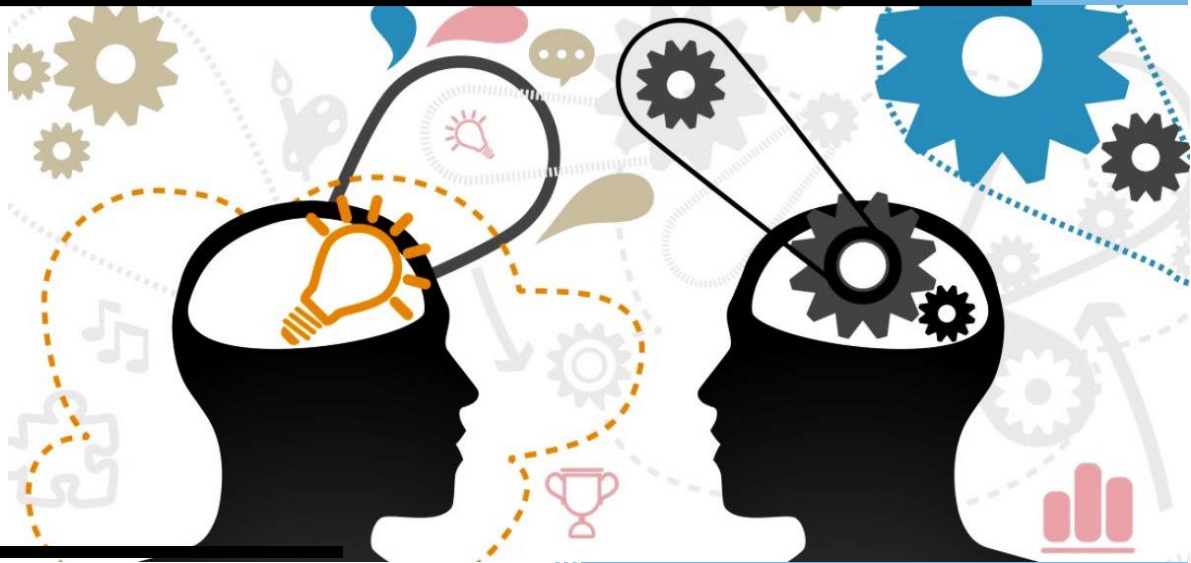June 2, 2020

A mixed-methods case study of communication, influential power and sensemaking as predictors of compliance with change goals in an organisational change context

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SUMMARY

Organisational change is quite common at present day, but how to realise change strategies has proved to be a challenge for many organisations. About 70% of organisations across branches implementing a change strategy fail, which makes it a widespread problem. Consequently, there is a need to understand what factors influence change outcomes and, more specifically, compliance with change goals. Communication, influential power and sensemaking were identified as variables of interest, based on previous research on organisational change. The study took place in an organisational change context where change was strategically implemented top-down. The results of a multiple linear regression analysis indicated that the model was not significant. However, the backward elimination method led to a significant relationship between traditional allocative resources – which partly define one's influential power – and compliance with change goals. Therefore, communication and sensemaking were not found to be significant predictors of compliance with change goals in this study. This research is the first to explore the influence of communication, influential power and sensemaking on compliance with change goals in one model, so the findings provide a valuable contribution to existing literature. Moreover, the newly developed constructs to measure communication, influential power and sensemaking proved reliable and can be useful for future research. The context-dependent factors may have influenced the outcomes of the present study, which led to a belief that a similar, preferably longitudinal study with the necessary improvements could result in a more significant contribution to organisational change theory.

1.   INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1.   Problem statement

One of the few things researchers agree on is that the pace of organisational change is greater than ever, so there is a need to understand how an organisation moves from a starting point to the envisioned new order (By, 2005; Lewis, 1999). Many organisations plan change by developing a strategy and implementing it top-down, however it is difficult to foresee how the strategy will change the organisation and thus what the eventual outcomes of change will be (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). As a result, many changing organisations struggle with realising the envisioned change outcomes: more than half of the organisations implementing a change strategy fail, reach a deadlock or do not reach the intended results (Elving, 2005). Moreover, a failed strategy can leave organisations in even worse positions than they started in (Elving, 2005). For example, with financial difficulties that result from the failed investments or practical difficulties like uncertainty among employees that can lead to resistance to future change initiatives (Armenakis, Harris, Cole, Lawrence Fillmer, & Self, 2007). Because organisational change is complex and widespread, it has resulted in problems with significant implications for the organisations. Therefore, the questions of what drives change and what variables influence change outcomes have been researched by various scholars (Armenakis et al., 2007; Balogun & Johnson, 2005; By, 2005; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Despite the interest in and previous research on organisational change, there is a lack of consensus on which variables are most relevant in relation to change outcomes (By, 2005). Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the relevance of three factors with different degrees of theoretical support in relation to change outcomes and to find out if these factors can predict compliance with change goals.

Firstly, communication has been widely identified as a relevant factor in organisational change (Elving, 2005; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Klein, 1996; Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008; Qian & Daniels, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). Good communication addresses the need for information about change, like many organisations do with newsletters, e-mails and such, but, more importantly, communication determines how information is received and can ensure a mutual understanding of the intended outcomes (Lewis, 1999). A mutual understanding of change goals and expected outcomes enhances the likelihood of success and some argue that it is even required for success (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Wong, 2005). Hence, communication seems to have an influence on change outcomes (Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008). However, there is little research on how a given quality of communication influences compliance with change goals (Qian & Daniels, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008) and there have been requests for more empirical research in the field of change communication (Frahm & Brown, 2007). Therefore, the first variable under investigation will be communication, understood as the perceived quality of communication.

Secondly, previous research discussed the importance of influential power in relation to change outcomes (Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). What defines influential power is related to traditional allocative resources (e.g. authority, knowledge and expertise), which are naturally more present in the higher organisational levels, and relational resources (e.g. formal and informal networks), which exist across organisational levels (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Influential power seems critical for change, because this power can be used to manage change and thus contribute to realising envisioned change outcomes (Rouleau, 2005). However, the existing research is inconclusive with regards to how change can be managed (By, 2005) and if influential power is truly relevant in relation to compliance with change goals (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Therefore, the present study will dive deeper into the relevance of influential power as a predictor of compliance with change goals.

Thirdly, sensemaking is increasingly discussed as being important in relation to organisational change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Previous research showed that sensemaking theory can be used to explain change outcomes, because sensemaking is a mental process that transforms interpretation into behaviour (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Change strategies are initiated to achieve particular goals, however the influence of people – how they interpret change, how that shapes attitudes and results in behaviour – determines how change actually

evolves from policy design to organisational practice (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Nonetheless, the influence people have on change evolution is often largely neglected when setting out a strategy and during the process (Armenakis et al., 2007; Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996). The knowledge regarding the relationship between sensemaking and change outcomes is growing, but the theory is fragmented with regards to the importance of sensemaking in relation to compliance with change goals (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). So, there is a need to further investigate this relationship.

Taken together, there is a drive to identify variables that influence compliance with change goals, because organisational change is a world-wide and branch-wide phenomenon and yet so many organisations struggle to implement change strategies successfully. Moreover, no consensus can be found in existing research on which factors are relevant in relation to compliance with change goals. There is reason to suggest relationships between communication, influential power and sensemaking on the one side and compliance with change goals on the other side, but more empirical research is needed to confirm this. Besides, these variables have not been investigated in one model thus far. The present study will focus on the significance of these variables in relation to compliance with change goals and attempt to shed a light on their importance for future change initiatives. How these factors are interrelated and the exact composition of the model will be discussed in more detail in the theoretical framework hereafter.

1.2. Theoretical framework

1.2.1. Organisational change outcomes

Organisational change can be described as moving from a status quo to a new order (Abdul Rashid, Sambasivan, & Abdul Rahman, 2004; By, 2005). The new order reflects the outcomes of change, which can be intended and unintended outcomes – i.e. outcomes that do or do not comply with identified goals of a change strategy (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). Sometimes unintended outcomes enable new resources and opportunities, but unintended outcomes often pose challenges for the execution of the change strategy (Feldman, 2000). Therefore, the purpose of a change strategy is to realise intended change outcomes, so to facilitate compliance with change goals. To understand why and how intended and unintended change outcomes arise and change strategies (partially) fail, scholars have begun to theorize organisational change differently. As a result, a shift was noticeable in organisational change theory from planned change to emergent change (Bamford & Forrester, 2003; By, 2005; Liebhart & Garcia Lorenzo, 2010; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Planned change is a more strategic, often top-down approach to change, that considers the effect of internal and external forces on change outcomes to a lesser extent (By, 2005). Emergent change, however, is more unpredictable and is existentially shaped by internal and external forces (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). As such, an emergent change perspective can explain why change outcomes are not always as envisioned beforehand (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). However, in practice many organisations approach change strategically (Klein, 1996). Liebhart and Garcia Lorenzo (2010) emphasized that an organisation must be able to consider both the planned and emergent approach to change in order to survive in the 21st century. They observed a tension between the need for structure and control, on the one hand, and awareness of environmental dynamics that are changing at high speed, on the other hand. As a result, organisations are navigating through the middle. Therefore, the present study considers organisational change to be planned and strategically implemented top-down, while considering the effect of controllable and uncontrollable forces on the change outcomes.

Now that the concept of organisational change and its outcomes have been discussed, it is time to address the focus of the research. The present study will focus on two key parts in relation to change outcomes – the change dynamics of a top-down approach and which factors are most likely to contribute to compliance with change goals. Firstly, the top-down approach to change can lead to differences between organisational levels with regards to their compliance with change goals (Jones et al., 2008). Nelissen and Van Selm (2008) claim that change is influenced by every level of an

organisation in a different way and therefore change outcomes manifest differently as well. In order to gain a better understanding of the change process, it seems useful to explore in what ways the organisational levels differ from one another and to what extent their compliance with change goals is actually different. As such, this will be researched in-depth during the study. Secondly, a change strategy is effective when employees comply with change goals, so the intended change outcomes are realised to a great extent (Elving, 2005). Considering the widely lacking success in executing change strategies, it is clear that organisational change is complex. Even with the knowledge and tools at hand to develop an effective change strategy, there are many variables to consider that influence the eventual outcomes. Which variables have the most significant impact remains part of the theoretical discussion (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Weick et al. (2005) argue that communication can function as a means to deliver the change message and facilitate a shared understanding of it, whereas influential power can be used to shape how that particular message is received and what behaviour is desired as a result. Sensemaking is a mental process that leads to behaviour and can determine the eventual compliance with change goals. Hence, this study will investigate whether communication, influential power and sensemaking influence compliance with change outcomes. Hereafter, each of these variables – i.e. communication, influential power and sensemaking – will be discussed in relation to organisational change and compliance with change goals.

1.2.2. Communication

The first variable under investigation is communication. Communication can be defined as a process where information is exchanged and understood by at least two individuals, usually intended to motivate or influence behaviour (Frahm & Brown, 2007). Regarding organisational change, extensive research is done on the relevance of communication in change processes. The findings underline that good formal communication can reduce uncertainty and resistance to change and facilitate satisfaction and commitment to change (Bennebroek Gravenhorst, Werkman, & Boonstra, 2003; Elving, 2005; Jamali, Khoury, & Sahyoun, 2006; Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008; Postmes, Tanis, & De Wit, 2001; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). To explain, communication provides information that helps individuals define meaning and purpose in change (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Weick et al., 2005). The gathered information is used to shape beliefs, attitudes and behaviour and thus can influence compliance with change goals (Weick et al., 2005). A distinction is made between communication as a means to provide information (''communicatio'') and communication as a means to create a shared understanding (''communicare'') (Elving, 2005). Good communication addresses both goals, so that the need for answers through informal channels becomes less relevant and the likelihood of creating a shared understanding of change goals becomes higher (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 2003; Elving, 2005; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). The quality of communication is primarily determined by how the receiver perceives it (Qian & Daniels, 2008). Therefore, the present study will focus on the perceived quality of communication instead of its content.

Managers have a key function in the communication process, because they form the connection between the policy writers and the employees in a top-down approach to change (Lewis, 1999). They need to possess good communicative skills and a sensitivity for what their employees need to support change (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 2003). This includes openness to a discussion of the change strategy, clarity about implications for the employees and a translation of macro-level goals to micro-level expectations for all levels of the organisation (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 2003; Rouleau, 2005; Weber & Glynn, 2006). When change goals and expectations are properly communicated and, as such, employees feel well-informed about change, compliance with change goals will be more likely (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 2003; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008). Considering the positive influence communication seems to have on the realisation of change goals based on existing research, the hypothesized relationship in the present study is positive as well.

Furthermore, the differences between the organisational levels with regards to the perceived quality of change communication will also be investigated in this study. It has become clear that the top-down approach to change leads to specific roles for each organisational level in relation to change

communication (Jones et al., 2008). Research on change communication indicated that each of these roles – e.g. guiding, supplying, translating or receiving communication – impacts eventual change outcomes (Johansson & Heide, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the differences between organisational levels with regards to communication more in-depth. A difference is expected based on the role division, however, what those differences are and whether these are significant will be researched.

1.2.3. Influential power

Next to communication, the ability to impact change appears to be determined by influential power as well (Weick et al., 2005; Wooldridge, Schmid, & Floyd, 2008). Influential power can be defined as one's ability to alter the attitudes or behaviour of others, often in response to one's actions or beliefs (Howard-Grenville, 2005). This is especially relevant in organisational change, because influential power can be exercised to influence how gathered information transforms into beliefs and attitudes regarding change (Wooldridge et al., 2008). What defines one's influential power is related to both traditional allocative resources (e.g. authority, knowledge and expertise) and relational resources (e.g. formal and informal networks) (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Those who possess traditional allocative resources usually find themselves in the higher organisational levels and are often at the forefront of change, so they have a key role in clarifying the intended outcomes and depicting the desired behaviour (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007; Elving, 2005; Schneider et al., 1996). Consequently, individuals with a lot of traditional allocative resources are more likely to comply with change goals, because they are expected to exemplify intended change outcomes due to their position in the organisation (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Furthermore, relational resources consist of formal and informal networks, which are not primarily dependent on the individual's hierarchical position in the organisation (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). These networks were found to be key sources of influence in organisations, because individuals with central positions in the organisation can easily reach and thus influence others (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). Therefore, influential power is argued to be a means to manage change (Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011) and differences between the organisational levels can be expected with regards to the influential power they possess.

Considerable research is done on the importance of change management and how influential power fulfils a role in the facilitation of a shared understanding of change across organisational levels (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Woolridge et al., 2008). Moreover, organisational change management theory emphasizes the need for authority to successfully manage change and enhance compliance with change goals (Wooldridge et al., 2008). Consequently, when influential power is used to manage the (collective) understanding of change goals and expected outcomes, it is more likely that these are realised (Weber & Glynn, 2006). Although, it seems there is agreement that influential power is in some way related to change outcomes as a means to manage change, further research is needed to investigate if a causal relationship exists (Wooldridge et al., 2008). Based on these findings, the present study will contribute to existing literature by investigating the causal relationship between influential power and compliance with change goals and look into the differences between the organisational levels.

Both communication and influential power were discussed in relation to change outcomes, both being controllable forces to some extent. The third variable under investigation is sensemaking, which can be seen as a more difficult to control factor in relation to change. The next part will shed some light on the importance of sensemaking.

1.2.4. Sensemaking in organisations

Sensemaking can be defined as a mental process that results in an interpretation and understanding of strategic change (Rouleau, 2005). It is about making sense of what is going on in organisations and how one uses that information to form attitudes and beliefs (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Weick et al. (2005) developed a model of sensemaking that

illustrates how the process of sensemaking starts with ''ecological change''. This refers to organisational change and it initiates a search for stability by making sense of the changing environment while going through a staged process (Mills, Thurlow, & Mills, 2010). Eventually and simultaneously, the result of sensemaking is behaviour, which is reflected in how employees perform their tasks, so sensemaking is what turns thought into action (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). How individuals make sense of change (and the behaviour that follows from it), depends on a variety of (social) factors like personal beliefs and attitudes, social interactions with colleagues and communication regarding change (Abdul Rashid et al., 2004; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). The result can be either positive with support and participation or negative with resistance (Armenakis et al., 2007). Support is more likely to result in compliance with change goals (Schneider et al., 1996). Moreover, the likelihood of realising the intended change outcomes is enhanced when an increasing amount of employees across organisational levels are more advanced in their sensemaking of change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). As a result, the compliance with change goals is expectedly higher when sensemaking is accomplished throughout the organisation (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2015). Therefore, the present study will investigate if a causal relationship indeed exists between sensemaking and compliance with change goals, as well as a comparison of the organisational levels regarding their sensemaking of change.

Differences can be expected, because about 75% of organisations across branches use a top-down approach to change (Ootjers, 2011). This means that the awareness of what needs to change and how the organisation can get there is naturally more present in the higher organisational levels (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). Even when members of all organisational levels are involved in the development of a change strategy, the top and middle level fulfil roles in managing change and information provision (Jones et al., 2008). Consequently, the upper organisational levels are at the forefront of change and are more likely to advance sooner in the sensemaking cycle than those at the receiving end of organisational change (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Moreover, Balogun and Johnson (2005) found that the level of sensemaking slowly decreases for the middle organisational level and the work floor. Based on these findings, sensemaking is expectedly more advanced in the higher organisational levels, but it would be valuable to investigate if this is actually true. Especially considering that advanced sensemaking organisation-wide could predict better compliance with change goals (Balogun & Johnson, 2005).

1.3.   Research question and model

Based on the theory, the model below was developed. The model illustrates the hypothesized relationships between communication, influential power and sensemaking on the one side and compliance with change goals on the other side.
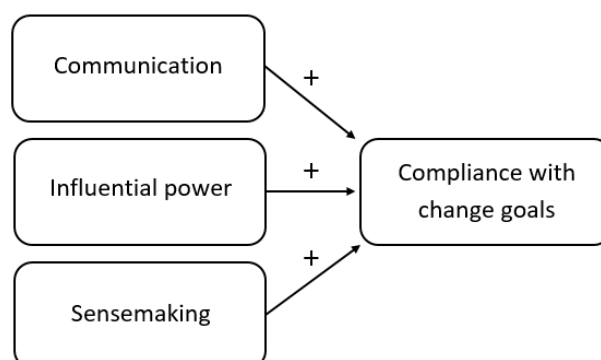

Figure 1. Theorized model of the relationships between communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals.

In line with the model and theory, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent can communication (consisting of communicatio and communicare), influential power (consisting of traditional allocative resources and relational resources) and sensemaking predict compliance with change goals?
2. What are the differences between organisational levels with regards to communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals?

1.4. Scientific and practical relevance

Organisational change is a difficult process that many scholars attempt to theorize and understand. An estimated 70% of change strategies fail, so the practical implications of organisational change enforce the need to find answers (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). The findings of previous research led to a particular interest in three concepts in relation to compliance with change goals: communication, influential power and sensemaking. The scientific value of the present study is characterized by two factors. Firstly, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods produce stronger evidence for the empirical research (Malina, Nørreklit, & Selto, 2011). Secondly, communication, influential power and sensemaking have not yet been investigated in relation to compliance with change goals in one model. The model creates an opportunity to identify predictors of compliance with change goals, which is also important for the practical relevance of the study. The identification of strong predictors of compliance with change goals can help organisations understand what the focus points of the change strategy should be and to guide organisations in the change process (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Research on predictors of compliance with change goals ultimately leads to more insights on organisational change and each contribution helps organisations world-wide and branch-wide to successfully implement change strategies (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015).

2. APPROACH TO RESEARCH AND METHODS

2.1. Research design

The research is based on a mixed-methods case study design, consisting of the analysis of survey data and findings from in-depth interviews. The case study offers a platform to test the research model and an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the organisational dynamics that play a part in change outcomes from the perspective of the organisational members. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provides insights in the causal relationships under investigation, on the one hand, and insights into the complex real-life context that can explain these findings, on the other hand.

2.2. Organisational context

The case study is settled at the Shared Service Centre (SSC) department of the Alliantie, a large housing corporation in the Netherlands that went through multiple reorganisations in 2001, 2003, 2006 and 2014. The first three were fusions and the last focused on large-scaled organisational restructuring and the corporate culture. The Shared Service Centre was a formerly separate department of the organisation that has been incorporated into the new structure in 2014. As a result, the department had to conform to organisation-wide policies that were not formerly enforced there. The current change strategy was implemented two years ago and focused on the social context. The change strategy was executed with a top-down approach. Employees were asked to voluntarily participate in trainings and workshops to change how they performed their tasks – to become more efficient and effective – and how they collaborated with others. The strategy assumed that managers would initiate participation and that seniors would guide the efforts. However, it soon became clear that managers were selective in what they initiated and initiatives were primarily one-time efforts.

Although, the initiatives were not received badly (even well by some), the lack of a follow-up effort made it difficult to ensure the success of change initiatives. Nonetheless, the organisation continued to introduce new change initiatives or slight adjustments to existing change initiatives in response to the lacking success of the strategy in place. At present day, a tension between policy and practice has been observed throughout the organisation, but most pressingly at the SSC. As a result, employees held on to their original work methods and there was little occasion to broach the subject of change. Taken together, the organisational change context presents an interesting setting to investigate the hypothesized relationships.

2.3. Respondents

The data was collected from employees of the Alliantie, who work at the Shared Service Centre (SSC) department of the organisation. 61 out of 119 employees filled in the survey and 22 employees were interviewed. All participants provided informed consent for their participation in the survey, the interview or both. The sample of respondents to the survey (*N* = 61) consisted of employees from the management/board level (16.4%), the senior employee level (21.3%) and the employee level (62.3%). The age of the survey respondents ranged 25 to 65 years (*M* = 47.63, *SD* = 10.19). The SSC is divided into six sub-departments: Facility Services, ICT, Financial Services, Control, Treasury and HRM Administration.

2.3.1. Ethical considerations

The research includes human resources, so a request for approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Twente was formally submitted and the research had been approved before the data was gathered.

2.4. Instrumentation and procedure

2.4.1. Procedure

The data was gathered in two parts: a survey and an interview. Firstly, the survey (see Appendix A) was constructed to collect quantitative data on demographic details, communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals. The sample of 119 employees was approached by e-mail to fill in the survey online, which took about 10-15 minutes. The response rate was 51.3%, after two reminder e-mails. The reminder e-mails included information about the change strategy and references to more information about it on the organisation's intranet, because it soon became clear that many employees were not familiar with the change strategy and, as such, could not fill in the survey properly. This will be addressed further in the part about limitations of the study.

Secondly, the in-depth interviews (see Appendix B) were held to get a better grasp of what was happening in the organisation from the perspective of the respondents. 27 employees were selected for a partially randomized sample and 22 employees participated, so the response rate was 81.5%. Beforehand, an ideal sample – representing each organisational level and each sub-department in proportion to the population of the SSC – was calculated to get a widespread, representative sample. Then, the sample was randomly selected via a random name picker online (ABCya.com, 2018) under the criteria of the sub-department and organisational level. The collected qualitative data was analysed systematically to enable reliable and valid support for the quantitative data results.

2.4.2. Survey

The survey consisted of five parts to measure personal details, communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals. There were 20 questions in total. The variables under investigation were measured with items that were scored on a 5-point Likert scale or with open-ended questions in case of the network analysis.

Communication

Communication was measured with 13 items as the perceived quality of communication. The construct consisted of communicatio – the quality of information provision – and communicare – to what extend a shared understanding could be created through communication. The 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Example items are: (1) ''the information I've received about the change strategy was useful'' – to measure communicatio; and (2) ''I feel free to ask my supervisor for more explanation regarding the change strategy'' – to measure communicare. The communication scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .89.

Communicatio was measured with seven items. The items were based on the quality of information scale created by Miller et al. (as cited in Qian & Daniels, 2008). The scale comprised several dimensions of information quality, including usefulness, appropriateness and adequacy. The scale has been used by other researchers and showed satisfactory reliabilities in those studies (Qian & Daniels, 2008). One item, ''information about the change strategy was communicated appropriately'', was added to the validated scale. The scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .95, which would have been α = .94 without the additional item.

Communicare was measured with six items. The items were selected from two sources. Items 1 and 2 were derived from Wanberg and Banas (2000), items 3-5 were derived from Postmes et al. (2001) and item 6 was created for the present study as a reversed item to complement the scale. The scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .77. The Cronbach's α would have been lower if any of the validated items were deleted, but higher if the additional, reversed item would be deleted (α = .80).

Influential power

Influential power was measured with 12 items, addressing both traditional allocative resources and relational resources. Example items are: (1) ''I have a lot of experience in my job''; and (2) ''Colleagues regularly approach me with questions about their work''. The dimensions were not measured in the same way, so the composition of a construct required a conversion of the values of relational resources. The scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .76.

Traditional allocative resources were measured with eight items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The items were selected from two sources. Items 1 and 2 were derived from Halaby (1986) and items 3-8 were composed based on how Battilana and Casciaro (2012) described they would measure this type of resource. The scale was found reliable with a Cronbach's α of .76.

Relational resources were measured with four items. The items were based on the method by Battilana and Casciaro (2012). This method measured prominence in a network by subtracting the amount of send contacts from the amount of received contacts. For example, when someone reported five persons (send contacts) and was reported by three persons (received contacts), the score would be -2. The total score ranged -5 to 5. In order to use traditional allocative resources and relational resources for the measurement of influential power in one construct, the values of the relational resources were converted to a range of 1-5 to comply with the Likert scale measurement of traditional allocative resources (-5 = 1, -4 = 1.4, -3 = 1.8, -2 = 2.2, -1 = 2.6, 0 = 3, 1 = 3.4, 2 = 3.8, 3 = 4.2, 4 = 4.6, 5 = 5). The scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .59.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking was measured with 12 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The items were based on Weick's model of sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005) and the statements related to the stages of sensemaking. Example items are: (1) ''I am aware of the change goals''; (2) ''I am aware of what the change strategy means for my work''; (3) ''I am consciously changing my practice in line with the change strategy''; and (4) ''I reflect critically on how I perform tasks''. The scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .81.

Compliance with change goals

Compliance with change goals was measured with 11 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*highly insufficient*) to 5 (*highly sufficient*). The items measured the individual's compliance with each of the change goals included in the change strategy. The scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's α of .90.

2.4.3. Factor analysis

To further investigate the constructs of communication, influential power and sensemaking, a factor analysis was conducted. 35 items were included in a principal axis factor analysis using oblique rotation to investigate whether the variables would be identified as intended.

The first step was to investigate the factorability to see how the items correlated. There were a few between-items correlation values of more than .8, which implied a small risk for multi-colinearity. The determinant of the correlation matrix was less than .00001, so the items seemed related overall. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was insufficient with .48, so below the recommended value of .5. Furthermore, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (χ^2 (595) = 1449.07, $p < .001$). Also, the communalities were above .3, except for item 9.6, 10.7 and the prominence in the informal network. This indicated that most items shared some common variance with at least one other item. Given the results of these indicators, the conditions for a factor analysis were not ideal. However, some assumptions were met, so the factor analysis was continued.

The first factor analysis indicated that the extraction was terminated, because the communality of a variable exceeded 1.0 during the attempted extraction of nine factors. A second factor analysis was performed with six factors, because that appeared to be the threshold for a successful extraction of factors.

The next step was to analyse the pattern matrix (see Appendix C). Six factors with an Eigenvalue of >1 were derived from the factor analysis, explaining 68.9% of the variance. The variables were not perfectly identified, but the items that made up one variable did not load with items of other variables. An evaluation of the items with factor loadings between -.3 and .3 led to the elimination of one item: item 9.6, ''I find it difficult to provide feedback to my supervisor regarding the improvement of the change strategy'' that was intended to measure communication. This item was developed in addition to the validated items of previous research, so there was less empirical support for this specific item and it reduced the reliability of the construct. Taken together, it did not appear to be a valuable addition to the scale. The internal consistency of the scale was recalculated after the elimination of item 9.6 (α = .80). The theoretical support for the other scale compositions was sufficient and the internal consistency of the scales was confirmed, so no other items were deleted.

2.4.4. In-depth interview

A semi-structured interview was developed to collect qualitative data and gain a more in-depth understanding of organisational change. The main goal of the interviews was to understand the change context – how respondents perceived change communication and change in general, what obstacles to organisational change they perceived and what role each organisational level had in the change process. The in-depth interview consisted of 17 open-ended questions, like ''what could be improved at the SSC from your perspective?'', ''how do you contribute to the realisation of change goals in your daily practice?'' and ''do you perceive obstacles to the realisation of change goals?''. The interviews were audio-recorded.

2.5. Data analysis

The data was analysed with multiple tools and programmes. Various tests in SPSS were performed to analyse the data that was acquired with the survey. A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to investigate the research model, i.e. if communication, influential power and sensemaking could predict compliance with change goals. Then, a backward elimination method was applied to identify which predictor variables contributed significantly to the model. Furthermore, a

one-way ANOVA was performed to investigate if a statistically significant difference existed between the organisational levels for communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals. A Welch and a Brown-Forsythe test were performed for influential power for the same purpose, because the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met and thus a more robust test was required (Field, 2013). The board group consisted of only one respondent, so the choice was made to add this individual to the management group. As a result, three organisational levels were used for the analysis – employees, senior employees and managers/board members. The results of the one-way ANOVA, Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests would only indicate if there was a statistically significant difference between the levels, but not what the differences between each level were. Therefore, a significant one-way ANOVA result was followed up by a Tukey's HSD post-hoc test (Laerd Statistics, 2018) and a significant Welch and Brown-Forsyth test was followed up by a Games-Howell post-hoc test (Frost, 2017) to investigate the differences between each of the organisational levels.

Besides, the differences were investigated more in-depth with the qualitative data derived from the interviews. To this end, the in-depth interviews were analysed systematically, using a code book for the manual and deductive coding of the interviews (see Appendix D). All data was organised per respondent and organisational level. Then, all statements regarding communication, influential power, sensemaking, compliance with change goals and organisational levels were selected. Every sentence that was related to one of the indicators of the code book was matched with the corresponding dimension. For example, the statement of a respondent who explained that they had not received information about change goals would be coded as communicatio. Moreover, statements that in the essence were shared among multiple respondents were selected to complement the results of the one-way ANOVA, Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests. Also, the content of the interviews helped to explain the results in the discussion section.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Quantitative Data

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Age	61	26	65	48.03	9.99
Employed at the Alliantie	61	.5	34	14.42	9.47
Employed at the SSC	56	0	26	7.46	5.67
Compliance with change goals	39	2.27	5.00	3.80	.57
Communicatio	54	1.00	4.14	2.90	.80
Communicare	54	1.00	4.60	3.33	.64
Traditional allocative resources	45	2.50	4.75	3.59	.60
Relational resources	61	1.80	4.40	2.99	.60
Sensemaking	44	1.67	4.75	3.22	.62

The respondents were grouped into three levels: the employee level (61.3%), the senior employee level (22.6%) and the manager/board level (16.1%).

Table 2

Intercorrelation Matrix of the Quantitative Data

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Compliance with change goals						
2	Communicatio	-.08					
3	Communicare	.29*	.36*				
4	Traditional allocative resources	.38**	.07	.25			
5	Relational resources	.09	.15	.13	.30*		
6	Sensemaking	.22	.54**	.29*	.26	.32*	

Note: *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

The correlation analysis showed that several factors relevant to the research model correlated significantly with each other. For instance, communicare and traditional allocative resources correlated significantly and positively with compliance with change goals. This implied that if an individual felt strongly that a shared understanding could be created through communication or if an individual possessed more traditional allocative resources, the compliance with change goals would expectedly be high as well. Furthermore, both sub-variables of communication and influential power correlated significantly and positively with one another. This indicated that a perceived high quality of information provision was associated with strong feelings that a shared understanding could be created through communication. Also, the possession of more traditional allocative resources was positively associated with the possession of more relational resources. However, both communicatio and relational resources did not correlate significantly with compliance with change goals. At last, sensemaking was not associated with compliance with change goals either. Yet, communicatio, communicare and relational resources correlated significantly and positively with sensemaking, which implied that a higher score on sensemaking was associated with a perceived higher quality of information provision, strong feelings that a shared understanding could be created through communication and the possession of more relational resources.

3.2. Predictors of compliance with change goals

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to investigate the influence of communication, influential power and sensemaking on compliance with change goals. For the purpose of this analysis the subscales of communication (i.e. communicatio and communicare) and influential power (i.e. traditional allocative resources and relational resources) were included separately instead of the composed variable to investigate each unique contribution to the model.

The multiple linear regression analysis showed that the model was not significant with $F(5, 33) = 2.36$, $p = .062$, $R^2 = .26$. Communicatio, communicare, traditional allocative resources, relational resources and sensemaking could explain 26.3% of the variation in compliance with change goals in this model. The results indicated that none of the independent variables provided a significant contribution to the model.

The model was reinvestigated with a backward elimination method, which was used to eliminate predictor variables stepwise until each of the remaining variables provided a significant contribution to the model. Table 3 (see page 16) shows the results of the backward multiple linear regression analysis, which resulted in five models. The variable with the lowest impact on the first model was relational resources ($b = -.06$, $SE = .14$, $β = -.06$, $t(33) = -.39$, $p = .696$), so relational resources was eliminated for the second model. Then, sensemaking ($b = .22$, $SE = .16$, $β = .25$, $t(34) = 1.36$, $p = .184$) was eliminated for the third model and communicatio ($b = -.15$, $SE = .11$, $β = -.21$, $t(35) = -1.30$,

Table 3

Backward Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Compliance with Change Goals, Communicatio, Communicare, Traditional Allocative Resources, Relational Resources and Sensemaking

Variable	Model 1					Model 2					Model 3					Model 4					Model 5				
	b	SE	β	t	p	b	SE	β	t	p	b	SE	β	t	p	b	SE	β	t	p	b	SE	β	t	p
Communicatio	-.24	.13	-.34	-1.81	.080	-.24	.13	-.33	-1.82	.077	-.15	.11	-.21	-1.30	.201	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communicare	.26	.16	.27	1.65	.108	.26	.15	.27	1.68	.103	.27	.15	0.29	1.74	.091	.20	.15	.21	1.35	.185	-	-	-	-	-
Traditional allocative resources	.26	.15	.28	1.71	.097	.25	.15	.27	1.68	.102	.30	.15	0.32	2.06	.047	.30	.15	.32	2.08	.045	.35	.14	.38	2.46	.019
Relational resources	-.06	.14	-.06	-.39	.696	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sensemaking	.23	.17	.26	1.39	.173	.22	.16	.25	1.36	.184	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
R^2			.26					.26					.22					.18					.14		
Model F-value			2.36					2.98					3.29					4.00					6.04		

p = .201) was eliminated for the fourth model. At last, communicare (*b* = .20, *SE* = .15, *β* = .21, *t* (36) = 1.35, *p* = .185) was eliminated for the fifth model, leaving only traditional allocative resources as a predictor variable in the fifth and final model. The effect of traditional allocative resources on compliance with change goals was significant with *F* (1, 37) = 6.04, *p* = .019, R² = .14, meaning that traditional allocative resources could explain 14.0% of the variation in compliance with change goals in this study. The positive association found in the results implied that having more traditional allocative resources is expected to lead to better compliance with change goals.

3.3.   A comparison of organisational levels

3.3.1. Communication

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate if the organisational levels scored different on communication, meaning if they had different perceptions of the quality of change communication. The test evaluated the null hypothesis that there was no difference between the organisational levels (*N* = 54). The independent variable, organisational level, included three groups: the employee level (*N* = 32, *M* = 2.98, *SD* = .66), the senior employee level (*N* = 13, *M* = 3.13, *SD* = .66) and the management/board level (*N* = 9, *M* = 3.36, *SD* = .37).

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested using Levene's Test. The test proved insignificant with F (2, 51) = .76, p = .475, indicating equal variances. However, the ANOVA was not significant with F (2, 51) = 1.33, p = .272, so the test provided no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. In conclusion, no statistically significant difference was found between the organisational levels in their perceived quality of communication, so no post-hoc test was performed (Laerd Statistics, 2018).

To further investigate the differences between the organisational levels with regards to communication, a qualitative data analysis was performed. The results from the one-way ANOVA were supported by the in-depth interviews. The perceived quality of communication was generally low to moderate. As derived from the interviews, nine out of thirteen employees (69.2%) felt they were not kept informed about changes in the organisation and sixteen out of twenty-two respondents (72.7%) expressed concern about inadequate formal communication with regards to important information in general. An employee declared the following:

''*There is a lot of room for improvement with regards to communication. The organisation is developing and changing and we [the employees] are the last to hear anything about it. This makes it difficult to respond to the changes that are happening. We [the employees] are continuously lagging behind events.*''

The senior and management level appeared to perceive the quality of communication somewhat higher than the employees. However, respondents from all levels emphasized the ineffective communication tools that were currently in place and no consensus was found on a better alternative. Besides, eleven out of twenty-two respondents (50%) mentioned that it is the responsibility of the manager to properly inform employees about change and that this should preferably be done face-to-face. A senior employee suggested the following:

''*Communication is difficult, because you don't want to overload people or they will stop listening. The most important thing is to find a balance and all managers must keep that balance. They should coordinate what is communicated and how it is communicated.*''

The qualitative data showed that the top-down approach to change has led to different roles for each organisational level with regards to communication. The manager/board level was responsible for the provision of information and was tasked with deciding what was relevant to share. Furthermore, the senior employee level formed a connection between the manager/board level and

the employees. As such, the employees had a more passive, receiving role in the communication process.

These findings from the qualitative data analysis can explain the insignificant ANOVA results and low to moderate scores, because employees from all levels seem dissatisfied with the quality of communication. However, the statements indicate a noticeable difference between the information available to each level and the position they are in to influence communication, which can explain why the perceived quality of communication was highest in the upper organisational levels and decreased toward the employee level.

3.3.2. Influential power

A Welch and a Brown-Forsythe test were conducted to investigate if the organisational levels scored different on influential power. These tests were selected instead of the one-way ANOVA, because the Levene's test proved significant with $F_{(2, 42)} = 3.67$, $p = .034$, indicating unequal variances. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met and a more robust test was required to evaluate the hypothesis (Field, 2013). The tests evaluated the null hypothesis that there was no difference between the organisational levels ($N = 45$). The independent variable, organisational level, included three groups: the employee level ($N = 25$, $M = 3.12$, $SD = .30$), the senior employee level ($N = 12$, $M = 3.63$, $SD = .47$) and the management/board level ($N = 8$, $M = 4.19$, $SD = .17$).

The Welch test proved significant with $F_{(2, 20.39)} = 77.35$, $p < .001$, as did the Brown-Forsythe test with $F_{(2, 20.10)} = 33.50$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, resulting in the conclusion that there was a statistically significant difference between the organisational levels in their influential power. Consequently, a Games-Howell post-hoc test was performed (see Table 4). The results indicated that each organisational level was significantly different from the other levels.

Table 4

Games-Howell Post-Hoc Test for Influential Power

Organisational Level (i)	Organisational Level (j)	Mean Difference (i-j)	SE	Sig.
Employee	Senior Employee	-.512	.148	.009
	Management/board	-1.072	.085	< .001
Senior Employee	Employee	.512	.148	.009
	Management/board	-.559	.148	.005
Management/board	Employee	1.072	.085	< .001
	Senior Employee	.559	.148	.005

To further investigate the differences between the organisational levels with regards to influential power, a qualitative data analysis was performed. The results from the Welch, Brown-Forsythe and Games-Howell post-hoc test were supported by the in-depth interviews. The analysis brought forward that five out of thirteen employees (38.5%) felt that they had little influential power with regards to organisational change matters compared to their superiors. An employee declared the following:

''*I've been with the organisation for a long time and I am enthusiastic about change. However, some colleagues cannot be bothered and it is difficult to correct them. I believe that if your superior says you have to do something a certain way, you simply have to comply. It is not intended to cross you, but it is needed for the development of the organisation*.''

In addition to these findings, five out of seven senior employees (71.4%) indicated that they feel responsible for mediating between the employee and the management/board level, which also

requires a certain amount of influential power. However, two out of seven senior employees (28.6%) expressed concern that the formal, vertical relationships are difficult and that their roles as mediators are challenging due to unmotivated employees and/or managers in the department. As a result, it comes down to them rather than their superiors to motivate and guide employees through change efforts, although the managers have the final say about these affairs. A senior stated the following:

''*The managers need to organise change efforts at least twice a year for their team, but some fail to do so. Unfortunately this is the only way employees become familiar with the goals and expectations related to the change strategy. They cannot be blamed for a lack of compliance with change goals if they are not familiarized with those goals. At the same time, the goals are logically developed from issues that arise in the department and employees can also address these issues with their superiors. However, it seems like nobody feels responsible for the change efforts and although seniors sometimes take up these tasks, it is difficult to realise change goals when the other levels are reluctant to change.*''

Taken together, the interviews brought forward that, on the one hand, the influential power increases per level, but, on the other hand, that power is not always used to manage change outcomes. This can be explained by the lack of initiative and inconsistence in policy execution across teams that was suggested by thirteen out of twenty-two respondents (59.1%). It has become clear that the both the influential power and use of that power differed for each organisational level. The employee level had limited power and limited impact, the seniors had more power and used that power to facilitate change to a greater extent and the management level had the most power, but seemingly failed to use that power for the intended purposes.

These findings from the qualitative data analysis can explain the significant differences between the organisational levels, because the statements indicated a hierarchical distinction with regards to the influence each level has on inferiors, peers and superiors. As discussed in the theoretical sections of the thesis, the traditional allocative resources (i.e. authority, knowledge and expertise) are primarily associated with the upper organisational levels, whereas relational resources can exist across organisational levels. This logically led to an upward trend in influential power from the employee level to the management/board level. Furthermore, the statements brought forward that primarily traditional allocative resources were important when it comes to the facilitation of organisational change, as was confirmed with the multiple linear regression analysis.

3.3.3. Sensemaking

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate if the organisational levels scored different on sensemaking. The test evaluated the null hypothesis that there was no difference between the organisational levels (N = 44). The independent variable, organisational level, included three groups: the employee level (N = 25$, M$ = 2.98, SD = .53), the senior employee level (N = 11$, M$ = 3.50, SD = .57) and the management/board level (N = 8$, M$ = 3.58, SD = .65).

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested using Levene's Test. The test proved insignificant with F (2, 41) = .13, p = .875, indicating equal variances. The ANOVA was significant with F (2, 41) = 5.32, p = .009. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, resulting in the conclusion that there was a statistically significant difference between the organisational levels in their score on sensemaking. Consequently, a Tukey's HSD post-hoc test was performed (see Table 5). The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the senior employee and management level, but the other levels were significantly different from one another.

Table 5

Tukey's HSD Post-Hoc Test for Sensemaking

Organisational Level (i)	Organisational Level (j)	Mean Difference (i-j)	SE	Sig.
Employee	Senior Employee	-.523	.205	.037
	Management/board	-.607	.230	.031
Senior Employee	Employee	.523	.205	.037
	Management/board	-.083	.263	.946
Management/board	Employee	.607	.230	.031
	Senior Employee	.083	.263	.946

To further investigate the differences between the organisational levels with regards to sensemaking, a qualitative data analysis was performed. The results from the one-way ANOVA and post-hoc test were supported by the in-depth interviews. As discussed, the difference between the scores of the senior employee and management level was only little, whereas the scores of both these levels did differ significantly from the employee level. According to several respondents, there was frequent reflection on the work methods and performance within the teams. Seven out of thirteen employees (53.8%) and seven out of seven seniors (100%) claimed to engage in reflection practices in a group setting ranging from every month to twice a year. However, only four out of thirteen employees (30.8%) were aware of how the change goals translated into their daily practices, compared to five out of seven senior employees (71.4%). These findings indicated that sensemaking was more advanced for the senior employee level than the employee level, because awareness and reflection are at the core of sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005). A senior employee said the following:

''*I finally understand what we [the seniors] are doing with regards to the change strategy, now that I've become more aware of the change goals and participated in change initiatives. We reflect on the progress with the change goals in our team, but not every employee is interested in participating.*''

In contrast, an employee said the following:

''*Our team participated in a change initiative and I think that it was useful. However, there was no follow-up and we do not take time to reflect on change goals in our team, because we have a lot of work to do. In the end, the things we learned, faded away in practice*''

The qualitative data led to two interesting findings. On the one hand, the top-down implementation of the change strategy has led to less sensemaking at the employee level compared to the management and senior employee level, because the employees seemed less involved and arguably less interested in the change process. This division was enforced by the indication that change initiatives were primarily targeting the upper organisational levels. A manager claimed the following:

''*The change initiatives are mostly directed towards managers and senior employees, much less towards employees.*''

On the other hand, the responsibility to create awareness and to encourage change among employees laid with the upper organisational levels as well. However, two seniors claimed that there was a difference among the seniors and managers with regards to how eager they were to take on that responsibility. A senior employee claimed the following:

''*There seems to be a big difference between seniors and managers in how they use the gained knowledge from change initiatives to realise change goals within the team. However, there are no*

collective guidelines regarding what the seniors and managers should communicate towards employees, so this depends solely on the willingness of individual seniors and managers.''

Taken together, a difference between the employee level and upper two levels was identified with regards to sensemaking. The differences between the senior employee level and the management/board level were small, because both levels seemed to participate in change initiatives and thus became more advanced in their sensemaking of change. However, the next step would be to initiate sensemaking within the team to engage employees, but that did not happen in every team. Despite the large percentage of interviewees that indicated they engaged in reflective practices, there seemed to be less indication that reflection led to sensemaking of change. In conclusion, these findings can explain why the differences between the organisational levels were significant and why the seniors scored similar to the managers on sensemaking.

3.3.4. Compliance with change goals

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate if the organisational levels scored different on compliance with change goals. The test evaluated the null hypothesis that there was no difference between the organisational levels (N = 39). The independent variable, organisational level, included three groups: the employee level (N = 21, M = 3.68, SD = .55), the senior employee level (N = 10, M = 3.79, SD = .68) and the management/board level (N = 8, M = 4.13, SD = .43).

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested using Levene's Test. The test proved insignificant with $F_{(2, 36)}$ = .71, p = .498, indicating equal variances. The ANOVA was not significant with $F_{(2, 36)}$ = 1.82, p = .177. Therefore, the test provided no evidence to reject the null hypothesis, resulting in the conclusion that there was no significant difference between the organisational levels in their compliance with change goals. Consequently, no post-hoc test was performed (Laerd Statistics, 2018).

To further investigate the differences between the organisational levels with regards to compliance with change goals, a qualitative data analysis was performed. The results from the one-way ANOVA were somewhat opposed by the in-depth interviews.

The compliance with change goals scores were quite high for all levels. However, only six out of thirteen employees (46.2%) indicated they were familiar with the change goals, compared to six out of seven senior employees (85.7%). Based on these findings, it would make sense that the employee level scored lower on compliance with change goals; when someone is not aware of the change goals, it will be difficult to comply with them. Nevertheless, it appears employees had a different understanding of compliance with change goals when looking at the measured scores. One of the primary reasons given or suggested for the lack of compliance during the interviews was the high work pressure, which decreased the priority given to change. It concerned eight out twenty-two respondents (36.4%). An employee said the following about this:

''I don't participate in change initiatives, because I'm not interested. The work pressure is too high in our department, so I don't care for change that much.''

Simultaneously, four out of seven seniors (57.1%) expressed their concern for the lack of motivation that was noticeable among the employees. Furthermore, employees from all levels indicated that the change goals were not equally relevant for them, so they made less of an effort to comply with the less relevant goals. The compliance score was an average score, so the scores may have been high for some specific goals and lower for other goals. An employee said the following:

''I don't think that all change goals are relevant for our team, but we definitely work on some of the goals.''

Taken together, the findings from the qualitative data analysis indicated a larger difference between the organisational levels regarding their compliance with change goals than the one-way

ANOVA showed. Moreover, the employees indicated a higher level of compliance with change goals in the survey than during the interviews. It appeared that seniors and managers were more involved in and committed to change, and consequently complied better with change goals than the employees did. Therefore, the insignificant one-way ANOVA results were slightly contradicted by the findings from the interviews. This will be discussed further in the discussion section of the thesis.

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1.   Discussion of the results

The aim of the present study was to investigate communication, influential power and sensemaking in relation to compliance with change goals. Besides, the study included an analysis of differences between organisational levels with regards to communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals to deepen the understanding of these variables. To this end, a model was developed and the research questions that followed from the hypothesized relationships were investigated with both quantitative and qualitative data. It appeared that the quantitative data results were not always supported by the qualitative data. The limitations of the study have led to a belief that the qualitative data results were more representative than the results of the quantitative data. This will be discussed more in-depth in the section about limitations of the study. The results of each research question will be addressed hereafter.

4.1.1. Communication as a predictor of compliance with change goals

Communication has been widely researched in relation to organisational change (Elving, 2005; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Klein, 1996; Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008; Qian & Daniels, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). The general statement described communication as being relevant, if not crucial, for the realisation of intended change outcomes (Johansson & Heide, 2008; Weick et al., 2005). Good formal communication would facilitate support and commitment to change, whereas inadequate communication could lead to insecurity and resistance to change (Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). Despite the availability of extensive research, there was less known about how a given quality of communication influenced compliance with change goals (Qian & Daniels, 2008). Therefore, the present study contributed to organisational change literature by investigating the perceived quality of communication as a predictor of compliance with change goals. The hypothesized relationship was positive, meaning that a higher perceived quality of communication was expected to predict better compliance with change goals.

The quantitative data results indicated an insignificant relationship for both aspects of communication and compliance with change goals. This implied that that the perceived quality of communication could not predict compliance with change goals and that the hypothesis would be rejected. The explanation for these findings can be found in the low to moderate perceived quality of communication combined with the moderate to high compliance with change goals that was measured with the survey. With regards to the perceived quality of communication, the analysis of the differences between the organisational levels brought forward that many respondents were dissatisfied with the information they received and there was little indication that a shared meaning of the change goals was constructed through interactions between colleagues (horizontally) or between employees and supervisors (vertically). Consequently, a lower compliance with change goals would be expected based on communication and organisational change theory (Elving, 2005; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Klein, 1996; Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008; Qian & Daniels, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). On the contrary, a moderate to high compliance with change goals was measured with the survey. The interviews revealed that some employees were not consciously changing as a result of the change initiatives, but rather they had a more general conception of what the goals entailed and therefore felt they complied with change goals when this was not necessarily the case. Therefore, the moderate to high compliance with change goals that was

measured with the survey did not seem representative for the actual compliance with change goals. Furthermore, these findings led to a belief that the qualitative data that was derived from the interviews may be more representative for the compliance with change goals instead, because the qualitative data was based on more in-depth information. Taken together, despite the low to moderate perceived quality of communication, the compliance with change goals appeared to be higher than expected and thus communication could not predict compliance with change goals based on the quantitative data.

As mentioned, the qualitative data seemed to be more in line with the expectations: both communication and compliance with change goals were perceived as low to moderate. Above all, the change strategy was not successful in practice thus far, although the compliance scores based on the survey results would indicate otherwise. These findings can be explained with previous research on the relationship between communication and change outcomes. Frahm and Brown (2007) explained that the failure of many change initiatives is the result of employee resistance to change, which arises from inadequate communication. Resistance and a lack of commitment to change were also found among some interviewees and many employees were unaware of what the change goals entailed, which could indicate a lack of communication about change goals. A solution can be found in the improvement of vertical communication, which is strongly related to organisational commitment (Postmes et al., 2001). Something that was also suggested by interviewed employees, who expressed a preference for information provision from their supervisor in a face-to-face setting. Several scholars emphasized the importance of face-to-face communication and vertical communication as well (Klein, 1996; Lewis, 1999). Lewis (1999) went as far to say that only communication between a supervisor and an employee can bring about change in employees. Consequently, to overcome the struggle with communication, the senior and management level need to be committed to providing information and creating a shared understanding of it through interaction (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). This will be addressed further in the section regarding practical implications of the research.

Although the quantitative data results did not confirm that communication could predict compliance with change goals, the statements in the interviews reconfirmed the need for good communication in an organisational change process. Considering these contradicting results, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that communication can or cannot predict compliance with change goals. Therefore, more research is needed to investigate this relationship.

4.1.2. Influential power as a predictor of change outcomes

Influential power has been increasingly recognized as having an important impact on organisational change (Weber & Glynn, 2006). The effect of influential power on compliance with change goals has been primarily investigated in a top-down context, where the influential power was strongest for the top level that was tasked with implemening change. However, recent studies emphasized the importance of the middle organisational level as a connector of the top level and the employees in organisational change, making the middle level influential as well (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Bamfort and Forrester, 2003; Lewis, 1999; Wooldridge et al., 2008). Furthermore, the existing research was inconclusive with regards to the relevance of influential power in change management (By, 2005; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) described that having less influential power can still be meaningful and having more power does not necessarily make you influential. The present study contributed to existing literature by considering influential power across organisational levels and investigating the relevance of influential power in relation to compliance with change goals. The hypothesized relationship was positive, meaning that having more influential power was expected to predict better compliance with change goals.

The results indicated that one part of influential power, traditional allocative resources, could predict compliance with change goals, but relational resources could not. So, these findings partially confirmed the hypothesized relationship. The positive relationship between traditional allocative resources and compliance with change goals that was found, can be explained with two sides of the same coin. On the one side, employees appear to be susceptible for the influence of others, especially of those who they perceive to be more knowledgeable and who possess more authority then they do

(Howard-Grenville, 2005; Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). Naturally, they look to their superiors for guidance (Klein, 1996). The influential power that is attributed to those perceived superiors can be used to enhance compliance with change goals, so that it positively affects the succes of a change strategy (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Furthermore, on the other side, previous research indicated that those in positions of power are often more involved in the change process and, as such, are contributing more to the realisation of intended change outcomes (Rouleau, 2005). In support of the theory, the interviews also revealed the importance of traditional allocative resources in relation to compliance with change goals. For example, one senior was mentioned by various employees to be a driver of change who inspired more compliance with change goals. Moreover, that individual confirmed that she took it upon herself to motivate others, which appeared to have the envisioned effect. Taken together, the present study supported the notion that influential power is relevant, because it can be used to manage how change is perceived by employees and therefore enhance compliance with change goals (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Weber & Glynn, 2006; Wooldridge et al., 2008).

However, the relational resources part of influential power was not a significant predictor of compliance with change goals, as opposed to the hypothesized effect. The interviews brought forward the focus on the top and middle organisational level as guides and managers of change. The significant relationship found for traditional allocative resources and compliance with change goals confirms the importance of factors that are primarily attributed to these levels, like authority, knowledge and expertise. Relational resources, on the other hand, exist across organisational levels and the qualitative data indicated that the employee level was not as involved in the change process as their superiors due to a variety of reasons. Rouleau and Balogun (2011) emphasized that those who possess more influential power should also utilize that power to bring about change. An employee with a prominent position in a network can posses the power to positively influence compliance with change goals, but if that power is not used for the purpose of bringing about change then it will likely not impact compliance with change goals either. In sum, there is theoretical support to expect a positive relationship between relational resources and compliance with change goals. However, the influential power derived from those resources must be used for the purpose of realising the envisioned change goals, which did not seem to be the case in the present study. Therefore, these findings spark an interest in more research into the relationship between both parts of influential power and compliance with change goals, which will be addressed further in the section about scientific implications and suggestions for future research.

4.1.3. Sensemaking as a predictor of change outcomes

Sensemaking theory has been used to investigate how individuals frame mental models of change and how these interpretations result in organisational practice (Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008; Weick et al., 2005). Balogun and Johnson (2005) discussed that both intended and unintended change outcomes can result from sensemaking. They found that what happens on the work floor is not necessarily determined by policy, but rather by how employees on each level make sense of policy individually and as a collective through social interactions and the information they receive. Therefore, there is reason to believe that sensemaking can influence compliance with change goals. The present study contributed to existing research by investigating a causal relationship between sensemaking and compliance with change goals. The hypothesized relationship was positive, meaning that a higher score on sensemaking would predict better compliance with change goals.

The quantitative data results revealed that the relationship was insignificant, meaning that sensemaking could not predict compliance with change goals. Mills et al. (2010) explained that sensemaking has explanatory properties in relation to compliance with change goals, but the process is often not focused on the outcomes. As such, sensemaking can contribute to the realisation of change goals, but it does not appear to have a causal effect. To explain, previous research described sensemaking as a means to explain change outcomes rather than to cause change outcomes (Mills et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the sensemaking of individuals could be shaped through sensegiving, so that it does lead to the desired outcomes. However, Rouleau (2005) emphasized that sensegiving and

sensemaking should be seen as distinctive processes that have different purposes. As such, sensegiving would expectedly be more likely to predict compliance with change goals in a causal relationship than sensemaking. Moreover, Frahm and Brown (2007) underline that it is difficult to make sense of change when the perceived quality of communication towards employees is low. Also, the interviews brought forward that there was little social interaction regarding the change strategy that was intended to construct meaning. These findings can explain why sensemaking could not predict compliance with change goals.

Although it can be argued why sensemaking does not have a causal effect on compliance with change goals, previous studies have illustrated the relevance of sensemaking in relation to change outcomes (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008; Weick et al., 2005) and the interviews brought forward that those who were more advanced in their sensemaking of change, were also more committed to complying with change goals. However, the difference in sensemaking between the employee level and the upper organisational levels was quite large, as will be discussed later on. Previous studies have focused on the upper organisational levels as well and illustrated the importance of sensemaking at the middle organisational level more specifically (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). However, Balogun and Johnson (2005) explained that more employee involvement can lead to advancement in sensemaking for the entire organisation, which would be good for the realisation of intended change outcomes.

The findings of the present study sparked an interest to investigate these claims more in-depth. The relationship between involvement in change, support for change and compliance with change goals would, however, require further research. Taken together, the influence of sensemaking on compliance with change goals was not confirmed with the present study. Despite this outcome, it has become clear that more research is needed in this field to draw any definitive conclusions about the influence of sensemaking on compliance with change goals.

4.1.4. Differences between the organisational levels

To enhance the understanding of the variables under investigation, a comparison between the organisational levels was conducted for communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals. The quantitative data was used to test if the differences between the organisational levels were significant and the qualitative data led to more in-depth insights. The different roles each organisational level was known to have in the change process were expected to lead to differences in communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals. Each of the variables will be discussed in this section.

Communication

A difference between the organisational levels with regards to communication was expected, because a top-down change implementation naturally distinguishes between sending and receiving parties (Frahm & Brown, 2007). To explain, those in the top organisational levels are at the forefront of change and have more access to information than those in lower levels (Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). However, Van Vuuren and Elving (2008) explained that this access also makes the upper organisational levels responsible for the provision of information. Considering that proper communication can facilitate engagement among the employees, the commitment to this responsibility by the upper organisational levels is essential for the realisation of intended change outcomes (Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). Because information flowed top-down, the perceived quality of communication was dependent upon what each level communicated and how each level socially constructed a shared understanding of change (Frahm & Brown, 2007).

In contrast to the hypothesized difference, the results of the present study showed no significant difference between the organisational levels with regards to the perceived quality of communication. The interviews brought forward that those who had access to information often failed to discuss that information with others due to a variety of reasons. One of those reasons was that the managers and seniors did not want to overload employees with information, because of their high

work load. The observed paradox was that employees felt left out and felt badly informed about organisational change, while at the same time there were indeed complaints of a high workload and a lack of willingness to participate in change initiatives because of that workload. It appeared that employees of all organisational levels were dissatisfied with the quality of communication and yet, those seemingly in a position to improve that, failed to do so. Consequently, little interaction about change took place horizontally or vertically. Frahm and Brown (2007) also investigated an organisation where change communication was poor and communication channels were not effective. They emphasized that it may be an issue of organisational culture as well. If an organisational culture does not value the exchange of information or discussion, the managers may not deviate from that norm. Therefore, in order to overcome the described paradox and reduce resistance among employees, it can be argued that the managers must be encouraged to step up as guides of (formal) change communication (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Klein, 1996; Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). This would expectedly increase the differences between the organisational levels, but for the benefit of the realisation of intended change outcomes if it improved vertical, formal change communication (Klein, 1996).

Influential power

Based on the composition of influential power – both traditional allocative resources and relational resources – a difference was expected between the organisational levels. The traditional allocative resources are naturally more present in the upper organisational levels, whereas the relational resources can be utilized across organisational levels (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Therefore, influential power was expected to increase towards the organisational top. The qualitative data analysis was intended to shed more light on what the actual differences between the organisational levels were, while considering the different resources on which influential power is based.

In line with the expectations, the post-hoc test showed a significant difference between each of the organisational levels with regards to influential power. The interviews revealed that the upper organisational levels had more power and could initiate change initiatives intended to realise change goals, which is consistent with the top-down approach to change. However, it seemed as though the senior employees were more focused on using their power to facilitate change than the managers. This brings us back to the notion of Maitlis and Sonnenheim (2010) that the amount of influential power does not necessarily determine the impact one can have. Also, it confirms the findings of previous research that described an increasingly important role for the middle organisational level in organisational change processes (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Bamfort and Forrester, 2003; Lewis, 1999; Wooldridge et al., 2008). At the same time, the employee level had less power and were less involved in change initiatives, either because of personal or practical reasons or because their superiors did not introduce them to those initiatives. Both reasons will be addressed further in the discussion on compliance with change goals hereafter. Despite the fact that the employees scored moderate on influential power, they seemed to be in no position to impact change in the organisation. Implying that the relational resources on which most of the influential power is based for employees seems to have less impact in practice.

Taken together, these findings show two sides of the same coin: the resources available to each level were determined by their hierarchical position in the organisation and this position enforced the roles – a managing, facilitating or receiving role – of each level in the organisation. However, an interesting finding was that the senior employee level seemed to use its influential power to stimulate change to a greater extent than the management level. Also, resources like authority, knowledge and expertise were found to be of more significance compared to formal and informal relations in relation to change, because these relationships did not appear to be utilized for the purpose of achieving change goals.

Sensemaking

The findings of previous research indicated a clear distinction between organisational levels in their sensemaking of change, where the top and middle organisational level were more advanced in sensemaking than their subordinates due to their roles as guides of change efforts (Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). More specifically, the roles of the top and middle level have been discussed as essential for sensemaking and sensegiving (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011).

In line with previous research, the present study found a significant difference between the three levels. The post-hoc test showed that only the employee level differed significantly from the senior employee and the management/board level, whereas the latter two did not significantly differ from one another. The top level showed the highest degree of sensemaking, the senior employee level scored somewhat lower and the employees scored lowest. This meant that the awareness of change and how to comply with change goals was more advanced in the upper organisational levels, as was expected based on previous research (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). The little difference between the top and middle organisational level can be explained with the growing importance of the middle organisational level (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Wooldridge et al., 2008). The interviews confirmed that the differences between the senior employee level and the management/board level were small. Many respondents from these levels were found to actively pursue compliance with change goals as a result of their awareness of what needed to change. Although the upper organisational levels seemed advanced in their sensemaking of change, the employees did not show a similar progress. However, Balogun and Johnson (2005) explained that when employees from all organisational levels would advance in their sensemaking, it would have a positive influence on the change process. To realise this, the upper organisational levels need to engage in sensegiving practices to enhance sensemaking for all levels. This would not necessarily reduce the differences between the organisational levels, but rather raise the overall degree of sensemaking in the organisation (Gioia et al., 1994; Rouleau, 2005).

Compliance with change goals

The top-down approach to change was expected to lead to differences between organisational levels with regards to their compliance with change goals, because each organisational level has a different role in the change process (Jones et al., 2008). These roles led to more involvement in the change strategy at the upper organisational levels, compared to the lower organisational levels. Because involvement is often associated with commitment to change, a difference between the organisational levels could be expected (Frahm & Brown, 2007).

The present study showed that there was no significant difference between the organisational levels in their compliance with change goals. The explanation for these findings is two-fold. On the one hand, the respondents indicated a level of compliance with the change goals in the survey that was higher than the compliance with change goals as evaluated with the qualitative data analysis. The difference was in particular large for the employee level. Several interviewees indicated that they complied with change goals in the survey, although they claimed they were not aware of the goals during the interview. This showed that there was a lack of understanding what the change goals entailed. Also, research showed that an understanding of change is needed to pursue change goals (Weick et al., 2005). Some change goals were general notions of what the organisational culture should look like and the interviewees felt they complied with those goals, although they were not aware of the expectations related to them. This led to a belief that the differences between the employee level and the upper organisational levels may have been significant in reality. On the other hand, the insignificant results were enforced by differences within the organisational levels. It became clear, for example, that not all seniors and managers were equally committed to the realisation of the change strategy. Consequently, some employees were motivated by their superiors to comply with change goals, whereas teams that were supervised by a senior or manager who was not committed to the change strategy were sometimes completely unaware of the change goals. As a result, the compliance

with change goals seemed more different between teams (horizontally) rather than between organisational levels (vertically).

4.2. Limitations of the research

The outcomes of the present study provide valuable insights for organisations in all stages of a change process. However, there were limitations to the research that must be noted. Firstly, at the start of the study, the assumption was made that all employees were familiar with the change strategy. This assumption was based on talks with the external supervisor and one of the policy designers. However, it soon became clear that this was not the case. Employees did recognize change goals and initiatives when talking these through with them, but there was no recall of the change strategy as such. This influenced not only the validity of the responses, but also the willingness of respondents to participate. The Qualitrics system automatically uploads responses after a week, which led to a lot of unfinished responses from respondents who stopped filling in the survey half-way. In the first week, several e-mails from respondents came in, in which they explained that they stopped because they were not familiar with the change strategy. An attempt was made to re-enforce their cooperation by providing more information and referring to informative links regarding the change strategy on the organisation's intranet (which were already available to all employees). The attempt did ring some bells and led to new responses, but the validity of the responses was still in doubt because of this.

Furthermore, the validity of the responses may be jeopardized, because the statistical analyses of the survey data and the qualitative data did not produce the same findings. More in-depth information was gathered with the interviews. Initially, the survey results were assumed to be more reliable, because of the larger amount of respondents and this data was less sensitive for the subjectivity of the researcher. However, these indications led to the assumption that the qualitative data provided a more accurate insight into the investigated relationships. Doing a pilot study could have made a difference, because the lack of familiarity with the change strategy would have been detected early-on. However, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data made it possible to still derive valuable insights from the study. Nonetheless, more research is needed to confirm the reliability of the findings.

Secondly, the variables were measured based on self-assessment, which posed a risk for biased data (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Podsakoff et al. (2003) indicated that the self-assessment bias risk can be enlarged by a factor of social desirability, because the survey was not anonymous. Furthermore, they explained that respondents may be reluctant to choose options with more radical statements, like ''not at all'' (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, to reduce the self-report bias, the scale anchors were ranged strongly disagree to strongly agree instead of do not agree at all to completely agree. By making the range less radical, the data was less likely to be skewed.

Thirdly, the sensemaking perspective has received some critiques that deserve to be mentioned. The theory of Karl Weick is leading in literature on sensemaking in organisation studies, but there is no single definition of sensemaking and the concept is difficult to grasp; some argue it is as emergent as change itself (Brown et al., 2015). Measuring sensemaking would therefore require a longitudinal and qualitative approach that considers environmental factors, as well as psychological factors (Allard-Poesi, 2005). The present study focused on sensemaking as an individual-cognitive process, thus disregarding the collective-social and contextual aspect that sensemaking is known to have (Allard-Poesi, 2005; Mills et al., 2010; Weber & Glynn, 2006). Although sensemaking theory presents an interesting perspective to explain the success or failure of a change strategy, the complexity and emergent character of sensemaking make it difficult to relate it to compliance with change goals in a causal relationship (Mills et al., 2010). There existed no quantitative measurement tool for sensemaking, so it was developed for this study. However, the limited information that can be derived from the survey and the interviews may not be sufficient to truly investigate sensemaking as a concept, thus posing a threat to construct validity. Nonetheless, the widespread acceptance and use of (variations of) Weick's theory provided a base for the chosen items that comprised the quantitative

measurement of sensemaking. Also, the qualitative data provided insights into sensemaking at each organisational level, which complemented the quantitative data.

4.3. Scientific implications and suggestions for future research

Organisational change research has grown extensively over the past decades and new theories have developed over time to explain change (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Bamford & Forrester, 2003; Weick et al., 2005). The future of organisational change research is determined by each contribution and the present study has attempted to provide new insights into the relevance of communication, influential power and sensemaking in relation to compliance with change goals. However, more research is needed to confirm the findings. Specific scientific implications and suggestions for future research will be discussed hereafter.

Firstly, communication, influential power and sensemaking were measured with new or adjusted scales that proved reliable. The scales can be retested in future research to evaluate the findings of the present study. However, the operationalization of sensemaking could be reconsidered. The newly developed construct would be interesting to retest as a quantitative tool in future research, but this approach could benefit from a complementary extensive, qualitative measurement of sensemaking that includes the social aspect of sensemaking. Investigating sensemaking more in-depth can help organisations understand how mental processes lead to behaviour and thus influence organisational dynamics at the micro and macro level (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Mills et al., 2010). Furthermore, to understand how sensemaking can be used to enhance compliance with change goals, a more in-depth investigation into the relationship between sensemaking and change outcomes is needed. A suggestion for future research would be to use a longitudinal approach to measure sensemaking in an organisational change context, to evaluate how research subjects perceive change and to connect those perceptions to actual behaviour in relation to change goals.

Secondly, extensive literature is available on the importance of change management, but less is known about the use of influential power in particular. Out of all variables of interest in the study, only the explanatory power of influential power was proved. Therefore, future research should further investigate the importance of influential power as a tool for change management, while considering the importance of traditional allocative resources over relational resources. Although the newly developed scale proved reliable, a complementary suggestion would be to measure both aspects of influential power in the same manner to enhance validity (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Also, the concept of sensegiving was introduced, which requires influential power to some extent. It would be interesting to investigate how sensegiving, influential power and compliance with change goals interact as well.

Thirdly, the limitations of the present study made it difficult to fully grasp the dynamics of organisational change, especially with regards to the relevance of sensemaking. It would be interesting to use a similar approach to the investigated relationships from a theoretical perspective, but to learn from the operational mistakes made in the present study. Above all, it is important to make sure that the respondents from all levels of the organisation are knowledgeable enough to provide a useful contribution to the measurement of the variables under investigation. A prerequisite for a future study in an organisational change context would be that the respondents are familiar with the change strategy. A pilot study would be recommended to identify flaws in the instrumentation and would uncover practical issues before the actual study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

4.4. Practical implications

Organisational change is a dynamic and interactive process, but the need for control and stability leads to a tension between the planned and emergent approach to change (Liebhart & Garcia Lorenzo, 2010). Liebhart and Garcia Lorenzo (2010) argue that both approaches must be considered to succeed in organisational change in the 21st century. Considering that an estimated 70% of the organisations that attempt to implement a change strategy fail, many scholars have attempted to identify what factors influence compliance with change goals so that organisational practice can learn

from them. Building upon previous research, the results of the present study have several implications for organisational practice as well.

Firstly, communication proved to be a struggle in the present study, while many scholars emphasized that good communication is essential for the success of a change strategy Elving, 2005; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Klein, 1996; Lewis, 1999; Nelissen & Van Selm, 2008; Qian & Daniels, 2008; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). Although the influence of communication on compliance with change goals was not confirmed, the present study showed that perceived quality of communication was low and the interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with the quality of communication and the ineffectiveness of communication channels currently in place. Moreover, there was little vertical or horizontal interaction regarding the change goals. Organisations can learn from the present study that they carefully have to consider how to prepare each organisational level for its role-specific tasks in the change process through communication and follow-up if the expectations are clear in order to realise intended change outcomes (Klein, 1996). Interaction can help clear up potential misunderstandings and contribute to a shared understanding of intended change outcomes (Elving, 2005; Lewis, 1999). Consequently, a change strategy should include a communication strategy that lays out what must be communicated, to whom and by whom during the general stages of change implementation (Klein, 1996). The use of different communication channels is advised, although face-to-face and vertical communication is most preferred (Lewis, 1999).

Secondly, the present study found the most convincing evidence for influential power as a predictor of compliance with change goals. It is interesting for changing organisations to further explore how influential power can be used to realise intended change outcomes. Influential power can exist across organisational levels, as was indicated by Balogun and Johnson (2005), but the present study brought forward that the traditional allocative resources are most relevant in relation to compliance with change goals and those resources are primarily present in the upper organisational levels. Also noteworthy was the role of the middle organisational level in this study and other recent studies. Therefore, a practical recommendation would be to assess which individuals take on key influential positions in the organisation, because of their authority and expertise, and to encourage those individuals to use that influential power for the purpose of realising intended change outcomes. The use of change agents in organisational change and their positive impact on change outcomes have also been demonstrated in previous research (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012).

Thirdly, organisational change research has increasingly emphasized the different roles each organisational level is known to have in the change process (Jones et al., 2008). As a result, differences between organisational levels can be expected with regards to how they perceive change and how they use that perception to determine their behaviour. The present study showed significant differences for sensemaking and influential power, but not for communication and compliance with change goals. To focus on sensemaking and influential power, the role of the top and middle organisational level can be used for sensegiving (Rouleau, 2005). Sensegiving is described as a means to shape sensemaking to influence the outcomes thereof, so sensegiving can be used to enhance compliance with change goals when individuals are steered in the right direction. Organisations can learn from these findings and previous research that the upper organisational levels should be tasked with sensegiving in an organisational change process to enhance compliance with change goals and thus contribute to the success of the change strategy (Gioia et al., 1994; Rouleau, 2005).

Taken together, the outcomes of the study offer new insights into how change can be approached and what factors appear to have an effect on change outcomes. The practical implications that have been described can be used to develop new change strategies or alter existing change strategies to work towards the successful realisation of intended change outcomes.

5.   CONCLUSION

In the 21st century organisational change has become a vital part of running a business. The widely lacking success of change implementation has led to research that investigates how change evolves and what factors can contribute to the realisation of intended change outcomes. Previous studies brought forward an interest in communication, influential power and sensemaking as predictors of compliance with change goals. The present study complemented existing research by investigating these variables in one model and by developing new measurement tools for the variables. The theoretical framework led to the development of two main research questions:

1. To what extent can communication, influential power and sensemaking predict compliance with change goals?
2. What are the differences between organisational levels with regards to communication, influential power, sensemaking and compliance with change goals?

The research questions were investigated with both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data showed that only the traditional allocative resources part of influential power was a significant predictor of compliance with change goals, so individuals in the organisation who possess more authority, expertise and knowledge are more likely to comply with change goals. Furthermore, the differences between the organisational levels were significant for influential power and sensemaking, but not for communication and compliance with change goals. In summary, the hierarchical position of the organisational level facilitated a different degree of access to information, involvement in and impact on the change process, awareness of what the change goals entailed and what expectations came with them. This led to significant differences between the organisational levels with regards to influential power and sensemaking. Furthermore, the qualitative data suggested that the differences in compliance with change goals may have been larger in reality than they were measured with the survey data.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study deepen the understanding of organisational change and what factors are relevant for compliance with change goals. The significance of influential power was confirmed, which can be drawn upon in both organisational practice and organisational change theory. Taken together, this study resulted in an interesting contribution to previous research and can be built upon in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Survey

Beste medewerker,

Welkom bij deze enquête! Je bent uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een afstudeeronderzoek over duurzame organisatie ontwikkeling. De enquête zal ongeveer 5-10 minuten duren.

De verzamelde gegevens worden uiterst vertrouwelijk door mij behandeld en enkel anoniem in de vorm van een rapport met De Alliantie en derden gedeeld. Bovendien is je deelname volledig vrijwillig, daarom vraag ik je op de volgende pagina akkoord te geven op een toestemmingsverklaring. Wanneer je nog vragen, opmerkingen of moeilijkheden hebt, kun je altijd contact opnemen met mij.

Bij voorbaat dank voor je medewerking!

Vriendelijke groeten,

Tyra van den Brink
Masterstudent Educational Science and Technology aan de Universiteit Twente
E-mail: t.t.vandenbrink@student.utwente.nl

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0.   Ik verklaar dat ik:
- op een voor mij duidelijke wijze ben ingelicht over de aard, de methode, het doel en de belasting van het onderzoek.
- weet dat de gegevens en resultaten van het onderzoek alleen anoniem en vertrouwelijk aan derden bekend gemaakt zullen worden.
- naar tevredenheid antwoord heb gekregen op eventuele vragen voorafgaand aan het onderzoek.
- geheel vrijwillig instem met deelname aan dit onderzoek en me daarbij het recht behoud voor om op elk moment zonder opgaaf van redenen mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek te beëindigen.

◯ Akkoord

---

1 Wat is je naam? (Voor- en achternaam)

_____

2 Wat is je geboortedatum? (DD-MM-JJ)

_____

3 Hoe lang ben je werkzaam bij De Alliantie? (Aantal jaren)

_____

4 Hoe lang ben je werkzaam bij het F&SSC? (Aantal jaren)

_____

5 Op welke afdeling van het F&SSC ben je werkzaam?

- ○ Facilitaire zaken
- ○ Control
- ○ Treasury
- ○ Financial services
- ○ ICT
- ○ Personeelsadministratie
- ○ Directie

6 Wat is je huidige functie?

- ○ Medewerker
- ○ Senior medewerker
- ○ Manager / Leidinggevende
- ○ Directie

7 Ben je betrokken geweest bij de ontwikkeling van Formule A?

- ○ Ja
- ○ Nee

8 Geef voor elke stelling aan in welke mate je het hiermee eens of oneens bent.

	Sterk oneens	Oneens	Noch eens, noch oneens	Eens	Sterk eens
De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A is op het juiste moment gekomen	○	○	○	○	○
De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A was nuttig	○	○	○	○	○
De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A hebben mijn vragen hierover adequaat beantwoord	○	○	○	○	○
De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A was voldoende om mij te informeren hierover	○	○	○	○	○
De informatie voorziening over Formule A was positief	○	○	○	○	○
De informatievoorziening over Formule A was gunstig	○	○	○	○	○
De informatie over Formule A is op een gepaste manier gecommuniceerd	○	○	○	○	○

9 Geef voor elke stelling aan in welke mate je het hiermee eens of oneens bent.

	Sterk oneens	Oneens	Noch eens, noch oneens	Eens	Sterk eens
Ik voel me vrij om mijn leidinggevende om uitleg te vragen omtrent Formule A	○	○	○	○	○
Ik kan op een prettige manier met collega's overleggen wat er bedoeld wordt met Formule A	○	○	○	○	○
Er zijn genoeg mogelijkheden om kritisch te reflecteren op Formule A of om suggesties te geven voor verbetering	○	○	○	○	○
Het management besteed aandacht aan de suggesties van werknemers	○	○	○	○	○
Als ik Formule A wil bekritiseren, dan weet ik hoe ik dit moet communiceren binnen de organisatie	○	○	○	○	○
Ik vind het lastig om feedback te geven aan mijn leidinggevende over hoe Formule A verbeterd kan worden	○	○	○	○	○

10 Geef voor elke stelling aan in welke mate je het hiermee eens of oneens bent.

	Sterk oneens	Oneens	Noch eens, noch oneens	Eens	Sterk eens
Ik heb veel zeggenschap over besluiten op mijn afdeling	○	○	○	○	○
Ik kan mijn kennis en vaardigheden goed toepassen in mijn werk	○	○	○	○	○
Ik heb veel ervaring in mijn werk	○	○	○	○	○
Ik draag verantwoordelijkheid voor anderen binnen de organisatie	○	○	○	○	○
Ik geef leiding aan andere werknemers	○	○	○	○	○
Collega's benaderen mij regelmatig met vragen over hun werkzaamheden	○	○	○	○	○
Ik heb regelmatig vragen over mijn werkzaamheden	○	○	○	○	○
Ik heb veel kennis van zaken binnen de organisatie	○	○	○	○	○

11 Noem exact 5 personen met voor- en achternaam die je het afgelopen jaar regelmatig benaderd hebt voor informatie en advies om je werkzaamheden goed te kunnen doen.

_____

12 Noem exact 5 personen met voor- en achternaam die jou het afgelopen jaar regelmatig benaderd hebben voor informatie en advies om hun werkzaamheden goed te kunnen doen (dit mogen dezelfde personen zijn als die je zelf benaderd hebt).

_____

13 Noem exact 5 personen met voor- en achternaam die je het afgelopen jaar regelmatig benaderd hebt voor informatie en advies over persoonlijke zaken, d.w.z. zaken die geen betrekking hebben op uw werk.

_____

14 Noem exact 5 personen met voor- en achternaam die jou het afgelopen jaar regelmatig benaderd hebben voor informatie en advies over persoonlijke zaken, d.w.z. zaken die geen betrekking hebben op uw werk (dit mogen dezelfde personen zijn als die je zelf benaderd hebt).

_____

15 Geef voor elke stelling aan in welke mate deze voor jou van toepassing is.

	Sterk oneens	Oneens	Noch eens, noch oneens	Eens	Sterk eens
Ik weet wat niet de doelen zijn van Formule A	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben me bewust van wat er beter kan in mijn werkomgeving	○	○	○	○	○
Ik weet niet wat ik zelf beter kan doen in mijn werk	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben me bewust van wat Formule A voor mijn werkzaamheden betekent	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben me bewust van wat Formule A voor mijn werkomgeving betekent	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben me bewust van wat Formule A voor mij persoonlijk betekent	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben bewust bezig met het veranderen van mijn werkzaamheden in lijn met Formule A	○	○	○	○	○
Ik moedig zelden anderen aan om te veranderen in lijn met Formule A	○	○	○	○	○
Ik streef de doelen van Formule A na in hoe ik mijn werkzaamheden verricht	○	○	○	○	○
Ik reflecteer kritisch op hoe ik werkzaamheden verricht	○	○	○	○	○
Ik reflecteer kritisch met anderen op hoe ik werkzaamheden verricht	○	○	○	○	○
Mijn opgedane kennis en ervaring gebruik ik om mijzelf nog verder te verbeteren	○	○	○	○	○

16 Geef voor elk doel van Formule A in één zin aan wat hier volgens jou mee bedoeld wordt. Denk hierbij aan wat er op basis van dit doel verwacht wordt van jou als medewerker.

	Verwachting
Eén Alliantie	
Verbinding Regio-SSC	
Bedoeling boven procedures	
Verantwoordelijkheid nemen	
Samenwerkingskracht binnen en buiten het team	
Klantgerichtheid	
Leren van en met elkaar	
Besluitvorming	
Vertrouwen in elkaar	
Elkaar aanspreken	
Interne informatievoorziening	

17 Geef voor elk doel van Formule A naar eigen inzicht aan in welke mate je over het algemeen voldoet aan de verwachtingen die hiermee gesteld zijn.

	Zeer onvoldoende	Onvoldoende	Noch voldoende, noch onvoldoende	Voldoende	Zeer voldoende
Eén Alliantie	○	○	○	○	○
Verbinding Regio-SSC	○	○	○	○	○
Bedoeling boven procedures	○	○	○	○	○
Verantwoordelijkheid nemen	○	○	○	○	○
Samenwerkingskracht binnen en buiten het team	○	○	○	○	○
Klantgerichtheid	○	○	○	○	○
Besluitvorming	○	○	○	○	○
Leren van en met elkaar	○	○	○	○	○
Vertrouwen in elkaar	○	○	○	○	○
Elkaar aanspreken	○	○	○	○	○
Interne informatievoorziening	○	○	○	○	○

18 Geef voor elk doel van Formule A naar eigen inzicht aan in welke mate je collega's over het algemeen voldoen aan de verwachtingen die hiermee gesteld zijn.

	Zeer onvoldoende	Onvoldoende	Noch voldoende, noch onvoldoende	Voldoende	Zeer voldoende
Eén Alliantie	○	○	○	○	○
Verbinding Regio-SSC	○	○	○	○	○
Bedoeling boven procedures	○	○	○	○	○
Verantwoordelijkheid nemen	○	○	○	○	○
Samenwerkingskracht binnen en buiten het team	○	○	○	○	○
Klantgerichtheid	○	○	○	○	○
Besluitvorming	○	○	○	○	○
Leren van en met elkaar	○	○	○	○	○
Vertrouwen in elkaar	○	○	○	○	○
Elkaar aanspreken	○	○	○	○	○
Interne informatievoorziening	○	○	○	○	○

19 Plaats naar eigen inzicht de veranderdoelen in een volgorde van succes, waarbij nummer 1 het doel is wat het meest bereikt is en nummer 11 het doel wat het minst bereikt is.

_____ Eén Alliantie

_____ Verbinding Regio-SSC

_____ Bedoeling boven procedures

_____ Verantwoordelijkheid nemen

_____ Samenwerkingskracht binnen en buiten het team

_____ Klantgerichtheid

_____ Besluitvorming

_____ Leren van en met elkaar

_____ Vertrouwen in elkaar

_____ Elkaar aanspreken

_____ Interne informatievoorziening

---

20 Heb je nog aanvullende opmerkingen of vragen over de enquête?

_____

Appendix B. Interview

Welkom! Heel fijn dat je geïnterviewd wil worden voor mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Ik zal vragen stellen over verandering binnen de Alliantie en alle antwoorden die je geeft zullen vertrouwelijk behandeld worden en nooit kenbaar gemaakt worden aan je werkgever of derden. Ik zal de verkregen informatie analyseren en verwerken in een rapport. Als je tussendoor vragen hebt, voel je dan vrij om die te stellen. Je behoudt ook altijd het recht om je deelname in te trekken.

1. Wat is je naam?

2. Zie je verbetermogelijkheden binnen de organisatie?

3. Zie je verbetermogelijkheden op jouw afdeling?

4. Met Formule A is een aantal doelen gesteld – (alle doelen presenteren op papier) – wil je deze in volgorde van prioriteit leggen? Dus prioriteer de doelen op basis van wat jou betreft het beste aansluit bij de verbetermogelijkheden die je ziet.

5. Neem je veranderingen waar als gevolg van Formule A? Denk hierbij aan je werkomgeving en jezelf (sociale interactie, sfeer op kantoor, taken, samenwerking met anderen en de resultaten die daar uit volgen).

6. Hoe zie je Formule A als je kijkt naar de ontwikkeling van de organisatie en het SSC specifiek? (Positieve/negatieve associatie?)

7. Heb je het wel eens met collega's over Formule A en wat er bedoeld wordt met de gestelde doelen?

8. Denk je dat Formule A invloed heeft op jou persoonlijk en je werkzaamheden? Denk hierbij aan hoe je werkzaamheden verricht, hoe je omgaat met anderen en hoe je de werkomgeving ervaart.

9. Welke initiatieven zijn er volgens jou genomen om de gestelde doelen te communiceren en te bereiken? Denk hierbij aan informatie vertrekking, informatieve bijeenkomsten en trainingen.

- Zijn deze initiatieven volgens jou effectief (geweest)?
- Zijn er volgens jou betere, alternatieve manieren om de gestelde doelen te communiceren en te bereiken?

10. Wat zijn volgens jou de bedoelde uitkomsten van Formule A?

- Denk je dat deze bedoelde uitkomsten gerealiseerd zijn?
- Denk je dat er onbedoelde veranderingen hebben plaatsgevonden als gevolg van Formule A? Denk hierbij aan positieve/negatieve neveneffecten van Formule A.

11. Met Formule A is een aantal doelen gesteld – (alle doelen presenteren op papier) – wil je voor elk van deze doelen aangeven of en hoe jij hier gehoor aan geeft in je dagelijkse bezigheden?

12. Zou je Formule A vooralsnog als een succes beschouwen?

- Denk je dat er factoren zijn die het succes in de weg staan?
- Denk je dat er factoren zijn die het succes (kunnen) bevorderen?

13. Reflecteer je wel eens zelf of met anderen op of de gestelde doelen worden behaald? Denk hierbij aan hoe het gaat op je werk en of je zelf je werkzaamheden verricht in lijn met de doelen.

14. Reflecteer je wel eens op of je bijdraagt aan het realiseren van de gestelde doelen?

- Doe je actief mee aan de initiatieven die geïnitieerd worden om Formule A te realiseren?

15. Reflecteer je wel eens op of anderen bijdragen aan het realiseren van de gestelde doelen? Denk hierbij aan of anderen werken in lijn met de doelen.

- Heb je het idee dat anderen actief meedoen aan de initiatieven die geïnitieerd worden om Formule A te realiseren?

16. Zet je anderen aan en/of motiveer je anderen tot het werken in lijn met de doelen?

17. Hoe zie je de toekomst voor je als het gaat om Formule A/verbetering van de Alliantie?

- Hoe wil je zelf bijdragen aan het realiseren van deze toekomst?
- Hoe denk je dat anderen aan deze toekomst kunnen bijdragen? Denk hierbij aan het A-team, je leidinggevende(n) en collega's.

Appendix C. Pattern Matrix

Table 6

The Pattern Matrix of the Principal Component Factor Analysis

		Component					
Nr	Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A is op het juiste moment gekomen	.498			.221		
2	De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A was nuttig	.895					
3	De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A hebben mijn vragen hierover adequaat beantwoord	.842					
4	De informatie die ik heb ontvangen over Formule A was voldoende om mij te informeren hierover	.848					
5	De informatievoorziening over Formule A was positief	.865					
6	De informatievoorziening over Formule A was gunstig	.732					
7	De informatie over Formule A is op een gepaste manier gecommuniceerd	.697					
8	Ik voel me vrij om mijn leidinggevende om uitleg te vragen omtrent Formule A			.762			
9	Ik kan op een prettige manier met collega's overleggen wat er bedoeld wordt met Formule A			.784			
10	Er zijn genoeg mogelijkheden om kritisch te reflecteren op Formule A of om suggesties te geven voor verbetering			.655			
11	Het management besteed aandacht aan de suggesties van werknemers	.228	.341	.582			
12	Als ik Formule A wil bekritiseren, dan weet ik hoe ik dit moet communiceren binnen de organisatie			.542			
13	Ik vind het lastig om feedback te geven aan mijn leidinggevende over hoe Formule A verbeterd kan worden (reversed)	-.241		.313			.284
14	Ik heb veel zeggenschap over besluiten op mijn afdeling		.340			-.677	.214
15	Ik kan mijn kennis en vaardigheden goed toepassen in mijn werk					-.723	
16	Ik heb veel ervaring in mijn werk	-.241				-.772	
17	Ik draag verantwoordelijkheid voor anderen binnen de organisatie		.391			-.549	
18	Ik geef leiding aan andere werknemers	.208				-.410	.445

No.	Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	Collega's benaderen mij regelmatig met vragen over hun werkzaamheden		.321				-.307	.539
20	Ik heb regelmatig vragen over mijn werkzaamheden (reversed)		-.376	.201				
21	Ik heb veel kennis van zaken binnen de organisatie		.284					.381
22	Prominentie in het formele netwerk							.647
23	Prominentie in het informele netwerk							.504
24	Ik weet niet wat de doelen zijn van Formule A (reversed)				.287	.202		.287
25	Ik ben me bewust van wat er beter kan in mijn werkomgeving		.801					
26	Ik weet niet wat ik zelf beter kan doen in mijn werk (reversed)	.229	.424			-.232		
27	Ik ben me bewust van wat Formule A voor mijn werkzaamheden betekent				.846			
28	Ik ben me bewust van wat Formule A voor mijn werkomgeving betekent				.846			
29	Ik ben me bewust van wat Formule A voor mij persoonlijk betekent		.208		.816			
30	Ik ben bewust bezig met het veranderen van mijn werkzaamheden in lijn met Formule A				.696			
31	Ik moedig zelden anderen aan om te veranderen in lijn met Formule A (reversed)	-.228	.430		.323			.264
32	Ik streef de doelen van Formule A na in hoe ik mijn werkzaamheden inricht				.855			
33	Ik reflecteer kritisch op hoe ik werkzaamheden verricht		.660		-.312			
34	Ik reflecteer kritisch met anderen op hoe ik werkzaamheden verricht		.555		-.361			.235
35	Mijn opgedane kennis en ervaring gebruik ik om mijzelf nog verder te verbeteren		.860			-.210		-.215

Note. Values ranging -.2 to .2 were excluded from the matrix.

Appendix D. Code Book Qualitative Data Analysis

Table 7

The Code Book for the Qualitative Data Analysis

Construct	Dimensions	Indicators	Example items
Communication	Communicatio – the quality of information provision	Are respondents informed about organisational change (goals)?	The quality of information provided about the change strategy is high/low
	Communicare – the creation of a shared understanding	How do respondents interact about change goals?	There is a little/a lot of interaction about the change strategy within the organisation
		Can respondents discuss questions about change (goals) with their superiors?	Supervisors are (un)available to answer questions about the change strategy
Influential power	Traditional allocative resources – the power that is derived from authority, knowledge and/or expertise	Do respondents possess traditional allocative resources?	There is a little/a lot of authority/ knowledge/ expertise in the workplace
	Relational resources – the power that is derived from formal and informal networks	Do respondents possess relational resources?	There is a little/a lot of formal/informal contact with others
Sensemaking	Enactment – the perception of change	Are respondents aware of change goals?	There is (no) awareness of change goals
		Are respondents aware of what needs to change in the organisation?	There is (no) awareness of what needs to change in the organisation
	Selection – the interpretation of change	How do respondents interpret change goals?	Change goals are interpreted (in)correctly, because it is (un)clear what they imply
	Retention – the pursuit of change	Are respondents changing their practice?	The organisational practice is (not) changing in line with the change goals
	Reflection – the reflection on change	Are respondents reflecting on their practice?	There is a little/a lot of reflection on the current organisational practice

		Are respondents reflecting on their progress with change goals?	There is a little/a lot of reflection on the progress with change goals
Compliance with change goals	Change goals – the change goals	Are respondents complying with change goals?	There is a little/a lot of compliance with change goals
		What motivates respondents to comply or not comply with change goals?	The reasons for (not) complying with change goals are …
Organisational level	Employee level – the lowest organisational level	How do employees perceive their role in organisational change?	The employees are responsible for … with regards to change
		How do employees perceive the roles of other organisational levels with regards to change?	The employees feel that senior employees and/or managers are responsible for … with regards to change
	Senior employee level – the middle organisational level	How do senior employees perceive their role in organisational change?	The senior employees are responsible for … with regards to change
		How do senior employees perceive the roles of other organisational levels with regards to change?	The senior employees feel that employees and/or managers are responsible for … with regards to change
	Management/board level – the highest organisational level	How do managers perceive their role in organisational change?	The managers are responsible for … with regards to change
		How do managers perceive the roles of other organisational levels with regards to change?	The managers feel that employees and/or senior employees are responsible for … with regards to change