange organization whereas employees who hold nostalgic viewpoints will often not succeed in the postchange organization (Parent & Levitt, 2009). Organizational change leaders should include the diversity of organizational meaning as they develop and implement organizational change to lessen employee resistance and cognitive dissonance (Reissner, 2010). Although Reissner noted the importance of sensemaking during organizational change, the results did not indicate strategies for integrating disparate past organizational sensemaking and identification experiences.

Employees often have difficulty adjusting to organizational change based on changes in environmental settings (Inalhan, 2009). Organizational change often creates a loss of attachment, a loss of familiarity, and a loss of identity (Driver, 2009). Employees create their identities in the organizational context based on his or her physical location within the organization and with coworkers in proximity (Inalhan, 2009). Organizational change often disrupts these settings causing passive and active resistance (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). Organizational leaders must develop and implement a transition cycle to help employees prepare for spatial and psychological changes, provide support during the change process, and provide follow-up support (Inalhan, 2009). The transition cycle should consist of supportive measures during the preparation, encounter, adjusting, and stabilization phases. Given the increasing need of organizational leaders to adjust operations, employees are likely to see recurrent organizational change (Jones et al., 2008). Understanding the linkage between employees and workplace settings is essential during organizational change, as workplace-setting familiarity can have a significant effect on employee productivity (Inalhan, 2009). Inalhan did not include strategies about easing the process of geographic relocation of employees while maintaining similar levels of productivity.

Commitment to the organization can predict an employee's ability to adjust to organizational change (Machin et al., 2009). Using a three-component measurement, Machin et al. demonstrated commitment indications exhibited by employees correlated to change adaption ability. The effective component of the measurement related to the employee's desires to remain attached and engaged with the organization. The normative

component of commitment related to the employees perceived obligation or loyalty to remain with the organization. The continuance component measured the employees perceived switching cost to other organizations (Machin et al., 2009). Employees who had a positive perception of the organization prior to organizational change were likely to perceive change within effective and normative commitments whereas employees who held negative perceptions of the organization were likely to implement continuance strategies (Lamb et al., 2010). Positive perceptions of the organization by employees prior to organizational change lead to supportive attitudes to organizational change, whereas negative attitudes about the organization prior to organizational change lead to a negative attitude (Machin et al, 2009). Although the process of organizational change might provide opportunities for employees dissatisfied with current operations to gain influence, the results of the study indicated employees who held positive perceptions of the organization preceding change remained disproportionately influential. The research took place in an organization, and the issue of the application of findings in different organizational settings is problematic.

Petrou and Demerouti (2010) posited an employee's willingness to engage in the organizational change process correlated with potential job promotion and access to organizational resources. The motivation of employees to engage in the change process moderated based on job demands and resource access (Petrou & Demerouti, 2010). As Lüscher and Lewis (2008) noted, job demand and organizational support were substantive factors in an employees' willingness to participate in organizational change. Employees who perceived they had significant access to organizational resources and

lesser job demands were prone to engage in the organizational change process.

Perceptions of minimal organizational support and high job demands by employees decreased the likelihood of change participation. Employees who perceived they had moderate organizational support and job demands scored in the middle (Petrou & Demerouti, 2010). To improve change results, organizations entering change epochs need leaders to provide the necessary recourses to employees and need to lessen job demands. Though Petrou and Demerouti indicated various operational and psychological attributes to shaping employee willingness to engage in the change process, the self-reporting mechanism used can cause confusion and misinterpretation.

Jain (2011) posited employees perceive organizational change as a discursive and multifaceted process. Although organizational change often entails functional change, the changes employees experience extend beyond the narrow scope of workplace functionality (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). Organizational change can affect how an employee perceives his or her organizational circumstance, organizational identity, individual identity, and perception of organizational practice (Inalhan, 2009).

Organizational circumstance relates to the interorganizational events pushing the organization to implement changes (Cutcher, 2009). Organizational change tends to disrupt an employee perception of organizational identity (Erwin & Garmen, 2010). The socialization of the employee into the organizations' culture and his or her position within the organization contributed to the sense of organizational identification (Grant & Marshak, 2011). Organizational change often forces an employee to reevaluate his or her position within the organization. Organizational change also changes organizational

practices (Jain, 2011). These changes force employees to remake occupational conceptions within the organizational construct. To improve change processes, organizational leaders should acknowledge organizational change extends beyond the concept of operational functionality of employees and concerns internalization processes (Lamm & Gordon, 2010). Although Jain outlined the multidimensional aspects of organizational change and their effects on employee, the search did not indicate managerial strategies to lessen employee stress and resistances during periods of organizational change.

Illia et al. (2011) posited during times of organizational change employees worry about losing organizational identity and member-belonging. Organizational identity refers to the contextualized understanding the employee has to his or her standing within the organization whereas member-belonging relates to the attachment employees have to immediate peer-groups (Illia et al., 2011). To lessen resistance to change, organizational leaders must communicate change to organizational-level and suborganizational-level groups (Nelissen & van Sale, 2008). Strong organizational identity and member-belonging tended reduce concerns regarding organizational change. Strong member-belonging entails collective efficacy among suborganizational groups and is prominent among groups perceived to have a high degree of organizational support and standing (Illia et al., 2011). Employees who have a strong attachment to suborganizational groups, particularly those demonstrating significant collective efficacy, are more likely to be supportive of organizational change than employees with loose connections to suborganizational groups or employees who belong to groups with low levels of

collective efficacy (Illia et al., 2011). To increase support for organizational change, organizational leaders should encourage the development of group attachment, and develop mechanisms for suborganizational groups to develop collective efficacy. Though Illia et al. revealed the importance of member-belonging and collective efficacy, the findings did not indicate strategies to develop member-belonging and collective efficacy attributes in an organizational setting.

During periods of organizational change, employees often create personal narratives regarding organizational experiences to function in emerging organizational constructs (Reissner, 2011). These personal narratives often develop into sensemaking (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). Although organizational change leaders often attempt to develop a standardized set of narratives supporting organizational change, standardized narratives are not successful frequently with employees who perceive organizational change as threatening, and who often develop change narratives opposed to organizational change (Reissner, 2011). Managing change requires moving beyond the process-oriented aspects of change, to a human needs orientation to moderate divergent change narratives (Inalhan, 2009; Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). Focusing on the organization prior to change, developing antichange narratives, and promoting antichange sources of authority are three critical actions employees use to resist change (Reissner, 2011). Narratives and sensemaking actions regarding the prechange organization are often nostalgic and tend to inflate the positive aspects of the prechange organization and eschew the negative aspects. The development of divergent narratives focused on how potential organizational changes will affect an employee's position in an adverse manner

as well as taboo subjects and the failures of prior change initiatives (Reissner, 2011).

During periods of change, employees often search for leaders or managers who do not support organizational change to legitimize antichange attitudes (Reissner, 2011).

Organizational leaders should develop an organizational culture favorable toward change to lessen resistance to change and delegitimize antichange advocates (Choi & Rouna, 2011). To achieve cultural orientation to change integration, continual communication concerning organizational change is paramount (Gilley et al., 2009).

Jones et al. (2008) noted although organizational change affects all individuals within the organization, the attitudes, and perceptions of the change process and potential outcomes could vary substantially. The purpose behind organizational change is to modify organizational practices to optimize the functionality at the unit and universal levels (Jones et al., 2008). Employees at the lower end of the organizational hierarchy tend to identify with immediate units in the organization, whereas employees at the higher end of the hierarchy tend to identify with the totality of the organization (Lamm et al., 2010). This type of organizational group identification creates a deviation concerning reactions to organizational change (Lamm & Gordon, 2010). Executives tended to have a positive disposition toward organizational change. The positivity executives exhibited to organizational change relates to their role in designing and encouraging organizational change as well as identifying with the organization (Jones et al., 2008). Supervisors and managers indicated mildly positive perception to organizational change. The mild positivity concerning change could indicate supervisors and managers were privy to certain details, but not all (Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006). Employees who held

nonsupervisory or nonmanagerial positions within the organization tended to have the least positive reactions to organizational change. The lack of positivity related to infrequent and incomplete information regarding the schematics involved in the organizational change process (Driver, 2009). The incorporation of organizational identification in change communications could help organizational leaders develop successful change strategies (Jones et al., 2008). Though Jones et al. noted divergent attitudes and perceptions regarding organizational change could influence the change process, the one organization researched presents problems of transferability.

Thurlow and Mills (2009) noted an individual's sensemaking ability is fundamental to perceptions of organizational change. Although organizational change entails the restructuring of organizational functionality, there is a lack of studies examining how restructuring affects individuals (Thurlow & Mills, 2009). Archetypal organizational change language has tended to focus on overarching themes of needs and desired ends for the organization while neglecting how individuals make sense of change (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Critical to the employee's ability to adjust to his or her new and emerging position within the organization is sensemaking (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). The process of organizational sensemaking is often more complicated and nuanced than structural changes (van den Heuvel et al., 2009). As change progresses, specific organizational language and the socialized context of language begins to change (Thurlow & Mills, 2009). Individuals within the organization are likely to confront a new language paradigm. Because language is fundamental for sensemaking within the organization, changes to organizational language are challenging for employees.

Organizational leaders must incorporate the aspect of language change as well as functional change when implementing organizational change strategies and processes as the saliency of language to change and identity is apparent (Thurlow & Mills, 2009). Though Thurlow and Mills noted the importance of language use and sensemaking by individuals within the organization, the study focused on an organization.

The preceding literature review contained an overview of the diverse array of topics concerning organizational change and the communication of organizational change. To assess accurately and organize literature concerning organizational change communication, the literature review included three sections: implementation, communication, and experience. The implementation section contained background on antecedes of organizational change and how such processes can be viewed by employees. The communication section included literature involving the communication of organizational change, change communication paradigm, change communication strategies, and differences of employee perceptions concerning various organizational change communication practices. The experience section contained literature regarding the diverse experiences and perceptions of employees during organizational change based on change communication. The diversity of experiences demonstrated that although interorganizational change has commonalities, the communicational tactics and strategies used within organizations differ, and have a salient effect on shaping employee perceptions of change.

Transition and Summary

Section 1 was an introduction to the problem and purpose statement as well as background into the problem. The introduction clarified the reason for conducting the study and the problem explored during the research process. This section also stipulated the proposed use of organizational theory as the primary conceptual framework for the study. The inclusion of the conceptual framework helped explain and contextualize the research. A definition of terms was included to provide clarification of any abstract or study specific terms presented in the study. Section 1 also included the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations to provide certain specifications and possible shortcomings inherent in the research design. The significance of the study section was included to indicate how the findings from the research could reduce gaps in knowledge to improve business practices as well as promote social change. A review of academic literature concerning organizational change communication concluded the first section and provided background research recently conducted on organizational change communication. The objective of Section 2 is to focus on the specifics of the research project such as the role of the researcher, participants in the study, and data collecting techniques. As noted in Section 1, conducting research within a researcher's organization might present issues of reliability and validity. Section 2 of the study will include the specifics of strategies to ensure the reliability and validity of the study.

Section 2: The Project

The following section includes the specifics of the research design for the proposed study. The purpose statement is reiterated and refined to remind the reader of the intentions of this study. This section includes how a researcher's role in the study could affect the interpretation of the results, and provides a background of how a researcher's biases as well as the connection with the participants and research site could affect the study (Gatrell, 2009). As the researcher is the instrument in the data collection process in qualitative methodology, understanding the role of the researcher and possible biases in research interpretations, are essential to developing a concise picture of the research presented (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This section includes an elaboration of participants' backgrounds, justification for the choice of the population, and issues pertaining to ethical protections. This section also includes the research method and design and the rationale for using the research method and design. This section additionally specifies and justifies the data collection techniques, instruments, and the organization of research results. By providing the details of the research method and design, role of the researcher, participant population and study site, use of data gathering, analyzing, and organizing techniques, readers can gain knowledge of the research process that provides a holistic understanding of the results. Strategies to strengthen reliability and validity conclude this section to provide justification for the method and design used in the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose behind conducting this qualitative study with case study design was to understand how organizational leaders could communicate the need for organizational change to improve organizational change outcomes in an effective manner. Given the multifaceted nature of change, the purpose of this study was to determine how the communication of organizational change occurs and how to develop effective communication paradigms (Shin et al., 2012). Lamm and Gordon (2010) noted there is an increasing need for change within organizations. Failure to establish effective communication during organizational change often limits the success of change (Michel et al., 2010). Possible social contributions that could occur from this study include creating change communication strategies more conducive to successful organizational change outcomes and more inclusive by increasing participation of various organizational stakeholders. Through increased inclusion in the change communication process, the process of implementing organizational change could improve (Stoltzfus et al., 2011). Increased inclusion could have the potential to optimize change communication to increase the possibility of full integration, which would lessen the monetary and human capital effects on organizations.

Role of the Researcher

The qualitative method places the researcher in the center of the study (Dumay, 2010). The development of questions, field research, interactions with participants, the data collection and analysis, and the dissemination of results, all involve the researcher (Yin, 2009). This researcher-centric paradigm presents questions necessitating redress.

As Marshall and Rossman (2011) noted, researchers must identify their biases, values, and background that have the potential to shape their interpretations of research collected during the study.

My role in this study was the primary interpreter of the research instrument. I developed the questionnaires, the semistructured research questions, and interpreted the findings. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) stipulated, researchers using the qualitative methodology tend not to use instruments or questionnaires developed by other researchers. Given the closeness of interaction with the participants, developing a reciprocal relationship with the proper amount of distance was critical (McGregor, Parker, LeBlanc, & King, 2010; Yin, 2009). Although I developed and made determinations in the study, I allowed participants to articulate their views unencumbered (Dumay, 2010). According to White and Drew (2011), the qualitative method allows participants to construct meanings and conceptions concerning actions and events. Through establishing neutrality, I afforded autonomy for participants by allowing the participants to convey their meanings and conceptions in an uninhibited manner (White & Drew, 2011). Establishing and maintaining neutrality allowed for the appropriate amount of distance from participants. This was pertinent in this study as the research site was my employer and establishing neutrality strengthened the assurance of validity of the results (Riege, 2003).

Participants

The population for this study was the 105 full-time online faculty members at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. This population is highly

educated and highly skilled. All positions in the Online Instruction department require a master's degree and many members of the department hold doctoral degrees. This population was appropriate to research regarding the effects of organizational change communication given the rapidly evolving marketplace of the industry, and the opportunity to garner different perceptions regarding change communication given the diversity of the population (Wood et al., 2005). The diversity and work experience of the population provided a variety of organizational change communication experiences. Participation was voluntary, and the size of the department made gathering 25 participants not problematic (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Selecting 25 participants permitted the inclusion of a range of change experiences while not producing overwhelming or underwhelming amount of data (Green & Thorogood, 2009). A purposive selection process helped determine participant selection based on the frequency of experiences in organizational change programs with more experience as desirable.

To ensure they were familiar with the organization, participants were in employment for at least one year at the organization, and must have taught ground-based courses to compare and contrast change communications within the respective positions. Through selecting participants in a purposive manner, I ensured the participants understood the purpose of the study as well as the nuances inherent in the process of organizational change (Suri, 2011). Interviews occurred during nonworking hours or during work breaks to prevent the research from distracting employees. To ensure the identity of the participants remained anonymous to prevent conflicts of interest from arising, I used pseudonyms regarding interviewee responses.

Researchers must respect the participants and the field site of their research during and following the research period (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Researchers should take into consideration any potential risks to participants and develop strategies and procedures to moderate such risks (White & Drew, 2011). Participants received and were required to sign an informed consent form acknowledging their right to privacy and confidentiality. By using open communication and providing research intentions, I established trust and reciprocity with research participants to garner an understating of the participants and the research setting (Gatrell, 2009). Establishing and maintaining the trust and reciprocity of the participants was essential in this study, as the focus of the research was on employee perceptions of organizational change communication, which required accessing latent information in the interview process (Yin, 2009). Failure to maintain trust and reciprocity could have produced misleading results.

Research Method and Design

The study consisted of qualitative research method and case study design, which entailed researching meanings attached to events, actions, or processes in socially constructed environments (Yin, 2009). The qualitative method focuses on the exploration of meanings by using open-ended and emerging questions to understand how meanings of participants are constructed (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative approach necessitates the researcher conduct research and collect data in real-world settings, rather than a simulated setting (Ogden & Cornwell, 2010). The case study research design allows exploration of events or actions, the effects of events or actions, and the meaning of

events or actions (Yin, 2012). The design is time-bound, which correlated well with the events and actions researched, namely the communication of organizational change.

Method

The reason for using the qualitative research methodology was the method allows research in a real-world setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To minimize study-oriented influences and lessen potential harm to participants, interviews occurred in a neutral environment. This environment helped to establish an understanding of the participants in the research setting and reduce bias (McGregor et al., 2010; White & Drew, 2011).

Qualitative methodology focuses on the participant in the research setting allowing the participant to have a voice in the research process (Clark, 2010; Ogden & Cornwell, 2010). Participants are often willing to participate in qualitative studies for many reasons including curiosity, enjoyment, individual empowerment, introspective interest, social comparison, therapeutic interest, representation, political empowerment, or promoting change. Qualitative methodologies afford empowerment to the participants quantitative methodologies often lack (Clark, 2010). Additionally, qualitative methodology allows a socially constructed research paradigm to emerge (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The qualitative method was appropriate as the focus of the study was about exploring perceptions and meanings of participants, rather than conducting experiments, a foundation of quantitative research (Johnson et al., 2007). As the research topic in this study was organizational change communication, which is an emerging process, the qualitative research methodology, which is intrinsically emerging and open-ended, was appropriate to the research emphasis.

Research Design

The reasons for using the case study design were the design permitted the exploration of the effects events, programs, activities, and processes have on participants (Yin, 2012). The case study design allows an understating of effects change communication has on an organization though the collection of rich data (White & Drew, 2011). As Yin (2009) noted, a case study researcher's main objective is to develop and construct a theory based on in-depth interviews with varying levels of abstraction. The case study design allowed participants the opportunity to elucidate different experiences regarding organizational change communication through semistructured interviews. The elements of the case study design were preferable over ethnographic research strategies because of time constraints, and over a narrative form of research for reasons of abstraction (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; White & Drew, 2011).

Population and Sampling

The potential participants for this study were the 105 full-time online faculty members at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. The participants for this study were faculty who are considered highly educated and have a minimum of a master's degree with many members holding doctoral degrees. This population afforded significant opportunities for the focus of this study exploring the effect of organizational change communication given the rapidly evolving marketplace of the industry and the comparatively new position of full-time online faculty (Wood et al., 2005). The diversity of the participants and different work experiences provided a diverse

array of organizational change communication experiences allowing a holistic account of perceptions of organizational change communication to emerge.

Participant recruitment into the study occurred in a purposeful manner; given the size of the department, gathering at least 25 participants to conduct interviews was not problematic (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Green and Thorogood (2009) noted a minimum of 25 participants interviewed should provide a diversity of results, while not producing redundancies in data concerning communication change experiences. Maintaining the number of participants at 25 allowed themes and patterns to emerge (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Participation in the study required employment by the organization for a minimum of one year as a full-time online faculty and previous teaching experience in a traditional face-to-face setting. Through selecting participants in a purposeful manner, I ensured the participants had experienced the nuances inherent in the process of organizational change communication and organizational change (Suri, 2011). To avoid potential harm for participants, interviews occurred during nonwork hours or during work breaks. Information garnered during the interview process referred to participants by pseudonyms.

Ethical Research

Central to developing accurate research is adherence to ethical standards (Gatrell, 2009). Research involving participants necessitates researchers developing protocols and procedures that ensure participant confidentiality and decrease potential harm. Creswell (2009) noted ethical concerns in research cover many aspects of the research process including issues in the research problem, in purpose and questions, in the data collection,

in data analysis and interpretation, and in writing and disseminating of research results. Accordingly, research ethics strategies must reflect ethical issues that can arise during different periods of the research process.

A research problem guiding the study should be beneficial to the participants (Yin, 2009). The research topic in this study concerning the communication of organizational change adhered to this requirement. The central purpose was to improve the communication of change, which intended to help the study participants and the research site optimize the process of organizational change. There must be an understanding regarding the purpose of the study and the meaning of the questions between the researcher and the participants (Sarantakos, 2005). Failure to ensure participants understand the purpose and research questions concerning the study can undermine the validity of the results (Wikman, 2006). Indicating the purpose of this study and the research question in a clear manner helped to reduce confusion by participants. Ethical issues involving monetary recompense for participation in the study and permission to leave the study are also important in the research process (Yin, 2009). The informed consent form indicated participation did not involve a monetary reward and outlined persons of contact to discontinue participation both during and until three weeks after research completion.

The ethical issues inherent in the data collection process involve attaining permission from the research site to conduct research. Before beginning the data collection process, the institutional review board IRB must provide permission to conduct research on employees. I received permission to conduct research at the site through the

research site's institution review board (IRB) after receiving permission from Walden University's IRB. The IRB approval number for Walden University is 11-27-12-0169022. The implementation of special ethical strategies should occur when study participants are from vulnerable populations (i.e., minors, pregnant women, prisoners, et cetera) (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Though the participants in this research study were not from vulnerable populations or adversely affected physically by participating in the research process, participants completed an informed consent form to mitigate the possibility of misunderstanding, and protect the participants' rights. The informed consent form added an assurance of safety from harm as well as indicated the participants' right to leave the study at any time for any reason (see Appendix B).

To ensure confidentiality I used pseudonyms in reporting and displaying results to enhance the research participant's privacy, and allow participants to retain their voice (Yin, 2009). I saved the results on a computer hard drive, and I will retain possession of the hard drive for a minimum of five years. The informed consent form indicated the desire to achieve reciprocity with participants, and there would not be monetary recompense for participation in the study. Information such as the level of participation expected to participate in the study and interviews will not occur during hours of operation was included on the informed consent form. The informed consent form also included persons of contact regarding questions relating to study participation.

Issues involving the analysis and interpretation of data included protecting the confidentiality of the individuals involved as well as the storage of research data, the ownership of data, and the accuracy of the interpretation of data. To address issues of

confidentiality, as indicated a priori, I used pseudonyms to ensure the protection of participants' confidentiality. Because no research team was involved in this study, questions of ownership were somewhat reduced. Issues regarding the ownership of research data and findings though important were not relevant in this study based on the singular nature of the research. When disseminating research, ensuring research findings are accurate was critical. To ensure accuracy, several reliability procedures were applied (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A rechecking of the transcript ensured no errors were committed. A detailed clarification of possible researcher bias was included to elucidate to the reader to indicate how my background might have affected how information was interpreted, and negative and discrepant information was included that went against the general trend of the research. To strengthen the reliability of research findings, a second reviewer associated with the research site, but not with the study, reviewed the data analysis to ensure the analysis did not contain researcher bias. The data reviewed by the second reviewer referred to participants by pseudonyms to protect participant privacy. These aforementioned procedures helped enhance the reliability of results.

Ethical issues regarding the writing and disseminating of the research could include the language used, the potential for suppressing or falsifying information divergent to the researchers' needs, the possible repercussions for individuals and institutions involved in the study by having findings publicized, or failing to include a full description of the research design and method (Gatrell, 2009). The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) (2010) provided guidelines concerning the proper use of language, including the use of unbiased language, the use of

language sensitive to labels, and the use of language acknowledging the participants in the study in a nondemeaning manner. I applied the guidelines specified above to ensure the presentations of research were consistent with APA ethical standards. Upon request, the research site will receive a copy of the final doctoral study or summary of findings; findings will not include raw data. I included a detailed description of the research design and procedures delineating the research process to allow future researchers to review techniques for reliability and validity.

Data Collection

Instruments

Qualitative research involves exploring the process of how individuals attach meanings or conceives of actions, events, or programs taking place in a real-world setting as each research setting has its own nuances, histories, cultures, and subcultures (Yin, 2012). Qualitative research entails extending how individuals perceive certain actions, events, or processes toward a critical exploration regarding how the localized setting has been effectual in shaping an individual's perception and meaning to events, actions, or processes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Yin (2009) noted interviews help researchers to explore individuals' perceptions of events, actions, or processes. The interview data collection instrument used permitted the exploration of the in-depth experiences of participants concerning organizational change communication. The use of a semistructured interview guide helped guide the interview portion of the research. The guide contained general questions to ascertain responses from the participants and motivate the participants to provide expansive responses and nuanced aspects of the

social environment (Dumay, 2010). The semistructured interview data collection instrument required participants to provide open, honest, and thorough responses to the interview questions (Clark, 2010).

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary interpreter of the research instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This necessitated a clear definition of the researcher's role (Wikman, 2006). Redressing my background and the possible research biases related to my background was important. A need also existed to include how I accessed the research site and any connections to the research as well as the steps taken to obtain permission to the site (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). These steps helped the reader to understand my perspective and any potential bias that could be inherent in the research process.

The qualitative method was appropriate, given the purpose of this study was to explore how organizational change can be communicated in an effective manner, in a real-world setting (Yin, 2012). I was central in the process of deciphering how participants constitute and reconstitute meanings, disseminate such meanings, and organize collective and individual experiences, given my position as the primary interpreter (Johnson et al., 2007). The interpretation of results from interviews allowed for an understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions concerning change communication. As stipulated by Yin (2009), in-depth interviews allow access to informal organizational contexts, investigate the hidden underpinnings inherent in the organizational milieu, and delve into the cultural and symbolic aspects of organizational

life. Gaining access to this latent information depended on the participants' willingness to participate in the interview process.

Clark (2010) noted participants have different reasons for allowing researchers access to perform interviews and to participate fully in the research process. Such reasons include subjective interest, curiosity, enjoyment, individual empowerment, introspective interest, social comparison, therapeutic interest, material interest, economic interest, political empowerment, and informing change. Researchers should develop a participant matrix to measure and verify the information presented by participants (Ogden & Cornwell, 2010). To ensure information in qualitative research is accurate and truthful, researchers must distinguish between accurate and truthful information and incomplete or false information (Peus et al., 2009). Through using multiple forms of data confirmation, a chain of evidence emerges to verify results (Riege, 2003; White & Drew, 2011; Yin, 2009). These steps helped assuage potential reliability and validity issues. As the researcher is the main instrument interpreter in the qualitative method, accounting for researcher bias, background, and research site access is central for clarifying to readers' the potential issues regarding data interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Conversely, clarifying the motivations of the research participants is necessary to provide protection against information and behavior provided with express or latent purposes of manipulating the researcher and results (Clark, 2010).

Data Collection Technique

An interview data collection instrument permitted the exploration of the in-depth experiences of participants concerning organizational change communication. This study

did not require a pilot study as Walden University does not require pilot studies for qualitative studies using semistructured open-ended interview questions. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) noted, the interview data collection technique allows the researcher to use open-ended questions to elicit the experiences, views, and opinions of participants. Interview-based research can provide an understating of how participants develop meaning to actions, events, and processes related to organizational change communication (Brod et al., 2009).

The semistructured interview allowed participants to express their experiences to organizational change; data collected garnered a rich understanding of the research site's unique complexities (Yin, 2009). The interview collection technique afforded the ability to explore in-depth multiple perspectives within the organization (Parent & Levitt, 2009). The semistructured nature of the interviews permitted a holistic understanding of participants' perception to emerge in an organic process. The semistructured interview allowed the participants an opportunity to express themselves regarding actions, events, and processes (Clark, 2010).

I developed the interview questions, interviewed the participants, used a digital voice recorder to record interviewee responses, and transcribed interviewee responses after interviews were completed. I informed participants I would be recording the interviews prior to participation as stipulated in the informed consent form and reminded participants of the recording at the beginning of the interview. The inclusion of data gathered through interviews in the study could allow the reader to develop an accurate understating of the research setting (Yin, 2009). Interview data could allow reader to

become familiar with the particular vernacular of the participants and research site, and were useful in developing a pattern of activities, events, and orientations, within the research setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; White & Drew, 2011). The interview questions are presented below and in Appendix A.

1. How effective were organizational leaders in explaining the reasons behind the creation of the position of full-time online faculty?
2. Was the amount of information you received concerning your position as a full-time online faculty adequate, please explain?
3. Has the requirements and responsibilities of the position been communicated in a clear manner, please explain?
4. What has been the most effective communication modality (e-mail, newsletter, face-to-face) concerning your position and your positional responsibilities?
5. How important is continuing communication, regarding possible changes to your positional requirements and responsibilities?
6. Have you thought that you have been able to provide feedback regarding your position as a full-time online faculty to organizational leaders (managers, directors, et cetera.)?
7. Do you believe your feedback has been included based on communication you received or through job function change related to your position, please explain?
8. How has the communication you have received from organizational leaders shaped your perception of the organizational culture and values?

9. How could you communicate to new full-time online faculty the nuances about their position? What is the interchange like between coworkers?
10. To what extent have you been able to implement communication regarding your position received from organizational leaders into your day-to-day function?
11. How has the communication you received regarding your positional responsibilities, requirements, and changes differed from communication you received while employed in previous positions?

Data Organization Techniques

The observance of the interview protocol occurred during the semistructured interview portion of the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The interview process entailed using open-ended interview questions listed on a formatted document. An icebreaker question began the interview, an example of which might be: In one minute or less, tell me about yourself. A statement of gratitude concluded the interview (Yin, 2009). The transcribed answers to the interview questions are stored on a secure hard drive for a minimum of five years then deleted. I organized interview responses based on the date of interview. These procedures helped organize the data collected in a chronological manner while maintaining participants' confidentiality.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis process consisted of thorough, iterative, and interrelated procedures involving seven interrelated steps to ensure the validity and reliability of results. The first step entailed the organization and preparation of the data for research analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). During this process, the results were organized

and arranged for analysis. The second step was a thorough review of the data collected; this process permitted the delineation of findings and opportunities to eschew erroneous data. The third step entailed the initiation of the coding process in which the segmentation of the data began (Yin, 2009). For this research study, the data gathered related to the effectiveness of organizational change communication, and was collected by semistructured open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A). Yin (2009) noted researchers have three options regarding coding generation: they can develop codes before the data collection process and fit data to the codes; develop codes based only on the emerging data generated; use a combination of predetermined and emerging codes. I used of a combination of predetermined codes and emerging codes. Predetermined codes helped give the coding process initial codification, whereas emerging codes permitted fluidity during the study. The NVivo10™ qualitative analysis software program assisted in the data coding, storage, and analysis of this study. One of the main advantages of the program was the ability to integrate data from multiple sources. The NVivo10™ qualitative analysis software program permitted the managing and organizing of data, managing of ideas, querying of data, and reporting of data in a succinct and structured manner (Bergin, 2011). During the coding process, the major themes began to emerge. The themes described the major results and were instrumental in the structure of the study, whereas codes provided detailed information concerning the individuals, settings, and events taking place during the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As themes developed, I began to build a contextual analysis of the research, thereby increasing the understanding of how participants perceived actions, events, and

processes. The analysis indicated the findings aligned with the conceptual framework of this study, organizational theory, as the results indicated communication employees tend to exchange information in a symbiotic manner. A nonbiased second reviewer reviewed the analysis of the data to ensure the analysis was free from researcher bias. The data reviewed by the second reviewer did not include the participant names to protect participant identity. A narrative section followed the theme development in which the various themes and description developed were interrelated and correlated. The narrative provided an understanding and interpretation of the data collected to synthesize results and provide a holistic understanding of the complexities and nuances associated with the organizational change communication process.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Ensuring research reliability concerns the researcher's approach to the study was consistent across different studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Fundamental to ensuring reliability was properly documenting the procedures used in the study. Developing and refining research protocol was significant in strengthening research reliability (Riege, 2003). Research protocol necessitated I record all data and information gathered during the study in an accurate and accessible manner (Stavros & Westberg, 2009). Yin (2009) stipulated researchers should follow specific procedures to eliminate mistakes in the data transcription process and should check repeatedly for code drift during the research process to ensure code consistency. I repeatedly compared the audio recordings to the transcribe interview notes to ensure accuracy of data. Wikman (2006) noted the question

development process could lack consistency between the research questions and the response to such questions. Limitations of language, scales, associations, and subject knowledge by the participant, could lead to erroneous findings. Steps to strengthen correspondence in questioning include the addition of detailed instructions, increasing the abstraction of the questions, adding a site related component, and indicating practical applications (Wikman, 2006). The clear and concise interview questions used helped to improve the reliability of responses (White & Drew, 2011). Through using these strategies, the reliability of findings in this study was improved.

Validity

Establishing mechanisms to ensure the validity of research is essential to producing research findings and conclusions that are both legitimate and actionable (Stavros & Westberg, 2009). Conducting research within my organization presented concerns regarding validity. By incorporating validity strengthening strategies in the research process, the validity of the findings improved (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Riege, 2003). Yin (2009) noted qualitative validity entails checking for accuracy of results throughout the research process. Multiple validity procedures can help to check data accuracy through a comparing and contrasting method (Stavros & Westberg, 2009). Using several strategies can strengthen the validity of the data, as each strategy is effectual regarding different aspects of research (Brod et al., 2009). To increase validity I used rich, thick descriptive words in presenting interview questions and findings, indicated my employment at the research site, and included negative or discrepant information (Yin, 2009). Marshall and Rossman (2011) stipulated researchers should

clarify their backgrounds to elucidate to readers possible bias concerning interpretations of the data, which I have done by indicating I am employed by the research site.

Qualitative research involves exploring how participants attach meaning to actions, events, or processes in a natural setting, therefore, interview questions should be clear to the participants (Hibbert et al., 2010). Researchers also must take steps to strengthen external validity (Riege, 2003). Yin (2009) noted qualitative generalization entails the researcher generalizing data into a broader theory. Strengthening external validity also involves the use of replication logic in multiple-case studies and comparing the evidence with current literature and the data collected (Brod et al., 2009). The findings of this study align with literature regarding organizational change. Themes developed during this study, communication modality, continuing and frequent communication, and communication of mission and values align with research completed in industries other than higher education (Bernerth et al., 2011; Dam et al., 2008; Kupritz & Cowell, 2011; Peus et al., 2009; van der Kleij et al., 2009). The aforementioned strategies helped assuage questions regarding research validity.

Transition and Summary

The objectives of Section 2 were to provide specifics of the research methodology and design aspects of the proposed study. The section included the importance of the role of the researcher to data interpretation. The justification for the participant selection was included and defended. The section will additionally address how the research relates to practical applications in the organizational and operational milieu. The content of the third section will outline the practical implications for social change related to research

results as well as my reflections regarding the process. Section 3 will include the culmination of the work presented in the previous two sections and a synthesis of findings into actionable and practical applications.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

This section includes an overview of the study, which presents a reiteration of the design and method used in the study, and the purpose and research question. The section includes the presentation of findings as well as the delineation of the major themes developed during the data analysis process. The application of findings to professional practice is included to connect the findings to actionable strategies applicable to real-world business practices. This section also includes the application of the findings toward promoting positive social change. Section 3 includes recommendations for action to provide practitioners strategies to improve change communication and indicates needed future research to provide researchers with concepts to study. This section concludes with my reflections on the findings of the study and the summary of the study conclusions.

Overview of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study with case study design was to explore the development of effective organizational change communication strategies to allow organizational leaders to communicate the need for change. A compelling need for change exists because of fluctuations in the marketplace, and future trends are likely to demand organizational leaders to become change-oriented (French & Holden, 2012). The educational realm, especially higher education, is experiencing a high level of change and the need to adapt the traditional mode of delivering education is apparent (Wood et al., 2005). The research site for this study was an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. Given the rapid change occurring in the research site's industry, the site was appropriate for research concerning organizational change

communication, and the findings may be relatable to other industries experiencing periods of change.

The data collection process consisted of 25 one-on-one interviews with the study participants. These interviews occurred between January 11 and February 5, 2013, and took place in a private conference room to lessen possible distractions and afford participants confidentiality in the interview process. I asked the participants to respond to 11 semistructured interview questions related to organizational change communication. The semistructured nature of the interview allowed the opportunity to ask follow-up questions during the interview and afforded the participants the ability to provide nuanced and detailed answers to the questions. Interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes and I used a digital audio recorder to record the participant's responses. Participants were aware of the recorded interview prior to signing the informed consent form, (see Appendix B), and informed again at the beginning of the interview process. I transcribed the interview recordings into Microsoft Word™ format and entered the transcripts into NVivo10™ software program for data storage, organization, and analysis.

The study participants were full-time online faculty at an institution of higher learning in the southwestern United States. Given the dynamic changes that occurred in the online education industry as well as the emergent qualities of the participants' occupation, the choice of the research site and participants provided an excellent opportunity to explore organizational change communication. To provide confidentiality in the research process, the participants received codes (P1 through P25). I entered the data collected during the interview process into NVivo10™ software for analysis. Data

analysis yielded several important themes. The salient themes that emerged were the modality of communication, continuing and frequent communication, and the communication of mission and values.

The purpose of this qualitative study with case study design was to explore how organizational leaders can deliver communication about organizational change in an effective manner. The major themes that emerged from the research indicated several significant strategies leaders can use to improve change communication. Participants were willing to engage in the study as many viewed communication about organizational change as important and relevant to their professional lives. Although some variation was present concerning the issues pertaining to the communication of organizational change, agreement existed between participants on other topics. The participants viewed the development of effective organizational change communication strategies as important (P1-P25).

Presentation of the Findings

This section includes the major themes derived from the data analysis preformed using NVivo10™ software. The themes that emerged from the analysis were communication modality, continuing and frequent communication, and communicating mission and values. Each theme subsection includes findings from the semistructured interviews I conducted. Although the subsections do not include direct quotations from the study participants, responses are paraphrasing to indicate general meaning. Participant coding identifiers (P1 – P25) indicate where paraphrased material was included. This section contains the major themes that developed concerning the research question: How

does communication of organizational change affect an employee's perception of organizational change?

Theme 1: Communication Modality

Participants indicated the communication modality by which they receive information had an effect concerning their perception and interpretation of the communication. Communication received in the correct modality has the potential to help organizational change integration, while communication received through incorrect modalities can harm change integration (Jain, 2011). Organizational leaders typically communicate with employees through either face-to-face contact or through e-mail, with differing usage patterns depending on leader preference (Kupritz & Cowell, 2011). Although each modality can be an effective mode to communicate change, the importance of the information and the content of the information necessitate differing delivery modalities based on research findings of this study.

The majority of study participants indicated face-to-face communication was their preferred method for receiving important information. This type of information could include job related changes, changes to requirements, new employee standards, new expectations, and complicated information. Face-to-face communication offered participants the chance to interact with the communication senders (i.e. managers, directors, et cetera.), and allowed them to view nonverbal communication cues. Participants indicated being able to understand the communication in a holistic manner enhanced their understanding the nuances of the communication.

Study participants indicated face-to-face communication was important for conveying communication about organizational change. The participants did differ concerning how organizational leaders could use face-to-face communication. The majority of participants indicated face-to-face communication was preferable compared to e-mail communication concerning information perceived as very important (88%). A minority of participants preferred e-mail communication regarding important information as this modality allowed participants to have a written and time-stamped type of communication; this allowed verification regarding substantive changes (12%). The participants who indicated face-to-face communication was preferable indicated the modality allowed a personal touch when communicating. Face-to-face communication can help to assuage fears regarding major changes as leaders could communicate the intricacies of the change processes in detail (Gill, 2011). Several participants noted e-mail communication tended to be somewhat cold and detached, and did not take into consideration the individuals unique qualities or talents. Participants viewed face-to-face communication as more honest as organizational leaders could not hide behind e-mail communication and would need to respond to concerns of participants in real-time. The personal touch added through face-to-face communication additionally helped to break the monotony of working online daily.

Participants also indicated face-to-face communication was easier than e-mail communication. Several participants noted e-mail communications could be confusing, often requiring multiple emails to understand the information completely (P3, P6, P21, P23). Participants indicated the human interaction of face-to-face communication

improved their chances of remembering the information and integrating the information into their operations (P13, P18). Participants reasoning behind the perception face-to-face communication was easier than e-mail included face-to-face communication took place in real-time and provided immediate feedback (P11, P24). The real-time feedback between participants and their managers increased the level of understanding by participants, and provided the opportunity to ask questions in real-time. Several participants indicated face-to-face communication allowed dialogue to take place (P15, P20, P23). The opportunity for dialogue can be important for information that was complex, multifaceted, or involved major workplace changes (van der Heuvel et al., 2009). The study participants in general enjoyed the human interaction, the real-time question and answer aspects, and personal touch of face-to-face communication. The majority of participants viewed face-to-face communication as the preferred modality to receive information about major changes as the modality allowed increased interaction with organizational leaders (88%).

Not all participants shared the preference for face-to-face communication and many participants indicated significant downsides to the modality. The potential exists that communication could be misunderstood or explained incorrectly, causing acrimony between leaders and employees (Jones et al., 2008). Some participants indicated face-to-face communication could be intimidating, especially when dealing with controversial issues (P5, P9). Face-to-face communication often requires a level of trust and understanding between communicators, which some participants indicated did not exist presently. Several participants expressed a preference toward e-mail communication for

all communications as e-mail allowed participants to analyze the information within their schedule and allowed time to develop follow-up questions (P1, P13, P18).

The majority of study participants indicated they preferred to receive communication about minor issues through an e-mail modality. As several participants expressed they were very busy during their day, the e-mail modality allowed them to view less pertinent information when convenient (P3, P5, P14). Given the large amount of information participants processed daily, having some control of when to retrieve and view information allowed participants to decrease their stress levels. Several participants additionally expressed the efficiency of the e-mail modality (P8, P9, P13, P23). For minor changes or peripheral material, e-mail was preferred as the modality permitted for the communication of information to the entire department without a major disruption to daily activities.

Participants indicated e-mail communication was useful for communicating information about upcoming events. The participants believed e-mails were practical for providing preparatory information about meetings or projects, which allowed participants to be prepared for upcoming tasks. Participants additionally indicated the time-stamp and verification attributes of the e-mail modality were positives (P4, P6, P13, P15, P19). The time-stamp feature allowed participants to verify they had (or had not) received a communication, and the written record can be useful to settling disputes (Neufeld et al., 2010). In addition, participants indicated being able to retrieve e-mails was useful as this negated the need to create mental notes of the information (P13, P18).

Several participants indicated aspects of the e-mail modality were problematic. E-mails can often be misconstrued, as participants may not understand the use of words within the communication (P2, P6, P14, P21). These misunderstandings related to the lack of individualization of communication, which is often inherent within e-mail communication (McGregor et al., 2010). The presumption of knowledge by the e-mail sender was also a contributing factor toward ineffectiveness as the sender (organizational leaders) assumed participants had the knowledge needed to make sense of the information. The lack of verbal cues and nonverbal communication can affect negatively the communication of complicated or nuanced information (Qian & Daniels, 2008). The communication of complex information via e-mail often required several additional e-mails to provide clarification, which several participants found inconvenient. Several participants noted receiving multiple e-mails regarding the same subject lessened the likelihood they would review subsequent e-mails (P3, P9, P15). In addition, a commonality cited issue with e-mail communication was participants did not read them; lack of time being a primary reason. Based on the findings, e-mail communication, although efficient, may not be the most effective modality organizational leaders can use to communicate organizational change or other salient issues.

Theme 2: Continuing and Frequent Communication

The majority of the study participants found continuing and frequent communication was important regarding organizational change. Continuing communication referred to communication that concerned long-term issues and was ongoing (Peus et al., 2009). McCabe (2010) indicated continuing communication could

be valuable in lessening employee mistrust and uncertainty about organizational change. Frequent communication related to daily contact employees have with organizational leaders (Jain, 2010). Frequent communication can be crucial toward developing intraorganizational reciprocity and creating an environment conducive for change (Jabri et al., 2008). Continuing and frequent communications were both critical components to establishing positive conditions for organizational change.

All study participants found continuing communication was important regarding organizational change related information. Continuing communication was important as this type of communication allowed employees to know, understand, and meet expectations. Outlining new and emerging expectations during organizational change in a concise manner can reduce change resistance (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). A majority of participants expressed habitually changing expectations required organizational leaders to communicate expectation changes in a continual manner (94%). Participants additionally indicated continuing communication was salient for conveying valuable information (P1, P15). Several participants indicated continuing communication was consequential as it allowed them to understand the department and the organization on a holistic level (P11, P12, P16, P17, P18, P21, P23). Other participants, however, indicated a lack of continuing communication was causation for not understanding the long-term direction of the department and the long-term goals of the organization (P22, P24).

Several participants noted continuing communication provided a feeling of safety regarding job security (P14, P23, P24). Organizational change often leads to increased

levels of fear and stress among employees, and effective communication can help to lessen these change barriers (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). Some participants expressed continuing communication was useful for communicating about upcoming changes and the reasons behind the changes, which made the adjustment process easier. Continuing communication could help lessen resistance to organizational change not initially supported, as indicated by several participants (P2, P12, P20). This might indicate continuing communication during organizational change could be more important than changes in the employee's job function.

The study participants indicated continuing communication was essential in developing intradepartmental reciprocity (P2, P13, P20). This entails both formal and informal communication (Arif et al., 2009). Informal communication was communication that took place outside the workplace. Several participants noted establishing positive relations with organizational leaders was an ongoing process, which required protracted interaction (P7, P9). Concerning the formal context, participants indicated continuing communication with organizational leaders helped them gain a deeper insight into the leader's values and a better understanding of the leader's long-term goals for the department. This type of familiarity assuaged resistance to organizational change and provided a comprehensive understanding of the reasons behind changes.

Several participants indicated some negative aspects about continuing communication. A minority of participants saw continuing communication as unnecessary. Based on the autonomy of the position, some participants saw organizational leaders as having a minor effect on their day-to-day operations (P15, P19).

Several participants indicated their large workload made the process of continuing communication untenable (P9, P22). Some participants indicated they had negative experiences with managers and were not inclined to establish close relationships. These negative experiences could increase resistance to organizational change (Reissner, 2011). A participant additionally noted the amount of information they receive daily is overwhelming, and the effect of continuing communications with organizational leaders would be limited (P24).

The majority of the participants indicated frequent communication was useful for information relating to organizational change (60%). Unlike continuing communication, frequent communication occurs daily, and discussion topics tend to be more immediate (Jain, 2011). Several participants indicated frequent communication with organizational leaders allowed them to receive rapid feedback and implement minor adjustments in their daily processes (P5, P8). Daily contact with organizational leaders can help mitigate fears of uncertainty and establish workplace-level rapport (Jabri et al., 2008). Frequent communication was beneficial to improving day-to-day process (P9). This was especially true when processes or expectations changed. To reduce resistance to organizational change and ease process adaption, organizational leaders should be in constant communication with employees (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2011). Frequent communication by organizational leaders, as a participant indicated, made them feel appreciated (P19). The perception of appreciation by organizational leaders encouraged positive change attitudes, as indicated by several participants.

Participants noted frequent communication was useful toward managing challenges faced daily as well as handling unexpected challenges (P9, P13, P17). Participants additionally indicated frequent contact with organizational leaders increased their willingness to volunteer for extra assignments or new challenges (P8, P13). In general, frequent communication engendered positive feelings among the participants, which can be crucial for organizational change success (Lopes et al., 2009). Frequent communication between organizational leaders and employees might help ease change integration and promote a prochange organizational environment.

Several participants indicated there were problems associated with frequent communication. Some participants viewed this type of communication as superficial and counterproductive to achieving organizational goals. Fear of misinterpretation of communication, which could lead to a negative outcome, was a reason given by several participants (P9, P12, P21). Misunderstanding within the organizational context can be a factor toward employees developing resistance to organizational change (Parent & Levitt, 2009). Participants who did not indicate positive feelings to frequent communication cited negative experiences interacting with organizational leaders. A crucial complaint among participants, however, was communication was not frequent enough (P7, P16). This might indicate increasing the frequency of communication between organizational leaders and employees could improve the organizational change process.

Theme 3: Communicating Mission and Values

The communication of organizational mission and values was the third significant theme that emerged during the data analysis process. A majority of participants indicated

understanding the mission and values of the organization was critical in their perception of change related information. Organizational change often brings uncertainty, providing clarity of direction, and purpose behind the changes can help to alleviate employee resistance (Kira et al., 2011). The clear delineation of mission and values can help employees understand the nuances of the organization and interpret change in an accurate context.

The majority of participants reported understanding the mission and values of the organization crucial to being supportive of organizational change. A large number of participants expressed the need for clarity concerning mission and values as change seemed constant and having clarity helped to alleviate concerns about changes. During periods of change, small consistencies can seem valuable to providing stability in a chaotic setting (P14). A clear understanding of the mission and values can provide elucidation of how the organization is changing, and the organizational leaders' future goals, even if such items are unclear initially (P23). Participants indicated a need existed to provide some semblance of stability in their day-to-day function during periods of change as well as an idea of how changes would affect their workplace lives (P14, P23, P24). The communication of organizational mission and values seemed to help, or could have the potential to help, lessen fears and resistance toward organizational change.

A number of participants noted the clear delineation of organizational mission and values could help establish employee-organizational ethical congruency (P3, P9, P10, P20, P21, P23). Because employees form emotional and psychological attachments to their workplace, the alignment of employee's values and mission with the organization's

mission and values can increase willingness to participate in organizational change (Inalhan, 2009). To help promote this alignment, organizational leaders should communicate to employees the mission and values of the organization (P14). Some employees, however, formed a natural attachment to the organization or previously held similar values (P1, P16). The communication of organizational mission and values to a priori supportive employees can reaffirm the employees' commitment to organizational change. Some participants indicated understanding the mission and values of the organization, even if they did not internalize the mission and values, could increase their support for organizational change. Understanding the mission and values of the organization could help them develop a better rapport with their coworkers and managers (P20). Some participants indicated clarity of mission and values could help them overcome differences with coworkers (P2, P20). Understanding the mission and values could help employees move beyond personal differences and view collaboration as needed to fulfill the mission and values of the organization. A participant also believed a clear understanding of the mission and values could affect the ongoing development of the mission and values (P13). Participants saw mission and values as essential for clarifying their role, behavior, purpose within the organization, and believed the mission and values were amiable, regardless of viewing the mission and values as a stabilizing abstraction during periods of change.

Although participants expressed the reasons behind the need for clarity regarding organizational mission and values, positive perceptions of change required organizational policies and operations to align with the stated mission and values. Several participants

indicated leaders throughout the organizational hierarchy needed to act in a manner consistent with the organization's mission and values (P9, P16). This expectation extended beyond managers to senior-level positions, even though participants did not interact with these individuals daily. Participants indicated program implementation and policy development needed to match the mission and values (P7, P17). Failure to align behavior, programs, and policies to the mission and values of the organization has the potential to decrease motivation and increase change resistance if employees perceive organizational leaders as hypocritical (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). A participant indicated training new employees about the sociocultural aspects of the organization could help promote the mission and values (P24). This type of training could include a historiography of the organization, current goals, and future goals. The main emphasis behind this type of training would be to promote behaviors consistent with the mission and values of the organization (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Participants indicated having organizational leaders meet face-to-face with department leaders to discuss organizational mission and values as well as their personal mission and values, could further clarify the organizational mission and values. Verbal interaction with organizational leaders about salient issues such as mission and values were often more effective than policy statements sent out via e-mail or otherwise not communicated person-to-person. This preference for verbal or face-to-face interaction between employees and organizational leaders about salient information aligned with the findings indicated in the first theme in which employees' preferred face-to-face interaction for informant information.

A minority of participants indicated clarity of mission and values would not have an effect on their perception of change related communication. Some participants were neutral about organizational culture and were more concerned with doing their job well, rather than organizational-wide issues (P18, P23). Other participants indicated they did not believe a departmental or organizational culture existed currently and did not express major concerns about the lack of culture (P9, P25). Although clarifying mission and values can help promote a positive perception of organizational change, failure to align organizational policies and operations with the stated mission and values can lead to resentment among employees. The lack of connection between espoused values and actions can lead to disengagement by employees (Driver, 2009). Participants in addition might disagree with the stated mission and values of the organization, which has the potential to lead to negative consequences. Although providing a clear outline of organizational mission and values can have positive effects toward promoting organizational change, failure to align organizational policies and operations with the stated mission and values can engender change resistance. The findings of this study correlate to the conceptual framework of organizational theory as the results indicated communicating information about change within the organizational construct was both a complex and interrelated action. Communicating change is complex as organizational leaders communicate through multiple modalities, and the communication requires an understanding of the organization's culture. The findings of the study indicated interrelated aspects such as communication about change exist throughout organizational and departmental hierarchies.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders could use to communicate the need for organizational change in an effective manner. The complexity of many modern organizations and the different factions within organizations has made communication a salient issue. Organizational change is constant, and the need to communicate organizational change strategies exists (Bisel & Barge, 2011). Fluctuations in the marketplace have increased the need for organizational leaders to communicate change in an effective manner (Jain, 2011). The need for organizational change and effective communication is not likely to decrease. Organizational change and the communication of change will remain important organizational activities (Petrou & Demerouti, 2010). Despite the acknowledgement of the need for effective change communication strategies, communicating change remains a crucial barrier to implementing organizational change (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). Lack of understanding, trust, knowledge sharing, and rapport can be consequences of ineffective communication within the organization.

The goal for this study was to develop strategies organizational leaders at an institute of higher education could use to communicate organizational change effectively. Given that organizational change can often meet resistance from employees as change threatens the status quo, deciphering how to communicate change in a manner that lessens resistance and increases support seems applicable to business operations. The population and industry in this study were appropriate for the topic of organizational change as the populations' occupation is unique and emerging and the industry is rapidly

changing. Focusing on the three themes developed in the data analysis, communication modality, continuing and frequent communication, and communicating mission and values, can increase the ability of organizational leaders to communicate change in an effective manner.

The modality in which employees receive communication about organizational change can have a salient effect toward their perception of the communication. The findings from this study indicate employees preferred to receive important information face-to-face and receive less important information via e-mail. This finding can have a major effect on how organizational leaders choose to communicate. Major changes can threaten an employee's sense of security, the personal touch added through one-on-one personal communication might help to alleviate resistance and fear regarding change. Face-to-face communication can help build rapport between managers and employees, which can be critical toward lessening employee resistance to change (Chaudhry et al., 2011). Efficiency is a crucial component toward organizational change success (Raukko, 2009). The results from this study indicated e-mail communication was an efficient modality for leaders to communicate less important information. The e-mail modality allowed participants to read communications on their schedule, which helped them to manage their schedules in an effective manner. Some employees may differ in how they want to receive communication about change as the findings indicated, but the majority of participants found face-to-face effective for communicating important information. The disadvantage for organizational leaders is face-to-face communication can be time consuming. Participants, in general, preferred e-mail communication for less important

information, and this modality affords organizational leaders with a means for increasing the efficiency of their communications.

Continuing and frequent communications are crucial actions for engraining positive perceptions about organizational change. Continuing communication can help organizational leaders communicating the long-term goals for the department and organization (Russ, 2008). Continuing communication might also be useful in developing in-depth familiarity between managers and employees. This finding indicated participants found continuing communication useful to develop a clear idea of the goals of the department, their role in the future of the organization, and a familiarity with organizational processes. Frequent communication can be useful for communicating short-term goals, projects, and strategies (Qian & Daniels, 2008). Organizational leaders can use frequent communication to establish and build rapport with employees. The findings of the study indicated the employees were positive concerning frequent interaction with their managers. Frequent communication was helpful for allowing participants to understand requirements and expectations. Frequent communication can allow organizational leaders to ensure employees have a clear understanding of the short-term goals of the department, and to receive feedback from employees about departmental goals.

Communicating the mission and values of the organization can help communicate organizational change. Leaders can help employees to develop a holistic understanding of the organization by communicating the mission and values of the organization. This can be salient when integrating organizational change because change often requires

employees to modify their routines (Bernerth et al., 2011). Engendering a holistic understating of the organization to employees can allow them to view change in an organizational-wide context. The findings from the study indicated communicating the mission and values of the organization allowed employees to find ethical congruency between themselves and the organization. This can be especially important given the psychological attachments employees can develop toward their workplace (Chaudhry et al., 2011). Leaders who communicate the mission and values of an organization can often decrease resistance to organizational change and increase support (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2011). The findings from the study indicated understanding the mission and values of the organization allowed participants to overcome differences, and focus on organizational-wide goals. A crucial aspect of communicating the mission and values of the organization is policies and operations need to support the organization's mission and values (Pearse, 2010). Actions or policies that contradict the stated mission and values were likely to decrease support for organizational change and increase negative perceptions of the organization. Leaders therefore need to ensure policies and operations align with the stated mission and values of the organization.

Implications for Social Change

A compelling need exists to improve change communication to promote positive social change. Ineffective communication is often a significant barrier toward instituting change in multiple settings. Given the rapidly changing environment many organizations operate within, the communication of change has become a salient issue for organizational leaders. Ineffective change communication by organizational leaders can

lead to employee disengagement and resentment. Despite the potential for change to bring positive results, unless communicated in an effective manner, full implementation of change will likely not occur. These half-measures can often lead to negative, unintended consequences.

A central aspect of this study has been to focus on employee perception of organizational change communication. The findings of this study can indicate to organizational leaders how to communicate the need for change in an effective manner, based on employee perceptions of change communication. Improving change communication can lessen employee resistance to change by creating a change-oriented culture, in which the change process is organic. As organizational leaders' acquire the needed strategies to communicate change, communication about other organizational issues can likewise improve. Improving change communication can extend beyond the organizational setting to political, social, and educational realms. By studying how leaders can communicate change effectively, the findings of this study can produce strategies to promote positive change in diverse milieus.

Improving the change communication process can increase the willingness of individuals to engage in change endeavors. By increasing the willingness of individuals to engage in the process, change communication strategies and implementation processes can become more inclusive, in which multiple perspectives are included. The inclusion of multiple perspectives can create a holistic change paradigm. Improving change communication strategies can reduce the need for organizational leaders to respond in a reactive manner to outside pressure groups demanding change, allowing organizational

leaders to catalyze the change process. This can help leaders of organizations or other entities to become proactive regarding change processes, which should lessen the burden often associated with change.

Recommendations for Action

The participants in this case study indicated communication modality, continuing and frequent communication, and communication of mission and values were important aspects concerning perception of organizational change. Communication is essential in the organizational change process, and organizational change is necessary to respond to marketplace demands. Organizational leaders need to communicate in an effective manner the need for organizational change to remain competitive. The information in this study could be useful for organizational leaders implementing change as the themes developed came from a diverse population in a rapidly changing industry, which could be applicable to industries beyond higher education experiencing rapid change. To help improve organizational change communication at the research site, the research site can receive a copy of the study upon request.

All study participants indicated communication regarding organizational change was important. Based on this finding, organizational leaders need to develop effective communication strategies when implementing organizational change. Given that change can create fear among employees, and lack of communication can create resistance, organizational leaders should work toward communicating change effectively to lessen fear and resistance regarding change (Bao, 2009). Organizational leaders should use face-to-face communication when communicating about major issues and pertinent

information based on the findings of this study. Participants tended to appreciate the personal touch added through face-to-face communication, and face-to-face communication helped promote dialogue. Based on the findings of this study, organizational leaders should use e-mail communication to convey less important information. The findings indicated employees preferred this modality as it allowed participants to review information on their schedules, which afforded freedom to manage their day. Using the correct communication modality can help organizational leaders communicate change in an effective manner, reducing waste and confusion.

In the short-term, frequent communication can help build support for immediate organizational change projects. In the long-term, continual communication can help engender a change-oriented organizational culture. The findings from this study indicated organizational leaders should use both continuing and frequent communication when communicating change. Continuing and frequent communication can serve the short-and long-term interests of the organization. In the short-term, frequent communication can help build support for immediate organizational change projects. In the long-term, continual communication can help engender a change-oriented organizational culture.

Frequent communication can be effective for communicating short-term goals and improving daily processes. Participants tended to enjoy frequent interaction with leaders, which helped to build rapport within the department. Organizational leaders need to ensure they communicate frequently with employees to build trust, which can be essential to implementing organizational change. Frequent communication also afforded participants the ability to provide regular feedback to leaders. By encouraging feedback

from employees, organizational leaders can create a more holistic change process, in which support for organizational change is increased (Pardo-del-Val, Martínez-Fuentes, & Roig-Dobón, 2012). This finding supports the need for frequent communication between leaders and employees.

Continuing communicating can be effective for communicating long-term organizational goals. Given that change is a continual process, communication about change should be continual, as well. Organizational leaders can use continuing communication to help build a change-orientation within the workforce (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). This requires leaders to use continuing communication to build positive and reciprocal relationships with employees, based on symbiotic interests; creating a symbiotic relationship necessitates in-depth familiarity, which often requires protracted dialogue. Organizational leaders should use continuing communication to elicit rich feedback from employees, and build trusting relationships. Participants who believed they had a trusting relationship with leaders were more likely to provide in-depth feedback. Leaders should use continuing communication to clarify the long-term trajectories and goals of the organization, which can allow employees to have an accurate idea about the direction of the organization, thereby reducing fear and resistance.

The study participants indicated a clear delineation of organizational mission and values were important to their perceptions of change communication. Organizational leaders need to communicate the mission and values of the organization to allow employees to discover a psychological connection to the organization, in which change efforts become transformational. The effective communication of mission and values can

allow employees to establish ethical congruency with the organization. Employees who believe their ethics align with the organization are often more supportive of change (Choi & Rouna, 2011). Leaders need to ensure policies and programs align to the stated mission and values of the organization. Policies and programs perceived as disconnected from the mission and values can create hostile feelings among employees. In addition, organizational leaders should focus on communicating the mission and values of the organization as this can allow employees' to perceive the organization in a more holistic manner (Pearce, 2008). Creating a more holistic perspective among employees can help organizational leaders create a change-oriented organizational culture.

Recommendations for Further Study

The need exists to continue to conduct research on organizational change communication. Given the increasing need for organizational leaders to adapt operations, developing effective strategies for communicating organizational change will remain salient. The multifaceted nature of change communication can afford researchers multiple areas to study. Several pertinent areas that might deserve further research include communicating within virtual teams during change, communicating about change in different industries, developing change-oriented organizational cultures, and organizational training for developing change-ready employees. Virtual teams are becoming increasingly common, and although communicational technologies have improved, virtual teams continue to communicate mainly via e-mail. Based on the findings of this study, participants preferred communication about major change issues to be in a face-to-face setting. For virtual teams, face-to-face communication may not be

possible. Developing an increased understanding of how to communicate major issues associated with organizational change solely through e-mail modality might present future opportunities for research. As organizational operations become more international, the ability of organizational leaders to communicate in an effective manner with employees from diverse culture backgrounds will likely remain important. Future studies about communicating change to different cultural audiences could bridge cultural divides. Organizations tend to develop unique cultural characteristics. These characteristics can either help or hinder the organizational change process. Studies devoted to the process of developing prochange organizational cultures, and how communication helps develop prochange cultures, could prove valuable to organizational leaders. Future studies on how training might effect change orientation might be useful in developing employees who have the skill sets to adapt and embrace change. Organizational communication is essentially about person-to-person communication, and future studies on the interaction that occurs within the organizational setting, and how to increase the effectiveness of interactions, could be useful.

Reflections

The process of organizational change is a difficult endeavor for both organizational leaders and employees. Attempting to communicate the need for change in an effective manner can be problematic for organizational leaders as they are addressing diverse audiences with disparate interests. Employees are often not included in the change process, which can lead to resistance to change. Many of the participants indicated they had negative experiences regarding organizational change as they often

believed they were not included during the development of change processes, and perceived change communicating as ineffective. These negative experiences indicated organizational change communication is a salient topic of inquiry, and will likely remain important as the need for change is not likely to abate.

A potential bias that existed was research occurred at my place of employment, and this had the potential to influence how participants would respond to interview questions as well as the level of insight participants might share. Although I was previously acquainted with some of the participants in the study, this was not true of all participants, which helped reduce bias. Another potential bias was I developed the interview questions and conducted interviews. Being the interview question developer and interviewer assumed I could remove bias from both tasks. A second reviewer reviewed the data analysis to check for researcher bias, and discrepant information was included.

There were some preconceived notions or ideas partially confirmed by the data analysis and study results. Emergent and unexpected findings occurred, as well. The results confirmed preconceived notions such as face-to-face communication being the preferred modality for communicating organizational change. The research results confirmed this notion as the majority of participants indicated face-to-face communication was preferred concerning important information. Participants indicated the modality allowed human interaction and included nonverbal cues, which participants viewed as beneficial. Unexpected results included the emergence of the mission and values theme. Participants indicated the effective communication of the organizational

mission and values helped to develop positive perceptions of organizational change. This theme was unexpected as missions and values might not seem related to organizational change. Participants indicated because of psychological and sociological attachment to the organization, finding ethical congruence was important regarding support for organizational change.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies organizational leaders could use to communicate the need for organizational change in an effective manner. The central research question was: How does communication of organizational change affect an employee's perception of organizational change? Communicating organizational change can be a difficult endeavor, but an essential part of the organizational change process. The purpose of this study seemed appropriate as all participants in this study indicated communicating organizational change effectively is important.

The data analysis yielded three central themes: communication modality, continuing and frequent communication, and communicating mission and values. Organizational communication occurs through either face-to-face interaction or via e-mail. The participants indicated face-to-face communication was preferred for information perceived as important. Participants enjoyed the face-to-face interaction with organizational leaders and indicated the personal touch added by face-to-face communication could lessen fear and resistance to organizational change. Participants in this study additionally indicated e-mail communication was preferred for information

perceived as less important. E-mail communication was beneficial as the modality allowed participants to view information on their schedule and believed having a time-stamped record was important. Continuing and frequent communication were both essential to communicate organizational change as indicated by participants. Continuing communication can be useful for communicating long-term organizational goals and providing a holistic perspective of organizational operations. Frequent communication was important for communicating short-term initiatives and daily processes, and for building familiarity between organizational leaders and participants. Continuing and frequent communication were perceived as important for building reciprocity, trust, and rapport within the organizational context. Participants indicated the effective communication of organizational mission and values was important toward perceptions of organizational change communication. Communicating the mission and values of the organization can allow employees to find ethical congruency with the organization, which can be important toward improving change outcomes. The communication of mission and values can help employees overcome personal differences and view change in an organizational-wide context. The benefits derived from the effective communication of mission and values must align with the policies and operations of the organization to produce desirable outcomes.

The strategies that emerged in this study can help organizational leaders communicate organizational change in a more effective manner. An important aspect of the communication process is communicational strategies need to account for perceptions of employees to organizational change. As employees are essential to implementing

change, increasing support, and lessening resistance are cornerstones of effective change communication. Organizational change will likely remain important, and the need to implement change is likely to increase. As the need for change increases, the ability of organizational leaders to communicate organizational change effectively will increase, necessitating optimal organizational change strategies.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How effective were organizational leaders in explaining the reasons behind the creation of the position of full-time online faculty?
2. Was the amount of information you received concerning your position as a full-time online faculty adequate, please explain?
3. Has the requirements and responsibilities of the position been communicated in a clear manner, please explain?
4. What has been the most effective communication modality (e-mail, newsletter, face-to-face) concerning your position and your positional responsibilities?
5. How important is continuing communication, regarding possible changes to your positional requirements and responsibilities?
6. Have you thought that you have been able to provide feedback regarding your position as a full-time online faculty to organizational leaders (managers, directors, et cetera.)?
7. Do you believe your feedback has been included based on communication you received or through job function change related to your position, please explain?
8. How has the communication you have received from organizational leaders shaped your perception of the organizational culture and values?
9. How could you communicate to new full-time online faculty the nuances about their position? What is the interchange like between coworkers?
10. To what extent have you been able to implement communication regarding your position received from organizational leaders into your day-to-day function?

11. How has the communication you received regarding your positional responsibilities, requirements, and changes differed from communication you received while employed in previous positions?

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Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study to explore effective communication strategies organizational leaders can use to garner support for organizational change. The researcher is inviting Full-Time Online Faculty at the research site to be in the study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Eric Nordin, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a Full-Time Online Faculty Member, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to interview individuals to regarding their experiences of organizational change communication.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Respond openly and honestly to semistructured interview questions
- Expand upon initial interview questions to give a more complete account of experience
- Participate in an interview that will last between 30-45 minutes
- Be willing to have your answers to the interview questions be recorded by an audio tape recorder during the session and transcribed by the researcher after the session for possible publication

Here are some sample questions:

- What has been your perception of the quality of information concerning organizational change?
- How effective were organizational leaders in explaining the need for change, the process of change, and the end goal of the change process?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the research site will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or until three (3) weeks after interview completion.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as or becoming upset or being asked to recall unpleasant work experiences

The potential benefits from this study are the improvement of change communication strategies in the organizational change process and the development of sustainable operational change outcomes. The participant can help play a role in these developments by participating in the research process.

Payment:

There is no payment for participation in this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be confidential by using pseudonyms. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. In addition, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. The data collected during the research process will be stored by the researcher (Eric Nordin) on a secured computer hard drive. Data will be stored for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now, or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at (602) 503-8784 or email at eric.nordin@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-27-12-0169022 and it expires on November 26, 2013. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Curriculum Vitae

Eric Nordin

*Work Experience:***Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona – July 2007 – Current**

- Associate Managing Editor, Journal of Non-Significant Findings (September 2012-Present)
- Department of Online Instruction (January 2011–Present)
- Full-Time Online Faculty
 - Handles duties such as grading student assignment and providing feedback
 - Developing curriculum and designing classroom material inductive to the learning process
 - Communicates with student support team to ensure student success
 - Utilizes databases to monitor student progress and take proactive action to ensure success when needed
- Office of Academic Records (July 2007 – December 2010)
- Multiple Positions Held
 - Central role in the Database Conversion Team
 - Experience with devising and implementing new workflow processes

Presentations:

- The SoLT Commons: A Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Presented on: The Journal of Non-Significant Findings: Learning the Research and Publication Process.

*Education:***Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona****Master of Science** in Leadership, May 2009**Bachelor of Arts** in Political Science, May 2007