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# Organizational Culture and Change: Corporate Challenges in Implementing Change - The case of AMOI

The role of organizational culture in the  
implementation of change strategies

Bachelor's thesis in Business Administration  
Supervisor: Daniel Casoinic  
April 2024



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Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Faculty of Economics and Management  
NTNU Business School





# Foreword

To the reader,

This work (thesis) represents the culmination of a three-year bachelor's degree in Business Administration, specializing in Organization and Change, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. My choice to explore this topic was motivated by a deep interest in the dynamics of organizational culture and the complexities of implementing change within a corporate setting. My aim was to delve deeper into these complex subjects and draw valuable lessons from them.

I am thankful to Amoi for allowing me to collaborate with them on this thesis. My gratitude extends to Oliver Mulelid-Tynes, my contact at Amoi, whose assistance and insights have been invaluable throughout the semester. Additionally, I am grateful to the professionals and experts I had the opportunity to interview, whose experiences and knowledge in the field of organizational culture and change enriched my research.

Special thanks are also due to my supervisor, Daniel Casoinic, for his guidance and invaluable input throughout this process. I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to my family for their support and encouragement, not only during the thesis writing process but throughout my entire academic journey. Their support has been appreciated.

*The author of this thesis is responsible for its content.*

April 2024

Irnis Besirovic

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# Abstract

This thesis delves into the dynamics between Organizational Culture (OC) and change management (CM) through a case study of the company AMOI which is a digital platform facilitating the delivery of local goods and services. As digital transformation continues to reshape the corporate landscape, businesses face increasing challenges in implementing changes and adapting their OC accordingly. This thesis aims to investigate the impact of OC on Amoi's strategic change initiatives with a focus on how cultural values and leadership influence change initiatives, as well as the role of employee resistance on strategic change initiatives. Employing a qualitative approach through four semi-structured interviews where the study explores the challenges and dynamics of implementing change in AMOI.

The research contributes to the field of OC and CM by highlighting the influence of OC on strategic change initiatives and pinpointing barriers such as resistance and misalignment between change strategies and culture. Findings underscore that managing change hinges on aligning OC with specific challenges like resistance and communication gaps. This emphasizes the complexity of CM in digital settings and need for deeper investigation.

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# Sammendrag

Denne oppgaven utforsker dynamikken mellom organisasjonskultur og endringsledelse gjennom en casestudie av selskapet AMOI som er en digital plattform som tilrettelegger for levering av lokale varer og tjenester. Den digitale transformasjonen fortsetter å omforme organisasjoner, noe som bidrar til at bedrifter møter økende utfordringer med å implementere endringer og tilpasse sin organisasjonskultur deretter. Målet med denne oppgaven er å avdekke hvordan organisasjonskultur påvirker endringer i AMOI, med fokus på hvordan kulturelle verdier og ledelse påvirker endringsinitiativer, samt rollen ansattes motstand spiller i strategiske endringsinitiativer. Det blir benyttet en kvalitativ tilnærming gjennom fire semistrukturerte intervjuer der studien utforsker utfordringene og dynamikken ved å gjennomføre endring i AMOI.

Forskningen bidrar til feltet organisasjonskultur og endringsledelse ved å fremheve påvirkningen fra organisasjonskultur på endringsinitiativer og peke ut barrierer som motstand og avvik mellom endringsstrategier og kultur. Funnene understreker at håndtering av endring avhenger av å tilpasse organisasjonskulturen med spesifikke utfordringer som motstand og kommunikasjon. Dette fremhever kompleksiteten mellom endringsledelse og organisasjonskultur, samt behovet for videre forskning på temaet.

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# List of Acronyms

OC	Organizational Culture
CM	Change Management
SME	Small to Medium-sized Enterprise

# 1 Introduction

Adaptability and responsiveness are important to achieve success in today's fast-paced world (Tejeiro Koller, 2016). Companies are often driven by the underlying forces of their Organizational Culture (OC) which serves as an invisible yet powerful influence on their operations and strategies. Alongside this, Change Management (CM) emerges as a critical process to ensure that organizations can transition through the changes in the modern business world (Price & Chahal, 2006). At the heart of this dynamic is the question of how deeply ingrained OC influence a company's approach to change (Weiner, 2009). This becomes essential as it delves into how cultural factors affect CM practices and identifies the cultural barriers that can impede successful change implementation.

Amoi founded in 2020 is a digital platform that supply goods and services from the providers on the platform. The company is wholly owned subsidiary by Posten Norge AS. Amoi blends traditional retail values with digital commerce efficiency (Amoi, n.d-a.) . The case of Amoi offers a view on how OC influences CM and vice versa, providing a practical context to explore theoretical concepts.

This work aims to research the complexities of change within established OCs, using Amoi as a case study. This thesis seeks to contribute both to academic understanding and practical application in the fields of OC and change by examining the ways in which Amoi's culture influences its change strategies.

## 1.1 Research Questions

To provide a structured approach to this research, the thesis aims to address two central research questions, which lays the groundwork for understanding how specific elements of OC influence strategies and outcomes of CM in the context of a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME).

The research questions of this thesis are:

- Q1: How do strategic change initiatives influence the cultural values and leadership behaviors, and why?
- Q2: How does resistance to change from employees impact strategic change initiatives?

## Introduction

The aim is to examine the relationship between OC and CM. The objectives of this work are to explore how OC can contribute to the development of strategy when implementing change, conduct a literature review on OC and CM, formulate practical recommendations, and contribute to academic literature with an empirical case study.

### 1.2 Research Aim and Scope

The aim of this thesis is to explore on the influence of strategic change initiatives on OC and leadership behaviors, with a particular focus on Amoi during its growth phase. This study seeks to understand how these change initiatives affect cultural values and leadership practices, and how employee resistance is managed impact strategic change. The scope is limited to a qualitative analysis of Amoi, utilizing theories from the fields of OC and CM. This research focuses on the group and organizational levels of analysis and seeks to offer insights into relevant theories and practices within the realms of OC and CM, connecting them to a real-world corporate setting.

### 1.3 Context and Organization Description

Amoi is a company that provides a digital platform that connects buyers with a diverse range of shops, each with its own area of expertise. This includes everything from fishmongers and bakers to florists and butchers, offering customers the convenience of purchasing high quality, local products from various retailers in a single delivery (Amoi, n.d-b.).

The company is based in Norway and have made significant strides in supplying both private and corporate customers, providing flexible delivery windows that range from morning to evening. This collaboration with local businesses is Amoi's commitment to supporting local commerce and providing customers with a digital interface to access a diverse array of goods. Amoi has made diverse offerings from multiple local vendors into one delivery experience with a blend of traditional retail and modern digital efficiency (blank, n.d.).

It's an interesting case to study how it preserves their OC and manage change as Amoi evolves in the e-commerce market. This thesis will examine Amoi's approach and strategies for practical insights into how some dimensions of OC affects CM strategies.

## 1.4 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 sets the foundation for the thesis, providing the context and an introduction to the company Amoi. Chapter 2 begins with a literature review that examines theories and studies about OC and CM. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, focusing on data collection methods and their reliability and validity. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes findings from interviews, revealing insights into Amoi's CM strategies and cultural context. Chapter 5 connects these results with theoretical frameworks, noting similarities and differences, and discusses them within the broader scope. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarizing the main findings, addressing limitations, and proposing future research directions, highlighting the contribution of the thesis on OC and CM.

## 2 Literature Review

This chapter examines existing theories and empirical studies on OC and CM with the focus of dimensions on strategic change initiatives on cultural values and leadership behaviors, as well as employee resistance. The aim is to establish a foundational understanding of these areas, particularly the interaction between cultural dimensions and change strategies. The review also underscores empirical research that investigates the mechanisms by which OC either facilitates or hinders change. This review sets the fundamental for understanding how OC influence CM strategies and identifies potential barriers that may obstruct these processes.

### 2.1 Understanding Organizational Culture

Organizational Culture is a term that refers to the collective values, beliefs, rituals, and norms that shape the behavior and practices within an organization. It forms the underlying fundamentals that guide employee's interaction and decision-making processes where it plays a crucial role in shaping an organization's identity and work environment (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Duncan (1989) mentioned that the definition of an OC highlights three important characteristics of it: it is learned, it is shaped and it is transmitted (Duncan, 1989).

Shared values and beliefs are often unspoken yet deeply ingrained in the company's practices and are at its core of OC. These elements manifest themselves in various forms, including company rituals, symbols, stories, and language, all of which contribute to the cultural fabric of an organization. The quest for strong cultures reflects a broader recognition of OC's role in solving productivity challenges, emphasizing the critical need for understanding cultural underpinnings to effectively navigate change in organizations (Schein, 1990). The importance of understanding these cultural dimensions becomes particularly evident when organizations undertake change initiatives (Vogds, 2001).

Edgar Schein's model of OC is a foundational theory in this realm. Schein identifies three distinct levels within an OC (Somers, 2023): artifacts (visible but often not decipherable), values (greater level of awareness), and basic assumptions (unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, invisible, and pre-conscious). This model provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing and understanding the complexities and subtleties of OC (Schein, 1983, pp.1-4). The Figure 2.1 shows the three distinct levels where artifacts represent the visible environment of

a firm, the exposed values are the greater level of awareness and the reason for why people behave a specific way and the underlying assumptions shows the beliefs that determine how the people in the group think and feel.

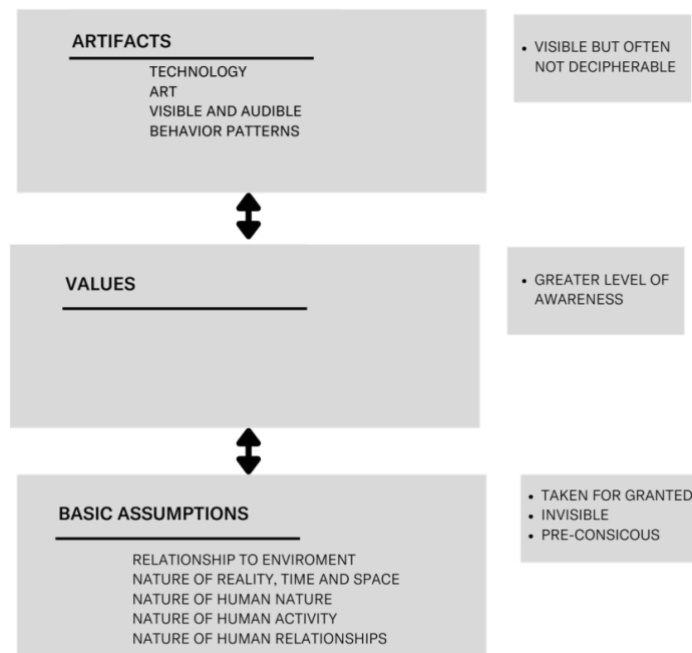


Figure 2.1: Levels of culture adapted from Schein, 1983, pp. 29-30

## 2.2 Types of Organizational Culture

Organizations function within distinct cultural frameworks, significantly influencing decision-making and daily interactions. Central to understanding processes are four main types of OC: Hierarchy (Control), Market (Compete), Clan (Collaborate), and Adhocracy (Create). Each culture type dictates how an organization pursues objectives, addresses challenges, and inspires its employees (Tharp, 2009).



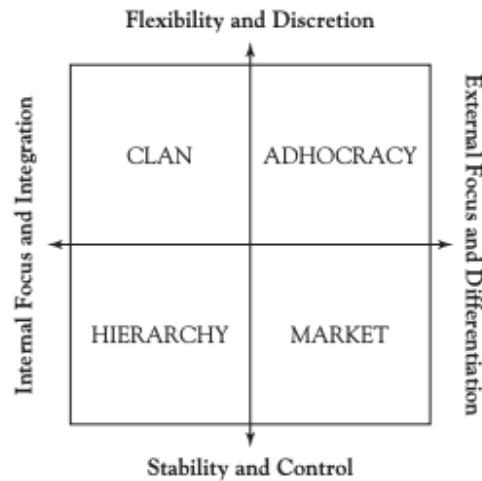


Figure 2.2: The Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p.35)

### Hierarchy (Control)

The Hierarchy or Control culture values order, clear structures, and procedures to ensure efficiency and stability (Tharp, 2009). Organizations with this culture focus on clarity in responsibilities, formal authority, and consistency in task execution. Leadership in such organizations emphasizes rules, standardization, and a clear chain of command to achieve predictability and minimize risk (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, pp.37-39).

### Market (Compete)

The Market or Compete culture is driven by results, goals, and a strong performance orientation (Tharp, 2009). This culture focuses on achieving tangible outcomes and often rewards those who contribute to the organization's success through competitive advantages and market dominance. Leadership here is goal-oriented, competitive, and focused on external achievements rather than internal processes (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, pp.39- 40).

### Clan (Collaborate)

The Clan or Collaborate culture views the organization more like a family where members value close collaboration, loyalty, and mutual understanding (Tharp, 2009). This culture emphasizes well-being of employees, teamwork, and an inclusive decision-making process. Leadership is mentor-oriented, placing great emphasis on personal development and the success of the community (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, pp.40- 43).

## Literature Review

### Adhocracy (Create)

The Adhocracy or Create culture promotes innovation, flexibility, and a willingness to experiment (Tharp, 2009). Organizations with this culture type thrive in rapidly changing environments, where they can quickly adapt to new opportunities. Leadership here is dynamic and inspiring, encouraging innovation and valuing unique solutions to complex challenges (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, pp.43- 45).

Studies indicate that OC beliefs amongst employees tends differs based on hierarchy where senior managers showing a preference for clan culture compared to their junior counterparts. People tend to favor structured and market cultures over time, but changing a culture successfully requires strong leadership and management. It's noted that organizations mix various cultural traits, like innovation and stability. This is showcasing the advantage of a multifaceted cultural strategy for enhancing organizational effectiveness (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, pp. 79-81).

## 2.3 Impact of Organizational Culture on Employee Behavior

The impact of OC extends beyond just corporate identity where it also influences employee behavior, motivation, and satisfaction. A strong and positive culture can enhance employee engagement and loyalty, leading to improved organizational performance and success. Whereas a weak and negative culture can lead to employee disengagement, decreased productivity, and even conflicts (Tsai, 2011).

This influence of OC on the workforce lays the groundwork for understanding its role in CM. OC acts as both a facilitator and a barrier to change. In organizations where the culture emphasizes adaptability and innovation, employees are generally more receptive to new ideas and change initiatives. This accentuates the necessity of comprehending and adeptly managing OC to ensure the success of change initiatives (Janićijević, 2012). Furthermore, OC greatly affects how engaged employees are and how they respond to changes, especially during events like digital transformation. Understanding this is crucial for evaluating its effect on organizational adaptability and employee actions, underscoring OC's essential role in managing change processes (Deep, 2023).

## 2.4 Understanding Change Management

Change Management is a critical field in organizational development that involves methods and manners through which a company describes and implements change within both its internal and external processes (Worren et al., 1999). This section presents CM theories to provide a comprehensive understanding of how organizations navigate through change.

CM is a strategic approach that guides organizations from their current to desired state where it focuses on adaption, control, and implementation of the change. It hinges on empirical evidence and planning, emphasizing the importance of aligning change initiatives with organizational goals and culture. An important factor for success in CM is engaging stakeholders and ensuring adaptability, which enhances organizational resilience and performance amidst change (Strouten et al., 2018). CM integrates various strategies, methodologies, and practices to navigate change complexities that aim to transit organizations towards desired states. It deals with changes arising from growth, innovation, or competitive shifts (Philip, 2021), focusing on aligning expectations, communication, and employee training (Giebe, 2019). However, its effectiveness varies in the literature.

Central to CM's success are strategies that mitigate resistance, foster smooth transitions, and involve rigorous planning for system updates and modifications. Effective leadership and clear communication are essential to synchronize organizational expectations with strategic actions, ultimately measuring CM's impact through its business results (Tamilarasu, 2012).

Research in CM demonstrates varying outcomes, underscoring its success as highly dependent on the context. Leadership, employee participation, and OC emerge as key determinants in change initiatives, yet there exists a notable gap between theoretical concepts and their application in practice. This discrepancy underlines the necessity for a more profound, context-sensitive exploration of CM, particularly in addressing OC and employee resistance (Todnem By, 2005). Moreover, critiques within the CM field frequently highlight the overlooked complexity of human behavior in organizational contexts and the persistent shortfall in comprehensive strategies to effectively tackle resistance to change (Erwin & Garman, 2010). This signals a critical area for advancing research towards developing models that merge insights from organizational psychology with CM methodologies that aim to enhance the handling of employee resistance and cultivate an environment for change.

## Literature Review

### Change Models

Several foundational models and theories underpin the field of CM where each offer different perspectives on how change should be managed. One foundational theory in CM is Kurt Lewin's (1947) Change Model, that is structured around three steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. This model emphasizes the need for preparing the organization for change, implementing the change, and then solidifying the new state as the norm (Hussain et al., 2018). Critics suggest that Lewin's framework may not fully capture the complex nature of modern organizational change, echoing broader debates about the model's relevance in the face of emergent theories that view organizations as self-organizing systems that are complex (Burnes, 2007).

Another significant theory is John Kotter's (1995) 8-Step model. Kotter's model builds on the concept of creating a sense of urgency for change, forming powerful coalitions, and developing a vision for change (Kotter, 1995). It also focuses on removing obstacles, creating short-term wins, and anchoring changes in the corporate culture (Richesin, 2011). Kotter's 8-Step model is critiqued for its sequential nature and may not align with the fluid realities of modern organizational change, pointing to the need for more adaptable CM strategies (Ramasamy & Ramaswamy, 2017).

### Complexity of change

Research reveals change is notably influenced by the organizational context with key factors like leadership style, employee participation, and OC being pivotal for change initiative success. Despite the identification of these factors there remains a significant gap between theoretical frameworks and their practical application, pointing to a need for a deeper understanding of CM that is attuned to the nuances of OC and employee resistance (Dempsey et al., 2021). Critiques within CM literature highlight a general underestimation of the complexity in human behavior in organizational contexts. While resistance to change is a well-explored subject, there exists a deficiency in comprehensive strategies to effectively tackle this issue (Musaigwa, 2023). This gap indicates an opportunity for research into models that merge insights from organizational psychology with CM practices that aims to create a supportive change environment.

## 2.5 Organizational Strategies to Adapt Change

Adapting to change strategically is crucial for organizations aiming to innovate, stay competitive, and align with their core goal. This focuses on the key strategies for understanding, preparing for, implementing, and sustaining change, highlighting how organizations navigate and thrive in the business landscape (Ketemaw & Amente, 2023).

Organizations adopt strategic frameworks and models for decision-making during change, emphasizing the importance of aligning OC with new processes (Price & Chahal, 2006). While discussions often center around the significance of strategic frameworks and models, there's a consensus that adaptation and innovation are fundamental to a company's strategic approach to change. The essence of adaptive strategies lies in navigating the evolving external landscape that's marked by consumer behavior shifts, technological progress, and regulatory updates. Organizations leading in adaptation distinguish themselves through their agility, swift decision-making, and foresight in identifying market directions which often leads to a greater likelihood of successfully managing change (Reeves & Deimler, 2011).

In the context of strategic decision-making during change the impact of OC on adaptation strategies is crucial. It influences how strategies are chosen and implemented, underscoring the need for alignment between an organization's culture and its approach to change. This alignment enhances the navigation through shifts in the external environment, such as consumer behavior and technological advancements. Integrating cultural considerations into strategic planning is therefore essential for fostering agility and successful adaptation (Janićijević, 2012).

## 2.6 Barriers to Change in Organizations

Addressing barriers to change involves overcoming personal fears, organizational challenges, and issues specific to the change itself (Rosenberg & Mosca, 2011).

Organizations encounter barriers during change efforts, notably resistance from employees. This resistance stems from fears of the unknown, anxiety about job security, and discomfort with potential changes in control dynamics. This mental model sees resistance as a natural opposition to change makes the process more difficult and masks the true dynamics involved

in efforts to change an organization (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). A major obstacle is communication breakdowns where ineffective transmission of change rationale and impacts leads to misunderstanding and increased resistance. Despite communication leadership there are challenges that arise from integrating diverse cultures and missions (Neil, 2018).

A crucial barrier is the lack of leadership support. Without a strong commitment and consistent messaging from leaders, change initiatives can be plagued by ambiguity and skepticism (Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). When changes clash with the organization's existing culture they are likely to encounter resistance as changes perceived to conflict with core values and beliefs face challenges (Steen, 2010).

Inappropriate CM planning compounds these challenges lead to unrealistic timelines, insufficient resources, and confusion over roles (Mosadeghrad & Ansarian, 2014). Furthermore, rigid organizational structures can stifle the flexibility and adaptability needed for effective change. To successfully implement change, organizations should focus on clear communication, deeply involve employees in the process, and align initiatives with the OC and values. Leadership plays a critical role in ensuring adaptability and responsiveness (Rosenberg & Mosca, 2011). Strategies to overcome obstacles also emphasize the importance of communication, employee involvement, and cultural alignment, highlighting the significance of leadership in these processes (Zogjani & Raçi, 2015).

## 2.7 Impact of Leadership on Change

Leadership plays a pivotal role in guiding organizations through the complex and often turbulent waters of CM. The effectiveness of leadership in this process largely hinges on the ability to adapt leadership styles to suit the evolving needs of the organization during the change process. Transformational leadership is known for its ability to inspire and motivate employees towards a shared vision is particularly effective in change scenarios. This leadership style has contrast with more transactional or autocratic approaches and is inspiring collective action and mobilizing employees towards shared goals (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

A key element of leadership in CM is the articulation of a clear and compelling vision for the future. Leaders who communicate this vision effectively can engage employees in the change process, aligning the workforce with the organization's goals and reducing resistance to change.

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This involves not only disseminating information but also listening and responding to employee's feedback, fostering a two-way dialogue that builds trust (Kotter, 2001).

Leaders also serve as change agents, embodying the change they wish to implement within the organization. By modeling the behaviors and attitudes necessary for change they set a powerful example for their team. This approach not only demonstrates a commitment to the change initiative but also encourages employees to adopt new behaviors and mindsets that support the transformation (Kotter, 2001).

Addressing and overcoming resistance to change is another critical area where leadership proves essential. Strategies for addressing resistance involve engaging employees in decision-making, offering support for change, and addressing concerns and fears. Such strategies emphasize the importance of understanding and managing the emotional journey of employees through the change process. Research by Seo et al. (2012) highlights the impact of employee's affective experiences on their commitment and behavioral responses to change, underscoring the role of leadership in navigating these emotional terrains (Seo et al., 2012).

Leaders play a role in creating a culture that is open to change. This involves creating an environment where adaptability, innovation, and continuous learning are valued. By influencing the OC in this way can leaders ensure that change is not only accepted but embraced as part of the organizational ethos (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

## 2.8 Employee Perspectives on Change

Employees initially respond to change with different emotions that range from enthusiasm to anxiety. These reactions are shaped by factors like the perceived impact on job security, work routines, and the work environment. Lewis (2006) suggests that the value employees place on their input and leader's communication of vision positively affects their perceptions of change success and is highlighting the intricate link between employee engagement and their initial reactions (Lewis, 2006).

Resistance to change is a common employee response that's stemming from fears of the unknown, perceived threats to job security, and discomfort with new routines. Understanding these root causes is essential for effectively addressing resistance. Fugate et al. (2008) provide

## Literature Review

a model where coping with change is seen as a process with negative appraisal leading to reduced control and escape coping that affect employee well-being and organizational commitment (Fugate et al., 2008).

The role of communication in shaping employee perspectives cannot be overstated. Transparent, timely, and clear communication helps the change process that align expectations and reduce resistance. The quality of implementation information impacts employee's resistance perceptions, indicating that how information is conveyed is just as important as the information itself (Lewis, 2006).

Involving employees in the change process can create positive attitudes and a sense of ownership. This involvement leads to increased commitment, a better understanding of the change, and valuable input from those familiar with day-to-day operations. Bryant (2006) suggests that understanding of employee voice gives insight into how employee participation influences their responses to change that potentially mitigate confusion between voice and resistance (Bryant, 2006).

Providing adequate support and training is crucial for helping employees adapt. Kensbock et al. (2017) discuss how job accommodations, while addressing performance problems related to health restrictions can introduce challenges such as interpersonal conflicts. This underscores the importance of comprehensive support systems that address not only skill gaps, but also the social and emotional aspects of change (Kensbock et al., 2017).

The existing OC plays a significant role in how change is perceived and accepted. A culture that values adaptability, learning, and innovation is more likely to foster positive attitudes towards change. However, Kensbock et al. (2017) highlights that even in supportive cultures, challenges such as discrimination and maltreatment can arise, particularly in contexts like job accommodations. Addressing these issues requires an understanding of change as a complex social process, not just as an operational or strategic one.



## 3 Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology for the thesis. Theoretical debate and argumentation rely on core basis of logic and language, enabling structured and logical discussion of ideas. Precision involves the accurate use of subject-specific terminology, clear definitions of key concepts, and clear reasoning about these concepts and their interrelations. Validity of argument focus on the use of defensible premises and ensures a logical connection between these premises and the conclusions of the argument. Completeness requires thoroughly considering and evaluating all critical factors to ensure comprehensive argumentation Grønmo (2021).

### 3.1 Research Approach

This thesis employs a qualitative method which is a way to study a particular group of people, in this case, employees at Amoi, focusing on data gathered through observation or measurement to explore questions related to this group (Grønmo, 2021). Unlike quantitative method, which quantifies the occurrence of phenomena, qualitative method aims to uncover patterns, behaviors, and underlying dynamics (Hoffmann, 2013). Hence, the qualitative approach is more fitting for the research question since this thesis seeks to comprehend how Amoi's employees perceive their OC and its impact on change.

### 3.2 Research Design and Methods

The understanding of OC's impact on change and its potential challenges can be enhanced by leveraging existing literature and the experiences of others. The thesis conducts an in-depth analysis of the case study, starting from a hermeneutic viewpoint that focuses on interpreting the significance of research outcomes and contributions from participants, primarily through interviews. Daniel Little (2008) explains that according to the hermeneutic approach that the fundamental aspect of social life is the meaning behind an action since actions form the basis of social existence. These actions have significance both to the individuals performing them and to other members of the social sphere (Little, 2008). Interpreting these meanings is crucial to understanding the data collected and the findings of the research.

Given the insights and knowledge gained from studies and experiences across various disciplines, it appears that an inductive approach that prioritizes moving from empirical data

to the development of theoretical insights is well suited for the purpose of this research. This methodological choice is justified given the focus of this research, which involves analyzing a specific phenomenon observed in OC and CM practices within the company Amoi. The inductive approach, emphasizing the progression from empirical observations to the construction of broader theoretical frameworks, aligns with the aim to develop a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interplay between OC and change initiatives (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 179-180).

While the deductive reasoning is applied to test theoretical models with empirical data, the inductive approach retained here allows for the theoretical framework to be continuously updated, considering new and emerging empirical data, and for the data collection process to be adapted based on emerging theories (Busch, 2013, p. 51).

### 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

For the purpose of this research, primary data was collected through digital semi-structured interviews. An interview guide with predetermined list of themes and questions were provided to guide and conduct each interview (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 437). The guide was given to participants beforehand to structure the conversations around OC and CM at Amoi. This procedure facilitated the process of data collection.

Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed into four detailed documents. The software NVivo 14 was used to code the statements from these transcripts, based on the questions from the interview guide used for analysis prior to deriving the results. This coding process is reflected in the results because all conclusions derive either directly or indirectly from the analyzed statements. The content remains nearly verbatim that are allowing for direct quotations. The results include direct quotes where appropriate to reinforce this approach. A thematic analysis strategy was used to look at patterns in the discussion that combines theoretical literature with empirical research findings which is aiming to ensure that the conclusion presents a nuanced selection of the most significant or relevant points concerning the research questions (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 651-652). The distribution of codes across themes is shown in Figure 3.1.

∨ ○ 1 Introduction	0	0
○ Background	4	11
○ Concept of change	4	11
○ Relation to change	4	12
∨ ○ Organizational Culture (OC)	0	0
○ OC type	3	4
○ OC definition	4	14
○ OC Influence on change	4	15
○ OC change relationship	2	2
∨ ○ Change Strategies (CS)	0	0
○ CS initiatives	4	11
○ CS approach	4	23
∨ ○ Barriers to Change (BC)	0	0
○ BC challenges	4	5
○ BC origins	3	4
○ BC overcoming	4	16
∨ ○ Leadership's Role (LR)	0	0
○ LR contribution	4	9
○ LR style	4	12
○ LR examples	4	7
∨ ○ Employee Responses (ER)	0	0
○ ER reception	4	5
○ ER resistance	3	3
○ ER handling	3	8

Figure 3.1: Distribution of codes across themes.

### 3.4 Research Quality

The research employs a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured interviews with both management and non-management employees from a SME. This method is chosen to gain detailed insights into the company's CM practices and experiences to understand how a company with around 20 employees navigates change. This approach offers depth, flexibility, and a comprehensive perspective by incorporating diverse viewpoints within the company. This context is making it ideal for exploring the intricacies of OC and CM in a specific context.

The methodology impacts the study's overall quality and are crucial for determining the trustworthiness of the results. Saunders et al. (2019) outlines some factors for research methods:

**Reliability** relates to the quality of measurement and the extent to which the collected data can be deemed reliable (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 193). The data originates directly from Amoi that is gathered during the interviews. The risk of misinterpreting responses is mitigated by asking follow-up and clarifying questions ensuring a clear understanding.

**Validity** relates to the process of analysis and the relevance of the data to the research problem. Getting a picture of the subject becomes easier when data comes from like-minded people (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 213-216).

**Transferability** refers to applying the study's findings to different contexts and provides the opportunity to judge the transferability of the study to other settings (Saunders et al., 2019, p 217). The specific context and conditions at Amoi may facilitate easier generalization to similar scenarios than from different companies. Efforts have been made to assess the study's validity and maintain reflexivity by transparently discussing the research process and interactions.

**Generalisability** refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts or settings (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 450-451). Given the qualitative nature of the interviews at Amoi, the study provides specific insights into CM and OC within a SME context. While direct generalization may be limited, the thematic analysis and identified patterns could offer valuable perspectives for similar SME facing change.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ensured in accordance with the legal protocols and requirements for handling and protecting personal data. Despite the small number of participants, care has been taken to avoid sharing information that could potentially portray employees in a negative light or lead to negative consequences.

## 4 Results

This chapter presents the results of interviews with Amoi employees, in particular with four people working in the company, filling both managerial and non-managerial roles.

### 4.1 Organizational Culture and Change at Amoi

This section describes their roles within Amoi and presents their views on change and engagement with change within the company based on the responses of the four participants.

#### Background of the Participants

Participant 1 is working with design; their perspective brings to light the creative and user-centric aspects of dealing with change. Participant 2's journey from product and service development to a broader focus offers insights into the fluid nature of roles at Amoi. They elaborate, *"When I started, I was responsible for ensuring that we were delivering nationally."*, showcasing the adaptability required in their business developer role.

Participant 3 outlines their comprehensive role from a leadership standpoint: *"I'm responsible for Amoi everything related to operations."* Similarly, Participant 4 working in the leadership emphasizes the strategic aspect of technological change.

#### Perspectives on Change

Change from the participant's perspectives varies from personal role adjustments to broader strategic shifts. Participant 1 defines change as *"Essentially about moving from one state to another, involving a series of processes."* This view encapsulates the ongoing nature of transformation within the company. The adaptability and evolving responsibilities highlighted by Participant 2 reflect the broader organizational dynamics at play, where roles are continuously reshaped to meet objectives. Participant 3 adds a dimension to this understanding by stating, *"Change from my perspective is when you aim to do something different from what you're doing today... usually it involves some new mindsets, new activities, and getting rid of old habits."* Furthermore, Participant 4 brings attention to the friction encountered in change, *"So change in an organizational setting is typically when you need to start working in a different way, that's what creates the most friction... requiring people to be more fluid."*

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### Engagement with Change

The participants reveal a culture at Amoi as generally open to change but recognizes the challenges that come with it. *“We, as a startup/scale-up, are very accustomed to change”* states Participant 2, pointing to an inherent organizational resilience. Participant 3 and Participant 4 underscore the importance of clear communication and alignment within the organization, highlighting leadership’s responsibility in managing change effectively. The stories shared by these participants illustrate not just the process of adapting to change, but also the strategic considerations and communicative efforts that underpin successful CM. Through the experiences and reflections of these four participants, a picture of Amoi's approach to OC and change emerges.

## 4.2 Analysis of Organizational Culture

The insights from the four participants shed light on the definitions, types, influence on change initiatives, and the relationship between culture and change.

### Definition of the Organizational Culture

The participants provide diverse perspectives on what constitutes Amoi's OC, emphasizing adaptability, ambition, and an egalitarian ethos. *“Small changes that have the bigger impact, and we change plans quite often based on what we see works and what doesn't.”*, participant 1 notes, underlining the culture of responsiveness and data-driven decision-making. Participant 2 adds, *“Our culture is young and modern, characterized by ambition and curiosity...We're very open-minded, welcoming new ideas and are eager to explore new possibilities.”*. This sentiment is reflected by Participant 4 who values the egalitarian aspect, *“We are very egalitarian, where everyone can suggest everything, but you have to prove the return on investment of what you want to do.”*

### Types of Organizational Culture Identified

The participants identify adhocracy and egalitarian cultures as predominant at Amoi, with a focus on innovation, flexibility, and market responsiveness. Participant 1 believes, *“We fall under adhocracy culture because we're really focused on growth.”*. Participant 3 perceives a mix, *“I think it's a mix of hierarchy and adhocracy.”*. Participant 4 reflects on the blend of cultures, *“Amoi's culture has been extremely egalitarian and flat... Adhocracy, is probably the closest one.”*

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### How Organizational Culture Influences Change Initiatives

The culture at Amoi influences its approach to management of change initiatives. Participant 1 highlights the agility in adjusting to change, *“We readjusted very quickly with the changes.”*. Participant 2 points out the challenges brought on by the frequency of changes, particularly affecting the leadership and organizational structure. Conversely, Participant 4 discusses the advantages and drawbacks of a flat structure, *“Being very flat means if you have a very loud voice, people with good ideas, but not such a loud voice often drown out. We try to handle this by having workshops etc.”*.

### Relationship Between Culture and Strategic Change

The participants agree on a correlation between Amoi's culture and its ability to undergo change. *“I think there is a direct link between the culture and the way the organization changes”* states Participant 1. This view is supported by Participant 2, *“Change doesn't feel as significant when you're used to it being a constant.”*. This relationship underscores the adaptability in Amoi's culture that are facilitating an environment where change is both anticipated and managed.

## 4.3 Change Strategies Observed

Delving into the change strategies at Amoi unveils different initiatives and approaches that underscore the company's adaptive, collaborative, and strategic approach toward change. The insights shared by the four participants clarify the specific change initiatives undertaken and the methodologies employed to plan and implement these changes.

### Specific Change Initiatives

As described by the participants the change initiatives at Amoi range from structural reorganizations to tactical shifts in operational models. Participant 1 reflects on their experience, *“I was more of a passive part...it was a little bit frustrating for a period of time because we needed to figure it out”* emphasizing the impact of change on individual team members and the importance of teamwork and communication. Participant 2 recounts the strategic decision to enhance agility, *“We realized that to scale faster, we needed more guidelines and structure”* leading to the dissolution of the product department and are highlighting the dynamic nature of organizational structuring in response to growth challenges.

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Participant 3 discusses a significant logistical shift, *“We're making a big change to our logistics model in Oslo today...we brought it in-house”* signifying a move towards greater control in operations. Participant 4 shares their effort to embed initiatives deeper within the organization, *“So every Monday we have what we call ways of working meetings”* pointing to a structured approach to continuous improvement and alignment.

### Approaches to Planning and Implementing Change

The approaches to planning and implementing change at Amoi are characterized by inclusivity, strategic clarity, and agility. Participant 1 highlights the collaborative and iterative nature of their process, *“We worked it out. We talked it through... I think everyone's opinions are heard”* showcasing the value of collective input and adaptability. Participant 2 outlines the leadership's role, *“When a decision is made to implement a change... it's generally the leadership group that takes the lead”* yet emphasizes the organization's openness to ideas from everyone, *“Any team member with a new idea or suggestion for improvement can spark a change.”*

Participant 3 elaborates on a systematic approach to change, *“We started off by defining the need for change, then we moved on to designing a new model”* demonstrating the importance of clarity, stakeholder engagement, and structured implementation in change initiatives. Participant 4 describes a mechanism for maintaining flexibility and alignment, *“Every Monday we actually have the opening availability to just reprioritize initiatives completely”* highlighting the significance of regular strategic alignment across the organization.

### Reflections on Change Strategies

The change strategies at Amoi are observed through the experiences and reflections of the participants, they reveal a multifaceted approach grounded in adaptability, inclusiveness, and strategic foresight. The initiatives range from structural reorganizations aimed at enhancing agility and responsiveness with the goal to operational changes designed to improve efficiency and control. The planning and implementation of these changes are marked by a commitment to open communication, collaborative decision-making, and regular strategic alignment. This is ensuring that the organization remains nimble and responsive to both internal needs and external market pressures.

It becomes evident that Amoi's approach to change is not just about the specific initiatives undertaken but also about the way these changes are conceived, planned, and executed. The



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company's culture of adaptability, open-mindedness, and strategic clarity plays a pivotal role in facilitating these changes.

### 4.4 Barriers to Change Implementation

In exploring the challenges associated with implementing change at Amoi, insights from the participants highlight both universal and unique obstacles. This section categorizes these challenges into their nature, origins, and the strategies employed to overcome them, providing an understanding of the complexities faced during change initiatives.

#### Main Challenges in Relation to Change

The participants identify several challenges that arise in the face of change, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of these hurdles. Participant 1 speaks to the inherent difficulty of adaptation, *“Something changes, and you have to adapt to it and the process of adapting is challenging from time to time”*. This is reflected by Participant 2, who despite an open-minded disposition, acknowledges the difficulties, *“I’m quite open-minded and positive, but even for me, change is challenging.”* Communication emerges as a critical barrier according to Participant 3, *“I think the main barrier is really communication... sometimes we fail to communicate or describe the importance of it.”* Participant 4 pinpoints autonomy within teams as a significant challenge, *“For me the biggest kind of challenge for change is making my team more autonomous.”*

Delving into the roots of these challenges provides insight into their complexity. Participant 1 attributes the challenges to the nature of change itself, *“Change generated those challenges.”* Participant 2 reflects on a fundamental human tendency, *“We’re always looking to improve, and fundamentally, as humans, we seek security and a sense of control over our lives.”* Participant 3 identifies technical communication as a stumbling block, *“maybe I’m too technical sometimes. It doesn’t make sense for the rest of the organization.”*

#### Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

The participants share various strategies for overcoming the barriers to change, highlighting the importance of communication, planning, and adaptability. Participant 1 advocates for breaking down challenges into manageable parts, *“Really dissect the challenge into little problems...and solve those in the correct priority order.”* Participant 2 emphasizes understanding the reasons behind change, *“Understanding why we’re making a change is*

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*perhaps one of the most crucial aspects.*” Participant 3 stresses the role of effective communication and documentation, *“I think adapting communication, making sure that the right people get the right information is one barrier to change...If we actually want change, we need to have it documented.”*. Participant 4 discusses a hands-on approach, *“I have to train them in being very active and pulling information out of the business side...Typically I do like side-by-side coaching.”*

### 4.5 Leadership’s Role in Facilitating Change

Based on the insight shared by the participants the role of leadership in facilitating change at Amoi is critical. Their reflections provide an understanding of how leadership contributions, styles, and specific examples significantly impact the process and outcomes of change initiatives within the organization.

#### Contributions of Leadership to the Change Process

Leadership at Amoi is characterized by a communicative, transparent, and participatory approach. Participant 1 praises the communicative style of leadership discussions, emphasizing openness yet acknowledging the leader’s responsibility in planning, *“it is a pretty open communication, but then they would take over the planning points most of the time.”*. This balance between open discussion and decisive leadership action is echoed across the narratives. Participant 2 highlights the importance of explaining the rationale behind change, *“the most important thing here is to be able to explain why we're doing the change.”* Meanwhile, Participant 3 and Participant 4 stress the importance of clarity and challenge in the change process, advocating for a leadership role that ensures the scope and purpose of change are articulated and questioned to have the understanding and alignment within the team.

#### Influence of Leadership Style on Handling Change

The influence of leadership style on handling the change process is profound. Participant 1 observes that leadership does not dominate discussions, allowing for a level playing field, *“even though leadership is present, they do not overvote anyone.”*. The style of leadership that emphasizes transparency, honesty, and exemplarity is crucial for navigating change successfully. Participant 2 notes the significance of being open about potential negatives, *“And also be open and honest about them the potential negative aspects or implications of that change.”*. Participant 3 comments on the diversity of leadership styles within Amoi where they indicate that this variety can both be positive and also complicate the process of change,

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depending on how well communication and follow-ups are managed. Participant 4's approach focuses on adaptability and leading by example, highlighting how personal openness to change can facilitate broader organizational transformation.

Specific examples illustrate the tangible impacts of leadership on change outcomes. Participant 1 contrasts their experiences with previous companies, lauding Amoi's leadership for its transparency and effective communication, *"in Amoi the leadership team tries to be as transparent as possible, and always keep everyone updated."* Participant 2 and Participant 3 point out the eagerness of leadership to embrace change and the occasional challenges with ensuring alignment and follow-through on decisions.

### 4.6 Employee Responses to Change

Investigating employee responses to change within Amoi reveals a spectrum of reactions that are ranging from acceptance and enthusiasm to resistance and skepticism. This section delves into the reception of change, observes instances of resistance, and explores the strategies employed to manage and overcome such resistance.

#### Reactions of Employees to Change

Employees at Amoi demonstrate a positive and rational reaction to change. Participant 1 describes the response as rational and business-focused when talking about a specific change initiation, *"We're obviously understood that we just have to work through it."* This is reflected by Participant 2, who acknowledges a cultural acclimation to change, *"We're quite accustomed to change, which reduces resistance to it."* Participant 3 confirms this openness, *"I think our employees are open to change"*. while Participant 4 highlights the appreciation for increased autonomy and responsibility that changes often bring, *"The team is really loving the autonomy and responsibility they get."*

#### Observations of Resistance

Instances of resistance are noted, with varying reasons attributed to such reactions. Participant 2 admits personal moments of resistance, *"all of us, including me, have definitely been resistant to change from time to time."* a sentiment that underscores the universal nature of resistance to change. Participant 3 identifies a lack of understanding or disagreement with the decisions as common reasons behind resistance, *"If we get resistance to change, it's either because the*

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*people haven't understood the importance of it or the value with it or that we actually made the wrong decision.”.*

### How Resistance to Change is Managed

Amoi employs strategies that emphasize communication, understanding, and flexibility to manage resistance. Participant 1 observes on a larger change to the organization of the company how resistance was handled when people were laid off, *“Even they did not really resist to it, they understood the reasoning behind the initiative.”*. Participant 2 speaks to the importance of maintaining a long-term perspective on change and are encouraging openness to adapt and influence change, *“And then you could follow and adapt to the change... trying to have a long-term perspective of change, I think it's super important.”*. Participant 3 highlights the crucial role of clear communication and documentation in overcoming resistance, *“you have to talk more about it...talking about it and defining the value with it even further and probably end up documenting something that you share with everyone's common understanding of why is key.”*.

## 5 Discussion

This chapter presents the discussion that contributed to answering the research questions with the goal to link the literature reviewed to the data from the results from the interviews conducted with the participants in this study.

### 5.1 Influence of Organizational Culture on Change

The interplay OC and CM serves as an understanding for how change initiatives unfold within organizations. OC is characterized by the collective values, beliefs, rituals, and norms that shape behaviors and practices within an organization (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Edgar H. Schein's model further delineates OC into three levels: artifacts, values, and basic assumptions, offering a framework for dissecting OC's complexities.

The cultural orientation towards adaptability and innovation at Amoi reflects Schein's theoretical insights. This underscores the culture's role in both anticipating and steering through change, highlighting the integral need for an understanding of OC to effectively manage organizational transformations (Vogds, 2001). Amoi's alignment with the adhocracy or create culture based on the model of Cameron and Quinn (2006) emphasizes the importance of flexibility, innovation, and an approach essential for navigating market changes.

Amoi facilitates CM with cultural perspectives that resonate with adaptability and an innovative drive resonating with Tharp (2009) as critical for organizations aiming to thrive amidst change. The findings from Amoi not only validate the theoretical propositions regarding the synergistic relationship between OC and CM but also exemplify how a culture that proactively embraces change can significantly enhance the efficacy of change initiatives.

Participants from Amoi provided insights into how the organization's culture actively fosters change, embodying Schein's (1983) model where artifacts, shared values, and basic assumptions collectively contribute to a proactive change-oriented environment. This illustrates a practical application of OC's theoretical models, showing how Amoi's culture not only supports but also actively promotes change, affirming the significance of cultural understanding in solving productivity challenges and facilitating change.

## 5.2 Evaluating Change Management Strategies

CM strategies are important in guiding organizations through transitions where the goals are to move from a current state to a desired futures (Worren et al., 1999; Philip, 2021). The literature describes CM as a multifaceted approach that encompasses adapting, controlling, and implementing change across various organizational levels as important to successful CM (Ketemaw & Amente, 2023). The alignment of these strategies with the OC and goals that is emphasizing stakeholder engagement, adaptability, and resilience (Strouten et al., 2018).

Amoi's commitment to an adaptive and innovative culture sets a significant backdrop for evaluating its CM strategies. The organization's cultural orientation towards flexibility and innovation directly influences the choice and implementation of its change strategies. Aligning this is critical and are theorized by Cameron & Quinn (2006), who suggest that the effectiveness of change strategies can benefit from being congruent with the organization's cultural dimensions.

CM strategies are not static at Amoi, they evolve in response to internal and external needs. This approach facilitates Amoi's capacity to navigate change processes, underscoring the aligning expectations, communication, and employee training highlighted by Giebe (2019). Through iterative planning and feedback loops, Amoi ensures that its CM strategies remain responsive to the dynamic business landscape, aligning with the organizational goal of sustaining competitiveness and being innovative.

Effective CM strategies at Amoi also prioritize engagement and communication, echoing the literature's emphasis on these aspects to CM success (Strouten et al., 2018; Philip, 2021). Transparent and inclusive communication practices at Amoi serve to demystify the change process, align expectations, and mitigate resistance, illustrating the practical application of theories posited by Kotter (1995) and Tamilarasu (2012) on the significance of clear communication and involvement in facilitating change.

The CM strategies at Amoi reveals an understanding of resistance to change even though the participants have not experienced significant resistance against change. Leveraging insights from organizational psychology and CM methodologies, Amoi's leadership have built a

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supportive environment that acknowledges and addresses employee concerns and fears (Erwin & Garman, 2010).

Furthermore, Amoi's CM strategies emphasize the importance of continuous improvement and development, ensuring that employees are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate change effectively. This focus on development and support is crucial in building organizational resilience and adaptability, facilitating the smooth transition of employees through change, and enhancing organizational performance in the face of change that is reflected from the perspectives of Kensbock et al. (2017).

The evaluation of CM strategies at Amoi, informed by both theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, underscores the interplay between change strategies and the OC. The organization's approach to managing change that is characterized by agility, stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to improvement is reflecting a deep alignment with its adaptive and innovative culture.

### 5.3 Addressing Barriers to Change

The literature highlights that barriers to change and resistance is a well-known challenge. Recognizing and addressing these barriers is crucial for the success of change initiatives (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Rosenberg & Mosca, 2011). Based on the participant's experience with barriers, a few emerged.

Resistance to change often stemming from fear of the unknown and loss of control, was identified as a barrier at Amoi. This resistance is not merely oppositional but indicative of deeper concerns and uncertainties among employees (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). Amoi approaches this barrier through open communication and inclusive decision-making processes, aligning with the recommendations by Kotter (1995), and emphasizing the role of transparent dialogue in reducing resistance. By actively involving employees in the change process and addressing their concerns makes Amoi cultivate a sense of ownership and commitment to the change initiatives.

Organizational structures and established procedures can also act as barriers to change, creating a sense of inertia. At Amoi, some existing processes and hierarchies initially hindered the rapid

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implementation of change strategies. To counteract this, Amoi adopted a more flexible approach to its organizational design and decision-making processes that are allowing for greater adaptability and responsiveness. This strategy is reflective of the insights offered by Janićijević (2012), who suggests that organizational flexibility is important in overcoming structural barriers to change.

Leadership emerges as an element in addressing barriers to change. Leaders at Amoi serve as change agents, embodying the attitudes and behaviors required for successful change implementation. By modeling adaptability, openness to innovation, and resilience, Amoi's leaders play a crucial role in navigating the organization through the challenges of change which are underscoring the importance of leadership as highlighted by Belias & Koustelios (2014).

Amoi also recognized the importance of providing support and resources to employees throughout the change process. They invested in initiatives from training and development programs to emotional and psychological support that prepare and empower its employees to embrace and contribute to change efforts, reflecting the strategies discussed by Kensbock et al. (2017).

In addressing the barriers to change, Amoi demonstrated the importance of a multifaceted approach that combines open communication, flexible organizational structures, alignment between culture and change initiatives, effective leadership, and comprehensive employee support.

### 5.4 The Role of Leadership in Change Processes

Leadership is acknowledged as important in change processes. The literature reflects that effective leadership can inspire, transform, and sustain organizational change efforts, making it an important element in navigating change (Kotter, 1995; Belias & Koustelios, 2014). The role of leadership at Amoi in facilitating change was highlighted as both transformative and operational, underpinning the strategies employed to address barriers and align the organization towards its designated future.



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Amoi's leadership demonstrated a profound capacity for setting a clear vision and strategic direction. By articulating a compelling future state and aligning it with the organization's values and goals, leaders at Amoi can create a sense of urgency and purpose, leading the organization towards the change objectives. Leaders at Amoi placed a strong emphasis on communication and engagement, echoing the theoretical insights of Kotter (1995) and Belias & Koustelios (2014) on the importance of communication in change processes. By having open lines of communication and actively engaging with employees, leaders can mitigate resistance, address concerns, and cultivate a culture of transparency and trust.

Leadership at Amoi also involve modeling the behaviors and attitudes conducive to change. By embodying flexibility, resilience, and a willingness to experiment, leaders set a powerful example for the rest of the organization. This aspect of leadership is reflected in the transformational leadership theory (Belias & Koustelios, 2014), emphasizes the leader's role in embodying the change they wish to see, thereby cultivating a culture that embraces change as an opportunity for growth and development.

Empowerment and enablement emerged as critical facets of leadership in the context of Amoi's change initiatives. Leaders focused on empowering employees by providing them with the resources, support, and autonomy needed to contribute effectively to change processes. This empowerment extended beyond mere task delegation, involving the cultivation of an environment where employees felt valued, supported, and capable of navigating the challenges posed by change. Such an approach aligns with the principles of transformational leadership, which seeks to elevate the capabilities and engagement of followers through inspiration, support, and empowerment (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Leaders at Amoi played a crucial role in navigating the organization through challenges and sustaining momentum in change efforts. Through strategic decision-making, resilience in the face of setbacks, and a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation, leaders ensured that the change initiatives maintained their course towards the desired outcomes. This role of leadership in sustaining change momentum highlights the dynamic and iterative nature of leading change, where leaders must continuously assess, adjust, and drive forward the change agenda.

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The exploration of leadership's role in Amoi's change processes reveals the complexity of effective leadership when it comes to CM. This is highlighting how leaders at Amoi, significantly influence the success of change initiatives through their understanding and action. This not only reaffirms theoretical principles but also offers practical insights into change leadership showing the crucial role of leaders in setting vision, empowering the organization, and guiding, supporting, and sustaining change efforts.

### 5.5 Employee Engagement and Resistance to Change

Employee engagement in change initiatives is important for the potential success or challenges of changes. The literature underscores the significance of understanding and managing employee reactions to change that range from enthusiastic support to handle resistance (Lewis, 2006; Fugate et al., 2008). Amoi's approach to create engagement and mitigating resistance provides practical insights into the application of literature in real-world contexts.

Employee engagement at Amoi was enhanced through strategies that emphasized participation and inclusion. Recognizing the value of employee input where leaders actively involve employees in the change process, from planning through implementation. This approach aligns with the findings of Bryant (2006) and suggest that employee participation not only reduces resistance but also leverages the collective insights of the workforce to improve the quality and acceptance of change initiatives. Amoi tapped into the diverse perspectives and expertise of its employees that is creating a sense of ownership and commitment to the change efforts.

Resistance to change is a natural response to perceived threats or uncertainties and was acknowledged and addressed at Amoi. Leaders try to understand the root causes of resistance, whether fear of the unknown, concerns about job security, or discomfort with new routines. This empathetic approach is supported by the model proposed by Fugate et al. (2008), emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and addressing the emotional and psychological aspects of change resistance. By engaging in open dialogues and providing reassurance and support, Amoi aimed to alleviate concerns and build trust in the change process.

Communication emerged as a tool for both enhancing engagement and managing resistance at Amoi. Leaders prioritized transparent, timely, and clear communication about the reasons for change, the expected outcomes, and the impacts on employees. Lewis (2006) highlights the

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impact of communication on employee's perceptions of change, suggesting that information can reduce resistance and foster positive attitudes towards change. Amoi's focus on communication served to demystify the change process, align expectations, and cultivate a supportive atmosphere for change.

Recognizing the challenges that change can pose to employee's do that leaders at Amoi try to have an inclusive process to include the employees and provide the necessary resource and support. This commitment to employee development reflects the strategies discussed by Kensbock et al. (2017), underscoring the importance of providing adequate resources and support to facilitate the transition through change.

Amoi's strategies for engaging employees and managing resistance are underpinned by a broader effort to a culture of adaptability and continuous improvement. Amoi aims to create an environment where change is viewed as an opportunity for growth and development, rather than a threat. This cultural shift is essential for sustaining engagement and minimizing resistance over the long term, aligning with the perspectives of Janićijević (2012) on the role of OC in facilitating change.

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

This concluding chapter summarizes the main findings, presents the limitations of the research, and provides suggestions for future research, as well as a series of useful practical recommendations for Amoi managers and employees.

### 6.1 Summary

This thesis presents a qualitative study into the interplay between OC and change CM strategies with the focus on the case study of Amoi. Through detailed analysis and synthesis of academic literature and practical insights, this study examines the impact of OC on the adoption of CM strategies, focusing on how strategic change initiatives affect cultural values, leadership behaviors, and the impact of employee resistance. To ground the theoretical exploration in real-world experiences, the research methodology included conducting four semi-structured interviews with persons working at Amoi, providing a practical understanding of the organization's approach to change.

The central research questions guiding this thesis were: (Q1) How do strategic change initiatives influence the cultural values and leadership behaviors, and why? And (Q2) How does resistance to change from employees impact strategic change initiatives? The aim was to explore the complex dynamics when organizations undertake change initiatives, with a particular focus on the role of OC in facilitating or impeding these efforts.

Amoi's OC that is characterized by adaptability, innovation, and a strong emphasis on collaboration, emerged as a critical factor in both supporting and challenging the change processes. The interviews revealed that while OC at Amoi significantly contributes to a flexible and dynamic approach to change, it also presents challenges that require careful navigation. Leadership's role in effectively managing change, encourage employee engagement, and addressing resistance was underscored for successful implementation of CM strategies.

The findings based on the interviews, underscore the complexity of aligning CM strategies with OC. Leadership within Amoi was identified as an element in this alignment where communication, engagement, and the ability to model desired behaviors were leadership qualities that facilitate change. Additionally, the findings highlighted the importance of

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employee engagement in the change process, noting that resistance to change can be a barrier, but can be mitigated through inclusive and transparent communication strategies and by fostering a culture of adaptability and continuous improvement.

By integrating theoretical frameworks with insights derived from the interviews at Amoi, this thesis contributes to an understanding of the nuanced relationship between OC and CM. It highlights the role of leadership and employee engagement in navigating the complexities of OC and offers a comprehensive perspective on the strategies that can enhance the success of change initiatives. The case of Amoi serves as a practical example of how organizations in a specific context such as Amoi can effectively manage change by leveraging their culture and addressing potential challenges through strategic leadership and employee involvement.

## Practical Recommendations

Based on the insights from Amoi's case study and discussion, the following recommendations are proposed to organizations within a similar context such as Amoi undergoing strategic change initiatives, with a focus on cultural values, leadership behavior, and managing employee resistance:

**Agility and Innovation:** Considering Amoi's adaptive and innovative culture, it's recommended that such organizations ensure their CM strategies are in harmony with OC. This alignment is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of change initiatives that are leveraging for adaptability and responsiveness to change (Worren et al., 1999; Philip, 2021).

**Leaders as Change Agents:** Leaders should embody the change they wish to see, serving as role models for adaptability, innovation, and resilience. With their role in setting a clear vision, engaging employees, and creating a supportive environment (Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Kotter, 1995).

**Culture of Open Communication and Inclusivity:** Communication and inclusive decision-making processes are important in avoiding resistance to change. Organizations should prioritize transparent, timely, and clear communication practices to discover the change process, align expectations, and create a supportive culture for change (Kotter, 1995; Tamilarasu, 2012).

**Address Resistance:** Recognize and address resistance to change by understanding the root causes and actively involve employees in the change process. Strategies should focus on open communication, reassurance, and support to build trust and a sense of ownership among employees (Dent & Goldberg, 1999).

**Organizational Flexibility to Overcome Barriers:** Adapt organizational structures and decision-making processes to enhance adaptability and responsiveness. A flexible approach to this can help overcoming barriers to change (Janićijević, 2012).

**Employee Development and Support:** Commit to improvement and development to ensure employees are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for navigating changes (Kensbock et al., 2017).

## 6.2 Limitations

This study, focused on the case of AMOI, faces limitations inherent in single-case design where only four persons were interviewed and qualitative research, primarily regarding generalizability and the potential for subjective interpretation (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 450-451). Despite efforts to ensure clarity and consistency in the treatment of key concepts, the reliance on semi-structured interviews introduces a degree of subjectivity that could influence findings. OC and CM are dynamic and complex topics meaning that the vast and expanding body of research on these fields can cause that some relevant theories or studies might not be included, and the scope might have been too big in the initial phase. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for situating the study within the broader discourse on OC and change. This understanding of the limitations can provide a clearer scope for future research.

## 6.3 Further Research Perspectives

This study opens avenues for further research in several areas. Future studies could explore the long-term impacts of change initiatives on OC and performance. Additionally, comparative studies across different industries or organizational sizes could provide broader insights into the universality or specificity of the findings presented here. Lastly, the role of digital technologies in facilitating or hindering change within organizations presents a rich field for exploration (Attaran et al., 2019), particularly in the context of digital transformation strategies.

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# Appendix A

## A Interview Guide

Interview guide - Organizational culture and change: Corporate challenges in implementing change - The case of AMOI

Estimated time: 30min-35min

### Intro (1 min)

- Intervjuer explains what the interview will be used for
- NTNU Bachelor thesis in Economics and Administration
- Anonymous answer in the thesis
  - Obs! Consent form.
- Inform about the task and problem.
- *Use examples.*

### Part 1: Introduction (3 minutes)

1. **Background:** Could you provide a brief description of your role and experience in the organization?
2. **Concept of change:** Could you briefly give your definition on change, what is it and what does change involve?
3. **Relation to change:** If you have been personally involved in change processes in Amoi could you give a brief description of what types of changes?

### Part 2: Organizational Culture (5 minutes)

*Definition of organizational culture: Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape the behavior and interactions of people that work within an organization (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985).*

1. *Hierarchy Culture: Values order, clear structures, and procedures to ensure efficiency and stability.*
  2. *Market Culture: Driven by results, goals, and a strong performance orientation.*
  3. *Clan Culture: Views the organization more like a family, where members value close collaboration, loyalty, and mutual understanding.*
  4. *Adhocracy Culture: Promotes innovation, flexibility, and a willingness to experiment (Tharp, 2009).*
4. **Definition:** How would you define the organization's culture in Amoi?
  5. **Type:** What type of organizational culture do you believe your organization have, and why?
  6. **Influence:** In what ways do you think the culture has influenced change initiatives?

7. **Links:** How does your organization's culture affect change initiatives, and in what ways do you see change shaping or being shaped by this culture?

### **Part 3: Change Strategies (6 minutes)**

8. **Initiatives:** Can you describe a specific change initiative you have been part of recently or during your time in the organization and the purpose of that initiative?
9. **Approach:** How are change initiatives usually planned and implemented and by whom?

### **Part 4: Barriers to Change (6 minutes)**

10. **Challenges:** What are the main challenges you have experienced in relation to change and what generated those challenges?
11. **Overcoming Challenges:** How are the change-related challenges usually addressed or handled, and by whom? Are they successfully tackled?

### **Part 5: Leadership's Role (5 minutes)**

12. **Contribution:** How does leadership meaning the people or person in charge of the change project influence the process?
13. **Leadership style:** Do you think leadership style plays a role in handling the change process? Why?
14. **Examples:** Can you provide examples of how the leadership style has impacted the outcomes of changes?

### **Part 6: Employee Responses to Change (5 minutes)**

15. **Reception:** How have employees generally reacted to change?
16. **Resistance:** Have you observed any resistance to changes among employees? If so, what do you think are the reasons?
17. **Handling:** How are resistance to change usually handled?

### **Conclusion (1 minute)**

- **Additional Information:** Is there anything else you would like to add that could provide deeper insight into organizational culture or change processes?

