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Resilient change leadership

How is leadership influencing organizational resilience in VUCA environments?

Master's thesis in Technology Management and Digital Transformation

Supervisor: Mark Pasquine

Co-supervisor: Bella B. Nujen

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Abstract

Building resilience to meet changing environments or when handling internal changes is imperative for organizations and their managers. Compared to traditional change management strategies which often is employed and aimed at during large changes, scarce attention has been given to organizational resilience and its leadership. Thus, identifying and exploring potential leadership characteristics that can support the organization and drive change processes deserves further attention.

This study aims to contribute to this discourse by conducting an in-depth investigation of a Scandinavian multinational company operating within the energy sector which is undergoing major changes. A survey was distributed internally to benchmark the company's current situation, followed by in-depth interviews with leaders and employees at different organizational levels which focused on their perceptions of the concept of resilience and its impact on leadership characteristics.

More specifically the results showed that employees in a VUCA situation need close and individual follow-up. Even in a competence company, clear communication and clarity of roles will be important. In addition, the results showed that there can be very little difference between what is perceived as an empowering leadership style and one that is perceived as Laissez Faire. The results in the thesis can be used as a basis for further development of managers, especially considering resilience.

Keywords: Resilience, Change management, Leadership, Dynamic capabilities, Energy sector

Sammendrag

Å bygge motstandskraft for å møte skiftende miljøer eller når man håndterer interne endringer er avgjørende for organisasjoner og deres ledere. Sammenlignet med tradisjonelle endringsledelsesstrategier som ofte brukes og rettes mot under store endringer, har det vært lite oppmerksomhet til organisatorisk resiliens og ledelse. Derfor fortjener å identifisere og utforske mulige lederegenskaper som kan støtte organisasjonen og drive endringsprosesser, ytterligere oppmerksomhet.

Denne studien har som mål å bidra til denne diskursen ved å gjennomføre en dybdeundersøkelse av et skandinavisk multinasjonalt selskap som opererer innenfor energisektoren som er under store endringer. En undersøkelse ble distribuert internt for å måle selskapets nåværende situasjon, etterfulgt av dybdeintervjuer med ledere og ansatte på ulike organisasjonsnivåer som fokuserte på deres oppfatning av begrepet resiliens og dets innvirkning på lederegenskaper.

Analysen avdekker potensielle fokusområder på lederstiler og egenskaper for organisasjoner i endring. Mer spesifikt viste resultatene at ansatte i en VUCA-situasjon trenger tett og individuell oppfølging. Selv i en kompetansebedrift vil tydelig kommunikasjon og rolleklarhet være viktig. I tillegg viste resultatene at det kan være svært liten forskjell mellom det som oppfattes som en styrkende lederstil og en som oppfattes som Laissez Faire. Resultatene i oppgaven kan brukes som grunnlag for videreutvikling av ledere, spesielt med tanke på resiliens.

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List of Abbreviations

HRO	High Reliable Organization
RQ	Research Question
CM	Change Management
WHO	World Health Organization
SSB	Statistics Norway
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science & Technology
KTH	Royal Institute of Technology
CU	University of Copenhagen
DEI	Diversity, equity, and inclusion
SHRM	Strategic Human Resources Management
FRL	Full Range Leadership Model
PSC	Psychological Safety Climate
HR	Human Resources
VUCA	Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous

1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore which leadership characteristics influence organizational resilience in a VUCA environment, through a case study of a multinational energy company. Change management and resilience are both two concepts that have gain increased attention in recent times. Nevertheless, when studied jointly the academic literature on the topic is still limited. Thus, enhancing the understanding of specific managerial characteristics for navigating changes (cf. Change management) is of great importance and requires further investigation – particularly regarding its interconnectedness and fairly unexplored relationship with resilience.

This chapter provides an introduction to the research by introducing the background of the thesis and the research questions. Subsequently, the context will be addressed in addition to the relevance of the topic.

1.1 Background

To say that the world has changed during the last decades is quite the understatement. We have experienced vast disruptions - the internet, smartphones, apps, the cloud, electric and self-driving cars, drones, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, explosion of renewables, new energy carriers and many more.

Adding to advancement in technologies and digital solutions, the paradigm of stable international relations, hyper globalization, and democratization is also fundamentally shifting as the globe enters a period of transition. Moreso, the energy transition, the return of inflation, and the fragmentation and instability of national political systems, both in Western democracies and more authoritarian regimes have entered the agenda. Over the past years people have endured a pandemic, seen a horrific military invasion of Ukraine, an increase in serious wildfires, and noticed that the leaders of some of the biggest economies are becoming more dictatorial and divisive in their communication.

Hence, it is evident that our world has entered a more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment also referred to as (VUCA). The acronym originates from the US military university and was introduced in 1987 (Murugan, Singh, & Rajavel, 2021). VUCA is characterized as a state of rapid changes that last over a certain period is to be described as volatile. Such an environment seems to put more demands on leadership capabilities and/or characteristics, as well as on how change management action is carried out, which makes it an intriguing research area to explore further. Organizational resilience can be utilized to overcome and thrive through such adversities and companies showing higher resilience levels, are more competitive and deliver higher profits (McCann et al., 2009). Especially, since the increased complexity of ongoing technological advancements, changes in the workforce's demographics, the demand for quicker decision-making, and the growth of adaptability and changeability, prompts organizational resilience. Hence, it might be reasonable to ask whether development of management skills and characteristics have received the attention it requires or whether this is an area that is lagging. Accordingly, prioritizing these issues and their potential consequences for organizations and their leaders' necessities the application of a change and resilience lens especially paramount.

1.2 Relevance of the topic

1.2.1 Academic relevance

As major disruptions such as, the COVID-19 pandemic, are likely to continue to occur (Lund et al, 2020) it is reasonable to assume that European companies must increase their awareness and abilities on how to manage and navigate external and unpredictable changes. As a result, academics and practitioners have accentuated organizational resilience as an important area to focus on. However, focusing on resilience due to other external changes posed on companies (e.g., policy requirements, new customer preferences) are equally important since this too might require alterations in existing business models which might pose new technologies being utilized or even new skill requirements. In fact, altering existing business models or embarking on totally new ones, often impose additional organizational changes which requires being managed. Hence, while unexpected disruptions require organizations to be resilient, internal changes are dependent on good change management strategies. However, research shows that managing smooth change transitions are hard to achieve (Sirkin et al, 2005). Consequently, how change is managed becomes critical to organizational resilience.

1.2.2 Practical relevance

According to a survey conducted by Heidrick & Struggles in 2020 (www.heidrick.com) there is a need for a new breed of leadership in the energy sector. The report highlights, among other things, that leaders in this sector need to put further attention on collaboration to stay innovative and leverage technology. They will have to improve their leadership skills in many fields, grow even more agile and resilient, and place a higher value on inspiration, learning, and innovation, highlighting the importance of resilience change management. Managing changes to stay competitive and resilient is paramount for companies operating in the energy. Especially since this sector is operating within a context that is uncertain by nature (i.e., dependent on natural resources) and operates under strict national regulations as much as under international policies. Managers leading such companies would therefore benefit from further research on the relationship between leadership resilience and change management in order to grasp opportunities (e.g. expanding into new value chains) and avoid unfavorable outcomes (e.g. non-compliance leading to hefty fines, legal ramifications, and damage to the company's reputation).

1.2.3 Research topic in literature

The increase in interest on resilience comes from the belief that the strongest and prosperous companies are those responding to changes in their environment in a swiftly manner, either by bouncing back to the original state before being exposed by (un)predicted changes or by anticipate new opportunities, to recover from events that may impact its ability to function effectively (Duchek, 2019). Despite this notion of resilience, Ignatowicz et al. (2023) highlights that there is currently no consensus on how to evaluate organizational resilience, what should be measured or assessed and using what characteristic and indicators. Having said that, the skills and characteristics required to act in accordance with resilience mirrors the same argumentation that can be found in psychological and change management studies. For instance, in change management, practices promoting flexibility have focused on actions that can ease the creation of openness to change, by limiting structural and organizational obstacles (including culture,

flow of work and people, as well as resources) that can impede an efficient execution of strategy (Dyer and Singh, 1998). Thus, within the context of change management, resilience prompts the need for constant, proactive, and swifter approaches to change (Bolton, 2004), before the case for change becomes too complex to manage. In essence, this thesis adheres to resilience as an organizational capability (Stoltz, 2004; Pedersen and Jensen, 2022) that is underpinned by distinct managerial characteristics that enhances the ability to manage change(s). More precisely, on an organizational level, this current work applies resilience as *“an organization’s ability to anticipate potential threats, to cope effectively with adverse events, and to adapt to changing conditions”* (Duchek, 2019, p. 220) which mirrors the leadership/management dimensions of resilience as heightened by who stated that *“resilience is more than mere survival; it involves identifying potential risks and taking proactive steps to ensure that an organization thrives in the face of adversity”* (Somers, 2009, p. 13). A second stream of literature applied throughout this thesis is thus naturally embedded within the field of change management, where the work of Lewin (1951) and Kotter’s (1996) are central, which will be presented more thoroughly in literature section, covered in Chapter 2.

1.3 Research question

Based on the above-mentioned scenarios and framework, it is important for organizations to map, train and promote the capabilities needed for a leader to successfully fulfill the role through disrupted markets and adversity.

Change leadership is a proactive approach to change management, where change is seen as a possibility for growth and improvement rather than a finite project. Change leaders create an inspiring vision, and advocate for that vision throughout the organization. Leaders of change should adopt a people-centered strategy.

The leader must smoothen and relieve shocks in the organization, through transparent internal communication and a strategic vision. Higher levels of resilience are associated with a lower risk of burnout from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishments.

Therefore, leaders must enable their employees to continue to learn, adapt, innovate as well as transform and thrive through mega changes. The underlying research question in this thesis is:

How is leadership influencing organizational resilience in VUCA environments?

In the following section, an overview of relevant literature is provided with the purpose of explaining the theoretical background of the thesis. Organizational resilience represents the core topic in this research, the following sections presented are dynamic capabilities, change management and leadership styles and these are addressed separately to establish an in-depth understanding of the topic and exhibiting their relationship and relevance.

2 Theory

In this chapter an overview of relevant literature is provided with the purpose of explaining the core theoretical background of the thesis.

2.1 Organizational resilience

Historically resilience comes from the "act of rebounding or springing back", often of immaterial things as in the field of metallurgy, where it describes the elastic deformation of a body that returns to its original shape after being subjected to force (www.etymonline.com). The results of the Charpy impact test are analyzed to determine the energy absorbed by the sample during impact, which provides insights into the material's resilience (Siewert et al., 2002).

For half a decade the term has also been applied to human factors. In the beginning mostly on individual level but applying this to organizations; Cronenberg proposed to add additional levels of analysis, namely the team and organizational level (Cronenberg, 2020). A year later Brink et al. (2021) added the environmental level, including the external factors and conditions affecting an organization's resilience (Radic et al, 2022). Engineering, ecology, and psychology all employ the concept of resilience. Lately it has received more attention also in the field of business and management studies, but in this context meaning handling a VUCA environment or crisis management.

Resilience is not a 'short-term fix': it involves incremental growth and iterative learning from challenging events (Powley and Cameron 2020, p. 264). Resilient organizations have the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and continue to deliver their core services and products while managing risk effectively. They can withstand disruptions caused by events such as natural disasters, cyber-attacks, financial crises, and pandemics, which account for a substantial threat to organizational performance and competitiveness. Part of an organization's strategic positioning in relation to the needs of its operational environment is determining the appropriate resilience configuration (Burnard et al, 2018).

Taylor et al. (2019) contend that the concept of resilience may be extended at a systems level to the environment of an organization, and that organizational resilience precedes personal resilience. The ability of a company to deal with difficulties through flexible, adaptable, compassionate, and interactive mechanisms, while preserving the wellbeing, personal resiliency, and engagement of employees, is known as organizational resilience. Thus, resilience can be claimed as the ability to overcome obstacles also for organizations, despite mostly theorized at the personal level (Warner & April, 2012).

Organizational resilience allows for an adequate adaptation in crisis contexts to survive, recover, expand, and gain competitive advantage. Lengnick-Hall et al. define resilience as the ability to rise above setbacks and turn them into opportunities to perform better than before (Lengnick-Hall et al, 2011). Some researchers view organizational resilience rather specific and others as a comprehensive concept that includes the preventive avoidance of adversity, preparatory actions, the actual management of crises and subsequent learning and change (Ortiz-de-Mandojana; Bansal, 2016). The creation of a common understanding of the concept is complicated by the vast volume of resilience-related research (Linnenluecke, 2017). Organizational resilience comprises numerous and divergent themes and it is referred to as an umbrella construct by Stephanie Ducheck

(Duchek, 2019) and she also argues that organizations need to develop resilience to adapt to uncertain events through anticipation, coping, and adaptation (Duchek, 2020), which is depicted in a stage-process model below (Fig. 1).



Figure 1 Process of organizational resilience, based on Duchek (2020)

The first stage refers to an organization’s ability to detect critical developments (Duchek, 2020) and to recognize important events and any dangers to the organization, and have the proactive capacity to adapt (Somers, 2009). That is, the ability to **anticipate**, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions or unexpected events that may impact its ability to function effectively (Duchek, 2019). This is in line with Somers (2009), who argues that an organization must be able to observe, recognize, and adapt to potential crises for it to be resilient.

The most important benefit of preparing the plan is the growing of effective relationships and mutual understanding among those involved in the plan preparation process.

(Crichton et al. 2009, p.32).

The second stage can be explained as an approach to organizational resilience of a more continuous and constructive nature. Here organizational resilience is perceived as the capacity of the organization to handle change through ongoing business operations renewal to avoid deterioration and misuse (Stewart and O’Donnell, 2007). Individuals that are resilient display a remarkable acceptance of reality (Couto, 2002). Organizations need experience to accept the unexpected and reality (Weick, 1993) and acceptance is related to system understanding and being cautious and accepting system failures (Duchek, 2020; Robert, 2011).

In addition to accepting the situation organizations must understand the situation and act upon it, which can be related to sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005). “The basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs” (Weick, 1993, p. 635). Organizations endure difficulties to the point where they must constantly change to be relevant. Especially in critical infrastructure sectors or other critical, government sectors where critical services are supplied; deliveries under expected quality have too high consequences. Certain studies indicate that the characteristics of HRO and resilient organizations are comparable. HROs employ adaptable organizational structures to utilize local knowledge where surprises arise, defer decisions to experts, and respond to a broad range of possible crises (Roberts, 1990). This viewpoint describes organizational resilience as deliberate and active **coping** with unforeseen circumstances (Duchek,

2020). One part of coping is to develop solutions, another is to ensure they are implemented (Duchek, 2020).

The third approach uses the idea of anticipation when describing resilience as a somewhat forward leaning response (**adaptation**). The term “adaptation capabilities” refers to the capacity to change after crises. It is focused on organizational progress and building the organization’s knowledge base, which again might enhance the capacity for anticipation (Limnios et al., 2014). According to Duchek (2020), adaptation includes two types of capabilities: (1) reflection and learning and (2) organizational change capabilities. Interaction and collaboration are also important to enable failure learning (Gressgård & Hansen, 2015). This is because new knowledge is often created through established lessons learned processes. However, this knowledge is often not generated into new behavior. In such situations diverse perspectives might enable organizations to widen their understandings through constructive discussions on which actions to prioritize (Gressgård & Hansen, 2015).

While most studies on resilience concentrate on just one of the three perspectives mentioned, some researchers claim that there are different types of resilience. For example, Boin and van Eeten (2013) refer to precursor or recovery resilience as referring to the anticipation and recovery perspectives. Others talk about how resilience can take multiple forms, such as resistance or adaptation (Limnios et al. 2014). Recently, studies (McManus et al. 2008; Burnard et al., 2018; Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal 2016; Williams et al. 2017) have begun to incorporate two or more views in one resilience concept. According to these researchers, the many viewpoints are all a component of resilience and can only work together to foster progress in the face of a crisis. Following this presumption, the anticipatory perspective has been integrated with the active reaction perspective (which involves deliberate coping and adaptation). One way to characterize learning is as a continuous process of involving comments, reflection, and reflection on failures and unanticipated results (Edmondson, 1999).

Vakilzadeh & Haase presents several building blocks for organizational resilience, as well as antecedents underlying them. The different building blocks contribute to the organizational resilience interdependently and influence each other across different capabilities (Vakilzadeh & Haase, 2020). Adding to the understanding that organizational resilience is complex.

In a study McCann, Selsky & Lee (2009) found that organizations with higher levels of organizational agility and resilience were more competitive and profitable. This study also concluded that “*Pursuing agility without investing in resiliency is risky because it creates fragility – unsupported exposure to surprises and shocks*” (McCann et al., 2009, p. 45).

Building organizational resilience involves implementing risk management strategies, fostering a culture of resilience, developing robust business continuity plans, and investing in infrastructure and technology that can support continuity of operations in the face of disruptions (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011). It requires a proactive approach to identifying potential threats, assessing vulnerabilities, and developing plans to mitigate the impact of disruptions on the organization. In addition, an organization need instinctive thinking and improvised decisions (Bhamra, 2011). A consequence of rapid change is that it can surpass those within the system, leading to problems of adaptation such as stress, impaired work engagement, and reduced performance, and ultimately personnel turnover (Noblet, Rodwell, & McWilliams, 2006; Taylor et al., 2019). It is viewed as crucial for retaining a competitive advantage in addition to being essential for

survival. From such a perspective, resilience is also an ability of the organization to confront problems using flexible, adaptable, compassionate, and interactive mechanisms, while preserving the wellbeing, personal fortitude, and engagement of employees (Taylor et al., 2019). Taylor and the team used a variety of work stress models to determine the essential elements of organizational resilience. The interdependency of individual resilience in organizational resilience is present and the organization will only be resilient if its constituent pieces, primarily the personnel, are likewise able to change and develop (Taylor et al., 2019).

In comparison to the vast research on personal resilience, the idea of organizational resilience is still very much in its infancy. Resilience and the ability to persevere through adversities at work have traditionally been studied at an individual level in a therapeutic or developmental environment.

In this thesis the attention is on resilience at the organizational level. The individual level is recognized as a potential factor and part of organizational resilience. It is recognized that this can be studied at many levels and within many fields, and it is advised to have a further look at Radic et al. (2022) for questions regarding resilience at level or for whom.

2.1.1 Organizational resilience and interpersonal aspects

In most systems the individual is seen as a part of the group and indeed individual resilience is often regarded as a construct of organizational resilience. On a social scale, it is claimed that resilience can be analyzed at three levels; individual (micro), organization (meso) and on a system level (macro)—and that resilient entities (e.g. organizations and societies) which may include or convey resilience from one level to the other (Kayes, 2015). Because smaller systems are included in larger systems, Carpenter et al. (2001) emphasize that these levels do not entail consistency with one another. Instead, they coevolve and interact in nonlinear and unpredictable ways (Walker et al., 2004), demonstrating the complexity of the micro-macro relationship between levels in resilience. Resilience has therefore also emerged as an important differentiator between those who overcome and those who do not, in recent studies regarding stress, trauma and other challenges (Seligman, 2011).

An important facet to consider when looking at resilience from an interpersonal perspective is psychological safety. Psychological safety addresses workers' psychological health and well-being and protects them from psychological and social harm. A psychologically safe work environment cultivates a positive workplace and increases productivity and innovation of the employees. Not having psychological safety in place might create distrust, feelings of isolation, and decreased employee and job satisfaction. From earlier research we have learned psychological safety is much formed by local leaders and leadership style. It has also been stated that psychological safety motivates divergent thinking and trust which are characteristics in creative thinking (Delizonna, 2017).

The degree to which people gather and stick together to complete work or achieve socially connected goals, is referred to as **team cohesion** (Filho, 2019). It is highlighted as a significant factor in achieving good performance and flow in the project (Franz et al., 2017). Especially as it benefits team productivity by increasing performance and has a positive psychological impact on team members (Mathieu et al. 2015; Neubauer et al.

2016). It is a valuable and dynamic capability that powerfully determines competitive growth and success (Filho, 2019).

The psychological safety climate refers to policies, practices, routines, and procedures, for the insurance of a worker's psychological health and well-being. Even more so, it entails employee perceptions regarding the company values and practices towards the balance of priority for production goals versus the psychological health of workers (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). A leader can affect a subordinate's sense of self-efficacy in several ways, for example by eliminating role ambiguity and providing recognition (Yukl and Gardner, 2020).

Being able to overcome a challenge and subsequently return to equilibrium is the aim of organizational resilience. Even in the time of significant disruptions, the **adaptive capacity** of a system can offer flexibility and evolve through change. Through continuous improvement organizations may adopt and optimize procedures, or even experiment with restructuring and reorganization the current structures to boost flexibility (Sutcliffe, 2011). The cumulative effects, the physiological costs of exposure to a chronic stress response, and a variety of psychological health-related symptoms might result from recurring and continuous stress overload, such as in the case of chronic continuous demands (McEwen, 2003). To evaluate the resilience in the organization this is therefore one of the factors to look for.

Organizational resilience also includes **coordination and cooperative mechanisms**. The impact of burden at work comes from an individual's inability to control the intricate physiological coordination needed in response to mounting demands. There is a chance that prolonged exposure to stressors in the contemporary global economy has stretched physiological coordination to the breaking point, which eventually results in chronic disease (Karasek, 2008). The "associationist" demand-control model (Karasek, 2008), explains how higher levels of organizational order enable the organism to successfully respond to environmental demands—without negative health effects at lower levels (Taylor et al, 2019).

Higher levels of coordination and order is needed inside organizations, applied at the organizational level, to lessen risks to individual workers' stable self-regulation and potential interference with task prioritization, emotional well-being, personal growth, job stability, and work/family life. Exchanging knowledge and information within a system, is an illustration of coordination and cooperation. This is acknowledged to be a key component of developing organizational resilience (Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2009).

An organization that wants to develop resilience must improve its daily operations. Certain resilience capabilities, most notably those pertaining to the ability to anticipate events, adapt to disruptions, and recover from them, as well as to maintain control over structure and functions and continuity of operations, must be accomplished with the assistance of process management and information technology (Pacheco et al., 2023). Resilience is complex and in addition to the above-mentioned aspects, it also depends on mature and well-established processes in the organizational structure (Sincora et al., 2022).

Even though there is no consensus on how to evaluate organizational resilience, what should be measured or assessed and using what characteristic and indicators. Resilience can be viewed upon as a critical capability. Especially since businesses need to be able to sense, adapt to, and utilize the opportunities presented by the evolving business

environment which mirrors the concept of dynamic capabilities (Teece et al, 1997). The next section will look further into the theory of dynamic capabilities.

2.2 Dynamic capabilities

To manage continuously altering settings, dynamic capabilities come to play (Teece et al, 1997). Teece, Kogut & Zander as well as Mintzberg all discuss skills needed in a landscape in continuous change. Teece introduced in 1997 his dynamic capabilities which include the capacity to gather, integrate, generate, and rotate internal and external skills (Teece et al, 1997). The combinative capabilities developed in 1992 by Kogut and Zander, examined the factors that influence resource development, access to resources, and novel ways to combine resources to foster synergies and collaboration among organizational units for increased productivity.

A structure for transformation of capabilities and resources in an organization is created by a capability's lifecycle (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003). These steps are founding, development and maturity. Through these three steps, employees can create new capabilities, develop, and redevelop several times (dynamic) or mature (operational capability).

In addition to operational capabilities one also need dynamic capabilities, to create strategic change (Schilke et al, 2018). Establishing, developing, and maturing are the three levels of the capability lifecycle – forming a framework for change in capabilities and resources in an organization (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003). Through these levels one can organize to create new capabilities that over time can transform, moving through the development levels several times (dynamic) or remaining on the maturity level (operational capability).

2.2.1 Managerial dynamic capabilities

An enterprise's dynamic capacities are supported by the characteristics of its individual managers. The many performances made possible by managers' reactions to changes in the external environment are explained by dynamic managerial capabilities, which are made up of managerial cognition, social capital, and human capital. (Adner & Helfat, 2003).

Dynamic capabilities are formed through corporate culture, human capital, and managers' leadership and management cognition (Schilke et al., 2018).

Through the mobilization of learning and knowledge acquisition, the acquisition of essential information resources like legitimacy, and the development of managers' potential to comprehend social problems, management cognition indirectly influences corporate social responsibility. (Chen et al., 2023). Nayak et al. (2020) believe that a tacitly shared substrate of sensitivities and predispositions, which comes before cognitive representation, provides the foundation for unique, idiosyncratic, and unique dynamic capabilities. It has also been found that a person's natural curiosity is a key component in the process of developing dynamic capacities and a crucial foundation for the growth and modification of organizational capabilities (Bağış et al., 2022). Dynamic capabilities include adaptability, flexibility, learning orientation, and inventiveness, all of which are very useful for managing and implementing organizational change. They also underpin

and improve the efficacy of change management programs, which will be elaborated on below.

2.3 Change management

In today's dynamic business climate, it is crucial to benchmark while handling the unexpected. Change management is an approach that can be deployed when dealing with unforeseen events. Change management has been defined as 'the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers' (Moran and Brightman, 2000, p.66). Change is an ever-present feature of organizational life, both at an operational and strategic level (Burnes, 2004). Furthermore, describes change management an organized method, methodology, or group of procedures and strategies used to help an organization successfully execute changes (Burnes, 2009). It seeks to reduce resistance, ensure effective communication, and facilitate the transition from the present state to the intended future state by concentrating on the management of persons and teams affected by the change. Planning, stakeholder engagement, communication, training, and progress tracking are just a few of the common actions involved in change management. The management of the human side of change is therefore subject of a specific discipline or methodology called *change management* (Burnes, 2009). Accordingly, to ensure a smooth transition and to aid individuals and teams through the transformation process, change management is an important element of effective organizational change. Organizational change cannot be separated from organizational strategy and vice versa (Burnes, 2009).

Therefore, it is important for an organization to be able to identify and learn where it must be in the future, namely develop a strategy, and how to manage the changes required for reaching its targets.

Change management is not a separate field with strict, demarcated limits. Instead, a variety of social science disciplines and traditions are incorporated into the theory and practice of change management (Burnes, 2009). An overview of the development of change management theories is presented in Table 1 below. The unpredictable character of change brought on by the lightning-fast growth and developments of technology, legislation, and business models in general contribute to a massive need for change and to improve the success rate of the change related projects.

Theories	Elements	Types	Process	Discussions
Lewin's & pre-1990s		Planned Type	Top-down (unfreezing, move and act, and refreezing)	Except technology, which was hardly discussed, human and strategy were somehow reflected in these strategies. This signifies that these aspects are main ingredients for all changes before, now, and then. Due to the absence of technology, changes per se were static. The results of change could thus be predicted; the methods to manage change do not vary, and hence planning has a critical role in the management of change. Top-down instruction was adopted, and hence, top managers role is important
Emergent Theories (the 1990s)		Emergent Type	Bottom-up (process-driven approach)	Technology was seen to be a driving cause for the development of the theories. Technology has made change unpredictable, and unforeseen, and hence planned approach to change is no longer applicable. The approach to managing change relies heavily on the flexibility of front-line managers to adapt and adopt. But this also brings about big risks to the institution. To mitigate risks, steps were introduced to both guide the practices, and limit the broadness of the managers liberty.
Contemporary Theories	1) Human 2) Technology 3) Strategy		1) Bottom-up 2) The interdependence of human, technology, and strategy 3) Open, flexible, and practical strategy	Given the uncontrollable nature of change driven by fast technological development, defining what change is about becomes a challenge. Change could no longer be defined based on contents and context, but instead, could only be understood by the elements that shape it. Though the theories largely fall into the emergent nature (given the presence of technology). It has yet to rule the planned approach to managing change obsolete. Rather than concentrating on type, these theories focus more on strategy for managing change. Proper management of human, technology, and strategy to deal with change at a given time.

Table 1 A theoretical overview of change management theory development

Organizations can utilize best practices in a change project by learning about the many change management models and identifying contextual factors (Chowdhury & Shil, 2022). No matter whatever model you use or how you combine them, they can help you create a change management technique that is more successful. Change projects are usually of substantial size, complex and costly. By using a reliable change management strategy, the organization may consider all the elements required to win over employees and stakeholders. Additionally, it provides a quicker way to create a change management workflow and lessons learned that could be reused next time you deploy a new change as opposed to having to start from scratch (Errida & Lotfi, 2021).

Since the 1950s, there have been several theories and methods for managing change. It may be argued that success in a highly competitive and constantly changing environment depends on effective change management. Even though many claim extreme failure rates in change management processes, high levels are supported by majority of the change literature. Failure rates of between 60% and 90% have been concluded by Burnes (2009). What are the consequences and what does this mean for organizations?

When implemented improperly, organizational change might have many unintended consequences. It might degrade employee commitment and morale, which lowers work

effectiveness (Jian, 2009). Change management has been around for decades, back when the world changed much slower than today. Might some of the models be outdated? Out of 37 models investigated by Errida and Lotfi (2021), only five were originated after 2016. However, the models still include many similar success factors. In the study, 74 sub factors were identified and put in 12 categories: The categories cover vision and strategy of change, change readiness, resistance management, communication and motivation, sponsorship and monitoring and more.

The categories are somewhat familiar in many of the most frequent change models, which are Lewin's, Kotter's and ADKAR change management models and The McKinsey 7-S model.

2.3.1 Planned change

Primarily the two approaches for managing change that are consistent with the principles of planned and emergent change strategies, are Lewin's change model and Kotter's 8-step model.

To effectively handle the acceptance and control of change, Lewin and Kotter transformed the management models into change management models. These change models support effective change implementation inside the organization.

Kotter's change management theory

1. Create a sense of urgency to motivate people
2. Build a diverse change team with leaders and change agents of various competence and departments
3. Define a strategic vision for what is wanted to achieve
4. Communicate with everyone involved in the change management process to get them on board and make sure they know their role
5. Identify barriers and address anything causing friction
6. Create short-term targets to have the change management plan in achievable steps
7. Keep up the momentum throughout the process of implementation
8. Maintain the changes after the initial project is complete

The theory and practice of change management have been dominated by the "planned change" perspective, as well as by Lewin's three-step change models. "Unfreezing, Change, and Refreezing", are also referred to as the three learning stages (Burnes, 2004). Lewin suggested that for change and new behavior to successfully be embraced, the prior behavior must be abandoned. Before implementing new strategies, the model of change recognizes the necessity of getting rid of outdated practices, learnings, systems, procedures, and cultures (Burnes, 2004). Table 2 below illustrates how these dominant views of change management models are related.

Overview of two change management models	
Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model	Kotter's 8 step Change Model
Unfreeze	Establish a change of urgency Build a powerful change coalition
Change	Create a shared vision Communicate the vision Empower others to act on the vision Plan for and create short-term wins
Refreeze	Consolidate improvements and produce still more change Institutionalize new approaches

Table 2 Linking two change management models (KL, 2024)

Organizations that approach change strategically and methodically are more likely to maintain the talents required to carry out their work processes (Kotnour, 2011). Hence, without a systematical approach to change the risk of poor results are present. Typical unfavorable effects can be losing institutional memory, expertise, and the ability to execute the work which again can lead to reduced quality, lack of improvement or innovation, and an increase in staff burnout (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015).

This thesis adheres to Kotter's change management theory as it is the predominant theory and among the most adopted models in the world.

2.3.2 Emergent Change

According to the argument for emergent change, if an organization functions in a more predictable and stable environment, there would be less need for change, and the process of change would be shifting from one relatively stable state to another.

According to proponents of emergent change, planned change is inadequate given the ambiguity of the external environment. Planned change initiatives also frequently win praise from decision-makers for their accomplishments in providing fresh approaches to surviving, but they seldom alter the fundamental culture of the organization, and issues typically return (Weick, 2000). Emergent change emphasizes a "bottom-up" strategy rather than "top-down" control in establishing and carrying out organizational change, according to (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). The reasoning behind it is that the pace of "change is so rapid and complex that once it occurs it is impossible for senior management to identify, plan and implement action when required" (Bamford and Forrester, 2003, p. 546-564).

All that is accomplished in an organization is based on individual transformation. As individuals are inspired to act, the team, the department even the organization may start to change. The more trust employees have in their companies, the more probable it is that they will embrace change and support it. Yue, Men & Ferguson investigated the mediating role of trust in change processes and their results points to the "key role of transformational leadership and contextualizes its positive impact on eliciting employee trust during the organizational change" (Yue, Men & Ferguson, 2019, p. 19).

The recipients of organizational change are distinct individuals, regardless of its scope or intensity. An organization is only as successful as its employees. This is no different to

organizations and their ability to adapt and respond. Change is inevitable in any organization, and how well that change is managed can have a significant impact on its success. Therefore, change management is important as it might help organizations navigate and successfully implement changes to their business routines, technology, and/or organizational culture. Change can be disruptive and unsettling for employees, and they may resist it if they don't understand the reasons behind it or how it will affect their work. Change management provides a structured approach to communicate the change and engage employees in the process, which can help to minimize resistance and increase adoption (Kotter, 1996). It is important for management to recognize employees' legitimate feelings such as anxiety and uncertainty towards the coming change and to show genuine consideration for their concerns, feelings, needs, and wellbeing (Yue, Men & Ferguson, 2019). Change management ensures that the organization realizes the full benefits of the change, such as increased efficiency, productivity, or profitability. By managing the change effectively, the organization can minimize any negative impacts and optimize the positive outcomes. The study from 2019 showed that to encourage employees' willingness to change and promote successful change implementation, trust-building must be prioritized by businesses as a key business issue (Yue, Men & Ferguson, 2019).

An article published in 2022, makes a qualitative link between employee performance conversations and organizational change which contributes to the literature on change management (Blackman et al, 2022). Focus on communication skills training as a central, under-focused, field of management development (Endrejat et al., 2020). In fact, according to Elving, initiatives for change that lack intentional internal communication always fall short (Elving, 2005). Change implementers give employees a better knowledge of the content and justification of the change through effective internal communications.

Change management ensures that the change is sustainable and can be integrated into the organization's culture and processes (Burnes, 2017). By involving employees in the change and providing them with the necessary support and resources, the organization can ensure that the change becomes a permanent part of the way things are done. Selecting or developing the leaders that enhances this involvement and support will increase the probability of a successful implementation of change (Burnes, 2017).

During change and crisis, leadership conduct is essential for the organization to adapt and recover (Lombardi et al, 2021). Being aware of how to manage change and how to increase the development and use of critical capabilities during after difficulties (i.e., boost resilience), is however not only restricted to change management models but also dependent on different leadership styles and characteristics. The next section will therefore focus on the role of leadership styles and characteristics.

2.4 Leadership

The notion of leadership has been researched and examined for decades and has been explained and defined in many ways (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). The history of leadership studies is long and has been ongoing since early 1900s through Bennis and Lewin, both regarded as pioneers of the contemporary field of leadership studies. These years have resulted in numerous theories. Changes and crisis develop new needs for management as Claus (2021) states; "leading under uncertainty, managing a disrupted workforce and building resilience".

There is a vast landscape of leadership theories in literature and leadership research has experienced rapid growth, with thousands of scientific articles documenting various leadership phenomena and processes (Batistič, Černe & Vogel, 2017). In an article of 2018, 200 influential leadership works were analyzed. Out of these, ranged the most occurring leadership styles and most co-cited works. In total there were 22 leadership styles among these articles and the top occurring handled transformational, charismatic, and transactional leadership (Zhu et al, 2018). Changes in employees' impressions brought on by the leaders' styles and behaviors are what make leadership so difficult. The leader-member exchange theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) contends that employees' reactions to certain leaders' styles and behaviors influence the nature of their relationships and performance.

The Full Range Leadership model is one of the most researched and validated leadership models in use today. It is a well-known leadership theory that focuses on how leaders behave toward their workforce in various work settings. The full range model of leadership includes transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire behavior (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The model conceptualizes leadership in terms of the behaviors linked to the various styles and the theory has been empirically supported. This thesis will therefore look further into these three leadership styles considering massively changing environment and the fostering of organizational resilience.

Transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles were first described by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass in 1991. The model below shows an outline of the three leadership styles sorted by their engagement towards the team, leading to different leadership efficiency.

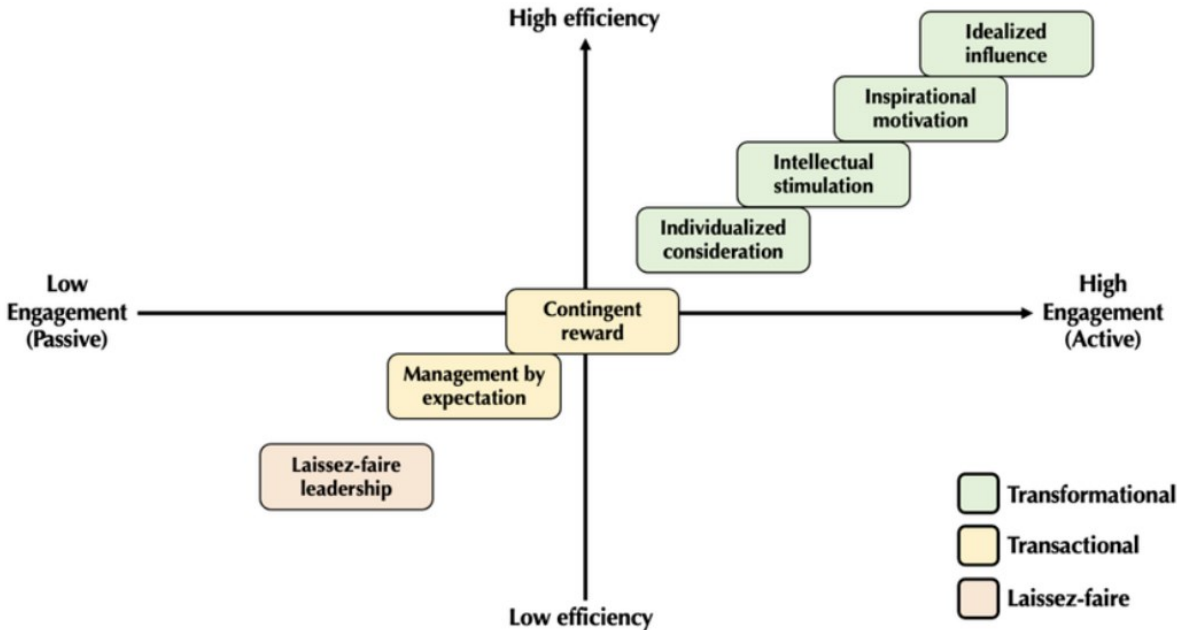


Figure 2 Full Range Leadership Model (Bass & Avolio, 2002)

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is long term oriented. The "ability of leaders to influence others by transforming their behavior without necessarily being in a position of authority"(Morgan, 2005, p. 11) relates to transformational leadership. According to a systematic review of transformational leadership, it includes intellectual stimulation through incentives for new ideas, individual consideration of each employee, motivation and inspiration, creativity stimulation, conveying optimism and meaning for the organization's mission, leading the team in a cogent direction, acting as an example, and fostering a sense of belonging and motivation. Leaders that show transformational leadership behaviors, inspire their followers to utilize their strengths and act proactively. Seemingly these behaviors, foster work engagement and enhance performance (Bakker et al., 2023). Employees' well-being can be significantly enhanced by genuine and frequent appreciation, which transformational leaders are particularly likely to offer (Godkin et al., 2010) and this further emphasizes the significance of manager recognition in the work environment (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018).

Like any other leadership approach, transformational leadership is not without its detractors. Having employees feel like they are a part of something, that they belong to something bigger, may be perceived as extremely manipulative, even though they rarely have a say on the major strategic or financial plans of the firm, and they typically do not hold any stakes in it. Furthermore, transformational leaders are frequently criticized for concentrating their efforts on a select few people to help them grow. Finally, if transformative leaders have bad motives or malicious goals, their impact over their team members may be negative. To put it another way, if the leader has terrible intentions, employees could be persuaded to follow the leader's decision.

Podsakoff et al. (1996) distinguish six dimensions of transformational leadership in their research The key behaviors of a transformational leader are articulating a future vision, role modelling as in setting an example, providing individual support, promoting collaboration, intellectual stimulation to re-think and expectations of performance excellence.

The original Bass model presents four different components (Bass, 1985).

- Intellectual stimulation

Transformational leaders will challenge the set ways and encourage creativity among their employees. Employees will be urged to develop new competence and encouraged to explore new ways of working.

- Individualized consideration

Giving each individual employee support and inspiration is another aspect of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders will continue to allow employees access to communication channels till employees may exchange ideas, and this is done so that leaders can acknowledge each employee's unique contribution. Additionally, this promotes supportive partnerships.

- Inspirational motivation

Transformational leaders have a clear vision that they communicate to their employees. These leaders can also help employees experience the same passion and motivation

- Idealized influence

Employees look up to transformational leaders as role models. Because they respect and believe in the leader, employees will emulate them and internalize their values.

2.4.2 Transactional Leadership

To ensure that broader organizational goals are achieved, transactional leadership entails leaders clarifying goals and objectives and communicating to coordinate tasks and activities with the cooperation of their staff (Bass, 1974). The ability to work through this method of exchange and tolerate hierarchical distinctions are prerequisites for this kind of leader-employee relationship to succeed. The foundation of transactional leadership is the idea that systems and subordinates perform better when there is a clear chain of command. People are motivated by incentives and punishments (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987).

Characterized by systems of praise, punishment, and corrective action taken by the boss in response to how the team members carry out their duties. Employees often work alone; there is no collaboration among those who exhibit short-term devotion to the organization. Because it doesn't require a leader to act morally and ethically, transactional leadership fails to develop trust between the leader and the employee and instead depends on extrinsic motivation to get employees to work for the employer's benefit. Such leadership's primary objective is to reach an understanding on a set of acts that serve the distinct and immediate goals of the leader and the employees. Features of transactional leadership include immobility, self-attraction, and managing the subordinates. Three other characteristics are further developed on Burn's conceptualizations, explained by Bass (1985) as being contingent reward (let's make a deal) - the degree to which the leader sets up constructive transactions or exchanges with employees. The second and third characteristics are passive and active types of management by exception (putting out the fires). Where active managers monitor the behavior of employees, anticipating problems and will take corrective measures prior to serious incidents (Northouse, 2004). Passive managers wait until the mistake has happened before acting. The active manager will be looking for deviations, while the passive will be waiting for problems to emerge.

2.4.3 Laissez-Faire Leadership

Scholars have typically dismissed "laissez-faire leadership," which is referred to as "the absence of leadership," as the inaction of subpar managers who are uninterested in the results of their organizations or their followers (Norris et al., 2021). Laissez-faire leadership can easily be explained as hands-off leadership. Positioned at the very opposite of an active transformational leadership in the full-range model of leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2002), figure 1. This leadership style is a distinctive framework for leadership as instead of describing a phenomenon, it suggests the perceived absence of leadership behaviors (Bass, 1985). It is generally defined by disregard for both tasks and employees, as opposed to transactional and transformational leadership styles (Yan et al., 2014). Delaying or avoiding making decisions, providing little to no feedback, rewards, or involvement, and making no effort to coach or encourage subordinates are all characteristics of this leadership style (Bass, 1985). Both laissez-faire and aversive leadership styles have demonstrated negative impacts on employee perceptions and performance. Aversive leadership prevents the learning from mistakes, but it also probably encourages the avoidance of future mistakes. Laissez-faire leadership, as a type

of non-leadership, may, nevertheless, be worse for learning from mistakes because it provides little to no feedback and little performance incentives to spur on further learning (Bligh et al, 2018). Laissez-faire leadership could have negative effects on organizations that depend on continuous learning to stay competitive given the growing importance of learning from mistakes as a necessary component of organizational change and the enormous risk of loss due to the failure of error learning (Yan et al., 2014).

History urges us to embrace our errors and mistakes, even our failures, as important developmental experiences that will allow us to grow and adapt to change. Transactional leaders are more likely to be satisfied with efficient results in exchange for incentives, maintaining the status quo, even though they can serve as a complement to transformational leaders and may be effective in environments that place less emphasis on innovation and change (Bass, 1985).

There is some evidence that, in many cultural situations, perceptions of laissez-faire leadership can be just as harmful as aversive leadership when it comes to organizational learning and transformation, and notably when it comes to people learning from their own mistakes (Bligh et al, 2018). Laissez-faire leadership might indeed not only be ineffective but also destructive (Skogstad, Hetland, et al., 2014).

Table 3 summarizes major characteristics of the above-mentioned leadership styles.

Transactional Leadership	Laissez-Faire Leadership	Transformational Leadership
<i>Contingent reward.</i> Defining the exchanges between what is expected from the employee and what the employee will receive in return.	<i>Management by Exception.</i> Fights fires – A leader will wait for a problem to appear before acting.	<i>Inspirational motivation.</i> Articulation and representation of a vision; leaders' optimism and enthusiasm.
<i>Active management-by-exception.</i> To maintain current performance status, the focus is on detecting and correcting errors, problems, or complaints.	<i>Avoids involvement.</i> The leader will refuse to assume the responsibilities that are part of the position.	<i>Idealized influence attributed.</i> Instilling pride in and respect for the leader; the employees identify with the leader.
<i>Management-by-exception passive.</i> Addressing problems only after they have become evident.		<i>Idealized influence behavior.</i> Representation of a trustworthy and energetic role model for the employee.
		<i>Intellectual stimulation.</i> Employees are encouraged to question the set ways of solving problems.
		<i>Individualized consideration.</i> Understanding the needs and abilities of the individual employee; developing and empowering each employee.

Table 3 Overview of Leadership style components (KL, 2024)

2.5 Resilience and leadership

The ability to react unexpectedly and quickly adjust to changes is a necessary component of improvisation, allowing one to express both reactive and adaptive qualities (Abrantes et al, 2018). Improvisation helps organizations to respond to crises without the benefit of planning and is considered a central skill in resilient organizations (Couto, 2002).

According to research, resilient leaders can be extremely important in promoting resilience because they are more likely to react to shocks by adapting and growing—that is, by dynamically merging various elements, such as “preparedness and improvisation, clear direction-setting and flexibility” (Giustiniano et al., 2020, p. 2). Therefore, effective leaders are crucial to the spread of resilience because they facilitate a process of ‘learning to unlearn and learn’ (Giustiniano et al., 2020).

In most literature, psychological resilience has been described as a desirable and positive phenomenon. Like the other qualities that may be referred individuals, teams, and organizations, the synthesis between resilience and leadership is not invulnerable to unforeseen side effects. However, some scholars have reported that there also might be a darker side of psychological resilience (Williams et al., 2017). Prior research has shown that there might occur a promotion of their perceived resilience capacity, this might result in wrongful perceptions of invulnerability, putting at risk the actual demonstration of resilience when troubles hit, increasing risk of venture failure (Sundermeier et al., 2020).

According to Peter Drucker's Management Theory there has been a shift from a "managerial" economy to an "entrepreneurial economy" that relies on knowledge creation as a source of wealth in society, has taken place. If drawing on a few parallels between entrepreneurs and managers, there are some interesting findings showing that resilient entrepreneurs could also underestimate the importance of social support systems for organizational resilience (Kahn et al., 2018), which could endanger the functioning of their organizational system. Revisiting the Peter's Principle in a resilience context, would mean that a resilient entrepreneur might not be a blooming resilient leader. Other side effects are the development of a culture that will stigmatize employees that show poor resilience (Britt et al., 2016), this might in line lead to “citizenship fatigue” (Bolino et al., 2015). The employee may then become less likely to ask for assistance, which would suppress the dynamic learning process that is the foundation of resilient leadership. Likewise, an excessive focus on resilience could lead individuals to become unduly accepting of hardship, and additionally to focus less on altering the surroundings to lessen their exposure to adversity (Krueger, 2011). Further, those who try to overachieve in resilience may experience the “false hope syndrome” (Polivy and Herman, 2000). This is a phenomenon where, when there is evidence that specific targets are unlikely to achieve, overconfidence and too optimistic behavior can cause people to prioritize incorrectly and devote effort and energy on pointless activities.

	Duchek 2020 - Organizational resilience: a capability-based conceptualization Vakilzadeh & Haase 2020, The building blocks of organizational resilience: a review of the empirical literature	John Kotter 1996, The 8 step Process for Leading Change	Teece et al 1997, Dynamic capabilities and strategic management
	RESILIENCE CAPABILITIES	CHANGE MNGMT CAPABILITIES	DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES
Prior	Anticipation: Observe Identification Preparation	Identification Planning	Sense
During	Coping: Development Accepting Implementation Coordination	Communication Projecting Risk and resistance understanding Create employee support	Seize/develop Innovative Creative Alliancing
After	Adaption: Reflection Learning Organizational Change Change Management	Assessing Evaluation Change agents	Transform

Table 4 Comparison of capabilities within resilience, change management and dynamic capabilities (KL, 2024)

Table 4 shows the comparison or alignment of Duchek and Vakilzadeh & Haaze’s resilience models, Kotter’s CM framework and Teece’s Dynamic Capabilities. When comparing these theories with the three steps of resilience; anticipation, coping and adaption and the underlying capabilities, some of the common factors are communication, learning and collaboration. These interconnected factors are all drivers in change management, dynamic capabilities and in building resilience. These factors are also in line with the results from a 2021 study (Liu et al, 2021) who state that the main influencing factors that directly affecting organizational resilience are organizational competence, organizational relationships, organizational learning, and organizational communication.

A more resilience fostering leadership can form a foundation for building dynamic capabilities within an organization. By focusing on learning, adaptability, innovation, and strategic thinking, resilient leaders can contribute to the development of dynamic capabilities, enabling the organization to stay competitive in a changing environment. This thesis will therefore further study collaboration, learning and communication. To investigate whether a leadership that promotes characteristics in these areas can help foster organizational resilience through massive changes.

2.5.1 Demands on leadership to foster resilience

Resilient organizations have management who demonstrate the support of an organization's vision and values. Bass and Avolio (Bass & Avolio, 1994) state that having a clear vision as one of the key factors accounting for extraordinary leadership performance. Simon Sinek, founder, and CEO, of The Optimism Company has also said "People don't buy what you do; they buy how you do it." Challenging the status quo takes courage. Peterson and Seligman (2004), experts in the positive psychology approach, identified an important association between a person's character strengths and their performance in life, which can also be applied to leadership performance. As part of this work, they identified six virtues as signature resources that individuals can draw from to increase performance, during challenging times as well as good times (Southwick et al., 2017).

These virtues are wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Taken together, these signature characteristics are powerful components for both personal resilience and by extension, leadership resilience (Southwick et al., 2017).

Because the disruptions are unforeseen and impossible to predict in advance, they cause changes in the business environment that are out of control of a company. Nonetheless, it is within a company's power to develop resilience capabilities to handle the more frequent disruptions (Fiksel et al., 2015). Navigating such mega changes successfully, therefore requires an organization to be resilient. As a result, resilience is presented as a skill and a strategic objective that businesses ought to pursue.

2.5.2 Demands on leadership to manage changes

While leadership is not the sole determinant of organizational resilience, it has a significant impact on how an organization responds to and navigates challenges. Leadership has become a critical factor for a successful change in organizations (Mansaray, 2019). In such massive and abrupt changes, leaders must smoothen the shocks on the organization. Transformational leaders might communicate a new vision and direction, while a transactional leader might ensure a stable environment for managing specific tasks or processes while a laissez-faire leader might allow the team to quickly adapt to new situations and make decisions without waiting for approval (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

All organizations need effective leaders to determine the performance of organizations by leveraging job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity of the workforce. The capacity to change and adapt has become increasingly important for the ability to develop in a sustainable manner (Burnes, 2017). Change is critical in achieving sustainability and as Roger Gill stated, "Change, therefore, is primarily about leadership." (Gill, 2003, p. 309).

Leadership creates culture and culture is important for the ability to change. Positive feelings can boost resilience and enhance a person's overall mental health. Since it has been demonstrated that a leader's positivity can boost employees' positivity, developing leaders is crucial (Avey et al., 2011). Leadership behavior can have a positive impact on subordinate resilience and employee resilient behaviors (Nguyen et al., 2016).

Psychological safety encourages employees to speak up and share their opinions and ideas without fear of negative consequences, while resilience helps workers recover from difficulties and disappointments. An individual's capacity for resilience can help them

cope with the stress brought on by the increased need for agility (Braun et al, 2017). Change happens at the individual level; therefore, it is important to have an inclusive change plan (Ali and Sundar, 0:40-1:16) 2019). When implementing changes, leaders must understand how to deal with various attitudes and cultures (Bayerl et al, 2013).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are important through change as it contributes to a broad knowledge base (Duchek, 2019), diverse perspectives and an enhanced frame for innovation. "To be resilient, organizations should develop a broad and diverse knowledge base to anticipate both internal and external change, even if this knowledge is far away from the organization's core business" (Duchek 2020, p. 234).

Because they are used to negotiating various viewpoints and strategies, diverse teams are frequently more flexible. This flexibility adds to the organization's overall ability to bounce back from setbacks. Well implemented DEI principles are also positively related to organizational resilience through the support of the development of collective capabilities that underlie an organization's resilience (Duchek et al., 2020).

Unlike views and behavioral differences among cultural groups as well as identity differences among group members in relation to other groups which can include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religious beliefs, etc. (Wasserman, 2015). Diversity management is used to encourage an awareness of differences linked to improving opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds with an attention on highlighting differences that extended beyond race and gender to also include other social identity differences such as age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, etc. (Wasserman, 2015).

Given the complexity and pace of the unprecedented change that is occurring today, traditional change management techniques that emphasize linear models and top-down control have shown to be insufficient for handling organizational transformation. According to research, organizations may be better equipped to handle or regulate rapid change and exploit this capacity as a competitive advantage if they can increase the agility of their staff (Braun et al., 2017). However, such aspects are dependent on organizations and managerial capabilities (i.e. competencies and traits). For instance, organizations may be better able to manage or mitigate change, volatility, and uncertainty by developing organizational agility, or what some scholars have referred to as "adaptive capacity" (McCann et al., 2009). Similarly, managers can be trained at certain skills to better handle and thrive in changing situations.

2.5.3 Collaboration and communication

Keeping staff members informed of forthcoming occurrences and reducing their level of uncertainty is an important objective of change communication (Bordia et al., 2004). Previous studies have shown that communication skills are a critical function of the leadership process (Krapfl & Kruja, 2015). From change management theory, we have learned that communication is crucial to the success of implementing change, through gaining support, avoiding resistance, and aligning information through its course (Kotter, 1995). To manage employee uncertainty, sense of control, and job satisfaction during transition, communication is vital (Bordia et al., 2004).

Maintaining a transparent communication makes internal communicates most effective (Men and Stacks, 2014). Transparent communication is comprised of three dimensions

including accountability, participation, and sustainability (Yue et al., 2019). To increase the effectiveness of these variables, one must include trust. Trust is a very important factor during change (Browning, 2014). In addition to providing workers with the information they need, systematic and reliable communication before, during, and after organizational change will foster a sense of control by making them feel included and involved in the planning process (Bordia et al., 2004). Employees valued having leaders available and having a "open door" policy (Saksvik et al., 2007). The dialogue with management might be a success factor for driving change and it is therefore very unfortunate if the management is unavailable or does not have overview of the latest information (Saksvik et al., 2007).

As a result of technological improvements, globalization, and particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, digital communication has become a key component of many project management teams. However, the result is still dependent on team members' interaction, collaboration, and exchange of knowledge and experiences (Swart et al., 2022). They present an overview of key challenges and success factors for collaboration in virtual teams. Many of these themes are valid also for collaboration in the physical space, including but not restricted to psychological safety, leadership, resource planning, diversity, knowledge sharing and communication. Connecting the employees and aiding collaboration, which is important to facilitate social resources, a vital component of organizational resilience (Duchek, 2020).

The acceleration of virtual and hybrid project execution as well as the rapid advancement in information and communication technologies, traditional face-to-face or 'in-person' ways of working has been transformed. As a result, many firms have embraced virtual working practices, whether through entirely virtual teams or a hybrid-based strategy (Reiff, 2022). Since more projects are now being executed digitally, it is more apparent than ever before, the value of communication and information sharing in both project-based environments (Binz-Scharf, 2004). Leadership capabilities are sought to attain project success, including the capabilities to deal with diversity, complexity, and distinct personalities of team members in dynamic project environments (Maqbool et al., 2017). Project managers with high emotional intelligence who bear the desired competencies and exhibit transformational leadership behavior are effective leaders and ensure higher success in projects than their counterparts (Maqbool et al., 2017).

"Inter-organizational relations serve as coping strategies to forestall, forecast, or absorb uncertainty in order to achieve an orderly, reliable pattern of resource flows and exchanges" (Oliver, 1990, p. 246). It has also been suggested that 'managers may participate in collaborative networks in order to ... reduce uncertainty and moderate the negative impact of the shock on their individual organization' (Ryu and Johansen, 2017). A 2023 research report, investigating a firm's supply chain capability, implies that the factors of the firm's supply chain capability (leadership capability, IT capability and collaboration capability) strengthen the supply chain network and allow it to weather a crisis (Das et al., 2021; Gani et al, 2023). This finding is grounded in Resource Based View theory, which emphasizes that firms' different tangible and intangible capabilities (e.g. leadership capability, IT capability, and collaboration capability) are essential in creating a durable operational efficiency (Ali and Gölgeci, 2019; Gani et al, 2023).

Encouraging collaboration across teams can be seen as transformational leadership behavior, as it strengthens employees' awareness about the outcome (McCleskey, 2014).

A leader must also be aware of how to handle different perceptions and cultures when implementing changes (Bayerl et al, 2013).

Scholars have also emphasized the significance of social resources and procedures in fostering resilience (Meneghel et al., 2016). Teams require time to mature and enough time for development of team has been linked to organizational resilience (Duchek, 2020). Hence, it is important that in complex and unstable environments, they should consider assigning responsibilities to more experienced teams (Duchek, 2020).

Many scholars have attempted to and suggested a definition of diversity. Taylor has defined it as "the representation, in one social system of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance" (Cox, 1993, p. 5). A year later Cox & Smolinski (1994) stated it is a representation of several identities within one organizational structure. More recently it has been discussed as a group of conscious activities that call for a thorough knowledge and respect of people, cultures, and the environment (Patrick & Kumar, 2012).

While inclusion has been defined as "the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes such as access to information and resources, involvement in work groups, and ability to influence the decision-making process" (Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998, p. 48). Or simplified "*Diversity is being asked to the party and inclusion is being asked to dance*" (Ali and Sundar, 1:20-1:40).

Executives have the responsibility to maximize value creation for stakeholders without utilizing trade-offs. Strong businesses survive because they can align the interests of their stakeholders (Freeman, 2007). Ensuring that stakeholder interests are aligned, requires coordination and collaboration across individuals and teams in the organization. Frequent and collaborative interaction is an important organizational practice that promotes inclusion. This is because it can naturally arise in many team-oriented situations, and it has been observed over time that there is a stronger correlation between diversity and organizational performance (Richard et al., 2007). Furthermore, relational coordination skills are crucial since they will likely support social integration and overall wellbeing in diverse teams (Guillaume et al., 2017). Results show that coordination is a valuable team resource that enhances team resilience (Meneghel et al., 2016). From this result it is evident that collaboration is merely not just providing a task and a team, it is a complex universe depending on many soft factors. Most of these highly influenceable by leadership. Based on the discussion in this section, I have the following propositions:

- P1: *A leadership style that promotes communication will foster organizational resilience in VUCA environments.*
- P2: *A leadership style that promotes collaboration, will foster organizational resilience in VUCA environments.*

An organization's knowledge base is an important antecedent for organizational resilience. Whereas resource availability, social resources and power and responsibility act as the main drivers (Duchek, 2020). Findings indicate that the more positive styles of leadership (e.g. transformational and transactional) help foster and encourage error learning, while more passive or negative styles (e.g. laissez-faire and aversive) actively inhibit employees from learning from their mistakes (Bligh et al., 2018). Hence, learning and unlearning is also relevant to change and resilience, and a learning culture has been

found to be strongly connected to affective commitment to change and employee resilience (Malik and Garg, 2017). The next section will therefore further scrutinize theory around learning in relation to change and resilience.

2.5.4 Learning and error learning

A progressive learning culture where talented employees are continuously motivated to find creative solutions to organizational challenges is thought to improve employees' resilience and involvement in the work itself, which eventually leads to higher work engagement levels (Cooke et al., 2019). Leadership is an important, but often neglected factor of error learning (Yan et al., 2014). The learning organization presented by Mintzberg et al. (1998), states that hierarchy is replaced by collaboration, and the key values are those of risk taking, integrity and trust (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Mintzberg et al. suggest that the objective for a company is to be able to continuously learn new things. They mention five principles for a learning organization: Learning from failure, continuous re-examination, first-hand learning, keeping knowledge mobile and searching outside for knowledge. For majority of companies, learning is not possible without unlearning (Evenseth et al., 2022).

Apart from being a method of changing organizational practices and structures, change is also perceived as a process of learning (By, 2005). Burnes, Graetz, Moran and Brightman all state that learning, also through identification, assessment and evaluation are important elements in change management. A resilient organization also emphasizes a knowledge base and the management of knowledge inside the company to continuously learn, grow, and adapt (Duchek, 2020; Evenseth et al., 2022). Strategies on experiential learning, the creation of methods to learning, and enabling learning-facilitating environments are necessary to achieve this (Evenseth et al., 2022). Thus, it becomes clear that learning is an integral part of several elements of resilience and leadership theory as well as in the change management process. Consequently, I propose that:

P3: *A leadership style that promotes learning will enable organizational resilience in VUCA environments.*

Given the comprehensive literature review presented in this chapter, three factors important for leadership in change management and resilience are extracted as visualized below in Figure 3. The first element in the framework is communication. Incorporated in this element, is inclusion, clarity in communication and information flow. The second element is collaboration. This element is important for unit cohesion and knowledge exchange; therefore, this also bridges the last element which is learning. Further elements of learning that are important for leadership, change management and resilience are knowledge base, learning from failure and sharing of information. This chapter aimed to provide a theoretical foundation for the research question, as presented in chapter 1 of this thesis.

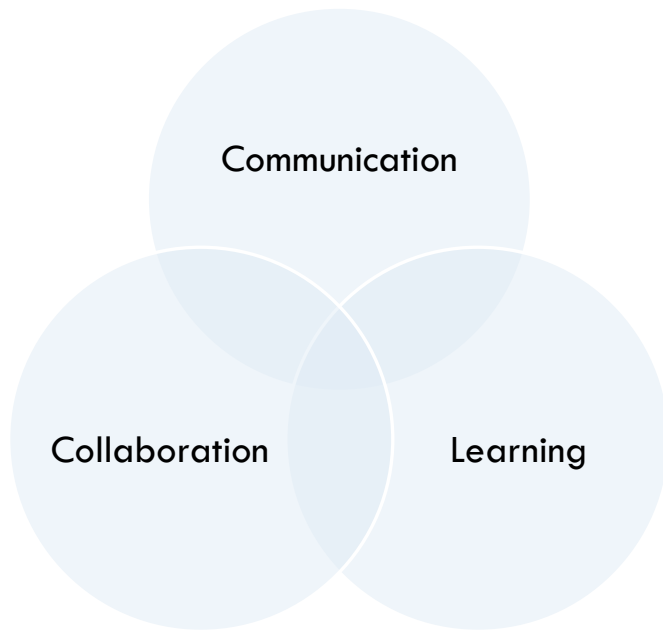


Figure 3 Capabilities for the change oriented, resilient leader (KL, 2024)

3 Method

The emphasis of this study is to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how ensuring resilience through mega changes, affects and defines the need for new leadership skills. To address these aspects and the research question guiding this study adequately the presented research question, the methodological choices need to be appropriate.

The following chapter will deal with how the information and data used in the study have been obtained. The chapter will describe which methods have been used, how the data collection took place, as well as a critical assessment of the method used.

3.1 Research Design

The research design sets the overall plan to relate the conceptual research problem with the existing and relevant empirical research (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2005).

A study's research design is a plan for how the procedure to be able to answer the problem must take place (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2020). Inductive and deductive approach is described as the two main forms of research approaches. The inductive approach goes from empiricism to theory, which leaves room for an exploratory approach research design. This approach provides the opportunity to acquire knowledge in a subject where there is little available research. The deductive approach works the opposite, in that it goes from theory to empiricism. With such an approach, a study can test theories based on themes where there is available research (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2020).

The aim of this study is to investigate and create an understanding of which characteristics and behaviors of leadership are most relevant in securing organizational resilience through massive changes. Based on the study's problem and purpose, it is appropriate to choose an exploratory and investigative research design.

The study follows an exploratory research design with a stepwise deductive inductive approach (Tjora, 2017). Therefore, the study has applied a strategy of pursuing a qualitative method of a single case study.

3.2 Research Method

After the research design has been chosen, it is appropriate to explore which research method that best suits the study. Research methods are used to collect necessary information for the purpose of the study, and when collecting data, a distinction is made between two different source categories; primary data and secondary data. In a survey, you can choose to use one or both data sources. This will depend on the investigation's problem and scope (Toft Sundbye & Nisted, 2017).

The method chosen has great importance for the collection process, the results that are collected and how the results can be used. One should therefore think carefully about what the objective of the research is and choose a method accordingly. It is common to distinguish between two main types of methods:

a) Qualitative methods, e.g. unstructured interviews, focus groups and participant observation.

b) Quantitative methods, e.g. questionnaire surveys, structured observations and statistics

Qualitative studies normally aim to achieve in-depth knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of what is being researched (Grønmo, 2023). Collection of data usually includes a few units, and sometimes only an entity, such as individuals, organizations, and communities. This to capture up individual opinions and viewpoints (Tjora, 2021). Quantitative studies, on the other hand, are based on capturing opinions and data that can be quantified or measured (Grønmo, 2023). In this method the data is available in the form of numbers or other quantity terms, such as tables or graphs. Quantitative methods are characterized by the fact that they often contribute to creating insight, while qualitative methods often emphasize overview (Tjora, 2017). Together, these two methods complement each other, and it is not rare that these methods are combined in the form of mixed methods for more complementary research (Grønmo, 2023). The use of several methods can outweigh those of the different methods weaknesses, and consequently strengthen the reliability, generalizability, and validity of collected data.

The choice of research method affects the quality of the research. To critically assess the methodological quality of the thesis, the research's reliability and validity are assessed. It is important to be critical of the chosen methodology which involves the data collection method, the information itself which has been collected and how the information has been processed and analyzed (Tjora, 2021). According to Tjora (2021), the choice of research method forms the basis for being able to answer the research question. The method chosen should reflect what you want to do find out, and the work should be reliable, relevant, transparent, generalizable, and verifiable.

Against the background of the project's problem, which is to investigate whether the way the leader communicates, coordinates, and upholding of processes affects the project team's resilience against internal and external forces, it is necessary to have knowledge that is based on experiences and attitudes in the design process. This makes it natural to choose a research method with a qualitative approach. In addition to experiences, the thesis is based on existing literature and company specific documents.

The study avoids solely induction where one goes from empirical to theory, and instead follows a deductive approach by starting with the findings from the theory and then search for evidence with empirical evidence (Tjora, 2017). After carrying out the empirical work, it proved necessary to go back to the literature to uncover knowledge gaps. Therefore, the stepwise deductive inductive method, in which a step-by-step inductive process was selected as the analytical model. The method is presented below in figure 4. Deductive reasoning aims to test the preexisting theory, whereas inductive reasoning develops a theory. The methodology relies on created empirical data that advances theory before reverting to the more empirical (Tjora, 2017). The methodology makes room for a more imaginative approach, a distinct emphasis on the organization of analytical work, and the growth and development of general knowledge.

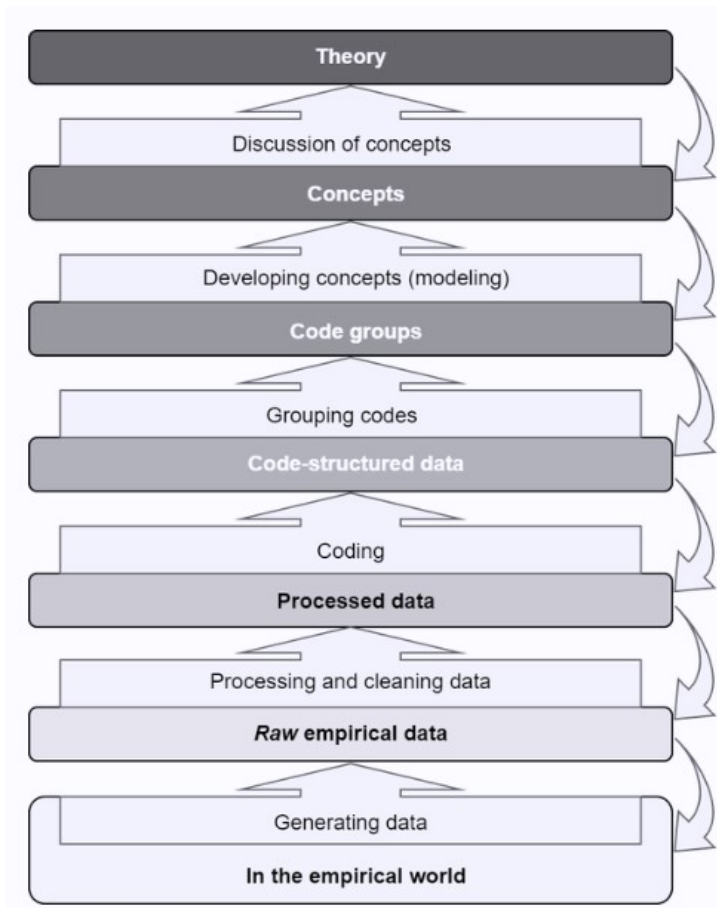


Figure 4 Illustration of the SDI model (Tjora, 2017)

The process was not so linear, but the model created a good starting point for systematic and continuous progression in this research project. In the first step, data was generated through interviews and the analysis of secondary data. In the second step, the recordings were fully transcribed following by the third step where there was created codes based on the gathered material. In step four, these are again collected in code groups according to categories as per the division in the results chapter. These groups are again linked closer to existing theories in the discussion chapter. Finally, I evaluated the possibility to develop new theories based on this research.

There's limited qualitative research on the topic of resilient leadership during change, and therefore a research design that sheds light on this is desirable. To choose one research design consisting of deductive/inductive approach is considered the most appropriate method, as it gives the opportunity to go in depth on the subject matter.

Case study is a preferred method, when the research question focus on 'how' or 'why' and the research object is contemporary (Yin, 2009). I opted for a single case study, and the case selection is described in more detail below.

3.3 Case Selection

In qualitative research, purposive samples are utilized more frequently than random samples (Miles and Huberman, 1994). However, rather than considering a case as a

sample, one could consider it as a chance to provide empirical light on any theoretical principle or concept (Yin, 2018). Purposive case selection is a better option for this case since it allows me to choose a case that is relevant for the study (Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

Therefore, I followed some criteria recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994), where the authors suggested that sampling strategies in qualitative research can be evaluated in terms of a few attributes; relevance, appearance of phenomenon, generalizability, believable explanations, feasible and ethical.

Perhaps never or not since the war of currents, has the energy industry been exposed to such massive changes during a very short period. Strains on supply chain, geopolitical effects, climate, renewables, grid restraints, new energy carriers, hence the energy industry is very relevant for investigating VUCA environments.

To maneuver these changes, many resources has been added to understand the new landscape of regulations, support packages, applications, new digital tools, branding and many more resource demanding tasks. It might be reasonable to ask whether development of management skills and characteristics have received the same attention or whether this is an area that has been lagging.

Because these changes are so complex, leading through mega changes can be particularly demanding. In these situations, strategic thinking, clear communication, flexibility, resilience, and a thorough comprehension of the dynamics of the company are all necessary for successful leadership. Leaders must be prepared and able to navigate uncertainty, engage and motivate their teams, and make strategic decisions that propel the organization toward its desired future state. Interviewing both management and employees in new business areas should both generate information of the phenomenon of interest and believable descriptions and explanations.

In addition, EnergyX has a solid position in the renewable energy sector and has a department that has been heavily impacted by the vast changes in both market and structure which is my phenomenon of interest. EnergyX was therefore purposively chosen as the company is maneuvering in this uncertain context.

The company has a new ambitious strategy, it is entering new markets, new business areas and have reorganized to deliver on these demands and targets. I will provide a short description of the case in chapter 4.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Interviews – Primary Data

Primary data comes from the original source and is information that is collected for the first time by the researcher. This type of data is often used to provide answers to a concrete and current question problem (Toft Sundbye & Nisted, 2017). There are two methods that can be used for collection of primary data: qualitative and quantitative analysis (Dalland, 2017).

The method applies therefore often turn to groups or individuals who are considered relevant sources in advance the survey. This is called a strategic selection, when the selection of sources can provide a basis for experience-based argumentation within the relevant topic (Dalland, 2017). Data collection using qualitative analysis can, for example, be carried out through interviews. Where a selection of relevant interviewees answers questions related to the issue. The purpose of the quantitative research method is to develop and test hypotheses based on statistical analyses. Quantitative data collection can take place through structured observation, survey, or content analysis. The collected data is then made measurable through analyses, which can prove or disprove the hypothesis. Quantitative analysis will thus be advantageous to use to test theories based on recorded information, for example to describe or explain social conditions of various types (Grønmo, 2023).

To gather knowledge about how leadership is affecting organizational resilience through mega changes, it was decided that a qualitative method can contribute to gain a deep understanding of the subject. By conducting qualitative research interviews, it was possible to produce nuanced descriptions of the interviewees' assessments in the areas which were relevant to the study. The method provides a basis for obtaining knowledge about the object's views and experiences on several different topic areas that the study covers (Dalland, 2017). The aim of this study is to perform a deep dive into the needed characteristics of a leader to nurture resilience in a time of change. By conducting interviews with various people who were relevant to the issue, I could obtain information based on their individual competence, experiences, and point of view. It has been chosen to carry out semi-structured interviews, as this leaves room for adaptations of question formulations during the interview (Tjora, 2017).

In total, 22 interviews with EnergyX employees were conducted. They represent different business units in the company and represented level 2, level 3 (L3) and 4 (L4) and below, in the organization. All interview objects are considered experienced and have been selected based on the following criteria on a) they had been involved in strategic change projects and/or processes, b) they were in touch with operational teams, c) they represented diversity across business areas and functions d) their high level of competence within the subjects of the study.

The interviews for my study were conducted in November 2023. with the duration ranging from 45 to 90 minutes. Some of the conversations were carried out via the communication platform Teams. The aim was to meet the interviewees personally, to create a natural flow in the conversation and avoid misunderstandings, to ensure its quality.

The interviews were recorded and over 158482 words were converted from speech to text using the dictate and transcribe function in Microsoft Word or the transcribe function in Microsoft Teams. Each interview's transcription was then manually edited for some mistakes. Quite a few of these interviews were given in a dialect, which Microsoft word did not dictate in a proficient manner, these were listened through several times, to extract the most relevant reflections, categories, and citations. Each transcript was then saved as a separate word-process file, renamed to the date of the interview and respondents initials and stored on an external computer. Thereby, governing the confidentiality and anonymity (Saunders et al., 2012).

Every interview also included contextual information, such as the respondents' backgrounds, the place and setting and so on. This adds to the interviews' value by increasing the data's credibility (Saunders et al., 2012).

The research's entire sample, which includes the 22 respondents who were interviewed, is shown in table 5 below. Every respondent was assigned a distinct ID code (A–V). In the subsequent sections, this code will be utilized to differentiate between the data collected from various respondents.

ID-code	Position/level in EnergyX	Country of residence	Duration (Min)	Topic (emphasized in addition to interview guide)
A	Business Developer	Norway	60	Inclusion
B	Investment Analyst	India	90	High workload and inclusion
C	Specialist	Norway	45	Processes
D	Business Developer	Sweden	50	Decision making and processes
E	Procurement Manager	Norway	90	Clarity
F	Business Developer	Norway	45	Recognition
G	Commercial Manager	Norway	60	Experience
H	Investment Analyst	France	45	Sensing
I	Senior Specialist	UK	60	Trust
J	Business Developer	Norway	60	High workload
K	Senior Advisor	Norway	60	Team cohesion
L	Head of	India	45	Innovation and collaboration
M	VP	Norway	60	Transparency
N	VP	Norway	50	Positivity
O	VP	India	45	Implementation and alignment
P	VP	Norway	50	Prioritization
Q	Head of	Norway	60	Psychological Safety
R	SVP	Norway	60	Learning and growth
S	VP	Norway	50	Change process
T	SVP	Norway	60	Prioritization
U	Specialist	Norway	90	Team cohesion
V	Advisor	UK	45	Coordination

Table 5: Overview of the interviews

Transforming and streamlining the gathered data is the process of data condensation in analysis; this can be accomplished, for example, by summarizing and classifying the data (Miles et al., 2020). Data categorization is assigning relevant sections of the gathered information—which could be words, sentences, or full paragraphs—to the proper codes or categories (Saunders et al., 2012). New codes evolved from the collected data as the analysis progressed, with the initial categories being concept-driven and directed by the objective of the research and based on existing literature. Certain codes were split up into smaller ones, some were combined into a single code, and some were shifted up or down in the hierarchy (from top code to sub-code or vice versa). As themes, patterns, and linkages emerge and are improved, this process of creating categories and rearranging the data continues as part of the data analysis process (Yin, 2018). However,

it is critical to recognize that data analysis is an interactive series of processes that happens both during and after the data collection phase. This is because, as patterns and themes emerge during data collection, they enable modifications to be made prior to gathering additional data (Saunders et al., 2012). During the final deductive cycle of coding, I applied codes based on my conceptual framework and existing literature. After this cycle of coding in which I sorted the data into theory-based categories, I did some inductive analysis, where I developed short phrases that connected my findings with existing literature and theory.

3.4.2 Desktop Analysis – Secondary Data

Secondary data are data sources that already exist. Unlike primary data, which is aggregated for the purposes of the research, the secondary data sources have been collected by other researchers for other purposes. When collecting secondary data, one performs what is called desktop analysis. This the analysis involves collecting relevant information that can be found, for example, in articles, reports, newspapers or public records. In this way, the analysis can be carried out at the desk, without to carry out independent investigations or analyzes in the field (Toft Sundbye & Nisted, 2017). Using secondary data provides scope for building up the study based on previous research. The weakness with desktop analysis, on the other hand, is that such data can contain sources of error and have varying quality, considering the study's purpose (Hansen, 2015). This must be considered during the study. It will be just as useful to use secondary data as primary data. To be able to answer the issue and associated research questions, it has therefore been decided to carry out a relatively comprehensive desktop analysis next to the qualitative analysis. One like that data collection will provide the basis for all theory-based information. By linking the issue to relevant secondary data, it will help to strengthen the reliability and validity of the results from the research interviews. It will be beneficial to carry out a desktop analysis as we can easily also carry out preparations for the interviews, as we do not need direct access to other respondents to be able to obtain data. By combining a research method consisting of both primary and secondary data, it will be able to contribute to a thorough discussion, and finally, provide a good basis to be able to answer the overall problem.

Resilience is a hot topic these days and it has therefore been necessary to constantly keep up to date throughout the study period to keep up with developments. Desktop analyses have been performed regularly throughout the project period with the aim of acquiring knowledge in three areas:

Change management

Leadership style

Organizational resilience

In the desktop analysis, high ranked journals from the ABS list, electronic specialist articles, podcasts and relevant literature originating from reliable sources. Through the study, EnergyX have also allowed me to review internal documents to give an insight into the company's visions and strategy within the areas of interest.

It has also been possible to participate in webinars and listen to podcast as they have occurred at different times during the project period. Streaming function has made it possible to go back to quality-assure that the understanding has been correct.

3.4.3 Critical source evaluation

Even though a publication matches the search criteria you have set, it does not necessarily mean it is from a quality source of reliable or necessary information. Evaluation of sources can therefore be the first step to ensure that you have solid material, as you must critically evaluate the reliability, validity, authority, and bias of the source. Assessing whether a source is suitable or not for work on the master's thesis can be challenging. A method to assess and evaluate the sources, can be done through the TONE methodology. Due to the time span of the task, it is not efficient to read through dozens of publications. It was therefore decided to start by looking at the publication's title and keywords to assess relevance to the scope. The next step was to read the abstract, assess the publication date and check whether the article is peer-reviewed to decide on whether the publication should be included in the evaluation process or not. Several sources were considered relevant and weighed against the principles of credibility, objectivity, accuracy, and suitability, better known as the TONE principle (Overland, 2018). According to this, the introduction can say something about whether the publication is relevant, while the conclusion can say something if the publication has something to offer. However, then it is important to be aware that not all publications have a clear conclusion. If a publication passes all points in the TONE principle, you probably have a usable and credible source (Overland, 2018).

The *TONE principle* is characterized by the following keywords:

1. *Credibility*: Author, institution, and place of publication - Can the source's information be trusted?
2. *Objectivity*: The author's intention, any conflicts of interest and common features with other literature - Is the source neutral?
3. *Accuracy*: Reference use, language, and time of publication – Is the source precise?
4. *Suitability*: Template group, relevance to topic and clarity – Is the source suitable for the format of the project?

3.5 Data Analysis

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the data analysis, including the steps involved in obtaining it and the methodology used.

Qualitative research interviews are described as an effort to comprehend the world from the respondents' perspective to provide meaning to their experiences (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). In a research interview, two or more converse about a topic of shared interest between the researcher and the respondents (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Conversations where you will discuss difficult topics and might need to interrupt each other, are more suitable to make face to face. It is more difficult to interrupt, to ask questions and comment if the meeting is held over digital platforms. Based on this, it was an aim to meet most of the interviewees face-to-face. Qualitative interviews are often classified as either exploratory or descriptive. Through exploratory approach you

will ask open questions like “how” and “why”, this approach also includes brain- storming sessions and interviews. While a descriptive design can answer questions like “what”, “who”, “where”, and “when” and are typically studies that describe products, people, and situations (Saunders, 2012).

Unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews are the three different styles of interviews. Unstructured interviews are those in which the questions are not prepared ahead of time. Because the questions are pre-written, all candidates will be asked the identical ones in the same order during structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, new items might be added to the next interviewee's questionnaire based on the outcomes of earlier interviews (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). This led to the decision to make the interviews semi-structured. The major goal of the interview was to encourage the participants to be honest and share any hurdles they had encountered in change projects. Another crucial factor in choosing the interview format was intellectual integrity.

According to Tjora (2017) the main aim of a semi-structured interview is the relatively free and relaxed dialogue, where the conversation circles around questions the interviewer has prepared. To succeed with in-depth interviews, it is important that you manage to create a comfortable and trustworthy ambiance where the interviewee experiences that it is safe to talk about herself and her personal experiences, and where it is allowed to come up with digressions. To create such an informal atmosphere and to ensure the appropriate development of the interview is the responsibility of the interviewer (Tjora, 2017). Prior to initiating the interview, it is therefore best practice to establish an interview guide. Ensuring high quality of phrasing and assisting in maintaining a dynamic and relaxed dialogue.

The interview guide and an information letter as well as a description of the project task, was submitted to the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt) in advance of the interviews to ensure that privacy and data handling were maintained on a legal basis. It was only after approval from NSD that the interviews could be performed, see Appendix A.

The interview guide, which can be found in Appendix B, is divided into three main sections: the opening open-ended questions, the middle questions, and the closing questions. Its questions were intended to elicit information, pertinent to the research. Some questions have been changed or added as intriguing topics have come to light during the interviewing process.

The relevant interviewees were contacted some time before the survey. They signed a consent form in the information letter that dealt with a description of implementation, data processing and anonymity. This was important to ensure that both parties agreed on the scope and purpose of the interview. To ensure that important information would not be lost after the interview, it was noted during the conversation and a summary prepared after each interview. The summary contains important key points from the interviews. All interview data will be deleted afterwards assignment grading in consultation with Sikt's guidelines.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

The two primary ideas used to assess the credibility of scientific research are validity and reliability. Validity is the degree to which the results may be believed or taken seriously, whereas reliability is the degree to which the results will remain the same when they are

repeated (Silverman, 2014). The production of data may be impacted by the researcher's involvement in the research process. When it comes to guaranteeing validity and reliability as well as the research's quality, interpretation is crucial (Thagaard, 2018).

3.6.1 Validity, reliability, and generalizability

The discussion of the research's quality is an essential component of every study. Typically, reliability, validity, and generalizability are discussed incorporated in credibility (Tjora, 2017). The ideas of validity and reliability have been the subject of debate over the years. A researcher that studies, even, a small case will not see everything and interview everyone, hence some kind of generalization to a broader population is required (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Tjora (2017) contends that while it is more difficult to examine the notions inside an interpretive tradition, it is yet crucial to be critical of the data's quality. It contends that since this is one of the benefits of an inductive approach, it is taken into consideration gradually throughout the data collecting and analysis process.

Validity is the degree to which the interpretations and explanations are regarded as legitimate. It is necessary to assess if the methods selected are acceptable for this situation and whether the results accurately reflect reality (Thagaard, 2018).

Process quality, focus, analysis, and insight are necessary to ensure these elements. The researcher can benefit from a few themes and queries. Is the researcher skeptical of their own conclusions? Exist any other plausible explanations, or would the interpretation have been influenced by the researcher's personal experiences? Verifying the literature's backing will make the interpretations more dependable. Does the individual know what the interpretation is? Does the informant's evaluation matter? If the researcher includes some queries about their own interpretation, that will further strengthen the case (Tjora, 2017).

Is the research conducted in a trustworthy manner, is the research-process just and defined and has the relationship between the interviewer and the object been accounted for? These questions are central to establish reliability (Silverman, 2014).

Does the interpretation add to conceptual generalizability by offering a transferable understanding to different contexts? While some research is only descriptive, others may provide insight into the nature of situations more broadly. The outcome greatly depends on how it is phrased and how well it is sorted and interpreted (Tjora, 2017).

3.7 Ethics

This study has chosen a qualitative research method which involves opinions and experiences from a selection of individuals. To ensure high ethical standard in the research, it has been decided that the interviewees will be kept anonymous, and that data from the interviewees must only be reproduced at company level to safeguard the confidentiality (Silverman, 2014). This will ensure privacy, which means that the people who have participated in the study, shall not in any way be harmed because of the research report. Prior to the interviews, the informants were sent an agreement stating that participation in the project is voluntary. If the interviewee chooses to participate,

they can withdraw their consent at any time without giving any reason. The agreement also included information about anonymization and deletion of personal data and audio/video recordings. Through ensuring the anonymity of the respondents, the interviewer hope the interviewees can speak as freely as possible, without having to consider possible recognition problems that could create consequences for the future. This will benefit both the study and the interviewee. Personal recognition factors, such as name and age will therefore be censored.

3.7.1 Informed consent

According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2015), informed consent is an ethical standard that must ensure that the participants in a research project are informed about the purpose of the study, the main features of the design of the study and their rights as participants. This also means that the participants participate voluntarily and can withdraw at any time, without having to give any reason (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Consent forms were sent out and signed by all informants, see Appendix C.

3.7.2 Confidentiality

In the consent form, it was made clear that all information provided by the informant would be treated confidentially and that the processing of the information would be in accordance with Sikts guidelines (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, 2023). Furthermore, it was made clear that all information collected in connection with the study would be deleted after grading of the thesis, and that only the undersigned student and the supervisors would have access to the information. It was also informed that the thesis might be made available to EnergyX on request.

Qualitative research aims to report the main findings in a manner that strikes a balance between contextual descriptions and analytical findings, whereas quantitative research typically uses diagrams, tables, and statistics (Saunders et al., 2012). This can be achieved by choosing direct citations from the research participants. A citation approach is appropriate in this study given the development of it through qualitative research.

The procedure for evaluating the gathered data has been described in this chapter; Chapter 4 will further describe the case and the case context.

4 Case Context

EnergyX has during the last year and a half presented an ambitious new strategy and implemented an organizational restructure process to deliver on this. Therefore, EnergyX presented itself to be a suitable case for investigating leadership characteristics during change. This chapter's goal is to convey the findings of the information gleaned from the interviews. The case profile is presented first, followed by an analysis and discussion.

4.1 About EnergyX

For an exploratory in-depth case study, we selected a multinational energy company because of its high level of risk management maturity and the strong relevance of OR as it deals with critical infrastructure and developing new business areas that will operate hazardous substances like hydrogen, e-methane, and ammonia. The company, headquartered in Scandinavia has offices in many countries and nearly 6000 employees.

4.2 A New Strategy and its implementation

EnergyX's latest corporate strategy was launched in 2022 with ambitious growth targets across technologies, pursuing a position as a leading, international renewable energy company towards 2030. The strategy is based on a market-centric approach and four strategic pillars that build on EnergyX's competitive strengths and the opportunities arising from the energy market.

Although the energy market has been through many extremes for the last 1.5 years, the underlying direction of the energy transition towards a net-zero energy system over the next decades is continuing. In some respects, the energy crisis has even accelerated the transition. The long-term megatrends in the energy transition support EnergyX's strategic direction.

From August to November 2022, EnergyX ran a reorganization project set to better align its organizational structure to deliver on the new corporate strategy. The outcome of this project has now been implemented throughout the company. The aim of the reorganization project, was to deliver a less complex and more collaborative organization, designed to deliver on EnergyX's goals for 2030. With the new organizational structure, the company is said to move closer to the markets with harmonized support functions. This ensures a prepared approach for accelerated growth and for scaling emerging technologies.

Change processes of the scale that EnergyX has been through are significantly more likely to have a positive outcome if there is follow-up past going operational and through implementation. Audits from prior organizational change projects in EnergyX, has revealed that the company has not always been successful in the implementation phase (EnergyX.com).

The term matrix organization refers to an organizational structure that seeks to combine several purposes. In this case, a hierarchical line organization based on geography or technology has been combined with cross-functional projects, dual reporting lines and

group functions. This way the company can utilize expertise across and realize the benefits that come through scale and international expertise.

4.3 Organizational resilience and change management

The people development team in EnergyX was established three years ago and has already had major accomplishments. It manages learning and development, DEI principles, the goal and development dialogue framework and more strategic learning initiatives. As project future came to an end and the reorganization was a fact, the team in cooperation with top management decided it was important to keep attention to the implementation and to show management that they have a critical role in this time of unprecedented growth and change.

The top management is firm on remaining true to the organizational setup and structure. Therefore, there is a greater need to invest in the managers, and to keep teaching and developing them.

The company has established a new strategy; it has reorganized and is working on new governance structure and processes. It needed some attention on the people who will make this happen and how they should do it and if they have the skills needed for it. There is a need for change in mindset and behavior throughout the company to deliver on these new ambitions.

To deliver on its strategy EnergyX needs a change in behavior and culture. In late 2023 the people development team initiated a strategic learning project. The project is a top management development journey designed to support EnergyX in ensuring the success of the new strategy, vision, and organizational structure.

The learning project builds on three main objectives; collaboration, change and resilience.

EnergyX has a very ambitious strategy. It will expand and scale very rapidly. It is recognized in the company that this will generate a high level of uncertainty and that there might be a general lack of resources for quite some time.

I have extracted relevant findings from the in-depth interviews to address the RQ

"How is leadership influencing organizational resilience in VUCA environments?".

Chapter 5 will address these findings and the interpretation of the results.

5 Findings and analysis

The findings in this study are based on interviews of 22 respondents from EnergyX. The findings represent data from respondents working in new business areas, whereas 2 of the interviewees were L2, 7 were L3, and 13 were L4 and below. 5 of the interview objects were female, 17 were male and all objects were between 28 and 60 years old.

In this chapter, I have applied the theories introduced in chapter 2 to present the findings. To show how the aspects are connected to my theory, I will discuss the findings based on table 4 and figure 3, from chapter 2. Then present a developed conceptual model towards the end of the chapter, in Figure 5.

To begin with, all 22 respondents were preoccupied with how to navigate through mega changes. More specifically, respondents on the lower levels emphasized preservation of individual resilience and clarity in roles and goals, which is different from L2 and L3 respondents where the emphasis was more on the structural setup, the organizational capability to deliver on the growth strategy. However, in turbulent times, where there is additional stress and uncertainty in the organization, it has become evident that it is especially important to ensure this gap does not become too big. As I will further describe in the following sections.

Leadership play an important role in employee performance and when developing team resources (Bakker et al., 2023), and coordination is regarded an important team resource which positively contributes to team resilience (Meneghel et al., 2016). Also, Avey et al. (2011) states that employee work performance is positively related to organizational resilience. This indicates that there is a positive relation between leadership and organizational resilience.

According to Bass (1985) a transactional LS will not focus much on the team cohesion and other interpersonal objectives, but rather concentrate on tasks and ensure solid processes and thereby bring clarity in who does what. A transformational LS will focus on the vision and strategy, secure close interaction with the team and through this ensure that all pull in the same direction. A Laissez Faire LS will delegate and respond reactively by waiting until someone will flag an issue before getting involved.

As mentioned above, there is a relation between leadership styles and organizational resilience. However, whether there are certain leadership styles that negatively influence organizational resilience, is not as clear.

The preliminary analysis of the findings of this current study touches upon such notions and are presented below.

5.1 Leadership Style

We have all heard the saying "perception is key" and in some sense perception beats reality. Especially, when talking about leadership style, as this relates to how the leader is perceived by the employees and how the employee perceives the leader impacts their performance. Leadership plays an essential role in promoting both individual and organizational resilience. The analysis of the interviews considering change management, leadership, and resilience theory, resulted in the development of five key resilient leadership characteristics. Section 5.1 will present a further analysis around these characteristics.

Recognition

Creating a plan to acknowledge employees isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a best practice and leadership discipline. It is an aspect that can be effortlessly incorporated into management routines. A recognition best practice will benefit teams and organizations. A transformational leader will more likely provide more recognition to employees (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018), the passivity of laissez-faire leadership fails to provide employees with necessary recognition, while a transactional leadership style shows a recognizing effort through contingent reward and the evaluation of job performance (Bass, 1985).

Recognition can appear through being visible, approachable, and available, through active listening and clear communication, through knowing your team, their skillsets, and through processes. Ensuring that there is frequent interaction is easily managed, however it is easily neglected. "Professionals require little direction and supervision. What they do require is protection and support" (Mintzberg, 1998, p. 146). Perhaps this is especially relevant in competence organizations and even more so where the culture of leadership is based on empowerment and autonomy.

The neglect is raised by one of the male employees. He has over 20 years of leadership experience and reflects over this in one of the interviews:

"It takes a bit of an effort as a manager to take that phone call, you must remember something about the person. It demands effort and mentally, you must not be too stressed or have too much on your mind, because then you will not have the required focus. Being the recipient of such a call; you feel recognized, someone is thinking about me. I have colleagues that care about me." (D)

The missing recognition was linked to availability, active listening, psychological safety, and not fully developed processes. As explained:

"There is no time for chatting during weekly meetings. There is not enough time to get an update from all team members. This could certainly be structured better." (K)

A L2 manager concurs:

"It is about seeing the individual. The one-to-one talks are very important. I try to be an active listener, who both hears what is and what is not being said. Then I also try to create an environment in the management group, where we have a high level of psychological safety for each other." (R)

Earlier literature has examined recognition as a component that can improve employee motivation and performance (Godkin et al., 2010). Recognition is a central responsibility of the leader and related to availability through the leader setting aside time for managing the employees; thereby enabling both recognition and availability.

Availability

Several of the leaders at EnergyX recognized the lack of focus on leadership. Especially during this period of massive scaling and changes, but also related to the culture of the company. The interviews and the related insights added to the understanding that the focus on empowerment from leaders were more due to practicalities rather than allowing development and reinforcement of self-efficacy. One of the more experienced employees provided his take on the new way of leading in the company, which he considered to be "not by leading but by reporting" (G). He missed the visibility of the leader and the

approachability. It was evident that through less visibility, leaders were perceived to have a high social distance to their employees.

"The manager is very involved in recruitment, a consequence of which is that he is not very available." (G)

This is confirmed by research, middle managers often withdraw during significant change initiatives while attempting to gain control of the situation themselves (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Saksvik et al., 2007). The low availability was confirmed by management itself, through mentioning:

"I don't perform micromanagement. You must flag if there is any need. In other words, I focus on delegation, recruitment, and prioritization" (P)

However, there is quite the gap between micromanagement and the necessity to flag if there is any need. This is confirmation of how difficult it is to separate autonomy, empowerment, and hands off management in competence organizations. Prioritization of tasks for management is central and through the interviews it is recognized by all employees to be a central issue.

This is further supported by the statement:

"When there is massive recruitment, you don't get to talk to the manager. When there are tasks that need to be performed, then the proportion focused on management goes down, and that at a time when it should at least be maintained." (T)

The same leader continues with explaining that:

"I really prefer that large parts of the management resource pool do not primarily work with management." (T)

This has created somewhat of a blueprint for a leadership culture, and another also commented on the lack of transformational leaders in the company:

"There are mostly subject matter experts in the company, I don't find many human oriented leaders in EnergyX." (S)

This blueprint also in accordance with the conclusions from Oshagbemi & Gill (2004) stating that senior managers' actions often have an impact on how lower-level managers perceive themselves, leading to a culture of comparable organizational behaviors. This is also in line with Bass et al. (1987), who proposed that either superiors may choose subordinates who exhibit similar behavioral patterns as themselves, or followers can imitate the behavior of their superiors. The danger of establishing a norm of unavailable management, is therefore very much at hand.

Clarity

Clarity was mentioned by many of the respondents in reference to many topics. In times of adversity a leader's behaviour and characteristics alter, when the employees expect an assertive and firm leader (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Leadership is among other things also defined as giving direction to your employees as well as organizing tasks. For this clear information is required (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

A clear strategy was mentioned as one of the real advantages by EnergyX:

"We are very lucky to have a clear strategy and a clear strategic direction." (P)

Another L3 was a bit more critical to the implementation of the strategy and how aligned the growth is with the other ambitions:

"We want to be one of the leaders in ethical business practices, ensure good governance, and that is, at least in today's world, in a bit of a conflict with growth." (O)

In essence, communication is difficult in change. And meeting all expectations will not be possible but change management and leadership theory provides good frameworks to deliver on many.

"I expect the owner of a strategy to set a direction, I expect it to come up with a clear plan on how to deliver! It also sets the precedence for how the management and organization should prioritize." (J)

On the topic of information flow, confidentiality was mentioned by a few of the employees. Three mentioned that there were issues regarding confidentiality and that it was treated in an unsystematic manner that led to misunderstandings and uncertainty. Two of these mentioned that it had negatively affected their performance. One of the most experienced employees mentioned that he questioned the procedures and reflected that it was often related to positioning towards certain accounts or projects:

"I find that there is so much confidentiality a bit strange. Often the case is that, eventually it isn't so confidential. It is merely a power game." (A)

This study revealed a lack of clarity as a perceived challenge. Much in regards of roles and mandates, goals, and general information sharing, but mostly regarding clarity in communication. A lack of close interaction and clarity between employees and management was further explained by:

"The onboarding was chaotic. I had two nice lunches, but then there was no more presence from management during the first three months." (C)

Clarity from a leader is important in communication of expectations, and especially around roles, responsibilities, and goal setting (Saksvik et al., 2007; Yukl and Gardner, 2020). (T) commented on the leaders in the company and explained that traditionally leaders in EnergyX receive promotions to leadership roles in accordance with the seniority principle or their technical and professional expertise:

"The most important criteria for becoming a manager in EnergyX, is that you are the best caseworker." (T)

Unfortunately, these leaders do not necessarily have experience managing and guiding people.

From the above we can see that there is a perception of lack of clarity, spanning from roles, responsibilities and mandates, processes, targets, information flow, to general communication. A leadership style also refers to how they inspire and guide others to achieve organizational objectives (Gill, 2003). Ensuring a diversity in leadership styles in the management groups, might improve the quality of communication.

Empowerment

It is a sensitive balance between guiding and recognizing enough, and empowerment and autonomy. As the latter are of substantial importance for many of the responders. This is backed by Teece (1997) and Mintzberg (1998), especially concerning competence

organizations, cf. above quote from Mintzberg (1998) regarding little supervision, but more support. There is a delicate space between this being positively received and it being perceived as hands off or laissez faire.

As stated by one of the employees:

"It is positive for me to have a leader who has trust and gives a lot of autonomy. A supportive leader who enforces self-management." (U)

However, she continues with explaining her view on the downside with absent middle managers:

"The manager must really be a trustworthy, stable management person. Must possess tools to ensure that the team moves in the strategic direction. If they are not visible or the gatekeeper towards deliveries, then you are redundant." (U)

This indicates that management has been prioritizing tasks and processes, such as recruitment and strategy implementation, while responsibilities and priorities remain unclear. Furthermore, not focusing on team cohesion or coordination and allowing for high levels of freedom and autonomy for the teams. Accumulated this has led to a perception of an absent leader or a Laissez Faire leadership style.

The role of the leader and the absenteeism is explained rather explicit in the quote below.

"I think everyone in the relationship towards this manager must communicate themselves; "Now I need support", and it's not really his job either, to keep track of everything we do or need support on. (N)

There seems to be a connection between the uncertain climate of operating in mega changes and an increased need for certainty in roles, mandates, and responsibilities. This business climate might also have affected the fine line between an empowering leadership style and a Laissez Faire leadership style. Nonetheless, the learnings are apparent. Empowerment needs specific attention to the individual. Structure and experience might cover somewhat for frequent and close interaction. However, since perception of delegation, autonomy and empowerment is very dependent on the individual and their own past experiences, it is advisable to keep a high frequency of interaction and ensure approachability and availability.

Learning and collaboration

Learning equips an organization with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to adapt, innovate, manage risks, and respond effectively to both expected and unexpected challenges. Individual experiences of overcoming adversity or learning from failures can provide valuable insights for organizational learning and adaptation (Evenseth et al., 2022). Organizations that encourage reflection, knowledge sharing, and experimentation can leverage individual resilience to enhance their adaptive capacity and organizational resilience (Evenseth et al., 2022). Building a culture of continuous learning is essential for enhancing an organization's ability to thrive in an ever-changing business environment. It is evident that not all processes are in place in a new business area, and this is confirmed by many through the interviews, such as:

"If we look within the new business areas, we don't have an established best practice yet." (Q)

In the dialogue with one of the L2 managers, when discussing learning from failure and having a focus on continuous learning he said:

«We have a slightly evasive feedback structure. I notice that myself, people are afraid to speak up and be clear. » (T)

This evasive feedback structure is according to many of the respondents culturally related. With a presence of many transactional, task-oriented leaders, findings from Yan et al. (2014) are relevant, which indicate that transactional leadership is less likely to promote employee error learning than authentic and transformational leadership styles. (S) explained the culture, by giving some background:

"A few years back they did a survey on EnergyX's group management, and they found that the company's group management were apart from one red, only blue personalities." (S)

The effect on culture from top management was confirmed by respondents from all levels. As (T) stated:

"This starts in a corner office on the 7th floor, it comes from the very top."

According to error management supporters, failures should be recognized and tolerated because they are positively connected to employees' creativity and learning behaviors (Bligh et al., 2018). The greatest barrier for learning from failure is a Laissez Faire leadership style (Yan et al., 2014). Therefore, leaders that are attempting to encourage error learning should focus especially on minimizing their unfavorable actions and leadership styles (Yan et al., 2014). The individual variable of mindset also plays an important role in whether error learning occurs, both directly and indirectly (Bligh et al., 2018). Organizations should have a strategy on management hiring and development. There is a special need to pay attention to managers that have a tougher, more destructive leadership style, especially because they may make it difficult for workers to learn from mistakes. Organizations are frequently enticed to choose and promote executives who use these approaches in the context of short-term market pressures and the need for outcomes (Bligh et al., 2018). The longer-term detrimental effects on organizational learning, as well as innovation and change in general, could, nevertheless, turn out to be highly unfortunate.

Organizations can also benefit from a diversified knowledge base through improved learning from experience and internalizing new information (Duchek, 2020) and following adversity, the implementation of change management and learning might also improve the organization (Burnard et al., 2018). Reflecting and learning from a past event is important for the proactive development of resilience (Edmondson, 1999). The rapid scaling of the company has been mentioned to be a delaying factor in the development of processes. Leadership style is in the center of facilitating learning, through collaboration, diversity, processes and many more. Ensuring a sound prioritization through the mega changes.

Experience

Another key factor in fostering organizational resilience is, distributing power based on expertise and experience rather than basing it on hierarchical position (Duchek, 2020;

Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011; Weick et al. 1999). A broad knowledge and experience base might also be a positive contributor to resilience, with regards to utilization of their skills, capabilities, and competence towards innovative solutions (Duchek, 2020; Weick et al. 1999).

(H) shares his experiences regarding sharing and utilization of knowledge in the company:

"I only use 5% of the knowledge I have accumulated through earlier education and experiences. We don't map the competences or try to understand what the newly hired actually can deliver." (H)

He continued to convey a demand for experience in their manager. The value of knowing the industry, having a solid network internally and externally, simplifying the collaboration and knowledge sharing:

"I want a leader who has knowledge, and a network, which complements the team. It is important to me, that the leader has more experience than the team." (H)

This is supported by Duchek 2020, stating that experienced leaders are positively connected to resilience. Moreover, leaders require competencies, such as the capacity to learn and adapt, manage relationships, and cope with ambiguity. (Duchek, 2020). Studies have indicated that leaders with a high degree of leadership experience perform more effectively, especially in high-stress situations (Duchek 2020, Fiedler 1994).

A reflection on the experience of one of the managers in the company and the related positive contribution he has on the leaders in his team:

"One leader is very experience and has introduced a type of leadership reflection sessions. An example to be followed by other management groups. That leaders prioritize reflecting on different management topics." (Q)

During mega-changes, experience seems to be a positive contribution in providing balanced support and autonomy.

Psychological Safety and Team Cohesion

Psychological safety encourages employees to take calculated risks and be innovative. In a psychologically safe environment, individuals feel comfortable suggesting new ideas, experimenting with different approaches, and contributing to the organization's innovative efforts. A psychologically safe workplace promotes open and honest communication. Team members are more likely to share information, voice concerns, and provide feedback without fear of retribution. Open communication is crucial for organizations to stay informed about potential challenges and address issues proactively. An environment that values cooperation and open communication, is an essential tool for enhancing an organization's resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). This was supported by:

"There is one more thing that is important for resilience in the organization, that is that we have psychological safety. It is extremely important that you trust each other and that we know each other in the team." (J)

A contribution to the above, by also including the responsibility of the leader:

"I think it's about how you fulfill your leadership role. As a manager, you are primarily responsible for creating psychological security and trust, then ensuring everyone else contribute to that." (R)

In cohesive teams, there is a culture of knowledge sharing and continuous learning. Furthermore, cohesive teams are generally more adaptable. They can quickly adjust to new circumstances, redistribute tasks, and pivot strategies as needed. Cohesive teams are more likely to collaborate and share information seamlessly. This collaboration ensures that the organization can draw upon the diverse skills and knowledge of its members to address challenges and develop innovative solutions. Cohesive teams tend to have open and effective communication channels. An employee reflects on the company efforts on the topic:

"In concrete terms, I have not experienced initiatives from the management to create unity." (U)

This was supported by a perception in several business units that the collaboration is really suffering from the lack of leadership due to focus on recruitment and scaling.

"We have had far too little interaction in the team, we work very individually, and the team cohesion is therefore quite poor." (K)

How the psychological safety climate is led in the organizations affects not only the general psychosocial working conditions, but also the possibilities for good leadership of psychological safety in smaller units in the organization (Sjöblom et al., 2022). The result from their study indicates that hybrid solutions, compared to face to face, require more time, deliberation, and intentionality if one wants to establish and lead psychological safety and that the role of remote interaction is underlined in it (Sjöblom et al., 2022). The importance of time to develop teams and ensuring collaboration, which is important to facilitate social resources is supported by Duchek (2020) and is also in line with what my analysis showed.

High Workload

High workload situations often require teams to be adaptable and flexible. Organizations that can quickly reallocate resources, redistribute tasks, and adjust priorities in response to increased work demands demonstrate a level of adaptability that supports resilience (Duchek, 2020). On the negative side, sustained high workloads without appropriate support mechanisms can lead to increased stress and burnout among employees. This, in turn, can negatively impact resilience as burnt-out employees may become less effective in dealing with challenges. Organizations that are resilient are adept at allocating resources effectively (Duchek, 2020). Effective resource management becomes essential in the face of heavy workloads to guarantee that the company can meet demands without sacrificing the welfare of its employees or the quality of its outputs. There was reported not only a high workload but also a management who didn't recognize it:

"Those who have project management responsibilities in this BA will have a lot to do! I don't think management comprehends. The BA has not delivered on construction projects in this area before. What has been delivered are concept studies, R&D projects, but there is a huge gap between studies to constructing." (J)

Another also recognized the practice and added:

"It wasn't really accepted that I was sick on Monday. Not necessarily directly stated that you are not allowed to be sick, but it was more "it's a shame that you are sick, but it's nice if you deliver on what you're supposed to."(U)

(M) explains:

"I know several managers are very aware of the high workload. There is a difference from being aware to adding more tasks. It is partly the challenge in our growing organization that there is not much that is easy to disregard. The company depend on having autonomous employees, also able to prioritize by themselves." (M)

Not only more profitable, but more sustainable would be a reasonable conclusion. In the revision work with its diagnostic manual ICD-11, the WHO has recognized burnout as an "occupational syndrome" (www.who.int), which means that burnout must be seen in the context of the work-related challenges the employee experiences. As burnout and stress related absence has doubled over the past decade, the direct and indirect costs as well as the overall sustainability of work life are demanding increased attention.

Avolio and Bass (1988) found transformational leadership to be particularly evident and stronger at the top level. It is suggested that high-level leaders have the opportunity to change organizations through strategic decision-making. In contrast, middle and especially first-level leaders are likely to be more transactional in their leadership activities. Nonetheless, high workload over a long duration is a high risk that needs to be handled. Hence it is critical to have a diverse leader pool that will recognize and accommodate this topic.

5.2 Change Management

The disruptive climate in the energy industry and the complexity of the new emerging green solutions that EnergyX operated in, in addition to the reorganization project, accumulated to a megachange.

My study showed that, quite a few of the respondents felt uncertain during the reorganization process. In the early stages of the reorganization, there was not sufficient information on the reasoning for the change in organizational structure. The organization seemed doubtful of the reorganization because they could not comprehend the intention of the change process. In addition, some of the respondents reported uncertainty regarding the organizational structure. Section 5.2 will present the analysis of change management through megachanges and connect this to positively related characteristics for a resilient change leadership.

Communication

According to change management literature it is especially critical to maintain close interaction, communicate clearly and to coordinate the teams during change. The grandness of the changes in EnergyX, called for a clear-cut change management strategy. Through Kotter one can understand that creating a common understanding,

and getting the engagement and involvement of the employees is crucial for a successful change journey (Kotter, 1995). Lack of involvement during change is therefore poor change management.

Another expressed a feeling of surprise and noticed the same experience across the organization:

"I had the experience of being caught off guard by the whole change project. I have understood that the change came quite sudden on many people." (S)

A quote from an experienced L4 explaining that the clarity and transfer of information is critical says:

«One of the most important things is good and clear information, that there is a personal transfer of the information from level to level. » (Q)

This is in accordance with Kotter's theory, which is focusing on involving and including the people who will execute the change to not alienate them (Kotter, 1996).

This is further supported by several of the respondents. Much of the criticism versus the change process was related to lack of information and communication. One of the employees stated that he indeed did not catch much communication around the organizational change, and he also reflected over the duration of the chaos in the organization and that it went on for longer than he thought was healthy. One supported this by saying:

"There was limited communication about the structural changes, as far as I can remember there was only information online." (S)

He continued to mention the human centric side to change management seemed to have been lost along the way:

"The process was a bit hectic. The company hired L3 and L4 level at the same time. I believe that L3 would have wanted to help influence its own organization. Naturally, also the other way around, it is very good to know who the leader will be, the one you will work closely with." (Q)

Megachanges over a long period has laid a strain on the organization. In situations like these, if leaders want to maintain or build employee positivity, the organizational leaders must be aware of the contextual factors facing these employees (Avey et al, 2011). Furthermore, more complex circumstances may tend to negatively influence employees' motivation and their problem-solving execution (Avey et al, 2011).

This is supported by an experienced, female employee who explained the extremely wide range of tasks of the business developers in new business areas. In addition to the massive load, it was a wide range of complex tasks for many of the employees in the business unit and she feared this strain would lead to lower levels of motivation.

A male employee, who has worked in the company for 20 years, also verified the importance of contextual factors. He has been working in one of the core units in the company before joining the new business area a few years ago. His perception was that it is exactly this uncertain, complex environment that demotivated many. The fact that there is a need for multiple stakeholder interaction, but no processes to define this interaction and the roles and responsibilities of these. It contributed to a very uncertainty for the employee and affected his motivation.

Succeeding in implementing new policies, procedures, programs, and goals may be more likely for leaders who are able to motivate their staff behind these essential company endeavors (Kotter, 1996).

Lack of clarity generating doubt

The results revealed a potential lack of two-way communication. The reorganization project was quite limited in participators and other parts of the organization was not perceived as invited to partake. To manage employee uncertainty, sense of control, and job satisfaction during transition, communication is essential (Bordia et al., 2004).

As explained:

"I had some information arbitrage over, what was the general company information. But I didn't realise until quite late, that the ultimate implication would be that we become more centralised. Which was not the objective or not the stated objective at least." (O)

Not much information about the new structure, hence there was a sense of uncertainty. There was lacking cooperation with others in the organization, however the change project had representatives from all parts of the organization. In addition, there was lack of inclusion of others in this process, and this was highlighted among many of the respondents.

In his fifth stage, Kotter (1995) highlighted the importance of including employees. By "empowering others to act on the vision," it is critical to include employees in the transformation process. Likewise, in his second step "change", Lewin stressed the value of involving staff members (Burnes, 2004).

Most respondents expressed that they had been provided good information throughout the transition process. However, (S) felt that the information that was provided at the start of the transition process was inadequate:

"It was a bit unfortunate that the organization was so shocked. It was communicated as a shock, but what this change means to me is enormous growth and is merely a positive change."

Management was unable to precisely articulate the aim of the change process resulting in uncertainty. As explained by:

"The matrix organization has been criticized, and it was not clearly communicated that this was the future structure. It was very clear that we were going for a functional, geographical organization, so there was an implicit understanding that many functions would cross paths. However, as a result there are quite a few employees, who have been frustrated in recent years due to this miscommunication and structure." (S)

There was a lack of communication from management, following the change implementation. This could be due to the managers having to complete the implementation before the deadline or an overzealous management. Due to time constraints, the management were more preoccupied with the procedure than with the employees who were impacted by the change. The short duration of the reorganization project might have been a contributing factor for why the communication strategy was perceived to be weak and if this had been improved, the employees' uncertainty regarding the change process may have been prevented.

Most respondents found there was a lack of communication after the implementation of the new organization.

"After the implementation long time passed, where there was a lot of chaos in the organization. Quite a lot longer than I thought was perfectly healthy." (C)

Indeed, increased psychological strain brought on by organizational change has a significant impact on results that are important to the organization, like employee retention and satisfaction. Stress brought on by uncertainty about one's future role, job security, and career prospects may cause valuable individuals to leave the company (Bordia et al., 2004).

Implementing change takes time, therefore prioritizing change management and allowing time for it, might become success factors. A clear communication from management, what to prioritize is important or business as usual will prevail. It might also help to identify and mitigate risks associated with the change, such as potential disruptions to operations, delays in implementation, or resistance from stakeholders. In addition to exchanging information, communication serves as a means of attempting to reach a shared understanding of the experiences of the transformation process (Saksvik et al., 2007). By planning and managing the change proactively, the organization can minimize the risk of negative consequences.

5.3 Organizational Resilience

Overall, resilience denotes a capability that enables the company to operate in a turbulent global business environment (Pedersen & Jensen, 2022). Except from their own definition of resilience, the interviewees seemed to understand and relate to the questions. After the definitions from the theory were discussed, everyone had solid reflections on which factors were important to them to be a resilient leader and to foster resilience.

Factors contributing to resilience, such as empowerment, inclusion, experience, learning, processes, collaboration, and availability were reported as especially critical. While factors such as high workload, poor team cohesion, lack of resources, prolonged decision-making processes, lack of clarity and recognition were mentioned, all negatively influencing organizational resilience. Agility was mentioned as a contributor to resilience by a few and this is also supported by literature. In this thesis, agility is partly included in structure through processes and routines. Section 5.3 addresses elements of diversity, inclusion, and processes, and how these are reflected in different sets of characteristics in resilient change leaders.

Diversity

In 2011 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released a report that attempted to address the issue of why the institution was unable to foresee the financial crisis a few years back. According to the fund the primary causes were "a high degree of groupthink, intellectual capture, a general mindset that a major financial crisis in large, advanced economies was unlikely, and incomplete analytical approaches" (International Monetary Fund 2011, p. 17). A clear example of how lack of diversity and a narrow knowledge base can hit a company.

Quite a few mentioned that EnergyX had good intentions regarding diversity but had yet to put this into practice. A few of the female respondents applauded the composition of the group management, however recognized that the company still had many business area management groups lagging in gender equality.

The report from IMF reflects on one of the risks with lack of diversity, an employee confirms the recruitment policy and the danger of hiring only the best:

"Part of the diversity we lack in EnergyX, is that we mostly hire A-students from NTNU, KTH or CU, and we have the top-notch consultants who are very hungry. In the end, it is a small weakness that everyone is so accomplished. It becomes a culture, and there will be extreme delivery pressure." (U)

(L) concurred with the practice and called it a "sort of inbreeding".

This touches on another perspective uncovered in the interviews, such as the focus from management on recruitment. Not only is this creating a situation where management will be unavailable, occupied with recruitment processes. In addition, there is a substantial risk that this practice will lead to less diverse teams. In this regard, I would like to add a perspective on diversity given by Nobel Prize winner Richard Thaler in a McKinsey interview. There he states that diversity is not only with regards to ethnicity, gender, or age; but also, with regards to how people think (McKinsey, 2018).

This was also highlighted by:

"In a decision-making process, it should be based on facts and that means you can't have a long chain of people agreeing. You need challenging people and diverse minds." (D)

The results promote less involvement from management in recruitment. Having a more systematic approach to which competences and profiles will provide the best fit for an organization, from a diversity perspective, should be ensured by a more distance entity, such as HR.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a positive contributor to resilience (Duchek, 2020). From the analysis it became evident that poor confidentiality processes might result in a weakened flow of information as well as a feeling of exclusion. Quite a few of the interview objects reported poor processes regarding confidentiality and coherency around the topic. One of the L3 managers also stated that the handling of insider information and the reporting of insider lists were not apparent. Poor confidentiality processes seem to provide a barrier to inclusion and hinder an efficient flow of information. To provide employees with a sense of control, communication and information sharing is critical (Bordia et al., 2004).

The sense of exclusion and poor team cohesion was also expressed in many of the interviews. This was also explained due to the prolonged situation of absent management and lack of resources. Also confirmed by many of the managers through the confirmation of the leadership culture, prioritizations and lack of time and resources.

As two managers explicitly say, and confirmed through other interviews, there is not time enough in the day and focus is on tasks, that does not leave much time to ensure engagement in your employees and cohesion among your team members:

"There is limited time during the day. Being a father of small children, I don't work between 5 and 7.30, I'm not going to budge on that, this is the time when I see my kid. if you work late in the evenings and get up again at 6, that is just not sustainable." (P)

The L2 provided his view on the management culture:

"For me, it is at least a good fit that it is a management culture that focuses on getting the job done!" (T)

However, as another argued:

"Inclusion is 80% about being polite." (O)

Following with explaining that ensuring the right culture, ambience, and respect in the departments, covers much of the necessary work regarding succeeding with inclusion. Another supports this and adds his view on the responsibility of leaders:

"The role of a manager is to ensure the employee-leader distance is not too high. A critical function of a good leader is to make sure that the entire team feels included. Unfortunately, when talking to some of my colleagues in EnergyX, I understand that this is not always the case." (I)

Confirmed by another:

"I have heard from people and also observed, that their opinion is not taken into account or considered." (P)

Perceptions of lacking inclusion are unfortunate, as positive results are frequently associated with management initiatives that promote inclusivity (Mor Barak et al., 2016).

Structure and processes

According to role theory, improving good outcomes requires that each job in a formal organizational structure have a clearly defined set of activities or position responsibilities (Rizzo et al., 1970). Structure in functions and processes are positively connected to organizational resilience (Pacheco et al., 2023; Sincora et al., 2022).

Compared to activities that are unclear, unstructured, and challenging by nature, structured tasks offer the leader greater control. Because task completion is so unclear, these unstructured tasks lead to tension and anxiety. Leaders will act based not on academic ability but on intuitive understanding and skills gained through experience, to the degree that the task itself causes tension and anxiety (Fiedler, 1994).

Most of the leaders emphasized the need and prioritization of maturing processes and focusing on tasks in the further development and scaling of the business unit.

A L2 manager reflects over the consequences of having a very operative CEO. In many regards positive, it demands everyone to really know their material, but it also prolongs decision making and somewhat pushes decisions upwards in the organization. As he further elaborated:

"We have an extensive focus on control, and management-backing in the company, which means that the mandates are not used effectively." (T)

Another commented on the status with regards to processes and was especially specific in saying:

"Before we actually have some of the basic processes in place, continuous improvement will have to wait" (P)

Bureaucratic processes can hinder organizations against reasonable seizing (Teece, 2009). They proceed to argue that an organization with dynamic capabilities control their decision-making procedures, to prevent these prejudices by rewarding and stimulating creativity and getting rid of unnecessary assets. In hierarchical organizations there will probably be committees involved in the decision-making. Senior management will possibly demand written reports and explanations for big decisions. Structures for committee decision-making nearly always favor compromise and balance. Teece also recognizes that in such organizations there is a probability that the organization senses the opportunity, but fails to invest (Teece et al., 2009).

There seems to have been an effort to not be too constraint in this emerging business area, emphasizing on mobility and flexibility. However, if the organization aim to develop resilience, it must improve its daily operations (Pacheco et al., 2023). Clarity, structure and availability, all touch upon this topic. As availability of information increases, through clarity and structure; the demand for availability of the leaders will decrease.

I have analyzed the findings based on the interviews and theory, this commenced in a development of a conceptual model in Figure 5. Chapter 6 is dedicated to a summary of these findings aligned with chapter 5 and figure 5.

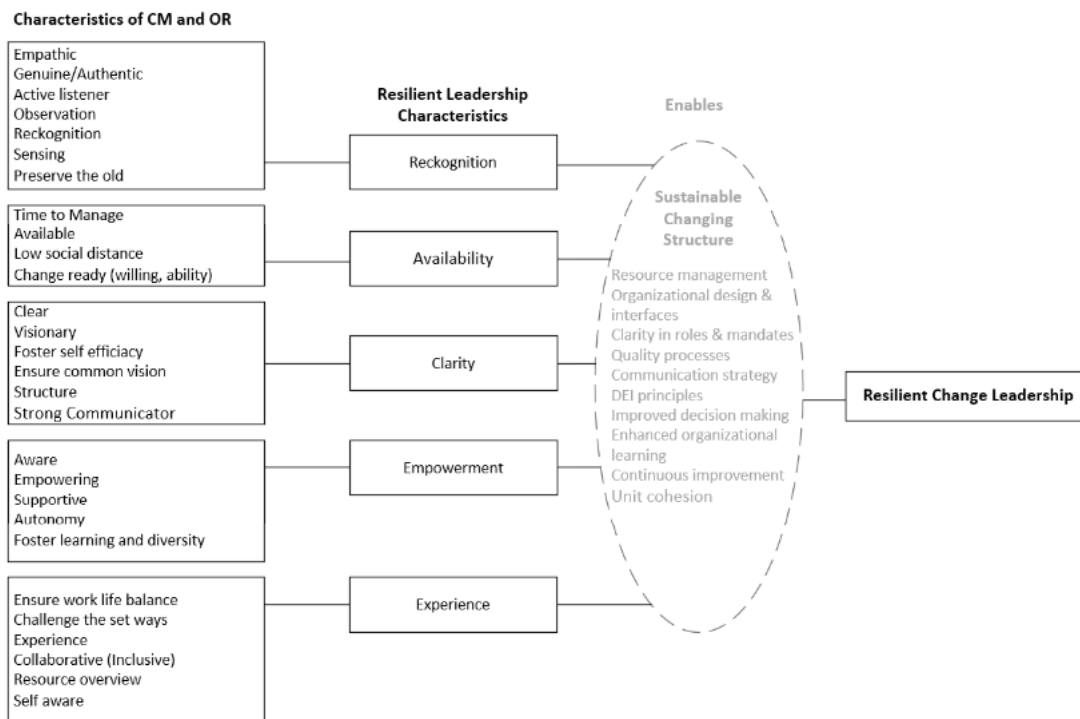


Figure 5 Conceptual Model of Resilient Change Leadership characteristics and enablers (KL, 2024)

6 Discussion

This study employed a stepwise deductive inductive method and a single case study design and provided findings on; the influences of leadership on organizational resilience in a VUCA environment. The applied research design was qualitative, to explore commonalities and gaps between change management, dynamic capabilities, and resilience.

Resilience is an organizational capacity that strengthens the ability to handle change and is supported by managerial attributes. The study investigated characteristics within collaboration, communication, and learning, as these are recognized as influencing factors of resilience.

This study's problem has quite a wide scope, and there are several aspects that come into play: organizational structure, mega changes, ambitious strategy, growth targets, hiring of resources as well as onboarding and offboarding processes and processes in general. The study limited the scope to collaboration, communication, and learning, while looking more away from individual resilience influencing factors such as psychological safety, team cohesion, motivation, and such. However, according to Radic et al. (2022), individual resilience is a part of team and organizational resilience. Through the interviews it also became apparent that we cannot overlook individual factors when looking at the whole, as the collective resilience of individual employees contributes to the overall resilience of the organization.

In line with the first proposition, I saw that a leadership style that promotes collaboration will foster OR in VUCA environments. A leader fostering diversity and a psychological safe climate, and in this manner enabling a solid knowledge base, improving problem solving skills and unit cohesion, is breeding stronger relationships which will improve the adaptability of teams and consequently enhance the OR.

Proposition 2 was also supported. A leadership style that promotes communication will foster OR in VUCA environments. In VUCA environments, clarity and inclusion is important. This study showed that even in high competence organizations, with a high level of autonomy – there is still a high demand on leadership to perform clear and continuous communication. Where there is a transparent communication, employees are more likely to share information, and this will improve the organization's capability to adapt to changes or adversity, hence improve OR.

Last, I also found support for proposition 3. A leadership style that promotes learning will enable OR in VUCA environments. A leader that facilitates a learning environment through encouraging reflection and feedback, implementing lessons learned processes, but also a psychological safe climate to enable error learning and sharing of information, will enhance flexibility and adaptability through acquisition of new knowledge, continuous improvement and a more constructive mindset around failures, thus improving OR.

This study has showed, that while resilience and change management share many common elements, they address different organizational needs and challenges. By

integrating both concepts, the study provides a more holistic approach to navigating both planned and unplanned disruptions in the dynamic business environment.

One of the more popular leadership styles the last decade has been the empowering leadership style. This is a constructive leadership style, allowing for much trust and recognition through providing employees with autonomy and developmental support (Kim & Beehr, 2020). The necessity of superiors recognizing events and conditions where subordinates experience a need for leadership and, correspondingly, embracing this need instead of avoiding it is underscored by the demonstration that laissez-faire leadership is a primary cause of subordinate role ambiguity (Skogstad et al., 2014).

Different factors were identified in the interviews which affected the perception of the leader and their abilities during change. My findings show that the empowering leadership style is very sensitive to being perceived as Laissez Faire, which in many contexts, is a very destructive leadership style. The inactivity characterizing a laissez-faire leadership style makes it distinct from other negative approaches as its negative consequences result from the absence of constructive behaviors rather than from actively implementing destructive ones (Skogstad et al., 2014).

It was stated among many of the respondents that a factor for driving resilience is experienced leaders. This is also supported in the literature by Duchek (2020) and Fiedler (1994).

Perhaps this is where experience triumphs the non-experienced. In the current volatile environment, resilience is viewed as a critical organizational characteristic. However, this study confirms the tendency of managers in the new business areas of EnergyX to dedicate most of their attention to operational, and internal aspects of change management with a short-term, reactive behavior, and unfortunately neglecting soft, long-term requirements of an organizational change process.

Recognition

In times such as these, where the new division in EnergyX has emerged, scaled up and developed very rapidly, the interviews tell a story of a need for sensing, listening and recognition from the leaders. When there is a high level of change and uncertainties, there will be questions regarding how to preserve the old whilst welcoming the new. There has been a high workload, change of organizational construct, change in roles and deliveries, and quite a few desired a stronger focus on personal development to deliver on new tasks. Also, a need for the actual dialogue around the feeling of mastering these new set of tasks.

Availability

From the interviews it was obvious that the most critical factor was, time to manage. The scarce availability of the leaders was conspicuous, and it was reported from all levels of the organization. Questions regarding prioritizations and direction, contemplated from this discussion. It became evident that the lack of resources had weighed heavy on the organization for quite a while, but the focus on recruitment from leaders was not believed to be a correct approach as this increased workload, prolonged decision-making, and

applied further uncertainty to the remainders in the organization. In addition, this study has revealed a need for a diversified management group to counter the risk of establishing a culture of unavailable management.

Clarity

The results from the interviews also revealed, a massive need for information and a clear direction. This is not surprising since most change management literature tells us the importance of communication to inform, engage and implement changes. Several of the interview objects mentioned a desire for a visionary leader; one who could communicate the holistic situation and point clearly to the direction and priorities of the organization. There was a reported expectation in clarity from management and other internal stakeholders, also regarding day-to-day deliveries. This is also an enabler for a needed sense of self-efficacy with the employers. A diverse management group might also be better equipped to effectuate a more appropriate communication strategy according to its purpose, hence provide more clarity in the organization.

Empowerment

It was evident from the study that in a competence organization such as EnergyX; autonomy, self-efficacy, and learning are valued objectives. However, a certain downside to empowerment was disclosed. The analysis showed that the organization had a stronger need for guidance, than the performing empowering leadership style would deliver. There was seemingly a mismatch between, what was believed to be empowering and what was perceived as laissez faire behavior. A source of explanation can be found in literature, where a study concluded with gender difference in perception of delegation (Norris et al., 2021). Utilizing this fact, in a context of a very uncertain environment, where clear communication and guidance is of essence, it is not farfetched to believe that what is meant to be empowering might be very different from the perception of empowerment.

Experience

A central result to knowing your team, knowing their skill sets and knowing the organization, business or industry is that one can best utilize the resources and foster collaboration. Clarity in vision and strategy also boils down to "*what shall the team do to succeed?*" or "*how shall the team succeed?*". To implement accordingly leadership must ask themselves "*how shall I best enable the team to succeed?*".

The interviews showed a general low expectation to management's involvement, engagement, and support. Self-awareness is a contributor to put responsibility, where responsibility should be. Knowing your team and the skill base, is central to the leadership function. Hence, how to motivate, inform and otherwise accommodate individual needs to fully utilize the potential in the team, is the leader responsibility. The more stressors an individual is exposed to, or the amount of time to which they are exposed, can decrease their resilience. In a knowledge economy, especially, where the employee's knowledge is such a great asset, it is poor financial management to allow such resources to deteriorate before they must, or in other ways underutilize their competence.

Challenging the set ways and asking questions upwards in the organization was also mentioned as a factor of being a resilient leader. A desire to maintain questioning the fundamental assumptions facilitates organizational learning (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Organizational learning, learning through failure and continuous improvement are viewed as characteristics, but also enabling processes of resilience. An experienced leader is perceived to have a better foundation to execute on ensuring a sound prioritization through the mega changes.

6.1 Summary

Against a backdrop of increasing globalization, deregulation, the rapid pace of technological innovation, a growing knowledge workforce, and shifting social and demographic trends, few would dispute that the primary task for management today is the leadership of organizational change.

(Graetz, 2000, p. 550).

This study agrees with Gratz's statement and furthermore the results show that not only is leadership essential to organizational resilience, but it is also vital for organizations to select and/or develop leaders with certain key characteristics.

Especially in uncertain times an empowering leadership style might easily be perceived as Laissez Faire, which is damaging to resilience, but not necessarily for change management in total. An experienced leader will probably pertain the qualities to balance this in a better manner, than a leader with less experience. A solid learning for the novice leader is therefore that empowerment is important and will be positively received - if adjusted to the individual.

7 Implications

Having addressed the research question through the analysis and discussion, this chapter will present the implications and contributions of the findings. Finalizing with the limitations of the study along with recommendations for further research.

7.1 Academic contributions

Although the majority of the study's conclusions are in line with previous research, it nonetheless offers significant new insights into the topic of resilient change leadership.

I found significant differences in perception of the implemented change between the levels L2, L3 and below. The study suggests that through turmoil and mega changes, it is critical to promote resilience-enhancing leadership styles to implement changes. Upskilling of the management will be necessary to meet the requirements of being a resilient change leader.

The findings of the study bring attention to a set of specific characteristics to meet the need of a **resilient change leadership**. Five categories have been found to cover these characteristics, namely **recognition, availability, clarity, empowerment, and experience**.

The most critical learnings to deduct from this study is that a **perceived** Laissez Faire leadership style will negatively influence organizational resilience during change. The study also contributed with reflections on perceptions related to leaders, causing a need for upskilling of leaders and an awareness concerning a diversified leadership constellation in the organization.

7.2 Managerial contributions

Practically speaking, the result of this study provides insight into how employees are influenced by not only by their leaders, but also by their perception of their leaders. The following recommendations are made to organizations looking to prepare their management's leadership skillsets to enhance resilience through changes. Specifically, they need to develop a sense for employee recognition, improve availability, promote clarity, empower their employees as well as build and reflect on experience.

A management that is executing substandard through wrongfully prioritizations, e.g. too operational in recruitment; might negatively affect both availability and diversity. As this specific example is creating a situation where management will be unavailable, and there is a risk that this practice will lead to less diverse teams. By management hiring individuals that are like themselves or shows behavior that will fit in the team. In such a case, these issues will benefit by an increased role and mandate for external support or HR, in securing a systematic approach to diversity, and which competences and profiles that will provide the best overall fit for an organization. In a more general setting, experience and upskilling of leadership will provide an added value for individuals, teams, and organizations through among other things optimal resource utilization, knowledge sharing, a sense of belonging, coordination, and autonomy.

In addition, empowerment is important and will be positively received if adjusted to the individual. However, especially during mega changes it is easily perceived as Laissez Faire, which is damaging to resilience. This study has highlighted the importance of

ensuring that constructive contributions are perceived as intended, as a perceived Laissez Faire leadership style will negatively influence organizational resilience during change.

7.3 Limitations and Recommendations for further research

This thesis offers insightful analysis of appropriate literature and case study with implications for academia and management. Nonetheless, it is important to note certain limitations and future research opportunities.

First, the research findings have limited generalizability due to the qualitative approach that was used in the thesis and the case study's single company focus. Due to time and resource restrictions, my research was limited to the perceptions of 22 respondents regarding their perception of the reorganization process and leadership fostering resilience. As a result, the majority impacted by the reorganization process may not be represented by this small sample. However, the range of positions held by the employees made it easier to compare their diverse experiences.

Due to the size of scope of change management, resilience, and leadership styles, along with the nature of this thesis, meant that this study could only make a modest contribution. In addition, it is important to note that the process of reorganization was put into effect around a year ago. It is possible that some details were inadvertently omitted.

Future research is to investigate the interfaces between delegation, autonomy, empowerment, and the perceptions of laissez faire. Also, to further look into gender and cultural perceptions of these elements.

It would be interesting to further investigate, whether this is an isolated happening in new business areas, or will megachanges affect mature, core operations in a similar manner. Do different leadership styles and characteristics to change management impact organizational resilience differently, depending on whether organizations are undergoing slower, more stable organizational change versus rapid innovation and expansion.

Although this study emphasizes the importance of a diverse management group, this specific topic undoubtedly deserves more attention in further research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Approved application Sikt

Appendix B: Interview guide

Appendix C: Consent and information letter



Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer

682776

Vurderingstype

Standard

Dato

13.11.2023

Tittel

Hvilke lederegenskaper kreves for å fremme organisatorisk resiliens gjennom turbulente tider?

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for økonomi (ØK) / Institutt for internasjonal forretningsdrift

Prosjektansvarlig

Mark Pasquine

Student

Kathrine Langjord

Prosjektperiode

25.10.2023 - 22.12.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 22.12.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)

Kommentar**OM VURDERINGEN**

Sikt har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket. Vi har nå vurdert at du har lovlig grunnlag til å behandle personopplysningene.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Det er institusjonen du er ansatt/student ved som avgjør hvordan du må lagre og sikre data i ditt prosjekt og hvilke databehandlere du kan bruke. Husk å bruke leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med (f.eks. ved skylagring, nettspørreskjema, videosamtale el.).

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Se våre nettsider om hvilke endringer du må melde: <https://sikt.no/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Appendix B - Interview Guide**Introduction**

	The interviews all start with general introduction questions covering general information about the interviewees and the topic of the thesis.	Additional questions were added where insufficient information, and follow-up questions will be addressed if relevant	
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Initial Open-Ended Questions

	Question	Elaborate	Notes
1	What is your perception about the management awareness of the change situation Statkraft has been through the 1-2 years?	e.g., were they aware of the situation, how did they handle the situation, what changed did they focus on	
2	What is the most important successfactor for driving organizational change?		
3	Were you informed that we would operate in a matrix structure?	Was this communicated well through all levels of the organisation?	
4	Do you and your team have clarity in your roles and mandate.	How did management communicate changes in roles, did they ensure competence and motivation for the new tasks?	
5	In general, what do you think are the three most important leadership qualities of our time?	Why? Can you give an example?	

Intermediate Questions

	Question	Elaborate	Notes
6	In the past strategies we have had a focus on collaboration. Why do you think this has been such a tough nut to crack?	Have you seen improvements in this area? How does management measure the success of collaboration?	
7	In what way does management in Statkraft encourage and set the frame for teamwork?	Frequency, not only cross departmental, sharing and inclusive information sharing	
8	How does management coordinate and communicate with the team?	Weekly, face to face, joint messages, mngmt info, GAD planning. What are you satisfied with and where is room for improvement?	
9	How succesful are management in building a connection to the team? How do they focus on improving/maintaining it?		
10	Have you seen examples of proactive support within/among a team when or if a team is struggling?		
11	Can you give an example of how management practice inclusion?		
12	In the past pulse surveys, there has been a strong signal of high workload on employees. How does management approach this issue?	Is this sufficient? What else would you appreciate to see?	
13	Is there a practise for performing exit interviews in Statkraft?	knowledge transfer, mapping of workload, job satisfaction, retention rate	
14	Is there a culture for continuous improvement, lessons learned and best practises in your BA/Division/company?	Can you elaborate on a process where we have implemented systematic, continuous improvement?	

15	What is your perception of “failure situations” that needed to be handled? How did the leader cope with this?	e.g., do they exhibit/ demonstrate high level of supportive behavior or more directive behaviors, if yes in what way (strong vs low) if no, why not	
16	What is your perception of what has been done by the management during the change/disruptive times?	e.g., did the organization/team simply survive the change, did they do little, nothing, where they proactive? (please elaborate)	
17	What are you most happy about with the general management in Statkraft?		
18	What would you want to improve?		
19	What are the most critical leadership characteristics for you during change?		
Ending Questions			
	Question	Elaborate	Notes
20	In your opinion, what is the most important trait a leader should have to be resilient?		
21	Is there anything else you would like to share or anything you would like to ask me about?		

Are you interested in taking part in the research project -

What are the required leadership traits to foster organizational resilience through turbulent times?

This is a question for you to participate in a research project where the purpose is to map whether some leadership traits can be considered more important than others during change seen in the light of promoting organizational resilience. In this document, you will be provided with information about the aims of the project and what this participation will mean for you.

Purpose of the project

You are invited to participate in a research project where the main purpose is to investigate whether there are any leadership traits that may be more important than others in leading employees through the changes in a resilient way. This will be done by answering the question:

What are the required leadership traits to foster organizational resilience through turbulent times?

The study is a final master's thesis in the study of Technology Management and Digital Transformation. The information gathered will not be used for purposes other than this task. The thesis will be shared with EnergyX upon interest.

Which institution is responsible for the research project?

NTNU is responsible for the project (data controller).

Why are you being asked to participate?

EnergyX has been through massive changes the past year and therefore this study will investigate managers and team members from the company.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you fill in a short questionnaire in addition to participate in an interview. This interview will take approx. 45 minutes. The survey includes questions about change management, leadership styles and resilience. Your answers will be recorded electronically.

Please do not refer to any specific colleagues/managers or mention any specific colleagues/managers by name.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified here and we will process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation (the GDPR).

- The supervisor and the student, will have access to the personal data.

- I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The planned end date of the project is 20.12.2023. All data will be deleted after received feedback and grading.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with NTNU, The Data Protection Services of Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Kathrine Langjord, langjord@yahoo.com, +4791187219
- NTNU via Mark Pasquine, mapa@ntnu.no, +4770161521
- Our Data Protection Officer: *[insert name of the data protection officer at the institution responsible for the project]*

If you have questions about how data protection has been assessed in this project by Sikt, contact:

- email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 73 98 40 40.

Yours sincerely,

Marc Pasquine
Project Leader
(Researcher/supervisor)

Kathrine Langjord
Student (if applicable)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project *What are the required leadership traits to foster organizational resilience through turbulent times* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview
- to participate in a questionnaire survey

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end of the project.

(Signed by participant, date)



 **NTNU**

Norwegian University of
Science and Technology