

**Leaders Are People Too: Studying the Role of Leaders' Affect during Digital
Transformation**

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Abstract

The pivotal role of both leaders and employees during digital transformation is apparent in current literature. However, the role of leaders' state of affect in the context of employee individual readiness to change (IRTC) is absent. This study aims to provide insights into the relationship between leaders affect and employee IRTC, in the process enriching the current literature surrounding IRTC and the role of leaders affect as an antecedent. The study of four teams currently engaged with digital transformation was setup as an exploratory and inductive study, combined with a case study approach to gain insights into different teams and their respective dynamics. The four studied teams all operated within a digitally transforming department at the time of the study. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the data collection method, allowing the study to yield interesting insights and underlying phenomena of leaders' state of affect and its influence on employee IRTC. The findings indicate that leaders' state of affect plays a significant role in shaping and influencing employee IRTC during digital transformation, mainly by the leaders purposely sharing positive and filtering negative affect when displaying affect towards employees. Resulting in a 'displayed state of affect' by the leaders, which moderates the relationship between employee cognitive and affective attitudes and their beliefs regarding the digital transformation.

Keywords: *Digital transformation, State of affect, Individual readiness to change, Leader's role during change*

1. Introduction

Change processes initiated by digital transformation are considered to be disruptive changes, since organizations are forced to fundamentally change the business model and core processes (van Dun & Kumar, 2023). Since these changes are considered disruptive, organizations are forced to adapt. Changes initiated by technology, innovation and competition occurring in the direct environment create a volatile and uncertain market, in which organizations need to adapt to remain competitive (Mathew et al., 2014). More importantly, organizations which resist digital transformation are likely to slowly fade, emphasizing the need for organizations to adapt to digital transformation and accept new technologies (Mathew et al., 2014; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). The employee is mentioned as a crucial factor in the inevitable change processes related to digital transformation (Mangundjaya, 2013; Mardhatillah et al., 2017; Szóts-Kováts & Kiss, 2023). In order for an organisation to effectively undergo change, the commitment of its employees is pivotal, implying a necessity for organizations to focus on their employees, to increase the chances of a successful change (Mangundjaya, 2013). Failures of organizational change in general often arise from organizations' inability to shape employees' attitudes and general feelings (affect) towards the change (Szóts-Kováts & Kiss, 2023). Hence, organizations should prioritize shaping positive attitudes and beliefs among its employees towards the proposed change. A crucial factor in order to effectively implement changes in an organization, is the individual readiness to change of the organizations' employees (Kotter, 2007; Mardhatillah et al., 2017; Metwally et al., 2019). Individual readiness to change (IRTC) is defined as the extent to which individuals are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace and adopt a particular change (Holt et al., 2007). The influence of the organization on IRTC is highlighted in multiple studies (Gigliotti et al., 2019; Miftachul & Reni, 2023). Hence, organizations must grasp how employee attitudes toward digital changes form and how proposed changes are perceived by their workforce. Grasping employee perceptions support organizations in more effectively influencing and shaping employee IRTC (Holt et al., 2007;

Metwally et al., 2019). Being able to understand and affect employees IRTC allows organizations to implement disruptive changes more effectively.

The pivotal role of the leader in change processes is known (Mangundjaya, 2013; Miftachul & Reni, 2023). Hence, in the field of change management, many studies have unravelled the influence of leaders in change processes (Mangundjaya, 2013; Metwally et al., 2019). The link between IRTC and leadership has been part of the research focus regarding the role of the leader. For example, Metwally et al. (2019) have studied the effects of ethical leadership on the IRTC of the employees. Additionally, leaders' change-promoting behaviour, which consists of reducing apathy and removing barriers, is shown to positively influence individual readiness to change (Adil, 2014). Leaders are generally considered to be change agents, due to the capability of shaping and directing organizational change processes (Metwally et al., 2019; Miftachul & Reni, 2023). However, the role of leaders as a person, with an own state of affect and their effects on employee IRTC, remains unstudied. Which is surprising, since the relationship between employees and leaders is identified as a crucial antecedent for IRTC among employees (Mathew et al., 2014). Additionally, emotions and attitudes are shown to influence leaders' ability to convey changes successfully, through sensemaking by the leaders (Kraft et al., 2018; Lorentzen, 2022). Moreover, affective commitment to change is shown to impact the way individuals perceive the proposed change, highlighting the relevance of ones' affect during change (Michaelis et al., 2009). Furthermore, leaders' resistance to change significantly influences employee resistance to change (Walk, 2023). On the contrary, leaders' emotions and attitudes, which are a fundamental part of affect, do not directly influence employee resistance to change (Matheny & Smollan, 2005; Walk, 2023; Weiss, 2002). However, emotions are shown to influence individuals' reactions and attitudes to change and the way information regarding the change is recalled, selected and interpreted (Klarner et al., 2011). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, attitudes partly shape the behavioural intent and the actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Moreover, individuals' state of affect is also a known predictor of attitudes

(Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2009; Seo et al., 2009). Yet somehow the influence of leaders' affect on employee IRTC through leader IRTC has thus far been overlooked. The fact that leaders' behaviour and attitudes influence employee attitudes, which are shaped by leaders' affect, indirectly suggests the importance of leaders' affect during change processes (Hartge et al., 2015). We argue that the impact of leaders' affect during digital change is currently overlooked, since the state of affect influences leader IRTC. To fill the identified gaps in the current literature, the following research question is proposed: *How does leaders' affect influence employees' readiness to change during digital transformation?*

The results of this study provides insights on the role that leaders' affect play during digital transformation, helping organizations to understand the role of the leader as an individual. Additionally, this research proves valuable for organizations seeking to understand how employees can be effectively influenced to accommodate digital transformations. Furthermore, organizations gain insight into whether leaders should be the primary focus of practices aiming to increase IRTC, instead of the employees. Lastly, the findings of this study will add to the IRTC theory of Holt et al. (2007), studying the implications of leaders' affect as an antecedent of employee IRTC during digital transformation, which are becoming more apparent (Mathew et al., 2014).

2. Theoretical framework

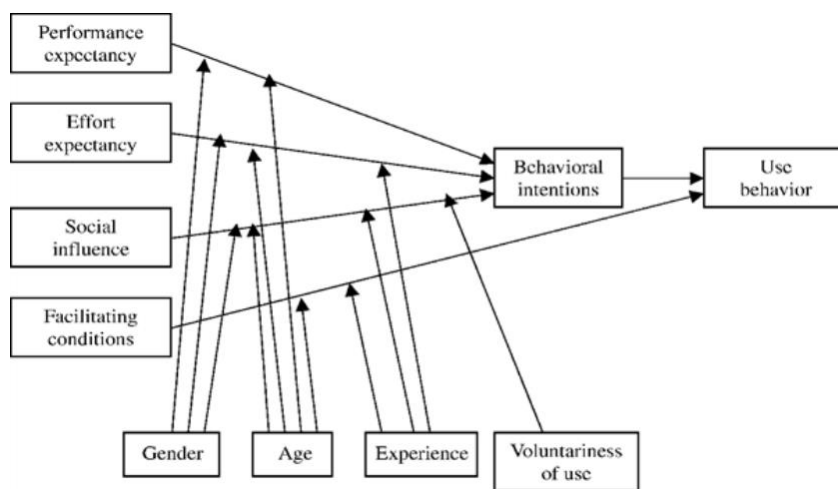
2.1 Digital transformation

Digital transformation (DT) is organizational change that occurs on the majority of the levels within an organization, induced by technology (Berghaus & Back, 2016). In industry 4.0, organizations are encouraged to transform digitally, in order to achieve higher efficiency and improve processes (Oh et al., 2022). While the consequences of DT seem solely beneficial, digital changes, as a result of DT, are considered disruptive (Tomičić-Pupek et al., 2023; van Dun & Kumar, 2023). It is important to note that DT is more extensive than digitization and digitalization. Digitization refers to the use of digital technology during operations, digitalization refers to using digital technologies to redesign and replace traditional business processes (Van Der Schaft et al., 2022). DT concerns leveraging technologies in order to improve organizational systems and their environment, including all stakeholders (Van Der Schaft et al., 2022). Piccinini et al. (2015) defines DT as leveraging digital technologies to enable major business improvements, such as customer experience enhancement and transforming business models. Organizations that are committed to digital transformation, are forced to implement drastic digital changes (Berghaus & Back, 2016). Such changes are likely to disrupt employees in their current work, due to them being forced to adapt to new technologies and learn new disciplines (Van Der Schaft et al., 2022).

When considering digital transformation, it is important to note that the acceptance of new technologies is crucial (Jayawardena et al., 2023). The acceptance of digital transformation is a complex concept with multiple antecedents on multiple levels. Consequently, the UTAUT model highlights pivotal antecedents of digital transformation acceptance (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008; Venkatesh et al., 2003). The UTAUT model, as seen in *Figure 1*, discusses performance expectancy, experience, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, facilitating conditions and social influence as factors shaping behavioural intention and intention of use (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008; Venkatesh et al., 2003). As a result, the usage behaviour of the individuals is indirectly affected by the aforementioned factors.

Which implies that organizations should inform and guide employees sufficiently regarding the performance, ease of use and the usefulness of the digital tool. Organizations are expected to shape the context and content of the change, to successfully implement digital changes. Moreover, intention of use is proven to be positively related to IRTC (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). When employees have a greater intend to use newly introduced digital tools, they tend to be more ready to change.

Figure 1: UTAUT Model (Venkatesh et al., 2003)

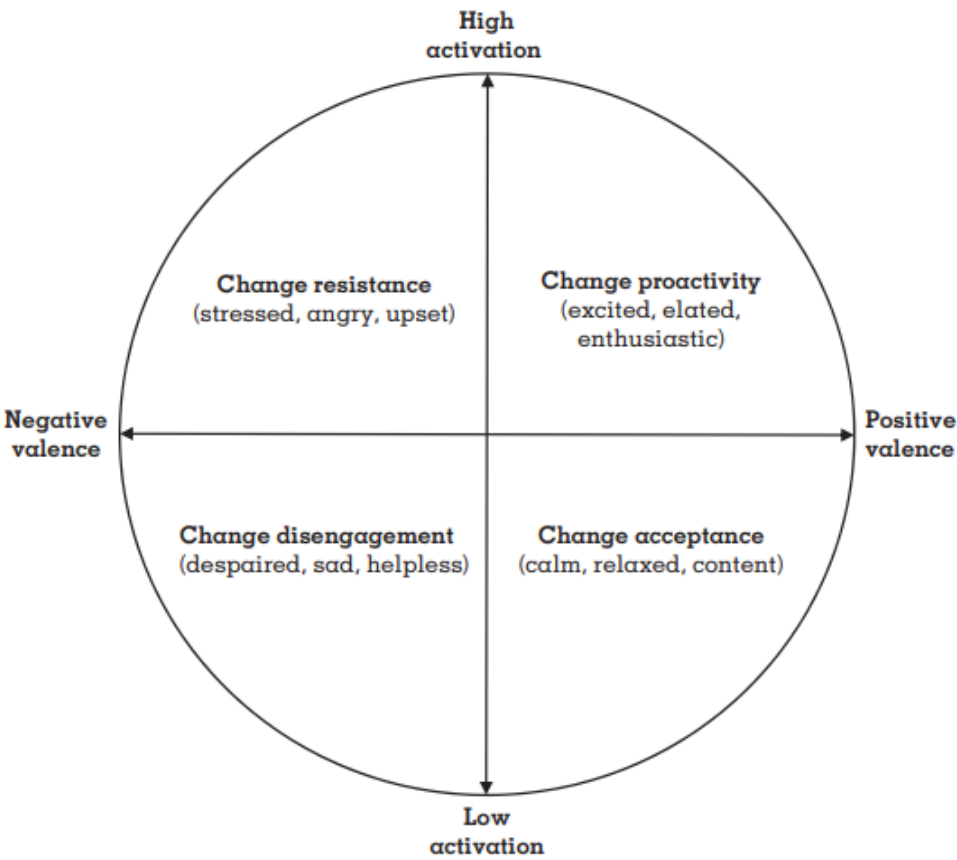


2.2 Affect

The concept of affect is one which is often confused with emotions and moods. While similar, affect is a phenomenon which develops over time and encompasses emotions, moods and temperament of an individual (Matheny & Smollan, 2005; Weiss, 2002). The affective experiences act as an unconscious tool which portray how certain internal and external changes are viewed by the individual (Kuppens et al., 2010; Scherer, 2009). However, affective experiences are not limited to changes, individuals experience a constant state of affect (Kuppens et al., 2010). Yet, in some instances, the affective state of an individual might only become noticeable during changes (Russell, 2003). Affect is considered to be a multidimensional construct as it is formed by two dimensions; activation and valence (Oreg et al., 2016; Seo et al., 2009). Activation refers to the degree of mobility and tendency

to undertake action within the individual, which is associated with whether or not the individual deems potential action to be necessary (Seo et al., 2009). Valence, either positive or negative, refers to the feelings of the individual towards a certain phenomenon (Seo et al., 2009). These feelings range from being pleasant (positive valence) to unpleasant (negative valence). Based on the two dimensions, as portrayed in *Figure 2*, individuals reside in a constant state of affect.

Figure 2: Circumplex of Change Recipients' Response to Change and Underlying Core Affect (Oreg, et al., 2016)



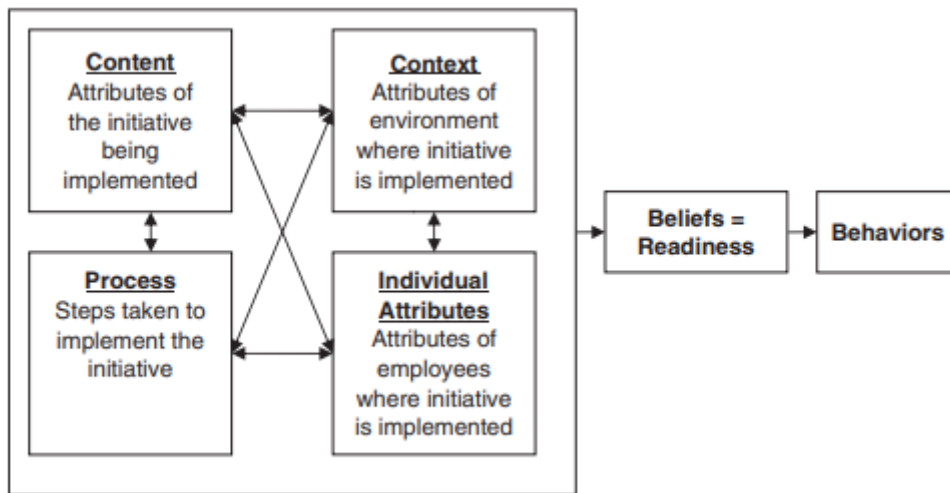
An individuals' state of affect is a predictor of their tendencies to act on certain events, such as organizational change (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Negative affect tends to lead to counterproductive work behaviours while positive affect tends to lead to creativity, proactive work behaviour and more actions taken by an individual (Scott & Barnes, 2011). Additionally, employee commitment is significantly affected by an individuals' state of affect. Negative affect potentially leads to overcompensation, with

overcommitment and poor performance as a result. Furthermore, negative affect could also lead to reduced employee commitment due to the desire to avoid future negative experiences. Affect has further implications during organizational change due to its prediction of attitudes and emotions during 'affective events' (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2009). These affective events are often associated with impulsive and automatic actions used to achieve a certain goal. Affective events in the work setting are either intra- or extra-organizational. Examples of relevant organizational affective events are; leader-member relationships and organizational change, which often leads to a major source of stress for both employees and leaders (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2009; Weiss, 2002). Lastly, the affect of individuals influences fairness perception within an organisation (Cohen-Charash & Byrne, 2008).

2.3 Individual readiness to change (IRTC)

Literature mentions multiple definitions of IRTC. Desplaces (2005) explains IRTC as the extent to which an individual is prepared and able to adjust to organizational changes. Holt et al. (2007) defines IRTC as the extent to which an individual is cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular change. Although the differences are subtle, the latter definition discusses the role of emotion and cognitive ability and more accurately describes how IRTC is formed. Therefore, we follow the definition by Holt et al. (2007). Holt et al. (2007) additionally explores how four factors shape IRTC (Armenakis et al., 1993; Holt et al., 2007).

Figure 3: The Relationship Between Content, Process, Context, and Individual Attributes With Readiness (Holt et al., 2007)



It is important to note that these four factors collectively shape the beliefs of the individual and therefore shape the IRTC of the employees, eventually shaping employee behaviour towards the proposed change (Holt et al., 2007). Additionally, IRTC is proven to influence the chance of resistance to change occurring during a change process, meaning that positive or negative attitudes towards change are an outcome of high or low IRTC (Armenakis et al., 1993; Vakola, 2013). This implies that resistance to change can be overcome by fostering high IRTC among employees.

2.3.1 Other antecedents of IRTC

While the four concepts mentioned by Holt et al. (2007) collectively shape IRTC, other concepts have been recognized as antecedents affecting IRTC. Concepts shaping IRTC are; communication of change, job satisfaction and learning and training (Almaamari et al., 2018; Azra et al., 2017; Nurul Haqq & Natsir, 2019). Communication of change refers to how the management of an organisation chooses to announce, send or explain information regarding the change to the affected employees (Almaamari et al., 2018). Moreover, the significance of considering the nature and quality of information as crucial elements for establishing clear and effective communication is emphasized. Job satisfaction refers to the way an employee

views the job based on cognitive, affective and evaluative observations (Azra et al., 2017). Organizational readiness to change and organizational support are also considered antecedents of IRTC of employees, both influencing employee efforts exerted during organizational change (Desplaces, 2005; Holt et al., 2007; Rafferty et al., 2012). Within an organization, the majority of employees share similar characteristics, leading to a higher probability of achieving a similar level of IRTC (Rafferty et al., 2012). In addition, close interaction with colleagues is also an antecedent and tends to form a consensual view of specific events and topics among employees (Oreg et al., 2011; Rafferty et al., 2012).

2.3.2 Leadership and IRTC

The leader is discussed as a pivotal component of change processes and thus IRTC (Mangundjaya, 2013; Miftachul & Reni, 2023). For example, leaders are able to exert influence on employees during change processes, especially through ethical leadership and transformational leadership (Metwally et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2021). Ethical leadership has a significant, positive effect on IRTC, achieved through management trust, management support and positive leader-employee relationships (Metwally et al., 2019). Moreover, transformational leadership is significantly related to IRTC, again emphasizing the important role of the leader (Tan et al., 2021). Transformational leadership allows leaders to effectively convey change processes to employees and promote IRTC among employees (Peng et al., 2020). Additionally, transformational leadership is able to positively influence self-efficacy and confidence among employees, evidently influencing IRTC (Holt et al., 2007; Holt & Vardaman, 2013; Peng et al., 2020). Lastly, leader participation, leader competences and the relationship between leader and employee are discussed as antecedent of IRTC (Mathew et al., 2014; Oreg et al., 2011).

2.4 The role of the leader during digital change

The role of the leader is clearly crucial (Mathew et al., 2014; Metwally et al., 2019; Rafferty et al., 2012). Leaders as change agents are able to effectively guide employees through digital changes and subsequently effectively guiding the company through digital

transformation, as long as the leaders follow a common agency provided by the organisation's top management (Ajmal et al., 2012; Graetz, 2000; Lorentzen, 2022). Thus, leaders as change executors are a pivotal component of digital transformation due to their ability to effectively influence their subordinates (Lorentzen, 2022; Sainger, 2018). Often, employees struggle with uncertainty regarding the change and their role, ambivalence, insufficient information and frustration. Leaders are able to offer sense giving to these employees and assist employees to accommodate the change by alleviating these issues (Kraft et al., 2018). While leaders as change agents are often considered as tools in change processes, they should also be considered as individuals with own emotions and attitudes.

Since a leaders' own attitudes and emotions greatly influence the leaders' agency and therefore the ability and desire to influence their employees (Agote et al., 2015; Lorentzen, 2022). When considering leaders as individuals rather than a change agent, leaders' IRTC becomes more prominent. Additionally, considering leaders as individuals suggests that leader IRTC develops identically to employee IRTC, through affect, individual attributes and the context, content and process of the proposed change (Holt et al., 2007; Klarner et al., 2011; Weiss, 2002). While little is known about the IRTC of leaders specifically, it is important to note that IRTC of leaders and employees differs significantly in similar contexts, however this only proves a significant difference and no relationship (Naumtseva & Stroh, 2021). Rafferty et al. (2012) confirms this by exposing the differences in IRTC on the individual level, the work-group level and the organizational level.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study focussed on the role of leaders' affect in the context of digital transformation. To further explore the role of leaders' affect in the context of digital transformation, inductive, exploratory research will be conducted. Inductive research allowed the researcher to further understand a specific phenomenon through analysis of complex data, from which themes emerge which explain the why and the how (Jebb et al., 2017;

Thomas, 2003). Exploratory research refers to a study which focused on discovering novel reasoning why phenomena occurred and what the influence of such phenomena is (Jebb et al., 2017; Swedberg, 2020). Lastly, this research used the case study approach, which focuses on understanding the dynamics occurring in specific settings (Eisenhardt, 1989). The multiple case study approach specifically, allowed the researcher to analyse the data within the different scenarios and compare different scenarios as well as explaining why phenomena occur (Bass et al., 2018; Gustafsson, 2017).

3.2 Sampling procedure

The sample of the study consisted of four team leaders with each three corresponding employees spanned over multiple organizations, totalling to sixteen respondents. Due to the nature of the study, there were a couple of criteria for the sample. Hence, the sampling method used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling methods, which entails selecting participants according to preselected criteria set by the researcher, relevant to the research objective (Patton, 2002; Rai & Thapa, 2015). Next to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was also used. The snowball sampling method refers to accessing new participants through previous participants by means of network and referral (Naderifar et al., 2017; Parker et al., 2019). This sampling method is often used when the population of the study is difficult to reach due to specific characteristics, as was the case with this study. This makes the snowball sampling method appropriate to combine with the purposive sampling method (Parker et al., 2019). As the population for this study was hard to reach, the researcher used his personal network to access the first potential participants. The different cases share some similarities, as all teams share an affinity with technology during their work. Yet also differ, one team is in the nascent stage of the change process while another team nears the conclusion of the process. Which forms an interesting perspective on why phenomena occur in different cases (Bass et al., 2018; Gustafsson, 2017). One of the organisations is a large organisation, which is a provider of

transportational services, while the other three are MSE's, of which two offer digital services and one offers educational services.

After selecting the teams that were going to participate in the study, the respective leaders of those teams were contacted and asked to describe the characteristics of their team in the context of digital transformations. Providing a clear image to the researcher. Afterwards, the researcher selected three employees who, together, formed the most accurate representation of the entire team. This ensured that the participating employees represented the actual teams as best as possible and avoiding any biases since the leaders had no influence in choosing the participating employees.

As mentioned previously, certain selection criteria have been developed to determine whether potential participating teams were suited for this study. The selection criteria are as follows:

- All teams should come from the lowest hierarchy level of the company in question.
- One leader and at least three employees should be willing to participate.
- Multiple teams from the same company and department ensured similar team sizes and similar amount of interaction between employees and the leader.

Organisation	Case #1 & 2	#3	#4
Number of employees	~ 50	~ 230	~ 20.000
Digitally centred organisation?	Yes	No	No
Digitally centred department?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Currently transforming digitally?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1: Organisation characteristics per case

3.2.1 Sample validity and reliability

The sample size was determined after considering multiple sources discussing qualitative sample sizes. According to empirical data provided by Guest et al. (2006), new themes are unlikely to emerge and the variability stays mostly stable after twelve in-depth interviews. Which is supported by other research (Kuzel, 1992). Another study states how saturation in qualitative research is often achieved in 9 – 17 interviews. (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022)

Based on these recommendations, a sample size of at least sixteen interviews was established+. Given that each team yield four interviews, the target was four different teams. This helped the study in order to meet the minimum for grounded theory study and ensure good variability and saturation (Francis et al., 2010; Kuzel, 1992). Lastly, using non-verbal reactions allows the participant to think and potentially elaborate further (Whiting, 2008).

According to Eisenhardt (1989), deliberately studying extreme cases is often more useful compared to 'random sampling', especially while building theory using case study. The organizational level of this organizations is currently going through a challenging digital transformation, which makes this chance a great opportunity for research. Capitalizing on

this opportunity allowed the researcher to compare the team under mostly similar circumstances and ensured other variables to remain constant across the cases.

N (total)	4
N (employees)	3
N (leader)	1
Leader gender	Male
Male employees	3
Female employees	-
Mean employee tenure	~ 2.5 years
Leader tenure	3 years

Table 2: Characteristics of Team 1

N (total)	4
N (employees)	3
N (leader)	1
Leader gender	Female
Male employees	3
Female employees	-
Mean employee tenure	~ 2 years
Leader tenure	2 years

Table 3: Characteristics of Team 2

N (total)	4
N (employees)	3
N (leader)	1
Leader gender	Male
Male employees	2
Female employees	1
Mean employee tenure	~ 6.5 years
Leader tenure	4 years

Table 4: Characteristics of Team 3

N (total)	4
N (employees)	3
N (leader)	1
Leader gender	Male
Male employees	3
Female employees	-
Mean employee tenure	~ 3.5 years
Leader tenure	3.5 years

Table 5: Characteristics of Team 4

3.3 Data collection method

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews. To fully study the relationship between leaders' affect and employee IRTC, both leaders and employees will be interviewed during this study. In-depth interviews are considered to be the appropriate data collection method for topics such as; emotions, attitudes, feelings, opinions and experiences, making them a logical choice for this research (Denscombe, 2017). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to discuss certain questions and topics, while remaining

flexibility to address other topics and ask the interviewee to elaborate on certain answers (Denscombe, 2017). Partially analysing the data during the interview allowed the interviewer to make the necessary adjustments during the interview, ensuring the most interesting and useful insights (Eisenhardt, 1989). The interviews have been conducted face-to-face with each participant. Face-to-face interviews allowed the interviewer to more accurately read responses and emotions during the interview, since body language is easier to read face-to-face compared to an online interview (Irvine et al., 2013). Furthermore, face-to-face interviews are deemed to be 'more natural' opposed to online interviews, making it easier for the interviewer to establish trust and support with the interviewee.

3.3.1 Outline of the interview

The meeting will start with an introduction round, where the researcher will briefly describe the nature of the study and personally introduce himself. After which the participants get an opportunity to introduce themselves, to establish trust and a less formal setting. Additionally, engaging in small talk prior to the actual meeting and getting acquainted also contributed to a less formal setting. Which helped creating a more relaxed environment for the participants, making them more likely to answer openly. The researcher will thank the participant for taking the time to partake in the study and provide information regarding anonymity. The transcripts and data will remain confidential and will be deleted upon completion of the study, both will be solely used by the researcher who is a student at the University of Twente. Lastly, the research will ask the participant if there are any questions. The interview will start with the easier questions as ice-breakers, in order to allow the participant to warm up and ease into the interview (Cridland et al., 2014; Rabionet, 2011). The interview guides can be found in *Appendix 1 and Appendix 2*. The interview guide for the employees focusses on measuring their IRTC by rating the items *appropriateness, self-efficacy, organisationally beneficial, personally beneficial and management support* on a 7-point Likert scale. This quantitative component will provide an insight into the IRTC of the employees in the different teams and the underlying individual item scores to analyse on

which items the leaders assert their influence. Afterwards, the employees are asked to discuss the emotions and state of affect of their leader and their influences. The interview guide of the leader focusses on their state of affect, how they handled the change process and whether they have actively tried to influence employee IRTC during the digital transformation.

All interviews were recorded with audio, as this allowed the researcher to listen to the interview multiple times and catch interesting comments which could be missed in the conversation itself. The participants were made aware of the recording equipment and the fact that the recordings were deleted after completing the transcripts. Additionally, a consent form regarding confidentiality and anonymity was filled-in and signed by both the participant and the researcher, which can be found in *Appendix 6*.

3.3.2 Data collection validity and reliability

Both leaders and employees were asked to provide insights regarding digital change(s) within the organization. Thus, having to judge the organization and its change processes, which could potentially lead to bias due to participants being afraid of consequences of certain answers and statements (Bucknor-Ferron & Zagaja, 2016; Woodman & Wayne, 1985). To overcome the aforementioned bias, the answers and transcript of the interviews remained confidential. Ensuring that the interviewees could answer in all honesty, all participants only received the final version of the study. This ensured both privacy of all participants and accurate, unbiased data. More privacy was ensured by conducting the interviews in private locations in which the participant felt comfortable. The interviews were conducted in the language that the participants feel most confident with, between English and Dutch. This choice was made since discussing emotions, feelings and experiences has proven difficult in general and especially in a non-native tongue (Baumgartner, 2012; Denscombe, 2017). Lastly, the researcher made sure to remain passive and neutral during the interviews, meaning no reactions or statements occurred which possibly influenced the participants into giving certain responses. Doing so

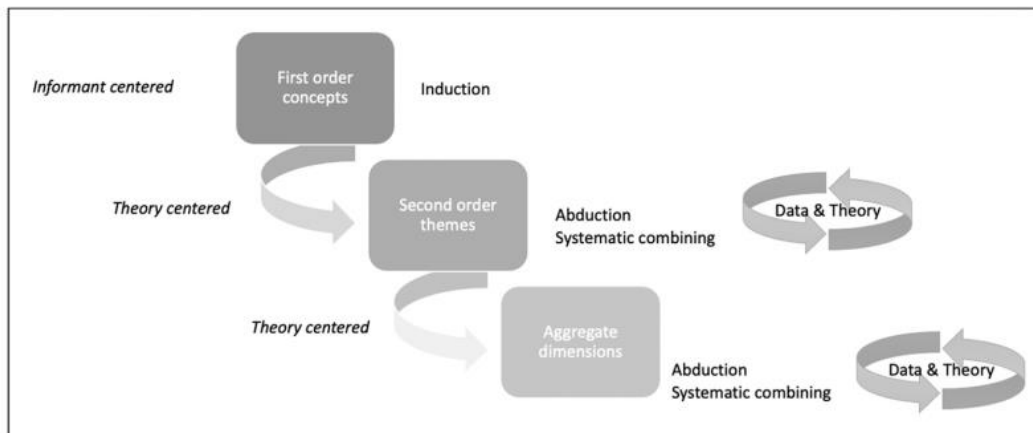
prevented participants from delivering biased answers and thus biased findings, due to social desirability bias (Chung & Monroe, 2003; Denscombe, 2017).

The development of potential follow-up questions helped the researcher to achieve consistency between all separate interviews during the study (Krauss et al., 2009). Follow-up question starting with; why, what, who, where, when and how are shown to instigate further thinking, reflection and elaboration from the participants during semi-structured interviews (Chenail, 2011; Turner, 2010). To instigate the aforementioned reactions, potential follow-up questions with the nature of 'why, what, who, where, when, how' have been developed. Additionally, other (follow-up) questions can be asked during the interview, which are spontaneous or based on answers presented by the participant (Chenail, 2011). Next to follow-up questions, non-verbal responses allow the participant to think and potentially elaborate further (Whiting, 2008). Lastly, the order of the items in the IRTC scale by Holt et al. (2007) was randomized for each separate interview. Which contributed to the reliability of the scale.

3.4 Qualitative data analysis

The data yielded by the semi-structured interviews was analysed using the Gioia method. The foundation of the Gioia methodology stems from the Grounded Theory Approach (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). The Grounded Theory Approach allows researchers to build theory from qualitative data, which has been yielded and analysed systematically (Dunne, 2011; Thornberg, 2017). An evolution of the Grounded Theory Approach is the Gioia methodology. The purpose of this methodology is to build theory derived from qualitative data, through its ability to capture complex constructs, such as affect, and their underpinnings (Gioia et al., 2013). Lastly, the Gioia methodology has philosophical underpinnings as it assumes that organizational phenomena, such as digital change, are socially constructed and are influenced by human agency (Magnani & Gioia, 2023).

Figure 4: The Inferential Process in developing a Data Structure (Magnani & Gioia, 2023, p. 3)



The Gioia methodology consists of two steps; conducting and analysing the qualitative data simultaneously and coding the data, which is sub-divided into three steps (Gioia, 2020). The Gioia methodology is visualized in *Figure 4*. The first stage of data analysis therefore commenced during the interviews, as the Gioia methodology suggests that the researcher should actively make notes and adapt to interesting comments by the interviewees. As a result, the first stages of coding also started during the interviews, since the researcher anticipated on the insights provided by the interviewee by conceptualizing draft assumptions and codes (Gioia, 2020). After transcribing all conducted interviews, the coding tool Atlas.ti was utilized to systematically code the interview transcripts. In which the second stage of data analysis was implemented, creating first-order codes that describe the most intriguing quotes by the interviewees, while adhering to the terms used by the interviewees. The aim was to form 50 to 100 first-order codes after coding all of the interviews (Gioia, 2020; Gioia et al., 2013). The third stage of data analysis is forming second-order themes by axially coding the previously developed first-order codes into similar categories. During this stage, the labels of the codes are becoming more theoretical while still adhering to terms used by the interviewees as much as possible. The aim was to form around 25 to 30 second-order themes, as suggested by Gioia (2020). During the fourth stage of data analysis, the goal was to form emerging themes that could explain and describe the

complex phenomena that surfaced during data collection, leading to aggregate dimensions. During this stage, it is important to focus on forming concepts that are not researched extensively in current literature (Gioia et al., 2013). The fifth, and last, stage of data analysis is creating a data structure (Gioia, 2020). This refers to the creation of a visual representation of both the findings of the coding procedures and the process of getting from raw data to the findings. The finalized data structure presents theoretical terms (aggregate dimensions) which accurately describe the insights provided by the interviewees and the underlying explanations of the phenomena, resulting the basis for the theoretical framework developed during the discussion chapter.

3.4.1 Data analysis validity and reliability

Using validated data analysis methods improves validity and reliability in a study. As this study employed the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013), validity and reliability are ensured during the data analysis. The Gioia methodology provides a clear data analysis structure, guiding the researcher into achieving accurate results and rigor in qualitative research (Gioia, 2020). This study did not rely on the use of computer software during the coding process. Manually coding the interview transcripts allowed the researcher to get familiarized with the data and the codes during the process (Razzak et al., 2023). Which, in turn, supported the researcher in understanding how and why certain phenomena occurred more effectively compared to using coding software. Furthermore, in order to achieve trustworthy data, the guidelines proposed by Morrow (2005) have been taken into account during data collection and analysis. Morrow (2005) argues that, to achieve 'trustworthiness', data should achieve the following: credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability.

In order to improve reliability of the data analysis, cross case analysis was used (Borman et al., 2012). Cross case analysis within case study improves generalizability and reliability data is analysed by comparing cases which share characteristics crucial to the study, while also having slight differences in characteristics or scenarios (Eisenhardt, 1989). Reliability was further solidified as the researcher achieved inter-rater reliability (IRR) during

data analysis by discussing the developed codes, themes and aggregate dimensions with peer researchers. IRR refers to the degree to which two or more raters or researchers agree on the formed data (Cheung & Tai, 2021; McDonald et al., 2019). According to Graham et al. (2014), the minimum IRR needed in order to ensure reliability is 75% when using absolute agreement IRR. As a result, the aim was to achieve at least an IRR of 75% during this data analysis.

4. Results

Before addressing the research question; *How does leaders' affect influence employees' readiness to change during digital transformation?* it is crucial to answer the question *if* leaders' affect influences employee readiness to change. The evidence in all four cases suggests it does, as the employees acknowledged the leaders' efforts to influence their IRTC and its influence. The data structures of each team, divided between the leader and the employees, are presented at the end of each case analysis.

4.1 Case analysis Team 1

4.1.1 *Does leaders' affect influence employee IRTC?*

All employees recognized the leader's effort to influence them. The first employee stated that he noticed the leader consciously expressing positive affect, with the purpose of influencing the employee. While another employee discussed how the expressed positivity of the leader has helped the team to maintain a positive view of the change and stay motivated for the change.

Employee: *"I do have the feeling that there is a conscious effort to express positivity to drag us along in that positivity."*

Interviewer: *"And do you feel that your leader sees this change as something positive or negative? And has that been expressed?"* **Employee:** *"As something positive. Yes. '...' That has been expressed as well. And I also think that it needs to be, so that everyone understands that it's also positive to move towards something*

new. So we'll wait and see. '...' There might be some differences still. But overall, everyone is positive, like, okay. It needs to happen, and we're just going to go for it."

One employee mentioned that he recognized the leader's fear of the change, essentially mirroring his leader's emotion.

Employee: "A bit of fear about... Yes, about what's going to change." **Interviewer:**

"Do you notice that yourself, or is it something you only see with your leader?"

Employee: "Well, I recognize that myself as well."

Another employee stated that the pro-active approach of the leader, a result of the leader's emotions, did take him along in that positivity.

Interviewer: "Do you also feel that he has been proactive in sharing his positivity?"

Employee: "Yes. Yes, very much. '...' " **Interviewer:** "Do you think it has had an

impact on you?" **Employee:** "It did take me along with it."

4.1.2 How does leaders' affect influence employee IRTC?

Summary: In this team, the leader actively manages employee attitudes and emotions, directly influencing their IRTC. This is achieved primarily by intentionally sharing certain emotions to influence the employees positively while withholding negative emotions to prevent any negative influences. Both methods indicate that the leader consciously utilizes his affect as a management tool. Lastly, the experienced emotions of the leader resulted in a pro-active state of affect, consequently resulting in his efforts to involve employees and emphasize with their emotions.

4.1.2.1 Leader purposely displays affect to manage employee IRTC.

The leader highlights the importance of managing employee IRTC during the change process, using his own affect to do so, in order to either generate support or alleviate concerns among employees. When asked whether the leader feels if his role is pivotal in shaping the dynamic towards the change, the following was discussed.

Interviewer: "Do you think that role is quite significant for you? That shaping of perceptions for the rest of the team?" '...'
Leader: "That's very important. Things can quite quickly take on a life of their own in the team." '...'
Leader: "In the team, there are colleagues who are very engaged and sometimes see obstacles that aren't necessary. And it's then the task to keep that managed."

The leader of this team assumes a crucial role in shaping employee IRTC during the change process, mainly in order to avoid speculation among employees which diminishes IRTC. He does so by explicitly sharing a certain state of affect he deems suitable. When asked for his rationale for influencing employee perspectives, the leader explains that some employees are very engaged and sometimes see obstacles that are not necessarily an issue, to which he believes it is his responsibility to alleviate those obstacles for the employees.

Leader: "For me, this represents an incredibly positive development. It offers us the opportunity to improve issues that we often encounter and that are limiting, in a good and effective way."

In the quote above, the leader states how the digital transformation is positive development, offering the organisation an opportunity to solve issues from the past, suggesting that he mainly focusses on increasing the employees' 'appropriateness' and 'management support' items of the IRTC scale. The leader was asked to elaborate on why he considers it necessary to influence IRTC within the team and how this is achieved. He explains to feel responsible to adjust inaccurate perceptions and opinions of the employees towards the change.

Leader: "The perception that sometimes exists within the team, or with an individual in the team, is not always a reflection of reality or the decision-making behind it. And then it's very important to have transparency and to involve the team in that."

Sometimes it's also good to express those concerns to create support or to alleviate the concerns."

The leader acknowledges to purposely display certain affect in order to influence employee IRTC during the change process. He achieves this by emphasizing that the change at hand primarily represents an opportunity for the organisation.

Interviewer: *"And have you actively tried to impose your perspective on the team, or have you completely let that go?"* **Leader:** *"Yes. With the people I've spoken to within the team, I often tried to emphasize that it's mainly an opportunity."*

4.1.2.2 Leader hides negative affect to avoid negative influence on employee IRTC

The leader indicates that he deliberately filters his emotions, which suggests the leader is well aware of the influence of his emotions on the employees' IRTC.

Interviewer: *"From your perspective, have you actively expressed your reactions to this change to the team?"* **Leader:** *"Yes, for me it's a bit in between. I always try to observe the situation first."* **Interviewer:** *"So if I understand correctly, you're a bit more passive in expressing what you initially think?"* **Leader:** *"Yes, I'm also part of the management team here, let's say. So, from that role, yes, you need to be a bit discreet."*

Leader: *"I don't want to say too much. Better to say too little than too much, we'll say. Because that will really take on a life of its own. So that, above all."*

The leader further explains that he avoids displaying his affect excessively, as he is concerned it will take on a life of its own among the employees, potentially negatively influencing employees' IRTC. Yet, he acknowledges that employees do need some form of guidance to prevent the development of an undesirable dynamic within the team.

The table below visualizes the employees' perspective of the leader's emotions during the change process. While the leader states to filter his own affect in order to minimize any

negative influences on his team, he also struggled to effectively convey positive emotions towards his team. Although the leader’s enthusiasm was observed, the employees failed to observe the leader being elated, calm and relaxed. While no negative emotions were perceived by the employees, the table still shows that the leader was not successful in conveying the desired emotions onto the employees.

Emotions experienced by leader	Leader’s emotions observed by employee #1	Leader’s emotions observed by employee #2	Leader’s emotions observed by employee #4
<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Enthusiastic</i>	Excited	Excited
Elated	Stressed	Stressed	Stressed
Calm	Excited		
Relaxed			

Table 6: Leaders observed versus true state of affect
 Note: Emotions displayed in **bold and cursive** are emotions correctly observed by an employee.

4.1.2.3 Leader’s pro-active state of affect influences his change approach.

During the digital transformation process, the leader came across being ‘elated’, ‘enthusiastic’, ‘calm’ and ‘relaxed’, placing him in the middle of the change pro-activeness and the change acceptance dimensions of the state of affect model. Even though the emotions place the leader in between acceptance and pro-activeness, he has stated to act more pro-active. His affect towards this particular change determined his approach on how to lead the change and guide the team during said change, in this case a pro-active approach. The leader’s pro-active approach to the change is evident in the statements and his experienced emotions.

Leader: *"For me, I see it as an incredibly positive development. It gives us the opportunity to, as I just mentioned, improve things that we often run into now and that are limiting, in a good and effective way."*

Transparency, empathy and employee involvement are central to the manager's pro-active approach. Employees are involved during decision making and information about the strategy of the change is shared openly, to foster a collaborative environment towards the change at hand.

Leader: *"Additionally, it's important for me to ensure that the team also supports the change. But that's mainly objective. So, you need to be transparent about what's happening. For instance, during the update meetings, a lot of information is shared about the strategies, choices, and decisions being made. Yes, the team is kept informed. There are employees involved, and sometimes it's really necessary to provide some guidance to prevent a certain dynamic from developing."*

Leader: *"I regularly involve the team in the decision-making process and the potential impact that any decision might have, given my role. '...' So that you can keep looking ahead constructively. And then transparency is very important, especially when you have meetings where not the entire development team or part of the team is invited, you still want to involve the rest of your team in the decision-making and the information that has been shared."*

Leader: *"If someone is involved in something, then they already accept about 90% of it, so to speak. Whereas if you don't involve someone and say the exact same thing two weeks later, it's not their idea and they aren't involved. So, it often becomes negative."*

Employees recognize the leader's pro-active approach towards the change and acknowledged its effectiveness.

Interviewer: *"And do you feel that your leader sees this change as something positive or negative? And has that been expressed?"* **Employee:** *"As something positive. '...'* **Interviewer:** *"Do you also feel that he has been proactive in that?"*

Employee: "Yes, he tried to continuously initiate communication and follow up. Encouraging people to think along."

Employee: "If someone has a negative view, they are questioned about it. It's acknowledged that while they may be right, they should stay calm because everyone is involved, and we'll take this into account."

Employee: "Yes, it really gets you involved and gives positive energy. I feel more motivated to actually get started."

4.1.3 Case Conclusion

The analysis of this case has evidently shown that the leader has obtained a deliberate role in shaping employee IRTC through his state of affect. The leader is conscious about the influence of his affect, as he actively utilizes his affect to influence employee attitudes and IRTC. His strategy consists of sharing positive emotions to foster positivity, while filtering out his negative emotions to avoid any negative influences, crafting a 'displayed state of affect'. His approach of employing his affect as a management tool aimed to foster motivation and positivity among the employees during the change process. Employees recognized the leader's efforts to influence them positively and remarked that the leader was successful in doing so.

The emotions experienced by the leader forced him to the pro-active state of affect, further shaping the influence of his affect by determining his approach towards the change. The pro-active approach of the leader expressed itself through transparency, empathy and employee involvement, allowing him to level with and motivating the employees. Resulting in the employees feeling heard and taken into consideration.

Figure 5: Theoretical Model Case 1

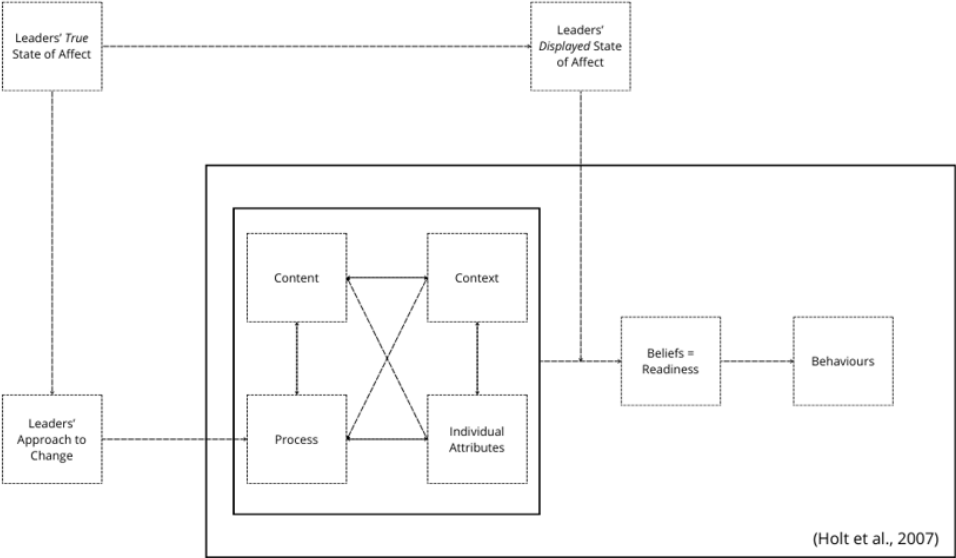


Figure 6: Data Structure leader Team 1

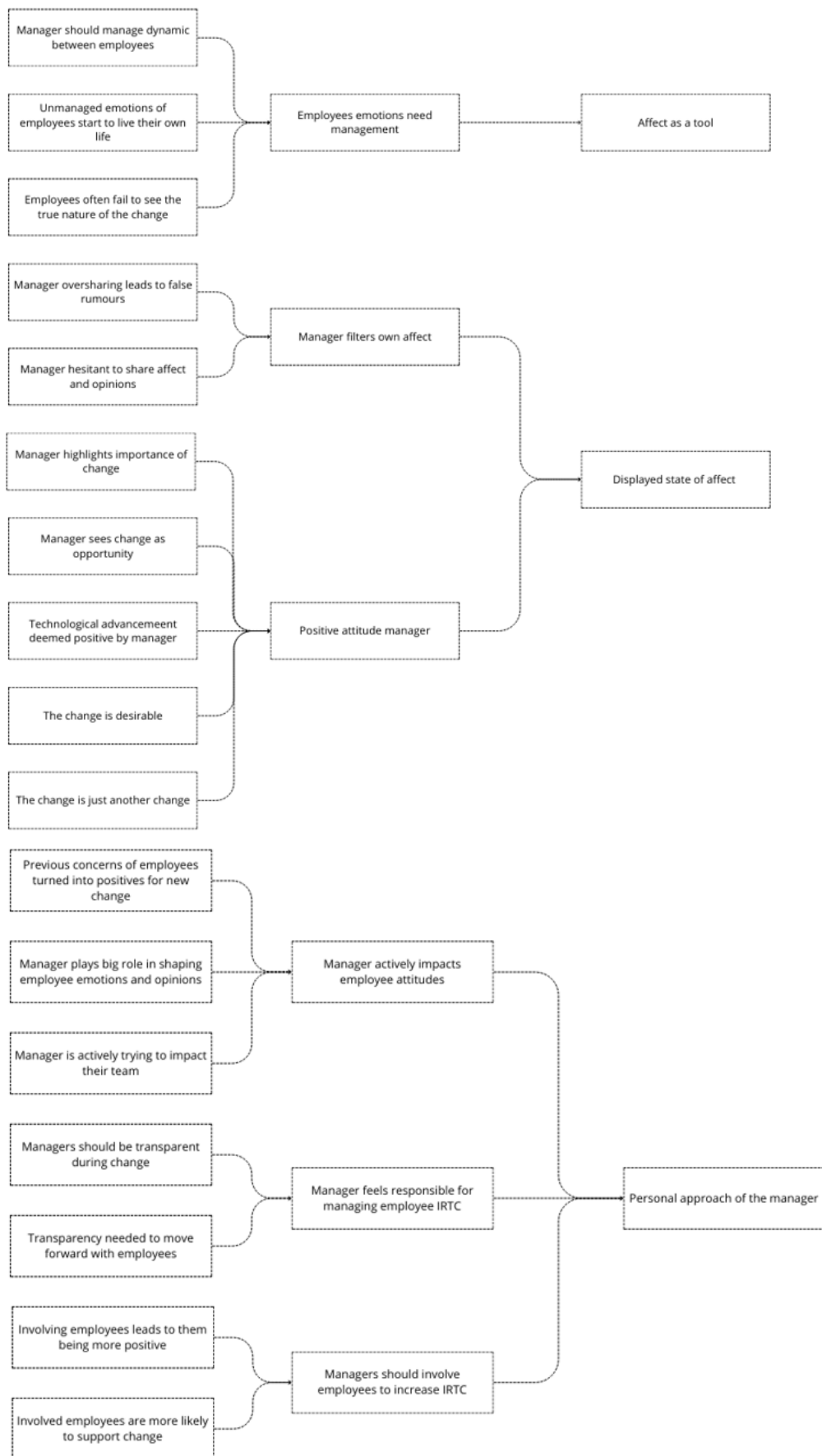
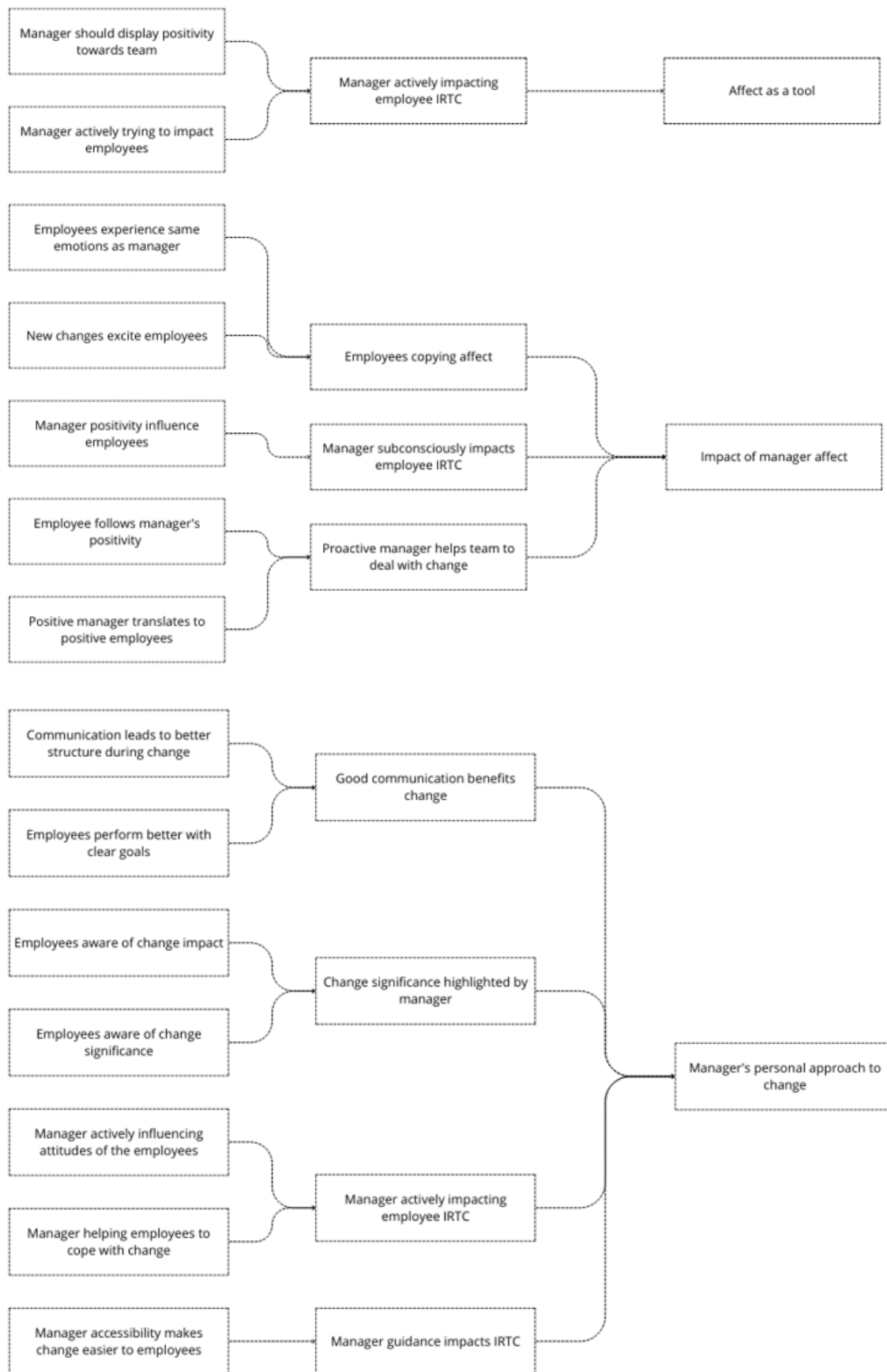


Figure 7: Data Structure employees Team 1



4.2 Case Analysis Team 2

4.2.1 Does leader's affect influence employee IRTC?

The employees in this team acknowledge the influence of their leader's affect during the change process. One employee states that their own IRTC and the leader's affect are interconnected, and thus the leader's affect definitely influences IRTC both positively and negatively. Another employee discusses how their leader being upset during the change process has had somewhat of an influence on him. Additionally, an employee discusses that, when two colleagues experience a similar feeling, their emotions tend to be reinforced by each other.

Employee: "Ultimately, I do think that, she is positive." **Leader:** "Do you feel that this has had an impact on you or on the team as a whole?" '...' **Employee :** "Yes, it's quite interconnected, so what the other person thinks definitely influences each other. Uh, so I do think that, but it doesn't necessarily have to be negative, of course."

Interviewer: "And could you indicate which emotions she has demonstrated or expressed, or how it comes across to you regarding her stance on the matter?"

Employee: "Yes, maybe a bit upset sometimes." **Interviewer:** "Did you notice that a lot? Did that have an impact on you? These reactions?" **Employee:** "I did notice it, maybe a bit of an influence."

Employee: "So, if you're feeling a bit like, someone else has a similar feeling about it, then you naturally start to reinforce each other's feelings."

4.2.2 How does leader's affect influence employee IRTC?

Summary: In this team, the leader's affect influences employees' IRTC in three ways, the first method being the direct influence of the leader's affect onto employee IRTC. Additionally, the leader consciously manages her own affect to limit or extent its effect. The leader's focus is on limiting any negative influences because of her state of affect during the change process, while maintaining some level of transparency towards the employees.

Lastly, the leader consciously utilizes her own affect to raise positivity among the employees. Employees' emotions, and thus IRTC, are also influenced directly by the displayed affect of the leader.

4.2.2.1 Leader purposely displays positive affect to raise employee IRTC.

The leader utilizes her state of affect as a management tool, to manage employee emotions and IRTC. The leader discussed her efforts to raise positivity among her employees when they were not all on the same page, yet the influence was not excessive.

Interviewer: *"Have you, '...' tried to influence their perspective somewhat? If you've done that actively?"* **Leader:** *"Usually, we're pretty much on the same page.*

Sometimes we don't. And then I do try to encourage them to look positively at the world again. So I think I've tried to do that a little, but not excessively."

Leader: *"Well, in that case, it's actually more active. I was aware that I had, yes, somewhat influenced them."*

When asked whether the leader consciously or unconsciously influenced the employees during the change process, the leader acknowledged her efforts to actively influence the employees to generate a more positive attitude towards the change.

4.2.2.2 Leader filters own affect to avoid negative influence on employee IRTC.

The leader of Team 2 expresses to strive for transparency towards her employees while simultaneously filtering out negative affect, primarily to avoid exerting negative influences on the employee IRTC. However, the leader acknowledges to have partially shared her concerns during the change.

Interviewer: *"But the question is, have you expressed that to the rest of your team?"*

Leader: *"Partially, yes."*

Leader: *"Well, because I do want to be somewhat transparent. So I think it's important to be honest about that. At the same time, I also try to keep some things to*

myself. So there's that. So I haven't shared everything. But there are some things that I think are important for them to know how I feel about it."

When asked for her reasoning as to why she shares some concerns, the leader explains to strive for transparency towards the employees, while keeping some negative emotions to herself. In the two quotes below, the employee state to have been unable to get a clear indication of the leader's valence towards the change, a result of the leader filtering her own affect.

Interviewer: "Is a clear opinion is really expressed?" **Employee:** 'Uh, no, I haven't gotten a clear opinion on that yet" **Interviewer:** "So it's not that she actively expresses that to you? **Employee:** No."

Employee: "No, I haven't heard whether she is really positive about it or not. But I think she's not really explicitly negative or very positive about it. It's kind of in between."

Below in Table 2, the leader's displayed and true affect are visualised. Notably, all employees observed the leader to be calm during the change, yet only one employee observed the leader to be stressed and upset. The leader indicated to be the most involved with employee #6 during this change, which may explain how he was able to notice those emotions when colleagues did not. The leader also experienced helplessness, which she managed to hide from her team.

Emotions experienced by leader	Leader's emotions observed by employee #5	Leader's emotions observed by employee #6	Leader's emotions observed by employee #7
<i>Calm</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>Calm</i>
<i>Stressed</i>	Excited	<i>Stressed</i>	Relaxed
<i>Upset</i>		<i>Upset</i>	
<i>Helpless</i>			

Table 7: Leader's observed versus true state of affect

Note: Emotions displayed in **bold and cursive** are emotions correctly observed by an employee.

4.2.3 Case conclusion

In conclusion, the leader's affect plays a significant role in influencing employee IRTC during their digital transformation. The findings indicate that the leader consciously employs her state of affect as a management tool, to positively influence employee IRTC when necessary, particularly by sharing positive affect in response to employees' negativity towards the change. Furthermore, the leader acknowledges the significance of her affect in shaping employee IRTC as she deliberately filters her state of affect to avoid expressing negative emotions and consequently hurting employee IRTC, creating a '*displayed state of affect*'. Successfully, as two out of three employee failed to observe the leader being stressed, helpless and upset while the last employee failed to observe the leader's helplessness.

Figure 8: Theoretical Model case 2

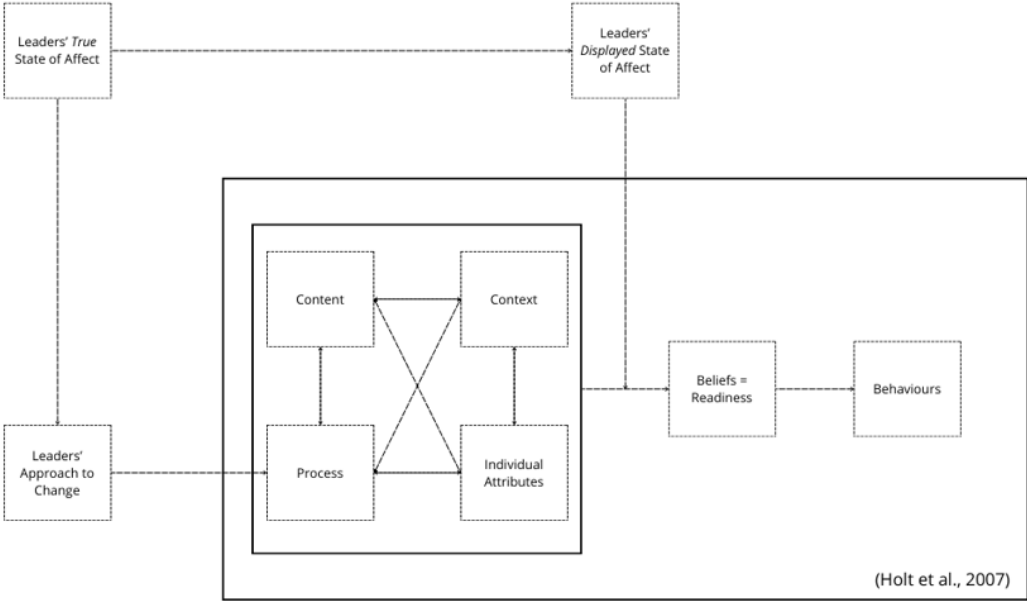


Figure 9: Data Structure leader Team 2

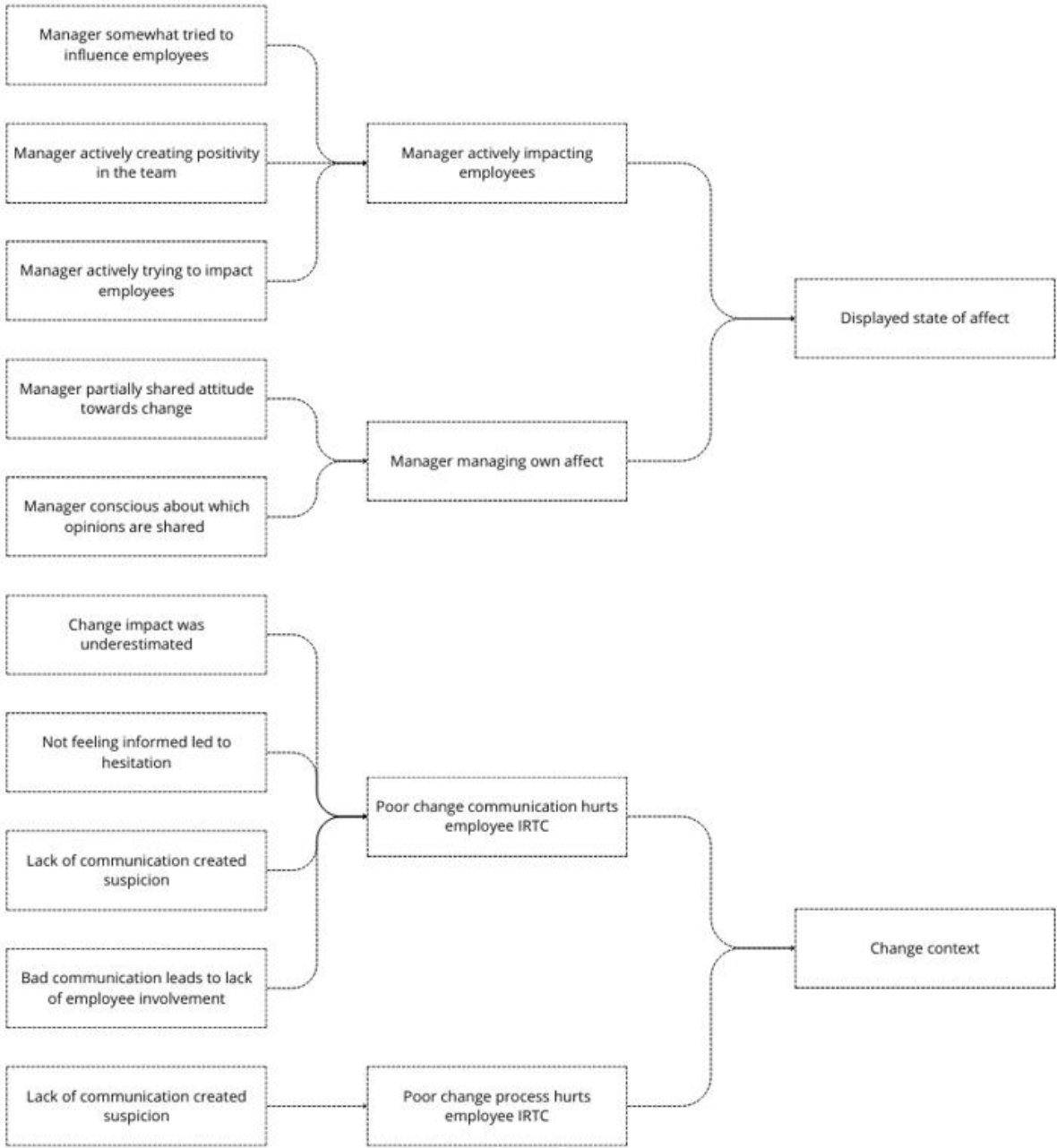
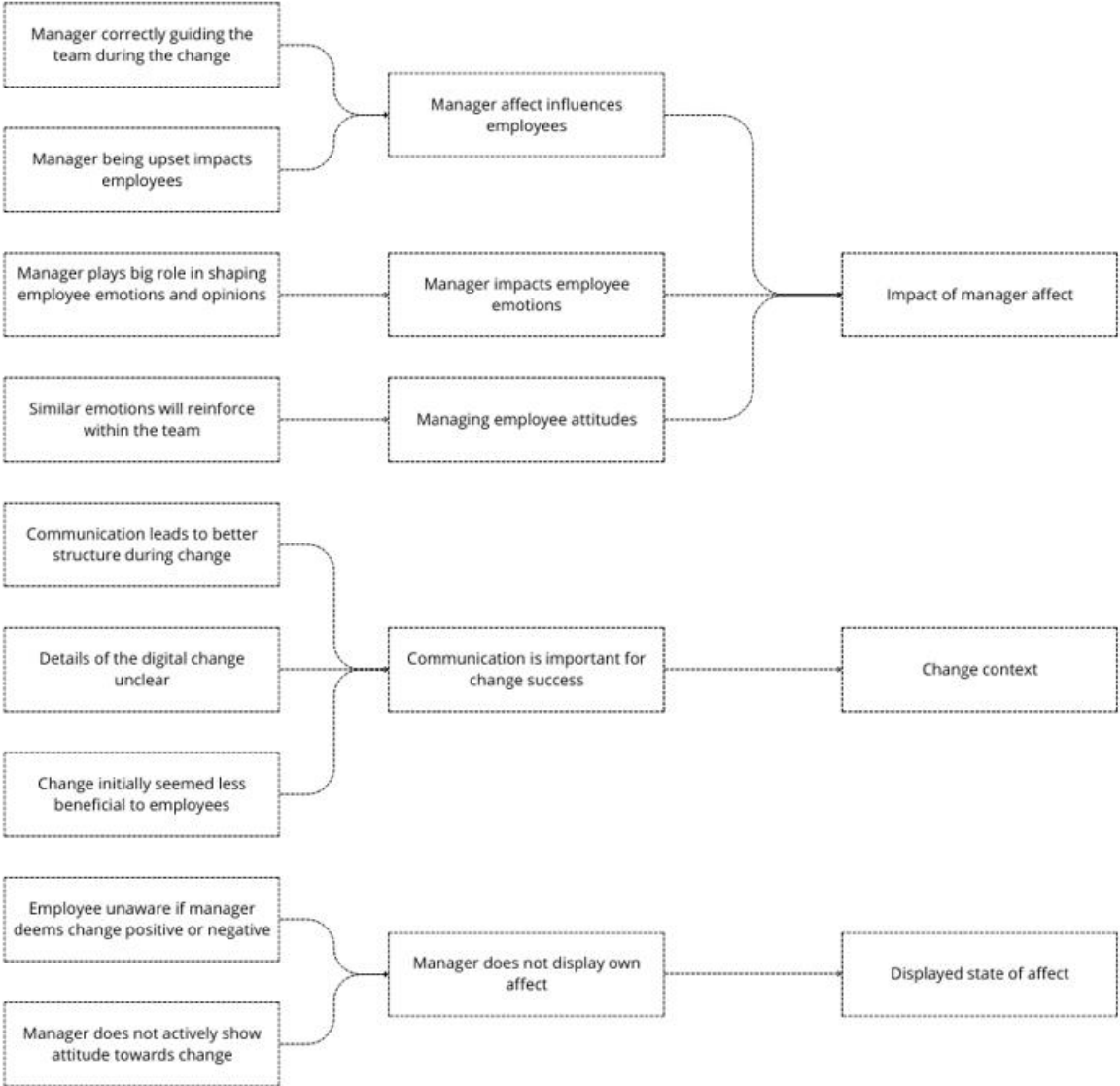


Figure 10: Data Structure employees Team 2



4.3 Case analysis Team 3

4.3.1 Does leader's affect influence employee IRTC?

The employees explain how the leader's approach to the change has a positive impact on their IRTC by encouraging all employees to embrace the change and being present in all separate locations of the team in order to remain visible and a point of contact. This pro-active engagement by the leader helped the team reach a collective point in which they all support the change. When the employees were asked to express their thoughts about the impact of the leader's positive state of affect, the following was discussed.

Employee: *"Well, he is mainly relaxed and enthusiastic, and well excited. Yeah, he can really take you along in that." '...'* **Interviewer:** *"And how does that impact you?"*

Employee: *"Yes, that's definitely good, of course. If you have someone who constantly complains, that's not good either. He often seems relaxed about it."*

Interviewer: *"But these statements, are they still relevant, considering how you feel about things now? Have they changed significantly over the course of the process? Maybe some statements were rated higher or lower at the beginning?"*

Employee: *"Well, the top statement was at about a one. So if this change was appropriate, yes, I would think, absolutely not. But now, yes."*

The leader's positive state of affect has influenced the employee positively, as he is quite relaxed about the change. One employee expresses appreciation for her leader not constantly complaining about the change as that would not have been beneficial, while another employee notes a substantial increase in his IRTC since the beginning of the process. The last two quotes confirm how the leader's affect has had a positive influence through his change approach, which is discussed further later on in this chapter.

Employee: *"He just tries to encourage everyone. He visits the locations every week, just to show his face. To be a point of contact. Which is indeed good"*

Employee: *“He has involved us in everything, and because of that, we have collectively reached a good point, so to speak.”*

4.3.2 How does leader’s affect influence employee IRTC

Summary: In the case of Team 3, the leader’s affect has an impact on employee IRTC throughout the change process. Interestingly, as one of the change initiators, the leader truly experienced his positive affect towards the change, allowing him to express his true affect when displaying positivity onto the employees. The leader is conscious of his role and how his affect plays into that role during the change process, by actively employing his state of affect as a tool to manage employee IRTC. The leader’s emotions regarding the change result in a pro-active state of affect, determining his pro-active approach towards the change. Which is mainly expressed by his empathy and employee involvement.

4.3.2.1 Leader purposely displays positive affect to raise employee IRTC.

The leader of Team 3 recognizes the impacts of his state of affect on the employees in his team, as he utilizes his own affect as a tool. When asked whether he has consciously shared his affect to influence his employees, the leader answered the following.

Interviewer: *“And well, you have certain reactions to that change. ‘...’ Did you actively express those to the rest of the team?”* **Leader:** *“Yes, in my case, I did. I actively expressed the change we were going through to the rest of the team.”*

Interviewer: *“ Yes, the change in general, but also how you really viewed it? So, really the emotions that come into play?”* **Leader:** *“Yes.”*

Interviewer: *“Have you also actively tried to influence your employees’ perspective, because you might get the feeling that they’re viewing it the wrong way or missing certain things?”* **Leader:** *“Well, I did steer it a bit.”*

The leader acknowledges to explicitly express his attitudes and emotions regarding the change. He further explains to have actively tried to influence the perspective of his

employees towards the change and steer them into the right direction. When asked for his reasoning, the leader explains why he tries to influence the employees.

Leader: *“You’re still searching, and when a team is searching, it can come across to some people that things aren’t happening quickly enough or that it’s not clear enough. But some things can’t be made clearer at the moment, and that can be a bit difficult. And I try to say, yes, of course, I would also like it to be clear, but it just isn’t right now. Let’s hold on to the fact that we know we want to get to that clarity. It will come, but let’s please not start doubting that it will come, as that is often detrimental.”*

Leader: *“If there has been a, I don’t want to say negative, but a hesitant thought about something, let’s say a piece of software or something, that if you approach it this way with the team, a positive thought can come out of it.”*

Leader: *“Now and then, it’s very good to indicate and make clear what this is all for. And that can be done in various ways.”*

As a team searches for the most effective way to handle the change, it can sometimes feel a bit slow, according to the leader. He addresses how his affect helps him to convince his team they are not alone and he also experiences these doubts, to avoid doubts among the employees and keep the team on track. Indicating what this effort will bring in the end motivates employees.

4.3.2.1 Leader’s true affect directly influences employee IRTC.

In the interview, the leader explained to use his own state of affect to influence and shape employee emotions and attitudes towards the change. As one of the initiators of this change, the leader truly supports the change and all its goals, eliminating any need to alter his expressed affect. Additionally, he emphasises the importance of transparency and staying true to himself. His positive state of affect allows the leader to spread positivity and consequently raise employee IRTC when sharing his true affect.

Leader: *"I was one of the initiators saying there is a need to change. '...' I wrote various documents for that. I met with several committees, from a works council member to directors and board members. Well, now it has become a supported initiative, and then we got to work."*

Leader: *"Some people want everything to be clear right away. And sometimes I can't provide that clarity, and I honestly say, sorry, I can't give that clarity right now."*

Interviewer: *"And do you have a reason for why you expressed your emotions?"*

Leader: *"I think if you show that, it lands better, and you come across better. You always have to stay true to yourself."*

Employees express a desire for clarity throughout the change process, to which the leader admits being unable to provide such clarity. According to the leader, offering such transparency and staying true to himself improves his credibility with the employees, who are aware of the support and effort of the leader. The employees' recognition of the leader's influence is evident, highlighted by the leader's effort and inclusive language, referring to the team as "we".

Interviewer: *"Does he see this as something positive?"* **Employee:** *"He sees this as something positive."* **Interviewer:** *"How do you notice that?"* **Employee:** *"Just the whole way he talks about it. Very positive, he always talks about 'we.' So yes, you can gather that he feels very positively about it."*

Employee: *"He does everything to get everyone on the same page. You can't argue against that."* **Interviewer:** *"And what do you think about that?"* **Employee:** *"Yes, I find that very pleasant."*

Table 3 below visualizes the true emotions of the leader in comparison to the emotions observed by the employees. Notably, all employees observed the leader to be relaxed and enthusiastic, which are in line with his true emotions. However, the employees were unable to notice the leader being stressed and content, which may have occurred due

to the leader overshadowing his stress with positive emotions, as these positive are true of heart. Additionally, the leader stated how his 'stress' was nuanced and not very intense. Nevertheless, the table shows how all employees have observed only positive emotions from the leader.

Emotions experienced by leader	Leader's emotions observed by employee #1	Leader's emotions observed by employee #2	Leader's emotions observed by employee #4
<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Enthusiastic</i>
<i>Relaxed</i>	<i>Relaxed</i>	<i>Relaxed</i>	<i>Relaxed</i>
Stressed	Calm	Calm	Excited
Content		Excited	

Table 8: Leader's observed versus true state of affect

Note: Emotions displayed in **bold and cursive** are emotions correctly observed by an employee.

4.3.2.3 Leader's pro-active state of affect influences his change approach

As the leader experienced being relaxed, enthusiastic, stressed and content, experienced a change pro-active state of affect, partially determining his personal approach towards the change. The leader's pro-active change approach expresses itself through transparency, a clear vision for the organisation and empathy with the employees.

***Interviewer:** "Why was your response so active?" **Leader:** "It's not about me, but about what I think fits best for the organisation. '...' You're really just the motivator, and then they take it on themselves without even realizing it."*

***Leader:** "This is a change I believe in. When you believe in it yourself, it works best. "If it's a change coming from higher up, that could also be the case, but if it's a*

change imposed from higher up, ‘...’ in that case, it might be difficult to be enthusiastic.”

Most importantly, the leader mentioned how his pro-active state of affect, originating from his positive emotions and genuine belief in the change, contributed to his ability to raise positivity. As the leader supports the change, he focusses on motivating the employees to support the change as well. Below, the employee discussed how the leader’s pro-active approach towards the change influenced them. To start, the employees state that having a leader who is open and honest towards them, and discusses certain issues one-on-one is important. Which is where the leader will raise the most positivity among the employees. Another employee highlighted the significance of the leader's visibility, which enhances transparency regarding his contributions to the team and the overall change process.

Employee: *“Be open. Be honest. And just discuss it one-on-one. Yes. Because that’s where you gain the most.”*

Employee: *“And just like I said, he makes himself visible and heard. And I think that’s important too. Because if you have a leader who just stays in their office saying, yes, I’ll take care of things, you might wonder, but what exactly are you taking care of? But he does involve us in what he wants, and I think that’s important too.”*

4.3.3 Case conclusion

In conclusion, the role of the leader in this team is clearly pivotal. The leader actively manages employees’ IRTC by utilizing his state of affect towards the change as a management tool. Purposely spreading positivity by sharing positive emotions allows him to influence employee attitudes and increase positivity. According to the leader, the fact that he truly supports this change initiative as one of the change initiators, allows him to influence the employees more effectively. The emotions experienced by the leader as the change initiator are positive, resulting in a change pro-active approach by the leader. Through his pro-active

change approach, characterized by employee involvement, transparency and empathy, the leader's affect indirectly influences employee IRTC.

Figure 11: Theoretical model case 3

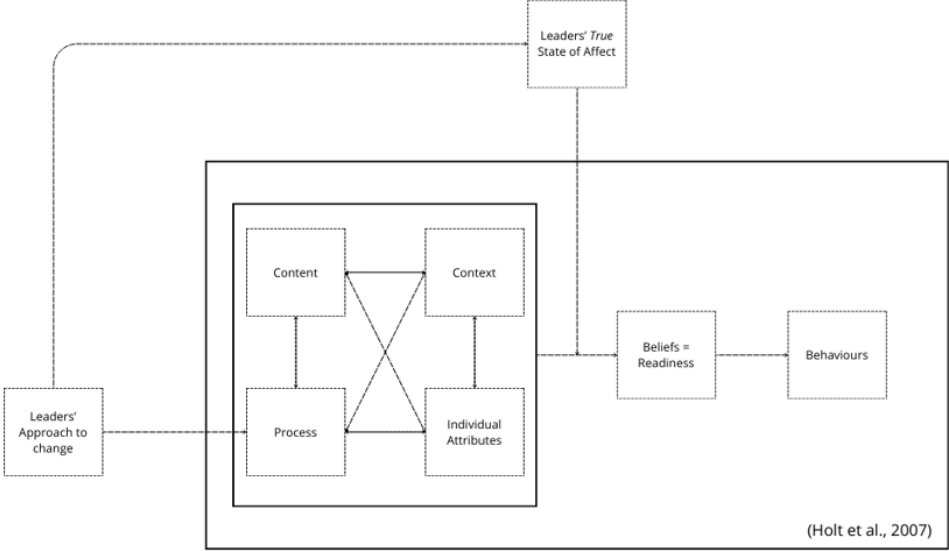
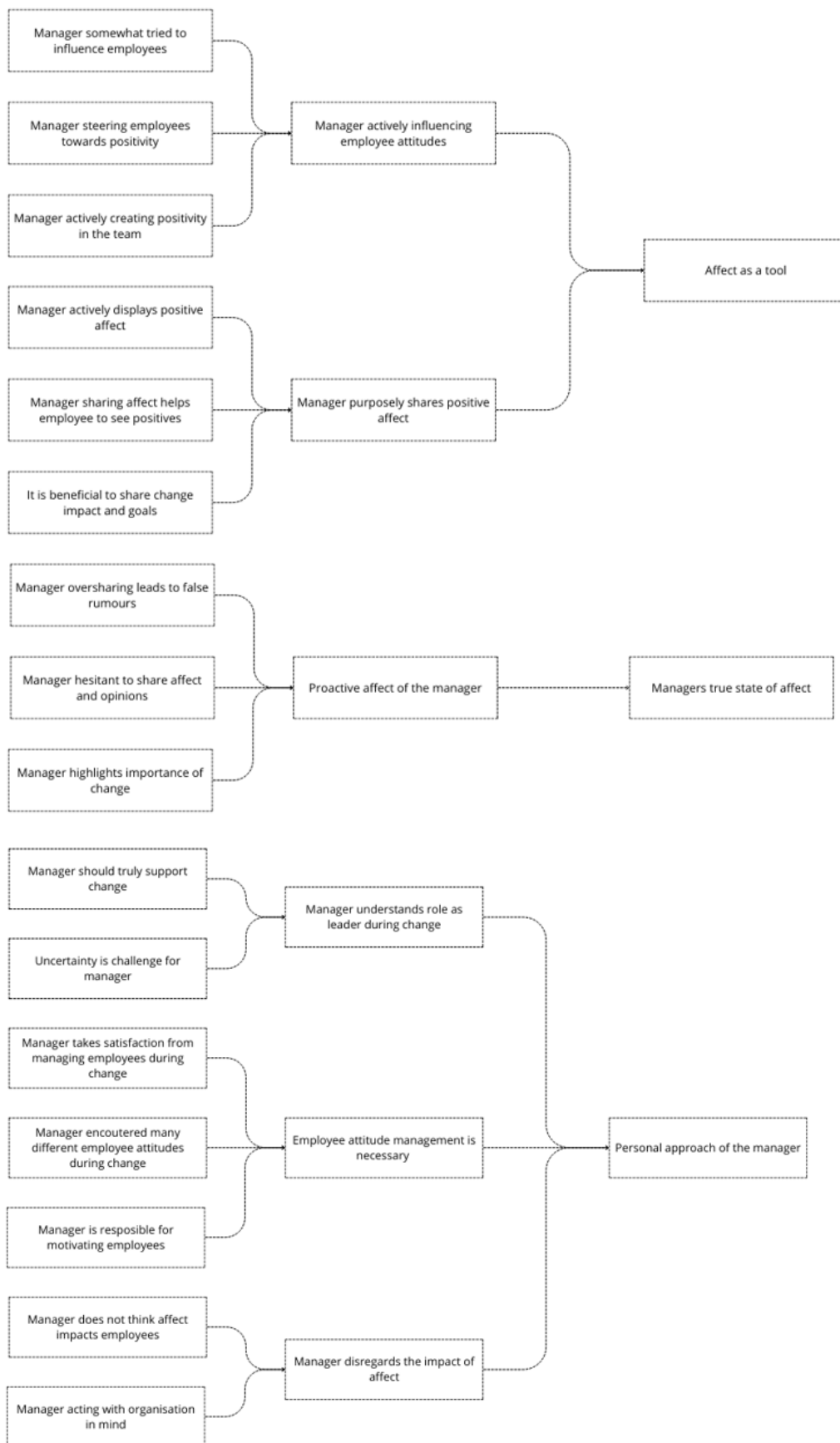


Figure 12: Data Structure leader Team 3



4.4 Case analysis Team 4

4.4.1 Does leader's affect influence employee IRTC

The in the following quotes, the leader explains that the change process has reached a stage where support for the change is greater than ever, indicating increased employee IRTC since the initiation of the change process. These quotes provide evidence for the increase in employee IRTC, of which the analysis suggested the cause is the leader's affect.

Interviewer: *"Do you have the impression that there has been significant resistance? That there has been a considerable amount of negativity towards the change?"*

Leader: *"Yes"* **Interviewer:** *"And have you been able to play a role in addressing that?"* **Leader:** *"Yes, exactly, I think it aligns with what I have already mentioned to some extent."* **Interviewer:** *"And has the perspective of that employee truly changed because of that?"* **Leader:** *"Yes, my perception is that the employee's perspective has indeed significantly changed."*

In the quote, the leader discusses his role in shaping employees' perspectives and decreasing their resistance to change, using his affect as a tool. When asked whether his IRTC has changed during the change process due to the leader's affect, employees stated the following;

Employee: *"Yes, due to an improper approach, I believe that initially, around December, the sentiment was more along the lines of, 'We really cannot handle this right now. I actually think there has been an upward trend all around."*

Interviewer: *"And that sense of excitement, how do you notice or observe it?"*

Employee: *"Um, especially because of the energy he has to tackle this change. He involves everyone and is quite upbeat."*

Employee: *"And now I do notice that they are really putting in all efforts to make this go as smoothly as possible. So he is completely 100% behind it. We know that it's serious, so to speak."*

4.4.2 How does leader's affect influence employee IRTC

Summary: The leader of Team 4 is aware of the influences of his own state of affect, as he acknowledges to utilize it as a tool during the change process. He discusses to deliberately express positive emotions to motivate employees and help them see the true goals of the change process, while filtering negative emotions.

4.4.2.1 Leader purposely displays positive affect to raise employee IRTC.

Interestingly, the leader is aware of the impact his affect has on the employees in the team. When asked whether the leader actively tried to influence employee opinions using his state of affect, the leader admits doing so. He explains that the goal is to raise positivity and increase IRTC among the employees towards the change.

***Interviewer:** "The next question is whether you have actively tried to influence the opinions of the employees?" **Leader:** "Yes, I think so. It sounds a bit manipulative, but indeed, that's what you do. By sticking to the course, but also by having conversations with the people."*

***Interviewer:** "And why do you share the positive then?" **Leader:** "Yes, I've always tried to inspire the people in operations to move forward. So that, and trying to tell the right story, so they can feel that energy or support to continue."*

By purposely sharing positive affect, the leader aims to inspire and support employees to foster energy and support towards the change. When asked to elaborate on how employee IRTC improved, the leader provided three examples during the change process where he believes his affect has positively influenced employee IRTC.

***Leader:** "The setup was such that a certain quality couldn't be delivered. And we just kept running into that. So we reorganized it. Because you have to be realistic. The environment isn't set up to do this well. And that's the big distinction. So people experience it as, 'I'm not doing well.' But that's not the message. The message is, 'The system is not set up properly.' But if you don't explicitly state that, it feels like, 'I'm*

not doing well. We're not doing well.' But it's not about you as a person. And separating that from each other is quite a challenge."

This example illustrates how the leader's opinions and emotions towards were expressed towards struggling employees, helping the employees to better understand the true nature of the change rather than doubting their abilities or performance. In this case, the positive nuance provided by the leader helped increase the employee IRTC. Another example displays how the leader utilizes his positive affect to influence struggling employees' IRTC.

Leader: *"How we could help them was that we just kept injecting a lot of positivity by constantly mentioning what was going well or sending them little notes when we got a hint that, 'Hey, they noticed that this or that is improving.' Making that big and saying, 'Hey, this is your contribution to it.' So also being engaged in the question of what exactly their contribution is and where that leads, I think that ultimately kept things afloat. '...' So that was also an important aspect. Very often, we had weekly evaluations with them, and this was almost always the topic of conversation: how they were doing and how they could deal with that resistance."*

4.4.2.2 Leader purposely filters affect to avoid negative influence on employee IRTC.

In addition to deliberately expressing exaggerated positive affect, the leader explains how some doubts and negative emotions are purposely withheld from the employees to avoid change resistance and maintain high IRTC. The leader typically filtered out most negative emotions when interacting with his employees, in the quote below, the leader acknowledges how he did show his true affect towards employees of the management team. Which emphasizes the leader's awareness of the impact of his negative emotions.

Leader: *"Well, I've noticed that, over time, I have made several shifts or adjustments. And we just didn't make any progress to the point that we had to discuss whether we even wanted to do this at all. I felt a bit lost at times because I had just arrived, and I*

*didn't know the entire content of the change, and those who did knew were contradicting each other 180 degrees. '...' So it just remained a kind of standstill, and tensions were running high. I remember having to work really hard to see if I could unpack that and ultimately put a stamp on it by saying, 'Okay, we're moving in this direction now.' I remember standing in that room while the entire ATMT was discussing this. Yes, it was really heated. I felt a lot of stress trying to find a way to break through that." **Interviewer:** "Okay, and that is in the level above you?" **Leader:** "No, this is in my own level, within the management."*

These quotes display how the leader did in fact experience negative emotions and shared expressed these towards direct colleagues while hiding them from his employees, confirming how the leader's displayed state of affect differs from his true state of affect. One of the leader's reasons for hiding negative emotions was to convey stability during unstable times, otherwise instability will occur among employees. Lastly, the leader discusses how, even when he strives to be transparent and realistic regarding the change, he subconsciously withholds uncertainties or doubts to avoid exerting negative influences on employee IRTC.

Leader: *"I also think it's very important for a leader of such a department to remain stable at that moment, at least to express stability. Because if I appear unstable, it creates unrest among the team."*

Leader: *"Well, no... I do believe I'm transparent and realistic. I indicate where we want to go and how we want to get there, and I'm very confident about that. I do sometimes mention that I can't always know for sure, so to speak. '...' But maybe I subconsciously hold back some uncertainties or doubts to avoid resistance or something like that."*

The leader emphasizes that he does not entirely fake his opinions and emotions as some true struggles are shared during the change process, which are necessary to

effectively involve employees. While trying to share honest attitudes, the leader explains to subconsciously withholding some insecurities and doubts from the employees. This highlights the difference between his true affect and his displayed state of affect. In table 4 below, the feelings experienced by the leader and the leader’s feelings observed by the employees are displayed. The green feelings indicate the feelings observed correctly by the employees and the red feelings indicate the feelings missed by the employees. Notably, the employees failed to notice helplessness and anger with the leader, which he genuinely experienced.

Emotions experienced by leader	Leader’s emotions observed by employee #1	Leader’s emotions observed by employee #2	Leader’s emotions observed by employee #4
<i>Stressed</i>	<i>Excited</i>	<i>Stressed</i>	<i>Excited</i>
<i>Excited</i>	<i>Stressed</i>	Calm	Relaxed
Helpless	Calm	Content	Calm
Angry	Enthusiastic	Enthusiastic	Content

Table 9: Leader’s observed versus true state of affect
 Note: Emotions displayed in ***bold and cursive*** are emotions correctly observed by an employee.

4.4.3 Case conclusion

In team 4, the leader's state of affect evidently plays a pivotal role in managing employee IRTC during the change process. The leader's deliberate use of positive affect allows him to utilize his affect as a management tool to influence employee IRTC directly. Furthermore, filtering out most negative emotions allows the leader to reduce negative influenced on employees with a displayed state of affect, which is more positive than his true affect.

Figure 14: Theoretical Model case 4

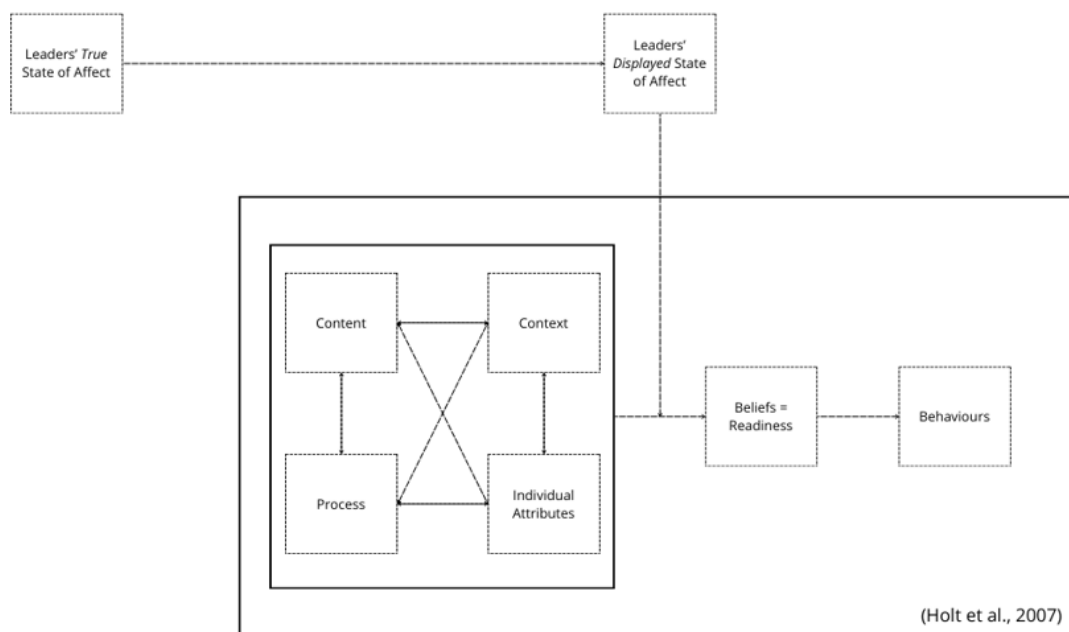


Figure 15: Data Structure leader Team 4 – Part 1

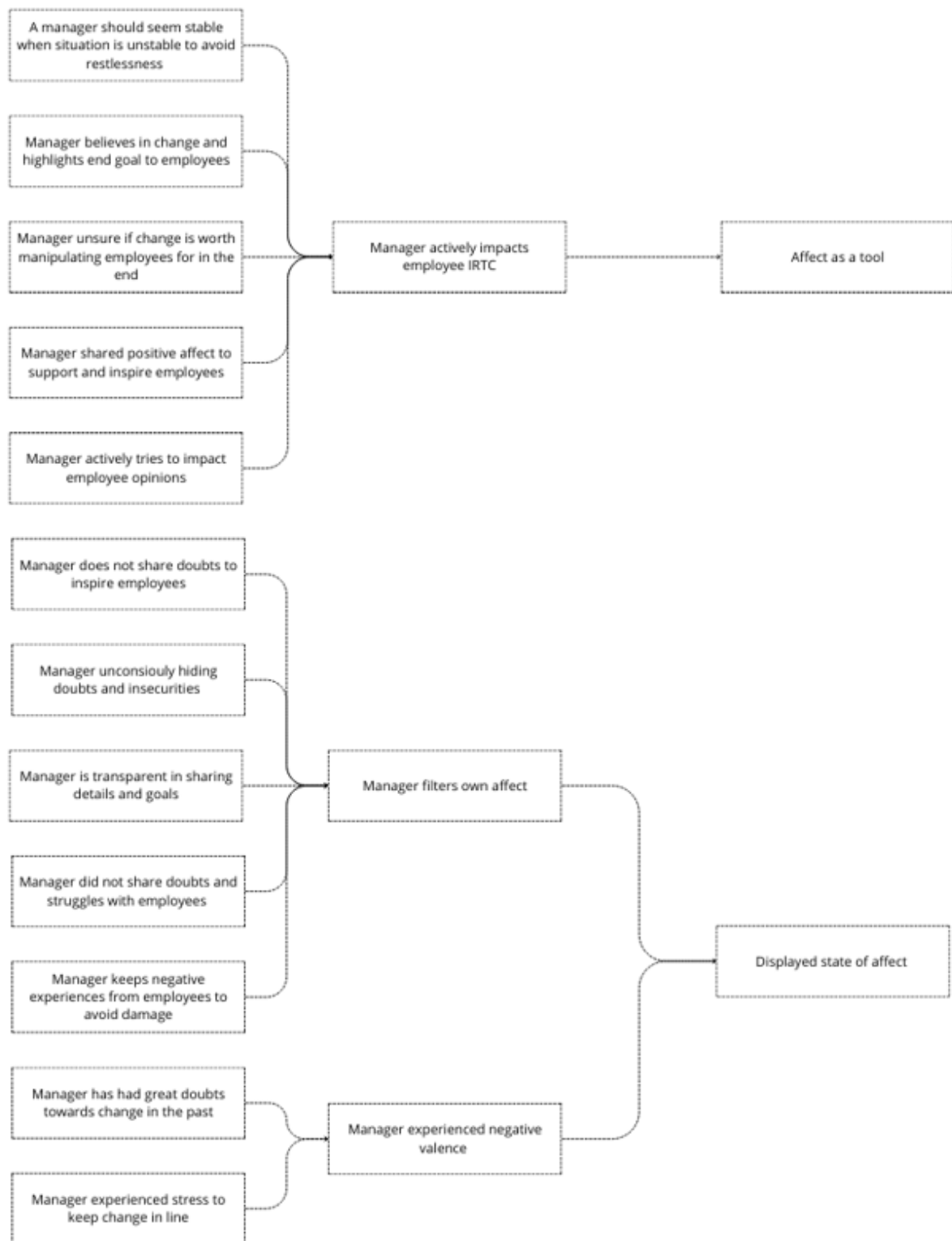


Figure 16: Data Structure leader Team 4 – Part 2

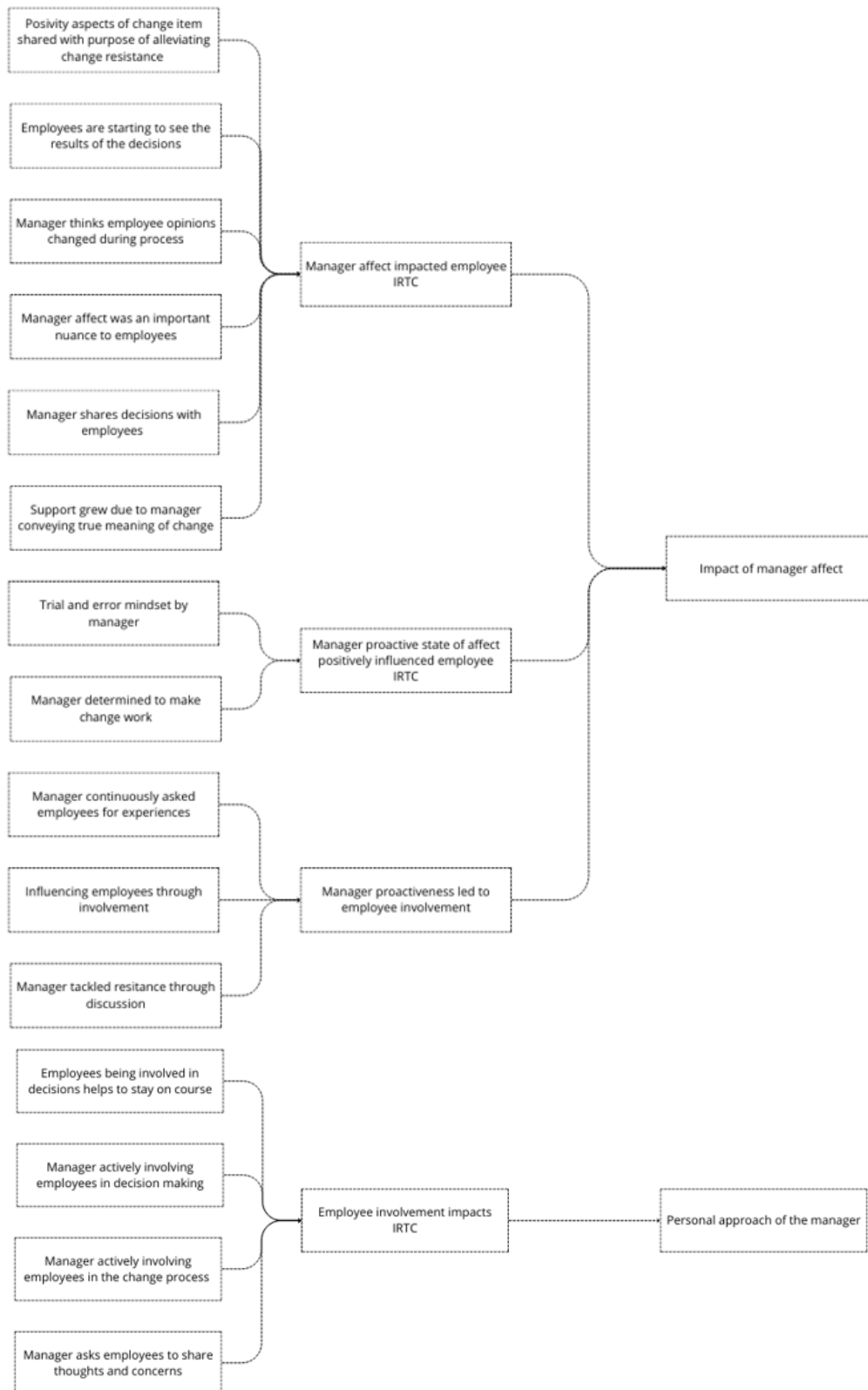


Figure 17: Data Structure employees Team 4 – Part 1

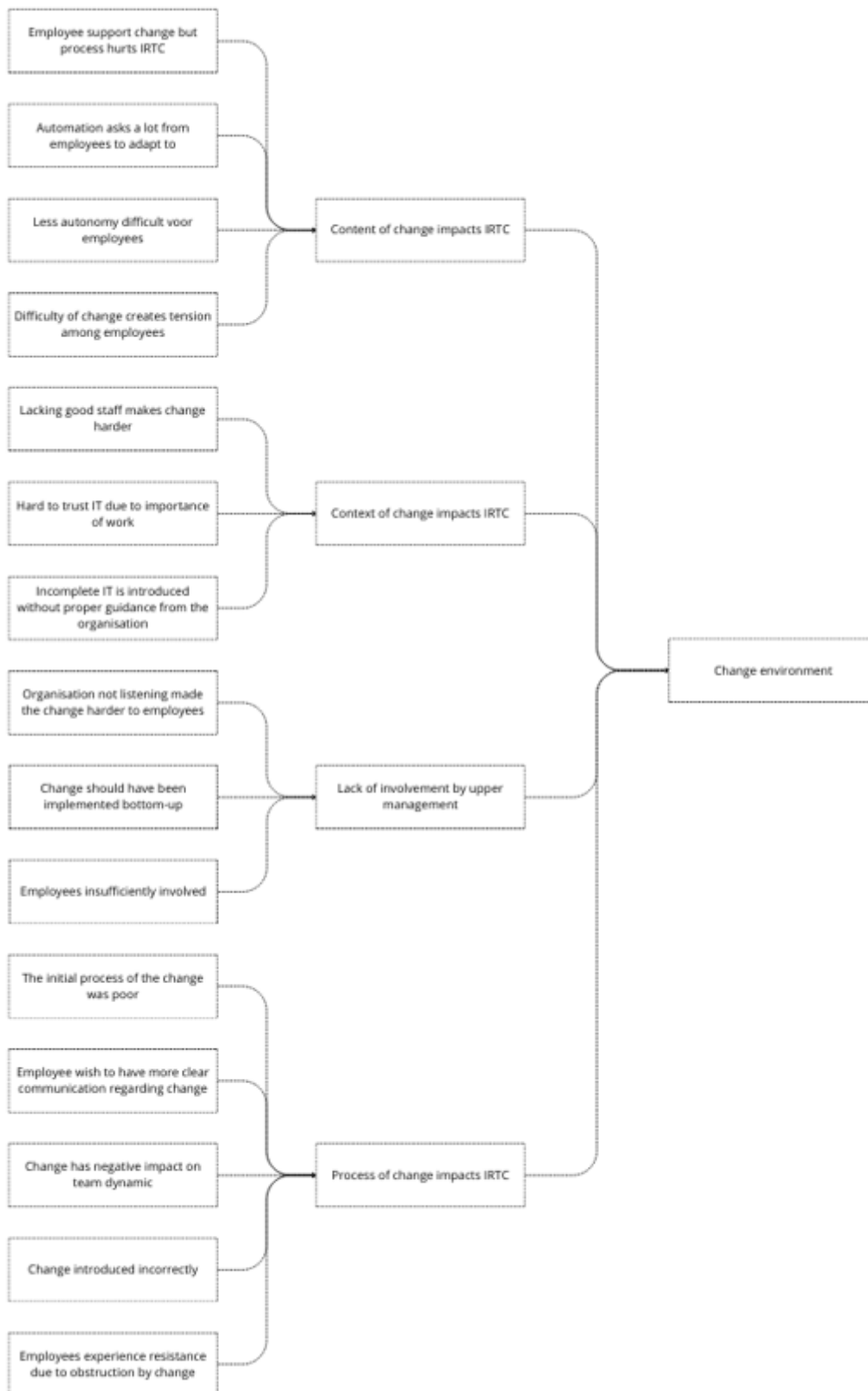
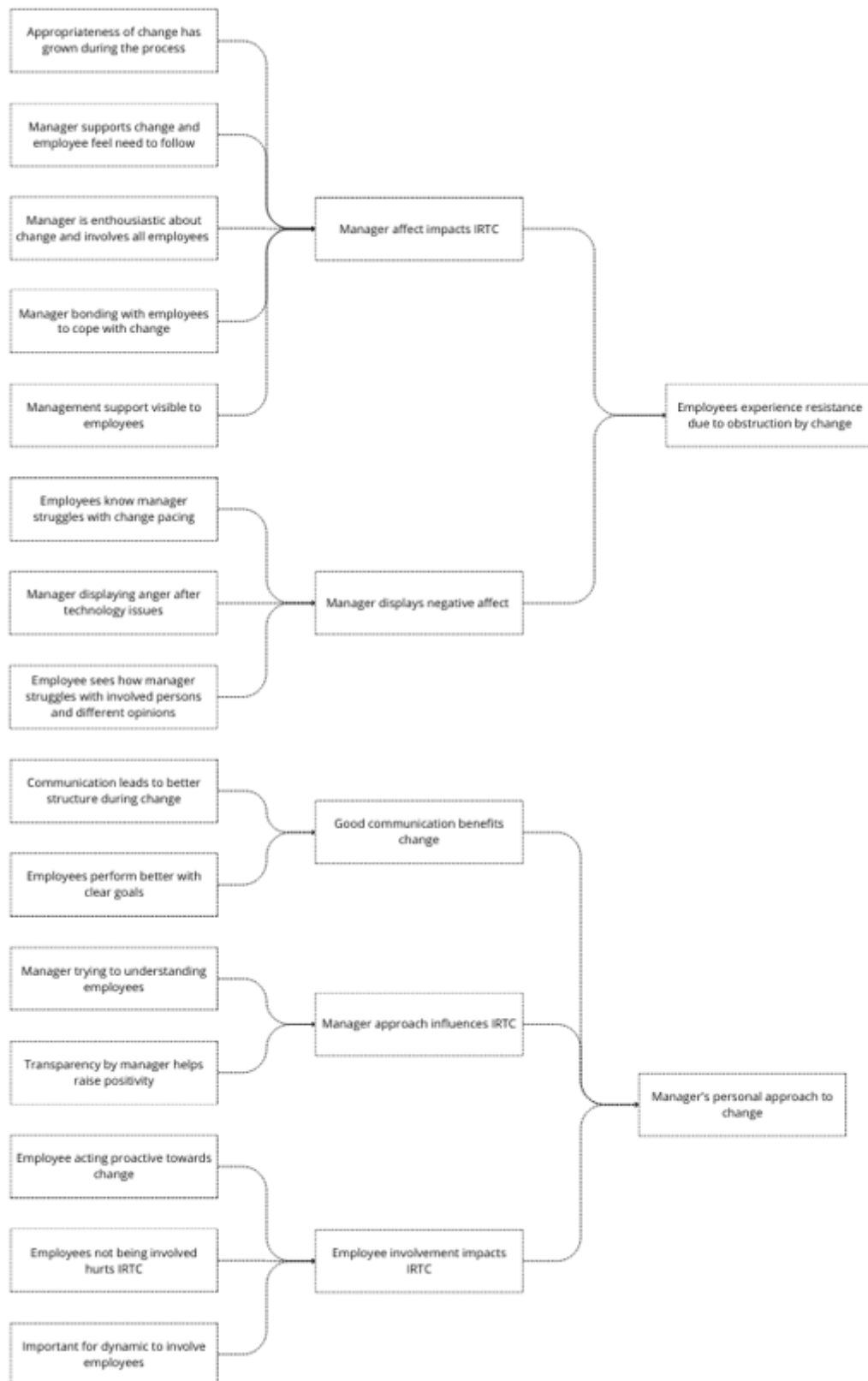


Figure 18: Data Structure employees Team 4 – Part 2



4.5 Cross-case analysis

In all four teams, the leaders actively utilize their affect to exert influence on their employees, by sharing positive and/or negative affect to manage employee IRTC in their respective teams. Teams 1, 2 and 4 have in common that their leaders utilize a displayed state of affect, which differs from their true affect, either by filtering out negative emotions or by imitating positive emotions. The leader of Team 3 however, influences employee IRTC without purposely shaping his state of affect. He is able to do so as he experiences true positivity and emotions regarding the change, allowing him to express his true state of affect towards the employees.

In Teams 1 and 3, the leaders experience a change pro-active state of affect, originating in their emotions during the change process, consequently influencing employee IRTC through their pro-active change approach. Interestingly, the leader of Team 4 was able to block out negative emotions unrelated to his *desired state of affect*. While this leader experienced emotions related to change disengagement and change resistance, he expressed to utilize a pro-active approach towards the change, suggesting his state of affect *did not* influence his change approach. Despite his state of affect being between change resistance and change disengagement, the leader approaches the change according to the best interests of the organisation, being a pro-active approach. Equally interesting, the leader of Team 2 experience negative emotions during the change process. Yet, in her case, the emotions were predictors for her *displayed state of affect* during the change. Which differs from the other leaders, who all alter their *displayed state of affect* in some way. As she experiences change disengagement, she refrained from employing a specific change approach.

In teams 1, 3 and 4, the leaders are successful in increasing employee IRTC through either their pro-active state of affect to the change or directly through their affect. Remarkably, the leader of Team 2 explained to actively influence employees positively during the change, however none of the employees mentioned to be positively influenced during the

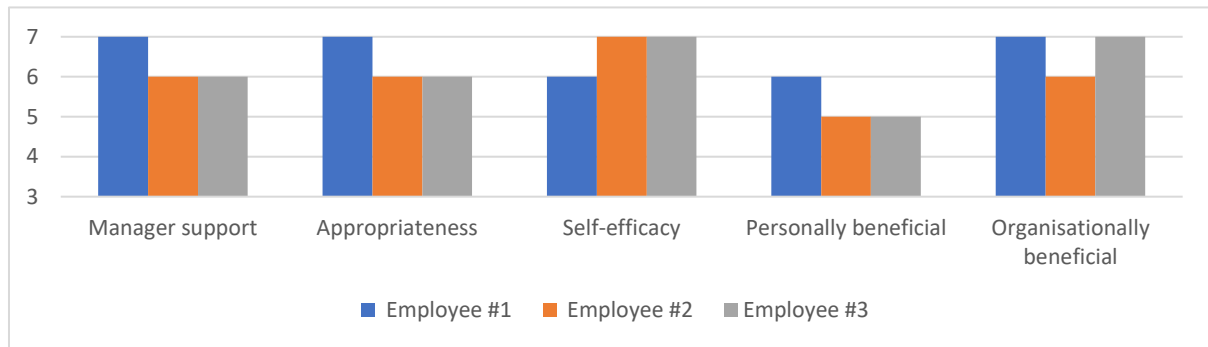
change process. One employee experienced an influence by his leader's affect, yet it was a negative influence as the leader displayed being upset during the change.

The four graphs below visualize the IRTC scaling of each employee of the four teams on a 7-point Likert scale. Team 1 shows the most stable IRTC scaling, with a maximum of 1 point between the employees' scores. This situation in Team 1 is due to the leader, as he is the leader who most excessively utilizes his state of affect to manage the employees' perception of the change and their IRTC of all the leaders. The employees in Team 2 score high and consistent on change appropriateness and self-efficacy, and thus believing in the change and their ability to accommodate that change. The higher spread on the other items confirms how their leader puts less effort into actively expressing positivity to raise IRTC. She instead focusses more on negating negative influence on employee IRTC because of her true state of affect, by utilizing a displayed state of affect instead of her true affect.

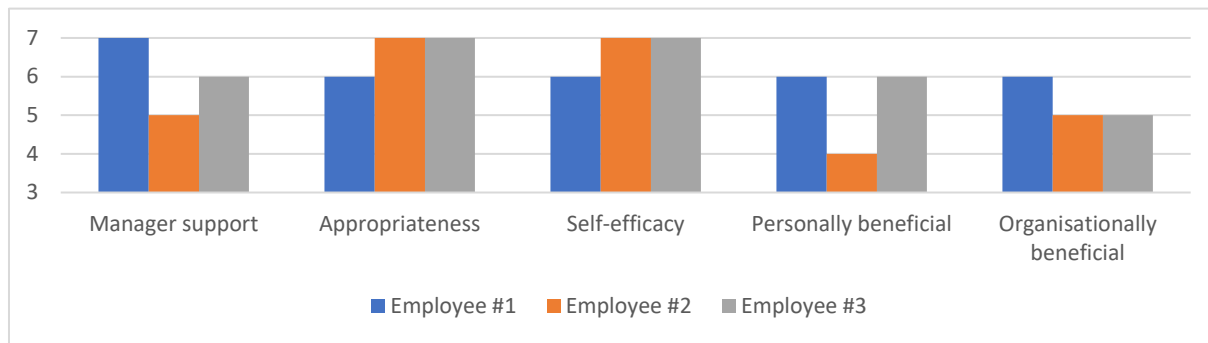
Team 3 displays many fluctuations between the different items of the IRTC scale as leader support and self-efficacy score consistently high, while the other items score lower and more inconsistent. The graph visualizes how the leader was able to display his true affect, raising 'leader support' and 'self-efficacy', yet the other items, which are more closely related to change context and content, score lower. Even though Team 3 is the only team in which the leader truly supports the change and is able to express his true state of affect, the employees are not convinced of the change's end goal as they either doubt the appropriateness or the advantages of the change, which the leader is unable to influence. Which shows how the impact of the leader is limited. Lastly, in Team 4, management support fluctuates significantly among the employees, due to the different personal relationships between the leader and the different employees. One employee explained to discuss the change with his leader, in which the leader expressed negative affect, while other employees did not have these conversations. Additionally, the change of Team 4 is the most nascent, limiting the amount of time the leader has had to influence his employees. Suggesting that the amount of personal contact determines how much influence the leader's affect has.

To conclude, the differences in employee IRTC between the four cases are partially due to the leader's influence, while also partially due to the different contexts of the cases. The leaders are able to influence certain items of the IRTC scale directly, these being 'self-efficacy' and 'leader support' through the change process, while the other items are more tied to change context, content and individual attributes.

Graph 1: Employee IRTC in Team 1, all items scored on the 7-point Likert scale.



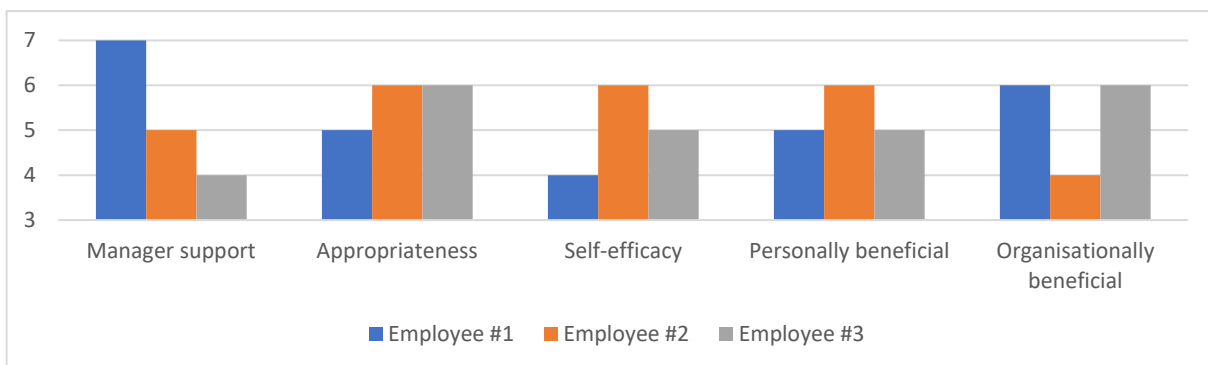
Graph 2: Employee IRTC in Team 2, all items scored on the 7-point Likert scale.



Graph 3: Employee IRTC in Team 3, all items scored on the 7-point Likert scale.



Graph 4: Employee IRTC in Team 4, all items scored on the 7-point Likert scale.



6. Discussion and conclusion

In order to foster digital transformation, organisations should prioritize understanding how employee IRTC can be influenced and maximized, as it pivotal to the success of organisational changes (Kotter, 2007; Mardhatillah et al., 2017; Metwally et al., 2019). Hence, this study focussed on how leaders' affect influences employees' IRTC. The findings of this study indicate that the leader's state of affect influences employees' IRTC, since affect is utilized as a management tool by leaders in explicitly expressing positivity to foster employee IRTC. Furthermore, leaders' state of affect partially determines their approach towards the digital transformation, consequently influencing employee IRTC.

Theoretical implications

This research provides insights into how employees experience their leader's state of affect during digital transformations and the influences of that leader's state of affect. While previous research mainly discussed the leader's leadership style or the role of the leader as a change agent during organisational change, this study provides a novel perspective by considering the leader's state of affect (Miftachul & Reni, 2023). Which adds to the current theory on leaders' role during digital transformation by considering the affect experienced by the leader and how this influences employees and their IRTC.

Furthermore, this study adds to the current literature on affect by suggesting that leaders often employ a 'displayed state of affect' when their true state of affect seems unfavourable. When studying the implications of the leaders' state of affect, it is crucial to consider that leaders are capable of displaying another state of affect than their true state of affect, as long as the leader possess the right agency during the change process. Additionally, the findings of this study validate the findings of previous studies, which imply that the leader is crucial in supporting employees who struggle with ambivalence, apathy, uncertainty and insufficient information during the digital transformation (Adil, 2014; Kraft et al., 2018). All leaders in this study have acknowledged that they have utilized their affect in

order to offer sense giving to the employees, mainly to assist employees with the aforementioned issues, raising their IRTC in the process.

Existing literature shows that an individual's state of affect primarily comes into play during 'affective events' (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2009). Two of these '*affective events*' are organisational change and exchanges between the leader and team members (Weiss, 2002). By actively expressing positivity towards their employees, all leaders in this study exploited the '*leader-member exchange*' affective event to influence their employees' IRTC using their state of affect. Furthermore, an individuals' state of affect predicts ones' tendency to act on digital transformation and the method how an individual responds to digital transformation (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Which is partially confirmed by the findings of this study, as the findings indicate that the leaders' state of affect shapes their approach towards the digital transformation in some cases.

Previous studies have shown that leaders are able to effectively guide employees through digital transformations, as long as they follow a common agency provided by the organisation's top management (Ajmal et al., 2012; Graetz, 2000; Lorentzen, 2022). Literature further states that leader's state of affect greatly influences their agency and thus influences their desire and ability to influence employees (Agote et al., 2015; Lorentzen, 2022). Which is partially contradicted by the findings of this study. While the findings do indicate that the leader's state of affect influences their employees, the leader's agency does not seem affected by their state of affect. The leaders explained to act on the interests of the organisation when deciding to whether they deem it necessary to influence the employees, and not on their own state of affect.

The theoretical models presented in the results chapter of this study, *figures 5, 8, 11, 14*, build on the existing IRTC theory by Holt et al. (2007). The theory suggests that the content, context, process of the change and the individual attributes determine one's beliefs of the change and thus IRTC. The findings of this study indicate that leaders' state affect influences IRTC by influencing the process of the change, which according to Holt et al.

(2007), is one of the predictors of IRTC. The leaders' state of affect only influences one of the four predictors of IRTC, limiting its impact. However, a larger influence of leaders' state of affect is exerted when the individual has developed their view of the change based on their individual attributes and context, content and process of the change. The leaders' state of affect is able to moderate the relationship between the cognitive and affective attitudes of the employee and their IRTC, which precede the employees' behaviour and thus IRTC towards the digital transformation (Svenningsson et al., 2022). This study has provided novel insights adding to the existing literature on IRTC by introducing the influence of leaders' state of affect during change processes.

Practical implications

Currently, many organisations utilize their individual leaders as a tool to guide an organisational change effectively. However, as this study indicates, it is crucial to consider the affect of the leaders as it significantly influences the employees' IRTC directly. Additionally, the leaders' state of affect indirectly influences employees' IRTC through the leaders' approach to the digital transformation. The findings indicate that the leaders' state of affect partially determine the leaders' change approach, which consequently influences employee IRTC during the change process. These insights point organisations in the right direction when struggling with change implementation, as they suggest organisations should consider the leader as an individual rather than a tool. Which can be achieved by considering the leaders' emotions and state of affect towards the proposed change, allowing the organisation to cooperate with their leaders to foster a beneficial state of affect. Thus, increasing employee IRTC and the chances of a successful change process.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

During this study, four cases were studied in three different organisations. While these three organisations were inherently different, the studied teams all share an affinity with technology on some level. Teams with low or absent affinity with technology could potentially react different to leaders' state of affect during digital transformation. Resulting in a relatively

low transferability of this study, as transferability refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be transferred to other contexts (Lincoln, 1985). Future research should include teams which have less affinity with technology and to which digital transformation is more disruptive.

Furthermore, all participants of this study were approached by their leader whether they would voluntarily participate in this study. Unfortunately, this raised the issues of volunteer bias, which is defined as the scenario in which research participants are selected voluntarily and when the outcomes potentially differ between volunteers and non-volunteers (Jordan et al., 2013). Potentially leaving out interesting insights of employee who were not willing to participate, as they could possess interesting insights as to why they declined. However, the leaders of this study purposely requested both supportive and opposing employees to participate in this study, in order to form a representative view of their change process. Thus, the volunteer bias was alleviated.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly indicate that leader affect does influence employee IRTC, as all leaders are aware of their affect's influence on their team. Additionally, three out of four interviewed leaders acknowledged to utilize their state of affect as a management tool during the digital transformation to deliberately influence their employees, further solidifying the role of leaders' affect. Multiple employees who partook in the study commented to have experienced a direct influence of their respective leader's affect, both directly and indirectly. The direct influence mainly occurred as a result of the leader's utilizing a '*displayed state of affect*', masking their true state of affect in the process. This allowed the leaders to mediate the relationship between the employees' cognitive and affective attitudes and their IRTC towards the digital transformation, which is a predictor of the employees' true behaviour. The indirect influence occurred through the leader's change approach, which the findings indicate to be partially formed by a leader's state of affect. The leaders' state of affect influenced the process of the change, which partially determines the IRTC of the employees. Thus, the

leader's state of affect also indirectly influences employee IRTC. Lastly, the analysis of employee IRTC in the different teams indicates that the efforts of the leader to actively influence employee IRTC and the level of personal contact between the leader and the employee influence the relationship between leader's affect and employee IRTC.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide employees

- Could you describe the nature of the digital change you and this team are currently going through?
- Could you score the following statements on a scale from *one* to *seven*? One representing the lowest, and seven representing the highest.
 - The change is appropriate.
 - I think I have the abilities and skills necessary to adapt to this change.
 - The change is personally beneficial.
 - The change is organizationally beneficial.
 - The change is supported by management.
- After scoring the five items of the IRTC scale, participants are asked to elaborate on each item.
- Did your leader take action after hearing about this change?
- Did your leader see the change as positive or negative?
- Could you please point out which of the responses in *Table 1* your leader had during the change?
- Did any of the items of the IRTC scale change during the change and how/why?

Potential follow-up questions:

- Could you elaborate on that?
- Could you give an example?
- How did you react to that?
- When did this happen?
- Asking for more information
- Non-verbal techniques, such as nodding and being silent

Appendix 2: Interview guide leaders

- Could you describe the nature of the digital change you are currently going through in this team?
- Did you take action after hearing about this change?
- Did you see the change as positive or negative?
- Could you point out which of the responses in *Table 1* you experienced during the change?
- From your perspective, did you actively display your responses towards the change during the process? If so, what was your reasoning for doing this?
- From your perspective, did you actively try to influence your employees' perspective of the change? If so, what was your reasoning for doing this?

The two questions above are asked to the leaders because I feel like it is important to in what context the leader did or did not have an influence on the employee. It makes a great difference whether or not the leader tried to influence the employees on purpose, or if it happened by accident.

- After the change process, did you feel like you had influenced your employees' perspective of the change? Albeit actively or unconsciously.

Potential follow-up questions:

- Could you elaborate on that?
- Could you give an example?
- How did you react to that?
- When did this happen?
- Asking for more information
- Non-verbal techniques, such as nodding and being silent

Appendix 3: Interview guide employees (Dutch version)

- Kun je de digital verandering waar jullie als team doorheen gaan beschrijven?
- Kun je de volgende stellingen een cijfer geven op een schaal van één tot zeven, in hoeverre je het er mee eens bent? Eén is het minste, en zeven is het hoogste.
 - Deze verandering is gepast
 - Ik denk dat ik de vaardigheden heb om mij aan deze verandering aan te passen
 - Deze verandering is voor mij voordelig
 - Deze verandering is voordeling voor de organisatie
 - Deze verandering wordt gesteund door het management.
- Na het scoren van de vijf items van de IRTC schaal, worden de geïnterviewden gevraagd om elk item toe te lichten.
- Heeft je leader actie ondernemen na het horen van deze verandering?
- Ziet je leader deze verandering als iets positiefs of negatiefs?
- Kun je aangeven welke van de reacties in *Tabel 1* jouw leader heeft laten zien tijdens deze verandering?
- Zijn bepaalde items van de IRTC schaal veranderd tijdens deze verandering en waarom/hoe?

Potentiële vervolgvragen:

- Kun je dat uitleggen?
- Kun je een voorbeeld geven?
- Hoe reageerde je daarop?
- Wanneer gebeurde dit?
- Vragen naar meer informatie
- Non-verbale technieken, zoals: knikken en stil zijn

Appendix 4: Interview guide leaders (Dutch version)

- Kun je de digital verandering waar jullie als team doorheen gaan beschrijven?
- Heb je actie ondernomen naar het horen van deze verandering?
- Zag je deze verandering als iets positiefs of negatiefs?
- Kun je aangeven welke van de reacties in *Tabel 1* jij hebt beleefd tijdens deze verandering?
- Vanuit jouw perspectief, heb je jouw reacties op de verandering actief geuit richting jouw medewerkers? Zo ja, wat was je reden hiervoor?
- Vanuit jouw perspectief, heb je actief geprobeerd om het perspectief van jouw medewerkers te beïnvloeden tijdens deze verandering? Zo ja, wat was je reden hiervoor?
- Denk je dat je tijdens het proces het perspectief van je medewerkers hebt beïnvloed? Zowel bewust als onbewust.

Potentiële vervolgvragen:

- Kun je dat uitleggen?
- Kun je een voorbeeld geven?
- Hoe reageerde je daarop?
- Wanneer gebeurde dit?
- Vragen naar meer informatie
- Non-verbale technieken, zoals: knikken en stil zijn

Appendix 5: Figures and tables used during the interview.

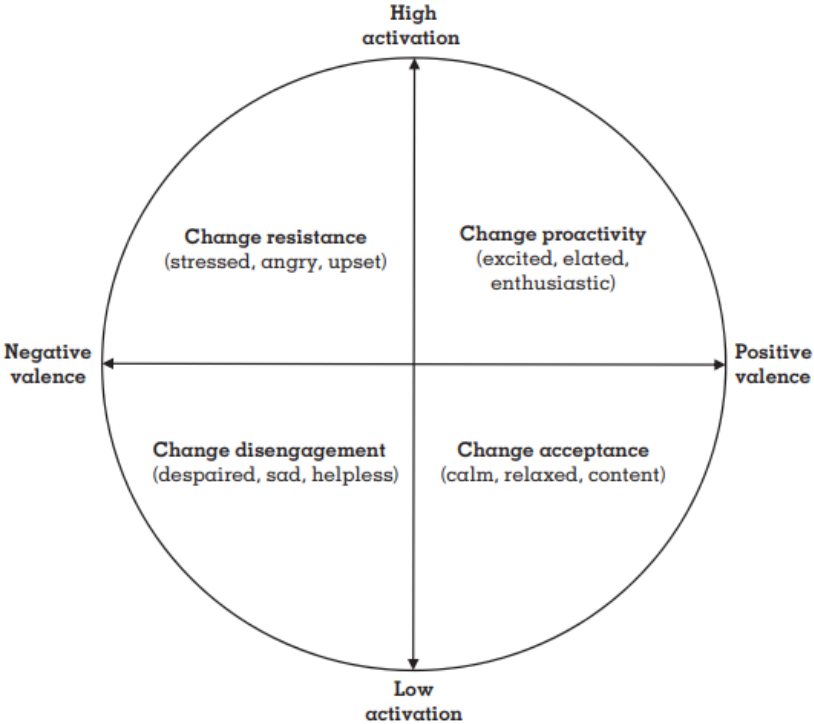


Figure 1: Circumplex of Change Recipients' Response to Change and Underlying Core Affect (Oreg, et al., 2016)

Stressed	Excited	Elated
Despaired	Angry	Sad
Relaxed	Calm	Helpless
Enthusiastic	Upset	Content

Table 1: Core affects according to Oreg et al. (2016)

Appendix 6: Consent form

Information Sheet for Leaders Are People Too: Studying the Role of Leaders' Affect during Digital Transformation

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to study the relationship between a leaders' state of affect and the readiness to change (IRTC) of the employee. We hope to shine light on how leaders' affect exactly influences employee IRTC in the context of digital transformation and build theory from there.

Benefits and risks of participating

Participation in this study could result in some social pressure from peers and your leader or employees. However, all participants and their shared information will be anonymised and confidential. Participation in this study could prove to be beneficial as it allows the participant to systematically reflect on the topics described in this study. Especially for leaders, as they learn how they could subconsciously influence their employees.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the BMS Ethics Committee of the domain Humanities & Social Sciences of the University of Twente.

Procedures for withdrawal from the study

Participants are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. Withdrawing consent is as easy as giving consent.

Collection and processing of personal data

Minimum personal data will be collected. The only personal data that will be collected is a team number create for the purpose of this study, to link employees to their respective leader. So, no team number or team code that is used in the actual company will be collected. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed into text; both files will be stored on a

secure, ISO-certified server of the University of Twente. After completion of the master's Thesis, all raw data will be deleted.

Contact details

If you have any questions prior to or after participation in this study, you are welcome to contact the researcher.

Name: Ivo Ros

E-mail: i.d.ros@student.utwente.nl

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Committee of the domain Humanities & Social Sciences of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente by ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl

Consent Form for *Leaders Are People Too: Studying the Role of Leaders' Affect during Digital Transformation*

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please tick the appropriate boxes

**Ye
No
s**

Taking part in the study

I have read and understood the study information dated [...../...../.....], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

I understand that taking part in the study involves participation in an audio-recorded interview, in which I am asked to provide opinions and views regarding my employers and leader. And that the researcher will take notes and transcribe the audio-recordings into text, which will be destroyed after analysis.

Use of the information in the study

I understand that information I provide will be used for a master's Thesis for the University of Twente.

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as [e.g. my name or my job title], will not be shared beyond the study team.

I agree that my information can be anonymously quoted in research outputs.

Consent to be Audio/video Recorded

I agree to be audio/video recorded.

Future use and reuse of the information by others

I give permission on [...../...../.....] information I provide to be archived in BSM-LAB in the form of anonymised transcripts, so it can be used for future research and learning

I give the researchers permission to keep my contact information and to contact me for future research projects.

Signature

Name of participant [printed]

Signature

Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

Researcher name [printed]

Signature

Date