



**Investigating the Role of Enterprise Social  
Networks in Facilitating Organisational  
Change in GCC countries**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The importance of enhancing internal communication and its content during organisational change appears to be neglected by many organisations. Although change management literature agrees generally about the role that communication plays in facilitating change, there is still a dearth of empirical studies that focus on improving internal communication during organisational change phases. The evolution of communication technology has provided some new tools that can enhance internal communication within an organisation. This study explores the role of using one of these new communication technologies in communicating organisational change through the development of a novel conceptual model.

The developed model covers the communication needs in each phase of a planned change, and combines the benefits of communicating organisational change with the benefits of using Enterprise Social Networks (ESN), as found in the literature. The aim is to investigate empirically how ESN as a new internal communication technology can be employed to communicate organisational change effectively in order to facilitate that change. To do so, the researcher in this study has applied a qualitative approach through a case study strategy in order to validate the conceptual model being proposed. The researcher conducted 32 interviews and analysed all of them qualitatively using Nvivo software.

The findings of the conducted study revealed that using ESN had many positive impacts on employees, such as increasing their awareness, engagement and participation, which helped to facilitate the overall change projects. Moreover, the study proved the suitability of the validated novel model to contribute in facilitating organisational change through ESN, which can guide leaders, managers, change agents and academics on how ESN can be used to communicate planned change effectively in order to facilitate it.

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## **DECLARATION**

This Thesis provides a report of the study conducted by Waleed Al Rawahi. Some of the material contained within this thesis has been published and some of it is still under review, as shown below:

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>DG</b>	Director General
<b>DDG</b>	Deputy Director General
<b>ESN</b>	Enterprise Social Networks
<b>GCC</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>PM</b>	Project Manager
<b>PMI</b>	Project Management Institution
<b>UNS</b>	Undersecretary
<b>X</b>	Case Study 1
<b>Y</b>	Case Study 2

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Research Literature**

In today's business life, change happens all the time and has become an everyday part of organisational dynamics. Scholars and researchers agree that organisations need to implement changes in their business model, as it is necessary for the long term success and survival of an organisation. Although there has been an abundance of research into organisational change, still many organisations have struggled to achieve the changes that they have wanted to implement (Rosenberg and Mosca, 2011; Zareen, 2013). Mdletye et al. (2014) and Burnes and Jackson (2011) supported this fact by stating that failure rates for change among organisations have commonly been reported as being up to 70% according to associated research, and there are various issues that have contributed to this high degree of failure. The most significant issue which researchers continually identify as a critical reason for the failure of change is the lack of clear and effective communication (Justin et al., 2013; Mdletye et al., 2014).

According to Kunanbayeva (2013), ineffective and poor change communication leads to high levels of misunderstanding, uncertainty and personal fears among employees during the change process, which can encourage them not to accept or support the change. Furthermore, the PMI report of 2014 showed that 59% of organisations around the world failed in their change initiatives because of insufficient internal communication during the change process (PMI, 2014). Additionally, Hargie et al. (2009) assert that ineffective communication during change can lead to poor relationships between employees and management, and this could result in reducing the trust in both the management and in the change. During organisational change, employees always seek justifications for the

change, and they recommend change to be implemented as early as possible and by those who have decided it and planned for it. Therefore, internal communication during change plays a critical role in either facilitating change or impeding it (Naveed, 2014).

Effective and open communication in a change context is not only about updating people frequently on what is happening during change (John, 2011). The content of communication during change is very important, as it concerns what information is conveyed to employees and what is received from them. Emma et al. (2014) argue that leaders, managers or change agents have to justify the change, sell the reasons behind the change and show the benefits behind it. Employees also want to know if they or anybody else are going to be affected by the proposed change. So, the kind of information that needs to be communicated to employees has to be meaningful in order for the communication to be effective (Matos and Esposito, 2014). According to Barrett (2002), meaningful communication helps motivate all employees to support change by informing and educating them during the entire change period. Consequently, it appears that it is important to provide truthful and useful information to individuals about a change in each phase of the change process, in order to facilitate the change (Gabriele et al., 2013; Kunanbayeva, 2013).

Moreover, the way change is communicated is considered to be another important factor that can play a critical role in improving internal communication during change and making it more effective (Aral et al., 2013). According to Allen et al. (2007), if employees are informed about change in a one-way communication stream, this can cause them to resist change. However, change is more likely to be successful when organisations adopt two-way communication strategies, where value is gained from mutual input and conversations. According to Garcia-Morales et al. (2011), employees are more likely to be satisfied with change when two-way communication is achieved. This is because two-way communication allows employees to share their own perspectives, worries and thoughts, which gives them a feeling of involvement (Clampitt and De Koch, 2011). Melanie and Tim

(2012), add that leaders also obtain value from two-way communication, since this allows them to gain valuable feedback regarding change, helping them to better understand the likely impacts of it.

Since two-way communication is necessary to facilitate change, and leaders have to provide a platform to enhance communication internally, technology nowadays offers practitioners the opportunity to try new communication tools. One of the new communication technology solutions that many organisations have started to use internally as a communication tool is ESN, as reported by Aral et al. (2013). ESN is currently used by many organisations to facilitate a more open and bottom-up approach to organisational communication, allowing new communication habits and workplace practices to be formed.

Although change management literature generally agrees that internal communication is essential during the change period, the existing empirical research into change management still neglects the importance of improving communication during change (Bisel and Barge, 2011; Eric and Grand, 2014). Moreover, there has been relatively little empirical research exploring the information which needs to be communicated in each phase of organisational change (Hodges and Robert, 2015). Furthermore, most of the available studies into communicating change are not concerned with interaction and the impact of using specific communication channels during change, especially in-house communication platforms (Wietske et al., 2015). Consequently, it is important for organisations to review their current internal communication strategies and enhance the way they communicate, choosing the most effective channels to communicate internally.

It became clear from the discussion above why many scholars still consider communication to be critically important in the context of organisational change, and this needs to be explored further. Therefore, this research is designed to reply to the need for further empirical research that focuses on improving internal communication to facilitate organisational change. It contributes to provide a

holistic and detailed perspective on how ESN can be employed in a change communication context. Also, it adds more understanding of the role of ESN during organisational change, and how it can facilitate change by impacting positively on employees.

## **1.2 Research Motivations and Significance**

Organisational survival depends greatly on the effectiveness of internal communication (Barrett, 2002). Without effective internal communication, change strategies and organisations will fail (Noora, 2013; Kitchen & Daly, 2003). John (2014) and Cheney et al. (2004) also point out that effective internal communication impacts the dissemination, institutionalisation, implementation and formulation phases of a change initiative. At each stage, internal communication has various influences, from providing managers with the opportunity to hear employee feedback and encouraging employee engagement, to creating greater recognition of change (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Internal communication also entails employee involvement, hearing and discussing employees' concerns, giving employees a long-term view, and sharing factual information about a planned change (Zareen, 2013).

Nowadays, various organisations have started to use ESN in their organisations to aid employees in sharing knowledge, communicating, and collaborating with one another (Aral et al., 2013; Paul et al., 2013; Krogh, 2012). Compared to conventional styles of communication, ESN is thought of as encouraging greater participation and openness (Denyer et al, 2011). Many ESN applications, such as Jive and Yammer, are now being used by an increasing number of organisations around the world. Additionally, UK-based Deloitte (2013) reported that ESN had been adopted at some level amongst 90% of Fortune 500 companies in 2013. This represented a 70% rise over the course of two years. McKinsey (2014) also reported that, as of 2013, 58% of firms had set a three-year plan to expand their

ESN and social media spending. Various researchers, including Richter et al. (2013), Herzog et al. (2013) and Bharadwaj et al. (2013), argue that the impact of ESN must now be explored due to its rising popularity. Von (2012) and Aral et al. (2013) state that most existing research has concentrated on the impact of ESN on firm value and marketing advantages as measures of organisational performance.

So, focusing less attention on the practice and impact of ESN as an in-house communication platform will mean that overall knowledge of its different roles in organisations remains limited, specifically in a change management context. Therefore, the significance of this research is a consequence of the necessity for improving internal communication during a planned change in order to be more effective and to be able to facilitate the overall change initiative. Additionally, the significance of this study is derived from the limitations of empirical studies that have explored in depth the communication of change through ESN and its impacts. Consequently, the main aim of this is to answer the following question:

How can ESN facilitate organisational change?

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

A qualitative approach has been adopted in this research using a multiple case study strategy. Data was collected mainly from two organisations in Oman and UAE through 32 extensive face-to-face interviews, followed by observation and then documentation, carried out with senior leaders and middle managers. This research is an attempt to develop a model of communicating planned change through ESN, where it can facilitate the overall process of change. This model could guide leaders, middle managers and change agents to communicate change through ESN to all employees, at any time, in any location, and in a more effective and meaningful way. Figure 1.1 on the next page summarises the importance of this research and identifies the problem that the research will try to address.

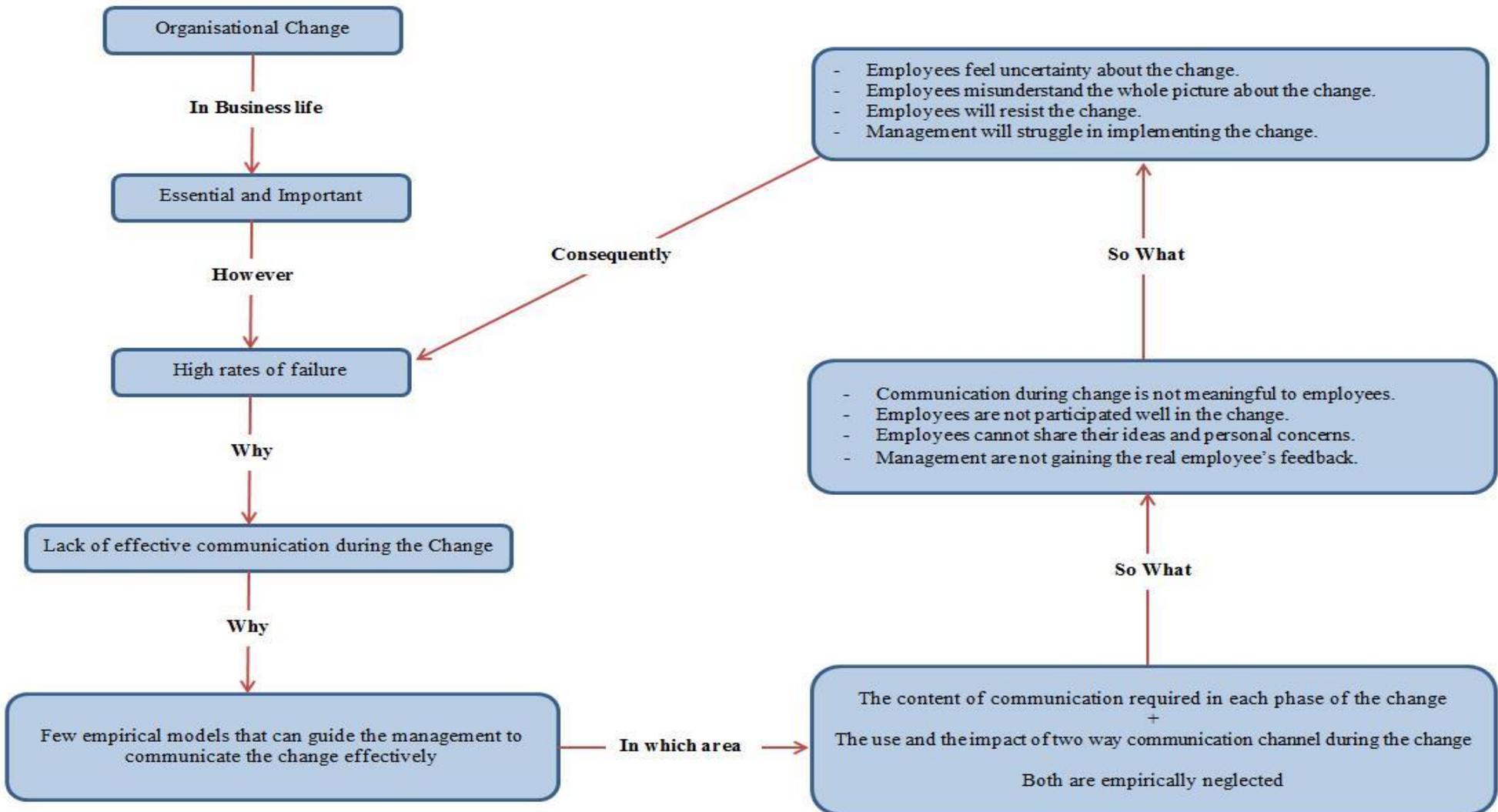


Figure 1.1 Research Problem Identification

Source: developed for the purpose of this PhD research

## **1.4 Research Aim and Objectives**

The main aim of this study is:

- To investigate and examine the role of ESN as an internal communication channel to facilitate organisational change.

In fulfilling this aim, the following objectives are considered important:

- To conduct a comprehensive critical review of the available literature and studies relating to organisational change, communication during change, and ESN, thus enabling a deep understanding of the available literature in order to identify research gaps and how they can be covered.
- To identify factors from the literature which are relevant to the study.
- To propose and develop a conceptual model that represents the process of communicating change through ESN in each phase of a planned change, to improve change communication and facilitate change.
- To conduct an empirical study in order to validate the conceptual model.
- To demonstrate the overall findings and the revised validated model, which could be considered as being a guide for leaders, managers, change agents and academics on how ESN can facilitate change.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

This thesis is outlined according to the following chapters:

**Chapter 1 Introduction:** This chapter discusses the background to the research, which identifies the research problem according to previous studies, and the motivation for the research, which clarifies the importance of the study. The chapter also identifies the aims and objectives of the research.

**Chapter 2 Literature Review:** This chapter extensively reviews the current literature on organisational change, internal communication in a change context, and ESN. There is also discussion in this chapter about the gaps found in the literature.

**Chapter 3 Conceptual Model:** This chapter discusses the building and development of an integrative conceptual model in the research and its elements and contribution.

**Chapter 4 Methodology:** This chapter presents the qualitative research methodology chosen for this study, by discussing the research approach, the research strategy of the study, and how the data is collected.

**Chapter 5 Analysis, Findings, and Discussion:** This chapter first discusses the case studies of the research. It then presents the analysis and findings, followed by discussing in detail all of the findings, leading to the final outcomes of the study and the revised conceptual model.

**Chapter 6 Conclusion:** This final chapter concludes the whole study, including discussions on the theoretical and practical contributions of the study, identifies limitations, and proposes some recommendations for future studies.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide an extensive and systematic analysis overview of the literature review and previous studies, leading to a realisation of the logic behind the decision to conduct this particular research. It begins with a definition and evaluation of the concept and process of organisational change in general, and planned change specifically. There is then a discussion on the literature of previous studies with regards to the importance of internal communication in managing change, followed by the role of communication in planned change. After that, the chapter provides an overview of ESN technology, followed by a focus on the literature of ESN as a new communication tool. The link between ESN benefits and organisational change is then discussed. Finally, there is a list of the gaps found in the literature. Discussion in the chapter does not focus on any specific sector, as there are no specific change models or communicating change models that are customised for the public or private sectors. Additionally, the role of communication during change and the role of using ESN as an internal communication platform are not differentiated according to sector in the literature.

## 2.2 Organisational change

Change is about developing an organisation in general, and it is always preferred as a means of eliminating issues and difficulties that face an organisation (Freddy & Mbohwa, 2013). Organisational change has resulted in the development of many theories due to many individuals having an interest in the topic (Zareen, 2013). There is an abundance of research which asserts that organisational change is essential for any organisation to survive (Zafar & Naveed, 2014). There are many definitions of organisational change, and most of them are similar to each other. According to Barnett and Carroll (1995, p.219), organisational change is defined as “*a transformation between two points in time with the key ability to compare the organisation before and after the transformation*”. Another definition by Chonko (2004) states that organisational change is the moving from one phase to another, and it’s the changing of current structures to develop another one. In addition to those definitions, Hartel & Fujimoto (2014, p.53) define organisational change as “*any alteration whether planned or unplanned that causes a shift in the status quo and affects the structure and the resources of the organisation*”.

Change is raised as a result of internal forces or external forces that are related to the necessity of businesses replying to difficulties. Burke (2011) argues that internal change forces are relevant to organisational expansion and development, whereas external forces are linked to concerns such as institutional or market volatility. In that manner, Cummings and Worley (2005) declare that an organisation must change its rules, structures, beliefs and procedures of competition, and this must start with the change facilitators.

Employees deal with organisational change in different ways, as some of them assume that it could provide opportunities to learn and grow, whilst others see it as a risk which needs to be avoided (Torben, 2013). According to Holt et al. (2007), successful implementation of change impacts motivation and the provision of opportunities for learning and growing, whilst poor implementation results in uncertainties and anxieties. Although there has been plenty of research into organisational change, still many organisations have struggled to achieve the changes that they have wanted to implement (Rosenberg and Mosca, 2011; Zareen, 2013). This fact has been affirmed by Mdletye et al. (2014), who state that the rate of failure among organisations have been reported as being as high as 70%, which is the result of many issues. The most significant challenge which researchers continually identify as a critical reason to such failure is a lack of clear and effective communication (Justin et al, 2013; Mdletye et al., 2014). Furthermore, the report from the PMI in 2014 showed that 59% of organisations around the world have failed in their change initiatives because of insufficient internal communication during the change process (PMI, 2014).



**Figure 2.1 The main cause of change failure**

**Source: PMI (2014, p. 5)**

### **2.2.1 Types and degrees of organisational change**

There are two main types of organisational change: planned change and unplanned change (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2014). Planned change refers to the identification of a reason for change, and the creation of a plan to meet the desired goals (Liebhart & Garcia, 2010). Burk (2011) adds that effective implementation planning is a requirement of planned change. That being said, many organisations throw change upon employees suddenly, without a systematic plan (Cameron & Green, 2013). This is known as unplanned change, which Hodges and Gill (2015) describe as sudden change that results in panic amongst employees.

Bennet (2001) explains that change occurs on two scales: incremental and radical. Incremental change usually meets little resistance, is a common minor occurrence, and does not take a great deal of planning (Liebhart & Garcia, 2010). On the other hand, as Hayes (2014) explains, radical change tends to be implemented organisation-wide, usually takes planning, is associated with innovation, and occurs on a larger scale. This can include cultural or strategic change, restructuring, or mergers and acquisitions (Kimberly & Hartel, 2007). According to Burnes (2004), resistance is most likely in the case of planned and radical change, which makes these types of change a focus for communication research. As Zareen (2013) explains, this is because communication is believed to be an important tool for effective change management. Additionally, since these types of change run a higher risk of causing negative reactions amongst employees due to the higher degrees of uncertainty involved, researchers such as Klein (1996) and Lundberg and Young (2001) argue that approaches to incremental and unplanned change communication are of less significance.

Heimbrock (2002) explains that planned change is often thought of as top-down change, which is linked to radical change and senior management's strategic planning. This means that the planning process does not typically involve employees, meaning that change will need to be communicated effectively by managers. In many cases it is not effectively communicated, which leads to a high failure rate for organisational change. This is because employees cannot understand and accept change if it is not explained to them. Therefore, it is useful to identify the ways in which employees understand and accept top-down change through the use of various communication approaches. This is particularly important, since top-down change tends to lack employee participation during the planning stage. Furthermore, as Heimbrock (2002) explains, top-down change tends to result in radical change, which is the main topic of this thesis.

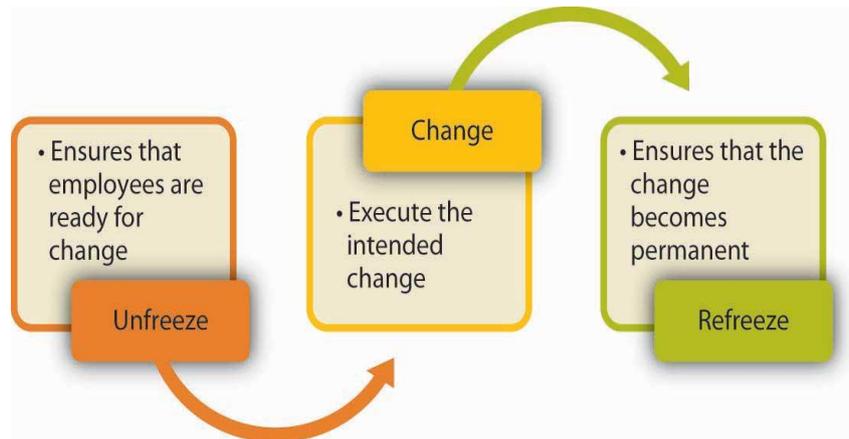
### **2.2.2 Organisational change models**

It is important to explore and understand the models of change management that have developed, as they can influence the implementation strategies and practices within organisations (Frahm & Brown, 2005). Lewin (1947) is considered to be the father of organisational change, and his three phases model is still considered to be the base of later change models. Lewin's model has been dominant in terms of change management for over sixty years, and it is still being used and developed.

Lewin asserts that any living system is subject to change, or is in a state of change to some kind of quasi-stationary equilibrium (Lewin, 1947). Lewin's model has three managed change phases, which need to be followed in order to achieve change. These are: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. In the first phase, organisational balance needs to be reworked, and organisational norms need to be

unfrozen to create an environment for change. Moving is the second change phase in Lewin's model, where change can start to be implemented.

The final phase, called refreezing, focuses on stabilising the change.



**Figure 2.2 Lewin's change model**

**Source: Cameron and Green (2013)**

Lippitt (1958) developed a model for change like the one developed by Lewin, and he named the phases in his model as development strategy, planning strategy, implementation strategy, and performance management. In the phase of development strategy, Lippitt proposed that leaders should develop the requisite basis for the transformation, launch change affiliation, and identify current problems within the organisation. The phase of planning strategy is concerned with examining alternative routes and goals, and establishing the intentions of action to change the current situation. The third phase in Lippitt's model, called implementation strategy, focuses on taking actual change efforts and starting to implement the proposed change. The last phase in the same model is called

performance management, which relates to stabilising the change and terminating relationships.

A change model developed by Quinn and Kimberly (1984) is built on four stages and eight strategies for dealing with change. The four stages in this model are called strategic readjustment, political adaptation, cultural development, and structural reutilisation. The strategic readjustment phase is concerned with analysing and determining whether a transition should be initiated or not, and also clarifying the distinctive competencies of the organisation. The second phase, political adaptation, focuses on the support needed to implement the change in terms of resources, employees, and the power of developing and maintaining the change. The phase of cultural development encourages leaders and managers to take care in being compassionate towards people and their sense of loss, because of the transformation and the significance of involving them in the change process. The last phase in Quinn and Kimberly's (1984) model concerns failure to plan, control and supervise change activities, which can lead employees into frustration and difficult situations. Also, leaders should remember that the structure awaiting modification must be in line with the strategy, environment and culture of the organisation.

An organisational level of analysis was the focus of Beckhard and Harris' (1987) model. According to their model, any major organisational change contains three different conditions: present state, transition state and future state. Beckhard and Harris came up with a model handling the change process based on these conditions. The first stage involves setting goals and defining the future state or the structural conditions yearned for after the change ensues. The second stage is to deduct the current state in connection with those achievements. The third is to

define the transition state. This focuses on establishing strategies and plans as a way to arrive at the desired future state.

A five-step change model developed by Beer et al. (1990) emphasises the mobilisation of dedication by building agreed goals for change and a communal vision on how change should be implemented. As a result of research into leadership, which convinced Beer et al. (1990) to believe that there are still a few heroic leaders who are capable of guiding people through organisational change, their organisational fitness profiling model was developed. The first step is diagnosing the need for change, and this is then followed by coming up with a strategy in which revitalisation of the organisation should be pushed from the top, involving all areas of the organisation. The revitalisation can be institutionalised through formal policies, systems and structures, as the model suggests. Monitoring and adjusting strategies in response to issues and feedback should be done throughout the process.

Management of re-orientation, which is defined as strategic and anticipatory organisational change, is a model proposed by Nadler and Tushman (1993). This model recognises ten activities, and gathers them into four different clusters. The first cluster is called initiating change, and it includes three principles: the diagnosis, the vision, and the energy. The second cluster is called content of change, and it includes two principles: the centrality, and the three-theme. Cluster three in the same model is called leading change, and it proposes the magic leader principle, and the beyond the magic leader principle. The final cluster in the model is achieving change, which contains three principles: the planning and opportunism, the many bullets, and the investment and returns.

In 1993, Tichy developed a change model with three acts and twelve steps. Creating a feeling of urgency about change and dealing with resistance or confrontation if possible is the first act in Tichy's model, and this stage is called "awakening" or launching the revolution. "Envisioning or mobilising" towards a vision is the second act of the model, and it focuses on preparing and creating a vision for the organisation. Re-architecting or building the organisation's social architecture is the last act of Tichy's model. By whom, for what and how decisions are made relates to how individuals work with each other to finish their tasks, and this is the definition of social architecture.

A similar path in the set of phases to transform an organisation is followed by Kotter (1995). The phases in his model are: "Establishing a sense of urgency, forging a powerful guiding coalition, envisioning, communicating the vision, and empowering others to buy into the vision." Kotter's first phase is similar to the unfreezing phase of Lewin's model. Also, part of the moving process in Lewin's model is determined by some of the steps in Kotter's model, which involve creating short term wins and consolidating improvements, and producing more change.

Table 2.1 shows all the phases of change in all of the change models discussed above.

Model Founder	Phases of Change
Lewin (1947)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfreezing</li> <li>• Moving</li> <li>• Refreezing</li> </ul>
Lippitt et al. (1958)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Strategy</li> <li>• Planning Strategy</li> <li>• Implementation Strategy</li> <li>• Performance management</li> </ul>
Quinn & Kimberly (1984)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Readjustment</li> <li>• Political Adaptation</li> <li>• Cultural Development</li> <li>• Structural Reutilisation</li> </ul>
Beckhard & Harris (1987)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Present State</li> <li>• The Transition State</li> <li>• The Future State</li> </ul>
Beer et al. (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilising Energy</li> <li>• Developing a Task Aligned Vision</li> <li>• Spreading Revitalisation</li> <li>• Continually Monitoring and Strategising</li> </ul>
Nadler & Tushman (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiating Change</li> <li>• Content of Change</li> <li>• Leading Change</li> <li>• Achieving Change</li> </ul>
Tichy (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awakening the Revolution</li> <li>• Envisioning Commitment to a Vision</li> <li>• Rebuilding the Social Architecture</li> </ul>
Kotter (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a Sense of Urgency</li> <li>• Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition</li> <li>• Creating a Vision</li> <li>• Communicating the Vision</li> <li>• Empowering Others to Act on the Vision</li> <li>• Planning for and Creating Short Term Wins</li> <li>• Consolidating Improvements and Producing More Change</li> <li>• Institutionalising New Approaches</li> </ul>

**Table 2.1 Phases in change management models**

*Source:* developed for the purpose of this research

### **Evaluation of Change Models**

The models outlined in the previous section have a number of similarities and differences, with some advantages and disadvantages to each, but all are designed around Lewin's three-stage model. All of the models of change noted earlier support the idea that these are the three fundamental phases of the change process.

This being said, the models do vary in terms of the way each step within the three phases is laid out. However, the majority suggest that the change process ultimately begins by identifying the problem – which is the focus of Quinn and Kimberly's (1993) model – with the present status, and justifying the motivation – which is the focus of Tichy's (1993) model – for change. However, Beer (1990) suggests that there is no real difference between identifying change and justifying the motivation for change. This model is built upon the concept of full participation, which results in the identification of a problem with the current situation. The other model is based more on the participation of senior management, who only involve other employees later during the change process.

In any case, all of the aforementioned models agree that the identification of the problem or justification of the need for change must occur before change can happen. Examining Tichy's model in more depth, we can see that the earlier stages of change are related to certain elements of the change vision, which Tichy refers to as a continual, continuous and endless process. The authors clearly differentiate between the creation of a change vision and the communication of a change vision, as well as the commitment to its implementation. Tichy proposes that these three elements are all contained within the change process, and all of the authors concur that it is essential for the change vision to be communicated and for commitment be motivated. This being said, the authors do not agree so much

in terms of the stages involved in transition management, though all except Tichy agree that this involves extensive planning and learning. Only Tichy and Quinn and Kimberly focus on resistance to change in relation to this stage. Resistance to change is noted as an element in motivating commitment to change by Beckhard and Harris (1987). On the other hand, Beer (1990) suggests that resistance naturally decreases through encouraging participation in the change process.

After reviewing the models, it is clear that all of the authors agree that successful change and momentum can only be achieved when changes are implemented through the acceptance of behavioural structures and systems. Some believe that change occurs over a long period of time (Nadler & Tushman, 1993), whilst others argue that change is constantly occurring and reoccurring (Tichy, 1990; Beer, 1990). Based on the contributions of the above models, it is clear that the authors agree greatly on the significance and implementation of the top-down approach to change. That is to say, change calls for the identification of a reason for change, the creation of a vision, the communication of that vision, effective transition management, and the institutionalisation of the necessary changes. All of the models were created based on the authors' consulting work, teachings or research. All of the models benefit managers in that they are relevant, easy to comprehend and possible to implement in practice.

Where the majority of the aforementioned models are lacking is that they do not take horizontal process redesign or bottom-up problem-solving into account. This being said, the latter is found to a small degree in Beer's (1990) and Tichy's (1990) models. Additionally, Tichy emphasises the participation of local unions, noting this as a key part of the change process. Tichy (1993) argues that employees should only become involved later in the change process, and that the top-tier of the organisation should change first. Horizontal process redesign is only

mentioned in Tichy's model. Tichy also refers to the general electric workout process. The initial stages of a workout are centred on minimised workloads, whilst the later stages of a workout are centred on the enhancement and evaluation of business processes. In Tichy's model, process design is considered an element of top-down direction setting rather than a standalone catalyst of change. This being said, Nadler and Tushman (1993) argue that Tichy's model falls down with regards to its lack of focus on the role of all levels of leadership.

Beckhard and Harris (1987) assert that the transition stage requires the management mechanism and special features to be evaluated. Tichy's (1993) model proposes that the last stage requires organisations to motivate all employees and managers to become agents of change. This being said, Nadler and Tushman acknowledge that the early stages of change require all levels of management to become change leaders, since the head of an organisation will have his or her own shortcomings. The three key phases of change (change initiation, transition management and sustaining momentum) have been forgotten in all but Tichy's (1993) model, with the other models only indirectly or discretely referencing these three phases. All models implicitly follow the three phases, even though the explicit connection is lost as discussed above.

### **2.2.3 Facilitating organisational change**

There are many strategies that scholars and researchers have proposed to facilitate and manage organisational change. The most prominent and the most recommended strategies for facilitating organisational change are briefly discussed in this section. All of the strategies associated with the scholars who recommend them are available in Appendix B.

➤ **Effective Communication**

Many researchers have explained how communication is fundamental to facilitating change and ensuring proper acceptance of change among employees (Zareen, 2013). Researchers such as Lewin (1947), Fiedler (2010), Gilley et al. (2009) and Zafar and Naveed (2014) have proposed an open communication policy that allows employees to communicate effectively their issues and concerns, thereby providing management with the opportunity to provide feedback to the employees, which can help to reduce their concerns. The further management communicates meaningfully with their employees, the more the gap between them becomes narrow and the trust level improves (Cameron and Green, 2013). Elving (2005) investigated how communication could be implemented to simplify and ensure the success of change, finding that the informative nature of communication creates a sense of community within a workforce. Additionally, in his investigation he found that effective communication can facilitate change by reducing the effects of uncertainty. The role and the importance of communication during change will be discussed more in section 2.3, as it is the focus of this study.

➤ **Participation and Involvement**

It is important for the management of any organisation to encourage employees to participate and involve themselves during a change project (Nur and Rozhan, 2016). According to Boohene and Williams (2012), involving employees in the decision making process can help to reduce forcefulness and facilitate change initiatives. Additionally, employees will feel more included in and responsible for the proposed change, and so will support it. Some scholars consider the participation approach to be an

important chance to give employees a kind of control and the power to raise their opinions or take their own decisions (Chirico and Salvato, 2008). Leaders and managers should be willing to allow for such participation, whilst also accepting constructive criticism, being open about the nature of the changes, being clear and concise in their reasoning, and encouraging a sense of confidence among their workforce (Boohene and Williams, 2012).

➤ **Education and Training**

Individuals that undertook higher education are more likely to have developed further communication skills, allowing them to better understand the problem at hand and apply their knowledge to providing a suitable solution (Cameron and Green, 2013). The literature of change mostly associates education with available information about change, and about the skills needed to implement that change. Agboola and Salawu (2011) and Moss (2012) highlight the importance of education in facilitating change, and they argue that employees need to be educated about change through different methods such as presentations, meetings, seminars and workshops. In the same direction, Justin et al. (2013) assert that when leaders in an organisation provide fair education and training on a change, employees will start to understand the whole picture around the change, will feel the importance of making the change, and will work towards it. Deria and Gokhan (2013) emphasise that educating and training employees before and during change is important to facilitate change, as it helps to expand the overall knowledge and skills that employees require to support the change.

➤ **Management support**

It is very important that employees always feel that their management supports them, regardless of whether there is a change or not. However, when there is a change project, employees will look for more facilitation and support from their managers (Rebeka and Indradevi, 2013). Support, counselling and facilitation from management should always be available to facilitate change (Burke, 2008). Leaders and managers should be aware of the support that employees require during the process of change (Sergio and Hal, 2006). Continuing to provide support and facilities for employees can make a place of work in general more satisfying (Gabriele et al., 2013). Sergio and Hal (2006) and Torben (2013) argue that providing all kinds of support to individuals can make the working environment a lot more comfortable, creative and pleasant, and will allow for the passive acceptance of change.

➤ **Motivation**

Motivation is fundamental to ensure that employees are energised, focused and directed in order to facilitate and achieve change (Kroth, 2007). Ann et al. (2009) argue that successful implementation of organisational change is highly dependent on motivation, and if the policy or system of reward used in an organisation is somehow unfair, then most employees will not show any motivation to work hard or to be committed to the workplace. In support of the importance of motivation in a change context, a study conducted by Alizadeh et al. (2013) in the education department of Khorasan Razavi Province in Iran showed a significant reversal relationship between reward appreciation and resistance to the change process. Employees that are motivated to become involved in change, as well as being informed about how the change will affect and benefit them, are more

likely to work towards organisational change and support it (Baker, 1987; Dubrin & Ireland, 1993).

➤ **Clear Vision and Goals**

A change vision and goals are important in providing an organisation with its future outlook once the change has been implemented (Cameron and Green, 2013). Clarity of vision and goals can push all stakeholders to embrace change by abandoning past practices and working hard towards achieving the proposed future change (Cameron and Green, 2013). It not only provides guidance for the decision-making process, but also creates an appealing and sensible picture of the organisation's future (Robert, 2015). Both employees and managers are willing to embrace change if only the proposed change is desirable and feasible (Matos Marques and Esposito, 2014). The implication of this is that a development project's goals will facilitate the materialisation of organisational vision (Groysberg and Slind, 2012).

➤ **Managing Resistance to Change**

Resistance is always present whenever a change is proposed, and it's still considered a big barrier towards the success of change (Ford and Ford, 2009; Freddy and Mbohwa, 2013). Therefore, leaders need to plan this possibility as part of the initial stages of their proposal (Torben, 2013). According to Hultman (2003), leaders should understand and consider the causes of individuals' resistance, and their possible reactions, in order to plan the most appropriate remedial action before a significant obstacle arises. Moss (2012) supports this approach by stating that the best way for leaders to reduce resistance is by first understanding the expectable, general causes of resistance in every situation and then formulating strategies around

them. Ford & Ford (2009), Hultman (2003) and Oreg (2006) argue that this method helps to advise leaders and managers about the implications of organisational change, thus highlighting the best method of mitigating resistance.

Since resistance to change is considered one of the main negative outputs behind the lack of communication during change, the improvement of which is the focus of this study, the next section will discuss the phenomena of resistance to change and its causes in more detail.

#### **2.2.4 Resistance to organisational change**

Resistance to organisational change is one of the main issues that usually appears during change, mainly as a result of poor and ineffective communication (Gabriele et al., 2013). The implementation of change will be negatively affected if employees at different levels of an organisation do not understand the change proposed and don't have any clue about it (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005; Gilley et al., 2009). Researchers like Freddy & Mbohwa (2013), Kunanbayeva (2013) and Zafar & Naveed (2014) argue that resistance to change is heavily affected by a lack of communication within an organisation, because it leads to uncertainty among people regarding the nature of the upcoming change. The Prosci Company (2013) conducted research that investigated 822 organisations across 63 different countries, and found that a lack of communication results in a lack of proper understanding about change, thereby creating overall resistance. Pranit (2010) indicates that if people are less informed about change, then they tend to reject it and question its purpose. Consequently, rumours begin to spread, which often worsens the problem, as they exaggerate the negative aspects of the organisational

change, thus further widening the divide between affected workers and the management level imposing the change.

Ultimately, individuals need to be informed as to what the change involves, how it will affect them, and why it is necessary. Also, a lack of communication will prevent the voicing of concerns, thereby creating distrust and frustration towards management (Shultz, 2007). The way managers communicate with their workforce may lead to resistance, and this fact was clearly demonstrated in a study conducted by Larson & Tompkins (2005), which concluded that managers may indirectly promote workers' resistance through communicated ambivalence. Thus, if management communicates about change in an ambivalent way, then people will generally resist that change. Eriksson (2004) indicates that change is considered negative among individuals who fear it, largely as a result of their uncertainty about how it may implicate their personal situation. Most people when they hear about a coming change want to know what is for or against them in the proposed change. Uncertainty among a workforce is often manifested as fear and anxiety, which is largely attributed to their fears about employment levels, loss of status, loss of control, reduced pay, reduced job satisfaction, or reduced job security (Lussier, 2009; Mullins, 2005).

It is clear how lack of clear and meaningful communication leads employees to resist change, since it raises misunderstandings, uncertainty and personal fears. Therefore, facilitating change depends mostly on how effective internal communication is during change phases.

Table 2.2 summarises all of the causes of resistance to change derived from poor communication during change.

Causes Author / Year	Fear of Change	Uncertainty	Fear of Failure	Misunderstanding	Lack of Motivation	Loss of Control	Lack of Trust	Lack of Participation
Aldag & Stearns / 1991		√		√			√	
Kreitner / 1992			√	√			√	
Griffin / 1993		√	√	√			√	
Dubrin & Ireland / 1993	√		√					
Strebel Paul / 1996						√	√	
Visagie & Botha / 1998	√							
Beer & Nohria / 2000				√	√			√
Bourne & Bourne / 2000								
Sims / 2002								√
Hultman / 2003	√		√	√			√	
Saiyadain / 2003						√		
Val / 2003					√			
Eriksson / 2004		√						
Singh & Kriel / 2004						√		
Bates et al. / 2005			√			√		
Giangreco & Peccei / 2005								√
Matejka & Murphy / 2005						√		

Causes Author / Year	Fear of Change	Uncertainty	Fear of Failure	Misunderstanding	Lack of Motivation	Loss of Control	Lack of Trust	Lack of Participation
Mullins / 2005		√				√		
Sinclair / 2005						√		
Lubkin & Larsen / 2006						√		
Oreg / 2006	√		√		√		√	
Sergio & Hal / 2006		√		√				√
Mullins / 2007						√		
Verhulst et al. / 2007						√		
Gilley et al. / 2009								√
Lussier / 2009						√		
Peter / 2009								√
Fiedler / 2010							√	
Peccei et al / 2011							√	
Cameron & Green / 2012								
Moss / 2012		√		√		√		√
Freddy & Mbohwa / 2013	√	√				√		
Gabriele et al. / 2013								
Kunanbayeva / 2013								
Torben / 2013		√	√	√			√	

**Table 2.2 Causes of resistance to change derived from poor communication**

The next section will discuss in more detail the literature of internal communication in the context of organisational change.

## **2.3 Internal Communication and Organisational Change**

Internal communication contributes greatly towards facilitating the implementation of organisational change and guides the change to success (Bennebroek et al., 2006; Elving & Hansma, 2008). The first definition of internal communications was developed by Frank and Brownell (1989, p.5-6), who asserted that internal communications are “*the communications transactions between individuals and / or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organisations to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities*”. In addition to Brownell’s definition, Bovée & Thill (2000, p.11) define internal communications generally as “*the exchange of information and ideas within an organisation*”. Since internal communication is considered to be a strategic management approach, Welch (2007, p.186) describes it from a strategic point of view, defining it as “*communication between an organisation’s strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organisation, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims*”.

In the domain of organisational change, where information needs to be shared and business goals to be achieved, Kazmi (2011) defines internal communication as “*exchange of information within an organisation to create a shared understanding*”

*that drives the behaviours and actions needed to move the business forward*". The existing body of research is diverse in terms of the emphasis placed on the role of communication in the process of change, although all researchers recognise that it is a relevant element. For instance, change management research such as Kotter's (1999) work presents a consensus that the change process depends greatly upon communication. This opinion is held by research that is focused on communication itself, practice or overall management. On the other hand, managerial change research, such as that of Lewis et al. (2007) and Cheney et al. (2004), tends to place weaker emphasis on the role of communication during the change process, with communication rarely the main focus. For instance, some researchers only speak about communication in the context of its role as a managerial tool (John, 2012; Paton and McCalman, 2000). This being said, communication is given prime position by a number of management researchers, with some including communication as one of the key stages involved in organisational transformation (Kotter, 1999), and some present communication as one of the ten core principles of organisational change (Kanter et al., 1992; Moss, 2012).

More communication-oriented researchers refute the argument that communication is not the main element of change, but is just one of many elements within the process (Gabriele et al., 2013). Consequently, these researchers argue that the absence of recognition regarding the role of communication represents a weakness in the managerial change literature. It is argued that a high number of practitioner and management papers adopt the perspective that communication is a tool that can be used for change management (i.e. the instrumental perspective) (Frahm & Brown, 2005). It has also been proposed that a great number of organisations fail to emphasise the role of communication as much as they do operational and financial factors, due to a lack

of awareness of its significance, which frequently leads to the failure of these organisations' change plans (Mdletye et al., 2014; Sergio and Hal, 2006; Wadman, 2006). Dolphin (2005) also notes that a high number of organisations overlook the overall need for effective internal communication and the part it plays in achieving change outcomes.

On the other hand, the significance of communication during the process of change management is much more prominent in the communication literature. For instance, one communication researcher argues that change management is doomed to fail, and change itself is unachievable, if employees are not able to communicate effectively (Barrett, 2002). Holtz (2004) adds that the ever-evolving business environment has brought about a greater need to focus on internal communication that is strategically oriented towards the objectives of the organisation, thus also introducing new ways to achieve organisational success through a new type of communication with employees.

Other researchers propose that change is itself an element of communication, not only a tool to be adopted during change, which represents a constructionist view of

communication and change (Eric and Canyon, 2014). Therefore, it is proposed that achieving planned and purposeful change depends upon the implementation of new social structures or a new status quo via communication itself (Cameron and Green, 2012). Consequently, as per the agreement of other researchers, change is seen as being constructed through communication, not just as being influenced by communication (Hodges and Robert, 2015). Since the concept of organisational change without communication appears unfeasible, there is much to be said for the communication literature, which calls into question how employees would be able to become aware of the need to change, to understand what their

organisation needs them to do, and to understand what the change would look like if communication was not a factor (John, 2011; Freddy and Mbohwa, 2013). Given this, there is value in exploring the significance and influence of internal communication during the change process, which will now be addressed in the following section.

### **2.3.1 The role of internal communication in organisational change**

Organisations can gain a competitive strategic advantage through effective internal communication, since internal communication has the ability to help organisations meet their strategic and organisational objectives (Moss, 2012). Communication is perceived by many to be a core factor in organisational change and sustainable success (Naveed, 2014). Furthermore, Cheney et al. (2004) add that communication plays an important part in the dissemination, creation, implementation and institutionalisation of a change initiative. Organisational progress is achieved through effective internal communication, as is high employee engagement (Hoover, 2005). Similarly, it has been proposed that communication has a significant part to play during the various phases of obtaining employee feedback, ensuring engagement, and creating awareness of change throughout the change process (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Furthermore, Zareen (2013) states that communication is essential in enabling employees to participate in change as well as in dealing with their worries and thoughts, helping them to see the broader view and outcome, and sharing facts about what the change will entail. Finally, it is explained that internal communication should be used to encourage employees to become engaged in change objectives, to minimise confusion, to promote good performance and advocacy for change, and to increase employee motivation, if employees are to be committed, to be open to

sharing their feedback, and to adopt a positive, enthusiastic attitude towards change (Barrett, 2002).

Cummings and Worley (2009) point out that organisations do not always effectively communicate change, which has been found to have a negative effect on organisational functionality. When change is ineffectively communicated, this can result in a negative impact on organisational culture, over-emphasis on the disadvantages or difficulties involved in change, rumour-spreading, and greater resistance (Kunanbayeva, 2013; Smelzer and Zener, 1992). Other outcomes of ineffective communication can include higher employee turnover, decreased productivity and commitment, and a breakdown in the supervisor-employee relationship that can lead staff to become demotivated when it comes to their daily tasks at work (Hargie et al., 2009). In a case study carried out by Elving (2005), which examined three different organisations, it was discovered that low-level readiness for change was likely when uncertainty was high and information-sharing was low as a result of ineffective communication. Another study, which analysed data from more than 100 ICT organisations, revealed that 75% of organisations experienced issues with sharing information regularly and sharing meaningful information with employees (Bennebroek et al., 2003). After three years, and through the same researcher, this time carried out with six organisations, a further study also found that organisations attempting to create change were experiencing difficulties in the realms of senior managers' communication behaviour, a lack of communication regarding change, and a lack of valuable information-sharing (Bennebroek et al., 2006). In order to establish a more effective change process, it is essential that change leaders are able to communicate effectively (Freddy and Mbohwa, 2013). Therefore, it is important to question the prevalence of one-directional, top-down information-sharing amongst today's organisations.

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### **2.3.2 Benefits of communicating change effectively**

Effective communication has been asserted as “the glue that holds an organisation together” (Barrett, 2002). Kitchen and Daly (2003) argue that organisations would fail to survive if they did not have effective internal communication. Kalla (2005) defines effective communication as the mutual sharing of valuable information that brings collective understanding, motivates new ways of thinking, and encourages action. John (2011) adds that effective communication entails much more than simply telling employees about each new change that is going to be made. In this regard, Emma et al. (2014) argue that effective communication means also that leaders have to justify the change, sell the reasons behind that change, and show the benefits of it. It also involves distributing meaningful information about change to all employees, discussing the change project’s processes and impacts, gathering employee feedback, and fostering candid discussion (Gabriele et al., 2013; Oreg, 2006). Therefore, the meaningfulness of the information is a major factor in the effectiveness of communication, as is the type of information shared.

Meaningful communication informs and educates employees at all levels, and motivates them to support change (Barrett, 2002; Noora, 2013). It is necessary to provide truthful and useful information to individuals about change, in order to decrease uncertainty and resistance, and guarantee overall success with the initiative (John, 2012; Kunanbayeva, 2013; Moss, 2012). It is explained in Hume’s (2010) ‘Internal Communication Toolkit’ that all members of an organisation are likely to share collectively the same understanding, objectives and attitudes to change when effective internal communication is realised. Additionally, research shows that effective communication is associated with increased employee engagement and commitment, greater shareholder returns, and

lower resistance and employee turnover (Carter, 2008; Goodman & Truss, 2004; Yates, 2006). Kotter (1995) and Lewin (1951) also point out that the effectiveness of change initiatives depend upon the use of relevant and effective communication that increases the awareness of employees and encourages them towards supporting change. During all change phases, people at management level must communicate change in terms of the advantages it will bring and any developments in the change process, whilst also listening to employees' opinions and concerns (DeWitt, 2004).

Internal communication scholars and practitioners are still keen to encourage employee commitment and engagement, reduce resistance, manage change, and motivate employees through appropriate challenges (Ellwardt et al., 2012). As (Christensen, 2014) points out, modern leaders now aim to involve employees, share knowledge, listen and respond to concerns, obtain feedback, update employees frequently and share information clearly and freely, rather than simply telling employees what they need to do and how they need to do it. Barrett (2002), Welch and Jackson (2007) and Emma et al. (2014) all assert that internal communication plays an important role in engaging and involving employees, in steering them towards the objectives of the organisation, and in improving commitment. According to Therkelsen and Fiebich (2003), committed employees are loyal, keen to support their organisation's success, and feel a sense of belonging. If an organisation does not have effective internal communication, none of these outcomes can be realised. Zareen (2013) further explains that effective internal communication represents a situation in which all members of the organisation understand why change is important, what the change will look like, and how they and the organisation will be impacted by the change.

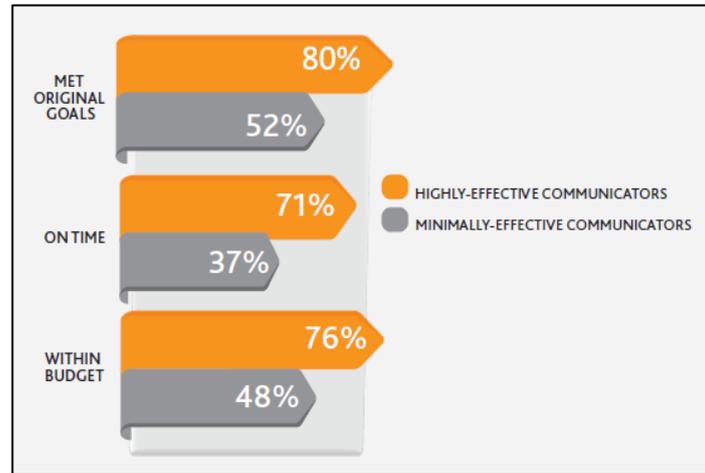
In order to ensure that information is shared truthfully and clearly, organisations should reach all employees through various channels, therefore ensuring that communication is managed well at all times (Abraham et al., 1999; Prosci, 2013). Consequently, greater satisfaction and success can be achieved when resistance is reduced, commitment is increased and levels of understanding are improved through effective communication (Hayase, 2009). Kumar and Giri (2009) found that job satisfaction was significantly and positively related to organisational communication, based on a study they conducted with 380 junior-to-senior managers working for banking and telecommunications companies. Furthermore, Jenaibi's (2010) research into job satisfaction within two government organisations signalled that job satisfaction was positively related to morale, which in turn brings about positive organisational outcomes such as increased loyalty, motivation, quality performance, and higher productivity. Chen et al. (2006) also found a positive correlation between internal communication and both job performance and organisational commitment, whilst Armenakis and Harris (2002) found that employees are more likely to accept, become ready for and adopt change when their organisations communicate clearly and consistently. Furthermore, Welch and Jackson (2007) found that strategic managers' ability to drive an organisation towards its objectives as well as to improve employee engagement was greatly influenced by internal communication. A positive correlation was also found between employees' sense of togetherness within an organisation, and their perception that they had access to all of the necessary information (White et al., 2010).

In addition, some scholars have stated the central role that communication plays in developing and maintaining trust (Ellwardt et al., 2012). For example, Chia (2005) affirms that trust and commitment can be gained by open, appropriate, clear and timely communication. Additionally, Fiedler (2010) argues that the

more management communicates meaningfully with employees, the more the gap between them becomes narrow and the trust level improves. This improvement in trust encourages employees to accept management decisions about change and therefore work with it positively (Tourish and Hargie, 2004). Employee commitment and trust between employees and all levels of management have been found to be highly influenced by internal communication. Meng and Berger (2012) shared the results of Watson Wyatt's Communication ROI Study 2007/8. The global consultancy company gathered survey data from 264 significant organisations in different countries around the world, discovering that it employees were four times more likely to be more engaged when effective communication was present. Other positive effects included an improvement in financial outcomes. Communication, comprised of effective talking and listening, sharing and addressing ideas and feedback, and exchanging information, has also been noted as the fifth step in improving employee engagement (Baumruk et al., 2006). In other research, two recently-merged organisations were surveyed, with 541 employees asked to share their perspectives on the change. In that research, Chawla and Kelloway (2004) found that employees are more likely to be open to change and trust in a change vision when they feel more involved in the change project.

Furthermore, another study between two US airlines (one of which had been acquired by the other) found that uncertainty regarding change can be reduced through effective communication (Kramer et al., 2004). Additionally, the PMI in-depth report of 2015 on the essential role of communication in organisations' projects showed that 52% of projects do not meet their original goals because of poor and ineffective communication. The same report also showed that only 37% of projects finish within the scheduled time, again because of ineffective communication. Moreover, according to the report, only 48% of projects finish

within budget as a result of ineffective communication. The figure below shows the percentages discussed above.



**Figure 2.3 Organisations that communicate more effectively have more successful projects. Source: (PMI, 2015, p.5)**

### 2.3.3 Communicating change models

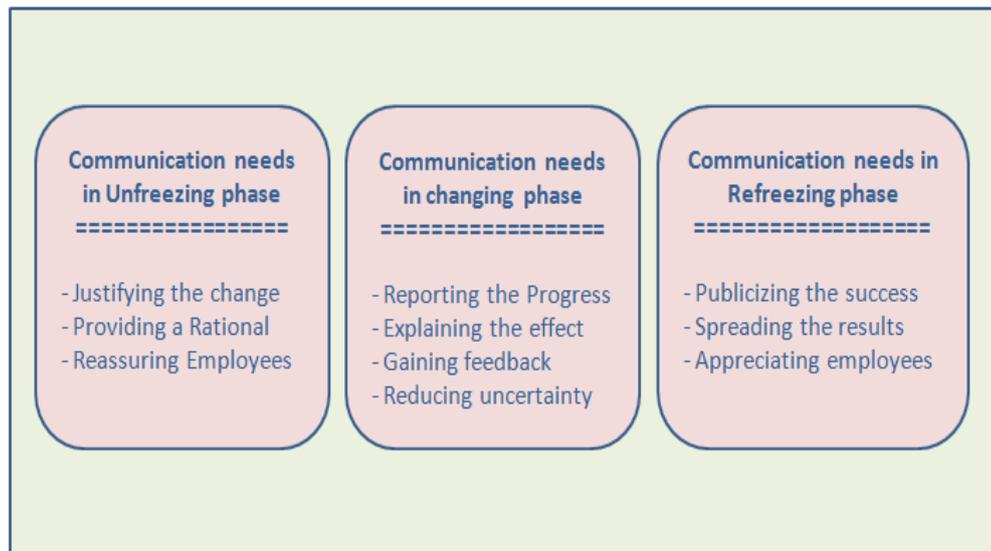
The literature on internal communication during change provides some models that focus specifically on communicating change, instead of only focusing on the general change process. Smelzer and Zener's (1992) model consists of the key components of the internal communication strategy, namely the message's components, the channels for conveying that message, and the time of the occurrence of the message. The context of the communication was much more essential than the content and the channel utilised in this model. According to this viewpoint, when leaders communicate about change, they have to focus on the timing of the message and the impact of the message.

A very simple model was created by Larkin and Larkin (1994) for change communication in big organisations, offering three key recommendations. Firstly, the researchers suggest that line managers (or frontline supervisors) are the first touch point for most employees, and should therefore be considered a major part of change by leaders. Secondly, the researchers suggest that change communication should always be carried out in person, because this allows for greater meaning and interaction. According to Larkin and Larkin (1994), richness means the ability of workers to discuss changes and their impact, whilst also offering them a chance to get feedback. Their last suggestion is that organisations should aim at communicating the relative performance of specific work areas, due to the fact that many workers care less about the organisation than they do about their own areas. The model makes substantial assumptions about organisations, including the assumption that front line supervisors have the communication skills that can enable them to communicate effectively with their workers, as well as that workers do not care about their organisation collectively (Cheney et al., 2004).

Klein's (1996) communication model offers the communication requirements in every phase of planned change. Those communication needs are plotted by Klein (1996) using Lewin's (1951) change model, which comprises three stages as discussed in section 2.2.2. An effective change progression can be enhanced by a well-organised communication process. According to Klein (1996), many difficulties which are usually related to substantial change can be solved easily if there is strategic thinking on how and what to communicate. His model suggests some essential communication messages to be relayed to each worker in every phase of planned change, utilising various communication channels if possible. For instance, he emphasised that prior to implementing change, workers have to

receive justification for the change from their leaders, offering the rationale behind the change, and encouraging the staff.

He urges that in the implementation or changing phase, leaders should document the progress of the change, elaborate the impact of the change, receive feedback from employees, and eliminate reservations. In the last phase of planned change, which is the refreezing phase, he recommends that leaders have to make public the overall success of the change, distribute the outcomes of adopting the change, and appreciate every worker's support and efforts. The figure below shows Klein's (1996) communicating change model.



**Figure 2.4 Klein's communicating change model**

**Source: Developed for the purpose of this PhD research**

Nelson and Coxhead's (1997) model suggests that organisations must adopt a number of processes in order to ensure that strategic projects and other initiatives are communicated effectively. To begin with, organisations must ensure that employees understand the change by introducing a common language. Senior managers must also be role models for the commitment and behaviours needed to achieve the change. Furthermore, information-sharing and workshops should be used to increase employees' awareness of the change plan and reduce confusion. The researchers also emphasise that rather than expecting various people to communicate effectively about the change, organisations should select or employ specific individuals who are able to lead communication effectively. The researchers assert that change plans can be achieved when all of these points are taken into consideration. One of the possible weaknesses of Nelson and Coxhead's model is that it assumes all parties involved in the change will participate fully. In reality, this can be a challenge for organisations to achieve alongside their daily operations. That being said, the introduction of communication specialists could be extremely helpful here, since managers do not necessarily always know how to communicate change effectively.

In a study primarily geared towards non-profit organisations, Lewis et al. (2001) proposed six key communication strategies for implementing change that could be chosen by the managers themselves. One of the strategies, for example, is to communicate only with those who need to know about the change, whilst another strategy is to communicate the same information to all parties. The researchers advise that the change manager should choose whichever strategy would encourage the appropriate level of agreement and efficiency. This approach has been criticised for lacking in relevancy, since it assumes that change is something of a dynamic process (Cheney et al., 2004). In response to this, Lewis et al. assert that it was not designed to be a universal rulebook, but is simply a guideline that

managers can use to consider their options whilst being ultimately focused on what path would best suit the needs of stakeholders. Given this, this approach offers a number of communicative strategies that could be adopted during change implementation based on the given aims of the change plan itself.

In another model, presented by Goodman and Truss (2004), it is proposed that managers must make a few main choices when communicating change. These choices are related to the approach to communication, the message itself, and the channel of communication used. These choices should be made based on employees' responses to change, the nature of the change initiative, the objective of the communication, and the organisational context. The guidance which this model provides to managers in terms of making decisions on how and what to communicate is considered to be of great value.

The model presented by Cheney et al. (2004) proposes seven key assumptions in relation to change communication: that change is catalysed by communication; that change occurs within the given organisational context and will be different between each organisation; that communication about change should be two-way; that organisations do not function as islands – trends in management and business will have an influence; that change can only be implemented through effective communication, since there would be no participation in change if nobody was aware of the change; that change is not static and will continue to evolve, with the final outcomes often being slightly different to the original plan; and that change may often be impacted by employees' feedback, which will arise throughout the entire change process.

Given the above information on the existing models of change communication, it is clear that most researchers believe that communication is an essential part of

employee motivation, and that this motivation is essential if change initiatives are to succeed. The researchers also seem to agree that each organisation will have its own communication needs, meaning that communication should be flexible and based on the change plan itself. Furthermore, employee feedback is highlighted in most of the models.

Furthermore, whilst the researchers differ in terms of the importance of communication, all of the above models agree that it plays a key role in change. All of the models apart from Klein's (1996) perceive communication to be an element or stage of change rather than the environment in which change grows. All of those models also believe that communication is a factor throughout the entire change process. Also, most of the previously discussed communicating change models do not cover the importance of communicating a change before the implementation of the change occurs, as Klein (1996) does. Finally, most of the communication change models do not plot clearly what leaders should communicate in each phase of the planned change process, from the initial stage until the end of the project. Klein's model is more comprehensive and detailed in terms of the communication needs in each phase of planned change, with the flexibility to communicate with any communication channel preferred by leaders. For those reasons, and to achieve the objectives of this thesis, the researcher has based the proposed conceptual model of this research on Klein's (1996) communication change model.

#### **2.3.4 Two-way communication and feedback during change**

Communication can move and flow within organisations in a number of ways and directions (Christensen, 2014). For instance, one form of one-directional

communication is monologue, where information moves in one direction from the person speaking to the person listening. According to Lewis (2007), many organisations adopt the top-down approach to communication, even though empirical data proves that there are many benefits involved in encouraging employees to participate in the decision-making process when it comes to change. As such, Allen et al. (2007) assert that it is often this one-directional monologue that causes organisations to struggle with resistance and uncertainty amongst employees. On the other hand, two-way communication allows employees and leaders to discuss change mutually and achieve collective meaning. Ruck (2010) and Tourish and Hargie (2004) explain that information can flow in three directions: diagonally, where information jumps between different levels of the hierarchy without going through the levels in between; vertically, where information moves up or down the levels one by one; or horizontally, where information moves across the same or similar levels. As Garcia-Morales (2011) points out, two-way communication is considered a key part of effective internal communication by many researchers today. Two-way communication is also important for leadership, in the sense that success is achieved through collective leadership and not through the actions of a single leader (Reinout & Angelique, 2010). Furthermore, communication strategies that are geared towards forcing senior managers' views and ideas onto employees are opposed in the research as being blind to the ways in which the evolution of working activities results in a shift in employees' attitudes (Smythe, 2004). It is also suggested that employee job and organisation satisfaction is more likely when two-way communication is fostered (Garcia-Morales et al., 2011).

Two-way communication has also been found to improve the implementation of strategy (Aaltonen and Ikävalko, 2002). This is because employees are more likely to better understand strategies when they are able to discuss them and ask

questions. The researchers suggest that organisations can achieve this by ensuring that any messages shared by employees reach senior management, and vice-versa, through frequent open dialogue, feedback and responses (ibid.). This being said, other researchers question whether bi-directional or symmetrical communication can ever be achieved in relation to strategy (Mustonen, 2009). Other researchers argue that the best communicators are those who are motivated to obtain feedback, to implement strategy and to focus on the recipient rather than the sender (Yates, 2006). These attributes represent the essence of two-way communication itself, allowing employees to share their views. Vertical two-way feedback was explored in a study in the early 2000s that highlighted the importance of feedback, with the researchers asserting that managers cannot fully evaluate the performance of themselves and their organisation without honest feedback (Tourish and Hargie, 2004). This being said, the same researchers also recognise that upward feedback can be challenging to achieve in reality. A great portion of the literature recognises the role of feedback in the change process. As Grossman (2000) points out, communication must be two-way even if it cannot be face-to-face. Frahm and Brown (2005) further assert that two-way communication is even more essential when major change is on the cards. Effective communication depends upon a dialogue between change leaders and implementers, and this entails more than just providing updates (Kanter et al., 1992; Kennan and Hazleton, 2006). Bull and Brown (2012) also point out that change leaders can gain valuable insights into the real impacts of change at ground-level when they are able to address employees' feedback, resistance and concerns. Furthermore, Kanter et al. (1992) and Cheney et al. (2004) also emphasise how feedback has a positive impact on the change process.

Organisational and individuals' issues which appear before and during change can be more effectively addressed through feedback. This is because feedback allows

managers to identify any unconsidered factors that may be hindering the effectiveness of a change plan. One group of researchers studying feedback in non-profit organisations found that, in many cases, leaders ask public trustees or major benefactors for feedback, and not the actual employees who are likely to be most impacted by the change (Lewis et al., 2006). The researchers suggest that this may be because leaders feel that creating a forum for open feedback could threaten their plans to make changes, given “how risky the process of soliciting opinions may be for some change initiatives” (Lewis et al., 2006). Leaders may also be afraid of getting into conflict, and may wish to avoid it by silencing employees. Whatever the reason, it appears that many organisations neglect the need for feedback to be shared effectively, despite research evidence that highlights its significance. It has been revealed in the literature, for instance, that leaders often believe sharing information will lead to greater change outcomes than asking for employees’ opinions. Therefore, little time is spent asking for feedback because it can be seen as irrelevant (Lewis et al., 2006).

It is also important for employees to be given feedback about a change once it has been implemented or decided on. Lewis et al. (2006) assert that few researchers have tackled this topic and how it relates to the success of a change plan. In other research, it has been indicated that change initiatives can be seen to be less effective when there is no communication about what outcomes have been achieved (Ford & Ford, 1995). Therefore, these researchers recommend that change leaders must make sure they communicate the outcome of a change plan, highlight those who have participated, and summarise what has changed. If this is not achieved, employees can believe that their input was pointless or overlooked. Essentially, leaders must communicate outcomes in order to avoid leaving employees unenthusiastic about participating in future changes and confused

about what has been achieved, even if they are worried that they will not be able to achieve the original outcomes that were intended.

Table 2.3 summarises all of the theoretical and empirical studies in regards to internal communication associated with their authors and findings.

**Table 2.3 Summary of internal communication studies and some key journal articles**

**\* (QN: Quantitative), (QL: Qualitative), (MX: Mixed Method), (T: Theoretical)**

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
Smelzer & Zener (1992)		•			Information regarding change should be communicated openly to employees as early as possible. Employees should be given all information and should not have to wait until closer to the change to find out about the change.
Kotter (1995)				•	Leaders who utilise every available communication channel to communicate an organisation's objectives and reasons for change experience greater success in change implementation.

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
Abraham et al. (1999)	•				<p>All phases within the change process must be communicated effectively and in a way that makes sense to all types of employees.</p> <p>Managers should ensure that they communicate with employees regularly about change whilst also ensuring that messages are shared through different channels, covering all aspects of change, in order to avoid misunderstandings.</p>
Armenakis & Harris (2002)		•			<p>Employees are more likely to embrace and implement change when communication is both frequent and clear.</p>
Barrett (2002)		•			<p>Change objectives cannot be met easily without communication. Organisational survival and success both depend on effective internal</p>

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
					communication.
Kitchen and Daly (2002)				•	Without internal communication, organisations will fail to survive.
Therkelsen & Fiebich (2003)				•	Employee productivity, loyalty, satisfaction and trust are all positively related to managers' and supervisors' ability to achieve effective communication.
Bennebroek et al. (2003)	•				When the quality of information shared regarding change is lacking, the change incentive will fail. This was found in all three case studies.
Tourish & Hargie (2004)	•				Employees' trust in the change incentive and engagement in implementing change increases in line with internal communication.

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
DeWitt (2004)				•	Managers must communicate change in terms of the advantages change will bring and any developments in the change process, whilst also listening to employees' opinions and concerns.
Chawla & Kelloway (2004)	•				Employees are more likely to be open to change and trust in the change vision when they are able to become involved in change at an early point and when change is communicated effectively.
Goodman & Truss (2004)		•			Employee engagement, commitment and shareholder returns are shown to increase in line with effective organisational communication, whilst resistance and turnover are shown to decrease.

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
Kramer et al. (2004)	•				Uncertainty can be minimised through the communication of information that is of value to employees.
Elving (2005)				•	Employees are found to be unprepared for change when uncertainty is high and information-sharing is low.
Chia (2005)		•			When communication is open, clear, and relevant and achieved at the right time, this can improve employees' levels of trust and commitment.
Hoover (2005)	•				Organisational progress is achieved through effective communication, as is high employee engagement. Openness also enables leaders to show that they have identified the issue and are ready to guide the

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
					organisation towards success.
Kennan & Hazleton (2006)				•	It is now managers' duty to involve employees, listen to concerns and feedback, exchange knowledge, share information and broadcast new updates rather than simply to govern and control employees' actions.
Chen et al. (2006)	•				Effective internal communication has been found to have a positive relationship with job performance and organisational commitment.
Baumruk et al. (2006)		•			Employee engagement is shown to increase when internal communication is characterised by listening, understanding, information-sharing and idea-exchanging on a regular basis.

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
Yates (2006)			•		Successful change depends on effective two-way communication between employees, middle managers and senior managers. Resistance is shown to be lower amongst organisations that achieve effective communication during the change period.
Oreg (2006)	•				Information-sharing alone is not enough to decrease resistance. The more important factor is informational content.
Sergio & Hal (2006)				•	Many change projects have faltered as a result of ineffective internal communication at the point of change.  Managers should reassure and encourage employees to understand the reasons for change on a continuous basis, not only one or two times.

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
Welch & Jackson (2007)				•	Effective internal communication improves employee commitment and participation, whilst also supporting employees' recognition and understanding of the organisation's change plan and objectives.
Carter (2008)				•	Effective organisational communication is found to be positively related to employee engagement and commitment, whilst being negatively related to resistance and employee turnover.
Hayase (2009)	•				Employee commitment is found to increase in the presence of two-way communication between employees and senior managers, whilst employee commitment and engagement is also found to be positively related to internal communication effectiveness and openness.

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
Kumar & Giri (2009)	•				High levels of worry, uncertainty and dissatisfaction are found within organisations that have low levels of communication and information-sharing. Trust and job satisfaction can be improved by enhancing the quality of internal communication.
Jenaibi (2010)			•		Workplace appeal and employee satisfaction are shown to increase with regular, effective communication between employees and senior managers.
White et al. (2010)		•			All types of employees are found to value mutual communication, wherein both parties offer input. Greater feelings of organisational belonging are achieved through the use of new communication

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
					channels that allow senior managers to feed information down to employees electronically.
John (2011)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Persuading employees to embrace change depends on the communication of the change project's advantages, impacts and desired outcomes.
Meng & Berger (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>				Organisational success and employee engagement is four times as likely to be achieved amongst organisations that have effective communication compared to those with ineffective communication.
Gabriele et al. (2013)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	New work practices, better knowledge-sharing, and enhanced internal and external communication can be achieved through the use of new

Author/Year	Methodology				Findings/Conclusions
	QN	QL	MX	T	
					technology.
Kunanbayeva (2013)		•			Employees report a lack of senior management information-sharing regarding change, despite the existence of various communication channels.
Emma et al. (2014)	•				Employee engagement is significantly positively related to the effectiveness of internal communication.

### 2.3.5 Communication channels

Communication channels represent the means by which messages are transmitted (DeVito, 2001). Moreover, just as a message can convey meaning, so too can the medium (Matos & Esposito, 2014). The most effective method of communication is to use as many different means to communicate as possible, to repeat the message several times through different channels, and provide a space for gaining feedback (Prosci, 2013). For example, information communicated via an organisation's headed paper may signify an important announcement, whereas a personal conversation between colleagues may be best undertaken through communication technology. Traditional formal and informal face-to-face channels exist within most organisations, and common communication technology employed includes intranet platforms, email, internet, video-conferencing and mobile devices (Flanagin et al., 2009). Each medium has its own intrinsic characteristics, which dictate its suitability in a given situation. Accordingly, channel effectiveness should be judged on its appropriateness and acceptability to employees (Welch, 2012). Employee satisfaction can be enhanced through the use of a wide range of resources and interpersonal channels, as research has suggested (White et al., 2010). Nevertheless, care must be observed to ensure consistency between various channels. Engaging in more types of communication media may enhance communication in the same way, according to Clampitt et al., (2002). Leaders should test their existing system and its impact on organisational life, whilst focusing upon channels which enable immediate feedback and a fast response to employee queries. Advances in technology have resulted in less static communication; its capabilities have evolved, becoming ever more dynamic. On the other hand, controlled media such as team brief presentations or an organisation's internal magazine allow senior management to

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control the content of the message, its format and also the channel employed (Welch and Jackson, 2007). New technologies in internal communication such as ESN have introduced more informal, employee-generated, collaborative, ‘bottom-up’ methods of communication, and have also enabled greater connectivity between people not based in the same location, or remote workers (Furnari, 2010). The next section will discuss ESN in more detail, as new internal communication platforms are starting to be used nowadays by many organisations around the world to enhance overall communication.

## **2.4 Enterprise 2.0 and ESN**

Internal communication nowadays is not simply one-way information, it is a dynamic platform for collaboration and interaction (Huddle, 2013). As Stankovic and Jovanovic (2010) argue, collaboration and openness are at the very core of Web 2.0 and Enterprise 2.0 technology. In this regard, Kevin (2015) asserts that Enterprise 2.0 is characterised by engagement, interactivity, participation, collaboration and sharing knowledge. Also, Janes et al. (2014) explain that content creation, collaboration and knowledge-sharing are the three main aims of Enterprise 2.0 technology. This technology represents a more extensive form of social collaboration within organisations themselves. As a result of the emergence of Enterprise 2.0, internal communication within organisations has been transformed to another style of communication (Baxter & Connolly, 2014).

Modern organisations can now utilise ESN, IM, blogs and other Enterprise 2.0 tools, along with email, face-to-face communication, intranet, telephone, internal newsletters, posters, and other print-based forms of communication, to increase

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employee engagement and awareness (Kevin, 2015). It has been proposed that Enterprise 2.0 platforms comprise four main sub-elements: connection, cooperation, collaboration and communication (Drakos et al., 2013).

The term 'Enterprise 2.0' was proposed by Andrew McAfee (2009), and is defined as the utilisation of new social software platforms in order to meet organisational goals. Additionally, McAfee explains that the main purpose of Enterprise 2.0 is "the use of emergent social software platforms by organisations in pursuit of their goals". It has been proposed that openness, sharing and self-organisation will become key, representing a shift away from the notion of hierarchical leadership (Tapscott, 2006). Likewise, Stefan et al. (2014) and Durst et al. (2013) indicate that since ESN offers junior, younger or newer employees at the bottom of the hierarchy greater social capital benefits, collaboration and communication is becoming less and less related to hierarchical structure.

Enterprise 2.0 has been categorised as a collection of search, social networking, social information management and social content creation tools (Gardener, 2013), whilst Razmerita et al. (2014) describe it as social networking, microblogs, wikis, blogs or other social media technologies adopted within the organisational environment. Internal interaction and communication is the core emphasis of ESN, which tends to refer to a variety of collaborative tools rather than specific tools designed to meet specific needs. ESN is typically used by organisations for the purpose of creating more connected networks, departments and teams (Drakos et al., 2013). Such tools can be used between organisations and partners, customers or suppliers, as well as within the organisation itself. The first major ESN tool to emerge was IBM's 'Connections' tools, which focused on the social software market. Yammer and SharePoint are Microsoft's two main products, with the former being related to ESN and the latter being geared towards document

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management. Santos et al. (2013) and Sultan (2013) explain that Enterprise 2.0 technology allows organisations to effectively and easily create and implement various projects either internally or externally. Information technology has become a major tool for such collaboration in the current environment of competition, change and innovation. Huddle (2013) adds that ESN, based on Enterprise 2.0 technologies, allows different departments and employees to work together more easily, allowing for more efficient content management, collaboration and communication. ESN also allows employees to break down processes and tasks and achieve greater flexibility at work, whilst also sharing ideas, directions and feedback with one another. McKinsey (2009) found that employee satisfaction is also improved through the adoption of ESN.

Lee et al. (2012) explain that a communication platform that depends on Enterprise 2.0 technology creates awareness on various different levels: collaboration, coordination, communication, workspace, social, information and group-structural. Gagen (2012) adds that not only does Enterprise 2.0 bring value to employees in the form of aesthetic appeal, sharing, reliability, integration, ease-of-use and accessibility (content-based benefits), it also allows employees to communicate with senior leaders in a tangible way, interact with one another, and share feedback (engagement-based benefits).

Importantly, researchers recognise that “the next generation of workers has been brought up on a lifestyle of social networking and will expect access to such facilities in the workplace” (Bond, 2010, p.2), meaning that future employees may be unlikely to want to work for organisations that have no corporate social network in place. This has become an expectation amongst many young workers today, who see the value of social networks for the purpose of facilitating communication (Levy, 2009).

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### 2.4.1 ESN as a new internal communication channel

There are many ways to communicate internally with employees, and technology nowadays offers practitioners the opportunity to try new communication tools instead of traditional ones such as print letters, memos, face to face, or even emails. One of the new communication technology solutions that many organisations have started to use as an internal communication tool is ESN. ESN is essentially a set of “web-based platforms that allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific co-workers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organisation; (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular co-workers as communication partners; (3) post, edit and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and (4) view the messages, connections, text and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organisation at any time of their choosing” (Paul et al., 2013, p.2). ESN allows employees to share information, collaborate and interact through a private social network that is built upon connectivity and brief, easy-to-use messaging (David et al., 2013). Richter and Riemer (2013, p.2) define ESN as “the result of applying technologies that emerged on the public Internet within organisations as a way of facilitating workplace communication and collaboration”.

ESN has facilitated bottom-up, open communication in the workplace through the use of collaborative technologies. Workplace practices have evolved as a result of extensive changes to the way in which employees communicate and share work. Krogh (2012), Paul et al. (2013) and Aral et al. (2013) all assert that ESN has been adopted by a high number of organisations for the purpose of greater knowledge-sharing, communication and collaboration. One of the main reasons for this, according to Denyer et al. (2011), is that ESN is thought to be an improvement on former communication methods, since it allows for greater participation and openness. Consequently, Söderqvist (2013) explains that Jive, Yammer and other

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ESN technologies are being used by an increasing number of organisations today. It is believed that ESN and other internal social media are used by more than 56% of organisations, according to The Towers Watson's 2013 Change and Communication ROI Survey. Other research has echoed the increasing adoption of ESN, with predictions of further increases to come (Jin et al., 2013). Additionally, the UK-based company Deloitte (2013) revealed that as of the end of the 2013, over 90% of Fortune 500 companies had adopted ESN to some degree. This represented a 70% rise in ESN adoption over the space of two years. Furthermore, McKinsey (2014) found that plans to inject more funds into ESN and social media over the coming three years were reported by 58% of companies surveyed in 2013. As Richter et al. (2013), Herzog et al. (2013) and Bharadwaj et al. (2013) suggest, the need to gain more insight into how these social technologies impact organisations is becoming stronger as a result of the increasing adoption of ESN in the workplace.

Thom et al. (2011) and DiMicco et al. (2008) reveal that ESN has the potential to enhance coordination within teams, the sharing of ideas, the search for information, and the identification of experts on certain topics or projects. This is an important area for managers, especially in terms of organisational change plans, the creation of internal communication strategies, and the role of support 'hubs', wherein employees all assist one another with various activities and tasks.

Riemer et al. (2012) also add that ESN adoption has been achieved by a high number of large organisations in particular, with Agarwal et al. (2008, p.244) highlighting that IBM and other major organisations have begun to shift from "command-and-control to connect-and-coordinate". Given this, Riemer et al. (2012, p.5) clarifies that ESN platforms are designed to "put emphasis on social relationships, interactive communication and adhoc sharing". Organisations have

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adopted a number of different types of ESN platform, with some choosing Salesforce Chatter, Yammer or other web services; others choosing IBM Connections, Jive SBS or other onsite vendor platforms; and some, such as Siemens, creating their own bespoke platforms. In any case, employees of these organisations are able to share all kinds of content, respond to questions, share ideas and ask their own questions, moving away from long in-person meetings, fussy PowerPoint presentations, or strings of emails. This allows real dialogue to be achieved between many users instantly or at a time of their choosing. Vance (2011) reports that Yammer is used by more than 100,000 companies, whilst Klie (2011) explains that it was amongst the first corporate social networking platforms to emerge. According to Yammer's (2012) own reports, 80% of its users are Fortune 500 companies. Other companies and government organisations are using services such as Chatter, Present.ly and SocialCast. Aoun and Vatanasakdakul (2012) support the argument that ESN platforms allow for greater interaction between employees, easier idea-sharing, and smoother exchange of feedback. McAfee (2009) praises ESN platforms for their ability to create equality in the workplace and serve as a mouthpiece for employees at all levels.

As a result, researchers such as Tapscott and Williams (2006) believe that managers will benefit by gaining greater input from employees, whilst employees will benefit from the erosion of the traditional hierarchy. Many other researchers, including Gu and Jarvenpaa (2003), Kankanhalli et al. (2005) and Kane et al. (2012), also assert that ESN platforms will allow communication to become increasingly mutual in the workplace.

### **2.4.2 ESN and organisational change**

It is the human, interactive behaviour that ESN prompts which represents its benefit, not the technology used to run it (Pervaje, 2011). Naslund (2010) agrees, stating that organisations can create an internal community of employees, fresh ideas and greater knowledge-sharing and collaboration through the use of ESN. Employees must be reassured that they are able to speak openly without worrying about conflict or negative repercussions. ESN has been found to be beneficial in improving coordination, project management, problem-solving, information-sharing and overall relationship building (Thom et al., 2011; Riemer and Richter, 2013). In an organisational change context, leaders have to communicate with employees in order to share with them meaningful information about a change, update them regularly, and solve any problems or personal concerns (Gabriele et al., 2013; Kunanbayeva, 2013). Since ESN can enhance the sharing of information and the gaining of feedback, it is expected to play a positive and important role in improving communication during change, thus facilitating the overall change process.

Also, according to Zhang et al. (2010) and DiMicco et al. (2009), ESN improves collaboration, communication, interaction and connection between users, through the creation of user-generated web content. Therefore, ESN has the potential to provide employees with career development opportunities, whilst also improving organisational performance. For example, one study into a leading IT company explored the effects that were experienced in the company's consulting department after implementing ESN (Wu, 2013). The researcher discovered a positive relationship between the use of ESN and both job security and performance, whilst also finding that employees gradually shifted in terms of their network position.

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Other studies, such as the work of Muller et al. (2012), have explored the way in which American firms' innovation, teams and collaborative efforts are impacted by diversity. The researchers found that the use of social software tools for relationship building and resource sharing varied depending on the community in question. Other researchers have found that social collaboration platforms allow organisations to transfer one-to-one information and share it either through one-to-many or many-to-many channels, allowing organisations to increase both collaboration and productivity through more efficient, meaningful communication and interaction.

Other research has found that 86% of employees blame poor communication or participation for failure in the workplace (Fierce, 2011), which highlights the importance of both participation and communication. Karin (2013) argues that both of these elements can be enhanced through knowledge-sharing tools, since this reduces issues with communication and misunderstanding. When communicating via phone, chat or email, any participant involved in a group will be able to receive the information being shared, but nobody else will. Therefore, ESN tools create greater equality of information-sharing, allowing all users to respond to and share information freely within their organisation (Riemer and Richter, 2013). This equality technically stretches from junior staff all the way up to the CEO of a company, which allows for real discussion, sharing and the exchange of ideas (Kevin, 2015). Furthermore, knowledge sharing tools such as ESN make it easy for employees to locate whatever information they need all in one place without having to approach different members of different departments, as they would have done in the past (Paul et al., 2014). With regards to organisational change, it is important for the management of any organisation to provide a good space for employees in which to participate and be involved,

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especially before and during change projects (Nur and Rozhan, 2016). This can be done by communicating effectively with employees from the early stage of change, and then continuously until the end the change project (Zafar and Naveed, 2014). As discussed earlier, ESN as an internal communication tool can improve employee collaboration and participation in the work place, which leaders need more during organisational change. So, using ESN as an additional communication channel for communicating organisational change can enhance and facilitate the change initiative.

ESN is a crucial part of an organisation's ability to build a sense of community, improve employee engagement and enhance productivity. The relationship between engagement and ESN has been highlighted in a recent study on medium- and large-size American companies in over 20 industries. Here, the researcher conducted a survey with 400 different employees, finding that employee engagement was positively impacted by ESN, blogs, video conferencing and wiki sites at work (Linjuan, 2013). Engagement leads to feelings of emotional attachment, commitment, pride, enthusiasm, participation and empowerment, which is highly beneficial for organisations and for employees themselves. In other work, it has been found that ESN is positively related to innovation, collaboration, employee engagement and inclusion (McAfee, 2009). Nicholls (2012) also highlights that ESN can open up shy or quiet employees and allow them to talk more freely. Aside from general collaboration, ESN also offers organisations the ability to offer public support, encouragement and recognition.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that employees' ability to watch their own input be acknowledged and implemented can also increase engagement as a result of ESN (Nazaraiian, 2012). Another benefit is that questions can be answered by multiple people at once, and answers can be found instantly, instead of having to

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wait for emails to go back and forth. The more engaged the workforce of an organisation, the more productive, innovative, and profitable the organisation will be (Cantrell and Benton, 2005). Engaged employees who perceive that they have a voice have been found significantly more likely to refer their organisation to others for employment, recommend its products and services, and more likely to support any future change in the organisation (Gagen, 2012). Peccei et al. (2011) perceive engagement to be a crucial element of organisational change, whilst Emma et al. (2014) explain that employee support for and engagement in change is driven most prominently through effective communication about that change. If ESN is employed effectively as a channel for communicating change, then it can help the management to increase employee engagement during change.

Bridge (2012) reveals that access to an overwhelming amount of information wastes up to 26% of employees' time. Since employees are able to access the information they require quickly and easily through the use of ESN, it is highlighted as a major time-saving tool for organisations. This argument is in line with the perspectives of another researcher, who explains that ESN helps organisations deliver information quickly, efficiently and easily, no matter where users are based (Gagen, 2012). Furthermore, ensuring that all employees and managers are able to share ideas in one central location means that an organisation can access rich information and insight on which it might otherwise miss out. In organisational change situations, when a change been announced initially by leaders, employees seek any available information and knowledge about the change (Emma et al. 2014). ESN is therefore an excellent way to share this information, since it is easy-to-use and reliable. ESN has been noted for its use in creating awareness in relation to collaboration, coordination, communication, workspace, group-structural, social and informational matters (Lee et al., 2012). During organisational change, most employees misunderstand the change because

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of poor justification from management (Zafar & Naveed, 2014). Leaders have to communicate effectively with employees to increase their awareness about change and reduce any uncertainty (John 2012; Noora 2013). When there is a clear explanation about change and it is supported by open two-way communication platforms such as ESN, which also enable transparent discussion, the awareness of employees becomes much better. Using ESN effectively to communicate change can help in improving overall awareness among employees about a change.

Research done by Cohrs et al. (2006) and Rayton (2006) has shown that organisations can achieve better employee retention, greater staff morale, higher levels of organisational commitment and improved job satisfaction amongst employees when using social networking tools in the workplace. The reason for this is that, as established, ESN shifts away from the traditional hierarchy and allows for more democratic, participatory communication (Kevin, 2015). Research has found that job satisfaction and effective internal communication are significantly positively related (Kumar & Giri, 2009; Jenaibi, 2010). Since ESN - as discussed already - is positively associated with job satisfaction, then it may have a positive impact if it is employed effectively during the change process, and it can facilitate change. This kind of sharing of information and expertise with others in the organisation increases employee self-esteem, trust in management, respect from others, and feelings of commitment, which enhance the feelings of organisational citizenship (Sultan, 2013). In addition, the democratic architecture and communication style which ESN provides by encouraging employees and management to share ideas and promote discussions (Patel and Jasani, 2010) fosters a great sense of community by creating new online communities, strengthens existing offline communities (Ba and Wang, 2013), and builds an environment of trust by increasing the level of trust among all employees at different levels (Paul et al. 2013; Salas and Sanchez, 2013). In the environment of

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organisational change, Fiedler (2010) argues that the more management communicate meaningfully with employees, the more trust levels are improved. This improvement in trust encourages employees to accept any management decision about change and so work with it positively. Furthermore, Cameron and Green (2013) argue that effective internal communication during organisational change builds a trust environment between management and employees, which can push a change towards success. ESN, through its democratic architecture and open communication style, can be a suitable platform where management and employees become close to each other and share information about change (Prosci, 2013). Table 2.4 summarises the main benefits of using ESN which have been derived from the literature.

ESN benefits	References
➤ Increase Employee's Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gagen (2012)</li> <li>• Lee et al. (2012)</li> <li>• Paul et al. (2013)</li> <li>• Kevin (2015)</li> </ul>
➤ Increase Employee's Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McAfee (2009)</li> <li>• Nazaraian (2012)</li> <li>• Nicholls (2012)</li> <li>• Linjuan (2013)</li> <li>• Kevin (2015)</li> </ul>
➤ Increase Employees Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leidner et al. (2010)</li> <li>• Moqbel (2012)</li> </ul>
➤ Incerase Employee's Participation and Collaboraion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DiMicco et al.(2009)</li> <li>• Denyer et al. (2011)</li> <li>• Karin (2013)</li> <li>• Muller et al. (2012)</li> <li>• Nicholls (2012)</li> <li>• Zhang et al. (2010)</li> <li>• Kevin (2015)</li> </ul>
➤ Building trust between employees & management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul et al. (2013)</li> <li>• Salas (2013)</li> <li>• Sultan (2013)</li> </ul>

**Table 2.4 Benefits of ESN derived from the literature**

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## 2.5 Gaps in the Literature

The inferences from the existing academic literature as discussed in the previous sections provide confirmation to the existing theoretical perspectives. This section details the gaps found in the literature related to organisational change, communication during organisational change, and ESN.

- Most of the available empirical studies on organisational change management focus on how to manage change projects successfully in general, without examining what needs to be done at each stage of the change process to facilitate the overall process (Zareen, 2013).
- Although the change management literature agrees generally that communication is a vital part of the change process, still there is a dearth of empirical studies that focus on what needs to be communicated in each phase of the change process to make communication more effective (Lewis et al., 2013).
- Most of the available studies on communicating change do not focus empirically on investigating the role of specific communication channels that can enhance internal communication and make communication during change more effective (Welch, 2012).
- The literature on ESN as a new internal communication channel still does not link empirically with the change management field, and specifically with communicating change.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented an overview of the literature upon which this study's aims are based. The research aim is to investigate and examine the role of ESN in facilitating organisational change in GCC countries, and to provide a set of recommendations for decision makers, stakeholders and academics.

The literature reveals that change today is more complex and rapid than ever before, thus it needs more timely and appropriate attention. The literature in the change management domain has concluded that internal communication during change plays a critical role in facilitating or failing change initiatives. Although many researchers argue about the importance of improving internal communication during organisational change, still there is a lack of empirical studies exploring the role of effective internal communication, especially in terms of what needs to be communicated and how. This research has the potential to offer academics and practitioners an empirical study on how new communication technology such as ESN can be used in a change context in order to improve internal communication and facilitate the overall change process.

The following chapter will guide the reader through the conceptual proposed model for this study and, therefore, the theoretical underpinning of this research.

## **Chapter 3: Conceptual Model**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to develop a conceptual model of communicating change through ESN to facilitate organisational change. The proposed model intends to support leaders, managers and change agents in organisations on how to communicate effectively with employees about change, using ESN as an additional internal communication channel in each phase of the planned change process. The chapter begins with a discussion on how the conceptual model has been built, and on what theoretical perspectives. The chapter then identifies the components of the developed model starting with the phases of organisational change, which are pre-implementation, implementation, and stabilisation. After that, the chapter identifies the communication needs in each phase, followed by the contribution of the conceptual model, which is communicating change through new communication technology known as ESN. Furthermore, the chapter identifies the impact of communicating change through ESN, which can facilitate organisational change.

### **3.2 Integrative Model of the Study**

Of the numerous indicators, models and theories of change management, Lewin's

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(1947) model is the most widely recognised and supported (Burke, 2011). According to Ford (2009), it is Lewin's model that is considered most applicable when studying planned change and its processes, which is the type of change that this study covers.

As outlined in Section 2.2.2 of this thesis, Lewin's theoretical model provides a foundation for many other change management models. It can be noted that the majority of researchers and scholars believe that facilitating change in the direction of success can be achieved through effective communication during the change process. The content of communication during change phases has to be clear and meaningful to all employees (Gabriele et al., 2013). The unfreezing, change and refreezing phases of planned change, and the communication needs in each of these phases, have been explored by Klein (1996), who proposes that planned change can be achieved successfully through a carefully-planned communication process. He argues that continuous and clear communication during change phases is necessary to overcome challenges. Effective internal communication is associated with a number of key considerations according to the literature, including the use of multiple two-way communication channels (rather than only face-to-face communication). However, change is often communicated only once or twice, and often only through a paper bulletin or via email (Lewis et al, 2006). Klein (1996) suggests that communication during change should be compatible with the change planned by the organisation, and in parallel with the change phases. The aim of this study is to investigate whether, and, if so, to what extent, ESN can help to facilitate organisational change, by exploring the use of ESN in each stage of organisational change, and finding its impact on employee awareness, engagement, satisfaction, participation and trust from a management perspective. The communication explored in this study is the information sent through ESN by senior leaders and middle managers to employees during change phases. The conceptual model of this study is based on the theoretical model

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given by Klein (1996), which provides the most detailed and, for the purposes of this study, useful description of communication needs in each stage of the organisational change process.

### **3.2.1 Phases of organisational change**

The proposed conceptual model of this study explores communication through ESN from management to employees during planned change phases. The phases of change in the proposed model are named as pre-implementation, implementation and stabilisation. Before change can occur, the initial phase of pre-implementation must take place. The pre-implementation phase is the process required to prepare for change, to help staff accept the coming change, and to break down the status quo (Gary & Ray, 2013). The next phase of the change process is called implementation, in which the movement into a new situation has begun, and this marks the start of implementing the change. This is the point at which change becomes real, and thus, for some, marks the beginning of a struggle with the new reality. The final phase of change takes the form of stabilisation, whereby the final changes made to the organisation's processes, goals, structures, products or people become the new reality and the new status quo.

### **3.2.2 Communication needs in the pre-implementation phase**

Many people in the pre-implementation phase will naturally misunderstand what's going on, so during this phase the primary communication objective is to prepare employees and the organisation for change, and to increase overall awareness of the change. Employees in this phase are seeking valuable information about the change, mainly from senior leaders who are responsible for the decisions and the planning of the change (Emma et al., 2014). Therefore, senior leaders in the pre-

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implementation phase must be able to justify that the change needs to happen whilst making employees aware of issues that are currently hindering the organisation's success. Employee involvement and satisfaction increases when change plans are communicated early on, which also helps employees to understand the necessity for change. Additionally, senior leaders must communicate the reasons for the change, and the desired outcome must be compared with the existing situation. According to Klein (1996), senior leaders must effectively outline all of the advantages and motivations involved in the change, as well as the impacts the change will have, the people who will be impacted, the reasons for the change, and what the change involves. Importantly, employees require reassurance. This can be given when the information communicated is of value to employees, since employees naturally tend to feel less concerned about the objectives of the organisation and more about how the change might impact their own authority, position in the organisation and job activities. Therefore, the information communicated by senior leaders through ESN in the pre-implementation phase should include justifying the change, providing a rationale and reassuring employees.

### **3.2.3 Communication needs during the implementation phase**

In the implementation phase, middle managers who are usually responsible for implementing change must communicate with employees about the possible impacts of change whilst sharing information truthfully and addressing employees' concerns, since the implementation phase of planned change can be one of the most difficult phases (Zareen, 2013). Middle managers are advised to improve employees' awareness and engagement, not only by addressing their concerns, but also by asking for employees' feedback and perspectives. Organisational activity is high during change implementation, and uncertainty

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tends to be common at this stage (Holt et al., 2007). This is because many employees have little information about the change, and are not very involved in the process. Therefore, communication is essential during the change implementation phase, and it is associated with two main goals: firstly, to share truthful and complete information about the change with employees who are not involved in the change implementation process; and secondly, to share information about how change will impact the roles of those who are involved in the implementation process (Kunanbayeva, 2013).

During the implementation phase, communication has to be more detailed due to change starting to have an impact on the organisation and outcomes becoming clearer (Emma et al., 2014). At this stage, middle managers should inform employees about any progress or update, and prepare them for any difficulties they may face. Middle managers should also address the ways in which change is likely to impact responsibilities and tasks, departments or specific employees. Employees are more likely to develop greater trust, respect and loyalty towards management when their feedback and concerns are addressed (John, 2011). That is why it is also essential for middle managers to request feedback from employees and to hear employees' perspectives and concerns. In many cases, uncertainty regarding change appears within the implementation phase and it relates mostly to vague communication. Consequently, middle managers should minimise uncertainty by using clear and meaningful information about the change. Therefore, the information communicated by middle managers through ESN in the implementation phase should include reporting progress, explaining the effect, gaining feedback, and reducing uncertainty.

### **3.2.4 Communication needs during the stabilisation phase**

The stabilisation phase of change is considered to be the last phase in the organisational change process, and during this stage all changes are made permanent and a new equilibrium is set (Cameron & green, 2013). This involves setting up processes and policies that will work with the new settings of change and behaviours. The communication in this phase has to come mostly from senior leaders, as it focuses on sharing with employees the success of the change and spreading at least the initial output from it (Freddy and Mbohwa, 2013). Employees in this phase want to know if the change has been implemented successfully and whether the organisation has gained some positive outputs from it. That is why senior leaders should publicise the success of a change by communicating it to everybody and spreading the overall results of the implemented change using ESN. In addition to that, senior leaders should appreciate all employees for their great efforts and support during the change process, by sending them thankful and appreciative messages and rewarding those who were directly involved in planning and implementing the change (Klein, 1996). Therefore, the information communicated by senior leaders through ESN in the stabilisation phase should include publicising success, spreading results, and appreciating employees.

### **3.2.5 The impact of communicating change through ESN**

Internal communication during change should not only inform employees about the change, but should also encourage them to participate freely in the change process, collect their concerns, and gather their feedback (Darrin, 2013). Therefore, ESN as a transparent communication platform goes many steps further than traditional communication tools. Conventional approaches to change management have been one-way and top-down in nature. Here, employees are

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simply told that change is going to happen, and are made responsible for the implementation of these changes. This blocks real dialogue and does not allow employees to make suggestions or raise their concerns. ESN has emerged as a new change management tool that is now adopted by a high number of organisations in order to enhance internal communication, particularly during the implementation of change (Aral et al., 2013). As discussed earlier in section 2.4.2, ESN has many benefits and impacts on employees when it is used effectively as an internal communication tool. Some of these impacts are listed in Table 2.4, which highlights the aims of communicating change in order to facilitate change. These are awareness, engagement, satisfaction, participation and trust.

➤ **Employee Awareness**

Employees tend to experience uncertainty about how change will impact their jobs and themselves, how it will benefit them, and why the change needs to happen (Sergio and Hal, 2006). Consequently, acceptance of the change can be difficult, and employees can struggle with productivity and focus at work. Achieving the desired outcomes depends greatly on employee awareness. Furthermore, resistance can be avoided by encouraging readiness and minimising uncertainty when employees are aware of the reasons change is needed. If there is uncertainty whilst change is being implemented, this can impact the working environment and each of the employees. Employees hope to gain a better understanding of and greater information about change once they are aware that it is going to happen. Therefore, communication can be considered the key tool in improving awareness and avoiding uncertainty amongst employees. Employee awareness improves greatly when ESN and other two-way communication platforms are used, alongside clear communication regarding change. Through ESN, employees can gain meaningful, visually pleasing, truthful information from credible sources, which can be exchanged and located easily (Emma et al., 2014). This means

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that employees' understanding and awareness of change can be maximised, which facilitates an organisation's achievement of its change objectives. Therefore, ESN can have an impact on the awareness and understanding levels among employees during organisational change, thus facilitating the overall change initiative.

➤ **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement can be defined as an approach taken within the employees' place of work that aims to improve employees' commitment to the values and objectives of the organisation, enhance employees' motivation to contribute to the success of the organisation, and allows employees to feel a greater sense of overall happiness and satisfaction at work (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). The outcomes of change projects depend greatly on effective employee engagement. When an employee is engaged, they are more likely to work harder, be keen to be involved in the organisation, and have a tendency to share positive opinions about the organisation. According to the literature discussed in Chapter 2, employees with high levels of engagement are crucial to the change process, since they support and drive change. On the other hand, employees with high levels of disengagement are more likely to resist change and encourage others to do so. If employees feel that their work has meaning and makes an important contribution to the change, they are more likely to be engaged. Employees do not only want to cooperate with the organisation, they want to collaborate with the organisation. This can be achieved through effective two-way communication. One of the ways that this can be achieved is through ESN, which offers a two-way platform for employees to express their opinions and concerns to line managers and, in many cases, senior managers. As an internal communication channel, ESN offers employees a platform to overcome communication boundaries with senior management whilst watching their own suggestions – and those of

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their colleagues – impact the actions of change leaders. Therefore, ESN can have an impact on the engagement and commitment of employees during an organisational change project, thus facilitating the change.

➤ **Employee Satisfaction**

Employees' job satisfaction has been shown to be influenced by the quality of information shared by an organisation, according to internal communication literature. Employee turnover and complaints can be minimised through the use of effective communication, due to its facilitation of greater job satisfaction. According to the literature discussed in the previous chapter, there is a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and internal communication in relation to organisational change. It has also been proposed that there is a positive relationship between ESN and employee retention, morale, commitment, job satisfaction and other work-related outcomes. The reason for this is that ESN moves away from traditional hierarchical communication and embraces a new type of internal communication: one that focuses on relationship-building, networking between employees and managers, and multi-way communication. Given that job satisfaction and the use of ESN has been found to be positively related, this indicates that the use of ESN during the change process is likely to improve employees' satisfaction with the change. Therefore, ESN can have an impact on improving employee's satisfaction during a change project, thus facilitating the change.

➤ **Employee Participation**

When information is shared in real-time, this allows an organisation to promote greater acceptance of change amongst employees, whilst also strengthening organisational policies, working relationships and services. Managers must be able to facilitate the provision of a productive environment

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that allows employees to participate and become involved in organisational change at all stages, particularly before and during the implementation of change. Barriers to communication can be overcome through the use of social networking tools and other tools that allow employees to collaborate, participate and share knowledge. Since all members of an organisation have the ability to post comments, share ideas, access posts and share posts in a real-time environment, ESN helps to remove the hierarchy of communication, giving everyone the same opportunity to participate in the process. This means that ESN and other social networking tools provide an idea-sharing platform upon which the ideas of the top leader or the CEO can be viewed with the same importance as the lowest-paid employee. Collaboration applications and ESN have been shown to be highly successful in encouraging employees to participate in various events, share their experiences and carry out new processes as one organisational team. According to the literature, ESN facilitates participation amongst employees, enabling them to easily communicate, interact and connect with other members of the organisation whilst generating network content. As has been established throughout this study, the implementation of change is positively influenced by the involvement and participation of employees. The desired outcomes can be reached if employees are given the freedom to participate actively in change instead of being controlled and directed by leaders. As shown throughout the literature, employees who feel that a change plan is representative of some of their own contributions will be more likely to show commitment to the project as a result of being able to participate in the process in a way that feels valuable to them. Since ESN encourages employees to participate easily without any formality or management barriers by communicating their ideas, voices and personal feedback at any time, therefore ESN can have an impact on employee participation during a change project, thus facilitating the change.

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➤ **Trust in Management**

Organisational change plans and projects are greatly facilitated by trust. Furthermore, trust also helps to improve credibility whilst strengthening loyalty between employees and their organisation (Mathews and Illes, 2015). Communication facilitates the establishment of an organisational culture that further strengthens this sense of trust. Therefore, trust and communication lie at the core of organisational change. Trust can be enhanced when communication is considered to be of value to employees (Fiedler, 2010). When employees trust managers and their organisation, they are more likely to take a positive attitude towards change and contribute effectively to the desired change outcomes, because they have faith in the decisions being made. Therefore, it is much more likely that a change initiative will be successful when trust levels are high within an organisation, due to effective internal communication at the time of change (Togna, 2014). Therefore, managers and leaders must ensure that communication is relevant, open, clear and two-way, and is achieved early on during the change process. If this is achieved, trust is achieved. A culture of trust can be built through the kind of collaboration and interaction that ESN platforms provide. ESN shifts the focus from traditional hierarchical communication and encourages members to embrace networking, relationship-building and multi-way communication that enables everyone to share feedback, concerns and information. ESN is an ideal platform for information to be communicated regarding change, since it fosters greater openness and democracy in the workplace. Therefore, ESN can have an impact on improving the trust level between management and employees during the change process, thus facilitating organisational change.

### **3.3 Research Conceptual Model**

Based on the previous discussion, the conceptual model as shown in Figure 3.1 is being proposed, to explore the impact of using ESN as a communication channel to communicate planned change in each phase of the change process, in order to facilitate the overall change project. The model shows the communication needs or content through ESN in the pre-implementation phase, the implementation phase, and the stabilisation phase, and the impact of communicating change through ESN on employee awareness, participation, engagement, satisfaction and trust.

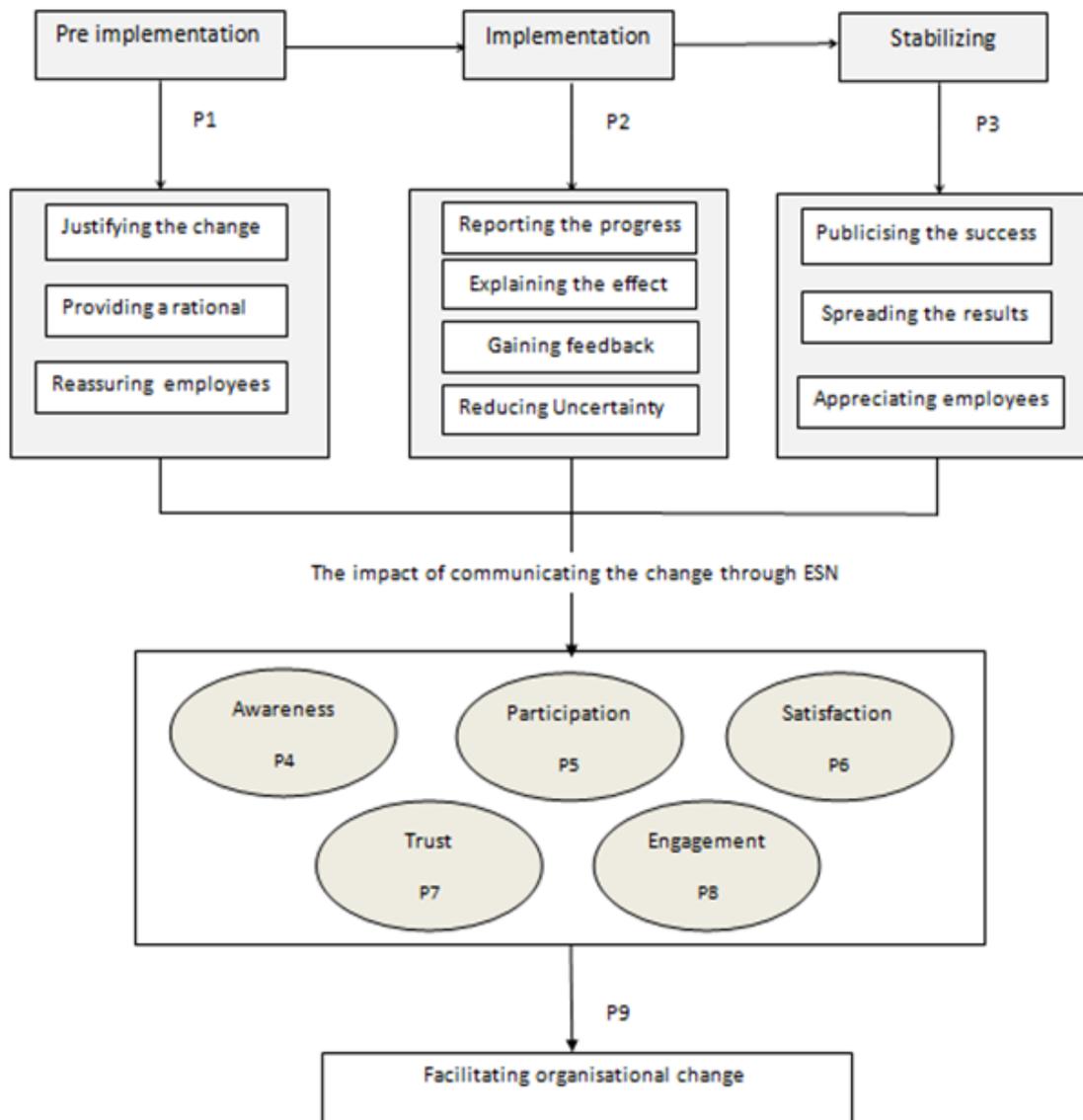


Figure 3.1 The conceptual model

### **3.4 Chapter Summary**

This research has identified a gap in the literature review, dealing with the lack of theoretical models for communicating change effectively in each stage of the change process, using ESN as an additional communication channel. This chapter started with a discussion about integrating the conceptual model and the theoretical base on which to build it, and proposed it as the novel model of this thesis. The researcher in this chapter also discussed the phases of change and the communication needs in each phase, which will be plotted in the conceptual model to be evaluated empirically later on by the researcher. Also, this chapter covered the impact of communicating change through ESN, which has been found in the literature on ESN and linked to the field of change communication. The researcher in this chapter has identified eight propositions which need to be tested and validated through identifying the appropriate paradigms, methods and techniques, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a discussion on the research methodology of this thesis. It describes, selects and justifies the appropriate research methodology for the work presented here. The first section of this chapter deals with research philosophies, followed by a rationale for the use of qualitative research, and then the case study research strategies are presented. Lastly, the sources of data and the collection methods are discussed.

### **4.2 Research Approach**

Any research, according to Saunders et al. (2015), is a route of methodical searching that increases knowledge about a certain phenomenon, and therefore it has to depend on reasonable relationships. Management and organisational research ought to be the consequence of both hypothetical and practical issues. To answer the main question of a piece of research, a researcher has to know the methods of data-gathering and how that data can then be analysed (Saunders et al., 2015). Before that, the researcher has to understand the two main philosophies of social science disciplines, which are called positivism and interpretivism (Yin, 2013).

The first philosophy, positivism, depends mainly on numerical data collection. The philosophy of positivism can be used to develop the understanding of human attitudes by exposing individuals' information through neutral values. The paradigm of positivism is focused on the evidence or sources of social phenomena, in which researchers use theories, variables and hypotheses (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Positivism uses statistical methods for analysis, because it is mainly dependent on numbers and figures. According to Yin (2013), quantitative research looks to clarify and expect what occurs in the social domain, by seeking symmetries and common relationships among its integral components. When the aim of a study is to gather data associated with incidences of phenomena, then a quantitative approach is more appropriate. The second philosophy, interpretivism, is linked to the nature of reality, and focuses on knowing human behaviours through the collection of descriptive data. It can be used to achieve more sympathy towards human behaviours through individuals' interpretive patterns, beliefs and value systems (Yin, 2013). According to Saunders et al. (2015), in interpretivism, the individual subjective state is to realise how and why phenomena happen. The philosophy of interpretivism is followed in this research, as it defines reality in descriptive means.

Regarding the types of approach to research, there is either the deductive approach or the inductive approach. The scientific principles regarding the deductive approach can be described as transferring from theory to data, testing the relationships of variables, collecting data quantitatively, and controlling the validity of data. In the induction approach, the principles are characterised through the significance of human viewpoints that identify with the research issue, knowing the research setting, collecting qualitative information, suppleness in modifying study building, and giving less consideration towards generalising the findings. The induction and deduction approaches can be combined together and applied to one piece of research, but this depends on the research issue that is

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being studied (Saunders et al., 2015). In this research, the phenomenon of organisational change is considered as a strategic problem, and internal communication plays an important role in either facilitating it or complicating it, depending on how effective or poor internal communication is within an organisation. Thus there is a need for an inductive approach, as the researcher needs to understand deeply the issue and is trying to explore the effectiveness of using a new communication tool to facilitate change, using the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, and to understand the impact of such a tool on employees during the change process, using the ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research**

Research studies that focus on the experience of individuals and their behaviours, or focus on how organisations work, mostly apply the qualitative approach. Qualitative studies are usually related to the social world by relaying participants’ interpretations. This is because the nature of the qualitative approach considers words’ meanings and the language used by participants.

According to Green and Thorogood (2008, p.30):

“If you want to understand the perspective of participants, explore the meaning they give to phenomena or observe a process in depth, then a qualitative approach is probably appropriate.”

Based on the aim of this research as stated in the first chapter, it is clear that the qualitative approach is applicable to this type of research. The below points explain further why the qualitative approach has been chosen for this research:

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- The researcher aims to understand the use of ESN in communicating organisational change, through the people who use it in real life. The research will involve people such as senior leaders and middle managers who are responsible for planning and implementing organisational change, and who communicate change to employees using ESN.
- The researcher aims to investigate in depth how ESN as a communication tool can facilitate organisational change when it is used to communicate change to employees.

## **4.4 Research Strategy**

The specific research objectives and questions associated with a given study should provide the direction in which the researcher must move, in terms of grounded theory, strategy, action research, surveys, case studies and instruments used. As Miles and Huberman (1994) and Saunders et al. (2015) explain, experimental research has been employed amongst social scientists and natural scientists for many years. Experimental research requires a hypothesis to be set and samples to be taken from the relevant population. Experimental conditions need to be used to allocate the samples, and a minimal number of controls and measured variables should be adopted.

Saunders et al. (2015) explain that deductive research is more often associated with the survey method. Here, questionnaires are primarily used to gather large quantities of data from a large population. Researchers are able to have greater control using this method, and the gathered data is suitable for statistical analysis. This being said, Saunders et al. (2015) and Bryman et al. (2007) highlight that

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since this type of research requires the researcher to plan and design the approach carefully before conducting a pilot study, an actual study, and then a final analysis, it can take a significant amount of time to achieve this. Standard structured interviews and structured observations can also fall under the survey strategy category.

Management and business papers tend to rely on case studies, which allow empirical data to be gathered quickly using multiple sources. Case studies are useful in that they aid researchers in gaining insights into the research process and the wider context, they enable researchers to use various methods to gather data, and they question the ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ of phenomena. It has been proposed that the case study method is an effective approach to the exploration of theory (Saunders et al., 2015), although Walsham et al. (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that its weaknesses are that it lacks scientific strength and it is based on specific situations or contexts.

Grounded theory can adopt both inductive and deductive perspectives, and goes further than simply building a theory. Bryman et al. (2007) explain that grounded theory can be used to gather data that allows researchers to present entirely new theories or frameworks. Another type of research strategy is action research. In the context of this research, this would entail the following three elements: change management as a function; employee participation as practitioners; and results that could shed light on another context or situation. Saunders et al. (2015) explain that action research is different from other strategies, since it focuses on explaining, understanding and describing results before applying them to the action of change. It is this action that separates this strategy from the others.

#### 4.4.1 Case study

This thesis adopts the interpretative explorative case study design. The case study method is a form of empirical research. It performs a detailed exploration of recent real-world issues and topics. Case studies are particularly useful when the researcher is unsure about the borders that exist between the environment and the issue at hand (Yin, 2013). The researcher recognises that when researchers wish to gain more in-depth data, qualitative methods are often used.

A case study is considered “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence” (Robson, 2002). As Saunders et al. (2015) explain, case studies address the ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘what’ of phenomena. The decision to adopt the case study method has been made based on a number of aims. Firstly, the researcher hopes to gain a deep understanding of the organisational change phenomenon and the communication needs before and during the implementation of change, and its extensive impact, in real life. Secondly, as Rosemann et al. (2008) and Cornford et al. (2005) point out, it is important for the researcher to be in the field in order to be able to gain the required insight. This can be achieved by addressing the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. Thirdly, substantial investigation is needed in order to know about the role and impact of using ESN to communicate with employees about organisational change. This can be done through applying multiple methods such as interviews, written documents, and observations (Yin, 2013).

#### **4.4.2 Case study type**

Case studies have three types, which Yin (2013) named as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The specific type of case study to be chosen is based mainly on the research question. This research is considered an exploratory case study, since it concentrates on answering the question of “how?” - how can ESN as a new communication tool facilitate organisational change? Saunders et al. (2015) admit that exploratory studies are valuable and crucial to understanding what is happening and understanding new perceptions, in order to evaluate the phenomenon in question.

#### **4.4.3 Single or multiple case studies**

Case study strategy can use single or multiple cases, and it is necessary for the researcher to decide on the number of cases to be studied before collecting the data. A single case provides an opportunity to examine a phenomenon that has not been widely considered before, and this helps the researcher to define the case and explain the phenomenon in detail (Saunders et al., 2015). The main motivation to undertake a multiple case study strategy is establishing whether the factors identified in one case are similar to those of others, which can later lead to generalising the results of the study (Saunders et al., 2015). Given this unique advantage, Yin (2013) argues that multiple case study strategies should be given consideration over single case studies. Since this study aims to explore how ESN can facilitate organisational change, it is therefore essential to employ more than one case study, in order to obtain necessary data that will answer the main ‘how’ question of the study. Herriott and Firestone (1983) mention that the results from two case studies are more constructive and concise than those from one case study. Also, Stuart et al. (2002) claim that one to three cases are appropriate to

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explore and explain a phenomenon in detail. Having two results from two different organisations can make the data more trustworthy, authentic, and able to be generalised. The researcher in this thesis has adopted the multiple case studies approach, based on two different organisations that use ESN as an additional communication channel to communicate organisational change.

#### **4.4.4 Unit of analysis**

The case study itself determines the unit of analysis used, and analysis of the case study determines the data collection methods that are adopted. As a result, Yin (2013) explains that units of analysis can represent a phenomenon, project, organisation or employee that reflects the case study topic. The case study cannot be of a hypothesis, argument or topic, but must be of a phenomenon that exists in the real world. Yin (2013) asserts that the units of analysis must be carefully determined, so that the researcher remains focused and realistic about what can be achieved. The unit of analysis should represent the case study and the main focus of the research. For this research, the unit of analysis is the process of communicating a planned change using ESN, and the management experience of using it as an internal communication channel to facilitate change.

## **4.5 Sources of Data and Collection Methods**

The main method adopted by qualitative researchers is the interview method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007). In this study, the researcher conducts semi-structured face-to-face interviews with nine senior leaders and 23 middle managers. Data can also be gathered from physical artefacts, participants' observations, direct observation, interviews, archival records and documents (Yin, 2013). In this study,

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the researcher gathered data from interviews, documentation and observation, all of which are outlined in the following section.

#### **4.5.1 Interview**

Interviews are used as the main source of data in this study, due to the adoption of the interpretive approach. Hannbuss (1996) and Walsham (1995b) explain that interviews provide insights into participants' experiences, aims, perspectives and interpretations, all of which can be compared and contrasted. The majority of qualitative researchers use the interview method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007). One of the main benefits of the interview method is that participants are able to freely express the way they see their environment (Cohen et al., 2003). These spoken descriptions provide data that researchers can then analyse. Since interviews allow the researcher to engage in some degree of dialogue with the participant, interviews are an ideal method for exploring complicated topics and events. As Jarratt (1996) and Cornford et al. (2005) point out, interviews allow researchers to delve into significant topics as they arise in discussion, which allows them to place more emphasis on the issues that are most relevant to the research. Therefore, some of the greatest insight can be obtained through the interview method. Jarratt (1996) and Cornford et al. (2005) explain that interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured, depending on the types of questions asked. In the current study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted. This was seen by the researcher to offer the best balance between time and desired insight. Haralambos and Holborn (1991) explain that interviews are often perceived as a less rigid way of obtaining data from participants compared to other methods. This being said, some disadvantages do exist in the case of unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Collis and Hussey (2009), for instance, explain that researchers must take into account that the interviewee may be influenced by

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troubling personal or professional events that have happened in their life recently, which could impact their answers to the questions. Furthermore, there is always the risk that interviewees may not be as precise, open, honest, reliable or knowledgeable as the researcher might have hoped.

- **Interview design**

The document which contains the interview questions is divided into five sections, with a cover page for each interviewee's personal information. The initial part of the document comprises some contextual information about the role of the interviewee, and some general questions about the change that has been implemented in the interviewee's organisation. The second part of the document is about the communication which occurred through the ESN software Yammer in the pre-implementation phase, and its impact on employees. The questions in this part focus on knowing the subjects about which senior leaders communicated with employees in the pre-implementation phase of the change, through the use of Yammer. In this part the researcher aimed to understand the contents of the communication which occurred, and the impact on employees of communicating about the change through Yammer from their perspective. The third part of the document is about the communication which happened through Yammer in the implementation phase, and its impact on employees. The questions in this part focused on knowing the topics about which middle managers communicated with employees in the implementation phase of the change, through the use of Yammer. Also, the researcher tried to establish the impact of communicating the change to employees in this phase from their point of view. The fourth part of the document is about the communication which occurred through Yammer in the stabilisation phase, and its impact on employees. The questions in this part focused on knowing the things about which senior leaders communicated with employees in the stabilisation phase of the change through the use of Yammer,

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and the impact of communicating the change to employees in this phase from their perspective. The last section in the document focuses on the future use of Yammer or any other new ESN software in future change projects, according to the current experiences of the organisation.

The questions used in the interviews for this study been designed after developing the conceptual model and choosing the data collection methodology. All of the questions were piloted with six participants from both organisations X and Y, in order to make sure that they were relevant to the researcher's aims, and to reassure the researcher that they are clear and comprehensible. The pilot test helped the researcher in this study to modify and improve some of the questions, to make them more appropriate for the outcomes needed from this study. Also, this helped to adopt the questions to become more understandable for the participants. Based on the feedback the researcher received from the pilot stage, some of the questions have been revised and improved.

#### **4.5.2 Documentation**

When conducting case study research, documents are an important source of data for researchers to access (Yin, 2013). Document analysis is an important tool for all kinds of research that requires data to be collected. In this thesis, the researcher found a range of different documents – such as documents and reports about change projects, documents about both organisations, annual reports, and some event reports in relation to the change projects – that provided valuable data for the current study. Yin (2013) cautions that when reviewing documents for analysis, it is important for the researcher to keep in mind the reasons that the documents were first created. If this does not happen, the researcher may end up with data that has no relevance to the research topic.

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### **4.5.3 Observation**

Another source of data that has been used in this research is observation. According to Saunders et al. (2015), there are two different types of observation: participant observation and structure observation. The main difference between the two types is that participant observation is about exploring the meanings attached to an individual's actions in the settings of the study, and their suitability for qualitative research. The second type, structure observation, focuses mainly on knowing the frequencies of those actions, and it is appropriate for use in quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2015). The researcher in this study found using participant observation to be worthwhile for collecting information about the real interaction in communicating through ESN, and figuring out the overall internal communication atmosphere. Applying the observation method in this research in addition to the interviews and documentation helped to improve the reliability and validity of the research.

### **4.5.4 Data collection, population and sampling**

When conducting case study research, it is essential for the researcher to understand the individuals chosen for interview, and to identify the clear reasons for choosing each interviewee. In this study, the main focus is the conduction of communication using ESN during planned organisational change. This is because this study takes change communication as the unit of analysis, not the organisation. As per the guidance of Seitanidi and Crane (2009), the main decision-makers and actors involved in change planning were highlighted, as were those who were most involved in using ESN to communicate the change to employees. Those who were involved in improving overall understanding of the change process were also highlighted.

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The researcher started the journey of data collection by first looking at suitable cases (organisations) available for the study. It was very important for the researcher to choose organisations that were using ESN technology in communicating organisational change. In addition to that, the researcher was looking for organisations that are easy to access and flexible in providing suitable data. The researcher started to contact some organisations in GCC countries that use ESN technology in their daily business, regardless of whether or not they had used it during a change project. Then the researcher chose only those organisations who had used ESN technology to communicate during a change project, as this would help achieve the aim of the research. When the researcher received the approved ethical form from the university, he started to contact key persons from organisation X in Oman and organisation Y in UAE, in order to request formal permission from their management to conduct interviews with some of their senior leaders and middle managers. I found those key persons' details from the websites of both organisations, as they were responsible for communication and IT. After some time, the researcher was granted access to start scheduling and conducting the requested interviews.

The researcher interviewed nine senior leaders, five from organisation X and four from organisation Y, whose positions were undersecretary, director general and deputy director. Also, the researcher interviewed 23 middle managers, 13 from organisation X and 10 from organisation Y, as presented in Table 4.1. The researcher initially used purposive sampling to select key informants and then other participants. In identifying only a certain population, a number of key informants may be missed when using purposive sampling, despite it being targeted towards those considered to be most highly involved in the process. Therefore, the researcher also used snowball sampling, which as Saunders et al. (2015) explain tends to be adopted in situations where identifying individuals

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within the target population is challenging. Therefore, these participants were selected through the recommendation of the key participants, who were originally recruited using purposive sampling, and who believed the additional participants would be able to provide valuable input to the study. Furthermore, according to the pilot study outcomes, the main participants for this study were senior leaders such as undersecretaries (“UNS”), directors general (“DG”), and deputy directors general (“DDG”), who were responsible for the decision-making and planning of the change. Also, heads of department (“HD”) and project managers (“PM”), who are considered middle managers, were reflected as key informants, as they were the ones responsible for implementing the change. For the purpose of this research, 32 interviews were conducted with senior leaders and middle managers in organisations X and Y. The researcher did not conduct a higher number of interviews, because of repeated findings. Nine of the total number of interviews were with senior leaders from both organisations, who were responsible for making decisions about the change, planning for it, and communicating about it to employees through ESN. The other 23 interviews were conducted with middle managers, who were responsible for implementing the change and communicating about it through ESN. Because most of the interviewees were usually busy due to their management roles, the length of each interview was between 45 minutes and 60 minutes. To ensure the correctness and the precision of the data, the researcher recorded all of the interviews using a digital tape.

The table 4.1 shows the list of interviews and the participants’ codes. For example, X1 represents an undersecretary in organisation X, and Y2 represents an undersecretary in organisation Y.

Participant No.	Positions	Cases	
		X	Y
1	Undersecretary (UNS)	✓	
2	Undersecretary (UNS)		✓
3	Director General (DG)	✓	
4	Director General (DG)	✓	
5	Director General (DG)	✓	
6	Director General (DG)		✓
7	Director General (DG)		✓
8	Deputy DG (DDG)	✓	
9	Deputy DG (DDG)		✓
10	Project Manager (PM)	✓	
11	Project Manager (PM)		✓
12	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
13	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
14	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
15	Head of Department (HD)		✓
16	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
17	Head of Department (HD)		✓
18	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
19	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
20	Head of Department (HD)		✓
21	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
22	Head of Department (HD)		✓
23	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
24	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
25	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
26	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
27	Head of Department (HD)		✓
28	Head of Department (HD)		✓
29	Head of Department (HD)		✓
30	Head of Department (HD)		✓
31	Head of Department (HD)	✓	
32	Head of Department (HD)		✓
<b>Total number of interviews = 32</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>

Table 4.1 List of interviews and participants' codes

#### **4.5.5 Data analysis methods**

The research paradigm chosen by the researcher determines which data analysis method should be adopted. Since qualitative research methods generate huge amounts of data, analysis can be a problem (Collis & Hussey, 2009). As Robson (1993, p.370) points out, one of the main issues is that there is “no clear and accepted set of conventions for analysis corresponding to those observed with quantitative data”. It is unthinkable to imagine how certain authors, scholars and researchers managed to obtain their findings from such a wealth of qualitative data. This has posed an issue for quite some time, and many qualitative researchers struggle when it comes to analysis, despite various guidelines and articles being written regarding this topic, as Bryman et al. (2007) point out.

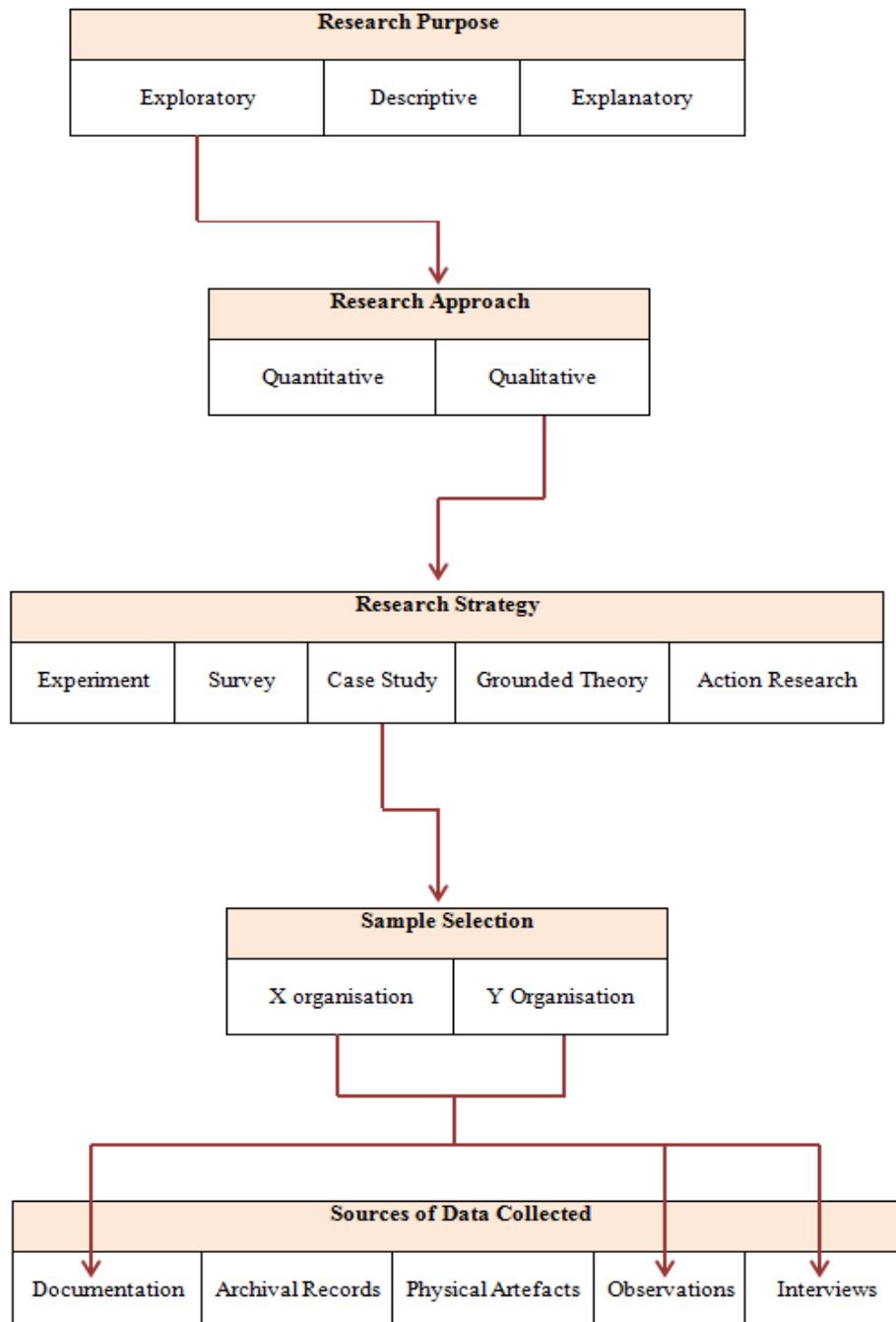
As per the guidance of Brewerton and Millward (2001), the researcher used content analysis to identify significant themes that arose out of the data. The researcher primarily extended the approach presented by Miles and Huberman (1994). This allows qualitative data to be transformed into a visual format that can be used to interpret data. The researcher began by coding the transcripts of the interviews, before creating a number of categories and then identifying the most frequently mentioned themes.

#### **4.5.6 Triangulation of data**

The researchers in all interpretive studies must consider the issues of reliability and validity. In order to achieve this, triangulation and validation is necessary. Triangulation can be achieved through method (the use of multiple methods to test validity), theory (the interpretation of data through multiple theories or paradigms), investigation (the involvement of a second researcher in the study), or

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data (Yin, 2013). In this study, the researcher uses interviews, documentation and observation as a form of data triangulation.



**Figure 4.1 Research methodology**  
*Source:* developed for the purpose of this research

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## **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided a review of the philosophical stances and diverse research paradigms associated with research generation, and the wide range of methods available to assist primary data collection. Selecting philosophical approaches, paradigms and methods that are properly aligned to the aims of specific research is essential.

The main aim of this study is to investigate and examine the role of ESN in facilitating organisational change in GCC countries. The researcher aimed to investigate deeply the real life of this phenomenon, in order to explore how ESN can facilitate change if it is used effectively to communicate change. To this end, a qualitative research approach has been adopted using a multiple case study strategy. Data was collected mainly from two public organisations in Oman and UAE through 32 extensive face-to-face interviews, followed by observation and documentation with senior leaders and middle managers. This research is particularly well-suited to the interpretivist's standpoint, given its emphasis on understanding a social phenomenon via the meanings that those associated with it derive.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis, Findings and Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The methods chosen to conduct and analyse the findings in this chapter were presented in Chapter 4. In this chapter, empirical data collected from two organisations will be analysed, presented and discussed. The researcher analysed communication of change through ESN which occurred in each phase of the change process, and the impact of this communication from a management perspective. The participants in this study were senior leaders and middle managers, who were coded as X or Y according to their organisation. This chapter covers the analysis of the empirical data, the main findings of the study, the related discussion, and, finally, the revised model.

### **5.2 Data Analysis**

The main aim of this qualitative research is to investigate the role of using ESN as an internal communication tool when facilitating organisational change. In this research, content analysis was used to analyse interviews in order to identify key themes emerging from the data. Qualitative methods were used to analyse the responses. The main themes which emerged from the data for the first phase in the change process, which is the pre-implementation phase, are: (a) communication through ESN during pre-implementation; and (b) the impact of using ESN during

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pre-implementation. For the second phase of the change process, which is implementation, the two main themes which emerged from the data are: (a) communication through ESN during implementation; and (b) the impact of using ESN during implementation. In the third phase, which is stabilisation, the two main themes which were derived from the data are: (a) communication through ESN in the stabilisation phase; and (b) the impact of using ESN in the stabilisation phase. Each of these themes, and its corresponding sub-themes, will be described, and direct quotes from the participants will also be included.

### **5.3 Background of Case Study X**

Organisation X has a vital role in the Oman electricity sector, as it owns and operates the main electricity transmission network through which electricity is transmitted from the generating stations to the distribution load centres in all of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. It also has the responsibility for balancing generation and demand at all times of the day, as part of its responsibility for the economic dispatch of power in the Sultanate. This organisation was formed in May 2005, and it is authorised to carry out the following activities: to transmit electricity, and to finance, develop, own and/or operate and maintain its transmission system; and to develop and operate a system of central dispatch of relevant production facilities which are connected to its transmission system, or to a system which is connected to its transmission system. Organisation X has embarked on a planned change project to implement a best practice asset management concept. In order to improve and support this change programme in the organisation, an asset management and planning department had to be established.

The main objective of this step is to manage the whole life cycle of the physical transmission network assets, according to international best practice in power transmission utilities and the international standard specification of asset management. The project aims to change the organisation's approach in dealing with physical assets, from the traditional operational approach to a strategic approach. Hence the implementation of the asset management concept requires a substantial transformation in business conduct, to cover the full life cycle of physical assets from the initial planning stage until the decommissioning stage. The implementation of the programme involves some key changes in roles and responsibilities, as well as establishing a practical framework for making decisions related to physical assets. The ultimate benefit of the whole programme is to enable the organisation to optimise the cost, risk and performance associated with physical assets. Regarding internal communication in the organisation, and in addition to the traditional email channel, Yammer is used as one of the important two-way communication channels within the organisation. There is a distinct feature of Yammer that makes it a suitable media to communicate the asset management change project. Yammer is a closed "Facebook" in which professional jargon can be used, and it is considered semi-professional, whereby the formal communication channel is diluted. With Yammer, every employee is accessible and every employee can speak up on issues related to the organisation, without any bureaucratic restriction. This is particularly important during a planned change project, because it helps management to know about and deal with employees' concerns immediately at the time they arise, which as a result can reduce any resistance initiatives. Also, it complements the communication gap between management and employees by providing another direct feedback loop and open transparent interaction platform, which enhances overall communication and facilitates the change process.

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## **5.4 Background of Case Study Y**

Organisation Y is a regulatory authority of the Government of Dubai, located in the United Arab Emirates, and it is responsible for the growth and quality of private education in Dubai. It manages and organises the whole private education sector, supporting private schools, private universities, parents, students, educators, investors and government partners, to create a high quality education sector. In the early part of 2014, organisation Y started a change project called “Happiness and Wellbeing”, which focused on creating a workplace environment and culture where people are healthier, happier and enjoy a balance between work and home life. This philosophy is based on the belief that the organisation has a moral imperative to assure the health and wellbeing of its employees and its customers, and an obligation to be a role model for best practice in order to influence stakeholders in the community and in wider society. The change project was planned and designed by the top management in organisation Y, and it is implemented and managed by a large team from different management levels called the “Thrive Team”. This team is responsible for selecting, implementing and promoting all wellbeing initiatives and activities, collecting feedback, monitoring the whole process, and updating top management about it. The primary approach used by the Thrive Team to develop a healthy workplace is the “Thrive Programme”. It was implemented after extensive research into best practice, regionally and internationally, and consultation with an external organisation and with its employees. It is built around the “5 Ways of Wellbeing and Happiness”, which are a set of evidence-based actions developed by the Centre for Wellbeing at the New Economics Foundation, as part of the UK Government’s Foresight Project. Each one of the five ways is implemented through a series of highly engaging activities that help employees to improve their own health, happiness and wellbeing. The programme is designed to be a holistic

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organisational development approach that transforms the working environment and encourages employees to adopt healthy practices at work and at home.

## **5.5 Findings and Discussion**

This section considers the findings of case study X and case study Y, and also contains analysis and discussion of both cases. The first phase in the proposed framework, which is the pre-implementation phase, will be considered in section 5.5.1, and in section 5.5.2 the second phase, which is implementation, will then be considered. The stabilisation phase, which is the final phase, will be covered in section 5.5.3.

### **5.5.1 Pre-implementation phase**

#### **Theme 1: Communication through ESN during pre-implementation**

The first theme in this phase is communication through ESN during pre-implementation. The participants from the top management level in organisations X and Y cited from the beginning the importance of communicating early with all employees by letting them know what exactly the change is, what it will look like, and the reasons behind it. Also, they sold the benefits of implementing such a change in order to reassure employees and to engage them with the change. Three sub-themes were derived from the interview findings under this main theme, which are justifying the change, providing a rationale, and reassuring employees.

In the pre-implementation phase of their change projects, the top management in organisations X & Y decided to use ESN technology, represented by Yammer

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software, as one of the main communication tools that could help in communicating the change to all employees, anywhere and at any time. The senior managers in both organisations started to communicate early with employees in their organisation using Yammer, to tell them that a change was coming and to provide them with some meaningful information regarding the change. As stated by participant X1:

*“We sent everybody messages to let them know that there is a change coming and it will be communicated through Yammer in more detail gradually. Those early messages attracted employees to know more about the change and check Yammer regularly.”*

Many employees in this phase usually want to hear anything regarding the change, but it is better to hear it from the people who have decided it or who have planned for it, instead of depending on rumours and wrong information. The responses of most of the participants at this stage from both organisations (88%) explained how they tried from the beginning, through Yammer, to justify the change and make the picture clear to all employees. The observation from participant X4 regarding this point was as follows:

*“It is our responsibility as top level management to draw a clear picture about the change, and that’s what we did. We explained to them what it was about and how it was going to affect them and affect the workplace.”*

It was clear from the statements of many participants in organisation X that the initial target of the change planners was to make all employees aware of the change from the beginning, so that they didn’t feel shock and didn’t listen to rumours from other people. Their point of view here was that as long as employees understand the change and the reasons behind it, then it will be much

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easier for the management to continue in implementing the change without much uncertainty among employees. Participant Y2 also spoke about how the change been justified through Yammer, and what information had been sent to all employees at this stage:

*“Before we started to implement the change, we used Yammer to justify the change by explaining to all employees first what the change was about, and what the main objectives of such a change were.”*

Justifying the change is supported in the literature by Gabriele et al. (2013), who reveal how it is helpful to explain to employees what the change is about and provide them with some meaningful information. Furthermore, Sergio and Hal (2006) argue that clarifying the need for change and influentially communicating it is considered an essential action that management should implement. According to the participants' views in the study, it seems that during organisational change employees always seek justifications, and they recommend that this should come as early as possible and from those who have decided about the change and planned for it. The more clarifications employees receive from management, the more they understand what is happening. That is what effective communication does during a change programme, especially when there is clear and transparent two-way communication done using an interactive communication tool such as ESN. Through this tool, employees can post their inquiries at any time, and can wait for further clarifications about the change from senior managers at this stage. It is clear how internal communication during a change programme can be improved when using such a new communication technology tool. The researcher observed during the period of conducting interviews that employees were using Yammer effectively.

The researcher observed some historical posts and chats from the Yammer screen of one participant, which showed how much rich detail was available about the change at that phase of the project.

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In terms of the rationales and reasons behind the change, many of the participants from both organisations (77%) mentioned that they provided rationales and reasons to all employees regarding the change project. All employees in both organisations wanted to know why the management had chosen to go for this change, and for the management to justify to them through Yammer the reasons behind it and how it's going to benefit them and benefit the organisation. As participant X3 stated:

*“For example, we posted in Yammer about how the organisation will be more efficient in terms of utilising the resources and assets that we have, and how the new asset system will reduce the maintenance work plus the maintenance budget.”*

Clarifying and explaining the rationale to employees before even starting to implement the change helped in improving their understanding and attracting them more towards accepting the change. Participant Y1 argued in favour of giving logical and real reasons to employees through Yammer in order to make them understand more why the organisation had gone for the change project:

*“We understood from the beginning how employees are looking for some clear and logical reasons that led us to decide on going for the change. That's why we posted in Yammer some of the main reasons, such as building a healthier and happier workplace environment which encouraged employees to enjoy the work here and become more productive.”*

In support of that, DeWitt (2004) argues that communicating about change means a lot more than just giving people regular updates on what is going to happen; managers or change agents have to sell the reasons behind that change. Top

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management has to answer the main question that employees raise in any change project, which is, “Why?” Providing employees with clear and logical answers will certainly help in reducing any misunderstanding about the change. Reassuring employees can actually help to calm them and take away their anxieties about change, and most of the participants from both organisations (66%) declared that they reassured their employees during the pre-implementation phase of the change in order to reduce any personal concerns they might have about it. Selling the bold lines of the change and the benefits behind it can really help in reassuring employees, as X2 cited:

*“Usually any strategic approach will not have many tangible benefits in the short-term that can be used as facts or figures to share with employees, so we focused from the beginning on reassuring our employees by spreading to them the bold lines, the main current issue, and the main benefits expected from the proposed change, as well as the good experiences of other organisations that had already implement such a change.”*

Participant Y4 spoke about how employees usually worry about their jobs when there is a change coming. He declared how the top management in his organisation considered this point and communicated clearly with employees in order to reassure them:

*“Generally employees worry about the effect of the change on their current positions, roles, or work load etc... so we tried to reassure our employees by explaining to them clearly how it is going to affect them and how things will be different from what they are doing now.”*

The importance of reassuring employees about change is supported also by Kane (2013), who argues that it is necessary for any organisation starting a change project to reassure employees at all levels and show them that their organisation

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cares about them and about their workplace. What leads employees to be nervous before and during organisational change is the uncertainty of the change itself. This happens because of poor and unclear communication in the early stage of the change process. That is why informing employees on how the change will affect them and keeping the communication open always will reassure them more.

### **Theme 2: The impact of using ESN in pre-implementation**

The second theme in this phase is the impact of using ESN during pre-implementation. The participants from the top management level in organisations X and Y declared some positive impacts of using ESN as an internal communication channel to communicate change in this phase. Two sub-themes were derived from the interview findings under this main theme, and these are awareness of change and impression of change.

Most of the participants in this phase (77%) agreed about the positive impact this communication tool provides in terms of increasing awareness among employees of the change. For example, according to participant X3, the feedback they got through Yammer from employees showed how they became more aware of the change and the benefits behind it:

*“For example, one of the employees asked before about why the organisation needs this new program, and we explained to him why through Yammer. After sometime, the same question was asked by another employee, but this time we were surprised that three employees from different departments replied to him and explained to him why we need it.”*

In addition, participant Y4 spoke about how Yammer helped in improving the awareness of employees, when the senior management in organisation Y used it to communicate the change in the pre-implementation phase:

*“Many employees who had some doubt about the change or misunderstood it replied to us through Yammer, and we communicated with them again to explain the whole picture to them, and this really helped to increase their awareness and let them understand the idea more.”*

Also, participant Y1 talked about the awareness level they found within the middle managers who had attended a workshop run by one of the directors general. He spoke about the improvement of awareness levels among middle managers as a reason for using Yammer to justify the change to them:

*“According to the high participation and valuable comments that middle managers raised in that workshop, we really felt that those managers understood the idea and appreciated it. This awareness been improved because of the early justification through Yammer.”*

The researcher observed a live event related to the change project which happened in organisation Y during the lunch break. All the staff engaged in that event were aware of it because of Yammer. The details and the pictures about that event and previous ones were available on Yammer. The previous opinions about the help of ESN in improving awareness of change among employees is supported by Lee et al. (2012), who argued that if ESN is used effectively as an internal communication tool to justify organisational change it will increase the awareness level of employees. Most employees misunderstand change because of poor justification from management. When there is a clear explanation about change and it is supported by an open two-way communication platform such as ESN, which also enables transparent discussion, the awareness of employees becomes

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much better. With regards to the second sub-theme, which is the impression of change, most of the participants (66%) argued that using ESN to communicate the change in the pre-implementation phase helped to build a good impression of the change. Participant X2 spoke about Yammer and how it helped them as senior managers to build a good impression of the change from the early stage of the project:

*“Yammer helped us to build and draw a good picture of the change from the beginning. We sold the benefits behind the change and how our organisation is going to be after implementing it. We received much positive feedback from employees regarding our messages, which gave us a general positive impression on how our employees are looking to the coming change, and this will guide us to put more effort into building an optimistic impression.”*

This opinion was supported by the participant Y3, who also mentioned how Yammer made a positive impact on employees' impressions of the change when they communicated through it.

*“We found many posts and discussions in Yammer that argued about the main benefits behind the coming change, which actually helped us to find some promoters who we used to support the efforts of building a good impression of the change from the beginning and encourage others to accept it.”*

This impact is supported by the change communication literature of Stacy and Kate (2008), who argue that effective communication before and during the change between top management and employees will build a good impression of a change. When employees feel positively towards a change and have the impression that the change will be good for them and for the organisation, then those employees will support the change.

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<b>Theme 1: Communication through ESN in the pre-implementation phase</b>		
Sub-themes	No. of participants out of 9	% of participants
Justifying the change	8	88%
Providing a rationale	7	77%
Reassuring employees	6	66%
<b>Theme 2 : The impact of using ESN in the pre-implementation phase</b>		
Sub-themes	No. of participants out of 9	% of participants
Increasing awareness	7	77%
Building good impressions	6	66%

**Table 5.1 Summary of themes and sub-themes in the pre-implementation phase**

### **5.5.2 Implementation phase**

#### **Theme 1: Communication through ESN during implementation**

The first theme in this phase is communication through ESN during implementation. The participants in this phase were middle level managers in organisations X and Y who were responsible for implementing the change and

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communicating it to employees around their organisations. According to the interview findings, three sub-themes were derived under this main theme, which are reporting progress, gaining feedback, and reducing uncertainty.

In this phase, middle managers in both organisations used ESN to communicate the change effectively with employees, and shared with them important things about it in order to keep them updated and involved during the implementation of the project. Most of the middle managers who participated in the interviews (78%) argued that they reported the progress of implementing the change through Yammer. For example, Participant X7 explained how they used Yammer to report and update employees on the change project:

*“Since Yammer is available with employees all the time, even on their mobiles, we always updated them with the progress of the change project by sending them some reports and figures related to what has been done until now, and what will be the next steps, and also who is going to be affected.”*

In this regard, participant Y8 also mentioned how they depended on Yammer to spread the progress of the change project and update all employees about it:

*“In my opinion, updating employees about what’s happening during the implementation of the change is considered a very important role for us, in order to let them be aware and to engage them more with the project. We let Yammer help us on this by using it to spread the progress of the project regularly, and to update all employees easily at any time.”*

Also, during the implementation phase of the planned change, most of the middle managers in both organisations X and Y who are responsible for implementing the change (73%) used ESN to gain feedback from employees regarding the change.

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Middle managers found that employees have an open and transparent platform through Yammer, where they can put their opinions or their feedback any time they want and without any fears. This was clear in the statement of participant X6:

*“Yammer as a semi-formal communication channel provides a good space for employees to post and send their comments and feedback about what’s going on during the implementation of the change without any fears and in a transparent way.”*

Such feedback is taken into consideration by the management of both organisations, and some of the feedback was even raised to the top management for them to take action. In addition to that, middle managers posted some questions on Yammer to measure the extent to which employees were aware about what was going on in this phase, at the same time gaining more feedback from them to help improve the process of implementation. In this regard, participant Y10 said:

*“Yammer helped us to gain much feedback from employees while implementing the change. For example, when we announced we would be having some yoga sessions in our organisation, we received much feedback and many different opinions to take into consideration.”*

The importance of employee feedback during the implementation of change is also supported by Cheney et al. (2004), who argue that gaining employee feedback can positively manipulate and improve the change process. It supports an organisation to discover some hidden issues and solve them directly.

With regards to the uncertainty which mostly appears during the implementation of change, most of the implementers from the middle management level in both organisations (69%) communicated clearly with employees through Yammer in order to reduce misunderstanding and uncertainty. Participant X12 talked about

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how the implementers received through Yammer many questions and inquiries during implementation, and they replied to them clearly in order to reduce uncertainty:

*“We received many inquiries from many employees through Yammer during the implementation of the change, and some of them asked for more clarification about what’s going on now and what is next. We focused on reducing their uncertainty through Yammer by interacting with them directly with clear communication and meaningful information.”*

Participant Y9 mentioned how Yammer helped them as implementers to reduce uncertainty among employees during implementation. He spoke about sending some pictures about activities related to the happiness project they had worked on, and how those pictures helped in reducing misunderstanding among some employees:

*“Some of the employees did not understand some of the activities we had launched as a part of implementing our happiness project, and they started to become uncertain about them. We decided to send some pictures about those activities through Yammer, and we succeeded in reducing their uncertainty and encouraged them to participate in those activities.”*

Reducing uncertainty among employees through meaningful and effective communication is supported in the literature by many scholars such as Jos (2012), Kunanbayeva (2013) and Noora (2013), who argue that providing truthful and meaningful information to employees during change helps to reduce their uncertainty.

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**Theme 2: The impact of using ESN in the implementation phase**

The second theme in this phase is the impact of using ESN in the implementation phase. The participants from the middle management levels in organisations X and Y declared some positive impacts of using ESN as an internal communication channel to communicate the change in this phase. Four sub-themes were derived from the interview under this main theme, which are encouraging participation, building trust, increasing engagement, and reducing resistance to change.

Most of the participants in this phase (82%) agreed about the positive impact this communication tool provides in terms of encouraging the participation of employees during the implementation of change. For example, according to participant X11, several employees shared in Yammer some valuable information they had already gained from different workshops with regards to the change project, which helped encourage others to participate and collaborate with the change:

*“Many employees participated in the change by sharing their ideas, comments and opinions through Yammer. For example, some of the employees started to post photos and summaries of workshops put on by the management regarding the asset management programme. This encouraged more employees to participate and collaborate in all change discussions and workshops.”*

When the organisations implemented the change, Yammer also played an important role as a communication channel that encouraged participation between employees. This was clear in the statement of participant Y7, who argued that employees became more interested in participating in change activities because of Yammer:

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*“We found that some employees who were not interested before in knowing about activities related to the happiness project became later more attracted to participate and collaborate. This happened after they saw their colleague’s photos of those activities which were posted in Yammer, and read their positive posts about them.”*

Furthermore, according to the literature, ESN as a new internal communication technology is perceived to be more participative than traditional methods of communication (Denyer, Parry and Flowers, 2011). That is why it helps to encourage participation and collaboration among employees within an organisation. Employee participation and involvement in change implementation is considered as important factor in facilitating change (Sims, 2002).

With regards to the second sub-theme, which is the trust between management and employees, most of the participants (78%) from both organisations argued that using ESN to communicate about the change in the implementation phase helped to build a trust environment. Participant X12 spoke about how the type of interaction which happened when communicating through Yammer during the implementation phase helped in building such an environment:

*“During the implementation of the change, we shared with all employees some reports about what had been done until now, what were the issues facing us, and what we are going to do later. This kind of interaction actually helped in building trust, because employees start to feel that that they are part of the change.”*

In addition to that, participant Y9 also supported the previous opinion about how Yammer really helped in building a trust environment. She mentioned that Yammer is a transparent platform where all employees can post their inquiries, questions or comments, and the management can always reply to them to show that they value their fears and their contributions:

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*“Yammer is a good feedback place where everybody can communicate and comment without any concern about formality. The transparent interaction and the quick responses from the management to the employees’ questions or comments in Yammer give the impression that we as management value our employees, value their efforts, value their contributions, and care about their fears. This logically builds a trust environment which supports change initiatives.”*

The role that communication plays in developing trust is supported by many scholars in the literature, such as Ellwardt et al. (2012), Rockmann and Northcraft (2008) and Thomas et al. (2009). They all argue that when management communicates effectively with employees during the implementation of change, the trust between them will increase, especially when it is two-way and open communication. Moreover, ESN is dominated by multiple ways, networking and relationships, rather than hierarchical communication, and this kind of sharing information with others increases employees’ trust in management (Sultan, 2013). Regarding the engagement of employees during the implementation phase of the change, most of the participants from both organisations (73%) agreed on the positive impact that ESN provides in terms of increasing the engagement of employees. For example, according to participant X10, many employees felt more motivated towards the change and worked really hard to finish their tasks according to their roles. This been improved because of positive and clear communication from the beginning through Yammer, and because of the good impression they got regarding the change, again through Yammer:

*“From what we saw and read through Yammer, we feel that many employees became more motivated and desiring of the task at hand. Not only that, they provided significantly more discretionary effort to engage more in the change project.”*

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In the same context, participant Y8 also talked about the good views and the positive effort employees showed on Yammer during the implementation of the change, and how this was reflected in encouraging other employees to engage more in the change project:

*“I can confirm that most of the employees showed optimistic effort and shared good views through Yammer about the change happening, and this had encouraged others to work and engage more in the change programme.”*

The literature on communicating change supports the fact of increasing employee engagement through communication. For example, Robb (2009) argues that organisations which communicate effectively with their employees are four times more likely have high levels of employee engagement than those that communicated less. Also, Baumruk et al. (2006) outline five steps to increasing engagement, and the fifth step is communication, which includes frequent and scheduled interaction and sharing of information, feedback and ideas. In addition to that, the literature on ESN also supports the same point through a survey done by McAfee in 2009, and another one done by Linjuan in 2013. Both surveys showed that ESN improves communication across silos, and increases inclusion and engagement among employees. Besides, Nazaraian (2012) argues that ESN improves employee engagement because people now have a platform where they can literally see their ideas and the ideas of others influencing decision-makers in the organisation.

With regards to resistance to change, many participants (66%) argued that using ESN to communicate about the change in the implementation phase helped to reduce employees' resistance to change. Participant X1 talked about how Yammer helped in figuring out who was somehow resisting the change, or was planning to do so, by showing some negative posts from different employees. These posts

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guided the management to know who was against the change, and this encouraged them to communicate more with those employees to convince them positively:

*“Through the open communication platform of Yammer we saw different views immediately in one place from different levels of employees, and we focused on negative views and posts, which led us to those who may plan to resist the change. We replied positively to those posts, we communicated with them more, and we succeed in reducing their fears and their personal concerns through Yammer.”*

Similar to this, top management in organisation Y also benefitted from Yammer by finding out some negative promoters who seemed unhappy with the change and might resist it more. This was clear in the statement of participant Y2:

*“When we read employees’ posts in Yammer, we can easily know who is happy with the idea of the change and who is not. It was important for us to know at least those employees who were promoting negative things about the change project. We used Yammer to communicate directly with them and tackle their initial views, and convince them to accept the change.”*

Individuals are likely to form resistance to change based on particular facts, beliefs or values (Harvey and Broyles, 2010). If leaders can figure out and understand where the resistance is coming from through effective and open communication, then it can help them reduce employee resistance (Kanter, 2012). Although the literature on ESN did not mention that ESN can have an impact on reducing resistance to change, this study proves it empirically.

<b>Theme 1: Communication through ESN in the implementation phase</b>		
Sub-themes	Number of participants out of 23	% of participants
Reporting Progress	18	78%
Gaining Feedback	17	73%
Reducing Uncertainty	16	69%
<b>Theme 2: Impact of using ESN in the implementation phase</b>		
Sub-themes	Number of participants out of 23	% of participants
Encouraging Participation	19	82%
Building Trust	18	78%
Increasing Engagement	17	73%
Reducing Resistance to Change	17	73%

**Table 5.2 Summary of themes and sub-themes in the implementation phase**

Reducing resistance to change through effective communication is supported in the literature by John (2011), who argues that managing change successfully requires reducing resistance to change through good and open communication. Also, Yates (2006) argues that organisations with effective two-way communication experience less resistance. On the other hand, Allen et al. (2007)

argue that an organisation which use a one-way communication strategy faces problems in reducing resistance to change. ESN as a two-way communication tool and as a collaborative platform helps to enhance internal communication and so reduce resistance to change.

### 5.5.3 Stabilisation phase

#### **Theme 1: Communication through ESN during the stabilisation phase**

The first theme in this phase is communication through ESN during the stabilisation phase. The participants in this phase were top level managers who were involved in making the decision to change and planning for it in organisations X and Y. According to the interview findings, three sub-themes were derived under this main theme, which are publicising success, spreading results, and appreciating employees.

In this phase, top level managers in both organisations used ESN to communicate about the stabilisation of the change with employees, shared with them the real results of implementing it, and appreciated all employees who helped it to be achieved. Most of the participants in this phase (77%) stated that they used ESN to publicise the success of the change to all employees. They used ESN to spread the good news about achieving the initial goals they wanted from the change project.

*“Once we finished implementing the change and employees started to get used to it, we used Yammer in addition to email to inform everybody about the success of implementing the change project.”*

Employees in both organisations received from the top management and through Yammer communication on the achievement of implementing the change. The

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importance of this step is supported in the literature by Klein (1996), who argues that leaders or managers who are responsible for decision-making and the planning of change must inform all employees at the end about the achievements of the implementation stage. Employees will then be much happier about the achievement, since the top management shared with them the actual success, and they will become more engaged in other future change projects.

With regards to the second sub theme, spreading the results of change, most of the participants (88%) said that they used ESN to communicate about the change in the stabilisation phase by spreading to all employees the initial results they got from the change. Participant X4 spoke about Yammer and how it helped them as senior managers to send a survey to all employees asking about their opinions after implementing the change, and to then share with them the initial results through the same software:

*“In my opinion, any change project needs a period of time to feel and see its real results. In our organisation, after three months we decided to evaluate the outputs and benefits we gained from the change by distributing a survey to all employees through Yammer, to gather their opinions about it. We sent to them later through Yammer the results we got from the survey as well as the initial overall results we got from implementing the change.”*

The phase of stabilisation requires supporting the new ways of working, which means an organisation first needs to celebrate the change, as Klein (1996) argues, so that all employees get the feeling of success. According to this study, the support which management got from employees during the change process was mainly because of the open and effective two-way communication that ESN provided, which facilitated the overall change project. Employees then became

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more satisfied, since the top management shared with them the actual outputs and celebrated the success.

The last sub-theme in this phase, which many of the participants (77%) spoke about, is appreciating employees. The top management in both organisations used Yammer as an additional communication channel to send their appreciation and thanks to all employees across the organisation. Participant X5 mentioned that they used Yammer even after implementing the change to send their appreciation and their thankful statements to all organisation members, for their great support from the first day of implementing the change:

*“We used Yammer at the end of the change project to spread our great thanks and our boundless appreciation to all employees around the organisation, for their help and support from the early stages of the change process.”*

Change programmes in any organisation, according to the literature, will not be successful without employee engagement and support. That’s why employees always play a critical role during the change process, and that’s why they need to be motivated even at the end of the project (Jenaibi, 2010). This study supports the literature in that view, by validating the need to communicate recognition and appreciation to all employees after implementing change. It also validates the use of ESN in spreading top management appreciation to everybody in the organisation for their support and their effort during the implementation of change.

### **Theme 2: The impact of using ESN in the stabilisation phase**

The second theme in this phase was the impact of using ESN in the stabilisation phase. The participants in this phase were top level managers who are responsible for announcing and deciding on the end of the change project, and responsible for

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appreciating all employees for their support and effort. According to the interview findings, one main sub-theme was derived under this main theme, which is increasing satisfaction. Most of the participants in this phase (77%) agreed about how the communication with employees in this phase through Yammer helped make them more satisfied about the change being implemented. For example, according to participant Y5, several employees posted many thankful messages in Yammer, which clearly showed the level of satisfaction with the change project.

*“When we posted the initial outcomes of implementing the change and publicising the overall success, we received from employees many grateful messages and much appreciation, because we shared with them the outcomes and we involved them until the end, and that made them more satisfied.”*

The literature on communication during change supports this finding, especially White et al. (2010), who argue that the use of a variety of two-way communication channels can enhance employee satisfaction. Furthermore, one of the goals of effective communication during change using ESN technology is making employees more satisfied about a change (McKinsey 2009). This study confirms the improvement of employee satisfaction through good and clear communication in the stabilisation phase using ESN technology, and this satisfaction facilitates the overall process of planned change.

<b>Theme 1: Communication through ESN in the stabilisation phase</b>		
Sub-themes	Number of participants out of 9	% of participants
Publicising success	7	77%
Spreading results	8	88%
Appreciating employees	7	77%
<b>Theme 2: Impact of ESN in the stabilisation phase</b>		
Sub-themes	Number of participants out of 9	% of participants
Increasing satisfaction	7	77%

**Table 5.3 Summary of themes and sub-themes in the stabilisation phase**

## 5.6 Revised Conceptual Model

The elements proposed in the conceptual framework in Chapter 3 have been empirically validated through case studies X and Y. The empirical data presented played a vital role in investigating the real role that ESN can play when it is used to communicate change. It also helped to validate the overall impact of this new communication technology in facilitating change. Based on the findings of this study, which will be discussed accordingly in the coming sections, some modifications have been made to the conceptual model proposed in Chapter 3, especially with regards to the impact of ESN in all of the phases of planned change.

### **5.6.1 Communication through ESN in the pre-implementation phase and its impact**

Participants from both cases in this study consider ESN to be a new communication technology that can improve overall communication during the change process, and can facilitate planned change. As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, there are many shared outcomes that were stated by the participants from both organisations when validating the framework of the study empirically. For example, with regards to communication in the pre-implementation phase of planned change, participants from both organisations demonstrated the use of Yammer to justify the change, to provide a rationale, and to reassure employees about the change. The participants believed that they drew a clear picture of the change for all employees from an early stage through ESN communication technology. They proved how ESN really gave them the space to open for employees a kind of transparent interaction platform, on which everybody in the organisation can raise his or her voice or can post any inquiries without following the traditional command chain. It appears that those elements of communication in the pre-implementation phase which the participants used are the same as described in the original framework of Chapter 3. With regards to the impact of communication through ESN in the pre-implementation phase, according to those participants ESN in this phase has a very positive impact on employees, such as increasing their awareness and building a good impression of the change, which logically facilitates the change. This is because when employees become more aware of a proposed change and have a good impression of it, they become more engaged and work towards supporting it. That is why participants mentioned the importance of enhancing internal communication within the organisation by choosing the best communication tool, which can reach everybody easily and provide them with a good space to participate in change communication or discussion. The two impacts of using ESN in this phase which

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were proved by participants were increasing awareness and building good impressions. In the original framework, the impact on awareness was there, but it was not clear if it would increase or decrease when ESN is used to communicate change. Furthermore, it was not clear that it would be a direct output from the pre-implementation phase specifically, as it appears now after the empirical validation. Also, the second impact of ESN in the same phase, which is about building good impressions, was not available in the original framework, so this element will be added in the revised framework under this phase, and this is considered a contribution of this study.

<b>Communication through ESN in the pre-implementation phase</b>	<b>Proposed Conceptual Model</b>	<b>Revised Conceptual Model</b>
• Justifying the change	✓	✓
• Providing a rationale	✓	✓
• Reassuring employees	✓	✓
<b>The impact of using ESN</b>	<b>Proposed Conceptual Model</b>	<b>Revised Conceptual Model</b>
• Increasing awareness	✓	✓
• Building a trust environment	✓	✗
• Increasing engagement	✓	✗
• Increasing satisfaction	✓	✗
• Encouraging participation	✓	✗
• Building a good impression	✗	✓
• Reducing resistance to change	✗	✗

**Table 5.4 Revised conceptual model for communication through ESN in the pre-implementation phase**

### **5.6.2 Communication through ESN in the implementation phase and its impact**

Furthermore, both cases demonstrated communication being done through ESN in the implementation phase, which includes reporting on the progress of the change

project, gaining feedback from many employees, and reducing all kinds of uncertainty among employees. Most of the participants in this phase believed that ESN as a collaboration platform really helped to spread continually exactly what was happening while implementing the change, thus keeping all of the employees updated all of the time. Also, many participants stated that the feature of two-way and real-time communication which ESN technology provides helped management to gain employee feedback and concerns about implementing the change, which meant they could easily reply accordingly. According to these findings, it is clear that the participants confirmed the elements of communication through ESN in the implementation phase, which are the same as the ones proposed in the original framework.

However, explaining the effect, which was in the conceptual model, has been removed from the revised model, since it was not mentioned by any participants. With regards to the impact of communication through ESN in the implementation phase, and according to the participants from both organisations, the impact of using ESN in this phase was clear. For example, it encourages the overall participation and engagement of employees during a change project. In addition to that, it reduces the level of resistance and builds a kind of trust environment between management and employees, because of the two-way semi-formal feature of ESN communication technology. These positive impacts played key roles in facilitating change and making it happen. As can be seen from the interview responses and the arguments in the literature, when resistance to change is high among most of the employees in an organisation, then leaders will face difficulties in implementing any change. In the same way, the level of trust between management and employees should be good enough to push for and facilitate change.

According to the responses of the participants, it appears that some of the impacts of using ESN to communicate change in this phase have been already proposed in the conceptual model in Chapter 3, but not specifically in this phase. In this study, and according to the responses of the participants, the positive impacts of ESN, such as encouraging participation, building trust and increasing engagement, were confirmed to be valuable impacts that can facilitate change, and therefore they will be added to the revised model under the implementation phase. In addition to that, the participants also confirmed reducing resistance to change as one new impact of using ESN to communicate change in the implementation phase. Consequently, reducing resistance to change has been added to the revised model.

<b>Communication through ESN in the implementation phase</b>	<b>Proposed Conceptual Model</b>	<b>Revised Conceptual Model</b>
• Reporting progress	✓	✓
• Explaining the effect	✓	✗
• Gaining feedback	✓	✓
• Reducing uncertainty	✓	✓
<b>The impact of using ESN</b>	<b>Proposed Conceptual Model</b>	<b>Revised Conceptual Model</b>
• Increasing awareness	✓	✗
• Building trust	✓	✓
• Increasing engagement	✓	✓
• Increasing satisfaction	✓	✗
• Encouraging participation	✓	✓
• Building a good impression	✗	✗
• Reducing resistance to change	✗	✓

**Table 5.5 Revised conceptual model for communication through ESN in the implementation phase.**

### **5.6.3 Communication through ESN in the stabilisation phase and its impact**

With regards to the final phase of the planned change process, many participants from both organisations believed that employees in this phase should be committed to the change and should get used to it, but the management should encourage employees through good communication in this phase. Therefore, based on the interview responses regarding the stabilisation phase, the top managers used ESN to publicise the success of implementing the change, in addition to sharing with employees the initial results they got from implementing the change. Moreover, in the same phase the top managers from both organisations sent their appreciation and their recognition to all employees for their great support and their excessive effort during the implementation of the change. As an impact of this, and according to most of the participants, employees became more satisfied about the change when they received thankful messages from the top management, and when the top management shared with them the initial outputs of the change. Employees felt that they were still part of the change, and the change could not be achieved without their support. This kind of feeling and satisfaction, which came because of clear communication through ESN, helped in facilitating the overall change initiatives.

With regards to the revised model, it appears from the findings of the empirical study that communication in the stabilisation phase contains publicising success, spreading results, and appreciating employees, which are similar to what was proposed in the conceptual model in Chapter 3. Most of the participants confirmed those elements, and therefore the revised model has covered them. In relation to the impact of using ESN to communicate the change in the stabilisation phase, participants in this study agreed that using this new communication tool in this phase to communicate change increased the satisfaction with the change among

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employees. Although this impact was already mentioned in the conceptual model in Chapter 3, it was not validated empirically and was not related to this specific phase of the change process. This study, and the participants, confirmed the impact of using ESN in this phase, and proved that the satisfaction of employees had increased because of communication through ESN. Therefore, this impact has been added to the revised model specifically under this phase.

<b>Communication through ESN in the stabilisation phase</b>	<b>Proposed Conceptual Model</b>	<b>Revised Conceptual Model</b>
• Publicising success	✓	✓
• Spreading results	✓	✓
• Appreciating employees	✓	✓
<b>The impact of using ESN</b>	<b>Proposed Conceptual Model</b>	<b>Revised Conceptual Model</b>
• Increasing awareness	✓	✗
• Building a trust environment	✓	✗
• Increasing engagement	✓	✗
• Increasing satisfaction	✓	✓
• Encouraging participation	✓	✗
• Building a good impression	✗	✗
• Reducing resistance to change	✗	✗

**Table 5.6 Revised conceptual model for communication through ESN in the stabilisation phase**

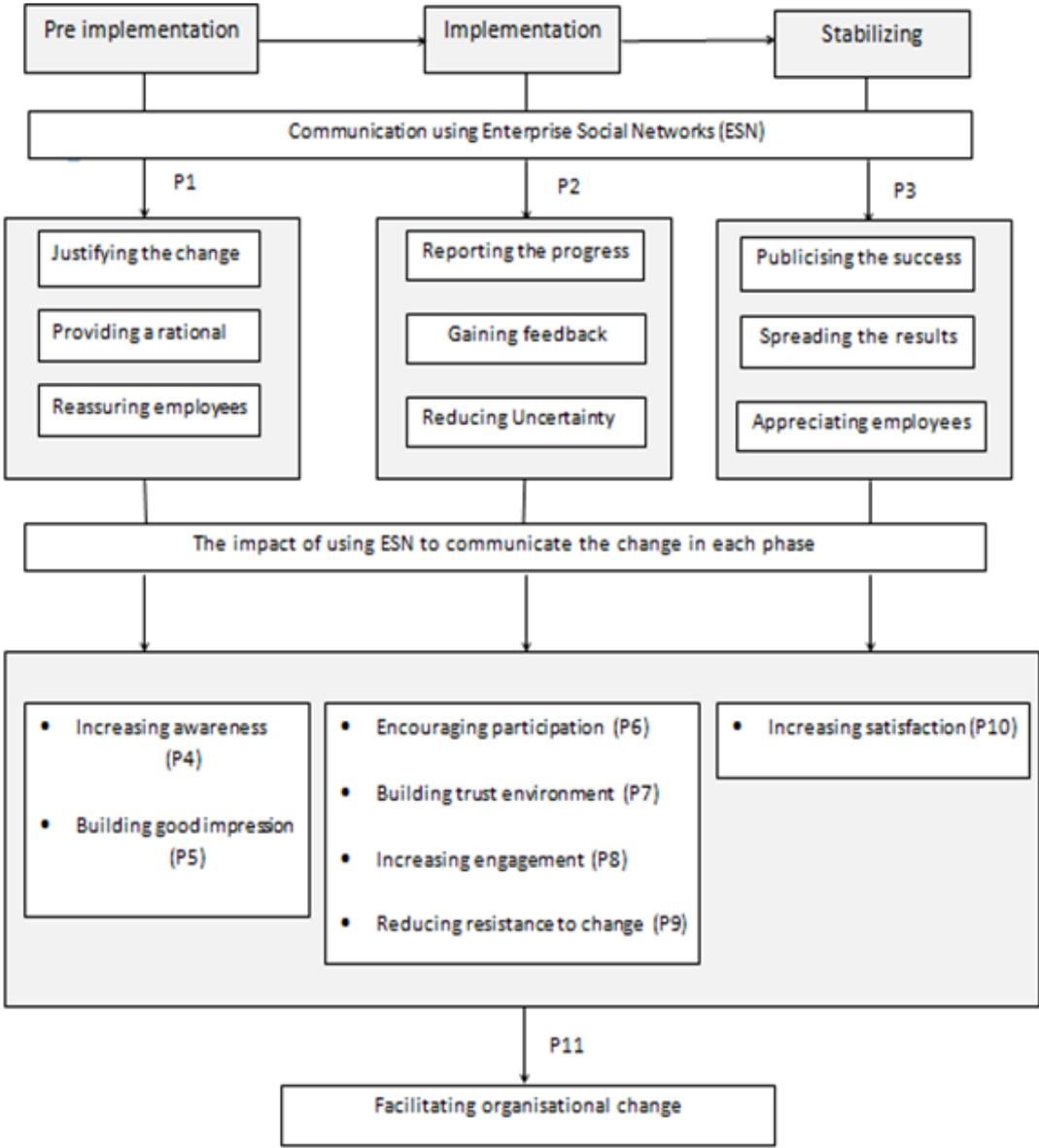


Figure 5.1 Revised conceptual model

## **5.7 Chapter Summary**

Content analysis was used to analyse the 32 interviews conducted in organisation X in Oman and organisation Y in UAE, using Nvivo software to help organise the themes and sub-themes. The participants involved in the interviews were coded as X and Y according to their organisation. The analysis of the results has been categorised into three phases, called the pre-implementation phase, the implementation phase, and the stabilisation phase. Analysis revealed eight themes, two to three from each phase. Each theme derived some sub-themes, which reflected the impact of communication in each of those phases.

In this chapter, the elements proposed in the conceptual model presented in Chapter 3 have been empirically validated through both case studies (X and Y). The empirical results found in this study played a vital role in investigating the real role that ESN can play when it is used to communicate change effectively. Also, this helped to validate and confirm the overall impact of this new communication technology in facilitating change, such as increasing awareness and engagement. Also, the findings showed some new impacts, such as reducing resistance to change and building a good impression, which can be considered as a contribution to the original model, and these have been added to the revised model.

The next chapter will discuss the conclusions of this research, presenting the main findings, the theoretical and practical contributions, and finally some recommendations and future suggestions for leaders, change agents and practitioners.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of ESN in facilitating organisational change. The study provides a communication model for leaders, change agents and academics on how to communicate through ESN during planned change. This chapter will conclude the study, and is a discussion on the theoretical and practical contributions of the study, and its limitations. Also, the researcher in this chapter will suggest and discuss some recommendations for leaders, change agents and practitioners, with suggestions for future research in the area of communicating change.

### **6.2 Research Overview**

According to the literature on organisational change and communication during change, as discussed in Chapter 2, it has been noticed that a focus on the contents of communication, and the existence of a suitable tool that can be used to communicate change, has been neglected. There is still a need for research that aims to improve internal communication within organisations in order to facilitate organisational change. Moreover, investigating the role of new communication technology tools such as ESN that can be used to communicate planned change is considered to be another gap which needs to be covered. Generally, there is a lack

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of studies associated with the communication needs in each phase of planned change, which could facilitate the change. Consequently, this research addresses the aspects above by focusing on investigating the impact of ESN as internal communication technology in facilitating organisational change. Moreover, the study provides a couple of recommendations in addition to a communication change model for leaders, change agents and academics. Through revising the current literature and earlier studies related to organisational change and communication during the process of change, the objectives have been achieved. The literature which was reviewed and the issues which have been raised helped guide the researcher of this study to propose the conceptual model and conduct interviews with two different organisations to help develop and validate the model.

### **6.3 The Main Findings**

The literature review showed that most of the available studies on organisational change management focus on how to manage change projects successfully in general, without examining what needs to be done in each stage of the change process, particularly in terms of communication (Zareen, 2013). In addition to that, although the change management literature commonly agrees that communication is essential to the change process, and that poor communication is considered as one of the main reasons behind many failures of change initiatives, there is still a dearth of empirical studies that focus on improving communication before and during the process of change (Lewis et al., 2013). Both case studies in this research confirmed the applicability of the revised conceptual model for a better understanding of the communication needs in each phase of planned change, and the positive impacts behind the use of ESN in this communication to facilitate change.

The findings of this study indicate a strong recommendation for using ESN to communicate a change project, because of its features and its positive impacts, which can help in to improve internal communication and so facilitate change. This is supported in the literature on ESN by Thom et al. (2011) and Riemer & Richter (2013), who argue that ESN can be beneficial in improving internal communication during projects. Moreover, the findings in this study show that participants recommend the continuous use of ESN as an additional communication channel to communicate a change project, in particular in relation to positive change. This is mainly because negative change naturally provides a huge domain of resistance within employees, and the availability of an open communication platform such as ESN, which can be used by negative promoters, can enhance the resistance domain rather than reduce it. Therefore, participants in this study did not recommend using ESN effectively in a negative change project, because it can encourage employees to work against the change. The literature on communicating organisational change and the literature on ESN did not cover how effective internal communication can facilitate or hinder a negative change project. However, the participants in this study indicated that effective communication through ESN during a negative change project is not recommended.

## **6.4 Implication and Contributions**

The findings of this study have created a novel contribution to the subject of communicating planned change, and have expanded the overall knowledge of it. The theoretical and practical contributions provided by the novelty of this study are explained in the next sections.

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### **6.4.1 Theoretical contributions**

This research makes a number of theoretical contributions to the available literature. First of all, the integrative conceptual model built in this study was based on the theoretical model of communication needs during planned change, proposed by Klein (1996), and this was linked to the literature on new communication technology tools called ESN, which had not been done before. Moreover, all of the communication which occurred between the management and the employees through ESN in each phase of a planned change have been empirically examined for the first time, in addition to the impacts of communication through ESN.

In addition to that, the benefits of ESN presented in the literature in relation to change communication have been confirmed, in addition to some new benefits as shown in the revised model, all of which helped to facilitate organisational change. The empirical findings have been presented, and the impacts of communicating change through ESN are an increase in employee awareness, engagement, participation, satisfaction and trust. In addition to that, ESN helps to build a good impression of a change, and helps reduce resistance to change. All of these positive impacts can facilitate change. This study has clarified how ESN as a new communication tool can facilitate organisational change, through its effective use to communicate change in the pre-implementation phase, the implementation phase, and finally the stabilisation phase

### **6.4.2 Practical contributions**

The main practical contribution of this study is the novel model that has been built, which can be applied as a tool for leaders, managers and change agents who

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are responsible for communicating change to employees. The model addresses the communication needs in each phase of a planned change, using ESN as an alternative communication channel. As this model identifies several positive impacts of using ESN to communicate change, it encourages the top management in any organisation to use it effectively to facilitate positive change initiatives. The model also improves the two-way transparent communication channel during the process of change, as ESN provides an open interaction platform, on which it is not necessary to follow the hierarchy communication flow.

The novel model of this study expands the knowledge of using ESN in organisational change projects to improve communication during the change, thus facilitating the change. Therefore, both researchers and change management practitioners can benefit from such a model.

## **6.5 Research Limitations**

As with any other research, there are some limitations to this study. Firstly, this research is based on only 32 participants, which is a suitable number for qualitative studies, but should not be considered as final proof of the actual role of ESN in facilitating organisational change. However, the findings can be considered as a basis for future studies on communicating change through ESN. Secondly, due to the qualitative narrative approaches that were used to analyse the findings of this study, the possibility of bias can be considered as a limitation. Therefore, the researcher put effort into interpreting the real meanings of the participants' interviews. Thirdly, usually a qualitative study depends on the perceptions and views of the participants. Although the researcher of this study encouraged the participants to contribute in more detail within the interviews,

most of those participants answered the questions briefly. Therefore, the lack of detail limited a full exploration and also the accuracy of the findings.

## **6.6 Recommendations for Future Research**

The approved suitability regarding the use of ESN to communicate change effectively thus facilitating change was built according to the findings from two organisations in the GCC region. Although this study can be generalised within the GCC region, it might not be suitable to use or generalise it for other regions. Therefore, it will be worth in a future study improving the generalisation of the study model to cover other regions. Cultural factors were not considered in this study, since all GCC countries have almost the same culture. Extending the applicability of using ESN in the change environment within a different cultural context could be a worthwhile future study, which might add some further contributions to the field and the literature on organisational change.

The reviewed model of this research improves communication during planned change by providing positive impacts on employees when it is applied to communicating positive change. As a suggestion for future researchers, it might be useful for the revised model to be validated for negative change projects. Also, future researchers might conduct a descriptive study with large samples of participants, in order to understand the scope of the role that ESN can play to facilitate change.

Since this study focused on the perspective of management regarding the role of ESN in facilitating organisational change, it might be worth future researchers investigating the same concept from point of view of lower level employees. As a

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final recommendation for future research, quantitative comparative research could be conducted to compare organisations that have used ESN to communicate change with those which have not used it. This kind of comparison could provide more evidence on how effective or ineffective the real use of ESN is in a change context.

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# Appendix A

## Interviews Agenda

The interview agenda is to investigate the role of Enterprise Social Networks - when used as an additional communication channel to communicate a planned change – in facilitating change, and to provide a set of recommendations for decision makers, leaders, change agents and academics.

The agenda contains five parts, which are as follows:

1- **Part A:** Background Information.

2- **Part B:** Communication through Yammer in the pre-implementation phase, and its impact on employees.

3- **Part C:** Communication through Yammer in the implementation phase, and its impact on employees.

4- **Part D:** Communication through Yammer in the stabilisation phase, and its impact on employees.

5- **Part E:** The future use of Yammer to communicate new changes.

## Participants' Personal Information Sheet

Participant's name (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience in the organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone no. (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_



## **Consent Form**

### Organisation Confidentiality

This is to confirm that Waleed Al Rawahi is a full time PhD student at Brunel Business School, Brunel University London. The focus of his research is on the role of Enterprise Social Networks in facilitating organisational change, and since your organisation has used the social software Yammer in a change project, it represents a very relevant research case for his study.

We would be very grateful if you could consider providing Waleed with suitable permission to conduct a number of interviews with senior managers and middle managers in your organisation.

You will have the opportunity to review all of the questions to be used in the interviews, which will be non-intrusive, and data collected will be anonymous and treated with total confidentiality. Moreover, Waleed's research conforms to the university's ethical research conduct rules, and has been approved accordingly by the Brunel Business School.

Date:

Signature of contact person in the organisation:

Signature of student:

Signature of supervisor:

## Information Sheet

I am pursuing a PhD in Management Studies Research at Brunel University London.

My research explores the role of Enterprise Social Networks - as a new communication technology tool - in facilitating organisational change. The main aim is to find out how this new communication tool can help to facilitate the success of an organisational change project when it is used to communicate before and during the implementation process of a change. With this in mind, I would like to request your participation by answering the interview questions.

I would really appreciate your cooperation in this regard. Please note that it is not compulsory for anyone to take part, and that you can withdraw at any time without consequence.

Also, I ensure you that all of your personal details will be kept anonymous and confidential, and all other gathered data or documents will be for research purposes only, and will not be used without your permission.

Your participation will be highly appreciated. Thanking you in anticipation.

Kindest Regards,

Waleed Al Rawahi

PhD student

Brunel University London

UK, London, Email: [Waleed.Al-Rawahi@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:Waleed.Al-Rawahi@brunel.ac.uk)

## Participants' Consent Form

Please answer all the questions

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study:		
- at any time (Please note that you will be unable to withdraw once your data has been included in any reports, publications, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without having to give a reason for withdrawing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to my interview being recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that I will not be referred to by name in any reports/publications resulting from this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree that my comments can be quoted as long as they do not directly identify me when the study is written up or published.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to take part in this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research participant's name:
Research participant's signature:
Date:

## Samples of Participants' Consent Form

**CONSENT FORM**

Please answer all the questions

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study:		
- at any time (Please note that you will unable to withdraw once your data has been included in any reports, publications etc)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without having to give a reason for withdrawing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without it affecting my future care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to my interview being recorded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that I will not be referred to by name in any report/publications resulting from this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree that my comments can be quoted as long as they do not directly identify me when the study is written up or published	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to take part in this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Participant Name:	
Research Participant signature:	<i>Maithe</i>
Date:	<i>June 7, 2015</i>

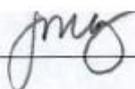
  

Principal Investigator name:	<i>Waleed Al Rawahi</i>
Principal Investigator signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>
Date:	<i>7 / 6 / 2015</i>

### CONSENT FORM

Please answer all the questions

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study:		
- at any time (Please note that you will be unable to withdraw once your data has been included in any reports, publications etc)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without having to give a reason for withdrawing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without it affecting my future care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to my interview being recorded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that I will not be referred to by name in any report/publications resulting from this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree that my comments can be quoted as long as they do not directly identify me when the study is written up or published	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to take part in this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Participant Name:	
Research Participant signature:	
Date:	7/6/15

Principal Investigator name:	Waleed Al Rawahi
Principal Investigator signature:	
Date:	7/6/2015

### CONSENT FORM

Please answer all the questions

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study:		
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7. I agree to take part in this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Participant Name:	
Research Participant signature:	
Date:	03 / 06 / 2015

Principal Investigator name:	Waleed AL Rawahi
Principal Investigator signature:	
Date:	3 / 6 / 2015

### CONSENT FORM

Please answer all the questions

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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7. I agree to take part in this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Participant Name:	
Research Participant signature:	
Date:	9/8/2015

Principal Investigator name:	Waleed AL Rawahi
Principal Investigator signature:	
Date:	9/8/2015

### CONSENT FORM

Please answer all the questions

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Research Participant Information Sheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study:		
- at any time (Please note that you will unable to withdraw once your data has been included in any reports, publications etc)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- without having to give a reason for withdrawing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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6. I agree that my comments can be quoted as long as they do not directly identify me when the study is written up or published	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to take part in this study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Research Participant Name:

Research Participant signature:



Date: 27/07/2015

Principal Investigator name: Waleed AL Rawahi

Principal Investigator signature:



Date: 27 / 07 / 2015

## Interview Questions

### Part A. Background Information

1. What is your role in the organisation generally, and in the change project specifically?

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2. Why has your organisation implemented the change project?

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3. How has your organisation implemented the change?

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4. Who has been involved in the change?

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5. Who has been affected by this organisational change?

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6. Overall, do you think that you and your employees have received sufficient information about the change project? If no, then why?

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7. Has there been any resistance from employees regarding the change project? If yes, then why? How have management dealt with the resistance?

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**Part B. Communication through Yammer before implementing the change, and its impact**

8. Before the change project was implemented, how did you perceive Yammer's overall communication regarding the change? What kind of information had been communicated at this stage?

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9. At this stage, do you think that any additional information needs to be communicated through Yammer? If so, what information would you like to receive? Why do you think that this information is important?

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10. Do you think that using Yammer to communicate about the change prior to its implementation had any impact on employees (in terms of awareness, engagement, and trust)? If yes, could you explain how Yammer affected employees' feedback and views with regards to the change?

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**Part C. Communication through Yammer during implementation of the change, and its impact**

11. From your experience, what do you think about Yammer's overall communication of the change during the implementation of the change project? What kind of information had been communicated at this stage?

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12. At this stage, do you think that any additional information needs to be communicated by Yammer? If so, what information would you like to receive? Why do you think that this information is important?

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13. Do you think that using Yammer to communicate about the change during its implementation had any impact on employees (in terms of awareness, engagement, and trust)? If yes, could you explain how Yammer affected employees' feedback and views with regards to the change?

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**Part D. Communication through Yammer during stabilisation of the change, and its impact**

14. Once the change been implemented and stabilised, how did you perceive Yammer's overall communication about the change? What kind of information had been communicated at this stage?

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15. In this stabilisation stage, do you think that any additional information needs to be communicated through Yammer? If so, what information would you like to receive? Why do you think that this information is important?

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16. Do you think that using Yammer to communicate about the change in this final stage had any impact on employees (in terms of awareness, engagement, and trust)? If yes, could you explain how Yammer affected employees' feedback and views with regards to the change?

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**Part E. The future use of Yammer to communicate new changes**

17. Do you think that the organisation should continue using Yammer or any other ESN tool to communicate information about change projects? Why, or why not?

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18. Do you think that communicating about change through Yammer or any other ESN tool has any limitations or disadvantages? If so, what are they?

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19. Do you think that using Yammer or any other ESN tool as a communication channel can facilitate organisational change? If so, could you explain why and how?

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## Appendix B

### Strategies for facilitating organisational change

Strategies  Author / Year	Effective Communication	Participation & Involvement	Education & Training	Management Support	Motivation	Clear Vision and Goals	Managing Resistance to Change
Lewin / 1947	√	√					√
Coch & French / 1948	√	√					√
Lawrence / 1954		√					
Rogberg / 1978			√				
Kotter & Schlesinger / 1979	√	√	√	√			
Baker / 1987		√		√	√		
Bernerth / 2004							
Schermerhorn / 1989		√	√	√			
Aldag & Stearns / 1991		√	√	√			
Kreitner / 1992		√	√	√			
Griffin / 1993		√	√	√			
Dubrin & Ireland / 1993		√		√	√		



<div style="text-align: center;"><b>Strategies</b></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><b>Author / Year</b></div>	Effective Communication	Participation & Involvement	Education & Training	Management Support	Motivation	Clear Vision and Goals	Managing Resistance to Change
Elving / 2005	√						
Giangreco & Peccei / 2005		√					
Washington & Hacke / 2005			√				
Oreg / 2006	√				√		√
Sergio & Hal / 2006	√	√		√	√		
Rafferty et al. / 2006							
Griffin / 2007		√					
Hebda et al. / 2007					√		
Kark & Van / 2007					√		
Kroth / 2007					√		
Schnake / 2007					√		
Schultz / 2007	√						
Vithessonthi / 2007		√					
Brown & Cregan / 2008		√					
Burke / 2008				√	√		
Carter / 2008	√						



<div style="text-align: center;"><b>Strategies</b></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><b>Author / Year</b></div>	Effective Communication	Participation & Involvement	Education & Training	Management Support	Motivation	Clear Vision and Goals	Managing Resistance to Change
Groysberg & Slind / 2012						√	
Cameron & Green, 2013	√					√	√
Deria & Gokhan / 2013			√				
Freddy & Mbohwa / 2013	√	√					
Gabriele et al. / 2013	√			√	√		
Kunanbayeva / 2013	√	√					
Noora / 2013	√						
Torben / 2013		√		√			√
Zareen / 2013	√						
Alice et al. / 2014	√			√			
Matos & Esposito / 2014	√					√	
Zafar & Naveed / 2014	√	√					
Robert / 2015	√					√	