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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

AN APPLICATION OF LEWIN IN A TRANS-PANDEMIC WORLD: A NARRATIVE
INQUIRY IN A CASE STUDY WITH A NEW SUGGESTED MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Chandler Barksdale Ewell Caldwell

April, 2023

James Rocco DellaNeve, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation is written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Doctors James Rocco DellaNeve, Judge John Tobin, Paul Sparks and University of the Pacific Regent, Scott Liggett, who assisted me in dissertation success!

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Thank you to my many supporters.

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ABSTRACT

Change is constant in today's post-pandemic world. This is truly evident in online business success with entrepreneurs that defy past limitations and rely on future vision. This study purposely attempts to identify and qualify the impact of stylized change focused leadership in response to workplace changes during the variant challenges of the corona virus pandemic. The relevancy of Lewin's organizational change model in today's new normal provides the foundation for this research. Data were gathered through interview with a purposive sample of 12 managers executives and team members from a public sector organization. Evolving through an iterative process of evaluation and conscious of risk bias in measurement, triangulation methods included a literature review and intensive analyses off the interview responses, participation notes and company records. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to find information supporting participants' perceptions. The themes were derived from coding and the number of references coded during the data analysis. Six themes emerged representing leaders' action for implementation of corporate change strategies. The themes have been divided into three catagories: defrost former learning, movement to change and solidification of new directions in corporate change. Results can help global organization leadership navigate ongoing change in a volatile world.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In a business environment change is not always welcomed, but it is an inevitable and large undertaking (Raelin, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has generated a massive and sudden change (Nayak et al., 2021; Wang, 2020). This change is witnessed, notably, in the daily operation of companies (Prin & Bartels, 2020). The transforming work market is seen as a production of filmic presentation, a drama currently incorporating technology, Internet, and the process of tele-networking to transport information and allowing employees to work almost anytime and anywhere (Müller & Niessen, 2019). This change has an impact not only on how an organization operates but also on the relationships between employees and employers. Resolutely, in this new work environment, with challenges, opportunities, and flexible work arrangements, leadership practices face myriads of changes and adaptations (Baska, 2020). Lifelong strategies for change face an escalation of time and resources that is critical to foster development of problem-solving skills. These skills are with multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary research and training required to take on complex global challenges to change (Baroki et al., 2021). The COVID-19 variant omicron has affected supply chain, labor shortages, finances, and government rulings (Mullin et al., 2021). This evolution of the SARS-CoV2 coronavirus emerged in November 2021 and is considered more contagious than the delta variant, according to medical officials at the Centers for Disease Control (Mullin et al., 2021; Walensky et al., 2021)

The narrative of the new normal in the trans-pandemic world is a story evoking apocryphal meaning. This meaning presents a millennial transcendence reminiscent of the Titans of ancient literature whose battles against unknown change fought against nature and the physics of matter and energy (Sailors, 2007). These mythological leaders saw change as a necessity, with

the environment presenting challenges and the physical laws of nature as their theories of change.

Fast-forward to the Field Theory of environmental change of Kurt Lewin, physicist, and social scientist. His is one of the most relevant change management models in history: the Lewin three-stage model of change (Burnes, 2020). Lewin's theory implies that individuals and groups are influenced by constraining forces that alter the status quo. Lewin's change model is a framework based on three distinct stages of change (unfreeze the status quo, change, and freeze) allowing the organization to plan and implement the required change.

This research saw change in social or the business habitats as the responses to environmental adjustments with human behavioral changes (Lewin, 1947a). In titan mythology a change is a transformation to control their environment during a challenging period (Waterfield, 2004). Lewin saw change as a response to behavioral and cultural adjustments in social structures and business interactions (Lewin, 1948). Lewin was primarily focused on resolution of social conflict through behavioral change, particularly in organizations positioned in the global society (Burke, 2008; Burnes, 2004).

Some contemporary researchers believe that Lewin is outdated and does not address current business priorities. Nothing is farther from the truth, according to other researchers who believe that the complexities of crisis business situations that are induced by the pandemic are more readily addressed by the directness and simplicity of a three-step approach to change management (Harrison et al., 2021; Hussain et al., 2016; Schein, 1999). One of Lewin's most ardent supporters was Edgar Schein. Schein (1999), a respected expert in the field of organizational culture said, "In most organizational change efforts, it is much easier to draw on the strengths of the culture, than to overcome the constraints by changing the culture" (p. 55).

Schein's (1999) theory presents "whether at the individual or group level [change is a] profound psychological dynamic process [involving] painful unlearning, difficult relearning as an individual cognitively attempts to restructure thoughts, feelings, and attitudes" (p. 59). Schein built on the behavioral details of Lewin, adding supportive empirical evidence to Lewin's theory (Burke, 2008).

This paper uses the Lewin model as a foundation and its strength in theory supportive of a collaborative approach combining theories and approaches to change (Lewin, 1997). Lewin felt that for change to influence culture, "It (change) has to penetrate all aspects of an individual's, organization's, or a nation's life" (Lewin, 1943, p. 46). This current study follows the three-step guidelines and Lewin as the founding father of organizational management for the following reasons:

1. Going to the source of organizational management, Lewin utilized the simplicity of three-steps to support changes that are long term and easily addressable to stakeholders and investors (Lewin Step 1; Hussain et al., 2016).
2. The movement phase of change offers the *unfreeze* state that gives companies a change to deliberate, define, and demarcate change (Lewin Step 2; Harrison et al., 2021).
3. Establishing a new status quo of change takes time and the three-steps can be repeated as environmental company situations progress in crisis situations such as the pandemic and other large focus issues (Lewin Step 3; Kanter et al., 1992).

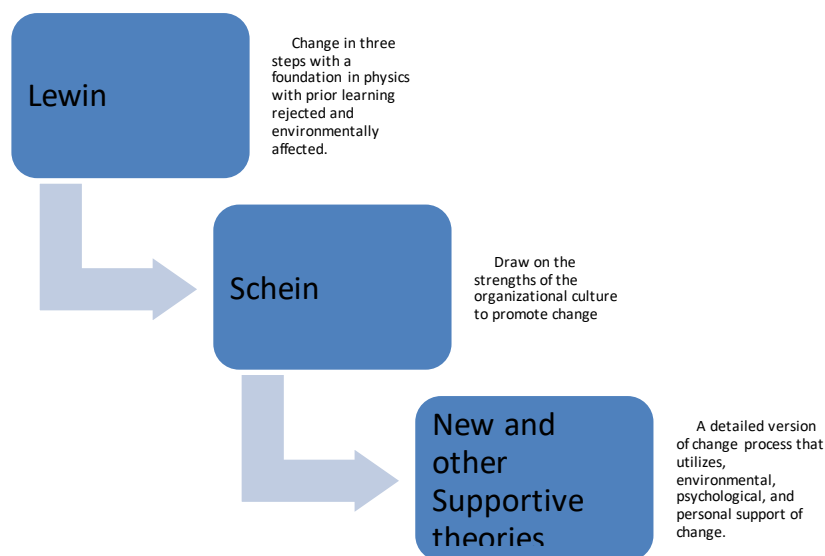
This current research posits that Lewin's change management approach is still valid and that the field theory analysis can effectively enable businesses to plan, design, and implement change successfully. Lewin's force field analysis states that to access change, all the restraining

and driving forces from the environment must undergo assessment (Harrison et al., 2021; Schein, 1999). After this assessment, leadership must determine whether the driving forces are more powerful than the restraining forces to change (Kanter et al., 1992). It is in this first step of Lewin's change in three steps that change can be designed and implemented.

Lewin formed a trajectory to post pandemic change strategies resolved and supported by this research and potential new theories in development stages as a proprietary change theory founded in Lewin. The modifications for future study will address issues by researchers who challenge the viability of Lewin's model in these areas:

- Simplicity in crisis business environments.
- Their perceived abstraction to make a fundamental change in today's corporate environment.
- Some studies believe Lewin to be static and limiting in the presentation of change.

Resolutely, this writer posits that Lewin founded the organizational change theory process, Schein offered a more detailed version of Lewin's change theory, and other previous scholarly works molded Lewin as a premise for a model of change for the trans-pandemic era and beyond exemplified in Figure 1 based on data responses of study.

Figure 1*Theory Transitions for the New Normal***Culture, Trans-Pandemic, Movement, Change, Transportation**

The year 2022 began with the pandemic in epidemic and transitory chaos with the elusive omicron variant. According to media reports, the variant has caused absenteeism in corporate America, prompting economists to downgrade U.S. and global economic growth (Torres et al., 2021).

Though the pandemic has disrupted the economy, organizational change movement is creating a path toward recovery. Organizational life is in process when leadership is at the steering wheel (Burke, 2008). Change, as driven by a foundation in Lewin's model, is on a highway of technology, economic speed, and decreasing forces changing the former status quo to a new quasi equilibrium of movement (Hussain et al., 2016; Schein, 1999). American culture is on the road to change and just as Henry Ford found at the turn of the century, the automobile is at the forefront of change. The vehicle is a symbol of change movement and new technology as Americans seek freedom from pandemic restrictions and take to a road of change through their

cars. The automobile, with new technology of electric vehicles' enhanced lifestyle and performance with social esthetics has a new presence in social media. Vehicle visionaries have saturated social media with their products, particularly YouTube, with stylistic presentations on electric vehicles, vehicle deconstruction and analysis, and road trips, testing the new driving product.

One such visionary is entrepreneur Sandy Munro and his transportation/product brand deconstruction to evaluate product efficiency with his trademark teardowns. He breaks down the car to determine its viability in the automobile market. These teardowns, as deconstruction, literally take the car apart. His success is like a puzzle solved by taking a car apart with analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. This provides companies and the consumer with valuable information concerning the automotive product.

He takes driving to a lifestyle luxury living experience evaluating electric vehicles and presenting a restoration technology of product redesign and product change implementation. His business savvy is entrepreneurial with a focus on change and organizational leadership. He uses social media to present his stratagems for corporate success. Sandy Munro is at the forefront of the social media change movement pioneering with his exploitation of new technologies in the fast-moving corporate world.

In the current trans-pandemic world, in organizations, there is a needed disruption of an existing culture, a new focus on leadership and behavioral change acknowledged by all involved. This paper looks at organizational change and leadership strategies in the face of trans-pandemic adaptations to a global paradigm shift. To support the validity of Lewin's change model in post pandemic business applications, we may need to propose updating the foundational Lewin action change for organizational leadership applications. Just as Lewin used physics as a basis for his

Field theory to understand behavior within a group and the changes occurring from forces and quasi stationary equilibrium; so too does this current study pay an homage to the physical forces at play in the changing world today (Burnes, 2020).

Other theorists have built on the strengths of Lewin's Field theory. Every generation a revitalization in Lewin's work seems to resurrect as a result of catastrophic world events. In the 1990s research was based on Lewin's change theories by Argyris (1992), Back (1992), and Kippenberger (1998). These theorists looked at complex theories of change in response to chaos and catastrophe in the system evoked by forces impinging on groups or individuals in organizations. Fast-forward to 2022 and this current study amid the trans-pandemic chaos, the times are changing and as Schein (1996) commented, it was a view that "one cannot understand an organization without trying to change it" (p.64).

Beyond Lewin

This study presents future research scrutiny with a foundational nod to Lewin's Field and Action theories. This takes Lewin's change to the next level of physics-based penetration through change processing that can set an order of generated rules (Macintosh & Maclean, 2001). This is what Smith (2001) posited as organizations attempt to prosper during chaotic trans pandemic times. This writer supports that Lewin was far from viewing social or organizational groups as fixed and stable and change as linear, as his critics try to prove. I contend that Lewin argued that social settings are in a state of constant change influenced by the environment (Lewin, 1947b). He saw change as an iterative learning process, where stability was quasi stationary, fluid and based on physics, given complex forces involved in outcomes that emerge on a trial-and-error basis (Burnes & Bernard, 2004; Macintosh & Maclean, 2001). New potential study with its foundation in Lewin's Field theory is the evolutionary response and the relabeling

of Lewin's existing perspective on change in times of complexity (Burnes, 2004). Without the foundation of Lewin's theories, we would need to rewrite 70 years of literature on change. This would have the detrimental effect of seriously undermining the foundations on which the organization development movement is built (Burnes, 2017).

This current study identifies a generational resurgence of Lewin-inspired thought to address the forces of changing pandemic pandemonium influenced businesses and the leadership qualities needed to inspire, evoke, and support the changing work environment.

Problem Statement

In 2022, pandemic pandemonium caused a resurgence of professional challenges in corporate and global business (McKinsey and Company, 2022). It was not known how management in different work situations would perceive and address the changes that were ahead. This is a large undertaking that requires leadership accommodation to technology, technique in management, and timing in delivery of business product and work interactions (Newman et al., 2022). Research during the processing of pandemic and social business accommodation requires vigilance and constant updating. This current study suggests leadership strategies to prevent corporate stagnation during times of uncertainty. At question here is how companies can draw on a framework of change and face new challenges with opportunities that secure corporate success. Supporting theories with change for this problematic solution include application of a Lewin change focus, learning ecosystem support, and simulation theories (Burnes, 2017). Each of these theories are based in physics.

The global economy is undergoing a major paradigm shift, a transition that is changing the strategies of organizations to build new interactions with clients and stronger relationships to

stakeholders. New technologies are changing organizations strategies that will require a new level of leadership and organizational culture development (Schein, 1983).

The COVID-19 pandemic opened a wide gap of knowledge. This is in developing and defining work force changes with social challenges in personal interactions and delivery of product (Cameron, 2020). While earlier studies scrutinized the readiness of leaders to guide change and constituents to follow this path of organizational adjustment, they did not focus on issues like pandemic recovery (McKinsey and Company, 2022).

The focus of analysis is based on a new understanding of how leadership perceives change. Current research is lacking in this area (Baroki et al., 2021). Therefore, the current study seeks to fill this gap in literature.

The return to a new normal is redefining leadership with the differing methods of business culture development and human interactions. Leadership has new influences on the success of this changing business culture and is a defining variable in consumer, stakeholder, and employee satisfaction (Da Silva & Borsato, 2017). Based on the literature suggestions for this current research implementation fill the need for additional information on the factors, types, and resistance to change in organizations. Prior literature looked at the employee's readiness for change based on environmental factors but failed to address the leadership understanding of change.

Purpose of the Study

This study purposely attempts to identify and qualify the impact of stylized change-focused leadership in response to workplace changes during the variant challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. As a qualitative case study, the target constituents are 14 leadership and managers at Munro & Associates, Inc. It explores greater levels of innovation in new product

design and focuses on change in business structure with a look at leadership through the lens of Sandy Munro as a case study. Munro is a self-made American businessman known for his lean design concepts of assisting corporate management teams in their breakthroughs in new product innovations across multiple industries (Munro & Associates, n.d.). These corporate manufacturing industries include aerospace, defense, automotive, and medical company support.

There is a focus on his positioning among other entrepreneurs moving through change in response to the pandemic economic recovery, employee satisfaction, and business success. Under scrutiny is the use of social media, particularly YouTube and its impact on consumer penetration, lifestyle change, and organizational corporate sales and ROI.

Change in a trans-pandemic world presents modifications to previous change theory applications. The present work looks at the gap in knowledge as to whether leadership style in work situations can be effective in organization change implementation.

The study examined change in the context of Lewin's model, change in three steps:

1. Change begins with prior learning rejected and the beginning of replacement of this new thought and behaviors (Lewin step 1; Schein, 1999).
2. Change in organizational behaviors moves forward with social learning and scanning of environmental needs (Lewin step 2; Schein, 1999).
3. Freezing new behavioral change becomes the new organizational norm. This step embraces the new normal of the environment (Lewin step 3; Schein, 1999).

Change in the organizational culture has many variables that influence worker values, productivity, and their response to leadership style (Bass et al., 2003). This study investigated organizational change with a change in a three-step approach to internal corporate change resolution. The pandemic recovery phase in 2021 and moving into 2022 and beyond, presents an

opportunity to look at the global response to the malady with ambitious tasks needing flexibility and new thought on how to implement change processes. To survive, organizations need to reconfigure themselves to address work issues, new work experimentation, and technological pursuits (Anderson et al., 2021).

To address the new normal this study moves from the linear foundations of Lewin with change theories modeled on three steps: accepting need for change, transition to change, and freezing new thought (Burke & Litman, 1992). The post pandemic pandemonium has set the stage for discontinuous, disruptive, and emerging patterns of change in organizations (Anderson et al., 2021) This paper presents a case study of an organizational change activity in the context of this new normal of working conditions. Founded on Lewin's Change model, Action research and other supportive theoretical data, this researcher attempts to build on Lewin's foundation of change implementation, using action research based on case study, observation, interviews, and documented analysis (Burnes, 2004).

Complexity theories are being used by organization theorists and practitioners as a means of understanding and changing organizations (Gilchrist, 2000). Complexity theory provides new insights into human behavior in social systems on the edge of chaos and change by demonstrating a disequilibrium necessary for growth and change. Complexity theories are based in the natural sciences and have a focus in physics. As Lewin's work was based in physics, so applicable is the complexity theory in support of this study with physical science underpinning (Burnes, 2020).

This current study responds to changes in business with respect to omicron and pandemic threat, using analysis of strategic management/leadership planning in a case study. This process is applicable to the following steps:

- Foundational Lewin Theory of Change priorities.
- Action research inspired by complexity theory.
- Institution of the proprietary Future Theory of Change (in development) supported by this work and developed by this writer to expound on the work of Lewin and suited to changes in the current pandemic work situation.

At crisis times during this COVID-19 outbreak, it is necessary for organizations to accept that change is required to promote future business success. Past research supports Lewin's foundational focus on change as a benchmark in change theory that makes change dynamics understandable and manageable (Burnes, 2020; Hussain et al., 2016; Schein, 1996). In the spirit of prior research, the current study builds on Lewin's change model, moves through the chaos of pandemic challenges with complexities theory to transition through environmental change in a case study.

Research Questions

This study proposal created qualitative data points to address the following research questions:

1. How does leadership plan for change in the organization amid the pandemic-inspired new normal?
2. How does leadership move the organization toward change?
3. How does leadership sustain change within the organization?

The theoretical framework was informed by a convergent qualitative approach to measure the relationships among an existence of a strong worker culture, the effect of leadership influence, and resulting business change, situated in hybrid or media-driven work environments. Research questions are explored using qualitative methods. Databases provided data from the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and COVID-19 policy records on the Internet.

Concurrently, the effect of leadership was explored using a survey with representative groups from the case study organization.

This study utilizes qualitative data to encourage impartiality in addressing the research problem. Analyses evaluates and recognizes theory derived from mirroring trends in worker data and statistical numerations of business outcomes in online and work situations (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to determine, identify, and evaluate leadership prowess in organizational change implementation, movement, and sustenance. This change process under scrutiny is based on change incurred by post pandemic situations in the workplace. Conceptual Theoretical Focus

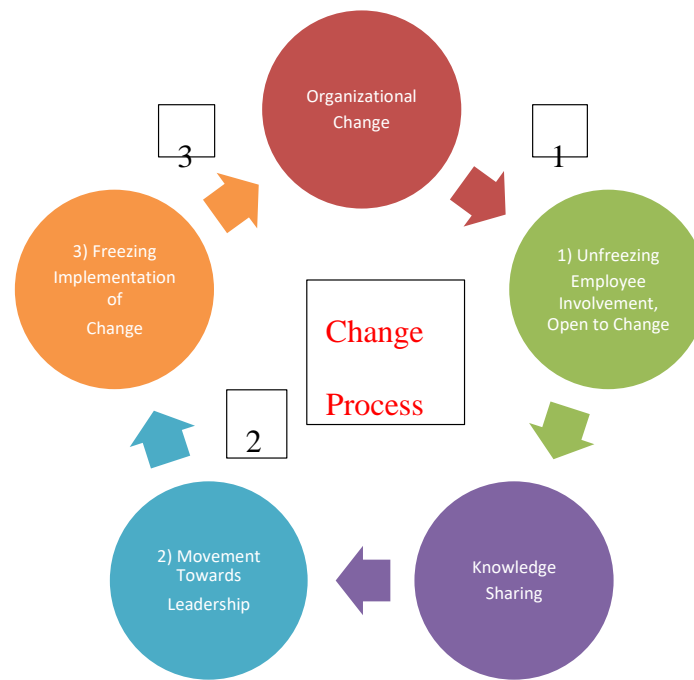
Trans-pandemic changes, whether government directed, or individual business culture influenced, are highly complex reactions based on individual social conditioning. Established conceptual frameworks assisted in defining change within the individual worker directed toward successful corporate change. The Lewin concepts of Action and Field theories demonstrated with his change model have their basis in physics. This natural science–inspired theory formed a foundation of change inspired by different objectives.

In classical rhetoric, there are common topics used to unify and support arguments for change. In the drama of change management, art re-creates life. Enter Lewin, the founding father of change management and his historic change in three steps (CATS). This paradigm for change is manifest, as with good drama, in three acts: unfreeze-movement-restore. Act 1 defrosts old behavior (the vision), fractally moving to Act 2 and a transitional level of behavior and learning with movement (scanning environments). Act 3 freezes the activity at a new level of behavior,

exhibiting closure or a climax of achievement institutionalizing change (Schein, 1999). Figure 2 presents the change process in this study.

Figure 2

Proprietary Research for this Current Study and Change Process



Note. Original figure from collective study data.

In 2021, after forensic scrutiny in this study, this current change paradigm restored the original concept by Lewin, who never used the word refreeze (Cummings et al., 2016). The Lewin model suggested that change agents should consider the drama of the change as internal and external based on environmental scans.

1. Unfreeze and liquefying preconceived blocks to change.
2. The movement and learning to change.
3. Finally freezing the liquid assets into a solid useful organization change.

The restoration of the change model Lewin supported can support newer approaches to change based on the understanding of how he perceived stability and change. He stated: “One

should view the present situation, the status quo, as being maintained by certain conditions or forces. Habits do not occur in empty space....it is the constancy of change” (Lewin, 1943, p. 172).

This statement attests to Lewin’s understanding of the limits of stability in change as well as his critics. He perceived change as fluid, with stability as quasi stationary and pointing to a predictability that was based on trial-and-error outcomes. This current study using Lewin’s change theory as a foundation to a new concept of change to address the trans-pandemic era, presents other future theories of change. This theory uses the natural science of physics and complexity theories used by organizational theorists and practitioners as a way of understanding and changing organizations (Gilchrist, 2000; Kippenberger, 1998; Macintosh & Maclean, 2001).

Definitions of Terms

The focus of this research study is how leadership understands and constituents follow readiness for organizational change. This study was seen through the lens of leadership and management as they understand the need for organizational change and its implementation, all with a foundation in Lewin’s change in three steps. Terms used in this project provide clarification of the topic, population, instrumentation, and data analysis.

- *Single case study*: A process or record of research in which detailed consideration is given to the development of a particular person, group, or situation within a period and one organization.
- *Change readiness*: A complete strategic plan in process at an organization based on the content, context and process, and the working constituents involved in the change (Holt et al., 2007)

- *Constituents/Employees*: Individuals with assumptions, ethics, and work priorities in an organization setting (Lewin, 1947b).
- *Organizational change*: This is the process of movement in an organization from the present to a desired future success positioning.
- *Organizational readiness*: This is the process of change preparation, designed by leadership and is the foundation for any successful change implementation in an organization.
- *Phenomena*: In a scientific context, this is something that is observed to occur or exist (Donthu & Guftasson, 2020). This concept transfers to business as behavior manifested in the work environment. In this single case study, the case studied was the phenomenon of this research.
- *Transformational leadership*: This method of leadership is a mutually beneficial relationship between the leader and the follower (Burnes et al., 2016; Burns, 1978). It is considered motivational and inspirational. In this case study, the leaders work with their constituents and followers to identify needed change and collaboratively resolve the problem or product issues.

Significance of the Study

This present study addresses the gap in knowledge that leadership during times of social and resolute corporate change is a strong directive of organizational change. The study (a) examines the way leadership encourages worker's support of change within an organization, (b) how change culture is moved by leadership to encourage acceptance of change by workers, and (c) how strong leadership with new technologies effect and sustain change within an organization.

Effective leadership, whether technology inspired or an office hybrid style of mentorship, influences the development and establishment of methodologies and mechanisms for cultural development (Avolio & Bass, 1995). There are many intervening variables that influence leadership stability and follower's responses. With the current global transition to a new normal, post-COVID-19 research is necessary to assess the variables influencing worker, leadership, and corporate satisfaction and success. Further study of the causal relationship between change and development of strong business culture can assist in creating new corporate policies and individual behavioral change. Because of the absence of research, this study aims to measure the effects of effective leadership on organizational change in a trans-pandemic work culture. This study takes scholarly probing a step further by utilization of the Lewin Action and Field theories and using this foundation to inform a new theory of change for corporate stability to transverse the trans-pandemic return to work.

The theoretical framework was informed by a qualitative approach to measure the relationships among an existence of a strong worker culture, the effect of leadership influence, and resulting business change situated in hybrid work environments. Research questions are explored using qualitative data.

Theory-Driven Thought and Analysis Plan Changes

When a researcher builds a dissertation around a theoretical framework, the pursuit of knowledge, in a metaphysical sense, is ever changing, as the study looks at the observed subject, the phenomena, and the observer's reaction to data analysis (Chessen, 2022). In this current study, change is not only the focus of study, but it is the process of planning research and analysis and its restructuring based on directed research. Cooke (1999) posited the theoretical framework of a study has implications for every decision made in the research process. Under

the theoretical framework of change in this study, other theories, constructs, concepts, and tenets are held up for scrutiny and adjustment (Bargal, 2006; Cooke, 1999).

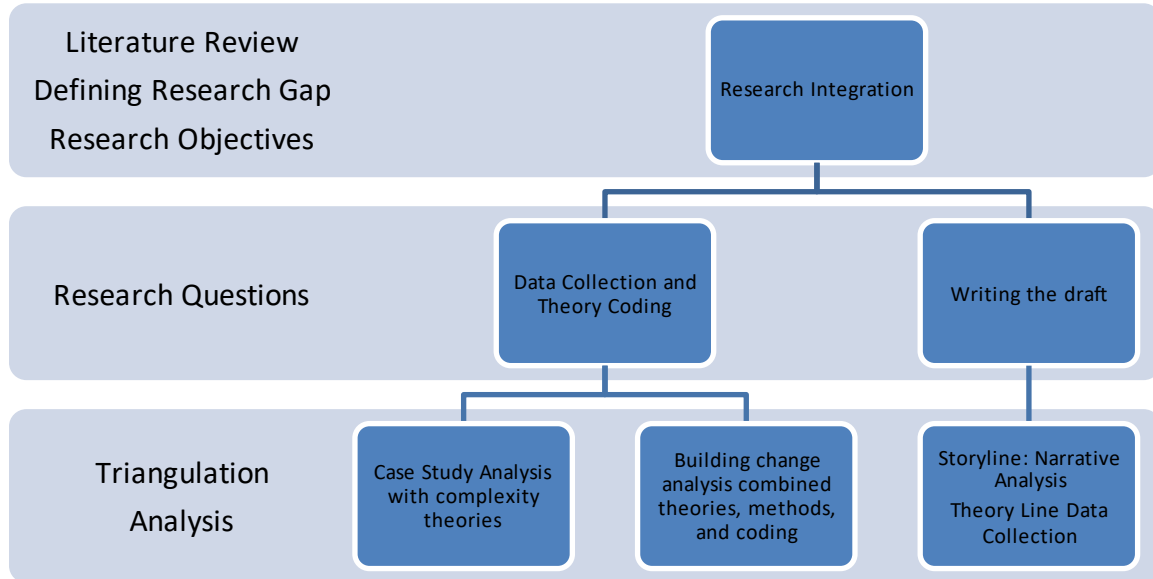
In qualitative research, sometimes the theoretical framework is adjusted in conception focus and emerges in the data analysis structure phase of study (Baxter & Jack, 2008) This is evident in the study, as this researcher attempted to maintain transparency by not forcing preconceptions on the findings but using a conceptual framework to provide ideas of how relationships and data in the study relate to one another in the theoretical framework. As this research plan evolved, methodological shifts in research focus emerged and offered an adjusted epistemological and ontological worldview and approach to the topic of change in the research case study (Boje, 2001). This data analysis tool was amended to include a narrative research inquiry framework to evaluate organizational change (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative research is based on Grounded theory but is a phenomenological qualitative inquiry into the experience of research participants as they transverse change (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a methodology, narrative research generates theories based on deductive data analyses. It was first introduced as a theoretical concept to generate theories based on individual, corporate, and relational experiences of phenomena or change (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

It is the foundation of the research plan that lays out the key factors of variables and constructs that will explain the natural progression of the phenomenon of change that is under study (Burnes & Bernard, 2004). This research presents a combined flow of qualitative research and grounded theory procedures to form the analysis triangulation research procedure (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Proprietary Research Procedure for This Study



Note. Qualitative integration research procedure with analysis triangulation.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

During the turbulence of transitioning COVID-19 pandemic pandemonium, this current work's valuation is supported by its acknowledgement of assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Assumptions

This qualitative single case study set out to examine organizational change during the challenging transition post pandemic and resolute variants affected the global workplace. The limitations in this current study offer a new foundation for continuing and future study.

As this work seeks to explore the phenomenon of organizational change, it looks at individuals' lives in a natural work environment and would provide benefits to leadership and followers alike on how they understand and seek progress from organizational change (Cameron,

2020). The assumptions in this study were honesty on the part of leadership and followers in providing answers to questions about change in the business and internet platforms. Another assumption was privacy in utilization of the survey instrument.

Limitations

Limitations included leadership's prior experience with change before the study. Another area of this researcher's concern was curbing preconceived knowledge and ideas about the company of study. Bias is best described as a process at a stage of inference that may produce results or conclusions that differ systematically from the truth (Galas, 2017). This research bias is prevented in this current study by these steps:

- Present a strong research design, with balanced questions, participant evaluation, and data analysis methodology (Yarborough, 2020);
- Prevent bias in qualitative research by moderation of questions without personal intent on the part of the researcher (Galas, 2017); and
- Eliminate confirmation bias in surveys and supportive extra questioning of subjects (Galas, 2017; Yarborough, 2020).

Delimitations

This concept sets the boundaries of a research study. This current research was limited to one organization that produces industry analyses in the Detroit area. Participants were in the process of corporate change. The COVID-19 pandemic constrained the ability to experience a face-to-face interview process.

Chapter Summary

Organizational change in reaction to post pandemic recovery is at the fulcrum of the new normal and success in corporate entities. In response to new pandemic inspired work situations, many companies are exploring online work environments.

The structure of this paper is a movement through five chapters. Chapter 1 opens with a quest to identify and bring attention to a challenge to identify the problem of organizational changes in a new ecosystem of business interactions post pandemic. Of specific focus is a look at Munro Live and a study of this business entity's penetration into the EdTech world of learning and training on YouTube. Additionally, research questions are posed in this chapter along with the purpose and significance of the study in analysis of corporate interactions and client success. Literature review is the emphasis of Chapter 2, offering the theoretical foundation for the research study. Methodology in Chapter 3 presents the epistemological framework and research design of the case study. This research design is supported by narrative analysis. This is further enhanced by data collection within the sample selection of participants, followed by the procedures of data analysis. Chapter 4 begins with the data results, climaxing in Chapter 5 with a resolution of research study findings and implications for further study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Classic literature has described life after a challenge with good times and bad times. History can repeat itself...for the better. Epidemics or pandemics change the world and usually transition it to a better social status (Barry, 2005; Farmer, 2001). It can encourage the survival of the fittest, promote migration, stimulate economic growth, and encourage new technology. Similarities have been drawn between the Spanish Flu of 1918 and the current COVID-19 malady. After the influenza in the early 1900s and World War I, the illness gave way to the roaring '20s.

F. Scott Fitzgerald once described the 1920s as the most expensive orgy in history. The 1920s were a time of social change, women's rights and new freedom, leisure time, new technologies, and its version of pop culture. Sound familiar? Fast forward to the 2020s with the social ferment of post pandemic pandemonium and change. Change has startling similarities from Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* roaring twenties orgasm of development to the 2020s orgiastic new technologies and social positioning challenging old factions in the new normal (Scoones & Stirling, 2020).

This current research presents a clarion call to understanding change in the new normal of a transitioning world. How do leaders lead? How will employees respond. How does a Field theory of environment adjustments inform the behavior of participants in the roaring 2020s? This literature review identifies leadership styles in corporations and global entities for the 2020s. It explores change grounded in Lewin's Field theory and moving to a possible theory of change based on physics and environmental response. The development of this review has two goals. One is to support a critique of the application of change theory in a case study online business environment (Munro & Associates, n.d.). The second objective is to outline the approach to a

proprietary theory of change for 2022 and beyond in response to the new normal of business and societal expectations. It is Lewin's Field theory that informs and grounds this review. Lewin's theoretical foundations of change are a launchpad for many contemporary theories (Burnes, 2017, 2020). Although a supportive structure to organizational change, many soothsayers of doom find his work simplistic and irrelevant in today's changing world. This current research and others find the scientific grounding of his theories not only current but futuristic in their ease of application and logical quantifiable theorems of change (Burnes, 2020). The new normal of 2022 and beyond embraces the simplicity of Lewin thought amid the technology of new advances based on scientific explanation and development.

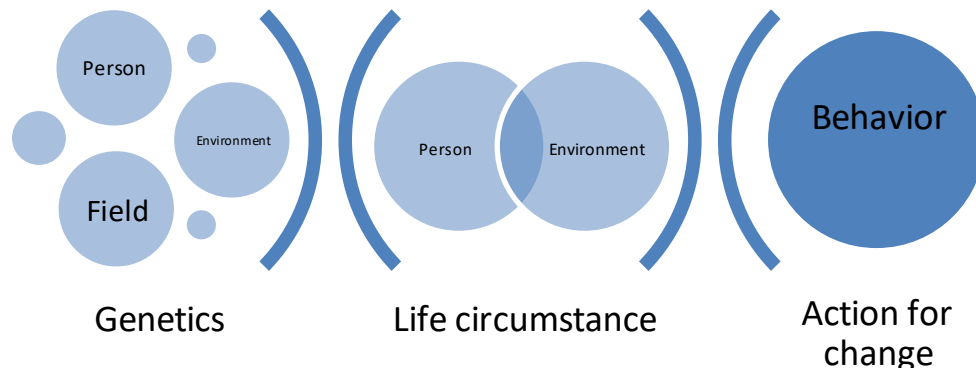
The study of change in literature usually focuses on content, processes, and outcomes (Celik & Ozsoy, 2016) This current study seeks to close the many gaps in organizational study and bridge them with new data on leadership, change in crisis, and new technology; all relevant to change during the new normal (Anderson et al., 2021).

Theoretical Approaches to Environment Change

Field theory is the term Lewin used for his psychological theory that examines patterns of interaction between individuals and the total field or surrounding environments of their life activities or movements. Lewin thought to build a better world after his escape from Nazi Germany to the United States; an exploration of leadership and behavior that stimulates change was based on a physics formula expressing value as behavior (B), person (P), and environment E all within a life space (L) (Lewin, 1947a).

Figure 4

Current Study and Field Environment Based on Collected Data



Note. Field theory formula in phased process formula. This is original figure based on collected data.

Lewin postulated that all psychological and behavioral phenomena are reality within a constructivist tradition that moved the objectivity of physics to a realism within the individual's life space. That is, reality for an individual is affected by events and internal and external forces at a given time and is relation based. This points to the conceptual roots of field theory based in Lewin's theory of change (Lewin, 1947b).

The external environment has a strong hold on organizational effectiveness and success (Bakari et al., 2017; Lewin, 1947a). Additional literature demonstrated that one reason for organizational failures and disrupted change success is inadequate leadership behaviors and style. Therefore, leadership effectiveness is considered the most successful change method during change or crisis (Fox et al., 2020).

Leadership Style During Change

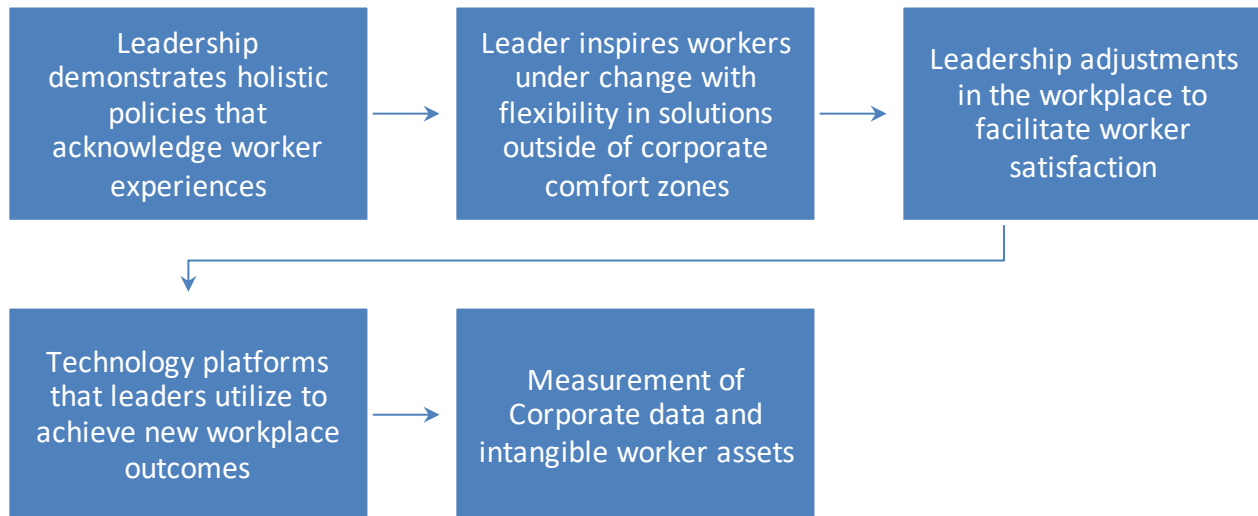
Lewin felt that democracy was synonymous with change and for the betterment of society. His society of change was an adjustment of the force field by a leadership agent of change. This was manifested by an individual who stirred up the equilibrium of complacency in behavior and replaced it with a behavior supporting change to result in a new equilibrium.

Allport (1948, 1961) referred to this as catharsis. A movement to change was followed by an adjustment to the new normal or status quo. Action by the group was a response to the democratic leadership of change. This action research was a call to scientific study of the field of social change facilitated by leadership in response to environmental stimulus for needed change. A change in Lewin's three steps can provide a social platform for strategic results in social management or engineering of social change (Lewin, 1947a).

Constituent Responses to Leadership and Change

Lewin used social engineering to apply it from applied science to social science. Lewin presented diagnosis of a situation of change as a process of various sciences for the objective of improvement of social management or change. Lewin sought to take theory and transfer it through research into practice and change. Bargal (2011) contemporized this process believing there is nothing as effective as the interdependence between theory, research, and practice. Herein lies the basis for followers or constituents to respond to leadership and potential change.

Just as Lewin promoted CATS theory as a change in three steps; there is also a progression of theory, applied research, and practice that promotes this current research and moves to a modified Lewinian approach to organizational change grounded in follower's response to motivational and transformative leadership (Mather, 2020). Leadership is expressed in Figure 5 based representing utilizing new technology in 2022 and beyond.

Figure 5*Reframing Leadership Strategies in a Reset New Reality Corporate Strategy***Roaring 2020s and Change, New Expanded Theories**

Lewinian theories address each decade of advancement in organizational change and future thought processes starting in 1948 with Allport. Allport (1948) concluded that the group was the foundation to enable change through perceptions, feelings, and actions. Lewin used the term quasi stationary equilibrium to represent the fluctuation of behavioral processes in response to environmental change. This disputes his critics who felt his change was only relevant in stable environmental conditions (Cooke, 1999).

In the decade of the 1950s, Cartwright (1951) agreed with the Lewin focus on group dynamics and that action within the force field or environmental conditions that modify behaviors are relevant to group change. Lewin's group dynamics inspired his next concept of action research and the CATS that heralded change as nonlinear, at the group level and stimulated by disequilibrium within organizations. Moving to the turbulent 1960s, change, according to Lewin, is an iterative process based on planning, action, and fact-finding in response to environmental change (Marrow, 1969).

Complexity theory spoke to Lewin's focus on self-organization expansion within the group change platform and the action produced in response to environmental situations and inspired by transforming leadership of the group (Bernstein 1968; Schein, 1983).

During the decade of the 1970s, the turbulence of global change gave way to a wider social agenda. Organizations responded by instituting an organizational development movement that interacts with sociotechnical systems, organizational culture, and transformational change. Organizational development is the standard-bearer for Kurt Lewin's pioneering work on behavior science in general and approach to planned change specifically (Conner, 1977).

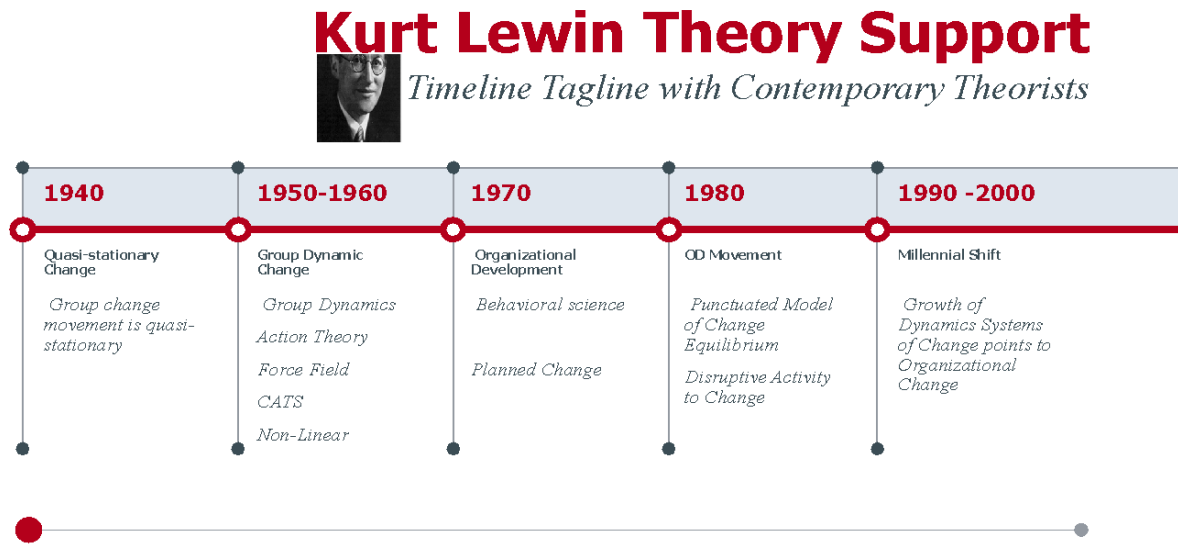
In the 1980s, in response to Lewin's critics, a new punctuated equilibrium model and continuous transformation model of organizational change presented patterns of activity followed by disruptive activity to revolutionize change (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994).

The 1990s to 2000s heralded a millennial shift to complexity theories as a way of understanding changing organizations (Bechtold, 1997; Choi et al., 2001; Lewis, 1994).

As with Lewin, complexity theorists come from the natural sciences, where disequilibrium is a necessary condition for growth of dynamic systems (Bechtold, 1997; Choi et al., 2001; Lewin, 1997). In Figure 6, a punctuated model of change equilibrium, spurs on disruptive activities that lead to change. These changes were seen in current study data. This can be scrutinized as looking at an organization as a complex system that requires a rethinking of the nature of hierarchy and control (Harrison et al., 2021). Burke (2008) contended that leadership needs to focus on changes within organizational contexts. This stance asserts that complexity will require leadership skills of management of chaos and change to develop skills to operate in new patterns of behavior to meet the needs of change in competitive business environments.

Figure 6

Timeline Showing Theory Support for Lewin Theory of Change in Current Study Data



Note. This figure shows other theories that concur or validate change. It is based on current research study. All theories support research findings.

Complexity Theories and Change

To recap change, there are three basic categories of change. They are changes that encompass incremental change, punctuated equilibrium, and continuous change. Burnes and Bernard (2004) questioned whether these are separate or competing theories. This current research suggests that organizational life cycles are evidenced in different ways of viewing the same phenomenal change. The complexity theorists would communicate this as a question: In organizational change within a company, what is new in structure, behavioral change, and the push toward corporate success (Farmer, 2001; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Stacey, 2003)? The complexity theorists all look at integrated conceptual systems that are metatheoretical, that is, a theory from which other methods or theories can be drawn (Lewin, 1948; Overton & Muller,

2013). Complexity theories in an organization can offer insights into how leaders motivate change, accomplished by demonstrating the following three steps (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009):

- How to maintain sustainability in an organization with learning;
- Adaptability in an organization with movement to change; and
- Innovative change in an organization that is continuous and under evaluation.

Lewin's planned change and change in three steps support these steps of Complexity theory maintained through self-organization and group-based change. Lewin put group learning at the core of the change process, and the three steps of change identify simple order generating rules that support self-organization in the complex systems strategies (Burnes & Bernard, 2004). Planned change, therefore, is not accidental change but self-organized in response to environmental stimulus in line with complex systems thought (Burnes & Bernard, 2004; Peters, 1989).

It is the premise of this current research to investigate the resolution of the gap in literature that responds to the environmental chaos of global business and social challenges. This study offers solutions to the gap in remedial repair of business strategies that explore the laws of complexity in adaptation of systems to present concepts for corporate success, particularly in areas of change management (Farmer, 2001) The complex system of an organization, especially but not limited to times of crisis, can be broken down into building blocks of change (Harvard Business Essentials, 2004; Turner & Baker, 2019). The adaptation of players or business agents within a team calls for a variety of individual strategies of behavior amid the self- organization of change. The illusion of drama in response to change is orchestrated in a dance of workers (in response to leadership), self-organizing encouraging innovative thinking, and in-the-moment adaptation to change (Hamstra, 2017; Raisio & Lundstrom, 2017; Richardson, 2008).

So, it is with a nod to Lewin's foundation in Gestalt psychology, social applications, and Jung's shadow images of interpretation of change—none of which by themselves represent the entirety of the change process—so it is in organizational change (Matthews, 2002; Richetta, 1974). This view at the content of change in literature forms the foundational strata of organizational study and heralds' directives this current study will spearhead and define with data support.

The Roles of Leadership in Organizational Change

There has been some research in literature to understand and define the role of leaders of organizations in the change process. This subject of leadership study was tardily approached in the early 2000s (Celik & Ozsoy, 2016). With Lewin's change in three steps as foundational research to organizational change, it points to management to create the buy-in for the change in business strategies through effective communication (Schein, 2004). Thus, leadership predicts and facilitates change through directives, examples, and guidance (Lewin, 1947a).

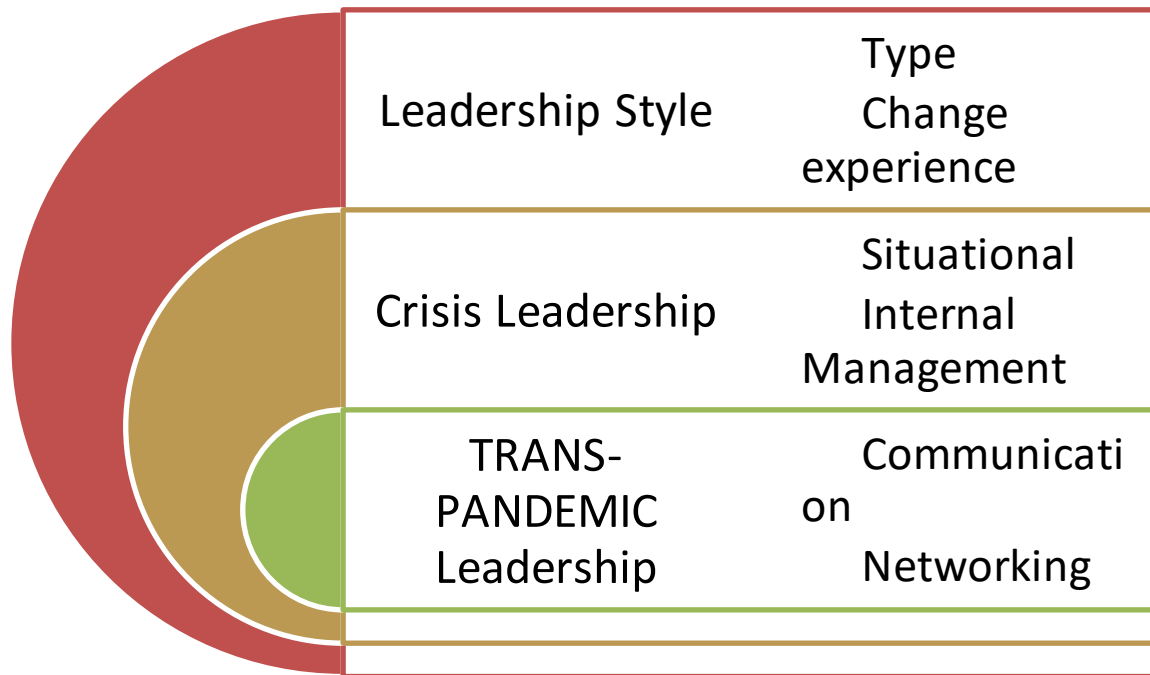
Historical Context at Review

Themes that emerge within literature for this study include leadership, crisis leadership, and COVID-19 transition leadership. It is suggested in the current study that interpersonal interactions form a social stratum that is fueled by interconnections of individuals within new social contexts. New thought and progressive change in organizations is a learned process based in relationships, corporate trust and common direction, and business strategy (Lewin, 1947a).

Related research supports this current study and its exploration into case study reactions to omicron variant pandemic challenges for building research, as past studies had no reference point for leadership in the pandemic experience (Fox et al., 2020). A visual figure of this trinity of research focus is depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Visual Interpretation of the Literature Review



This convergence of leadership style, crisis navigation, and trans-pandemic constructs mimic the responses to a change in environment or control in Lewin's (1947b) Field theory. Field theory is based on the concept that environmental change is aligned with behavioral or organization response. Guiding this response within an organization is the task of leadership.

The constructs under examination in this literature review include leadership style, crisis, leadership, and trans-pandemic leadership. Trans-pandemic leadership is a developing field of inquiry with leadership style and crisis leadership having longer evolutionary histories. The current study analyzes different leadership constructs used during change processes. Thus, the following review will focus on their interactions.

Leadership Style

There is a dynamism and depth to the research literature identifying differing styles of leadership. Successful organizational change finds its basis in dynamic leadership. It is of note

that leadership parameters were included in the strategies of change in the 2000s (Celik & Ozsoy, 2016). Content and resulting outcome were the focus in organizational change in past research. Many researchers deemed leadership style as a key element to the following:

- Success or failure of the change process finds a basis in leadership style;
- Successful leaders are implementers of change;
- Failure in change can be prevented by supportive leadership style; and
- Leadership strategies in planning change can soothe follower's challenges to change acceptance.

Three relevant styles of leadership supportive of this current research were authentic, transactional, and transformative leadership.

Authoritative leadership, presented by Avolio et al. (2022), are defined as patterns of transparent and ethical leader behaviors that reference openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting input from followers. Authentic leaders are considered optimistic, reliable, and trustworthy (Gardener, 2009).

Transformational leaders also can take a prominent research stance in this current study, as this category of organizational supervision possesses the ability to manage successful change through planning and making sure the desired plans for change come into fruition. The strength of the transformational leader is their charismatic abilities that inspire workers through a positive organization climate and value-based work environment. This has been evaluated by research during the post pandemic era with transformational leadership exhibiting positive workplace outcomes and worker satisfaction (Halkiopoulos, 2021). Workers in study expressed the strengths of the transformational leader in corporate change and guidance as effective in many

areas (Howell & Avolio, 1993). These situations based on the research of Howell and Avolio (1993) include:

- Extra effort demonstrated by leadership stimulated employee support;
- Effectiveness displayed by leadership encouraged worker satisfaction in working methods; and
- Satisfaction with leadership was based on appropriate leadership methods and work practices.

The current study seeks to disrupt the previous research yet build on its strengths.

Research teams under the tutelage of Burnes (2017) and Howell and Avolio (1993) expressed results of transformational leadership measures were associated with higher internal locus of control and more positively predicted unit performance. In Burnes's (2017) work, transactional measures of leadership, including reward and management by exception, were each negatively related to business unit performance.

The current study with the environmental backdrop of trans-pandemic recovery and a proprietary thought on change can witness a causal relationship between both transformational as well as transactional leadership behaviors and unit performance. The current research looks at individual styles of leadership and performance that were moderated by the individual levels of support for innovation in respective business units. Leadership styles precipitated by stress and adjustment to individual worker needs were under scrutiny and evaluated in the light of internal and external environmental adjustments (Raelin, 2021).

A third leadership style, authentic leadership, is a powerful style of business acumen to navigate an organization through a crisis such as the pandemic (Fox et al., 2020). This category of leadership uses corporate responsibility fueled by flexibility in challenge confrontation and

stakeholder applications for success. Authentic leadership faces change head on with adaptations to strategic business planning (Jacques, 2020). This can present challenges to satisfying stakeholders and opens the door to communication, flexibility in change, and other corporate concerns.

Authentic leadership is based on a theory generated out of a concern for ethics and the business commitment of leaders (Gardener, 2009). Values-based leadership is the foundation of authentic leadership. These values include

- Authenticity in expression of business focus;
- Leadership responsibility;
- Underlying beliefs and work ethics based on character; and
- Flexibility in business management.

These three styles of leadership, authenticity, transformational and transactional leadership, and their application to crisis management provide flexibility to meet the change processes in business adaptation post-COVID-19. An opportunity exists for this current study to investigate further corporate applications in leadership across topics of concern.

Communication in Crisis Leadership

According to James and Gilliland (2016), crisis is a subjective term used to describe a situation that affects an individual or a group in an excruciating way as a result of environmental or psychological stressors. This is another topic of concern in crisis management and leadership implications. Crisis management during the omicron variant has called for leadership that is more genuine and socially conscious (Avolio et al., 2022; Fox et al., 2020).

The emergence of the omicron variant of COVID-19 dimmed hopes that the crises of the pandemic were fading away. In a recent study (Mandeville et al., 2022) cited a survey of

domestic employers and found that more than half (57%) of companies responding planned changes to the business culture that include:

- Vaccines required for employees;
- A process of behavioral economics techniques to maintain social distancing at the workplace;
- Employers (90%) require indoor masks, no matter the vaccination status; and
- Reporting of COVID-19 exposures in the workplace is reported by leadership.

As the pandemic evolves, flexible and adaptive approaches in business culture can handle and control outbreaks in the workplace. McKinsey and Company (2022) posited that work-life balance was a concern for workers who saw no boundary between home and office. Many companies in response to work crisis management are instituting special mental health and return to work programs (McKinsey and Company, 2022). Crisis management has been identified as two types: proactive and reactive procedures to changes in the environment that present a crisis (Mitroff, 1994; Vasickova, 2021). The reactive approach focuses on addressing and eliminating the threat of an environmental crisis. The proactive approach sets out to prevent or in some cases totally avoid the crisis. The current COVID-19 pandemic has elements of each type of crisis within the workplace.

Crisis, especially in reference to leadership, is defined as a low-probability but high-impact event likely to cause serious damage (Jacques, 2020). This damage can hurt reputations or inhibit the ability to do business. There is no obvious and easy resolution; therefore, business decisions are challenging at best. The current literature is devoid of research that addresses decision-making and leadership communications specific to the omicron variant work and

professional environment. Leadership communicators, according to the Jacques (2020) research, present traits that include:

- Offer calm expertise and corporate direction;
- Understand the wishes and needs of stakeholders during the crisis; and
- Hand-in-glove approach to leadership to present the best outcome for the organization.

The current research in 2022 has looked at the components of authenticity in leadership during a crisis but few have addressed issues of scalability to other populations or global references in other countries. Some recent research includes a look at entrepreneurship on the micro level (Newman et al., 2022) but failed to address specifics to regional business audiences. This current study seeks to fill in the gap of crisis leadership research by addressing five areas of crisis leader focus that include:

- Frameworks of leadership evaluation techniques for change
- The movement or development of crisis leadership toward change;
- Leadership opposition to change during a crisis;
- Communication in crisis, culture, and change leadership; and
- Ethics of leadership during a crisis and follower's role in crisis response.

The differing approaches to crisis leadership and frameworks for change find a proposed model for crisis management in the research that focused on personal accountability and ethics (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001). Their study proposed that current crisis evaluation can be applied to a future resolution. The next step of movement toward change during a crisis was explored by the research of Mitroff (1994). Here creativity to prepare followers for change was explored.

Mitroff and Anagnos (2001) offered root causes to change opposition that can wreck progress in organizational change.

The literature offered leaders a picture of root causes to lead through adversity (Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001). This current study seeks to expound on the work of Mitroff and Anagnos (2001) in crisis situations.

The movement of crisis leadership during change, opposition to change, and cultural and ethical adjustments are seen in the gap widened by the new omicron variant. This current study identifies and evaluates leadership actions based on prior literature to remedy change distortion within the business climate that ensures corporate success (Bhaduri, 2019; Harvard Business Essentials, 2004; Walensky et al., 2021).

Trans-Pandemic Leadership

The new normal is more than a term. It is the current and future response to every changing status of the COVID-19 pandemic. The omicron as a new and emergent variant of COVID-19 presents this current study with an opportunity to be on the cutting edge of new and gap-filing research. This study views the research with a nod to Lewin's change in three steps and contemporized it with new theoretical focus for corporate success.

COVID-19 Through the Lens of Lewin

The current literature focuses on the steps leaders take to mobilize followers into successful action during the COVID-19 recovery. Some research has organized the steps leaders should follow for successful change (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). These steps and approach to leadership change include:

- Challenging change process with inspiration and positive role modeling;
- Visionary leadership moving the change process with follower's enablement; and

- As change is accepted, the leader uses recognition and encouragement to solidify change during the pandemic crisis.

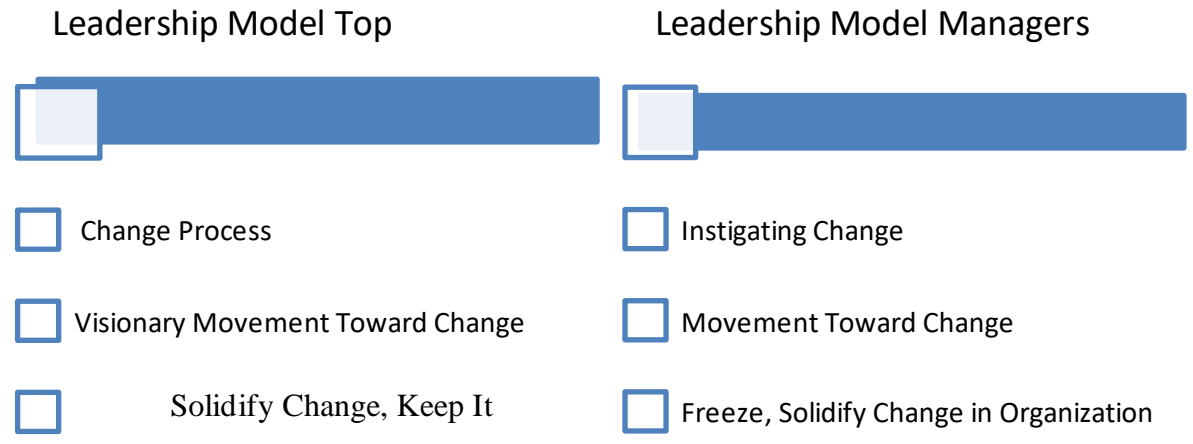
These steps mirror the change process of Lewin with unfreezing the status quo as Step 1. Utilizing authentic and visionary leadership to move change support among the followers in Step 2. Third, change is solidified with leadership support and reinforcement of continuing strategies of change success during omicron variant variability. Stoller (2020), in his research, validated Kouzes and Posner's applications of leadership change success during the pandemic recovery. This was based on realistic application to crisis management and the research emphasis on successful leadership during pandemic challenges to business adaptation and change. Stoller (2020) contended, "Leadership in a crisis requires both framing the challenge ahead while acknowledging the contributions that have been made to date" (p. 3). This supports this current research with its foundation in Lewin and its continuance in literature and life application support.

Leading Corporations

Effective leadership during the pandemic stresses' communication, change, and management reinforcement of follower's support and health concerns (Crayne & Medeiros, 2020). Speed, transparency, communication, and accountability for navigation of changing principles were literature-supported focus items identifying good leadership in corporations during the omicron pandemic processing. Figure 8 looks at leadership styles during change.

Figure 8

Comparison of Leadership Styles of Change Evidenced in Study



Focal Point at Intersection of Constructs

Leadership style, communication, and trans-pandemic leadership thrives at the intersection of Lewin change where knowledge translates into corporate success. The COVID-19 transition period offers researchers the opportunity to explore other areas of social and societal reparation for the new normal. The current research study makes a significant contribution to the literature by advancing the knowledge of three constructs, adjusted to meet current transitioning in global responses to pandemic variants (Hartney et al., 2021). Change in the current pandemic situation has become the new normal and with it, leaders and followers must accept it to stay competitive in the global business environment (Marien, 2020; Pounder, 2022).

Crisis During Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis is a once-in-a century global pandemic. It caused an economic crisis that saw a \$20 trillion stimulus put into the economy to keep businesses and people afloat. Business in the United States and globally have changed forever (Barrero et al., 2020; Dua et al., 2020). The business response to crisis situations such as the pandemic of 2020 has at its heart

Resilience theory (Meyer, 1982). Resilience theory is based on how a business survives a threat situation. The most prominent research that influences the COVID-19 recovery is demonstrated in the role of community, product support, and entrepreneurial innovation (Zahra, 2020).

Research on post crisis management literature points toward detecting threat and activation of a firm's change response (Zahra, 2020). The concept of organizational resilience during change falls into three categories:

- Resilience in change as it is engaged by a firm (Duchek, 2020);
- resilience in process at a firm and movement to change (Duchek, 2020); and
- resilience as it is sustained at an organization (Duchek, 2020).

Step 1, in a transitory trans-pandemic world, is new or developing businesses will take advantage of entrepreneurial incentives to promote change (Zahra, 2020). Step 2 defines new opportunities for change movement, inspired by leadership and then communally supported. Step 3 encourages new change within business sustained as business is successful with movement through environmental and business culture change.

In the variant era of COVID-19, there is a role of the advantage of capacity to absorb the negative effects of pandemics or other crises. Leadership and managers seek to address rapidly changing environments with change, innovation, and usage of new technologies to present their products. (Zahra, 2020).

The process of Dynamic Capabilities was a means of businesses employing models of transformation and change within organizations in response to a changing socio-business environment (McKinsey and Company, 2022). This response to the COVID-19 variant's changing environment demonstrates how businesses adopt technologies, strategies, and managerial and digital skills to increase their efficiency. This business strategy as a response to

the velocity of change within an organization encouraged application of new technologies and other digital means of presenting corporate products.

Digital product presentation in adopting new business models responded to crisis situations by developing resilience and presenting business culture behavioral change that pointed to business goal success. Bartik (2020) suggested there is a need for more analysis of digital business model innovation. Entrepreneurship literature on this category of growth remains an oft-neglected topic of study and research. There is still a gap to understanding the Dynamic Capabilities model that needs development for companies to respond to opportunities of the pandemic such as digitization and business model change (Seetharaman, 2020).

Managing uncertainty tends to be the new normal for companies around the world. During COVID-19, this stresses the importance of the creation of competitive advantage and implementation change processes so important to business success (Mather, 2020; Seetharaman, 2020).

Future research needed in pandemic transition can start where entrepreneurs seek new products and services, as it is said that nothing in business will be left unchanged after this global crisis (McKinsey and Company, 2022). The new normal is defined by researchers as the way of consuming, filtering out the resilient, and developing agile behavioral processes with the adoption of new digital technologies and learning new skills (Bartik, 2020).

Economic effects of the new normal demonstrate that investigating the long-term effects induced by responses to the change as a result of the pandemic point to wider economic, societal, economic, and political challenges (Robinson & Kengatharan, 2020). Further insights are needed to understand the role of economics and psychological/behavioral drivers of innovation during

crises. The role of the entrepreneur during the delta and omicron variant crises is manifested in three responses to changing environments:

- There is what, why, and how questions needed change in the work of COVID response entrepreneurs (Torres et al., 2021).
- Subjective elements of change movement respond to an ever-changing work environment (Torres et al., 2021).
- The domain of change, implementation, communication, and sustenance is under constant leadership vigilance and scrutiny (Torres et al, 2021).

The elements of new normal economic effects and business strategies in change listed above challenge leadership to find new areas of innovation in productivity. Future research may fill a gap in the widening social, economic, and global inequality between rich and poor countries (Bartik, 2020).

Production and service systems are also affected by employment trends changed by the pandemic. Meurer et al., (2021) in research found that workers and companies used to working side-by-side are seeking peers as well as financial support from online formats. As the working world becomes more flexible, it is a probability that mixed forms of physical and remote working situations will become the norm.

Types of Change During Crisis

Change outcomes during the trans-pandemic are factors related to this crisis. Knowing the type of change specific to the organization helps leadership start the change process (Donthu & Guftasson, 2020; Lewin, 1947a). Some research has identified change can be within departments of an organization. If many involve many different products' focus based on department status (Bhaduri, 2019; Robinson & Kengatharan, 2020)

Motivation is a major ingredient in organizational change (Rajapakshe, 2021). During the pandemic recovery, motivation presents as emotional struggle within an organization. Motivation is a driving force that moves communication and implementation of movement toward change.

The Lewin change in three steps model facilitates motivation for change, inspires leadership, and finally is accepted by workers (Hussain et al., 2016). This research also noted that workers' motivation filters through an organization and other departments and moves toward corporate success (Rajapakshe, 2021).

Motivation for change can also be compromised by followers' resistance. Full acceptance of change motivation is based on leadership support and the cultural, emotional, and behavioral tendencies of the followers (Mitroff, 1994). Other research projects have called for a better understanding and focus on sociocultural aspects of individual's attitudinal responses to change (Marien, 2020).

Leadership responsibility in change motivation finds a basis in encouragement of follower's support (Bhaduri, 2019; Hussain et al., 2016) To prevent change resistance, leadership, according to the research of McKinsey and Company (2020), supports the following traits:

- *Trust* in leadership is imperative for organizational change. Workers must determine whether past corporate behavior warrants current support (Hussain et al., 2016).
- *Personal Attitude* on the part of workers is relevant to organizational change and motivation to move through anxiety. Lewin's (1947b) Step 2 and 3 of the change in three steps model emphasizes empowering workers with communication and clarity of corporate work culture ethics.

- *Interest in Change* motivation and initiatives for change are paramount to leadership's belief in workers and their potential to sustain change. Lewin's step three in the change model is fueled by worker's enthusiasm in support of management and resolute change (Lewin, 1947a).

Motivation is not a transactional process based on leadership compensation or a transformational teamwork-inspired action within the organization (Bass et al., 2003).

Motivation on the part of workers is based on many behavioral and corporate culture traits. This literature review focuses on the following themes of current organizational change goals, business culture, and project success.

The literature review gives a basic structure for future research in response to trans-pandemic environmental challenges. Lewin's change in three steps and Schein's clarification of Lewin's process informs the following three steps to change with supportive research.

- *Organizational readiness for change* is a basis for successful implementation of a change initiative (Lewin, 1947b);
- change communication based on Lewin's Step 2 change model; and
- sustainability of change, Step 3 of Lewin's change model.

The factors listed above demonstrate leadership's ability to communicate change. Bakari et al., (2017) in this study found that the behavior of leaders empowered workers in the change process to work as a team, communicate ideas for change relevant to corporate success, and to begin the implementation and adjustment to the change process. Hussain et al. (2016) also supported leadership's guidance and worker's participation in the change process.

Research validates that although leadership and management guidance spearheads organizational change, knowledge on the part of leadership and management is a key element in

change implementation (Mather, 2020). Knowledge in the areas of organizational readiness for change, change, communication, and sustainability of change as categories of change success are lacking in current research, especially in relationship to the trans-pandemic business environment.

According to Lewin (1947a, 1947b) these subjects within the change model in three steps require the organization to maintain stability through the process of communication and within the changing climate of the organization. The current study attempts to fill the gap in research in the following three subjects of organizational change.

Organizational Readiness for Change

For an organization to be successful in change, it must have the support of the followers (Mather, 2020; Robinson & Kegatharan, 2020). Schein (2004), in his research on organization culture and change, presented a clarification on Lewin's change readiness with an organizational emphasis on leadership implementation and other internal corporate strategies.

Global trans-pandemic challenges have rendered change as a state of continuing process that finds its definition and resolution in leadership response. Schein's (2004) research also indicated that a leadership needed followers with flexibility toward change and corporate behaviors in alignment with company culture.

Research has proved to be limited in organizational change readiness during crises situations such as the variant changes in the COVID-19 pandemic (Mather, 2020; McKinsey and Company, 2022). When the change process meets uncertainty, individual communication that is one-on-one and personal points to successful change interactions (Robinson & Kegatharan, 2020).

Organizational readiness for change is challenging to implement and requires a focus on the extent where organizational workers are psychologically and behaviorally prepared to implement change (Burnes & Bernard, 2004).

Change Communication

Change communication is based on Lewin's (1947b) Step 2 of change. In recent literature, organizational change was deemed necessary to remain competitive in today's global economy (McKinsey and Company, 2022). Schein (1999) built on Lewin's foundation with leadership and management aware of their respective business cultures and personalizing feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors to arrive at productive transformational change thought processes.

Duchek (2020) presented a worker's involvement in decision-making as relevant to organization change. This was based on leadership communication that focused on workers commitment, department teamwork, and past positive business culture experience (Rajapakshe, 2021).

Although leadership communication to mid management and workers is a strong factor in an organizational change strategy, it is the focus on business culture grounded in content, context, and utilization of change that maintains workers support (McKinsey and Company, 2022; Schein, 2004).

Mather (2020) suggested that workers' involvement in decision making was a strong foundation for organizational change. In today's trans-pandemic work environment, communication by leadership has faced challenges in clarity of information or leadership inability to be consistent and transparent in communication of work-related change and pending business culture adjustments (McKinsey and Company, 2022).

Sustainability of Change

Sustainability of change is a challenge to organization change initiatives. Lewin's Step 3 in the change model focused on leadership's ability to insert change principles in the business culture of the organization (Lewin, 1947a). Schein (2004) built on Lewin's model by defining business culture as what culture is to a group personality is to an individual. In this context, as personality guides the behavior of an individual, so does culture guide and constrain the members of a business. Schein saw business culture as a construct that some considered abstract, but he posited that behavioral and attitudinal consequences are concrete.

In reference to Lewin's (1947a) Field theory, change is good. In the trans-pandemic era, change is constant and a complex process that requires adaptation and adjustment in the current business environment (Stoller, 2020). According to McKinsey and Company (2022), the pandemic recovery will be focused on digitization in what is called a normal recovery. Their cloud-ready business technology operating model forms a response model of change based in Lewinian theory. In their three steps of change, the CEO defines, initiates, and orchestrates change.

This present research in the current pandemic situation and projecting out the next 5 years identifies the following situations within the corporate climate:

- Leadership will inspire operational rigor and channel change as needed;
- Leadership will chart a course of movement through the omicron variant variability with a transitory change in response to company needs; and
- Leadership will communicate with transparency and conviction the course and continuance of company change to followers and stakeholders alike.

While there is some research with examination of leadership style, behavior of leadership, and leadership reaction to change, there is a lack of research on the pandemic recovery, addressing variants and a 5-year timeline for research. There is little work on organizational management, planning, implementation, and sustained organizational change. The current research seeks to fill this gap.

This current research set out to understand the process of successful change management in crisis situations, established by leadership, to prepare followers for readiness and implementation of organizational change (Harvard Business Essentials, 2004). The theoretical model that informed the research questions was based on Lewin's Field theory that was employed throughout this qualitative case study (Lewin, 1947a). The framework of the organizational change model was based on Lewin's change in three steps (Lewin, 1997).

The scenario in business during trans-pandemic recovery clearly depicts the Lewin change model (Donthu & Gustasson, 2020; Lewin, 1947b). In Step 1, many employees resist change, especially if it is induced by government control over the organization. In the second step of the model, movement can cause communication errors and challenges within the business culture that require training and leadership support and communication.

The final step is a period of reinforcing the new organizational culture (Schein, 2004). Leadership, in the final step toward change, can train, support, and reinforce workers' new and positive behaviors (Rajapakshe, 2021).

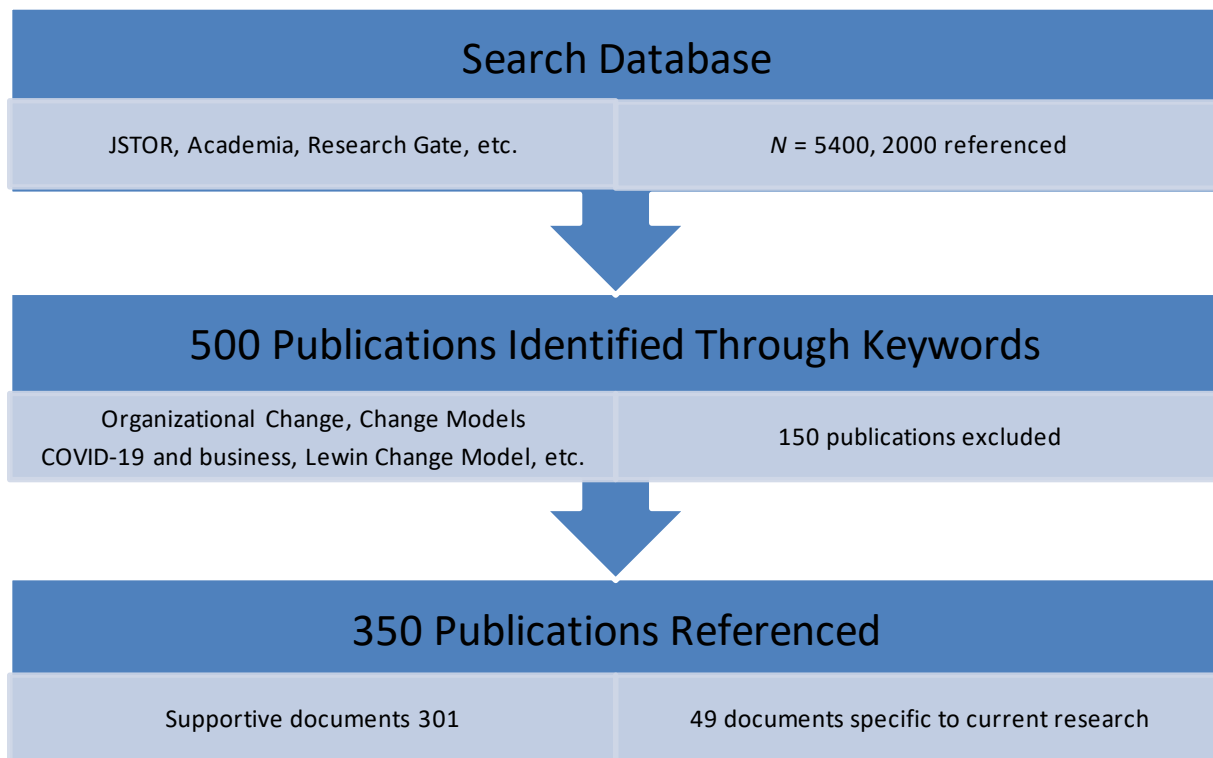
Concluding Thoughts on Literature

The challenges of this literature review were the lack of articles directly focused on variant crisis conditions. Initially, 150 publications were identified through inquiry in databases including, JSTOR, Academia, Research Gate, SAGE Premier, Emerald Insight and Science

Direct. Organizational change, organizational culture, and crisis management were used as core words to search literature. The summary of literature search is presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Literature Search Schematic



This study focuses on the change within an organization and approaches to redefine business culture in response to trans-pandemic challenges. The main objective of scrutiny is how leadership and workers accept, accommodate, and adjust to change as a result of the changing pandemic situation. It is hypothesized that if leadership fails to handle changes properly, a negative impact will affect corporate morale and business productivity.

In the current and updated literature review, it was difficult to locate articles and scholarly materials to reference recent changes with organizational factors relevant to the everchanging COVID-19 pandemic status. According to the literature, change models were relevant to affecting change with organizational factors and had a significant impact on corporate

culture and individual worker goal attainment. Changes in organizations, according to the review, are looking at categories of change that include leadership with change implementation, follower acceptance, and new technologies. It was Lewin's change model that was the foundational evidence that changing forces will either support or reject change within the organization.

Continued study would fill the gap in leadership communication skill research on change and its response to crisis situations in these areas:

- Resistance to change dissolved by leadership support of change and employees' position in the work culture (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b; Schein, 2004).
- Leadership moving change to validate new work culture (Lewin, 1947a; Schein, 2004).
- Leadership encouragement of organizational change, based on continued communication and sustainability of change (Lewin, 1947b).

A prominent gap in the literature exists that focuses on leadership preparedness, planning for change, and the ability of leadership to utilize strategies to sustain change. A two-way communication between management and leadership, a strength in Lewin's model of change, could assist corporate culture during change and crisis situations.

Chapter Summary

This study supports that Lewin had an enormous impact on organizational change. Returning to the literature of F. Scott Fitzgerald, his view of the roaring 20s explores characters in change and leadership transformations in social settings. Amid the backdrop of World War I, the Spanish Flu epidemic, and social upheaval, society and business must change to meet the needs and expectations of the new culture.

In the 2020s, the new normal meets change with a technology-enhanced lens supported by Lewin's vision as hyperopic and seeing change in the distance as a process in three stages to unfreeze, move toward, and readjust organizational change as needed in the new environment. It is this future vision of change that informs new and proprietary information and theories and offers clarity to Lewinian change processes and to reconstruct the deconstruction of organizational change in the new normal of 2020 and beyond.

This research seeks to identify how leadership can transform a corporate culture with change that transforms worker competency. The current research seeks to suggest new applications of technology and related development training for workers, all supported by leadership guidance and support for the new normal in the business culture. Recommendations for future research can expand case studies to look at different types of organizations and how change can be implemented in different cultures and global business situations.

During the turbulence of transitioning from the COVID-19 pandemic pandemonium, this current work's valuation is supported by its acknowledgement of assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. It is imperative for policy makers and government authorities to take note of this study's transparency and acknowledgement of the challenges faced by organizations traversing the pending changes in a global new normal (Nayak et al., 2021).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Global crises resulting from the coronavirus pandemic created a climate of challenges and unending threats for corporate executives. This study with a qualitative research platform supports its prolegomenon in a field theory paradigm environmental shift. It is a response to the disruption of a post-COVID era with a new stressor, the omicron variant. The study's purpose was to present three steps of change:

- RQ1. How does leadership start the organizational change process at the organization?
- RQ2. How does leadership or managers facilitate change movement within the organization?
- RQ3. How does leadership sustain or modify change within the organization?

Methodology includes validation of the literature review, as the study is conducted on a case study organization and its new technology platform on YouTube. This presents the factors that affected the leadership strategies of change initiatives that focused on organizational change and post pandemic success.

Corporations around the world face a crisis of pandemic proportions as they negotiate the unknown territory in 2020 (Anderson et al., 2021). There was a sense of confusion manifesting as political instability, financial challenges, and new business practices amid institutional constraints. This research sets itself apart from other processes by disrupting the disruption of COVID-19 with a narrowing of the gaps between the new normal and social expectations set by recent research (Anderson et al., 2021). This disruption process occurs in three change strategies:

- Achievement of long-term change directive focus within the organization;
- corporate culture adjustment and movement toward change; and
- sustainability of change during crisis situations.

The qualitative design offers a flexible use of protocols to answer the research questions with more fluidity and focus of thought for the organization (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The research questions presented a focus on clarity as this study progressed.

- RQ1: How does leadership plan and understand organizational change?
- RQ2: How does leadership or managers implement movement toward change?
- RQ3: How does leadership or managers modify and sustain change?

The new reality of change warranted supportive queries in the following new areas of expertise. These areas take the leader outside of the usual disciplines using systems thinking as a response to environmental changes. System thinking on the part of leadership can set the grounds for a reset of business strategies and new usage of worker development based on technology, work environment, and employee benefits (Burke & Litman, 1992; Kotter, 1995; Lewin, 1947a, 1947b).

Supportive research questions include these questions based on Lewin's change in three steps:

- What is the effect of leadership style on worker satisfaction and performance during change?
- How does strong leadership focus on workers satisfaction during implementation of change?
- To what extent does team workers autonomy react to the influence of leadership for corporate success during change?

This current research maintains that resolving the gaps in corporate change management issues will necessitate a movement from a post pandemic mentality that limits social and financial progress. A look at the case study can indicate how leadership and workers' response to change was enhanced by a reboot in business mindset that utilized new technology, thought, and action. This writer presents a clarion call to reset business strategies for success in 2022 and beyond. The new normal presented a new reality with reframed leadership principles. The methodology refers to the theoretical justification for the research of change in a chaotic organizational situation.

Research Design

When pandemics sweep through societies, they upend critical infrastructures and life in general (Anderson et al., 2021). The complexity of the times in which we live warrants a research design that responds to a multi-emphasis data collection process. This study seeks a restructuring of case study analysis using qualitative scrutiny to address the evidence-informed decision-making of the project (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018).

This current study is a primer demonstrating the qualitative aspect of interpretative investigation by the researcher. The procedure and design of the study promotes consistency in purpose, research questions, sample size, sample scheme, and data analysis techniques (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

The use of qualitative scrutiny to develop a new understanding of leadership roles, constituent acceptance, and corporate success is strengthened by this process integrating the following: (a) Qualitative analysis will assess leadership skills during rebooting of the business environment and worker satisfaction, expounded from statistical quantitative support; and (b)

incorporate subjective analysis based on data to access an organizational value or prospects based on nonquantifiable information such as management expertise and labor relations.

The case study design was an empirical look at a contemporary phenomenon in the context of reality (Yin, 2018). This single case study design allowed this researcher to conduct focused analysis of the phenomenon of organizational change. A qualitative single case study looks at authentically looking at data specific to data honed from reliable descriptive discussion. Looking through the lens of various components and reactions to change within the study explored change phenomena through a variety of data sources (Yin, 2018). There is a continued emphasis in leadership research, especially after the corporate changes evidenced and triggered by social and timely societal shifts (Avolio & Bass, 1995).

Qualitative case study methodology provides tools to study complex phenomena within their contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It is a valuable research method to develop theory, evaluate programs, and develop interventions of organizational change (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Case study approach, according to Yin (2018) should be considered when the study focus is on the context of study conditions that are relevant to the condition under scrutiny. This current research asks the how and why questions of the phenomenon of organizational change under the conditions of pandemic crisis and resulting corporate disruptions.

One of the drawbacks of case study design is the limitation of inductive approach when an exploration of phenomenon is in process. Yin (2018) suggested returning to propositions and concepts that support change within the organization. This current study safeguards against becoming deductive by journaling thoughts and conclusions during the coding process and evaluation with other researchers (Morse, 1991).

Sources of Data

The target population are employees, management, and mid management at the case study organization. The setting is a major Midwestern United States auto manufacturing location. It was diverse ethnically and gender representation is 75% male and 25% female. None are reporting other gender selection. Its employees are multinational with a 75% leaning toward U.S. citizenship. Permission to question and evaluate employees is granted by the CEO in the case study organization.

A challenge to various data sources is management of overwhelming amounts of individual information (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Although rigor is associated with this approach to numerous data sources, this current study seeks to utilize a computerized database to organize data collection.

Sampling

Purposive sampling is used to recruit participants. This method ensures that the participants have knowledge of the phenomenon of interest (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The participants were managers and workers at the case study organization. According to Yin (2018), a small sample of 25 participants is appropriate for a qualitative case study. Based on the methodology used for this current research, this small sample selection is deemed appropriate for the rigors of this composition and depth of data collection (Yin, 2018).

A sample database was used to prevent the drawback of the researcher being separated from the data (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Use of a computerized database improves the reliability of the case study, as it enables the researcher to track and organize data sources, including notes, key documents, tabular materials, narratives, and audio files (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Data Collection Strategies and Procedures

It can be good times or bad times in a society facing global political, ethical, and societal change. In a cultural reboot, after a global shift in economic stability, corporations are fighting to identify and maintain organizational legitimacy. Gaps exist where there is a difference between what an organization should be and where it is (S. Kim & Ji, 2018).

This current study attempts to explore gap analysis and identify modifications of current business stratagems by appropriate data collection, identification, and procedures. Research uses the following analytical data to hypothesize, identify, and clarify short-term goals to move the organization performance from current levels to ideals of success (Hatch & Schultz, 2001).

This research utilized various approaches and they are as follows:

- A questionnaire to determine participant data;
- semi structured interviews with leadership/department leadership workers on Zoom;
and
- focus interviews (individually managed on Zoom) with leadership and followers.

Site Authorization

A site authorization was secured from the case study organization and appears in the appendices. Prior to conducting any research, the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approval was granted, the IRB approval form was attached to Appendix.

Recruitment

A recruitment notification was sent with case study organization approval through email. The email also had an attached informed consent document that explained confidentiality.

Contact information for any questions or concerns was offered. The time frame of inquiry was a 3-week period with one session per week.

Attrition

This situation in research study is a loss of testing constituents (Decuir-Gunby et al., 2011). To prevent testing client loss, this researcher explained the importance, purpose, and implications of the study.

Study Data

This study data was collected from different sources, including:

- A two-part open ended, oral questioning by phone was used to select participants for the research study using purposeful sampling and solicit information from the workers regarding the organizational change process (Appendix A).
- Next, an individual semi-structured interview was administered orally on Zoom to collect data from leadership and department management. All discrepancies were amended.
- Data were also collected via Zoom in a focus interview session with leadership. Each member was individually questioned.

All interview strategies were field tested on subjects who were not participants in the study. This allowed the ability to see if the questions were meaningful and not ambiguous to the research. The researcher used the responses to amend data sources as needed.

The target population was employees, management, and mid management at the case study organization. It was diverse ethnically and gender representation is 75% male and 25% female. None are reporting other gender selection. Its members are multinational with a 75%

leaning toward U.S. citizenship. Permission to question and evaluate employees was granted by the CEO of the case study organization.

Because of COVID-19 omicron variant concerns, all interviews and subject contact was facilitated online via Zoom and other online formats. All interview protocols were field tested by at least two participants for potential amendment of discrepancies in questions.

Instrumentation

A personal interview was used to collect data from participants (Appendix B). The questionnaire was orally presented by this researcher. Then informed consent was validated by verbal and visual consent documentation. The first part of the tool included approximately 10 questions. Demographic information supplied age, sex, and work experience. Questions also answered eligibility of study participation and ability to offer time for analysis. These questions were developed for this study after reviewing the literature, existing testing readiness instruments, and surveys, thus establishing face validity.

Participants were supervisory or managerial staff and had experience or were open to organizational change. Those who, on further query, had no experience with change were eliminated from participation.

The next section of the questionnaire was based on a design supported by the organizational change model (Lewin, 1947b) The constructs of study were questions based on Lewin's change of status quo, unfreezing prior thought, movement through change, and establishment of change. The participants shared how they understood change in responses to questions. They were short 250-word answers and provided future collaboration in individual focus group queries.

Content validity was validated by feedback from expert panel solicitation (Simon & White, 2013). This rubric included focus on clarity, negative wording, overlapping responses, application to practice, and relationship to change. When sent for expert review, questions were evaluated on face and content validity. The experts' suggested changes in question content, if needed.

Leadership Department Personal Interview

The individual leadership/department interviews were conducted using a Leadership Manager Guide (Appendix B) prepared by this researcher and informed by Lewin's change model for the personal interviews (Lewin, 1947b). The questions for this interview protocol, though founded in Lewin's change in three steps unfreeze, movement, refreeze, may become a potential modification:

1. Modify prior thought, move through the status quo, and accept the need for change.
2. Openness to change facilitated by group acceptance.
3. Decide on directional change implementation.

The interview protocol was composed of 10 questions and development used semi-structured, open-ended questions. Probing inquiry was also used to obtain in-depth and follow-up information. Other research has supported the use of semi structured interviews to gather more potent information and data (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). In the same light, this current study used semi structured individual interviews to look at the perceptions of leadership and their take on organizational change, its facilitation, planning, and sustained implementation.

Focus Group (leadership category) Interview Strategy

The focus group interview questions developed by this researcher were based on Lewin's (1947b) change in three steps. Once again, semi structured questions were presented to

participants on Zoom to delineate their ideas and reactions to organizational change (Appendix C). Qualitative study research utilizes this question format to look at phenomena from the view of the participants (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Following the strength of prior research in the matter of organizational change, this present study used semi structured open-ended questions for its focus group interview protocol. Penetrating questions were employed when needed to discern follow-up focus query.

Organizational Testing Protocols

Personal Interview Questions (PIQ) presented Lewin's (1948) concept of unfreezing change. To document the prompts for the semi structured interviews, a custom interview protocol for this study was designed.

The intent of this protocol was to use some degree of structure to aid in the request of data from the participants about the experience with the phenomenon in question. The total list of questions is noted in Appendices A-C.

- PIQ1: The initial questionnaire identified your past involvement in organizational change. How would you currently describe feelings about organizational change?
- PIQ2: What brought you to the resolution of moving toward change?
- PIQ3: Who supported your move toward change?

These questions presented leadership ideas of changing the status quo to facilitate change readiness. These questions PIQ1, PIQ2, and PIQ3 were foundational integrative support to RQ1: How does leadership understand and facilitate organizational change (Lewin model of change, part 1, unfreeze change)?

PIQs present Lewin's (1948) implementation within the organization to facilitate movement toward change.

- PIQ4: How did you establish the idea of change in the organization?
- PIQ5: To communicate change at your organization, on what did you focus?
- PIQ6: Was it challenging to get others to follow your change promptings?

In these questions, leadership utilized followers' motivation to try change by giving them autonomy and authority to make their own decisions and transforming their corporate allegiance (Hussain et al., 2016).

Probing questions expounded on transition strategies to promote directive change in the organization. PIQ4, PIQ5, and PIQ6 solicited data to support RQ2: How does leadership implement change (Lewin's model of change, part 2, change)?

- PIQs present Lewin's model of change sustenance.
- PIQ7: How do you as a leader develop strategies to sustain change?
- PIQ8: What were your procedures, as a leader, to ensure successful change?
- PIQ9: What were your strategies to support your employees after the implementation of change?

Probing questions explored monitoring status of change and employee morale. PIQ7, PIQ8, and PIQ9 provided support for RQ3: How does leadership maintain organizational change? An extra probing question PIQ10 asked leadership: Does anything else come to your mind about your organizations change priorities?

Focus Group Interview Strategy Questions

Focus group (FG) questions were developed by this researcher and based on the three constructs of Lewin's (1948) change model. The focus group questions were also semi structured and allowed participants free rein to express their change ideas and feelings (Hussain et al., 2016. (Appendix C).

FG Questions—Lewin Freeze Construct.

- FG1: You have past knowledge of organizational change. How do you describe this change?
- FG2: How do you facilitate the need for change within your organization?
- FG3: What is the justification for change at your organization?

These questions showed the participants' preparation for change was commensurate with Lewin's first step in the process of change model. This researcher used probing questions to then explore personal areas of change, thought, and implementation among participants.

Questions FG1, FG2, and FG3 uphold question RQ1: How does leadership make sense of and facilitate organizational change (Lewin's model of change, part 1, unfreeze)?

FG Questions—Lewin Construct Change Movement.

- FG4: How do you plan to implement change?
- FG5: How will you include your staff and other managers in the change process?
- FG6: How will you communicate change to staff?

These questions promote Lewin's (1948) movement to change and his second part of the change model. These semi-structured, open-ended questions accrued data on the transition process of organizational change. The organization begins the movement in this stage from the status quo in the changing environmental induced field of corporate chaos to a pending state of change (Lewin, 1948). The change process is in motion as the participants have responded.

Resolutely, FG4, FG5, and FG6 provide the data to support RQ2: How does leadership implement organizational change (Lewin's model of change, part 2, movement)?

FG Question—Lewin Construct Freeze, Refreeze.

- FG7: How do you plan to sustain change at your organization?
- FG8: What steps will you use to secure this change?
- FG9: What ongoing steps will you use to keep change current and viable?

These questions set in motion the freeze of change in the new normal at the organization.

Change is in the air and leadership is probed about future support data of this change. Focus group questions FG7, FG8, and FG9 provide new information regarding organizational change (Lewin model of change, part 3, freeze new change).

FG Question—Additional Probing Questions.

- FG10: Is today's status quo different from last year's situation?
- FG11: What is your change plan for 6 months?
- FG12: Are there any changes you need to make personally to support ongoing change?

The different data sources were similar in content but solicited in different contexts. The Zoom session was exclusive of participant's visual images, and they are identified by a visual icon; only the researcher can see them. They knew that the session was being recorded. Follow-up questioning explored the employees, feelings, and outcomes about their work strata situation. The questionnaire was a self-test challenge, individual interviews were Zoom sessions or iPhone face-to-face calls, and interviews were via Zoom. Data was triangulated across the three data sources. This is the methodological triangulation that promotes datasets to explain differing aspects of the phenomenon of change processing (Nobel & Heale, 2019).

Human Subject Considerations

The IRB provided Exemption 2 status (Category 2) to this study based on signage and informed consent by the participants (see Appendix D). A potential challenge to this current research is transparency in participants' responses to open-ended qualitative questioning.

To foster participant trust, the provisions of the study were addressed in a pre-call with the researcher who discussed the nature of the proceedings, confidentiality, and review of the consent form.

The participants are protected by methodology proposed to the IRB. All data are stored then entered by the researcher and are double protected by antiviral protection on secured desktop computer systems. All ethical issues acknowledging data, notes, and confidential communications underwent encryption. The researcher is bound by procedures under the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative rules prior to the study.

Qualitative participation focused on written questions and a Zoom session with the researcher. No video images were used, and participants were issued a number for confidentiality and participant comfort.

IRB approval is included in the final dissertation draft. All data, notes, coding, and other artifacts are encrypted. The summary of data is not traceable to any individual participant (Baska, 2020).

Proposed Analysis

The explication of qualitative information will offer a summary of trends and themes uncovered in the interview process. This qualitative case study used its research as an approach to study phenomena using a variety of data sources (Yin, 2003). This processing determines

reliability based on the recording of detail in this stage of analysis. This analysis processing includes these categories defined by Yin (2003):

1. Organization of data;
2. Interpretation of data that is developed and clearly defined;
3. Visualization of the data;
4. Management of coding;
5. Thematically categorizing coding; and
6. Recording findings.

Steps 1 through 3 are the first cycle of coding. Steps 4 through 6 identify the second cycle of coding.

This research began with the process of identification of the sampling strategy with leadership and followed groups with one organization of case study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Referrals for participants were identified by access to the CEO of the company and departments listed on the company website.

Narrative Research Inquiry

As this qualitative study progressed, coding processes and analysis strategies emerged that would fully permit abstraction and relatedness of data that would be a foundation for future theoretical development (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The spirit of deductive query, integration and syntheses of knowledge presents empirical data that are validated with theory driven analyses. This is supported by the evolving use of narrative research inquiry. This offers a dialectical synthesis between inductivism and deductivism by exploration on an individual and socially interactive level in response to change (J. H. Kim, 2016). Open coding is a basis for narrative analysis. Narrative research takes it a step farther with conceptual refinement that does

not take the empirical statements in data for granted. To build valid theories on data, there is an ontological and linguistic presentation of phenomena identified in categorical support presented in the axial coding of narrative research (Weick, 2001).

The narrative analysis in this current study uses an action-oriented three-dimensional-inquiry paradigm model to support the building of categorical structures (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This is based on the principles of axial coding and selective coding in grounded theories. The validation of theory in narrative research presented in the following explicit grounding processes of data coding espoused by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). These include:

- Theoretical matching at the temporal level of inquiry or description;
- explicit empirical validation in individual stories of change within the organization.

This is an inquiry phase.

- evaluation of theoretical cohesion, thus an explanation of change.

This evolution in the current research process can identify new theories or categories with reference made to other existing theories of change. These new theoretical situations are implied by an evolving theoretical grounding based on the findings of Clandinin and Connelly (2000). This current research uses this theoretical matching in narrative analysis to support data categorical findings based on former theories of change. Gathering and analyzing data increased the knowledge of this research. This evolution of empirical and theoretical orientation can lead to revised or refined research questions that point to new theoretical orientation.

Coding

This process of coding in phenomenological and qualitative research is focused on the identification of concepts and their relationships from interview transcripts (Decuir-Gunby et al., 2011). In response to the complexity of the environmental changes required in a trans-pandemic

recovery, this current research presents a trifecta of coding methodology, including pattern coding, focus coding, and axial coding to respond adequately to clarity of data reporting. They are defined as:

- Pattern coding looks at explanatory or inferential codes that identify an emergent theme or explanation. This offers a means of setting up smaller numbers of sets or constructs (Saldana, 2009).
- Focused coding identifies the most frequent and significant initial codes to develop categories that make analytic sense (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006)
- Axial coding is the final stage of coding that synthesizes and reevaluates the categorization of thematic explanations of phenomena (Decuir-Gunby et al., 2011).

Utilizing the processes listed above includes recording of interviews dealing with specific phenomena relevant to the subject of organizational change. Data transcription and analysis of data are in accordance with phenomenological research design principles (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). This analysis followed the listed format of research:

Researcher defines personal experiences with crisis leadership change during COVID-19 pandemic recovery. These experiences were bracketed and set aside for future reference.

1. Next, a textural description included what the participants in the study experienced based on how the individuals experienced the phenomena of change (Patterned coding).
2. The data responses are identified into categories of response statements (Patterned coding).
3. The data are horizontalized with significant statements identified (Focused coding).

4. The next step includes categorization of nonrepetitive, non-overlapping statements (Focused coding).
5. Then categorization of significant statements is thematically collected identifying units of meaning (Axial coding).
6. Additionally, a textural description is devised that includes what the participants in the study experienced (Axial coding).
7. Next, a structural description is composed defining how the experience of change happened and the individual contexts of the change process are noted by participants.
8. This step is contextual and specific to each setting of the change experience (Axial coding).
9. Last, a composite description of the textural and structural descriptions is established by the researcher to form a description of the phenomena. This explains what was experienced and how it was contextualized as experience. This step defines the overall responsive feelings of the participants (Axial coding).

The explication of qualitative information offers a summary of trends and themes uncovered in the interview process.

The introduction of narrative analysis offers an enhanced schematic to order data and develop further questions based on general and analytic query. This is executed in coding with improved categorization and explanation of support with previous theories of change and future exploration in theory.

The final step was a summary of the results based on the application and reference to the research questions. The three-tier questions and focus groups underwent coding, comparison, and interpretation with emerging themes and trends of change.

As there are many ways to interpret data, this study utilized the following critical success factors to evaluate whether positive organizational change was actualized. This phase of qualitative research was based on guidelines from Creswell and Creswell (2018). Included were survey assessment status, validity and reliability of question formats, and evaluation of data. Data were coded using steps in the qualitative data collection phase include researcher transcription:

1. Question design;
2. Collection procedures;
3. Communication to the selection pool. This includes consent documents and possible interview data using Zoom.
4. Collect and analyze the data.
 - a. Create initial coding then connect to concept maps on thematically to categorize comments;
 - b. Establish review and revise codes into themes, opinions, and beliefs.
5. Analyze and secure visual representations using open and axial coding that illustrates and interprets qualitative results.

In qualitative research, reliability and validity of the instruments used are very important for minimizing errors that may arise because of measurement challenges in the research study. Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of the instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The stability or test-retest reliability of the survey instrument was obtained through a pilot testing of the data set conducted by this researcher. This testing has importance to establish the validity of the coding of the data sets.

Reliability of research is enhanced by this trail of procedures. These replication procedures inform future research with detailed maps of data collection to support other data gathering processes. Peer review was conducted by Pepperdine professor and Judge John Tobin.

Means to Ensure Study Validity

This study sought to return equilibrium to a company challenged by the new normal of post pandemic confusion. It is imperative to ensure steps of reliability and validity using comprehensive qualitative processing that is concrete and specific to data collection. This research began with a nod to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), who identified good research as that which ensures validity of data and results. Based on this strategy, repeat testing and trainee consultation sessions were recommended for this study.

Qualitative Validity

Qualitative internal validity refers to the range of data that represents the research questions. Threats to internal validity include challenges to the research, setting, and/or the environment. Internal validity threats can be procedural and challenge the researcher's ability to draw factual conclusions from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The data in this procedure focus on three strategies: (a) Evidence from the literature review, (b) Triangulation of data from other data sources or theories, and (c) Survey of practitioners. This information can reduce threats and ensure validity. This current study used triangulation as a primary focus to support validity. This current research utilized the following methods to ensure correct scrutiny and results of the qualitative involvement of the study.

- Screening out bias toward interviewees on the part of the researcher;
- prescreening protocols carefully delineated by all participants;

- all interviews held via Zoom or related sources presented researcher-participant dialog following IRB parameters; and
- validation of researcher trustworthiness is supported by the protocol listed above.

Triangulation of Data

A primary objective of this study was to use triangulation of the qualitative methods to achieve better accuracy of the interpretation of results by testing the validity and reliability of data. This processing occurred by determining their efficacy beyond chance involvement. Triangulation is a validity tool where investigation looks for convergence among multiple sources across the strata of data (Jick, 1979). In the current research, methodological triangulation focused on qualitative principle-based interviews (additional researchers looked at questions prior to use and evaluated coding after processing; anonymity of subjects was preserved, coding and multiple theories (Denzin, 1970).

Plans for Chapter 4

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggested that research design, using multiple theories, should indicate how qualitative research informs a deeper understanding of statistical findings. This current project strategy reports findings using tables, and media that explain and support the integration of data. The designated summary demonstrates findings that present the objectives of the research and the approach used to ensure that qualitative data were protected using detailed procedures and protocols.

The study findings demonstrate the rigor and efficacy of the researcher's procedures and practices that offered clarity to specific results using supportive qualitative themes and codes. The qualitative phase is validated by protocols and strict adherence to IRB parameters. Chapter

4, supportive to narrative research, presents the experiences of the individuals in the midst of organizational change in a narrative exposition (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Chapter 4: Results Analysis of Empirical Material

It is the best of times and the worst of times, as we approach 2023. This twin chaos is our new normal. In a global culture, with information at our fingertips, we are living our digital life. We populate social media networks. We are online to shop, offline to look at downloaded R-rated films, and in line with social media that stimulate the senses and expel personal excitement in what Neff (2014) referred to as *digital exhaust*. Individuals become personal data in their narratives of life (Georgakopoulou, 2016). The human organism of individual experience is tactile, erotic, expressive as the narrative is expressed, adjusted, and climaxed in change that is the culmination of the gestalt group effort (Lewin, 1951).

The convergence of data analysis in this digital life is the purpose of this study. This current study was to delve into life experiences of individuals at an organization in the midst of radical organizational change (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The research materials obtained for this study were from a purposive sample of 12 managers, executives, and team members from a public sector organization. These business leaders were in the throes of proposed and already-implemented organizational change in response to the transitional period induced by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The world is in transition in response to global changes. This transition is informed by the pandemic and interpreted by politicians, corporations, individuals, and this researcher in a quest to revise Lewin, look at change in a case study, and refurbish old paradigms with new insights. The conceptualization of this current research begins with change, transitions with new ideas, and is finalized (starting with this chapter) with a framework of change inspired by a narrative of research realized in case study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Restating Purpose of Study

In this narrative inquiry, data analysis and interpretation work in tandem, as narrative meaning is in response to concurrent analysis with interpretation (J. H. Kim, 2016). With a nod to Lewin, this research is based on an updated version of research protocol that is iterative, cyclical, and participative in nature, moving through change based on action research moving through narrative, proposed interventions, and evaluative change (Lewin, 1948).

This current study in response to the drama of global change and pandemic transition is open in response to bridge the context of the study with an evolving research questioning, purposeful data collection, and methods of data analysis. While data analysis in qualitative research is typically composed of previously proposed processes and theories; the methods of data analysis must be informed by and contingent upon research design and methodology. This process is to ensure integrity and trustworthiness of research with a holistic analysis of a case study bound in a detailed description of social processes that denote pending change in the organization (Yin, 2018).

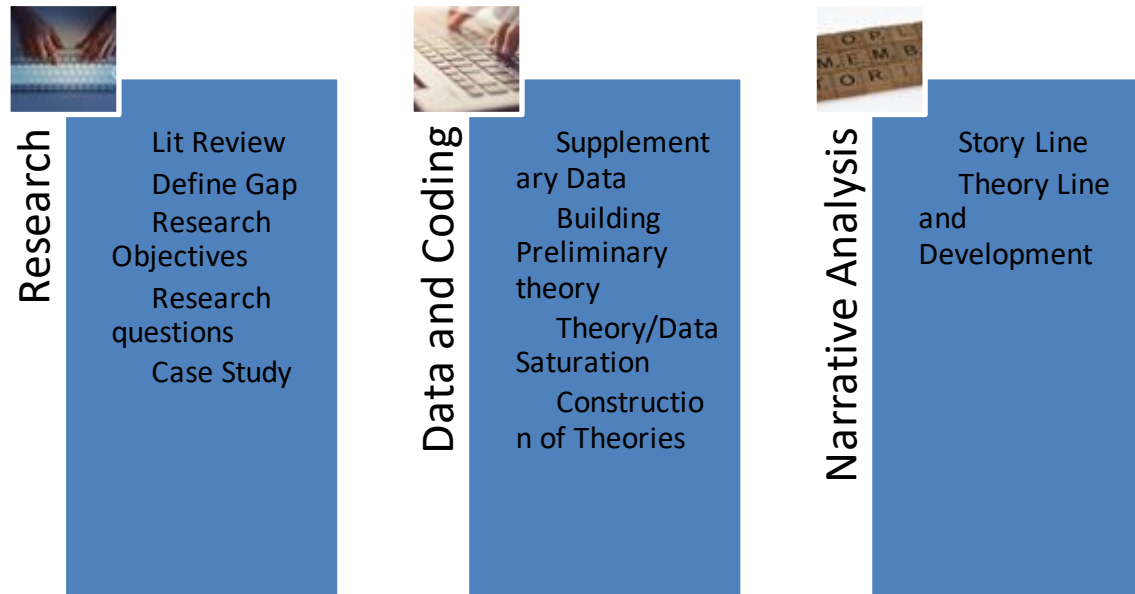
The triangulation approach to constructing theory was employed in this case study project. Analysis of evidence and data is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of working in case study. To overcome this challenge, this current study employs methodology such as data saturation in coding and analysis triangulation to interpret findings (Morse, 1991; Yin, 2018). Flyvbjerg (2006) posited that case studies are founded in a substantial basis of narrative interpretation. To support objectivity in case study analysis and confront issues of scientific data support, this research study used the following:

- Data triangulation supports objectivity with data saturation. Validity was enhanced with multiple sources of information, forming themes or categories in coding (Nobel & Heale, 2019).
- Narrative analysis strong storylines of informants' truths during the change process (Yin, 2018).
- Grounded theory was used to generate information on concepts and constructs of data themes to support theories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Data collection analysis and final theory usage stand in strong relationship in this study and inform one another in the application of narrative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The usage of the study is derived from the data to offer insight, enhance understanding of change within an organization, and provide a detailed plan for future action or theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This rendering (Figure 10) presents the flow of qualitative research and theory procedures to define the analysis triangulation research procedure based on this current study.

Figure 10

Data Triangulation Schematic Based on Current Research Paradigm



Research Question Restated Inquiry Begins

The purpose of this study was to experience change within an organization case study. The drama of change was founded on the theories of Lewin and defined in analysis of personal experience within the narratives of participants' mental constructs while in the throes of organizational change. This research gained access into the individual construct, feelings, and behaviors in the middle of pandemic-induced change and later dialogue interviews with research question inquiry:

- What stories did participants involved in organizational change use to describe their feelings, movement through change, and sustaining or re-creating change?
- What is revealed or not revealed by the participants' narratives, identified in their interviews as their behaviors in response to organizational change?

The Methods of Analysis

The narratives from Zoom interviews were the means of analysis in this study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In the spirit of Lewin (1947a), it is the gestalt ideation that identifies the group as one. Creswell & Creswell (2018) called this a phenomenon inspired by the individual and inspired by leadership. Fox et al. (2020) looked at the social context evidenced in social media with the individual expressing and embracing change on YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok.

As mentioned earlier, the analysis moves through a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Lewinian (1948) change follows a similar template in the change in three steps. The inquiry follows an analysis structure in line with Lewin as indicated:

- Temporal inquiries of change within the organization defined by leadership personalized by the individual participant;
- social experiences within the organization move through change in response to direction inspired by leadership in response to the traversing environment; and
- inquiry of change is a step toward the corporate leadership that embraces change and inspires growth through interaction and evaluation of change.

This current research, in a contemporary update of Lewin's principles of change, suggests a narrative approach as a frame of reference. This is an approach that communicates a frame of reference during the inquiry process that directs a research method. This research method validates the research study. This researcher contends that given the nature of case study analysis, this narrative approach is both a phenomenon and the method (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This analysis of narrative stories is in the framework of Lewin's sociocultural theories supportive of his change in three steps (Lewin, 1948). It is postulated in this current research that individual change and development is not isolated from the phenomena of environment and

organizational culture (Elbaz-Luwish, 2005; Lewin, 1948; Vygotsky, 2000). With triangulation, observation of the case study participants in the process of social media presentations, and evaluation of data analyses and interpretation, this current research builds on narrative story evaluation to define new theory (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Style of Analysis

Narrative inquiry, as used in this research, was the obvious result of iterative analyses of case study subject matter. As this method of inquiry has been criticized for not being theoretical enough (Boje, 2001; Clandinin & Connelly 2000); this has changed based on the challenges of global communication. This current study is a clarion response to international communication changes, especially in the context of organizational change that has intentionally focused on the new validity of narrative analysis encouraged by new technology and past research (Gubrium & Holstein, 2012; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000).

It is suggested by recent research that researchers create meaning and constructs in experiences during organizational change by co-creating a collaborative interaction between participant and the researcher (Burnes et al., 2016). This current study uses the analytical construct of three-dimensional-narrative inquiry space. In this methodology, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested that narrative experiences in change is a sociological continuum of corporate behaviors with a past shared experiential activity and this leads to experiential future change or new theories of shared experience. This current study postulates that Lewin's change in three steps supports this style of analysis and narrative interpretation. Both narrative analysis and Lewin's theories are based in sociology and the study of human behavior in reaction to change.

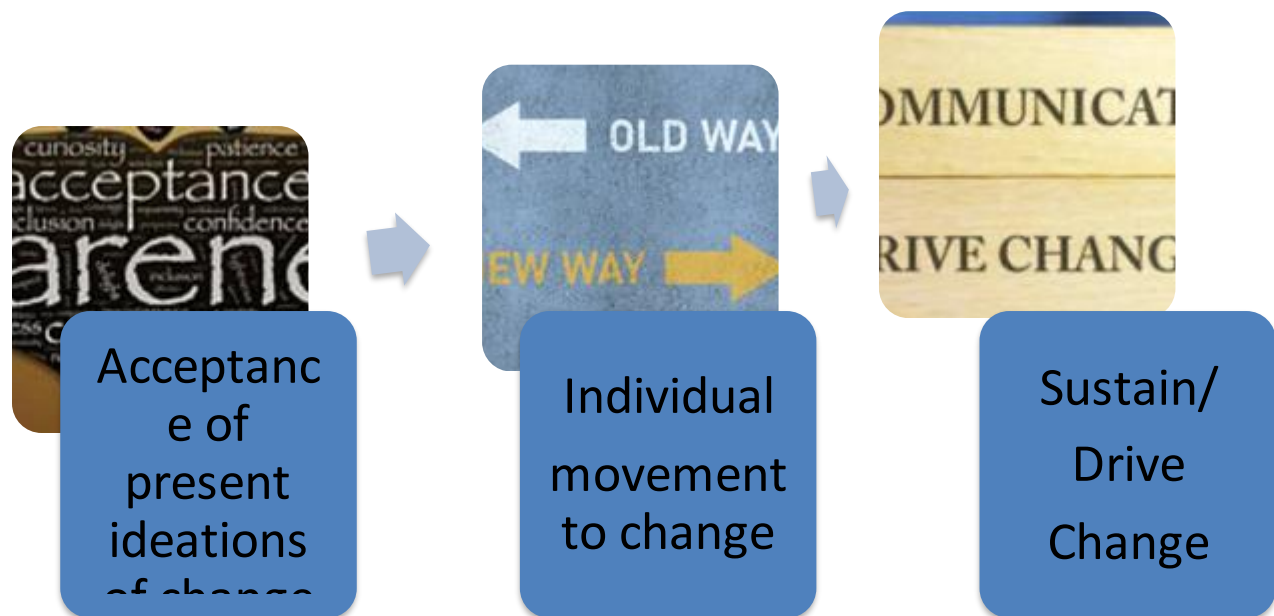
Questions of interest this study answers:

- How did the narratives of participants in organizational change describe their experiences metaphorically?
- How do the stories convey the drama of change, thematically and metaphorically, during company transitional change activities?

The analytical construct of three-dimensional-narrative inquiry has three steps:

1. The first dimension looks at past and present ideations of change or behaviors;
2. the second dimension looks at the context of the individual in experiences or movement to acceptance of change; and
3. the third dimension refers to the environmental elements and how change is executed and sustained in the corporate culture.

Lewin's change in three steps mirrors a similar experiential trajectory to this three-dimensional construct in Figure 11.

Figure 11*Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry*

Note. Change in three-dimensional narrative inquiry. Schematic designed for this research.

The Analysis Process in Narrative Inquiry Case Study

In 2020, COVID-19 hit. With it, corporate change shook up the public sector of business globally (Walensky et al., 2021). The pandemic was high drama at its best. With the climax of action, the shutdown of the world economy as we knew it ensued. Organizations such as the case study subject, Munro & Associates, used new technology in the guise of YouTube to present their manufacturing lean design theories in a new light. Munro & Associates dramatized the critical problems of management in dealing with product development by tearing down electric vehicles and offering the manufacturer the opportunity to benefit from their design expertise.

In management workshops, as a corporate consultant, this researcher used a theatrical play presentation of organizational theater. Here, tailor-made plays were staged for organizations in workshops where problem situations were dramatized. These presentations aided corporate cultures in management meetings, micropolitics in the workplace, and presented new concepts of

strategic change and planning (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Lewin (1947a) used change in three steps to dramatize the three steps of change in an organization, this theatrical intervention in organizations is not new, for the ancient Greeks used theater to dramatize change in topical issues and presented dramatization of the ancient mythical Titans to confer stories of change. As the Greeks found a new theatrical voice to communicate change, fast-forward to organizations in France and Germany that used organizational theater to communicate conflict and corporate change (Wehner & Dabitz, 1999). Lewin (1997) offered a rhythm, a voice in the sociology of human interaction that responds to the environment with the drama and behavior actions in the process of change. It is here the convergence of corporate drama, environmental response, and the usage of new technologies meets to communicate change in a case study of employees with a voice of change.

Analysis Act 1: Temporal Context—Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry

Within Munro & Associates, business times were changing: the early 2020s were a time of unprecedented change. The novel coronavirus national emergency was declared in March 2020, with California becoming the first state to declare a stay-at-home order. Munro & Associates launched Munro Live on YouTube in 2018 with video analyses and interviews on aspects of manufacturing and corporate design strategies. This was 20 years after Sandy Munro started his own consultancy under the Munro & Associate banner in Troy Michigan.

His specialty is his lean design based on Japanese concepts of speed and resources used in mass production. Munro perfected this design genre in the United States with lean manufacturing focusing on customer, product design, test production, and knowledge. Located in Auburn Hills, Michigan, the company performs electric vehicle benchmarking, consults in aerospace, defense, and medical sectors.

Temporal Dimension

It was during this time as a temporary response to the pandemic restrictions that Munro Live on YouTube had more than 500,000 subscribers (Munro & Associates, n. d.). It was during transition in company presentation and keeping the company productive during this abrupt and disrupting radical organizational change that employees responded to management strategies for change conferred by several company leaders as new and challenging. Most of Munro's employees were considered program managers and specialists in their departments. This represents an interesting leadership quality and a unity forming work ethic.

Change from status quo in response to the environment of change induced by the pandemic was a process encouraged by leadership. It was time to embrace new technology and come to people where they were since trade shows and manufacturing events were put on a pandemic-induced hold. Leadership had to rely on its small staff to keep the company afloat.

Their stories embraced change in three storied steps similar to Lewin's change in three steps (Lewin, 1947b). The drama of change was the conduit to the then, new normal. In that time frame of 2021, a current temporal space change was used by CEO leadership. A new direction was needed on YouTube. Top leadership will be identified by L. Subsequent program managers will be identified by M. The following transcript excerpt mirror three dramatic acts of narrative that this research compiled based on data that mirrors Lewin's change in three steps for each act towards change.

- L1: Felt a "fear of the unknown" and described being a Millennial but was not as "familiar with Internet platforms of communication."
- L2: "I prefer in person work with my [manufacturing] clients but I will try to adapt."

- L1: responded to this type of comment with a nod to trying to adapt to changes and offered past and sometimes emotional stories of change that occurred during a career in another era and time frame generationally.
- L3: “I have these skills and knowledge of the Internet, actually I think I will be a help with my Internet skills. It is good when a hobby becomes helpful in the workplace. New ground is always challenging.”

Unprecedented radical change with businesses and organizations working under the pressures of new working strategies and consumer interaction were evidenced in the behavioral and communication responses to leadership and corporate redirection. As Lewin presented Step 1 in his theory of change as movement to a new status quo in organizational culture, this case study organization is on point with leadership offering a new corporate direction validated in response to the changing temporal milieu.

Analysis Act 2: The Second Dimension of Narrative Inquiry—Movement Toward Change

Leadership research participants identified as L and program managers identified as M presented their comments in YouTube narratives and Zoom Interviews. Ten respondents (two female; eight male) and ages in categories from millennial to baby boomer representation. Ethnicity was three people of color and seven of European or Caucasian descent.

This current study following the inspiration of Clandinin and Connelly (2000) with this second dimension of narrative inquiry analysis focused on four distinct strategies. They were the social dimensions of corporate behavior deemed introspection, outward reactions, backward remembrance of workplace ideations, and forward workplace changes. The analysis in this current study simultaneously focuses in all four dimensions and supports the fluid nature of interviews and analysis.

Descriptive Pattern of Coding

Descriptive coding was used in this research to isolate elements of data into categories, then axial coding (both mentioned in Chapter 3) to channel these ideas in a heuristic transition to overall themes or theories (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The question arises as to what descriptive terms or metaphors participants used to describe their experiences and realities in organization change. This second phase of narrative inquiry aligns with Lewin's (1947a) second step in change in three steps. This step defines a movement toward change that is personal, reflective, and introspective as the individual accepts a leadership guidance but internally makes change their own (Bakari et al., 2017). There was a total of 11 code metaphor when queried about being in the midst of organizational change (taken from Zoom interviews):

1. Confusion at first. I did not know where I was going.

Conferred by:

M3

M5

M7

2. I did believe we could do this.

M1

M4

M7

3. It made us all worried and we were tense, but I think this inspired us as a company.

M1

M2

M7

L1

4. We were tearing down cars for study, but it was like not having a road map when we started. Boy did we get there.

L1

L2

5. It was like watching a movie on YouTube, but we were in the movie!

L2

M7

6. We were literally driving cars, with no map. But you know what, each team member pulled their own weight and then some. We worked together. We did not stop.

L1

L2

M1

M3

M6

M7

M8

7. We each had a role to fill, early on with no clear direction. But we had vision.

L2

M2

M7

M8

8. There were many changes, but we adapted as we went along.

L2

M7

M8

M9

M10

9. I felt like we were in the right direction.

M2

L2

L5

L7

10. I went away and came back. I needed the creativity of this company.

L3

11. Did I ever think “*we got this.*” At first, I was open to change, finally the dust cleared.

L4

L5

L7

Analysis Act 3: The Third Dimension of Narrative Inquiry—The Landscape of Change

The case study organization positions were configured with program managers in charge of their particular assignment. These were the Leadership identified study subjects. The organization change scenario, based on pandemic response, was partially implemented change, or change in process. The frontline leadership was in the position of reading the change

demanded by the environment or landscape and encouraging Management identified department leaders with behavior adjustment to facilitate and accept change in workplace strategies.

In narrative analysis, the landscape, environment dimensions inform the temporal work situation evolving in change and influenced by the personal and individual response of the department participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

A team leader, L3, described their work environmental landscape as a paradigm change.

L3-Zoom Interview: Our work is presented on YouTube. We reach so many people and influence many others in ways we did not necessarily anticipate. We are each a specialist in our own area as program managers. We are problem solvers. Ours is a modern way of business communication in the public workspace

A Manager described the environment as:

M2-Phone Interview: “Our organization responds in new ways to contemporary operating contexts. We took risks during the work lockdown. We had and continue to have great influence on corporations and individual engineers.”

The narrative space of inquiry, just presented, offers the temporal, social, and physical landscape of organization changes that coordinate in today’s changing world with Lewin’s foundational change in three steps (Lewin, 1947b, 1997). Just as Lewin’s work, founded in physics and expounded in sociological expressions, gave credence to individuals’ shared experiences in change, this current study contends that founded in Lewin, the narrative space of inquiry uses the environment and physical dimensions to influence the personal, work, and social dimensions of participants. That is, individuals traverse their experiences in a context informed by physical and temporal dimensions. It is at the convergence of these theories, organizational strategies, and social contexts that this current study seeks analysis and follows Clandinin and

Connelly (2000) individual analyses as socially scrutinized in four directions: looking inward and outward both in the past and the future. Lewin identified this as the gestalt of social interactions. In physics it is known as Newtonian mechanics (Kurki-Suonio, 2011). All properties have meanings in bodies, motion, and interactions. This element of pure phenomenon in physics is integral in Lewin's change theory (1947b) This current study supports that acknowledgement of Lewin's change theory, founded in physics, defined by Clandinin and Connelly's narrative questioning of context, suggests a moving type of discussion and story analysis that promoted an interview process that coded with an understanding of connecting patterns. That analysis follows with Section 1, identifying the narratives of metaphor in the content of social behaviors (Lewin, 1948). Section 2 incorporates a natural scientific analysis that is strengthened by context and interpretation informed by the landscape or environmental view (Lewin, 1997).

Analogies and Analyses

Coding evidenced nine analogies or metaphors to describe personal experience in change. The analogies/metaphors are visibly presented in Figure 12 with Department Leader Group and Figure 13 with Leadership Group.

Figure 12

Management Department Leader Group With response n

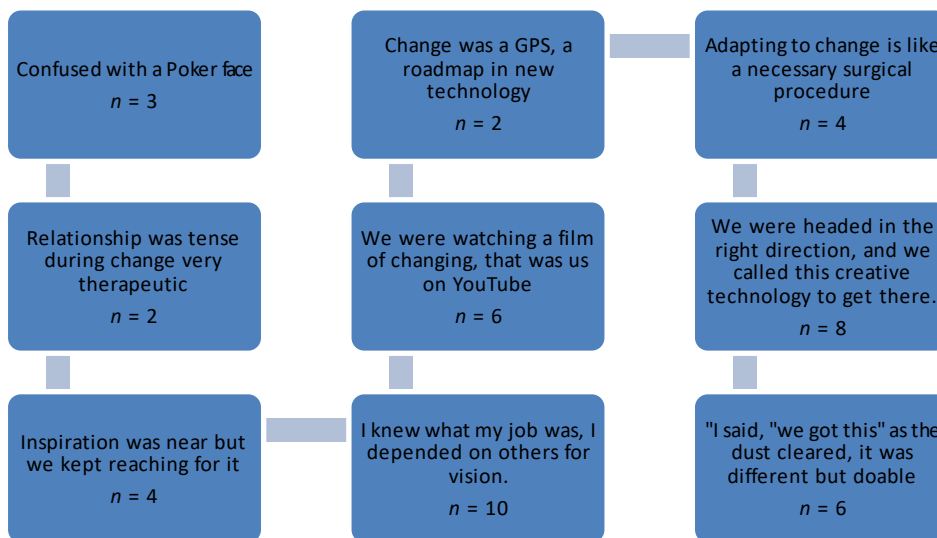
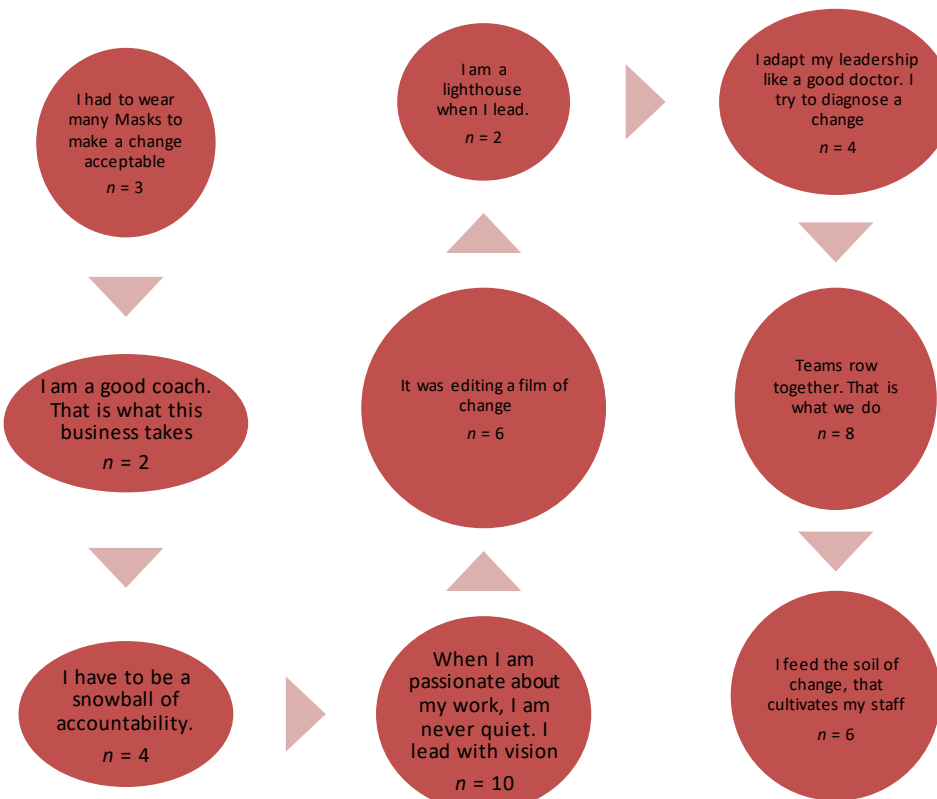


Figure 13

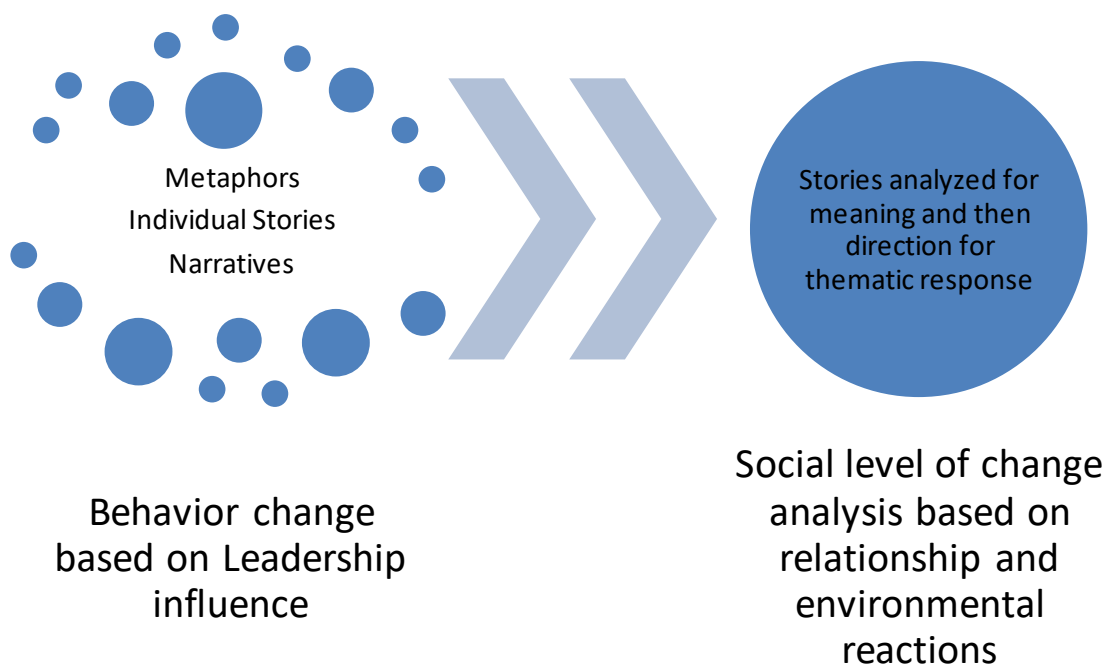
Leadership Group



These metaphors were an integral unit of analysis that expressed conversational interviews, stories, and narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). According to Lewin (1951), change happens within three steps that are evidenced in metaphorical analysis. Leadership must win their managers' confidence, behavior changes in movement toward change, and last, a social level of change is realized and processed in reaction to the work culture and changing environment. Figure 14 identifies metaphor analysis structure of study.

Figure 14

Analyses of Current Study Leadership and Metaphors



Narrative inquiry based on three dimensions mentioned as temporal space, personality identification, individual stories, and landscape of change environment can be interpreted as describing, interpreting, and explaining change. This pattern of narrative inquiry, predicated on metaphorical analysis and based in Lewin's Field theory and change in three steps, identifies the following metaphors:

- Temporal in the moment analysis identifies wearing of masks. This denotes a hiding of persona until change is implemented or understood. A game of leadership poker and follower masking moves toward tension in response to environmental induced change processing.
- Personality inquiry is expressed in metaphors of direction, lighthouse, being an actor in a film that is on YouTube but having overall vision with movement through change.
- Landscape environmental expression of change was metaphorically expressed as a diagnosis and doctor of change, moving together or rowing in the right direction, and last the Earth is a foundation for change cultivated after clearing the dust of confusion.

Each group of leaders was surprisingly consistent with their illusions and metaphorical expressions of behavior. Narrative research by Weick (2001) and Snowden (2000) emphasized the role of language in the process of the communicator creating meaningful messages about behavior. These messages metaphorically delivered are a consistent theme in Weick and Snowden's development of theory based on narrative patterns. This theme was that complex environments, matched with complex processing mechanisms such as narrative with accelerated pace and varied (actor) participant composition, denote a narrative as a communicative form that is consistent with organizational complexity and resolute change (Luhman & Boje, 2001).

Weick (2001) and Snowden (2000) asserted that the complexity of environment processing change is understood when language and the flexibility of metaphor and the story are a device to offer clarity to the processing of change. They both asserted that sometimes turbulent

environments disrupt the physics of the scientific management approach to media and policy making.

It is here that this research concludes this chapter with distillation analyses on the study of organizational change using the geographical survey term of triangulation using two points to identify a third. This current research will conclude this chapter with a first-person narrative and final thoughts on all analyses in complex narrative case study situations.

To restate the goal of this chapter, these analyses starting points looked at complex systems processes change and the positioning of the narrative framework that seeks to interface and mediate the complexities of communication in organizational change, science, and media; all influenced by contemporary cultural and environmental manifestations.

Narrative of Change

A narrative change expressed metaphorically in response to a new work situation on YouTube for the organization reads like a script for a movie of the week. This script is based on excerpts from individual Zoom interviews with participants conducted in September 2022.

Scene 1

It was the best of times with the worst of circumstances after the pandemic. Spring was here and with it the expectations of blossoming change. Lockdown was in the air and chaos in the office could be cut with a knife. Pandemic pandemonium had hit the organization.

L1 stated, “Making change is like wearing a mask. I have to keep my face up. To keep everyone together.”

L2 stated, “I am a good coach. I know the new technology. We can do our design online.”

M1 stated:

When it came to change and being on YouTube, I must say, I had to put on a poker face and say I know what I am doing. Sometimes illusion can move you to try new things. I have to show myself I can change my workplace persona to try new ways of presenting the work I know best.

M4 stated:

I felt the tension of not going to trade shows and presenting our product. I said, “show me this is going to work.” I know the Internet but is it for our company? I am open but (trails off in emotion).

L2 stated, “I am *all-in this game!* I am here for inspiration, a groundskeeper or gate keeper; a conduit or a channel to keep things directed. You have always done the work. Now it is just a new platform.”

L1 stated, “Big changes come from small wins. That is what we do. We break it down so others can build up their businesses. Right now, we are reconstructing our plan of delivery. We are builders.”

M6 stated, “If they (L1 and L2) think we can work in this media platform and make it better to present our product to manufacturers, then I am up for the challenge.”

The scenario listed above reads like the script of change. Storyline, like a storyboard in a film, serves as the cognitive, affective, and emotional connection that brings meaning to data interpreted from events (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This current study was on a quest to weave a collective narrative from interview transcripts that used a combination of structural analysis, story form, function, and phenomenon (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The metaphorical structure of the narrative followed the outline of good drama in three acts. These three behavioral acts were also the underpinning of Lewin's change in three steps.

Unpacking the similes and metaphors used by participants go as follows.

Act 1: Unfreezing Old Thought

Radical organization change has different effects on participants in leader and department positions. The case study organization is no exception. Leadership employed two descriptive metaphors to describe the experience of change with a mask that allowed this individual to keep appearances or face up. Just as actors in Greek theater used masks to transform into different characters and roles, leadership role playing masks a dual existence of an inner and outer life (Waterfield, 2004). This leader, in the spirit of Lewin's social theories of change, transformed their persona as an artist or leader conveying the meaning of transformation in the workplace. It is a social metacommunication where new meaning comes from past experiences (Georgakopoulou, 2016; Lewin, 1943, 1997). This current study codifies this as leadership sanctioning the change process as prescribing a model for change and preparing for the second step of the change process.

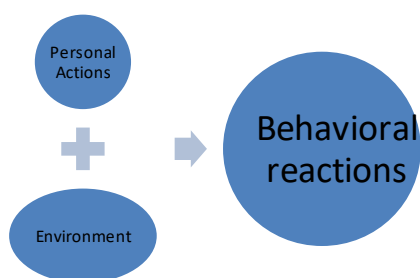
Leadership used the metaphors of masks and face at figurative levels to exhibit purpose in work and control in leadership. Being at the helm of operations was keeping face, organizational change was manifest as a metaphorical facelift, as this officer of the company exhibited a lifted countenance of confidence and tight control of the situation on YouTube. Facing change head on is participatory leadership within uncertain social change (Lewin, 1947 a, 1997; Meah, 1954). According to Lewin, this leader is facing change by looking it dead in the eye, while encouraging others to follow the path to change success (1947b).

Lewin's Field theory presents actors (participants) in the system with a subjective view who interact in the objective environment by their control of psychological factors (Hobman & Walker, 2015; Lewin, 1951).

Leadership demonstrated this control of the life space or environment with the declaration of being a coach and in control of system success with the *we got this* statement. The metaphor of coach is in line with Leadership's imagery of keeping face and system control in change. The objective external environment is kept under scrutiny by the subjective guidance of leadership promoting change. In this type of Field theory construct, behaviors are attempting to physically, economically, or politically, add constraints to change that are quashed by the subjectivity and leadership within the group inspiring change. Study data supports life force theory and demonstrates this behavior response to the environment with the formula in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Principles of Behavior from Study



Act 2 Movement to Change

The department leaders used imagery and metaphors reminiscent of Lewin's second stage of movement into change (Lewin, 1947a). Management used another countenance metaphor, this time a poker face. The individual expressed illusion and hiding reluctance to change behind a blank face playing a game of bluff to win the process of change. As Management was willing to

accept change in the organization, their poker face disguised their true confusion. This person used a metaphor of self-identification to soothe change anxiety. The self and the poker metaphor were posited here as a fiction. This leader in the department wants to follow leadership but has reservations about change. Subject orientation aligns here with the conceptual self. Lewin supported positive leadership as a conduit to shifting behavior of the department to the next level (Hussain et al., 2016).

Management 4 expressed tension based on the new Internet presence of the company. This participant expressed concern and emotion in not being able to find words to express their concern. Leadership 2 referred to being a player in the card game of life, the person described this as being all-in to support change and winning the card game of change. Analysis of the metaphor of the poker game of life is viewed differently from each perspective of leadership. Games of chance are just that. Each player is subject to the draw, the river, and going all in, in the poker game of life change. Lewin called this the life space in his Field theory. Both leaders are in a common game with change as the outcome. To have the winning hand, they both have to go all in. Leadership has a role to play in this game of change, keeping the appearance of being engaged in change while change is in process. All company leaders are connected in this gaming metaphor; each leader desires to play their roles or parts in change effectively. Lewin identified this as a balance in the life space, social field, and individual social interaction, that is, Stage 2 movement toward change (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b, 1951).

Act 3: Gatekeeper of Change

From Lewin's perspective, the shared metaphors of gaming, saving face, and being all-in are interconnected as they form the life space in the field of change. Lewin (1947b) would see this top leadership strategy as the gatekeepers of information that is funneled through to

department heads to facilitate change. Leadership 2 sets up this strategy as the channel of energy or information to move toward organizational change in response to pandemic limitations of business. The case study organization turns its focus on media platforms on the Web. How does this dissemination of work and organizational change presented on the Web challenge traditional models of gate keeping? As a former network journalist, this researcher is accustomed to content passing through a gate maintained by journalists before reaching the audience at-large (Popa, 2017). Herein lies the reply to the research question: Are Lewinian principles of strategic change applicable for today? It is argued by researchers that Lewin's field theory is relevant for today by adding:

- An audience channel to the theory of gatekeeping, where individuals can screen information specific to their needs, a sociological focus in Lewin theory;
- Screening of relevant information control is based on life space and environmental interaction; and
- Social interaction between participants in the life space informs gate keeping information and acceptance of resolute change.

Narrating Complexity, a Union of Theories

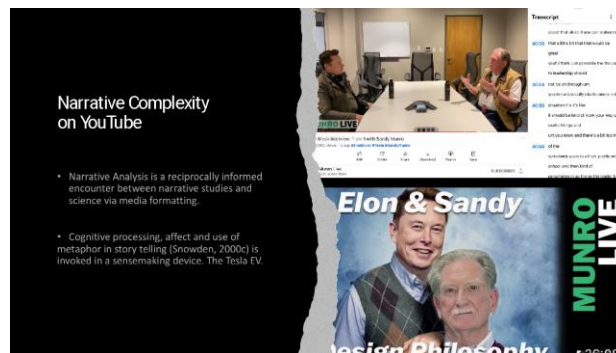
This current research with iterative processing based on the above listed narrative metaphorical analysis unpacked an emergent narrative complexity system. This system blends complexity systems theory with narrative analysis. In the narrative analysis of coding, research in visual online platform communication with the representational affordances of new media offer the possibilities of other social narratives (Czarniawska, 1998). These narrative iterations point to contemporary system theory establishing the basis for a sustainable and rigorously interdisciplinary model of narrative studies. Complexity is a science where communication of

ideas and concepts can be verbally challenging, but a narrative system of analysis can give verbal meaning to complex ideas (Snowden, 2000). Narrative complexity takes on a problem of scientific communication by using informative narratives and interactive visuals or media to communicate new ideas in contemporary formatting.

This process of narrating complexity has been the foundational strength of the case study organization Munro & Associates with its successful manufacturing video presentations on YouTube. In its presentations, the narrative channel of media is presenting its manufacturing teardown product analysis on YouTube. The narrative is foregrounded, with the fictionalized media presentation on YouTube to accommodate the complexity both formally and thematically, thus explanation of its product becomes evident (Luhman & Boje, 2001). Figure 16 is an example of YouTube Munro Live Narrative Complexity segment.

Figure 16

Munro Live YouTube Segment



Summary Narrative

This project started with a challenge of communication—of telling a story of change in an organization, that is the perfect blending of science, media, and the fiction of human behavior. This research followed a path of systems analysis with empirical data collection and narrative inquiry with metaphor analysis and words descriptive of participants' journeys in the midst of

already implemented radical organizational change. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) described a component of actions or behaviors coming to life in the fiction of storytelling. The participants in this study of change phenomena became autonomous as an actor embodying a role (Stilson, 2005). Themes that have arisen in this research captured participants' experiences during organizational change. Their personas were affected by how change influenced their self-concept and their business acumen.

Of striking interest in this case study analysis is the shared social subject and business strategies employed by leadership and department leaders. Emergent themes of shared corporate focus follow.

Theme 1: Assuming a Role, Persona, Changing Face

When leadership proposed a change in focus on YouTube presentations, although hesitant, eight out of nine participants became acceptant of change rather than mimicking a performance of accepting change (Boje, 2001; Stilson, 2005). Their countenance acquiesced as their behaviors began to change (Bakari et al., 2017; Burke, 2008). As one put on a poker face to play the game of change, another assumed a mask to get into the character of the change process. Literature suggests that the key features for change to move from the status quo to a counterfactual self (Lewin, 1947b) as prospective change is first imagined by the participant, then validated by the leadership inspiration.

Theme 2: Assuming Change in Self and Environmental Behavior

All participants noticed changes in their self-concept when taking on the role of an actor in organizational change. Recursive relationships were evident across the leadership positions with arguments and discrepancies coming back to a starting point (Avolio & Bass, 1995). These

dates usually opened conversation, according to participants, and resulted in acceptance of change.

As a researcher, it was noticed that lineal changes, or those related to environmental stimulus, were easier for participants on either side of the leadership spectrum to handle. Lewin (1948) postulated that behavioral change was predicated on trust of the social or business culture system. In recursive business situations, or backward glances to unresolved issues, leadership was challenged with the following, based on organizational change parameters (Lewin, 1948:

- Follower's must have confidence to move toward change.
- leaders gain confidence and followers in change by interaction with departments or individuals; and
- landscape change, based on environmental stimulus, changes and transitions in the business culture with revisiting organization goal status.

Theme 3: Revisiting the Landscape of Change

Theme two logically transitions from behavioral change to corporate culture movement and transitioning of change based on current issues from inside and outside of the organization. It is the movement of change, from the backward glance of day-to-day work integrations and relationships to what leadership and this researcher can learn from elements of change, that facilitate the winning of followership and willing participants in change.

The themes that emerged as respondents sought change with the organization are exemplified in the following data sample and mirror the answers to the research questions.

- RQ1 $n = 8$ responses to change acceptance encouraged by leadership.
- RQ2 $n = 9$ responses to change movement accepted by respondents

- RQ3 $n = 10$ responded that accepted change and making future adjustments to change in response to changing environment or Field theory.

Chapter 5 will offer metaphorical applications of research questions in reference to data collection and analysis.

The process of research presents the outcomes of new knowledge, innovative theory, and new hypotheses (Daiute, 2014). In the next and final act or chapter of this study, the once silent voices of change in this transitory period of organizational and global challenges expound on the resolute goals of narrative inquiry and they offer new guidelines for change after narrative analysis. This process of change will look at a level of system integration inspired by theory and based on narrative where structural issues are resolved, and potential new theory is suggested.

This research employs a narrative approach that involves content and resulted data focusing on what is said, written, or visually shown. But as supported in thematic analysis, content and data is an elusive focus of study. Thematic narrative analysis is often confused with grounded theory in qualitative methods literature. In response to this scholarly confusion, this research seeks to apply the key differences with a focus on the case study themes rather than categories that may fragment or distort clarity. Emergent themes will provide the-what, of narrative discourse and the behavioral experiences of subjects in the study.

Other Considerations

This research validated through data the following:

- Criticisms of Lewin's change theory accountability for the interaction within individual groups, society and in dealing with change based on adjustment to the iterative process of change were quashed by this case study group and their embrace of new technology. Findings agreed with Burke (2008) that depicts this

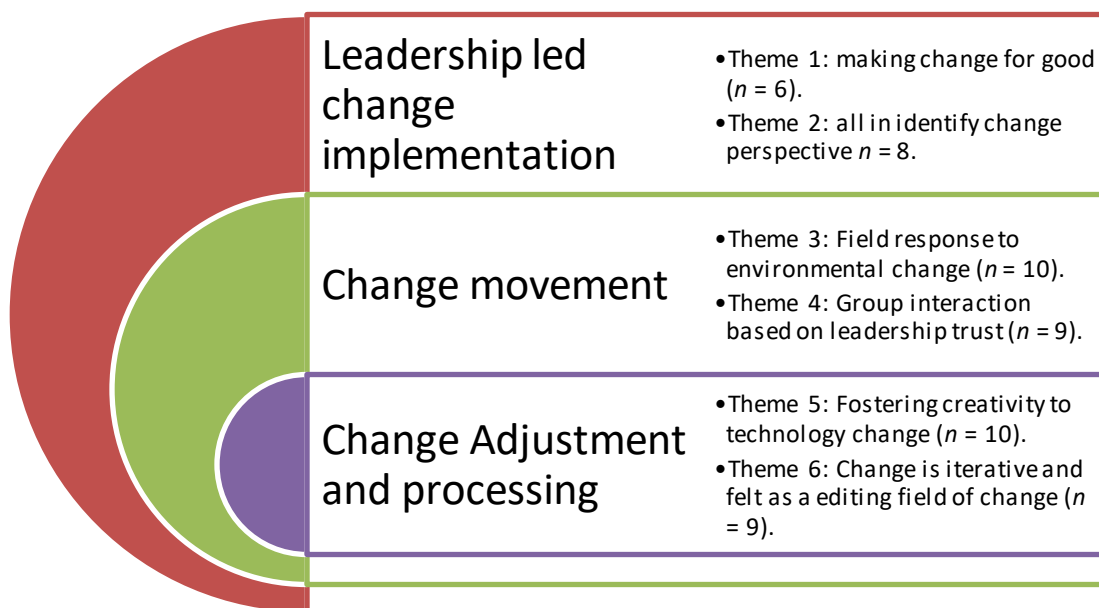
change model as a linear process. Theme 1 demonstrated leadership changing old thought paradigm with other leaders and managers in defrosting staid ideas of corporate strategies' and moving forward to new technology.

- In agreement with the behavioral focus of Lewin's Action research and Field theory, the case study groups Lean Design Model presented a people-based system (Wojciechowski et al., 2016). As evidenced by this studies Theme 2 data, trust was secured by leadership thus offering what one manager termed as a GPS or roadmap to change.
- Theme 3 was validated by Lewin's third step of change (Lewin, 1948). Leadership and managers in the study group found that change was linear and ever-changing, that is the field of change within the organization was revisited and always in process.

See Figure 17 for thematic development application and data points.

Figure 17

Themes and Leadership/Management Acceptance of Change



Chapter 5 Preview

Chapter 5 is the epilogue to this narrative inquiry subdivided into final thoughts, conclusions, recommendations, social impact, contribution to literature, and implications for new theory and research.

Concluding statements revisit the research questions (with thematic iterative adjustments) and the query of the viability of Lewin's legacy of change in the new normal. Question reboot includes:

- What conclusions can be drawn from narratives and metaphors that participants used to describe their experiences in the midst of change acceptance?
- What does narrative inquiry suggest about movement through change?
- What theories and systems support change processing for today?

Chapter 5: The End of the Story is Change

What stories do we as a culture live in as an experience to move through change, and with change to thrive or revive? How are leaders, in today's transitioning global environment beginning change, moving through change, and transitioning through a new normal that keeps demanding change? The purpose of this study was to identify change, observe organizational change, and determine the complexities of its delivery to society at-large.

This current research used a narrative backdrop and utilization of empirical materials collected through interviews (purposive sample of participants) and supported by online analysis and background information gathered from participants. These data points were collected as field texts and interpreted by this researcher as a picture of case study phenomena (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The project looked at participants in the case study group, Munro Live leadership and department leaders faced with radical change. This business strategy was a change of manufacturing analysis work situations moving to a focus of presentation on YouTube. The platform presentation was called Munro Live.

The research process included open-ended questioning in a Zoom format and narrative communicative story sharing combined for analysis. As presented in the preceding chapter, these data analysis was conducted in a three-dimensional narrative path (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

There were 10 respondents, and all replied to most questions. With triangulation and accurate response analysis in mind, all participants were approached by phone to acknowledge their answers met their change experiences.

This study noted that stories, narratives, and metaphors used by the participants were applicable to answering the research questions to describe experiences during radical change in

the organization, and second, how their stories processed change, movement (Burnes et al., 2016), and acceptance of transitioning change within the organization (Burke & Litman, 1992).

As this study went through iterative growing pains, it was noted that as a complex system, leadership and change take on different dimensions of analysis. The case study of Munro Live participants evidenced a self-organizing company with order generating rules that limit chaos even under environmental stress (Burns, 1978; Celik & Ozsoy, 2016). It is suggested that organizations that manage complexity with control delegated to responsible department heads, have leadership that encourages divergent views and operations in new patterns of work delivery and resolute success (Stacey, 2003). Herein lies the striking similarities to Lewin's Field theory and change in three steps that supports changing group behavior, self-organizing theory, and nonlinear systems of business development (Burnes, 2020).

As this case study presents as an organization functioning successfully in a complex system environment, it justified the support of complex systems analysis added to narrative inquiry analysis. Stacey (2003) posited that organizations seeking to adopt a complexity approach offer a balanced distribution of power, strong customer focus, and continuous learning in change application. Lewin's (1947 b, 1951) group-based, iterative, learning approach to change bears a close resemblance to self-organization of complexity theorists in his Action and Field theory approaches to change (1947a, 1947b).

This current organization case study falls within the context of narrative inquiry and complexity theory analysis of these interpretive sciences. It is here that social integration championed by Lewin meets at the intersection of complexity and narrative inquiry. His planned approach for change thrives in complexity theories that identify a number of theories, ideas, and research paradigms that are derived from the natural sciences (Macintosh & MacLean, 2001).

Lewin and the model of change in three step enables groups and organizations to:

- Self-organize processing change, suggested by leadership.
- Identify self-generating rules based on individual stories of change; and
- Respond to the environment is workplace specific and based on participant adherence and constantly evaluating change.

Summary of Findings

The world of literature is sometimes enhanced by the perspective of the narration of a story. In the Harry Potter series (Rowlings, 1997), third-person narration identifies Harry, the protagonist, as he. The action occurs in the past tense. A more effective means of conveying personal points of view is first-person narration. The first-person delineation of speech is the “I did this” of experience with a point-of-view *eye* or narrative voice to tell a story (Chessen, 2022). It is the narrative voice of this current study that becomes dialectical in nature, as it offers a lens and frame of recursive reasoning in the processing of change (Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

The analysis of this study is based on coded transcripts from interviews that convey leaders’ stories of change processing. The heart of analysis is evidenced in these coded excerpts from the Zoom transcripts ($n = 10$). This was phase one of the coding where this researcher read through the entirety of the interviews twice to ensure thematic quality. In the second phase of inquiry the research facilitated the process of thematic coding creating three generations of coding with primary, secondary, and auxiliary coding used to define original primary or parent coding with subsequent child and grandchild secondary coding. Note that the larger number of codes (primary $n = 22$; secondary $n = 216$; code applications $n = 75$) is the result of general, and very broad alignments such as leadership change anomalies that were not used in the final

analysis. The coding is based on deductive analysis by this investigator with emergent thematic conclusions for data query.

In the multi-tiered analysis, the primary or parent coding process in this study generated 10 themes and 50 secondary and auxiliary codes for thematic support (This was finally narrowed down to six core themes). Put in other terms this narrative analysis is based on patterned, focused, and axial coding. The codes evidenced leadership challenges within the process. At this stage the codes were reviewed and revised. The metaphors and stories codified as themes presented this researcher with consistent recursive patterns that expressed the narrative form as a means of interpersonal social engagement of the participants processing organizational change (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b). The coding processes went through three iterations with the final goal to fine tune and reduce the secondary or auxiliary codes. The first phase of coding was broad and offered many parent codes. The second stage of coding looked at related codes and refined, deleted or if applicable, renamed codes. In the second stage of data processing parent codes were reduced to 10 with 40 child or secondary codes. An example being leadership conversions where parent codes transitioned from leadership approach styles to masking leadership strategies to putting on a face of change that other followers can accept. The final phase of the coding activity was to revise primary codes to 10 and slightly below this number (see Appendix E). The final analytic results were the six themes listed below.

The analytic data for study were six themes and descriptive codifiers representing the auxiliary codes. Primary Themes noted the following with data response counts:

- Theme One Leader Values: masking change for good ($n = 6$)
- Theme Two Culture and Content: all in identify change perspectives ($n = 8$)

- Theme Three Leadership approach: environmental response reinforces change ($n = 10$)
- Theme Four: group interaction based on trust, focus and relationship ($n = 9$). Trust in this theme is manifest as a belief in leadership vision and managerial acceptance of change.
- Theme Five: fostering creativity, moving through tension with change goals. ($n = 10$)
- Theme Six: change is iterative with leadership checking and evaluating commitment ($n = 9$). Change in this theme is reevaluated and scrutinized by leadership to maintain company culture and success.

It is Theme One, leadership values that form the core of this research. The data from the narrative analysis reveals that the personal cohesiveness of this community of engineers bonded during the chaos of the pandemic and succeeded in their internet goals. This was facilitated with the underpinnings of personal values, life experiences and shared organizational culture.

Throughout the study the ten leaders repeated references to their values, confidence in teamwork and other values based on communal life experiences. Both top Leadership and Department Leadership exhibited keeping a countenance of work integrity, with a complexity of departmental interaction. This supports change goals that are global in reach with a visionary approach that is success oriented in their YouTube presentations.

This current study Organization presents internal and external cultures that influence the decisions leadership makes to implement changes effectively. The narrative coding evidenced secondary and auxiliary codes that manifested three descriptive codifiers including:

- Identify change perspectives, Lewin Change Step 1 (Lewin, 1947a);
- Embrace inclusion and department values, Lewin Step 2 (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b); and

- Optimize department culture with checks and updates on change, Lewin Step 3 (Lewin,1947a).

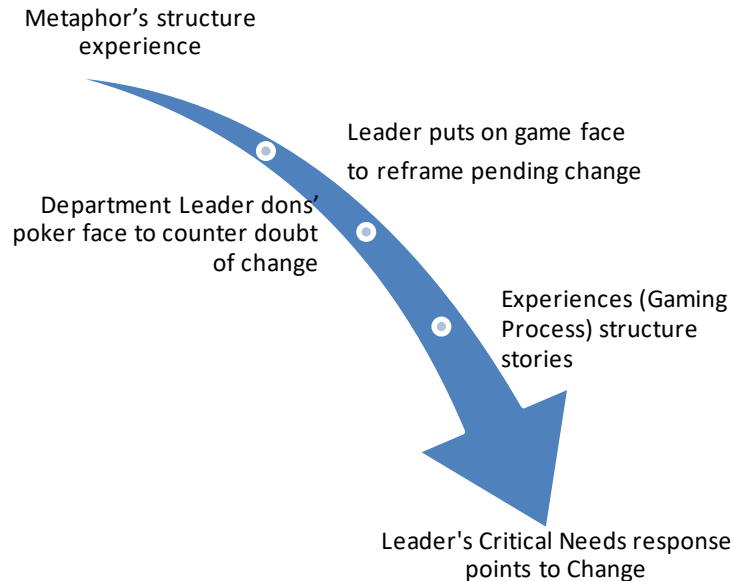
See Appendix E for Narrative Analysis with themes and codes in concert with Lewin's CATs.

Concluding Findings on Research Question 1

Leadership, whether top leaders or department leaders, spearheaded change in harmony with Lewin's (1947b) first step in change. In the narrative context, with a nod to the complexity of a changing work environment, the participants follow the following pattern: Participants' stories were connected by metaphors and stories. Then their experiences followed in the narrative. That is, their behavioral reactions were in context descriptive of their reasoning and dialectical in nature. Lewin (1951) framed this as a socio-behavioral reaction to the environment or Field theory inspired by directives of leadership to promote and encourage change (Lewin, 1948). It is here that relationship and bonding within departments encourages experiences that manifest in expressive dialogue. Narrative metaphors are exemplified in Figure 18.

Figure 18

Narrative Metaphors



Note. Winning the game of change with leadership response to critical needs from study data.

Department leaders' metaphors describing experience ranged from "tension," with four responses to leadership responding with nurturing six times. Hiding behind a mask illusion/metaphor was used by eight respondents in both leadership groups.

Using experiences through metaphor was conferred by six respondents as coming to change and just hanging out to see how it felt. It was a unique reinforcement of the Lewinian (1951) principles of sociocultural business relationship that manifest in democratically run businesses (Burnes, 2004).

In summation, the current research found that there is a pattern of experiences that participants in the study have in common with metaphors that structure their stories. It is with democratic leadership within this case study organization, participants demonstrated a processing

of individual understanding that created their own meanings of life in the midst of radical organizational change.

The findings of this study support the order-generating rules of Macintosh and MacLean (2001) that used Lewin's change in three steps approach to change. This is reminiscent of Lewin's theory of group-based action research (Burnes, 2020) that promotes change support-based on freedom of workers to learn, experiment, and pursue change in a safe work-based environment. Lewin's action research supports his concepts and metaphors of *planned change* that has a close relationship to self-organization espoused by complexity theorists (Burnes & Bernard, 2004). It is the order and disorder of the external environment that the complexity theories identify that is synonymous with Lewin's quasi-stationary equilibrium in his first step toward change (Burnes, 2004; Turner & Baker, 2019).

Concluding Thoughts on Question 2

The query of how leadership moves through inspiring change and assisting followers in this change through the processing of organizational strategies was the focus of Research Question 2. Movement through change in the current study looked at social variables that Lewin identified as social beliefs, recursive relationships, and already made thoughts on change. Individual behavior has been identified in this step as a function of the group environment or field (Burnes, 2017; Lewin, 1943). Herein lies the group dynamics of this stage of change, where leadership and department leaders concentrate on socialization processes to create disequilibrium and resolute change (Schein, 1999). Leadership at the case study company also used action research to shape behavior by using individual social reinforcement to inspire individuals to gain insight into benefits of change (Allport, 1948; Cartwright, 1951; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009).

Lived experiences and past history of change reflect heavily on department leaders' movement toward change (Baroki et al., 2021; Wojciechowski et al., 2016) Metaphors expressing change from department leaders addressed the elusive motivation to produce change that does not exist as an end in itself. There were two references to being in a film or editing a scene in a visual event. Unfreezing a situation does not necessarily predict direction, but it does inspire an individual to learn how to deal with change (Lewin, 1943; Schein, 1996).

Leaders alluded to a directional path to change with metaphors of feeling such as a GPS and having a concrete vision to move forward to change. It is a directive that the department leaders then process with their interpretations and diverse social inputs that respond to the complexity of the change environment (Vasickova, 2021; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). It is a move toward self-autonomy and away from hierarchy rule that is synonymous in organizations that exhibit democratic rule. Seven ($n = 7$) responses from department leaders fell in line with an acceptance to change with the following statements:

- I have the vision to move forward;
- We will pull out the stops—together.
- I will take this to the wall;
- It is different but we can make YouTube a real valuable presentation;
- Like fine wine, just pour me in.
- I can make this department a story of success; and
- We can learn it and be rock stars as we do it.

The diversity of these department responses to change exhibit the individual response to complexity (theories) where a mindful participant learns within the work culture and anticipates

success in change (Snowden, 2000; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Three respondents were neutral in their auxiliary codifiers and metaphorically different from the other responders ($n = 7$).

Question 3 Change Never Stops Changing

Question 3 uses self-organization in leadership directives to find success in organizational change. This processing acknowledges the operating dynamics that shifts leadership to the person who currently has the answer to expedite change in a complex work environment. (Luhman & Boje, 2001; Schein, 1996). Between both leadership segments in the case study, illusions to change in the final transitional period of change presented similar metaphors. Change was seen as a grounded (four comments), dust clearing change (two comments), and most surprising were eight comments about change as a medical diagnosis that Kurtz and Snowden (2003) interpreted as, “Collectively and individually we have many roots, cultural, medical, religious and so forth, that conjure up multiple affiliations” (p. 467).

Conclusions

The study realized reciprocal insights among three-axes of change discovery: the Change theories of Kurt Lewin (sociology and natural sciences), that of narrative-complexity interdisciplinary presentation (moving from complex systems dominant to narrative clarity) in interpretation, and this study’s analytic depth of inquiry. This current research inquiry points to new horizons of theory. New and emerging theories are marked by physical science, media science, and cognitive science. Three areas of discussion are realized here as changes in the new normal are addressed with communication, culture, and cognition (Vygotsky, 2000).

Communication With Emergence in Change

“A felt need is required for change to begin in an individual. It is in that inner realization that change is necessary” (Lewin, 1948, p. 16). The current research is nothing new, but it is

necessary. It was inspired by the narrative creativity of Kurt Lewin's field theory with a nod to sociological story and human development.

Culture in Narration and Change to Thematic Interpretation

This current study identifies the media as the epitome of contemporary fiction. What we see on the Internet, we can interpret as truth without question but that is where narrative enters to accommodate complexity in systems that cause environmental chaos reminiscent of the pandemic (Meurer et al., 2021). Change requires the evolution of environmental challenges, as Lewin identified in his Action Research and Field theories (1947a, 1947b).

Cognition, Knowledge of Change in Narrative Complexity

J. H. Kim (2016) communicated that for change to occur, individuals need to think and behave differently. The behavior of the research participants moved to accept change as their metaphors thematically blended in relationship with leadership and followed their supportive guidance. Metaphors inform narratives and narratives are built toward corresponding work experiences.

It is Lewin's social integration where leadership allows individual workers self-determined expression, developing their metaphors and story of change. Complexity in the environment would manifest as environmental determinism, where self-expression aids in behavioral change (Overton & Muller, 2013; Weick, 2001).

Change leadership personnel could be more successful winning their department followers by focusing on both system integration during change transition and social integration. The current research with narrative inquiry posits that both paradigms evidenced the connection between information and interpretation. The narrative is rich with metaphorical expressions of change, questioning, then notably corporate leadership trust was strengthened by relationship

building between top leaders and department leaders (Crayne & Medeiros, 2020; McKinsey and Company, 2022).

Implications for Organizations

This current study adds a subtext to evaluate and interpret radical change that can confound and confuse organizations involved in environmental paradigm shifts affecting business strategies. As global transitions continue in a state of flux with international business transactions ever evolving, this study invests in narrative inquiry and other cutting edge theoretical interventions to bridge a gap in new literature supported approaches to change and corporate development analytical plans for change implementation (Bakari et al., 2017).

Narrative creativity and thematic interpretation can be identified as contrived responses to environmental disturbances (the pandemic). However, it is the narrative, grounded in evolving change, the cultural interpretation of change acceptance and grounded in the complexity of transitional new theory that this research arrives potential new theories of change (Meah, 1954; Neff, 2014).

New Theoretical Potential

As with organizations, complex systems and theories keep changing on the verge of chaos but always contained by evolving new ideas and theoretical approaches (Luhman & Boje, 2001; Macintosh & MacLean, 2001; Stacey, 2003). In reappraising different theories such as Lewin's planned approach to change, this current research nods with recognition at the rigor of his work demonstrated with theory, experimentation, and practice. Lewin's (1947a) famous dictum, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory" (p. 17) was evident in change theory uncovered in this current research.

This research presents potential future theoretical inquiry based on change in three steps by Lewin. To substantiate this potential theory, this researcher offers the following:

- Substantiating the future theories based on change in three steps (CATS) by Lewin.

This current research modifies his principles for today's new normal with a modified approach to change.

- a. Modify prior thought, move through the status quo, and accept the need for change.
- b. Openness to change, facilitated by leadership and sustained by group acceptance; and
- c. Decide on directional change implementation and sustaining this change.

The modification steps for change in the new normal were used in some preliminary research with this current case study. The modification steps of change in the new normal worked next to Lewin's CATS and explained the same causality in change processing with the added asset of contemporary delivery and application to media trends and participant recognition.

- Explanatory aspects of this new theory built on the foundation of Lewin but sustained by explanations of change that address current social trends, narratives, business strategies, and new media applications.
- Predictive aspects of change and new theory are linked to other theories of change but expound on acts of attention in analysis sequences of study that were predictors of change in Lewin's Planned theories of Change (Lewin, 1948).

- Testable principles of analysis are linked to predictive steps in that a theory must make predictions that are testable, can stand up to scrutiny, and in principle, can be rejected.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Lewin recognized that change was difficult, especially in a diverse global societal platform (Burnes, 2004; Lewin, 1948). Change in today's trans-pandemic world can take unfreezing to a new level. To this writer, meltdown is a better description of change today. I channel Lewin's social consciousness tempered with a nod to the natural sciences to inspire change movement through action research. His action theory presented change requiring movement, movement based on correct analysis of a change situation, and last, an individual felt realization that change is necessary within an organization (Lewin, 1947b). It is in the spirit of Lewin that narrative inquiry can assist current researchers and organizations in providing a means of analysis that addresses change for the new normal with a deeper dive into human reactions. This area of human response can manifest social and systems implications for radical change. In research, Weick (2001) noticed that in organizational change, narrative strategies with stories and storytelling were not a mere diversion but facts, with social implications as presented by their workers. It takes a committed strong leadership mentor for change to occur (Argyris, 1992; Kouzes & Posner, 2017); herein lies a clarion call for current leadership to build a relationship and social interaction (Lewin, 1951, 1997) with themselves and those individuals who they lead through radical change. A gap in communication will be narrowed.

This current research offers a final recommendation for expanding on a method of analysis in narrative inquiry. This researcher added a narrative summary where the analysis of

participants' personal stories was transcribed, coded, thematically interpreted, and revised without change in content but for clarity and communicator's intent.

Pursuing this research model and future theoretical inquiry in development, a longitudinal study is a potential process to revisit Munro & Associates and repeatedly observe the same variables of change as the company adjusts to the ever-changing work environment (Neff, 2014). This process will contribute to methodological knowledge and thematic development by connecting interview time points with personal, interpersonal, positional, and societal levels of analysis (Grossoehme & Lipstein, 2016). Future research may also employ mixed methodology approaches to study to expand upon data strength, rigor, and validity (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

This current research utilizing other developing dynamics of change will be used in April 2023 in a consulting project with a medical facility in the process of organizational change. A functional MRI (fMRI) will add a scientific analysis data source to validate leadership responses (Tholen et al., 2020)

Summary

This reminds me of a story. There is an organization, Munro & Associates, that took a risk and explored new online business applications beginning with YouTube and a successful offering of Munro Live. It listened to the stories of employees, manufacturers, and even new audiences on YouTube. This organization evoked change with an understanding of employees and the needs within their work culture and community at-large to achieve a goal of corporate success and growth. Theme one of this study exemplifies the success of this case study group. The driver of leadership behavior as seen in leader values is prominent in the findings of this study. The data from the narrative analysis reveals the strength of this organization as being

shared values of engineers shaped by life experiences and rising to the occasion of radical change based on environment responses. Throughout the interview process leadership, whether top or departmental heads gave similar reasoning why and how they faced organizational challenges.

It is herein that three themes emerged in corporate leadership within the case study organization in line with Lewin's change in three steps (1947a, 1947b):

- Leader is responsible for execution of change (Lewin CATS, step 1).
- Leader stresses change for the good of the organization and moves towards it. (Lewin CAT, step 2).
- Leader seeks change that is non-traditional but responsive to environment and malleable (Lewin CATS, step 3).

These emergent subthemes point to future follow-up in longitudinal study. The data supports these subthemes as foundational characteristics to support productive organizational change and ongoing change development. To continue successful organizational change this study suggests the following:

- Leaders commit to a vision of change purpose and the engineers (Management) commit to environmental influences and change within the organization in deconstruction of vehicles and presentation on YouTube.
- Leaders move through change by listening to all levels of department leadership.
- Core values of leadership pointed to transparency, analysis and update processing of change and corporate homogeneity in change acceptance.

Present throughout the leadership narratives in this study were the subthemes listed above that were recurrent with all ($n = 10$) leaders whether departmental (Managers) or top leadership. In

many organizations within the environment of change, there is the creation of a work environment filtered through shared experiences, values, and the meanings invested in organizational culture and the changes society facilitates.

A final in-depth scrutiny of the ten leader's transcripts garnered in this study reveal compelling and challenging food for thought that arise for leadership involved in complex change scenarios like the Munro Case Study. A corporate picture of leadership response to rapid change demands adaptation and innovation to changing environments that suggest the following corporate actions for future longitudinal study by this researcher.

- Can this study based on Lewin's 20th century approach to change adapt with developing theory about approach and leadership in complex organizational change.
- Based on current data coding the case study organization moved from a traditional approach to new technology and was successful in change. How will this change progress and thrive and what does it present for other organizations as they venture into the stratosphere of complexity and changing. This can be a new area of scrutiny for future study.
- Does leadership continue to adapt to change within complex systems and maintain a team ethic that supports adaptations in organizational culture?
- This current research with longitudinal and proposed functional MRI testing will prepare other leaders for leadership in the changing global environment.

This current research is poised to continue post-doctoral study and support leading complex change in 21st Century technology-based organizations and global companies. It is the foundation of Lewin's quest for change (1947a) and narrative inquiry in this study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that points to a continuous and robust look at leadership strategies across

cultures with different types of change applications. One of the leaders in this study has the final say when he communicated:

I know our company is growing. But what we have is teamwork, productivity, and a sense of working through chaos. Isn't that today's world?

This sums up the complexity of change on the edge of chaos and the concept of ever-changing work environments. Taking a risk in a fluctuating work situation was the strength of those leaders identified in this study that represent the strengths and culture values of a strong productive change era company.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Demographic Statistics

1. Gender _____
2. Age _____
3. Education _____
4. Your time at current position _____
5. Your employment position _____
6. Are you fulltime or parttime employee? _____
7. Are you in a management position _____
8. Do you have experience with change implementation? _____

Part 2. – Organizational Change Management

9. Please describe your role in the organizational change process at your workplace
10. What changes have you implemented?
11. How do you look at the need for change in your organization?
12. How do you communicate the need for change to leadership
13. What issues has the omicron variant opened as far as change is concerned?
14. How do you lead subordinates to change?
15. Share an example of change you have developed.
16. List your change strategies.
17. What challenges have you encountered in change since January 2022?
18. How did you validate this change? List set to change.
19. How do you support your leadership in change?

APPENDIX B

Personal Interview

1. In the questionnaire you stated you were involved with change in an organization. What knowledge do you have of organization change? (Lewin Unfreeze) answer to RQ1.
2. How did you arrive at change strategy? (Lewin Unfreeze) Answer RQ1.
3. Who supported you change agenda?
 - a. Did other managers support your initiatives?
 - b. Did your subordinates support you?
4. How did you implement this strategic change? (Lewin Movement) Answer RQ2.
 - a. How did change progress?
 - b. What problems occurred?
 - c. How did you address these challenges
5. How was change communicated? (Lewin Movement) Answer RQ2
 - a. Did you face resistance to change?
 - b. Were there any other challenges to change?
6. How did you engage followers and other managers in change process?
(Lewin Movement) Answer RQ2.
 - a. What situations did you observe to validate change success?
7. How did you encourage ways to sustain change? (Lewin Refreeze) Answer RQ3.
 - a. How did you respect or acknowledge changes in organization culture?
8. How did you promote successful change? (Lewin Refreeze) Answer RQ3.

APPENDIX C

Zoom Focus Interview

1. Explain your knowledge of implementation of organization change (Lewin Unfreeze)

Answer RQ1.

- a. What role do you play in change?
 - b. Can you share an example of a change process you designed?
 - c. Was it successful?
2. How do you assess the potential need for change? (Lewin Unfreeze) Answer RQ1.
 - a. Can you share an example of the process or work situation that required change?
 - b. Any thoughts about what needed change; who needed change; why you arrived at this decision?
 3. How do you justify, support, and move towards change in your organization (Lewin Unfreeze) Answer RQ1.
 - a. How did leadership/management support your change initiatives?
 - b. How did your subordinates respond to your change processing?
 - c. Any other thoughts on this aspect of your change within the entire company?
 4. What was your first movement towards application of the change process after others accepted the new situation? (Lewin Movement) Answer RQ2.
 - a. How did you respond to stakeholders and ensure a buy in status on this change process?
 - b. Did you have any resistance to recent change applications?

5. How did you include leadership/management/stakeholders/subordinates in the change process? (Lewin Movement) Answer RQ2.
 - a. Explain delegation of duties in the change process. How was it accomplished?
 - b. What strategy pointed to your change and its success?
6. What was your communication plan for change? (Lewin Movement) Answer RQ2.
 - a. What were your step to prepare for change?
 - b. Did you make the decision to move forward to change?
 - c. What obstacles did you encounter in the change process?
7. How was change sustained in your organization? (Lewin Refreeze) Answer RQ3.
 - a. How was this a successful step in your organization
8. What steps did you employ to ensure the success of your change project? (Lewin Refreeze) AnserRQ3.
 - a. What validated change as a success in your organization?
9. Can you present an example of change support after its implementation? (Lewin Refreeze) Answer RQ3.
 - a. What support or challenges did you meet during change process?
 - b. Was there ongoing training after change?
 - c. How do you deal with resistance after change process?
10. What are other thoughts that come to mind about your change process?

APPENDIX D

Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

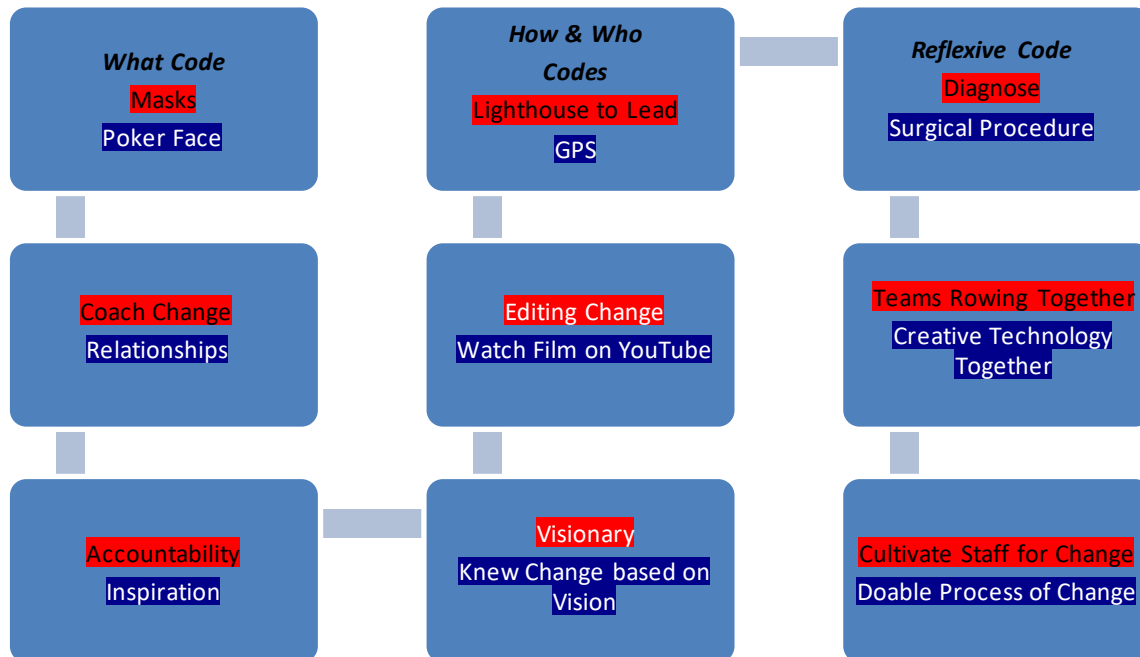
Change Data from Study

Change in three steps.

Leadership Starts Change.

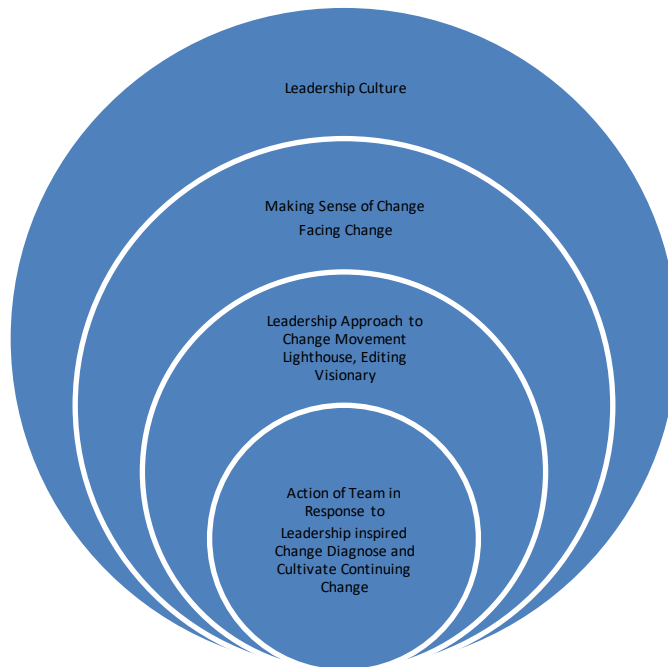
Leadership Action.

Action Team Engage



Among narrative analysis in the study as described in Clandinin & Huber (2010) and supported by Lewin's Change Theory (1947a) research could identify these emergent themes. Both Top and Department Leadership resonated in a similar thematic response to change.

The next step in thematic change leadership framework demonstrates the response to environmental complex systems (Lewin's Field Theory, 1947a). The emergent themes plug into a schematic of successful change within the study organization exemplified in data.



These are emergent themes in response to system complexity and environment stimulus supported by data. The data was processed in three iterative research steps below.

