

**Contextual Considerations in Organization Development with
Reference to the Context of South Korea:
Analysis of Individuals' Perceptions at Different Levels of an
Organization**

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List of Abbreviations

CA	Change Agent
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CF	Confer
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
M & A	Merger and Acquisition
OD	Organization Development
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

The complex global environment forces enterprises to change themselves in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the commitment of their employees (Meaney and Pung, 2008; Bond Baker, 2009). In particular, Korean companies that have hitherto achieved rapid growth have faced the challenge of changing their organizational culture with the aim of improving their global competitiveness (Choi, 2012). In this respect, this research has been undertaken with the main aim of helping to inform more successful organization development (OD) by exploring contextual considerations in OD in the context of South Korea, based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization.

This research adopts a qualitative methodology approach as the way forward to attain the answers to a set of research questions. In particular, it selects a single case study design in order to explore in depth how employees at different levels perceive the same change initiative driven in the same context. Thus, the researcher purposively selected 37 interviewees at different levels of the organization for semi-structured interviews.

Findings show that individuals at all levels commonly perceived three cultural characteristics as difficulties in relation to change initiative: a hierarchy-based Confucian culture, an excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism and the tendency of leaders to adhere to their opinions. It is found that given these perceptions regarding their change context, they were confused by a dual message from their company, even if the change content was designed based on a humanistic approach. This is because the message from the extremely hierarchical culture of a Korean conglomerate runs contrary to the change message based on a humanistic approach. In this respect, it is suggested that OD practitioners need enterprise-wide initiatives for all levels of leaders to work together to weaken the prevailing message of the hierarchical culture for successful OD. In addition, a change approach that takes into account the circumstances and characteristics of individuals at each level is needed, providing people with opportunities to practise the new way of change through participating in the change intervention.

Keywords: OD, contextual considerations, individuals' perceptions, South Korea

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This research explores contextual considerations in organization development (hereafter abbreviated OD) with reference to the context of South Korea (hereafter Korea). The high failure rate encountered by change initiatives is often explained as being a result of ignoring the importance of contextual considerations in implementing OD practice (Klein and Sorra, 1996; Rees et al., 2012). This thesis begins with the following point explicitly acknowledged: change inherently occurs via human social interactions taking place within a given context. It continues with the assumption, therefore, that it becomes important for OD to be implemented in a way that is appropriate to a particular context (Ford and Ford, 1995; Rees et al., 2012). In this respect, the current study examines how individuals perceive and experience a change initiative, what patterns among individuals at different levels are derived from these experiences, and what difficulties individuals experience in the context of a Korean enterprise. All of these areas are lacking in current studies. Based on the examination of these points, this study proposes implications for contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of Korea.

This chapter proceeds by explaining the background of and the rationale for the research. It then specifies the research aims and objectives, and concludes with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Research background

As markets become more global, changes in enterprises become ever more frequent. Contemporary enterprises are required to adapt quickly to contemporary environments (Choi and Ruona, 2011). In this situation, many global enterprises are working to improve their organizational capabilities through a range of change tactics, so that their employees can both adapt to change and lead it (Meaney and Pung, 2008; Bond Baker, 2009). Despite this, studies show that more than 70 percent of companies who propelled change experiences failed to adapt or lead (Burnes and Jackson, 2011; Isern and Pung, 2007; Oakland and Tanner, 2007). While a variety of theories and models of organizational change and development

support change at enterprises, the actual rate of successful organizational change in practice remains low.

The researcher's curiosity is located within this context of discrepancy. She was attracted to study why most change initiatives – especially those targeting corporate culture – end in failure, despite heavy investment by Korean enterprises in efforts to change their culture. This question stimulates the researcher's attention towards the appreciation of the paradigms underpinning the variety of theories and models present in OD. This curiosity also spanned individual attitudes towards a change initiative and the influence of change context on individuals' perceptions of a change initiative in ways described below.

First, the various theories and models of OD are based on respective ontological and epistemological paradigms which enable practitioners to view an organization and organizational change differently. Since a paradigm can lead to a different approach and set of assumptions, which eventually leads to different consequences, the consideration of ontological and epistemological paradigms can be an important starting point for undertaking organizational change (Anderson, 2016). However, most change models are based on open system theory which conceives of an organization as a system, which are aligned the mainstream of business management field, although a different approach has emerged which sees an organization as socially constructed over time; this can provide useful and different ideas and conceptions in OD (*ibid*). This is relevant to the starting point in undertaking this thesis: the importance of a fresh appreciation of the paradigm behind the choice of an intervention in a given situation. This bases the relationship between a given context and OD implementation on a more balanced footing between theoretical paradigm and appropriate practice, rather than an OD practitioner merely following the most popular or fashionable change model of the day (Burnes and Jackson, 2011).

Second, in addition to the careful consideration given to the paradigms and approaches of change initiatives, the studies on an individual's attitude towards change are important for successful organizational change (Holt et al., 2007; Armenakis et al., 1993). Recent studies focusing on the psychological aspects of individuals facing organizational change have established the pivotal dimension

whose part their receptivity to change plays in adapting to change (Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce and Jussila, 2011; Pierce et al., 2009; Fiorito et al., 2007; Salminen, 2012). No matter how good the model of change might be, in an implementation effort, the critical factor that makes a difference comes down to individuals who connect with the change model and then adapt it and execute it (Armenakis et al., 1993; Choi and Ruona, 2011). The level of the individual's acceptance of change in determining the level of success in organizational change thus warrants serious attention in the current study (George and Jones, 2001).

Third, the variable of context and culture and the degree to which they influence individuals' attitudes towards change demands focus in this thesis (Cummings and Worley, 2014; Edwards et al., 2000; Weiner et al., 2008). This is because OD deals with individuals' perceptions and behaviours which are inevitably related to the cultural characteristics of each culture. In this regard, this study is referring to this important concept in organizational change as the contextual considerations, arguing that organizational change needs to be approached and implemented in a way that is appropriate to each culture and context (Rees et al., 2012).

The empirical arena of this research is a change initiative within the context of a large enterprise in Korea. Since the demand for change in organizational culture has increased with the aim of gaining global competitiveness, many large enterprises have driven organizational change with the help of large consulting firms. However, they still have difficulties in changing their culture, despite outside support, because it requires change in the psychological mindset of their employees. In this respect, there is a need to explore this linking of theory and practice, of individual mindset and corporate context, and of Korean cultural considerations and employees' perceptions, that justifies the focus of the research as introduced above. It is hoped that this thesis will be able to provide practical insight for enterprises to drive cultural change informed by critical theoretical review as well as empirical findings.

1.3. The rationale of the research

The rationale of this study is stated below.

First, the complexity of individuals' perceptions in a change process can be explored

in more depth through the qualitative methodology. The individuals' perceptions of a change initiative are not simply determined by the content and process of a change initiative, but also inevitably influenced by many contextual factors (Jones et al., 2005; Weiner, 2009). For example, the existing customs and culture which are formed in relationships with peers and leaders within organizational systems and policies, more largely, the influence of the national culture, CEO's attitudes, change history of an organization and based on these contextual factors, employees' overall attitudes towards their organization, are inherent in its complexity (Weiner, 2009). However, most studies on individual readiness are weighted towards exploring the influence of and relationship with variables based on quantitative methodology (Bouckenooghe, 2010). Therefore, the researcher seeks to explore the perceptions of individuals with reference to this complexity by taking advantage of the strengths of qualitative methodology. As a research context, Korea is suitable for exploring individual perceptions because it is a place where diversity and dynamics are mixed together with a large gap between generations in a rapid change scenario with its fast economic growth, which cannot be observed so accurately in other countries (Choi, 2012).

Second, this study offers an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of mutual complementarity of the two different approaches adopted by OD practitioners who lead change practically, analysing the Diagnostic OD-based change initiative through a central perspective of Dialogic OD, which latter addition can additionally provide a meaningful insight into the perceptions of employees. There are numerous theories and models of organizational change, but the mainstream of change theories and models in the OD field is based on the open system theory, which has a long history as the origin of OD (Anderson, 2016). In this open system theory, which sees an organization as a system, taking into account relations between a system and its environment, it is important to understand the gap with the present situation through diagnosis to move to an ideal state where the parts of the system can work together organically and effectively (Cummings and Worley, 2014). In this respect, Bushe and Marshak (2009) termed the mainstream of OD approaches as "Diagnostic OD" while they labelled the emerging OD practices as "Dialogic OD"; the latter see an organization as constructed by people, rather than seeing it as an objective entity external to its members. It is understandable that most studies tend to adhere only to

the perspective of each approach rather than conducting complementary research, because each approach is based on a different ontological epistemological perspective. However, it is helpful to offer implications for practical change by analysing people's perceptions of a change initiative from the perspective of Dialogic OD, thus enabling OD practitioners to see opportunity and benefit from a complementary approach.

Finally, this study will contribute not only to the content aspect but also to the methodological aspect of the OD field in Korea where its history is relatively short. In terms of the contribution of content aspect to the OD field in Korea, this research on the perceptions of employees in a change process is expected to provide practical implications for cultural change along with inducing internal change in their employees. Along with rapid economic growth occurring over a short period of just 30 years, the history of itself OD in Korea is also very short. In this short history of OD, Korean enterprises have regularly conducted diagnosis to check their employee satisfaction but they have not considered adequate interventions for OD by way of a systemic approach, only implementing external changes and events as OD interventions (Kim et al., 2017). However, recently, in order for large enterprises to secure global competitiveness, there has been an increasing demand for organizational culture change. As a result, some large enterprises which have attempted to promote organizational culture change based on their corporate values are increasingly interested in OD, having encountered difficulty in leading cultural change which is accompanied by the internal changes in their employees (*ibid*). In this respect, this research on the perceptions of employees in a change process is expected to provide practical implications for the large enterprises that are planning and promoting organizational cultural change. This is because in order for a specific organizational culture to be propagated and internalized within the enterprise, the philosophy, intentions and policies emphasized by management are also important, but more important is how employees perceive the cultural change initiative and internalize it (Vakola, 2014; Choi, 2012; Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Keller, 2013). Therefore, research on how individuals perceive a change initiative and how they experience psychological difficulties in the process of internalizing change will provide practical implications for enterprises that promote cultural change. In terms of the contribution of methodological aspect to the OD field in Korea, this study,

which explores the perceptions of employees through the qualitative case study methodology, contributes to the methodological aspect of the OD field in Korea, in which most researchers currently use quantitative methodology based on the business administration field.

Since this study focuses on different perceptions of people in the same context in which the same values are promulgated, the researcher chooses a single case study method. However, in terms of the contextual characteristics of Korean enterprises identified through this study and employees' perceptions and difficulties in the change process, enterprises in a similar situation can gain selective insights according to their situation. Likewise, companies in other developing countries in Asia with rapid economic growth similar to Korea, which need to attain global competitiveness after achieving some level of economic growth, are also able to take selective but meaningful insights.

1.4. Aim and objectives

In responding to the above rationale, the aim of this research is to explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea, based on the analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization. The researcher believes that examining individuals' perceptions regarding their change initiative should precede the search for successful implementation of OD in the context of Korea, where there is a lack of research on OD. As a tool to examine the individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding a change initiative, the researcher uses the conceptual framework which is developed based on the concept of individual readiness. Thus, in order to achieve this aim of the research, the main objectives are as set out below.

- 1) to examine important principles throughout the development history of OD in order to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD
- 2) to examine how individuals at different levels perceive the change context
- 3) to examine how individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative
- 4) to explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea

1.5. Research Structure

The thesis is structured into seven chapters, which can be summarised as detailed below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the research background, rationale, aim and objectives, scope and research structure.

Chapter 2: Approaches and theories for organizational development

As the first chapter of literature review, this chapter explores some of the central concepts and themes from the development history of OD in terms of what has endured, having been accepted as relevant ideas, and what has changed. It seeks to understand the humanistic approach of OD as a central principle. It also examines what has been changing in the OD field by analysing the emergent influence of social constructionism and complexity theory in social science field, in addition to making a comparison between Dialogic OD and Diagnostic OD.

Chapter 3: Individual readiness

As the second chapter of literature review, this chapter investigates the concept and the multi-faceted and multi-levelled attributes of individual readiness and examines the critical factors tending to influence individual readiness, by investigating conditions that promote it or constrain it. Examining the critical factors which influence individual readiness provides the conceptual framework to explore the perceptions and experiences of individuals at different levels in the change process in the empirical study.

Chapter 4: Contextual conditions in relation to organizational change in South Korea

As the third chapter of literature review, this chapter examines the contextual conditions not only at the national level but also at the organizational level. Moreover, this chapter examines OD in Korea by investigating the current state of OD in the country as well as the suitability of OD in the context of Korea.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

This chapter explains the researcher's philosophical positions and the research strategy adopted, as guided by the research objectives and questions. Research design and ethical issues are further discussed.

Chapter 6: Research findings

An analysis of the data collected through 35 interviews is considered and presented, showing the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding the change initiative in the context of a Korean conglomerate.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

The discussion section of this chapter answers the research questions and achieves the research aim and objectives, bringing together the theories reviewed in the literature and empirical research results. The conclusion section presents the key points through a summary of the thesis and presents the contributions, implications and possible directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: APPROACHES AND THEORIES FOR ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Introduction

Challenges from the rapidly changing business environment have forced the field of organization development (OD) to change and evolve considerably in terms of the understanding of organizational change and how best to lead the change, although on some points the OD field has been criticized for failing to change quickly enough to meet emergent challenges in the business world (Pasmore and Woodman, 2017; Bartunek and Jones, 2017). Due to the nature of the field, which is constantly changing and evolving, there is no single formally agreed definition of OD. However, according to the definitions presented in widely used academic textbooks, OD is all about developing organizations and individuals in order to improve the overall organization effectiveness, through the planned approach to change, which is underpinned by humanistic values (Rees, 2012). The OD field, initially derived from a psychological perspective, has developed into an integrating paradigm which brings together ideas and theories from a range of academic fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and economics in order to provide organizations with pertinent organizational change designs and interventions (Rees, 2008). During the development history of the OD field, there are approaches that have changed dramatically, but humanistic values have been preserved throughout the development history of OD (Anderson, 2016; Burnes and Cooke, 2012).

The aim of this thesis is to explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea. Before exploring contextual considerations of OD, it is important as a preliminary step to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD, which have been obtained by trial and error in the development history of OD. In this respect, the purpose of this chapter is to explore some of the central concepts and themes from the development history of OD in terms of what has endured as containing relevant ideas and what has changed. Thus, first, its focus is seeking to understand the humanistic approach of OD which has been preserved as a central principle in its development history, applicable to current relations in the business world. Additionally, this chapter examines that which has been changing in the OD

field by analysing the emergent influence of social constructionism and complexity theories, which are major new insights in the social science field. Based on the major paradigm development in OD, it examines Dialogic OD, which has emerged as a significant feature of current OD.

2.2. The humanistic approach as a central approach of OD

2.2.1. Introduction

Going through a ‘metamorphosis’ of OD from its classical form to its current conceptual basis, many commentators have questioned its purpose and values, claiming that OD had lost its sense of direction (Greiner and Cummings, 2004; Wirtenberg et al., 2004). In line with this, Bradford and Burke (2004: 370) claimed, “there is no agreement about what OD is. The field lacks a central, agreed-upon theory of change.” This claim regarding the absence of a universally acknowledged approach defining the nature and purposes of OD reflects the substantial change in the OD field. From the point of view of this considerable change in the OD field, there is a perspective which views the OD field as a continuously evolving body of theory and practice, as circumstances change, rather than considering that the separation of classical OD from the current OD is important in a practical sense (Dent, 2002; Oswick, 2009; Rees, 2012). This perspective contains a desire to learn the lessons of its long history rather than discarding the classical OD in order to renew and reinvigorate the OD field from a new theoretical perspective (Pasmore and Woodman, 2017). This section examines the humanistic approach as a central approach to be preserved in the OD field, despite the substantial change in the development history of the OD field.

2.2.2. What is the humanistic approach in OD?

The humanistic approach in OD is to emphasize the importance of the individual, respecting the whole person, with a belief that employees will flourish and fulfil their potential in a work environment which is conducive to personal growth (Rees and Sharifi, 2002). It highlights the need for a supportive culture that allows employees to communicate openly, work and develop together, find meaning in their work and obtain a sense of fulfilment (Rees, 2008). Based on the humanistic

approach, autonomy, democratic participation, empowerment and honesty in the change process are emphasized not only when designing OD interventions but also when implementing them (*ibid*).

One of the reasons that the origins of OD are considered to be Lewin (1947)'s work is that his whole approach is based on a humanistic angle. Although the OD field is said to have undergone the 'metamorphosis' which has been the subject of considerable debate in recent years, it is generally agreed that the origin of the OD field has been derived from the work of Kurt Lewin since the 1940s (Worren et al., 1999; Dent, 2002; Oswick, 2009; Rees, 2012). The rationale for this is that Lewin provided not only the theories and principles but also the tools underpinning a humanistic approach. A central theme of much of Lewin's work is the view that the key to resolving social conflict is to facilitate the learning of individuals by strengthening democratic participation so that individuals can understand and restructure their perceptions of the world around them (Burnes, 2004). Additionally, he passionately believed that the improvement of the human condition is inevitably linked to the resolution of social conflicts. Thus, he continued to address paramount questions regarding the nature of enterprises and society (Burnes and Cooke, 2012). He believed that without considering these questions that lead enterprises and society to ruminate their rationale for existence, the purpose of OD in underpinning the human approach is inevitably blurred. This means that enterprises where OD is implemented do not reflect well on such fundamental questions as enterprises' rationale for existence; the purpose of OD based on the humanistic approach then can be blurred. Therefore, these significant questions, which remind and reflect on the nature and purpose of enterprises and society, are crucial to invigorate OD. Addressing the questions enables those in the OD field to agree that the nature and purpose of OD is to help enterprises and individuals to be effective and sustainable with the belief that organizational effectiveness only occurs with individual development (Porras and Bradford, 2004).

However, the economic paradigm which has dominated in the business management field has damaged the humanistic approach in OD. This dominant paradigm has driven a series of damaging wedges into the humanistic approach such as a lack of sustainability and the continuous decline in societal trust. Additionally, it prevents employees from exercising the creativity which is increasingly necessary

in a highly competitive global economy (Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Senge et al., 2007; Hodson, 2001). Additionally, the dominant paradigm in business management inevitably influences perspectives on the OD field. For example, since the 1980s when there was a severe economic downturn in the West, performance-oriented focuses in OD such as Total Quality Management and Reengineering have emerged (McLean, 2005; Cummings and Worley, 2014). Researchers and OD practitioners refer to the risk of these development whereby the OD field could lose sight of the significance of people, while focusing on the leadership of a few individuals when leading the change initiative (Burnes and Cooke, 2012). What is worse, it has been commented that the purpose of OD can be biased towards enterprises with the assumption that individuals have to be sacrificed for short term effectiveness in business (Cooke, 2007; Cummings, 2005). Consequently, organizationally based OD practitioners have tended to adopt practices that are obviously biased towards business objectives rather than considering individual development underpinned by a humanistic approach (McLean, 2005; Burke, 2011).

On balance, following the trial and error from the performance-oriented OD, there is an emergent need to re-examine the humanistic approach in order to renew and reinvigorate OD. For example, according to a major survey by the Global Committee on the future of Organization Development, one of the OD's major strengths is the adherence to its basic values based on the humanistic approach (Wirtenberg et al., 2007). In addition, even Parras, who critically opined that OD has lost its way, emphasizes that the humanity aspect should be maintained, saying "I definitely think that many of the guiding principles should be maintained, such as people should be treated humanely." (Porras and Bradford, 2004). In all likelihood, these contributions support the humanistic approach as a central approach which can retrieve the nature and purpose of OD.

Furthermore, Melé (2003) re-examined a humanistic approach based on the origin of the term "humanism" in the Ancient World. Humanism was said to be oriented to the development of human virtue, to its fullest extent, emphasizing the human condition common to all people. He claims that the humanistic approach includes not only motivating people to grow as human beings through human virtues, but also promoting an enterprise to strive to build up the organizational culture that motivates people to foster human virtues (*Ibid*). In this respect, he questioned the

view that the earliest version of the humanistic approach seemed to consider the needs of the human as means that were used only to increase productivity rather than considering employees as human beings who have the need for growth through human virtues (*ibid*). Therefore, he emphasizes that the renewed human approach should foster both the human growth of people and a better organizational performance, not viewing human beings as means to make profits (*Ibid*).

2.2.3. Why is the humanistic approach important in OD?

In line with the overall definition of OD noted in the previous section, the humanistic approach is very important in OD in terms of developing organizations as well as individuals for organizational effectiveness.

In terms of the perspective at the individual level in OD, the humanistic approach is important for encouraging the autonomy of individuals in developing themselves in alignment with organizational effectiveness. However, enterprises in a capitalistic society have traditionally tended to pay little attention to the humanistic approach, focusing on financial results by pursuing management on the basis of results and belittling qualitative factors such as human aspects that cannot be measured (Johnson and Broms, 2000). If enterprises deal with people without a humanistic approach, it will be hard to elicit the autonomy of people for organizational effectiveness (Booth and Rowlinson, 2006; Pirson, 2013). People may notice the deficient manner based on controlling and manipulating people by instinct when enterprises neglect the humanistic approach during the implementation of OD with the lack of people-focus consideration (Lemon and Sahota, 2004). This paradigm of viewing employees as a passive cog for business efficiency may prevent people from genuinely participating in change initiatives, making the situation worse rather than better (Morgan, 2006). Without genuine and sincere participation from employees, it is undoubtedly difficult to implement OD successfully. This is why the humanistic approach is important in successful OD (Mitroff, 2003; George, 2003).

In terms of the perspective at the organizational level in OD, the humanistic approach can help enterprises to reconsider the purpose of enterprises based on business ethics as well as sustainability in conjunction with significant questions

concerning society. In contrast to the vision of enterprises only as dehumanized mechanisms without any goal other than to enrich their owners, based on some popular economic theories such as agency theory and transaction cost theory, the humanistic approach allows us to reconsider the purpose of enterprises, seeing enterprises not as a set of contracts but as a community of people (Mele, 2009). Burnes and Cooke (2012) also argue that the narrowed ambitions of OD which has focused on the business objectives, urging employees to sacrifice for their enterprises, have made the OD field lose its nature and purpose, including ignoring the humanistic values. Besides, the various financial scandals of the past decade have highlighted the importance of the ethics and morality of enterprises along with a humanistic approach (Burnes and Jackson, 2011). In order to help enterprises to avoid falling into short-term expediency, Burnes and Cooke (2012) claim that it is time to contemplate and redefine the nature and purpose of OD in relation to significant questions of the day concerning society and enterprises.

From this humanistic view, an enterprise is not just a mechanism for profits and a mere set of contracts but a community of people managed by values and ethics in accordance with general moral principles (Dierksmeier and Pirson, 2010). Based on such an understanding, human beings in the organizational context can reconsider the purpose of business for its sustainability, which will impact business strategy, structure and culture as well as employment relationships. In this respect, corporate social responsibility is highlighted with a belief that an enterprise is an organ of society. These tendencies based on the humanistic approach would be a sign pointing towards a breakthrough for challenges faced in the fierce competition of the global business environment, such as the lack of sustainability and the continuous decline in societal trust.

In summary, the humanistic approach is important in terms not only of eliciting the autonomy and willingness of people but also of reconsidering the purpose of enterprises for organizational effectiveness and sustainability. In line with this, the humanistic approach is a central feature of the OD to be preserved, along with the “big questions” concerning society (Bartunek and Woodman, 2012). Despite new approaches corresponding to emergent circumstances, the humanistic approach cannot be discarded as a backbone of the OD field.

2.2.4. How does the humanistic approach apply to OD as well as business management?

With regard to the challenges such as lack of sustainability and the continuous decline in societal trust which derive from the economic paradigm dominating in the business management field, there are concerns and arguments in relation to the humanistic approach (Rego and Cunha, 2008; Epstein and Buhovac, 2014; Senge et al., 2007). Mintzberg (2013) criticizes the perspective of companies regarding their employees, saying that top management tends to drive employees in the pursuit of shareholder value, calling their employees not 'human beings' but 'human resources'. Pfeffer (2001) also asserts that people cannot be sacrificed for economic expediency and it is necessary to respect an individual's desire and right to be treated as a human being. He presented evidence that enterprises that place an importance on people tend to achieve high performance with the effective commitment to work practices from their employees, mentioning examples in Fortune's best places to work list as evidence (Pfeffer, 2001). Hodson (2001) stresses that human dignity is important not only for individuals who create the meaning in work but also for enterprises to pursue as they increase employee participation through autonomy. In this respect, management theory and practice increasingly urge approaches that stress how the economic system can be reconnected to humanistic roots (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010).

Understanding the important influence of this humanistic approach, some tendencies have emerged in recent decades in enterprises in terms of recognizing the importance of people in the workplace through Human Resource (hereafter abbreviated HR), leadership and transformation (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010). First of all, in opposition to the neoclassical economic imperative where the human resource can be only valuable if it adds economic value for the benefit of the enterprise's owners and shareholders, the ethical treatment of workers has taken on new significance (Greenwood, 2002; Kochan, 2004). Legge (2003) made the criticism that many enterprises, especially in the Anglo-American domain, commit obsessively to short-term profits, with policies of layering and downsizing, which inevitably run the risk of disregarding human dignity at work, treating organizational members as a cost to be minimized. Indeed, at the extreme, when it

comes to the very term 'human resource', the human being is regarded as one of the resources or commodities that an organization has, such as materials, money and technology (O'Donnell et al., 2006; Legge, 2003). In line with this perspective, there is a tendency both in academia and in practice to favour the use of the term 'people' rather than the term 'human resources'. In addition, the Human Resource Management (hereafter abbreviated HRM) function that has suffered from its status as the 'poor cousin' of the managerial professions tends to reinforce the strategic imperative of economic output rather than considering the devaluing of 'people issues' (Heizmann and Fox, 2017; Wright, 2008). In line with this, there have been calls for a balanced status of HRM that links with corporate sustainability, serving multiple stakeholders such as employees, customers and society, not merely the owners of companies (Järlström et al.; Beer et al., 2015; Mariappanadar, 2003).

Secondly, with regard to leadership, 'authentic leadership' based on humanistic psychology is emerging with the belief that leaders can see and treat their followers as human beings, opposing transactional leadership that leads followers primarily to maximize efficiency (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). If leaders treat their followers as instruments of short-term profits and use a vision as a ruse to manipulate them, the followers will discover the ruse by instinct and become disengaged (*ibid*). This is the reason that authentic leadership places importance on self-awareness of both leaders and followers and trusting and genuine relationships between them, emphasizing the importance of the leader's perspective on followers over leadership skills (Kernis, 2003; Avolio, 2005). In line with this, Mintzberg (2009) suggests the concept of 'communityship' that highlights the human nature of belonging to and caring for something larger than oneself, criticizing the heroic leadership that is so prevalent in the business world (Mintzberg, 2009).

Lastly, in terms of the transformation of structure, the humanistic approach centres on human capabilities and effectiveness, reducing authority levels, providing opportunities to fulfil people's intrinsic motivations, in opposition to the economic paradigm with its tendency to maintain control through agency theory and vertical structures (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010).

In line with the emergent humanistic approach in business management, there are some considerations in relation to the humanistic approach in the OD field. From the

point of view of the humanistic approach, the nature of classical OD can be problematic in terms of the limited participation available with dominant groups and with a management-led change process (McKendall, 1993). In line with this, there is a criticism that OD interventions have been used by dominant groups to consolidate power structures within organizations with the belief that the OD plan should be implemented by means of controlling and managing change in organizational culture; in other words, directly influencing the behaviours of employees (Marshak and Grant, 2008). This approach is likely to result in the dominant group trying not to change themselves, but to change organizational members through step-by-step OD plans (Rees, 2012). This deficient manner that undermines the humanistic approach during the implementation of OD is likely to cause fundamental resistance to change from organizational members (*ibid*). Therefore, it is necessary to consider a way of implementing OD based on the humanistic approach.

In this respect, Deaner (1994) proposed three principal values based on a code of ethics which the Organization Development Institute published in 1991. The first value is participation, which emphasizes the opportunity of people to be involved in the change process. The second value is shared power, which is the right to have a share in the decision making. The third value is truth, which emphasizes the right to tell and hear truth in the change process. Thus, these three values can be effective guides to check whether or not OD interventions are implemented in a manner that does not undermine the humanistic approach.

2.3. What has been changing in the field of OD?

2.3.1. Introduction

As the business environment changes rapidly, the OD field has evolved through new approaches and theories, generating considerable debate (Anderson, 2016). Although there are many different approaches and theories which have influenced the development history of the OD field, the most crucial would be complexity theories and social constructionism, which have allowed us to view organizations and change with a totally different perspective based on very different underlying ontological and epistemological positions. Therefore, this section examines complexity theories and social constructionism as the crucial approaches that have

influenced the contemporary OD field. It then examines the newer forms of OD practice called 'Dialogic OD', which have been developed based on complexity theories and social constructionism.

2.3.2. Complexity theories and Social constructionism

The literature on OD and its models have tended to be grounded in open systems theory in which organizations are perceived as living systems and change is perceived as a discrete and temporary disturbance that need to be controlled (Graetz and Smith, 2009; Van De Ven V and Poole, 1995). OD models based on the open system theory focus on explaining how change can be managed successfully, by providing organizations with an objective diagnosis in order for them to align their components such as strategies, structures, systems and people practices with the demands of their external environments (Cummings and Worley, 2014). However, starting in the 1980s and accelerating into the present, the OD field has been influenced by new theories and approaches which have very different underlying ontological and epistemological positions from the previous theories in social science. Different philosophies bring different perspectives on organizations and change according to their underlying theoretical assumptions and beliefs (Morgan, 2006; Anderson, 2016). Therefore, it is important to examine the different underlying ontological and epistemological positions of the new theories which have influenced the wider social sciences as well as the OD field.

First of all, from the 1980s onwards, the impact of social constructionism on social sciences has raised the question in OD that reality is not a single objective reality but multiple in construction and socially negotiated by the voices of many people (Anderson, 2016; Campbell, 2000). However, the literature on OD and its models has historically tended to be grounded in positivism, which presumes the existence of one objective reality. In addition, open system theory, which is borrowed from the biological sciences, was applied to social science in the early 1960 and it has been the basis of many theories and models of OD (Cummings and Worley, 2014). The open system theory can best be described in terms of interconnectedness of the internal units of organizations as well as their external environment (Burnes, 2014). The approach of the models has focused on trying an optimal mix of processes and structures in order to adapt to the external environment, investigating a singly

objective reality based on data collection and diagnosis (*ibid*). However, over the last three decades, social constructionism, which views organizations as socially constructed entities in which they are constantly reconstructed and recreated through the interactions of their members and others, has emerged. Consequently, OD based on social constructionism helps the OD practitioners to make sense of a social reality which is in fact multiple and formulated from a multiplicity of diverse voices in an organization (Weick et al., 2005; Ford and Ford, 2008). The proponents of this approach criticize the change models based on open system theory in that even if change interventions based on an ideal model have been implemented, organizational members will attribute their own meanings to the interventions, constructing multiple realities differently from each other (Bushe and Marshak, 2009). In this respect, in order to promote organizational change, OD based on social constructionism places a great emphasis on changing the prevailing narratives and conversation where organizational power and political processes have an influence (Bushe and Marshak, 2014).

Moreover, in a similar timespan, complexity theories have emerged in the work of academics and practitioners as a way of understanding organizations that are in unprecedented levels of change. The highly competitive environments have forced organizations to continuously innovate and adapt to the rapidly changing conditions. In this situation, the traditional OD approach has been criticized with reference to its assumptions that change can be planned, controlled and managed in a rational, top-down, linear fashion, as it is regarded as inappropriate to a fast-moving and unpredictable world in which organizations need to transform rapidly to survive (Kanter et al., 1992; Pfeffer, 1992; Weick, 2000; Peters and Waterman, 1982). In complexity theories, organizations, like complex systems in nature, are dynamic non-linear, complex and messy systems which are governed by a set of simple order-generating rules (Burnes, 2005). In addition, complexity theories consider change as a continuous flow, not as episodic one (*ibid*). The ideas of complexity sciences are applied as analogies rather than applying them directly to social systems in which human beings express emotions, power and anxiety in a much more complex fashion than in nature (Stacey, 2001). Complexity theories emphasize self-organizing principles that allow the local parts of an organization to respond in a timely and appropriate way to environmental change (Brown and Eisenhardt,

1997). In this respect, organizational change requires a response involving the self-organizing approach to the rapidly changing environment, promoting structures and policies which view democracy and power equalization as key parameters (Lewis, 1994; MacIntosh and MacLean, 2001; Stacey, 2007). Based on complexity theories, Holman (2013) offers a three-step process of disruption, differentiation and coherence in change. She emphasizes that disruption should be embraced for transformational change rather than viewing it as something to be resisted and avoided (Holman, 2013). This is because the disruption tends to increase differentiation, which forms a new level of coherence through new thresholds of interaction in order to transform an organization. In line with this, Stacey (2007) also argues that change occurs through on-going social interactions among people as a result of disruptions to the narratives within the existing power and political processes.

Along with these significant changes in terms of philosophies in social science surrounding the field of OD, a number of successful innovations in OD theory and practice have come about in the past 30 years. However, these innovative approaches, which are totally different from the classical OD, seem to have been placed under the umbrella of OD because they preserve humanistic approach as its core value. With this in mind, the next section will examine these innovative approaches, termed 'Dialogic OD', in order to gain lessons and insights from the new perspectives and theories.

2.3.3. Diagnostic OD vs Dialogic OD

During the last 30 years, along with the influence of social constructionism and complexity theories, a different set of OD approaches and techniques from the classical OD have emerged such as appreciative inquiry, the search conference, future search, world café, the conference model, open space, wholesale change and many others (Bartunek, Balogun, & Do, 2011; Bunker & Alban, 1997, 2006; Holman, Devane, & Cady, 2007; Shmulyian, Bateman, Philpott, & Gulri, 2010). Bushe and Marshak (2009) labelled this tendency as 'Dialogic OD'; it is based on very different underlying ontological and epistemological positions from classical OD. They similarly label the classical OD as 'Diagnostic OD'. However, they still place the position of both approaches under the umbrella of the OD field,

emphasizing humanistic and democratic values such as participation, authenticity, integrity, trust and collaboration as a backbone of the OD field (Bushe and Marshak, 2009). The motivation for them to differentiate some current OD practices from the classical OD was that most OD textbooks based on positivist open systems premises cannot give a good description of the philosophical and theoretical differences that have emerged in some current OD practices (*ibid*). In this situation, they termed the form of some current OD practices ‘Dialogic OD’, explaining the different mindset and methods compared with the classical OD termed ‘Diagnostic OD’. This section explores Dialogic OD, not only by analysing its different mindset and processes compared with Diagnostic OD but also by examining concerns and issues for further consideration regarding Dialogic OD.

In order to grasp what Dialogic OD actually is, it is necessary to examine its mindset and processes in contrast to those of Diagnostic OD, because its origins come from the theoretical limitations of Diagnostic OD that cannot accommodate the different mindset and processes of Dialogic OD practices. However, before examining the different mindset and process of Dialogic OD as against Diagnostic OD, it is apposite to understand the similarities between Diagnostic and Dialogic OD, which are why they still tend to be labelled together under the identity of OD. One of the most significant similarities between Diagnostic and Dialogic OD is that all forms of OD practices hold humanistic and democratic values as the bedrock of their values, as referred to at the beginning of this chapter as central values to be preserved (Bushe and Marshak, 2015b). Based on these humanistic values, both Diagnostic and Dialogic OD are interested in fostering greater system awareness to change it, concerned with developing more effective groups, organizations and broader social systems.

However, while these two approaches are similar in terms of the goal they pursue and the humanistic approach to be preserved, Dialogic OD seems to be more humanistic than Diagnostic OD in terms of the way of designing and implementing interventions (Bushe, 2017). The focus on individuals’ perceptions of Dialogic OD seems to involve the premise that human beings are able to change only when they are willing to change themselves, which is inevitably accompanied by the respect for human beings for successful OD. In line with this, in terms of implementation, Dialogic OD seems to emphasize the humanistic approach more than Diagnostic OD

does. For example, when the Diagnostic OD as designed and implemented by some dominant groups and decision-makers is not necessarily shared by all of the employees participating in the change process (Hardy and Phillips, 2004; Mumby, 2004), Dialogic OD focuses on helping all people to participate in negotiated agreements in the change process, fostering equal participation among them (Marshak and Grant, 2008). Despite the similarity between the two approaches in terms of the goal they pursue, the way to reach the goal is completely different based on the different mindsets and processes, as explained below.

First of all, one of the differences between Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD is how they view organizations and organizational change. Diagnostic OD views an organization based on open system theory, emphasizing that an organization needs to have all of the elements such as strategies, structures, systems and culture in alignment and adapt to its prevailing environmental conditions and competitive threats. In contrast, Dialogic OD conceives an organization as a complex adaptive, meaning-making system, focusing on the perceptions of people regarding their organization rather than the organization itself. In line with this, Dialogic OD emphasizes that multiple realities are continuously constructed and changed through daily interactions and conversations of organizational members (Bushe and Marshak, 2015b). Based on its different view of organization and organizational change, Diagnostic OD values an accurate diagnosis as a critical first step to uncover an underlying objective reality that includes the factors and forces causing the problem in the present situation, trying to figure out the optimal mix of processes and structures in the given environment (Bushe and Marshak, 2009). Dialogic OD emphasizes changing conversations and narratives that convey what people believe to be and interpret as true with the assumption that reality is not a single objective reality but multiple subjective realities that might offer alternative understanding of organizational phenomena (Bushe and Marshak, 2016). These conversations and narratives influence the mindsets of people, organizational culture, structures and processes by defining the way they are seen and experienced by those involved (Marshak and Grant, 2008).

Moreover, the focus of the change approach between Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD is different. Originally, Diagnostic OD has been dominantly influenced by behavioural psychology, focusing on measurable behaviour in studies of people and

organizations (Cummings and Worley, 2014). Thus, Diagnostic OD tries to ascertain the proper interventions to change the behaviours which cause the problems identified through the diagnosis (Bushe and Marshak, 2014). However, Dialogic OD focuses on changing people's meaning making or cognitive maps that guide behavioural responses, rather than seeking to change behaviour directly, although Dialogic OD is also interested eventually in changing people's behaviour (Bushe and Marshak, 2015b). In Dialogic OD, organizational change comes from changes in meaning making, encouraging people to confront, engage, or raise consciousness regarding alternative perspectives by changing the conversations as the central medium for changing mindset and consciousness (Marshak and Grant, 2008). To do that, first, Dialogic forms of OD engage in inquiry which helps people to increase awareness of the various experiences and different perspectives in the organization (Bushe and Marshak, 2009). Then, they focus on eliciting new thinking that emerges individually and collectively from people going through the dialogic process, which influences one another's sensemaking, thereby creating new images, stories and narratives that, in turn, will affect people's thoughts and behaviours (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014).

Lastly, while Diagnostic OD regards change as episodic and linear, Dialogic OD regards change as continuous or cyclical (Marshak and Bushe, 2009). While Diagnostic OD tends to be grounded in a planned approach with the belief that change occasionally happens between periods of stability and can be managed through processes of unfreezing, movement and refreezing, Dialogic OD assumes that change is more emergent than planned and it is part of the continuous process of self-organization that occurs in all human collectives (Bushe and Marshak, 2014). In this respect, Diagnostic OD focuses on identifying the current state with problem and desirable states and producing clear visions, goals and plans, by managing change with processes of unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. In contrast, Dialogic OD makes the criticism that this unitary sequence of planned change appears to be an oversimplification and that it would have negative and unintended consequences (Bushe and Marshak, 2016). This is because organizational situations are highly complex and continuously change in both intended and unintended ways, with multiple changes occurring at various speeds (Bushe and Marshak, 2014). In this regard, Dialogic OD is based on complexity theories with reference to the

importance of emergence of influences (Bushe and Marshak, 2014). The proponents of Dialogic OD assert that organizations continuously change at various rates and adapt their internal practices and behaviours in real time to changing external conditions, emphasizing holistic and contextual approaches (Holman, 2013). They promote all members of the organization to extensively and deeply understand the whole system in order for them to identify and implement change, avoiding the limitation of the 'Top-down' aspect of the Planned approach (Dawson, 2003; Black, 2000; Lewis, 1994; Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Weick, 2000). In line with this, while Diagnostic OD views disruptions as something to be resisted, Dialogic OD views disruptions as the prerequisite of the change process, arguing that disruptions to current patterns generate diversity in thinking which stimulates new levels of coherence (Holman, 2013; Stacey, 2001). Consequently, Dialogic OD consultants may nudge, accelerate or disrupt the existing narratives in the current power and political processes rather than trying to plan and control change (Bushe and Marshak, 2014).

Bushe and Marshak (2015b) place a greater emphasis on the Dialogic mindset because they believe the mindset is of much greater importance than tools and techniques in successful OD. Based on this Dialogic mindset, Bush and Marshak also propose three underlying change processes which some current forms of OD have in common (Bushe and Marshak, 2014). First, a disruption is stimulated as a prerequisite process for transformational change with a belief that the group or organization may be able to lead a more complex re-organization around the disruptions (*ibid*). Second, transformational change impacts the prevailing narratives and stories which are endorsed by the privileged power (*ibid*). Lastly, a generative image that is a combination of words or symbolic media provides new ways of thinking about the organizational reality for successful Dialogic OD (*ibid*).

In summary, Dialogic OD based on social constructionism and complexity theories has a different view of an organization and organizational change from other mainstream approaches of OD. Based on this different mindset, it focuses on changing new meanings and narratives for organizational change with the belief that organizational change is achieved not through changing organizational components but through changing meaning-making systems of people. Although Dialogic OD and Diagnostic OD seem to be similar on the surface, the mindset and assumptions

are not visible but deeply embedded under the surface, which has led to different practices in OD.

2.3.4. Further consideration for Dialogic OD

Although Dialogic OD has contributed to the OD field through highlighting the significant aspects that have been missing from the Diagnostic OD view, there are some concerns and issues for further consideration, as explained below.

First of all, with regard to the manner of presenting Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD as oppositional, Oswick (2009) argues that this may generate a form of black and white logic, not acknowledging that there would be a grey area. He expressed concern about the way of framing Diagnostic OD as being superseded by Dialogic OD, which positions Dialogic OD as “better than” rather than as “different from” Diagnostic OD. In addition, he suggests possibilities of deploying the two approaches in complementary ways, either blending Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD or implementing both approaches consecutively, which amplify the respective strengths of both (Oswick, 2009). With regard to this concern, Bushe and Marshak (2014) have also drawn attention to the possible risk of polarizations that form false dichotomies, and recognize the possibilities for new syntheses and convergences between Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD, considering that it is most important to choose the most appropriate approach for the situation OD practitioners face. For example, if the situation is simple such that leaders can clearly identify the right answer to questions, a Diagnostic approach is appropriate. However, when the situation is too complex or hard to find any objective “right” answer, a Dialogic approach is desirable (Bushe and Marshak, 2015a).

Second, there are some issues to be considered further in terms of what causes people to have a mindset conducive to the Dialogic approach and how to create the condition in which people are willing and able to communicate authentically. In line with this, Schein (2015) points out the cultural rules that influence the extent to which one can “say things openly”, even if OD consultants and management request “openness” and “transparency”. In line with this, Bushe and Marshak (2015a) also mention that it would be difficult for people to speak and listen willingly in situations where there are “irrational” or deeply entrenched conflicts (Bushe and

Marshak, 2015a). In addition, they emphasize the importance of encouraging widespread concern about and engagement with organizational change, stating that if people are not ready, in a situation in which progress is not possible, it is essential to frame the initial change effort in such a way as to encourage widespread concern or engagement among people (*ibid*). In this respect, the extent to which OD consultants develop “safe containers” and encourage differences can be various but will be circumscribed by organizational culture. This is the challenge where OD consultants encourage trust between management and employees. However, there is a lack of guidance on how to deal with these challenges, which would be practically useful for promoting change (*ibid*).

Finally, although Dialogic OD has relied on emergent self-organization in humans and human systems, there is a lack of attention to the profound shift demanded of individuals in Dialogic OD (Bartunek and Jones, 2017). Schein (2015) claims that the quality of communication in Dialogic OD process would vary depending on the individuals and cultural rules, although Dialogic OD takes as a premise that people seem to inherently have a willingness to communicate authentically to change the prevailing narratives in the organization. Despite Dialogic OD emphasizing changing the prevailing narratives in the organization in this way, it seems to be difficult to do this without changing the mindset of the privileged individuals who have power and authority and have initiated the idea of system change. This is the reason that focusing on individual change is imperatively demanded in the organizational change for all involved. Some scholars have emphasized the profound changes that can happen in individuals in the process of organizational change and appear optimistic in this respect (Senge et al., 2004; Scharmer, 2016). This attention to the profound mindset shift of individuals is significant because adding an individual level perspective on change provides new insights into how organizational change occurs. It also draw attention to the multiple ways individuals participate in change according to their position and role in their organization and how they relate to others (Bartunek and Jones, 2017). For example, some individuals may be change agents who engage in the dual role of working with management as well as employees. Some individuals may be middle managers with positional power, and some individuals may have less positional power but be able to influence in other ways. Individuals may influence organizational change in various ways but

their impact on change can become substantial in the Dialogic OD process. In this respect, it will be important to draw attention to the individual level for successful Dialogic OD.

2.4. Summary of the chapter

Along with the challenges of the rapidly changing business environment, the OD field has evolved with various approaches. Although there is no doubt that the humanistic approach is preserved as OD's backbone, during severe economic downturns in the West, it has gone through an evolution period with the emergence of a performance-oriented focus, which has caused OD to lose sight of the humanistic approach to some extent. However, through the trial and error of practice, OD has not only reinforced the importance of people in achieving successful change but has adopted new theories and paradigms that reinvigorate its humanistic side. Along with this recognition and realization, viewing humans as primarily existing to increase productivity has given way to respecting their needs and dignity (Melé, 2003). Melé (2003) claims that the humanistic approach should include not only motivating people to grow and develop but also to respect them and treat them with dignity, which is essential for an enterprise to build up the organizational culture that motivates people to foster human virtues. In line with this, understanding the important influence of this humanistic approach also coincides with its emergence in underpinning management practices such as more people-oriented HR and leadership respecting members as human beings. In this respect, the OD field needs to constantly re-examine the humanistic approach through attention to the way of implementing OD based on principal values such as participation, the right to have a share in the decision making and truthfulness (Deaner, 1994).

Moreover, this chapter examines what has been changing in the OD field by analysing the emergent influence of social constructionism and complexity theories, which are major insights in the current social science field. In line with this influence, some current forms of OD have emerged based on very different underlying ontological and epistemological positions. Bushe and Marshak (2009) labelled some current forms of OD theory and practice as 'Dialogic OD', labelling

the classical OD as 'Diagnostic OD'. Dialogic OD as influenced by the philosophy of social constructionism and complexity theories and so places a different perspective on organizational change. Based on the different perspective, although both Diagnostic OD and Dialogic OD emphasize humanistic and democratic values, the way of designing and implementing interventions in Dialogic OD seems to place a greater emphasis on the humanistic approach, encouraging all people to participate in negotiated agreements in the change process by fostering equal participation based on 'power equalization' among the participants (Marshak and Grant, 2008). In this respect, Dialogic OD seems to offer a different path to a more human-centred understanding to help people lead change all together rather than seeing people as targets of change. In addition, Dialogic OD focuses more on changing conversations and narratives as the central medium for changing the mindset and consciousness of those involved, while Diagnostic OD focuses on finding the optimal mix of processes and structures in the given environment (Marshak and Grant, 2008). Furthermore, Dialogic OD perceives change as emergent and self-organizing from human collectives, while Diagnostic OD assumes that change can be controlled and managed with proper OD plans (Marshak and Grant, 2008).

Although this Dialogic OD has contributed to the OD field through highlighting people's needs and people's interpretations, there still remains a challenge in practice in achieving the profound shift of mindsets it calls for (Bartunek and Jones, 2017). Consequently, exploring the perceptions at the individual level in a change process provides new insights into how organizational change occurs, drawing attention to the multiple ways with which individuals participate in change processes according to their positions and roles in their organizations. Therefore, the next chapter focuses more on the individual perspective in the organizational change process, with the concept of 'individual readiness'.

CHAPTER 3: INDIVIDUAL READINESS

3.1. Introduction

While exploring OD approaches and theories in chapter 2, the humanistic approach has been emphasized as one of the central insights from the development history of the OD field, consistently emphasizing the respect for human beings. It suggests that real change cannot emerge without understanding the human mind. Such change minimizes the risk that people will be manipulated or controlled by enterprises and leaders. As such, there have been an increasing number of studies focusing on the psychological aspects of the individual, which help enterprises and leaders understand the mindsets of employees in order to elicit commitment and willingness from them (Cunningham et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2005; Meyer et al., 2007, (Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce and Jussila, 2011; Pierce et al., 2009; Fiorito et al., 2007; Salminen, 2012). In line with this, studies in OD have focused on individual responses to actions undertaken during change initiatives not only at the initial stage of organizational change but also through the whole process (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999). Throughout this continuum of experience, ‘individual readiness’ has emerged as a concept to understand the profound challenges for individuals facing change processes, drawing on studies into the psychological aspects of individual behaviours.

In order to achieve the aim of this research, which is to explore contextual considerations of OD in South Korea, the researcher decided that individual readiness can be a reasonable tool to explore the perceptions and experiences of individuals involved in a change process. Although there are several concepts to explore the perception of individuals per se, the concept of individual readiness focuses on the perception directly related to a change process, which is a pertinent aspect for this research. In addition, unlike ‘resistance to change’ as a similar concept that deals with the perception of an individual in the change context, individual readiness is positioned as a neutral notion of an individual perception towards a change initiative, which is subjected to qualitative analysis.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to examine individual readiness in terms of its concept, its attributes and the conditions to promote it in order to determine the

critical factors of influence. Examining the factors which influence individual readiness provides the conceptual framework to explore the perceptions and experiences of individuals at different levels in the change process in the empirical study.

3.2. What is individual readiness?

As attention to the individual perspective has been increasing, the studies that deal with the psychological aspects of individuals in organizational change have likewise been increasing (Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce and Jussila, 2011; Pierce et al., 2009; Fiorito et al., 2007; Salminen, 2012). This is because the commitment and engagement of employees is a significant factor in the change process for successful implementation of organizational change. However, it is very challenging to draw out these commitments and engagement because they arise from the willingness of the members, which cannot be derived without understanding the values, motivations and minds of the members. In this respect, studies on the psychological aspects, such as the emotion of individuals within organizational context, psychological ownership, positive psychological capital and workplace spirituality, are important to OD approaches in understanding the mindsets of individuals within the organizational context (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002; Brief and Weiss, 2002; Kanfer and Klimoski, 2002). Along with these studies on the psychological aspects of individuals, additional studies on individual receptivity in an organizational change process have emerged (Weiner, 2009; Rafferty et al., 2012; Armenakis et al., 1993; Holt et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2005; Choi and Ruona, 2011). Primarily, this is because the extent to which people accept organizational change is not merely necessary but indeed essential for successful outcomes. Therefore, this section examines the concept of individual readiness in organizational change with these considerations in mind.

3.2.1. Resistance to change or Individual readiness?

Studies regarding the receptivity of employees to change have their origin in the concept of unfreezing, elaborated by Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1947). Unfreezing in the context of organizational change means the induction process by which the beliefs and attitudes of employees are unhooked (Kotter, 1995; Schein, 1999). Traditional

organizational change models regard the unfreezing step as an important phase to build momentum and present prescriptions for reducing resistance to change (Kotter, 1996; Armenakis et al., 1993; Schein, 1987). However, Lewin's initial notion of resistance to change is different from today's usage (Dent and Goldberg, 1999). For Lewin, resistance to change was a systemic phenomenon that included any or all of the factors which could cause a system to move to disequilibrium such as roles, attitudes and norms (*ibid*). By contrast, today's concept of resistance to change is about individuals' negative reactions to change as a psychological concept in which resistance is sited within individuals. Thus, the definition of resistance to change commonly used is "perceived behaviour of organization members who seem unwilling to accept or to help implement an organizational change" (Coghlan, 1993; Cummings and Worley, 2014). Consequently, the main topics of studies on resistance to change are the causes of the resistance and strategies for overcoming it (Bauer, 1991; Oreg, 2001; Val and Fuentes, 2003; Ellis, 2007).

However, the prevalent view regarding resistance to change has begun to be criticized, since the reasons that individuals are resistant to change result from the imposition of change or the prejudice of change agents who predispose individuals to create resistance rather than from being naturally resistant to change (Ford et al., 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Gioia et al., 1994; Dent and Goldberg, 1999). In this respect, individuals' negative reactions to change can be appropriate sources of information to implement the process for change effectively (Ford et al., 2008; Piderit, 2000; Waddell and Sohal, 1998; Knowles and Linn, 2004). Another criticism is that resistance to change is viewed as a reactive process where change agents at the extreme tend to monitor the reaction to signs of resistance rather than coach and help employees to participate in the change process (Armenakis et al., 1993).

In contrast to resistance to change, the notion of individual readiness assumes that individuals' concerns over change are natural and that these concerns need to be considered for more successful change management (Eby et al., 2000; Holt et al., 2007). Individual readiness is perceived as a way in which employees have varying views on the need for change which have to be exposed and discussed (Goh et al., 2006; Bouckenooghe, 2010). Consequently, the main topics of studies on individual readiness include: aligning organizational variables to individual readiness; strategies to create or heighten individual readiness; influential factors in individual

readiness; accessing individual readiness for change (Madsen et al., 2006; Armenakis et al., 1993; Hanna et al., 2000; Smith, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2001; Lehman et al., 2002; Weiner et al., 2008).

As seen in Table 3-1, two concepts in relation to individual receptivity to change are described, comparing them in terms of definition, perspective, origin and main topics of studies.

Table 3-1: ‘Resistance to change’ vs ‘Individual readiness’

	Resistance to change	Individual Readiness
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived behaviour of organization members who seem unwilling to accept or help implement an organizational change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational members’ beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization’s capacity to successfully make those changes
Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Described negatively • View people as passive: monitoring the reaction, not coaching, exposing the prejudice of change agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized as a natural concern with its potential for more constructive views • View people as proactive, Positive view of discussing the need for change
Origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credited to Kurt Lewin, but very different from today’s usage (A systems phenomenon versus a psychological concept) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started from health, psychology, and medical literature, focusing on ceasing negative behaviours or starting positive ones at the individual level, but extend to organizational level
Main topics of studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes: cf. misunderstanding, emotional side effects, lack of trust, personal conflict, threat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning organizational variables to individual readiness

	Resistance to change	Individual Readiness
	<p>to job status/security, workgroup breakup, uncertainty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for overcoming the resistance to change: cf. education, participation, facilitation, negotiation, manipulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies to create or heighten individual readiness • Influential factors in individual readiness • Accessing individual readiness for change

Source: Compiled by the author based on Dent and Goldberg (1999), Coghlan (1993), Armenakis et al. (1993), Choi and Ruona (2011), Bouckennooghe (2010) and Cummings and Worley (2014)

To sum up, while the concept of resistance to change has been challenged in terms of its negative assumptions regarding people’s reactions in the change process, the concept of individual readiness for change has gained recognition among researchers with its more constructive view of successful change.

3.2.2. The definition of individual readiness

Initially, studies on individual readiness originated from health, psychology, and medical literature, focusing on ceasing negative behaviours or commencing positive ones at the individual level (Block and Keller, 1998). When the studies concerned with the extent of an individual’s receptiveness are applied to the organizational settings, they inevitably extend beyond individual cognitions because individual readiness may also be shaped by other factors as well as at different levels in the context for organizational change (Gioia et al., 1994; Rogers, 2010; Ford et al., 2008).

Although researchers have defined individual readiness for organizational change in slightly different ways, the definitions are largely derived from Armenakis et al. (1993)’s definition, which is “organizational members’ beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization’s capacity to successfully undertake those changes” (1993: 681). However, the definitions of individual readiness are slightly different depending on the constituent aspects that authors emphasize, as Table 3-2 shows.

Table 3-2: The definition of Individual readiness

Author(s)	Term	Definition
Armenakis et al. (1993)	Readiness for organizational change	Organizational members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully make those changes.
Jones et al. (2005)	Employees' perception of readiness for change	The extent to which employees hold positive views about the need for organizational change as well as the extent to which employees believe that such changes are likely to have positive implications for themselves and the wider organization.
Holt et al. (2007)	Readiness for organizational change	The extent to which an individual or individuals are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo.
Weiner (2009)	Organizational readiness for change	A shared psychological state in which organizational members feel committed to implementing an organizational change and confident in their collective abilities to do so.
Rafferty et al. (2013)	Individual Readiness for Change	An individual's overall evaluative judgment that he or she is ready for organizational change is influenced by (1) the individual's beliefs (a) that change is needed, (b) that he or she has the capacity to successfully undertake change, and (c) that change will have positive outcomes for his or her job/role and by (2) the individual's current and future-oriented positive affective emotional responses to a specific change event.

Source: Compiled by the author based on Armenakis et al. (1993), Jones et al. (2005), Holt et al. (2007), Weiner (2009) and Rafferty et al. (2012)

Some researchers emphasize multi-level aspects of individual readiness, arguing that a multilevel perspective is essential for understanding the individual and organizational implications of change readiness together (Weiner, 2009; Rafferty et al., 2012). Other researchers emphasize the concept as a multifaceted construct such as an employee's belief in the benefits of the change, the necessity of a specific change initiative and the organizational capacity to implement it successfully (Rafferty et al., 2012; Holt et al., 2007). The slightly different emphases from these sources certainly impact on the terms they use such as 'Change readiness', 'Employees' perception of readiness for change', 'Individual readiness for change' or 'Organizational readiness for change'.

Although the concept of individual readiness intends to assess how ready for change employees are before organizational changes are implemented, it would also be a proper concept to check individual cognitive, emotional and behavioural state not only before beginning a change initiative but also during the whole change process.

3.2.3. The multi-faceted and multi-levelled attributes of individual readiness

As implied in definitions of individual readiness, individual readiness is not only a multi-faceted construct but also as a multi-levelled one. To begin with, individual readiness comprises several facets. Weiner (2009) asserts that it consists of organizational members' motivational aspect and behavioural capability to implement intentional organizational change. In particular, the organizational members' positive motivational aspect is a change commitment psychologically attributed as a result of which the individual is prepared to take action for change, which comes from the members' motives such as want to, have to, or ought to (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). The organizational members' behavioural capability refers to change efficacy that is based on the members' appraisal of three elements of implementation capability: task demands, resource availability and situational factors (Weiner, 2009). 'Task demands' mean that organizational members need to know what courses of action are necessary. Also, organizational members assess whether the organization has enough of the resources necessary to implement change initiatives such as human, financial and informational resources. Finally, they appraise situational factors such as whether their organization has sufficient

time to implement the change well, whether the internal political environment supports the change, or whether the culture supports it (Jones et al., 2005). When organizational members have confidence about these three determinants, the change efficacy will be high (Weiner, 2009). However, behavioural capability of individual readiness implies more than simply organizational capacity, which includes not only the perceptions of individuals regarding raw potentials such as resources and opportunities to successfully implement organizational change but also the capacity of individuals to activate the potentials into action in an efficacious way (Weiner et al., 2008). Therefore, it is more important to mobilize, coordinate, and apply those potentials in an efficacious manner for effective change management.

As another perspective regarding a multi-faceted construct of individual readiness, Rafferty et al. (2012) identify individual readiness with cognitive and affective elements, arguing that researchers are likely to pay considerable attention to cognitive elements, not affective elements, in terms of change attitude. This lack of attention paid to affective aspects leads to an unexpected result because the attitudes can be derived from both cognitive and affective aspects, which are differentially associated with attitude and behaviours (Rafferty et al., 2012). As for cognitive components of change readiness, Armenakis and Harris (2002) identified five beliefs underlying individual readiness: (a) discrepancy (b) appropriateness (c) efficacy (d) principal support and (e) valence. According to Armenakis and Harris (2002), in order for employees to create “need for change”, it is important to create a sense of (a) discrepancy that change is needed and the belief that the specific form of change is (b) appropriate. Also, it is important to create a sense of (c) efficacy, which refers to the members’ perceived capability to implement change initiatives. In addition, (d) ‘principal support’ from their organization influences individual readiness, especially in terms of a sense of efficacy (Armenakis et al., 2007). Finally, the belief about (e) ‘valence (benefits of change)’ is also positively associated with individual readiness. As for the affective components of change readiness, more recent discussions have broadly acknowledged that affect is one of the important components of change readiness. In particular, currently experiencing an emotion regarding the prospect of a future event would be one of the affective components of change readiness (Baumgartner et al., 2008). Individual readiness is influenced by the individual’s current feeling of optimism, confidence or imagining

the experience of certain emotions in the future once certain events have occurred (*ibid*).

As far as a multi-levelled construct is concerned, there is an increasing need to adopt a multi perspective for the understanding of individual readiness, although the theory and measurement of studies regarding change readiness has overwhelmingly been at the individual level (Bouckennooghe, 2010). In particular, while individuals have beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully undertake those changes, the group also has collective beliefs, attitudes and intentions that are shared by the individuals in the group. People develop a shared perception of their work group's readiness not only through a process of individual reflection but also through collective sense-making that comes from a series of interactions with other people at group level or organizational level (Rafferty et al., 2012; Klein and Kozlowski, 2000). Indeed, the individual level of readiness for change is significant because it is fundamental to collective sense-making at group level. However, the group level of readiness for change becomes particularly useful for the implementation of organizational change in terms of understanding the collective, coordinated appraisals and actions of many interdependent individuals who contribute something important in the change effort (Rafferty et al., 2012).

Colloquially speaking, group or organizational level of readiness for change means not 'what I think I can do and we can do' but rather 'what we think we can do together' (Rafferty et al., 2012). This approach is more holistic in that it encompasses the interactive and coordinative aspects of operating in groups and larger collectivities in the change process (Weiner et al., 2008). In this respect, Rafferty et al. (2012) assert that researchers adopt a multilevel perspective so as to suggest the antecedents and consequences of change readiness at the individual, group and organizational levels. Although the antecedents and consequences at the different levels are very much related each other, the multilevel perspective gives more insights in terms of understanding the individual and organizational implications of change readiness.

3.3. The critical factors to influence individual readiness

There are various perspectives that consider the conditions promoting individual readiness. One of the perspectives that researchers have widely acknowledged as important is to categorize the three parts as change content, change process and change context (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999). Similarly, Holt et al. (2007) also suggested a comprehensive measurement model that comprises four categories, namely change content, change process, internal context and individual characteristics. It is obvious that individual readiness is positively associated with a wide range of individual attributes such as individuals' needs, values and personality traits (Gomez et al., 2000; Oreg, 2003). For example, individuals who have positive psychological traits also show more positive beliefs and affective responses to change (Judge et al., 1999). To begin to explore the complexity involved in individual readiness, a focus is needed on the critical factors that influence it, which include change content, change process and change context. In addition, due to the relatively small number of studies that have focused specifically on the antecedents of individual readiness, this thesis expansively examines conditions bearing not only directly on individual readiness but also on other change-related attitudes such as support for change, commitment to change and negative change-related attitudes such as resistance to and cynicism about change in order to find potential antecedents (Rafferty et al., 2012).

3.3.1. The content of a change initiative

The change content, which refers to the particular initiative and its characteristics, is associated with individual readiness (Holt et al., 2007). The change initiative that is introduced may create certain core sentiments in terms of the content of the change message. These sentiments combine to shape an individual's motivation and attitude toward the change (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

First, discrepancy relates to the belief that change is needed. People can be motivated when they recognize that something is wrong and that something needs to be changed (*ibid*). Second, the appropriateness of the change is important: in order for people to be motivated to change, they must believe that the change content is appropriate for the change needed (*ibid*). Although people perceive the need for

change, they might disagree with the appropriateness of specific change content, a discrepancy which can be attributed to a wrong diagnosis led by the management and OD practitioners (Armenakis et al., 1990). Third, principal support such as sufficient resources and commitment to change that the management and OD practitioners have offered is critical in order for people to convince themselves that the change will be successful. This is because people have seen that many change efforts have failed due to lack of support. Fourth, efficacy refers to belief in the capability to implement a change. Individuals can be motivated to attempt a change to the extent which they have confidence in that they and their organization can implement a change successfully (Weiner, 2009). Bandura (1998) asserted that the perceived efficacy can be a strong predictor of motivation of individuals to participate and their subsequent action. Positive psychological capital, one of the parameters in the studies on psychological aspects of individuals, also cited efficacy as one of the positive psychological components in individual motivational propensities (Luthans et al., 2007). In this respect, efficacy can be a good indicator to measure the extent to which individuals accept the change content. The final point is personal valence. Individuals can be motivated to truly participate in a change initiative when they find out what the change means to them. The more organizational members value the change with the question to themselves ‘what is in it for me?’, the more they will want to participate in the change initiative. According to research on workplace spirituality, employees try to have consistency between their core beliefs and the values of their organization, in pursuing meaning in their work (Milliman et al., 2003; Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). In this respect, if people find the meaning connected to their personal beliefs in the change initiative, their individual readiness would increase.

In summary, if organizational members perceive a change content as one which is urgently needed, an effective and appropriate solution to solve an important organizational problem, and perceive principal support, enough confidence in the change and belief that change is beneficial and meaningful to themselves, individual readiness will be promoted (Weiner, 2009; Lehman et al., 2002; Cole et al., 2006; Madsen et al., 2005; Holt et al., 2007; Armenakis and Harris, 2002). In this respect, when the content of change is connected to the motivational aspects as well as behavioural capability of the organizational members, based on the five components

of change content, individual readiness will be increased.

3.3.2. The process of a change initiative

Based on the belief that a change content is the right one, can be effective, provides benefits and is based on the efficacy to effect with sufficient support, then the change process is also significant in terms of increasing individual readiness. The change process refers to how the change is being implemented (Holt et al., 2007). In order to increase individual readiness, change messages should be conveyed via three strategies in the change process (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

First, a persuasive communication strategy is recommended to convey the change content. Although there are many forms of communication such as speeches, presentations and newsletters, direct communication through primarily verbal means is recommended in terms of persuasive communication (Gopinath and Becker, 2000; Armenakis et al., 1993; Rafferty et al., 2012). Second, the active participation strategy may be the most effective strategy to transmit the change message because it utilizes self-discovery. People can learn through participating in activities which lead to self-discovery in terms of the change content such as discrepancies facing their organization. It can also produce a feeling of a partnership between leaders and members when people actively participate in the change process through successive involvement and feedback. Therefore, the change process should be designed to enhance the active participation of employees so as to promote individual readiness (Rafferty et al., 2012; Armenakis et al., 1993; Gagné et al., 2000; Wanous et al., 2000). Third, the management of information refers to providing employees with sufficient information regarding change, using internal and external sources. This sufficient information, provided during the change process, can prevent people from being cynical or feeling deceived at the prompting of rumours about change (Wanous et al., 2000; Bordia et al., 2004; Rafferty and Restubog, 2010). In this respect, enhancing participation, persuasive communication and providing sufficient information are helpful for increasing the individual readiness of organizational members during the change process.

These three strategies are also supported by promoting psychological ownership, which has received attention from academics and practitioners in terms of individual

psychological aspects of organizational change, dealing with the predictors of organizational commitment. As noted earlier, people are more motivated by opportunities for development, autonomy, flexibility and meaningful work experiences. Taking into account these values and aspirations of employees, psychological ownership provides insights and ideas to enable such people to stimulate their organizational commitment (Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce and Jussila, 2011; Pierce et al., 2009; Fiorito et al., 2007; Salminen, 2012). According to Pierce et al. (2001), psychological ownership emerges when employees have a feeling of controlling the target, when they come to intimately know it and when they invest themselves in it. In line with this mechanism, enterprises are advised to provide their employees with opportunities to exercise a degree of control in the change process for their greater psychological ownership. Also, the more employees are given information regarding the change initiative, the stronger they feel psychological ownership toward it. Lastly, the more employees invest their energy, time and attention into the change initiative, the stronger their psychological ownership of the change initiative will be. These routes to psychological ownership are aligned with the three strategies that increase individual readiness in a change process, supporting the theoretical basis for the commitment and engagement of employees.

3.3.3. The context of a change initiative

Experts and scholars have examined the undeniable roles of contextual factors such as policies, procedures and organizational culture in promoting organizational change (Eby et al., 2000; Cummings and Worley, 2014; Jones et al., 2005; Schein, 2010). In addition to these contextual conditions, others stress the change history in a firm as well as the CEO's attitude as influential determinants of individual readiness that organizational members assess (Devos et al., 2007; Rafferty and Restubog, 2010; Musteen et al., 2006).

On the one hand, these contextual conditions could positively or negatively affect the perceptions of employees regarding whether the change really will deliver benefits and whether their organization can implement the change successfully (Weiner, 2009). For example, Jones et al. (2005) assert that those members who rate their organization as having adequate organizational contextual conditions relevant to the change strategies have higher levels of individual readiness. On the other

hand, these contextual conditions are influenced by individuals who have experienced how their organizations have treated them and have valued their contributions so far (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003). The history of relationships created between individuals and their respective organizations may affect the individual's perception of the contextual condition, and likewise, it may affect their attitudes and behaviours toward change (*ibid*). In this respect, individual readiness for change can be different depending on not only the perceptions of change context such as policies, procedures and organizational culture but also the overall subjective perception of individuals regarding their organization, based on the existing relationships between individuals and their organizations.

Another point to be considered in terms of change context relates to the fact that organizational change as one significant feature of an organization is not perceived as separate from an organization's history and its historical, cultural, and political context (Armenakis and Harris, 2009; Pettigrew and Whipp, 1991). In this respect, it is critical to take contextual considerations into account, given that studies need to be conducted in a way that is appropriate to each culture and context (Aycan et al., 2007). This is because it is difficult to change socio-cultural characteristics, which are significantly influential when the change models and practices are implemented in a particular setting without having appropriate sensitivity to them (Rees et al., 2012). In particular, individual readiness as regards perceptions of individuals concerning the change is strongly affected by cultural influences (Ingersoll et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2005; Chonko et al., 2002). Jones et al. (2005) also assert that the members who rate their organization as having adequate organizational contextual conditions relevant to the change strategies have higher levels of individual readiness. In this respect, it can be important to consider the alignment between the change initiatives and the contextual conditions of the organization, rather than focusing only on change initiatives. Depending on whether the change strategies and effort fit with these contextual conditions, the extent of individual readiness can be promoted (Weiner, 2009).

In summary, there are contextual conditions, such as policies, procedures, organizational culture and change history, that influence individual readiness, but, at the same time, these contextual conditions are perceived by individuals who have their overall attitudes towards their organizations based on their relationship. In

addition, individual readiness is the perception of an individual regarding the change initiative, which is strongly affected by cultural influences. Therefore, it is imperative to take contextual considerations into account in order to increase individual readiness.

3.4. Summary of the chapter

Along with the emphasis on the humanistic approach, as well as the new forms of OD which focus more on people and the interpretations formed by people, attention to the individual mind in organizational change has been seen as significant. Moreover, with the increasing importance of individuals and the difficulty of treating individuals in a sensitive manner within the context of a significant shift in employment relationship, it has become much more critical to explore the individual perspective in the organizational change process. In this situation, individual readiness which reflects psychological aspects has emerged as a major concept for the understanding of the individual perspective in change processes (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). In contrast to resistance to change, the notion of individual readiness assumes that individuals' concerns at the prospect of change are natural (Eby et al., 2000; Holt et al., 2007). Thus, the notion of individual readiness has gained recognition among researchers, creating a more constructive view for successful organizational change based on the needs, beliefs and attitudes of employees towards change initiatives (Goh et al., 2006; Bouckenooghe, 2010).

Taking a view of the critical factors that influence individual readiness, which is a tool to explore the perceptions and experience of people in the change process as applied in the present study, these are presented in three categories – change content, change process and change context, as can be seen in figure 3-1.

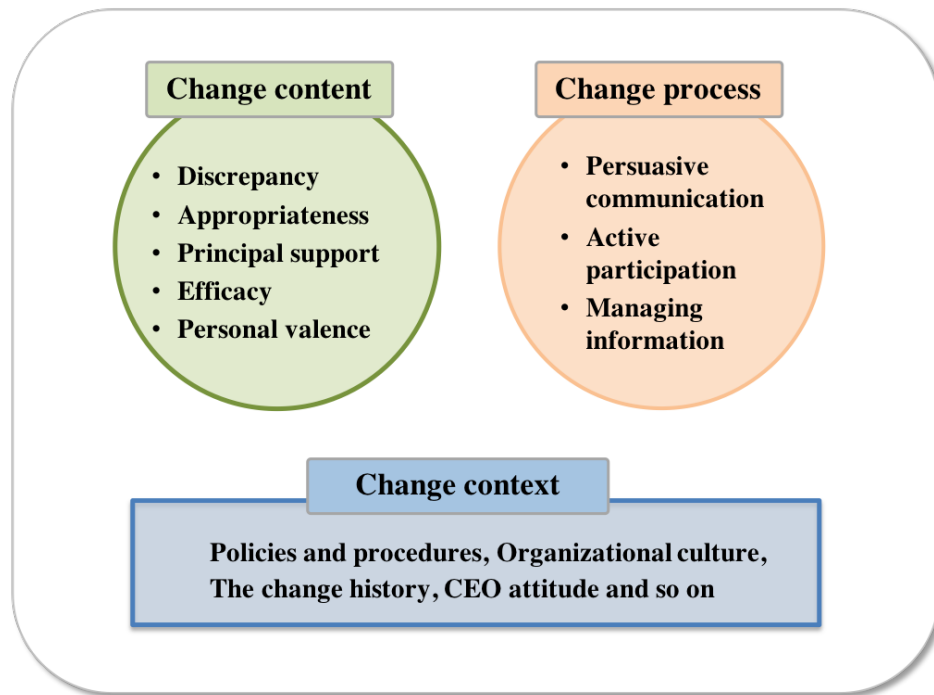


Figure 3-1: The critical factors to influence individual readiness

Source: Adapted from Holt et al. (2007) and Rafferty et al. (2012)

How people perceive and experience a change initiative can be explored by understanding how they perceive and experience change content, change process and contextual conditions. In particular, with regard to change content, how people perceive and experience the change content depends on how much they feel the need for change, how appropriate the solution is for solving the issues in relation to the need for change, how principal support manifests itself, whether they are confident that they can implement the change initiative successfully and whether the change initiative benefits them. With regard to the change process, whether active participation, persuasive communication and sufficient information being provided are involved in the change process forms people's perceptions and experiences of the change process. In this respect, the change content and the process of the change initiative need to be designed with due consideration of the critical factors which are connected to the members' motivation and behavioural capability.

When it comes to the change context of a change initiative, these are subjectively perceived by individuals who have certain overall attitudes towards their organization. The perceptions of people regarding the change context are another important parameter to be included. In this respect, it is requisite to take into account not only objective contextual conditions but also conditions subjectively perceived

by individuals, in order to increase individual readiness (Ingersoll et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2005; Chonko et al., 2002). Thus, in terms of the main aim of this thesis, it is significant to consider the contextual conditions that impact upon individual readiness. With this in mind, the next chapter focuses on understanding the particular contextual conditions of this study.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS IN RELATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN SOUTH KOREA

4.1. Introduction

As noted in the previous chapter, contextual conditions such as policies, procedures, organizational culture and change history in an enterprise influence individual readiness. Also, these organizational contextual conditions are inevitably influenced by the national culture, which is itself influenced by national histories, politics, socio-economic factors and demographics (Song and Meek, 1998; Schwartz, 2006). In this respect, in order to examine how individuals perceive the change initiative in a change context, it is necessary to understand and consider the contextual conditions in which they are situated. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the contextual conditions at the organizational level, as well as those at the national level which inevitably influence those at the organizational level. Moreover, this chapter examines OD in Korea by not only investigating the suitability of OD in that national context but also the current state of OD in the country.

4.2. The characteristics of national culture in South Korea

Despite the importance of contextual considerations in OD, in which change strategies and effort inevitably fit with the change context (Aycaan et al., 2007; Schwartz, 2006), change initiatives in the Korean context have been less of an object of study than those in Western countries. As the characteristics of national culture impact on organizational culture (Song and Meek, 1998), it is helpful to examine the characteristics of national culture through history and socio-economic background. In addition, it is worthwhile to examine family culture as the fundamental unit in which Koreans learn Confucian values, which influence organizational culture.

4.2.1. Historical background

Korea which is one of the few countries with a single race and its own language and has developed its own identity and culture for more than two millennia, along with

the Korean alphabet, created by King Sejong in 1443 (Connor, 2009; Byung-Nak, 1997). However, during the last century, Korea had experienced significant historical events such as the end of its last dynasty, 35 years of Japanese colonial rule, division of the country into North and South Korea and the military-led governments for a period of three decades (Paik, 2001). These historical events, which have a great impact on Korean culture, are described below.

Firstly, Korea suffered from horrible experiences under brutal colonial rule during the Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945 (Haggard et al., 1997). Japanese colonial repression sought to eradicate and distort Korean cultural identity during the colonial period (Robinson, 2014). This period of harsh Japanese rule was enough to render anti-Japanese sentiment deeply rooted in the consciousness of Koreans (*ibid*).

Secondly, after World War II, Korea experienced a devastating war, lasting for three years, which left 1.3 million people dead and 2.8 million wounded, and destroyed one-fourth of the resources and half the infrastructure of the country (Kee, 2008; Paik, 2001). This war left Korea a divided nation and the subsequent tensions between the North and South have penetrated into almost every aspect of Korean life (Kang, 1984). For example, using this tension, the military governments suppressed the people's movement for democracy, justifying the repression in the name of security reasons stemming from the division of the nation (Kang, 2002).

Thirdly, a series of oppressive autocratic governments based on military leadership took power in Korea for over 30 years, until in 1991 when president Y. S. Kim publicly embraced a path of political liberalization or 'democratization' (McNamara, 2012). For over a decade immediately after the Korean War, survival had been a key issue for Korea. During this period of political instability, general Park Chung-hee led the coup and took power for 18 years. He adopted a strategy of accelerated economic growth, claiming legitimacy for the military regime on the basis of national power and prosperity so as to protect South Korea from hostile communist and other foreign powers (Koo, 2001). As the second military leadership succeeded this regime, Korea was ruled by military leadership for 30 years. Although the military governments played critical roles in achieving the rapid economic growth, leading a stable political and social environment, the governments had suppressed the development of democracy (Kearney, 1991; Chuk Kyo, 2005).

These main historical events seem to have influenced Korean culture, causing the Korean people to experience unusual oppression and rule. The experience of being overwhelmed by the rule of power from tyranny as well as Japan influences the national culture in Korea up to the present time and permeates the fabric of organizations.

4.2.2. Socio-cultural backgrounds behind rapid economic growth

Korea has achieved very rapid economic growth and has transformed dramatically in the last 50 years. The Korean War ruined the economy, but the country later transformed itself from one of the world's poorest nations to one of the major players in the world economy within just a 50 year period, achieving an average 7.8% annual growth in GNP (Eichengreen et al., 2012). GNP per capita in Korea was only \$87 in 1962 when Ghana and Sudan had a similar income level, but exceeded \$20,000 in 2012, having the world's 13th largest economy (*ibid*). Behind this rapid economic growth, there are several socio-economic and cultural background factors, which can be analysed from a structural as well as a cultural perspective, as detailed below.

In terms of a social structural perspective, there are two socio-economic factors behind the rapid economic growth. First, the economically focused policy favoured 'chaebol' which are family-run conglomerates in Korea and seem to be one of the main drivers of the rapid economic growth of Korea. The military-led government employed economic strategies favouring 'chaebols' such as low interest rates, tax benefits, import and export licenses and foreign investment incentives in order to overcome inefficient engagement with external markets (Suh and Kwon, 2014; Chang, 2012). These close ties between government and business not only enabled the Korean economy to grow rapidly, but also brought about structural flaws such as cronyism, corrupt relations with government and economic concentration (Murillo and Sung, 2013). These structural flaws stemming from chaebols contributed to the 1997 financial crisis in Korea when chaebol profitability declined and their debt load created financial vulnerability (Suh and Kwon, 2014). Thus, most chaebols have been criticized for lack of transparency in corporate decision making and for high debt-equity ratios during the 1997-1998 period when Korea suffered from a financial crisis (Magoshi and Chang, 2009; Black et al., 2001). Since that time, the

chaebols have been blamed for their lack of transparency with poor corporate governance practices such as embezzlement by owners, bribery, tax evasion and inefficient use of capital, although they have contributed to Korea's rapid economic growth, growing into global companies.

Second, behind the rapid economic growth was the sacrifice of the workers. Although the economically focused policy led by the military government contributed to the rapid economic growth, it prevented the development of democracy in Korea, frequently ignoring the human rights of workers (Kearney, 1991). The military governments used the situation of division in the intense Cold War environment as a powerful tool to justify the suppression of political freedom and civil liberty and control of labour activities (Koo, 2001). For example, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the military government commonly ignored workers' pleas for government protection against labour abuses and allowed employers to control workers with a crude repressive approach (*ibid*). The government relied primarily on threats and punishment for labour movements, using security ideology to control labour agitation with a blatantly pro-capital and anti-labour attitude (Shin, 1994). The despotic authority of military government was interested in controlling workers, denying the basic human dignity of workers (Shin, 1994). The military government enforced hard work and sacrifices as patriotic behaviour, calling the factory workers 'industrial warriors' and 'the leading force of exports' for the national prosperity (Koo, 2001). This government's denial and oppression of labour rights and labour movements seem to have played a critical role in effecting labour docility and quiescence in the working class in Korea (*ibid*). In summary, from the social structural perspective, on the one hand, the economically focused policy led by the military government contributed to the rapid economic growth, on the other hand, the policy made Korean employees endure political dictatorship, economic injustice and abuse of basic human rights under the military government (Kang, 2002).

With regard to the cultural background which has played a key role in the rapid economic growth in Korea, the integration with the nationalism sponsored by the government and the pro-growth Confucian values seem to have created the subjective perception of Koreans regarding the meaning and value of work (Kim and Park, 2003). The government as well as the enterprises utilized nationalistic

sentiments, emphasizing that workers should sacrifice themselves for national economic growth under the harsh situational conditions of Korea such as the resource scarcity of the country and the security issue caused by to the division of the nation (*ibid*). In parallel with this nationalism, certain Confucian values such as diligence, loyalty and harmony corresponded well to capitalism such that they legitimized Korean capitalistic modernization (Lew et al., 2011). While nationalism served as the foundation of the commitment to labour to urge workers' to sacrifice for economic growth, Confucian ethics provided Korean employees with the way they were to work (Kim and Park, 2003). The main values of Confucian ethics that emphasize behaviour standards in interpersonal relations are respect for the old, loyalty to superiors and harmonious relations (Kee, 2008). These Confucian values are aligned to the hierarchical culture of Korean enterprises, which has accelerated Korean economic growth in the industrial society based on rapid decision-making and incredible drive (Morden and Bowles, 1998). On the one hand, employees tend to respect those in higher positions as well as to show deep loyalty to their superiors or leaders such that they are obedient to the orders or decisions from their leaders (Song and Meek, 1998). This tendency seems to have been reinforced by the collectivism of Korea, with its widespread perception that it is right. This culture of obedience seems to have led to an absolute execution of instructions and acceptance of decisions from bosses and led to rapid decision-making and incredible drive, taking for granted the sacrifice of the personal leisure time of the employees (Fuhl, 2006). On the other hand, individuals are less likely to have the requisite sense of self-efficacy because of employees' fear directed toward the traditional features of Korean corporate culture, such as authoritarianism, paternalistic leadership and bureaucratic managerial styles (Kee, 2008). In addition to this, the mandatory military service for every man in Korea seems to influence behaviour in its enterprises, emphasizing hierarchical command, can-do spirit and aggressive competition (Cho and Yoon, 2001).

However, in response to changing industrial structure in the global economy, in which more creativity and diversity are required, this culture of obedience based on some Confucian values has been criticized as a hindrance and obstruction to creative and diverse organizational culture (Jin, 2001). At the same time, the younger generation of Korea, who have been raised within less strong Confucian values and

more democratic family culture, has been growing rapidly and wants to express its voice and search for meaning in work and life (Kee, 2008).

4.2.3. Family culture in Korea

The Confucian value system is a dominant influence in Korea, despite the existence of many other values modifying traditional Korean values (*ibid*). Although the Korean family has changed its value system and the way of living over several decades, some values of Confucianism still remain and have been understood as the mechanism to strengthen the relationships in a family (Ellinger and Carlson, 1990; Lew et al., 2011; Na and Cha, 2014). In contrast to Western philosophy based on the individual uniqueness, the Confucian worldview emphasizes relationships and emotions that bind individuals as well as family members together according to the so-called five codes: between ruler and subject; father and son; husband and wife; older brother and younger brother; and friends (Shim et al., 2008). In line with this, the expectations and obligations inherent in the parent-child relationship have even been seen as the criteria for judging a person (Jo and Doorenbos, 2009). From the standpoint of the parents, parents believe that they should sacrifice themselves for their children as their basic role and duty (Shim et al., 2008). From the standpoint of children, the value of filial piety (hyo in Korean, xiao in Chinese and kou in Japanese) is required, which contains absolute respect and obedience to parents (Lew et al., 2011).

These practices in the family relationship seem to lead to the relationship in hierarchical enterprises, encouraging reciprocal obligation with family-like affective ties (Shin, 2012; Lew et al., 2003). While leaders have responsibility to protect and care for subordinates, subordinates, in turn, should be obedient with loyalty to their leaders (Lew et al., 2011; Cho and Yoon, 2001). Indeed, in fact, the management style, which requires family-like affective ties from employees, has been widely used in Korean companies, especially large conglomerates, letting employees call themselves a family by putting the company name in front of family, as in ‘Samsung family’ or ‘LG family’ (Kim, 2013). In this respect, the Korean family, as the prototypical social organization, is the most important element in which Koreans learn Confucian values to ensure harmony and obedience, which are applied to the larger society (Shin, 2012).

However, along with economic development, as well as the general educational level increasing due to parents' strong desire to educate their children, the pattern of value change in society plays an important role in moving from an authoritarian to a libertarian attitude (Flanagan and Lee, 2000; Inglehart, 1997). In line with this value change, parenting style in families has also been changing from an authoritative style to more a democratic style which encourages children's autonomy (Lee et al., 2012). In a changing family culture, the younger generation has a greater emphasis on equality than on hierarchy, with people freely expressing their own opinions and ideas and pursuing personal happiness and fulfilment (Flanagan and Lee, 2000; Ye and Chin, 2009; Na and Cha, 2014). Consequently, this brings about a significant generation gap between leaders and employees of the younger generation in an enterprise, because the more radically values change, the greater the generation gap in a society (Na and Cha, 2014).

4.3. The contextual conditions in relation to organizational change

Corporate culture is defined as a psychological sub-system employees share, such as beliefs, values or behavioural norms in an enterprise (Schein 2004; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). In order to understand the contextual conditions in relation to organizational change in Korea, first, this section examines the effect of national context on corporate culture; then, it examines the characteristics of chaebol culture, which have a huge impact on Korean society. Lastly, it examines not only the suitability of OD but also the current status of OD in the context of Korea.

4.3.1. The effect of national context on corporate culture in Korea

Many Korean business leaders have believed that the traditional Korean management style has been a driving force in the country's rapid economic growth and has worked effectively in the Korean context (Kang, 2002). The Korean management style is characterized as clan management, top-down decision making, Confucian work ethic, paternalistic leadership, loyalty, compensation based on seniority, bureaucratic conflict resolution, expansion through conglomeration and close government business relationships (Lee and Yoo, 1987). Along with this Korean management style, the historical, socio-economic and cultural context appears to play a significant role in shaping the corporate culture in Korea, as shown

in Table 4-1. (Song and Meek, 1998; Jun and Rowley, 2014).

Table 4-1: The linkage between the Korean context and corporate culture

The Korean historical, socio-economic and cultural context	Current Literature on corporate culture	Potential Influence on corporate culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korea had a series of suppressive experiences in its modern history (Chang and Chang, 1994). • The government drove an economically focused strategy to escape economic poverty, supporting only employers and ignoring the rights of employees (Janelli and Yim, 1993). • Integration with nationalism and Confucian values such as diligence, loyalty, harmony and unity has played a key role in achieving the rapid economic development (Kim and Park, 2003). • Through family as well as school, Koreans have maintained a strong Confucian culture based on the vertical structure of superiors and subordinates (Shin, 2012; Lew et al., 2003). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly bureaucratic and authoritative culture along with unilateral and peremptory leadership style (Chang and Chang, 1994; Chung et al., 1997; Shim and Steers, 2001) • Very hard for employees to express their opinion, especially when their opinion is different from the leader's (Chung et al., 1997; Ungson et al., 1997; Shim and Steers, 2001) • People accomplish their tasks with 'can-do' spirit and hard work in situations where adequate infrastructure and organizational support are lacking (Cho and Yoon, 2001) • Leaders tend to rely on leadership from their hierarchical position rather than their leadership ability in seniority-based culture (Chung et al., 1997; Shim and Steers, 2001). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness to speak out in the workplace. • Lack of trust that local and national leaders will protect workers' interests. • Leaders seem to have a belief that working hard with long hours is important to accomplish their task in situations where adequate decision making and infrastructure is lacking. • People seem to believe that leaders have much experience, insight and wisdom so that they can make better decisions. • Leaders seem to believe that they need to be right all the time • 'Good followers' tend to be regarded as people who just carry out the action, grasping the leader's intention

Source: Compiled by the author

First, the direct or indirect experience of oppression in the historical background as well as the lack of trust in the government may have influenced the culture of silence in Korean enterprises. Having experienced directly or indirectly oppression such as that during the Japanese colonial repression for 35 years and military

governments for around 30 years, Koreans seem to have long been exposed to fear of oppression since they have witnessed the irrationality of wrongly used power (Chang and Chang, 1994). In addition to this background, it appears that employees have a lack of trust in the government, which supported only employers and ignored the rights of employees in the pursuit of the rapid economic growth of the nation (Janelli and Yim, 1993). Second, a sense of accomplishment in its history, such as rising out of the ruins of war and achieving economic growth seems to encourage an atmosphere that emphasizes the indomitable spirit that people can do their best in any difficult situation. Despite a very difficult situation after the Korean War, Koreans had a successful experience of achieving rapid economic development with their diligence and unity based on integration with nationalism and Confucian values (Cho and Yoon, 2001). This experience caused people to become accustomed to accomplishing their tasks with ‘can-do’ spirit and hard work even in situations where appropriate infrastructure and organizational support are lacking (*ibid*). Finally, the strong Confucian culture emphasized not only in the family but also in the society seems to support a culture in which people tend to follow the opinions of their superiors rather than express their own opinions in the highly bureaucratic and authoritarian organizational culture (Shin, 2012; Lew et al., 2003). Along with the value of respect for the elderly emphasized in Confucianism, the prevalent belief that leaders can make better decisions because they have much experience, insight and wisdom seems to create the atmosphere where people must follow the leader’s decisions. In this atmosphere, leaders also seem to expect followers to simply carry out the leaders’ decisions with a great pressure to see that leaders have to be right all the time.

Considering the linkage between the national context and corporate culture in Korea, it can be understandable for employees of the younger generations not only to experience fear but also to be lethargic and resigned to the situation where authoritarianism, paternalistic leadership and bureaucratic managerial styles are prevalent. This is because the younger generations have their changed values and attitudes, with the tendency to pursue an affluent life and enjoy experiences based on increased individualism, which does not entirely fit in with the existing organizational culture based on the Korean management style (Na and Cha, 2014).

4.3.2. The corporate culture of chaebols in Korea

As noted in the previous section, large family-owned business conglomerates in Korea, chaebols, have played a pivotal role in the rapid economic growth of Korea based on a long history of close cooperation with the Korean government, and have still a huge impact on Korean society, economy and culture (Murillo and Sung, 2013). For example, in terms of the weight of the chaebols in Korea's economy, total sales volume of the five largest chaebols was 55.7% of Korean GDP and the volume of the 20 largest chaebols was 85.2% of Korean GDP, in 2011 (Murillo and Sung, 2013). Moreover, the concentration of economic power driven by chaebols has continuously increased, considering that the number of their subsidiaries, vendors and subcontractors has increased (Kim, 2013). Therefore, considering the influence of the chaebol culture on the corporate culture throughout Korea, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of chaebol culture.

In line with the effect of national context on corporate culture as noted in the previous section, the corporate culture of chaebols seems to have the following characteristics. First of all, they are much more hierarchical due to the excessive concentration of power in the owner of a chaebol (*ibid*). Chaebols have developed a unique governance structure under which individual subsidiaries are controlled by family-run, diversified business groups, although the individual subsidiaries have their own shareholders and boards of directors (Park et al., 2015). Thus, chaebols have been dominated and controlled by founding families, who have a great power through the interlocking-ownership structure among subsidiaries despite their low direct ownership stake (Hong and Ahn, 2000; Kim, 2006). In the excessive concentration of power in a founder, the paternalistic and authoritarian leadership of the top management centralizes most decision-making even for non-critical issues (Cho and Yoon, 2001; Kim, 2013). This style of leadership is reinforced by the strong family-like bonds in a hierarchy-based Confucian culture, in which the founders of chaebols are normally considered quasi-father figures (Cho and Yoon, 2001).

Second, with this excessive concentration of power of an owner, the hubris of CEOs who inherit succession rights in family-run conglomerates seems to be huge. CEO hubris, which is generally defined as extreme self-confidence and pride, can have a

significant impact on financial strategies, mergers and acquisitions, firm innovation and corporate social responsibility (Malmendier and Tate, 2008; Hayward and Hambrick, 1997; Tang et al., 2015b; Tang et al., 2015a). The owner affects a wide array of strategic decisions in the context of chaebols, in which they have more managerial discretion with excessive power concentration (Park et al., 2015). Thus, in a unique governance structure in family-run conglomerates in which absolute power is tolerated, the owners of chaebols are prone to be particularly vulnerable to overconfidence bias and seem likely to be indulged with achievements, recognition, praises or self-confidence (*ibid*). Due to the strong legacy of the ‘governor-controlled’ governance structure, there are hardly any checks and balances on this power, which makes it very difficult to suggest ideas or offer feedback that is against the opinions of owners (Cho and Kim, 2007). As such, because of the negative aspects that CEO hubris can cause, most studies have concerned themselves with the negative impact of CEO hubris. However, recent studies show that CEO hubris can have positive effects on firm innovation, which requires a high degree of the confidence to overcome concerns associated with risk and uncertainty (Hirshleifer et al., 2012; Galasso and Simcoe, 2011; Goel and Thakor, 2008). Whether CEO hubris is of positive or negative impact, it is not surprising that the tendency of high CEO hubris is one which is prone to arise in the context of the unique governance structure of a chaebol in a highly hierarchical culture, and thus can be seen as one of the characteristics of chaebol culture.

Lastly, ‘dynamic collectivism’, which combines collectivism with progressivism, is described as one of the unique characteristics of chaebol culture, although it changes over time (Cho et al., 2014). Above all, collectivism is emphasized with Confucian values such as loyalty, harmony and cooperation. In addition to their collectivism, chaebols have stressed progressivism, which makes people pursue fast alteration in response to external changes and preparation for the future with optimism based on ‘can-do’ spirit (Yu and Rowley, 2009). This ‘dynamic collectivism’, which applies collectivism only to ‘in group’ members and intensifies competition with ‘out-groups’, has supported rapid decision-making and incredible drive in chaebols, which can be seen as one of the driving forces for the rapid economic growth in Korea (Cho and Yoon, 2001). However, along with a new aspect of employee value orientation emerging as part of the process of coping with large social shifts, the

characteristics of ‘dynamic collectivism’ have been declining over time (Cho et al., 2014). The employees in the younger generation, who tend to change towards greater individualism, have different values and attitudes from older generations, who have sacrificed themselves for their company and a better future (Yu and Rowley, 2009). In addition, the culture of chaebols has become much more diverse in each chaebol and subsidiary, although the one main characteristic of corporate culture in chaebols still remains (Cho et al., 2014). However, while the characteristic of ‘dynamic collectivism’ still remains, to some extent it has been declining, and differences have become larger in chaebols and their subsidiaries compared to their past experience.

In summary, the characteristics of the corporate culture in chaebols tend to be more hierarchical in nature and to include a huge CEO hubris in a unique governance structure with excessive power concentration. In addition, the characteristic of ‘dynamic collectivism’ is still influential despite its decline. However, these characteristics of corporate culture in chaebols have been challenged, especially since Korean enterprises are entering a so-called ‘new normal state’ characterized by low growth, low consumption and low unemployment (Rowley, 2013). In addition to this challenge, the employment relationship, which has changed along with the changed values and attitudes of employees, has forced chaebols to find a different way to motivate employees in order to enhance competitiveness through people in a global economy, being aware of the importance of organizational culture. In response to these challenges, it seems clear that Korean enterprises need to change their management style and their existing culture, which had been driving forces for the rapid economic growth in the past but are no longer valid. It calls for deep changes that examine the existing paradigm regarding people and organizations that they have held to so far and find root causes that challenge the existing culture with new paradigms and new approaches.

4.4. OD in the context of Korea

4.4.1. Suitability of OD in the context of Korea

Initially, since OD evolved in the context of Western culture, fundamental values and principles are applicable, but some, especially those related to the

implementation or change process, require contextual consideration to apply to Korea's specific cultures and contexts. OD is highly related to people's behaviours and cultural context such that it is significant to take interventions and implement processes adequate to the culture and context of each country in order to implement OD successfully (Rees et al., 2012).

In order to implement OD successfully in an international context, Cummings and Worley (2009) suggest two key contingencies to be considered: cultural context and economic development. First, OD interventions are suitable for the cultural values and organizational custom of the host country (Cummings and Worley, 2009). For instance, in societies whose culture tends to have strong uncertainty avoidance, change itself would be regarded as a threat; thus, it is necessary to have more detailed plans to manage the foreseen risk (Rees and Althakhri, 2008). Second, a country's economic development can influence the success of OD interventions (Cummings and Worley, 2009). For example, enterprises operating in countries which have not yet reached a certain level of economic development may not feel the need for changes related to OD, and may need business-based interventions more than OD.

Based on the framework for the cultural and economic contexts of international OD practices initiated by Cummings and Worley (2009), Kim (2012) indicated Korea's position in Figure 4-1, which was in the upper left quadrant in 1980 and then moved to the lower left quadrant by 2010 (Kim, 2012). It is also estimated by Kim (2012) that the future position of Korea would be in the lower right quadrant, although it is difficult to forecast the timescale of the change.

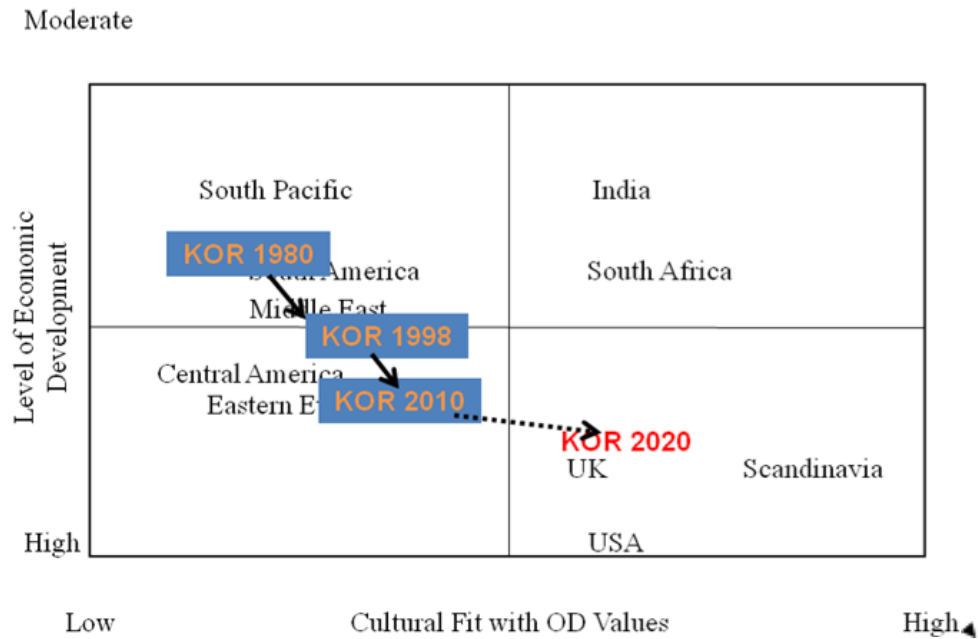


Figure 4-1: Korea’s positions and trend based on Cummings and Worley (2009)’s work

Source: from Kim (2012)’s figure

In terms of cultural change in Korea as illustrated in this figure, Na and Cha (2010)’s survey was referred to, conducted in 1979, 1998 and 2010 and which tracked changes in Korea’s values system (Kim, 2012). As Cummings and Worley (2009) examined cultural fit with OD values based on Hofstede (1980)’s four dimensions, Na and Cha (2010) also adopted Hofstede (1980)’s four dimensions to examine the cultural change in Korea over about 30 years. In this survey, it was found that power distance and masculinity have decreased while individualism has increased (Na and Cha, 2010). As to uncertainty avoidance, it has been consistently strong with the feeling threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations because Korean people have had to adjust to their rapidly changing environment while the country has transformed itself from a poor agricultural country to the world’s eleventh largest economy (Rowley and Paik, 2009). In terms of economic change in Korea, as emphasized in the previous section, Korea achieved rapid economic growth, having the world’s 13th largest economy (Eichengreen et al., 2012). Thus, it is time for Korean enterprises to consider organizational and human process issues in OD in order to secure global competitiveness.

In summary, continuous cultural change as well as continuous economic growth in Korea provide favourable grounds to implement OD and its associated value system

(Kim, 2012). Contrary to the context of Korea several decades ago, now appears to be an appropriate time for OD in Korea in terms of cultural as well as economic aspects.

4.4.2. The current state of OD in the context of Korea

As for the current state of OD in Korea, as an attempt to change the organizational culture in order to secure global competitiveness of companies, large enterprises are currently conducting OD practices through large consulting firms, as the following characteristics demonstrate.

First, large enterprises in Korea are establishing mission, vision, management principles and core values through various consultations and are conducting events and training courses to spread them to all members (Choi, 2012). It seems that the belief in emphasizing these ideal values and practices based on successful experiences will be handed down and accepted by the members. However, this only causes a large gap with the tacit values that have a real impact on the employees' thinking and behaviour and most enterprises emphasize only the ideal culture based on the core values that they propagate, while overlooking the various phenomena and the psychological state of employees which exist in the change process (*ibid*).

Second, as a manner of implementing OD, there is a tendency to regularize and activate organizational surveys that measure corporate culture or investigate employee satisfaction (Chang and Moon, 2008). However, most surveys are designed with questions about the variables or dimensions that constitute corporate culture and through the surveys, enterprises are often limited to identifying the level and the point of development of organizational culture, or comparing scores across companies or within specific units of a company. However, the results of these surveys often fail to lead to appropriate interventions for organizational change.

Finally, most of the interventions that are designed and promoted based on the results of surveys tend to be focused on external changes and end up with events (Chang and Moon, 2008). In most companies, organizational changes are perceived and implemented as external changes, such as shortening the time and frequency of meetings, fast process for approvals, activating communication, destroying formality such as by a flexible dress code, flexible working hours, work-life balance, and so

on (Kim et al., 2017).

Although large enterprises are investing heavily in changing their organizational culture, and their employees are eager to change the existing culture from which they have suffered, attempts to change organizational culture which focus on these external changes and events mostly as OD interventions may fail to win the hearts and minds of the employees in the process of change.

4.5. Summary of the chapter

Behind the rapid economic growth of Korea was not only the economically focused policy favouring 'chaebol' and the sacrifice of the workers, but also cultural backgrounds such as the integration of nationalism with Confucian values and hierarchical culture. The change of values in family culture, with more democratic parenting style and an emphasis on equality and individualism brings about significant a generation gap in an enterprise. The effect of national culture on corporate culture and a unique governance structure with excessive power concentration at chaebols has reinforced the hierarchical culture in which high CEO hubris is prone to arise. The collectivism and positively oriented mindset of 'dynamic collectivism' have been described as one of the unique characteristics of chaebol culture which has led to rapid economic growth; they have, however, been declining. With regard to the suitability of OD for Korea, it seems to be an appropriate time to implement OD in terms of level of economic development as well as cultural fit with OD values, with high demand for organizational cultural change in Korean enterprises.

This review of the contextual conditions in relation to organizational change in reference to the context of Korea can serve as a catalyst for a deeper understanding of the contextual conditions of this case study.

4.6. Summary of literature review and research gaps

The researcher's curiosity as to why most of the change initiatives for changing corporate culture end up in failure has found its foundation throughout the literature by examining the variety of theories and approaches present in OD. Considering the

large body of research in OD, the literature review has acknowledged that change is becoming ever more unrelenting and a far more complex phenomenon than is perceived by the various subjects of change. Hence, assumptions based on attempts to control and manage organizational change may be deficient in terms of simplifying the complex phenomenon, which can be one of the significant reasons that most of the change initiatives end up in failure. In line with this acknowledgement, the literature review has identified and critically reviewed three main themes relating to the main aim. The first theme is to examine theories and approaches in the development history of OD in order to gain valuable lessons which are applicable for OD today. The second theme is to examine the concept of 'individual readiness' as an underlying concept for developing a framework to explore the individuals' perceptions regarding a change initiative. Lastly, the contextual conditions of OD in Korea are examined as a research context by investigating not only the characteristics of national and organizational culture in Korea but also the suitability and current state of OD in the Korean context.

With regard to the first theme, the literature review has provided a theoretical foundation for successful OD by discussing the evolution of the development history of OD. First of all, the literature review has found that despite many changes in the development history of OD with numerous theories and approaches, the humanistic approach has been preserved as a central philosophy and value of OD, and recently this humanistic approach has been re-examined in management practices such as HR and leadership. Re-examining the humanistic approach, the literature review has justified the reason that the humanistic approach needs to be the starting point, as a fundamental and central approach to change. This is because a change initiative which is not based on the humanistic approach cannot raise the willingness of people and it will end with failure (Melé, 2003). Whether the level of change is at group level, at organizational level, or at a greater social level, true change requires the willingness of employees, which cannot be triggered when they are treated only as means to make a profit (Cusack, 2009).

Moreover, the review has identified how Dialogic OD, which has a different approach and philosophy from Diagnostic OD, affects the development of OD. Firstly, we learn from the literature review, Dialogic OD contributes to the recognition of multiple realities that can offer alternative understanding of

organizational phenomena (Bushe and Marshak, 2009). Meanwhile, Diagnostic OD conceives an organization as a single objective reality and tries to uncover this reality through an accurate diagnosis, Dialogic OD sees an organization as a complex adaptive, meaning-making system in which multiple realities are continuously constructed and changed through people's interactions and conversations (Bushe and Marshak, 2015b). Secondly, the literature review has found that for transformational change, Dialogic OD emphasizes changing conversations and narratives which convey and reinforce the mindset of people through a disruption of the prevailing narratives and stories and providing new ways of thinking, with a generative image created by all participants. Thirdly, the review has found that Dialogic OD places more emphasis on contextual considerations of OD in order to implement organizational change successfully, requesting the greater understanding of contextual conditions which influence individuals' perceptions. For example, the difficulties or obstacles that individuals experience may be caused by contextual conditions of a particular context that individuals perceive. Thus, it is important to understand them in order to implement organizational change successfully.

In summary, with regard to the first theme, through critical review of substantial theories and approaches in the development history of OD, which gives valuable lessons applicable for OD at present, this review has analysed the theoretical foundations of successful OD under three headings.

1. The humanistic approach is the starting point for successful OD. Otherwise, it is impossible to increase the willingness of people, which is critical to successful organizational change.
2. An organization is a meaning-making system in which multiple realities are continuously constructed and changed. Therefore, it is important to examine and consider the multiple realities for successful OD, rather than acknowledging only one entity and ignoring the others.
3. For successful OD, it is critical to disrupt the prevailing narratives or stories and to provide new ways of thinking in the change process.

With regard to the second theme, the literature review has provided a framework by

examining the concept and characteristics of ‘individual readiness’ and the critical factors which influence ‘individual readiness’. Although Dialogic OD emphasizes the importance of understanding individuals’ perceptions and context in OD, it does not provide a framework that allows researchers to understand how individuals perceive a change initiative in a particular context. Hence, the researcher has selected the concept of ‘individual readiness’ and examined the critical factors that influence individuals’ perceptions of a change initiative in a particular context based on the three categories of change content, change process and change context. Based on the theoretical foundation of successful OD in the first theme, the researcher has provided a conceptual framework to explore how individuals perceive a change initiative in the context of a Korean conglomerate for the present empirical research. The conceptual framework is as shown in the figure below.



Figure 4-2: The influence of a change context on individual perception of a change initiative

Source: Adapted from Holt et al. (2007), Armenakis et al. (1993) and Rafferty et al. (2012)

Lastly, the review has provided a comprehensive and realistic picture of OD in the context of Korea by examining the characteristics of national culture and corporate culture, the effect of national culture on corporate culture, and the suitability and current state of OD in the context of Korea.

Based on the summary of the literature review, the main issues and research gaps are presented hereunder.

Since Diagnostic OD practices are still mainstream in many enterprises, attempts need to be made to apply the perspectives of Dialogic OD to Diagnostic OD practices in a complementary manner in order for OD practices to be implemented more successfully. Although Dialogic OD has provided a new perspective and insight which can be helpful for more successful OD practice in practice, there have been some limitations in this approach, such as management teams' familiarity with Diagnostic OD and the burden of large-scale implementation of Dialogic OD. Consequently, Diagnostic OD practices are still being implemented in practice to a greater extent than Dialogic OD. In such a situation, studies based on approaches that can complement each other are needed rather than relying solely on either Diagnostic OD or Dialogic OD. There are many studies dealing with Dialogic OD cases, but there are few studies that have analysed Diagnostic OD practices from the perspective of Dialogic OD. Complementary studies are also needed to ensure that the new perspective and insight that Dialogic OD can provide for more successful OD practices can be incorporated more into Diagnostic OD practices. In this respect, this study attempts to analyse Diagnostic OD practices through the central perspective of Dialogic OD, which not only accepts multiple realities perceived by various individuals' perspectives but also emphasises the humanistic approach more than Diagnostic OD in terms of the way of designing and implementing OD interventions.

Second, most studies on individual readiness are weighted towards exploring the influence and relationship of variables based on quantitative methodology, and there are few studies exploring this complexity of individual perception in a change process from a phenomenological perspective of qualitative methodology. Therefore, the researcher seeks to explore the perceptions of individuals of this complexity by taking advantage of the strengths of the qualitative case study methodology.

Third, there is little research on contextual conditions in relation to organizational change in Korea. Despite the increasing need for cultural change in Korean conglomerates, there is a lack of research on exploring contextual considerations in

OD, which can be helpful for greater understanding of the difficulties encountered by individuals during the change process, so as to lead OD successfully. In the absence of research on contextual considerations in OD in Korea, it is necessary to explore the difficulties and psychological mindset of individuals by examining how they perceive a change initiative as well as the change context of a Korean conglomerate through qualitative methodology.

Therefore, based on the observed issues and gaps identified from the literature review, three research questions have been formulated. These questions are presented below.

- 1) How do individuals at different levels perceive their company in terms of employment relationships?
- 2) How do individuals at different levels perceive difficulties in relation to cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?
- 3) How do individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative?

In order to answer these questions, the design of the research methodology is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a coherent framework for the choice of research design and methodology based on research philosophy, in order to address the overarching research question of this study. First of all, it revisits the research aim, objectives and questions. It then provides a brief description of research philosophies and research methodologies in general. It explains the research philosophy and research methodology used to conduct the current research. Finally, it will explain the research strategy and design chosen.

5.2. Research aim, objectives and questions

The criteria for deciding the methodology and methods to be adopted in a particular research project should be determined by the research aims, objectives and questions, considering how research questions can be answered in the most appropriate and correct way. In this respect, it is worthwhile to remind the reader of the research aim, research objectives and research questions, as seen Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Research aim, objectives and questions

Research Aim	To explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea, based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization.
Research Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To examine important principles throughout the development history of OD in order to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD.2) To examine how individuals perceive the change context.3) To examine how individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative.4) To explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea.
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) How do individuals at different levels perceive their company in terms of employment relationships?2) How do individuals at different levels perceive difficulties in relation to cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?3) How do individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative?

Source: Compiled by the author

5.3. Research philosophy

Research philosophies are significant since they influence the research approaches, strategies and methods that the researcher selected. In the research philosophy, there is an unavoidable debate on ontology and epistemology (Saunders et al., 2012). While ontology concerns how the world exists, epistemology concerns how to understand reality (Sarantakos, 2005; Saunders et al., 2012).

First, with regard to ontology, there are two opposing ontological views, objectivism and constructionism (Bryman, 2015; Mark et al., 2009). Objectivism believes that social reality exists external to social actors as objective entities, emphasizing the structural aspects of management that are assumed to be similar in all organizations. By contrast, constructionism believes that social reality is constructed from the perceptions of social actors, challenging the view of objectivism that social reality exists objectively distinct from the perceptions of actors (Bryman, 2015). This research relates to exploring the experiences and the perceptions of people during the change process in the context of Korea. The researcher has based this work on the ontological view that organizational change is not something that exists external to people, but something that is constantly constructed and changed by people in a dynamic relationship within the organization. Therefore, constructionism is appropriate as the ontological perspective of this research.

Moreover, with regard to epistemology, two dominant approaches to understanding reality are positivism and interpretivism, although there are various approaches regarding how to understand reality, such as positivism, interpretivism, realism, critical realism, post-modernism, pragmatism and so on (Bryman, 2015). In positivism, which advocates the application of methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality, researchers can play the role of objective analysts, remaining emotionally detached from the objects of study (Bernard and Bernard, 2012). Thus, they are likely to use existing theories to develop hypotheses, which will be tested using quantitative methods such as experiments, surveys and statistics in order to explain phenomena objectively (Mark et al., 2009). In contrast to the positivist school, interpretivists raise questions about the objective view of positivists regarding the statistical data measuring human feelings, arguing that rich insights

into the complex social world would be lost due to a series of law-like generalizations from positivists (Mark et al., 2009). They assert that the complex social world cannot be treated in the same way as the natural sciences because the subject matter of the social sciences treats human beings as fundamentally different from the approach of the natural sciences (Bryman, 2015). The job of researchers is to gain access to people's 'common-sense thinking' to interpret their actions and their perspective of their social world (*ibid*). Therefore, they accept a more subjective interpretation in the context of data analysis which reflects the distinctiveness of humans, aiming to provide deeper and richer explanations and arguments (Mason, 2002). With this stance, qualitative data that show the reasoning and feelings of people are more significant for understanding the complex social reality which has meaning for human beings (*ibid*).

This research focuses on the subjective perception of members at different levels of the change process, rather than exploring change models or principles that are universally and objectively applied elsewhere. In particular, this research seeks to explore what perceptions and attitudes individuals at each level in the specific context of the Korean conglomerate have during the change process and how they comprehend and interpret their surroundings, and to make sense of the rationale and meanings behind their behaviours and choices during the change process. In this respect, this research takes interpretivism as an epistemological perspective that aims to create a deeper and richer explanation and argument by using the emotions, attitudes and perceptions felt by individuals rather than objectively by excluding individuals' subjectivity and emotion.

In summary, the underlying philosophy of this research is indisputably aligned to constructionism as the ontological perspective and interpretivism as the epistemological perspective.

5.4. Research strategy

In line with the philosophical standpoint of constructionism and interpretivism, the qualitative approach is selected to acquire and analyse the data in accordance with the research questions. While the quantitative approach focuses on establishing

relationships among variables and generalizing to a population through statistical analysis, the qualitative approach is preferred when researchers seek people's opinions, attitudes and perspectives relating to a particular social phenomenon (Blaikie, 2000; Bryman, 2015). When existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the problem, qualitative research is used to develop the theory (Creswell and Poth, 2017). In this respect, the qualitative approach is appropriate for this research because it relates to exploring people's point of view regarding the change initiative in the particular context of a Korean conglomerate where there is a lack of empirical research.

In particular, a qualitative case study is adopted as the way forward to attain the answers to the research questions. Creswell and Poth (2017) defines case study as 'a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual materials and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes'. Although there are many research strategies within qualitative approach including narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography (Creswell and Poth, 2017), the case study strategy is appropriate for the present research for the following several reasons. First of all, the case study strategy is appropriate for the exploration of a phenomenon when the research questions are related to both contemporary phenomena and real-life context such as the relationship between the person or group and the setting (Yin, 2014). This research focuses on the particular context of a Korean conglomerate to explore people's points of view regarding the change initiative. Therefore, the case study, which emphasizes the importance of context, is suitable to provide fertile comprehension of the context of this research and its procedure (*ibid*). Moreover, the case study strategy is suitable to explain how and why a contemporary phenomenon occurs (*ibid*). This research is interested in how people at different levels of the company experience and perceive the change initiative and why they have difficulties during the change process. Thus, the case study, which can deal with the complexities, processes and changes of organizations, is appropriate for this study, providing an in-depth and holistic account (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). In this respect, The researcher can gain a rich understanding of the phenomena of the

research through a case study that provides an in-depth and holistic account (Yin, 2014).

In terms of type of design for case studies, Yin (2014) explains four case study strategies based on two dimensions: single vs. multiple case studies and single unit vs. multiple units. This research serves to explore the experiences and the perceptions of people at different levels in a particular context of a conglomerate in Korea; hence, the single case study with multiple units is adopted, within which people at different levels of the company including organizational member level, team leader level, CEO level, change agent level will be treated as multiple units.

In summary, the case study is appropriate for this research because it aims to explore how people experience and perceive the change initiative in the real-life context of a conglomerate in Korea, seeking to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’. The researcher can gain a rich understanding of the phenomena of the research through a case study that provides an in-depth and holistic account (Yin, 2014).

5.5. Research design

Research design is the general plan for answering research questions. It provides a framework to collect and analyse data, taking into account validity and reliability (Bryman, 2015).

5.5.1. Case selection

A very important step in designing a case study is case selection: these should be selected in conjunction with the aim, objectives and research questions of the research (Creswell and Poth, 2017; Yin, 2015). This study selected a single case study design because it is a piece of research to deeply explore how employees at different levels perceive and experience the process of organizational culture change in the context of a Korean large enterprise. The single case design was chosen for two main reasons given below.

First, the researcher chose a single case rather than a multi-case approach, in order to explore in depth how different levels of people experience and perceive differently

or equally, despite undergoing the same change initiative driven in the same context. In the multi-case design, the context as well as the change initiatives of the cases will be different, which carries a risk of attenuating the level of detail and depth which the researcher can provide in the case. A single-case study has the advantage of providing a thorough and detailed understanding of the case by focusing on key issues to understand the complexity of the case. In this respect, a single case design was considered appropriate.

The second reason is a revelatory purpose. Yin cited a revelatory purpose as one of the conditions for selecting a single-case design (Yin, 2014). In general, Korean large companies tend to confidentially manage internal information. In this regard, researchers are very restricted in accessing data and information because they are reluctant to release data and information regarding the change initiatives driven by their companies. Company A, which was selected as a case, was able to access deep and rich data and information on the change context as well as the change initiative because the researcher had been working as a change agent for many years. The researcher also tried to contact company B, which has promoted an organizational culture change similar to company A, but even access to data and the coordination of interviews at various levels were limited. Therefore, the researcher decided to proceed with this study with a single case.

In addition, the reason for choosing one of the chaebols to conduct research on organizational culture changes in the context of Korean enterprises, as mentioned above, is not only because chaebols are very influential in Korean society, including Korean enterprises, but also because they are capable of investing in organizational culture change in order to secure global competitiveness. In particular, Company A is a company that has invested heavily in promoting changes in organizational culture along with changes in corporate systems based on a strong commitment to change by its chairman. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the company, which strives to promote organizational culture change on a core value basis in earnest, is suitable for a case study.

5.5.1.1. Background and the Description of the change initiative in the case study

Company A is large family-owned business conglomerate with more than 100 years

of history. It is a global company with about 40,000 employees in 38 countries, having subsidiaries all around the world such as in North America, Europe and China. This company provides diverse products and services in multiple businesses ranging from power generation, desalination, engines to magazines. Company A has grown rapidly as a global company through several global M & A activities, but the top management felt the need for cultural change in order to be a true global company and a sustainable one. This is because the top management realizes that it is difficult to sustain the growth of the company with this existing culture, which cannot retain talented people, although the company has achieved the current rapid growth thus far thanks to its existing culture. In addition, they found that the employees were thoroughly exhausted due to the short-termism where the attitude of urging everyone to achieve quick results prevailed. In this situation, since the new chairman was inaugurated, the top management promoted a cultural change initiative by announcing the corporate values rooted in the 'people-centric' philosophy, emphasizing 'respecting people', 'developing people' and 'open communication', which can be seen as the opposite to the existing culture of short-termism.

In order to promote company-wide change in the company, including its overseas subsidiaries, change agent (Hereafter CA) teams were built on a hierarchical structure. A CA team of the parent company was created directly under the chairman to design interventions for change initiatives. In each subsidiary, a CA team based on the Human Resource team was established, and operated interventions designed by the team at the headquarters. In this way, through this CA organization to manage and control the change initiative across all subsidiaries, organizational culture change based on corporate values was promoted in earnest.

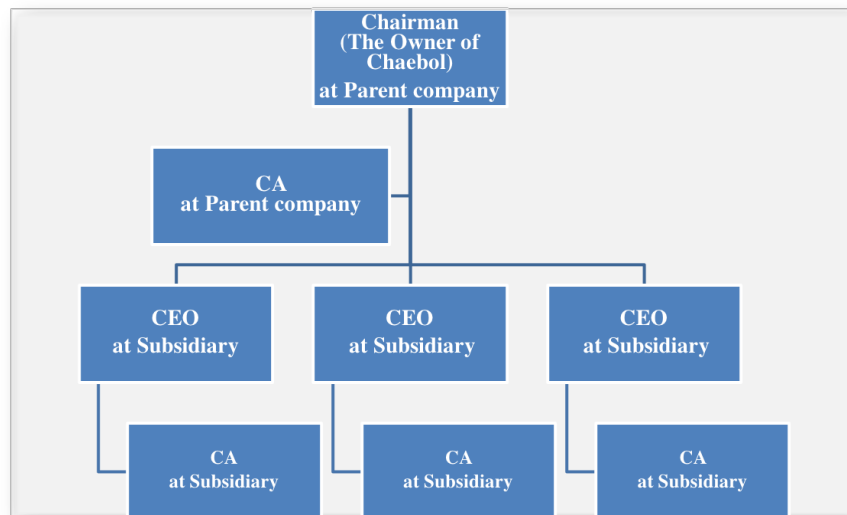


Figure 5-1: CA organization

Source: Compiled by the author

With regard to the delivery of the change messages, as the first stage of the change initiative, the parent company promoted the cultural change initiative designed to propagate corporate values through implementing company-wide workshops, training, internal publications and communication with subsidiaries both nationally and internationally. The company-wide workshops, which were designed to be the primary means of the change initiative, were held for two or three days in succession, divided into the CEO level, the senior manager level and the team leader level. These workshops involve the active participation of employees all around the world in order to help employees to understand the corporate values and the direction of the change programme. The priority of these workshops is reflected through the chairman's attendance. After communicating the change initiative to various levels of leaders, workshops were then organized for members of each senior manager unit so that everyone in the same unit, i.e. the senior manager, team leaders and organization members, were able to discuss together the corporate values as a change initiative. After implementing these workshops as a main means to deliver the change message, the chairman promoted town hall meetings at home and abroad to emphasize the corporate values to change the culture. In the second stage of the change initiative, the parent company focused on in-house media communication and newsletters within the company, encouraging subsidiaries to take the initiative to change and drive their own change.

However, the prolonged downturn of the global construction market, particularly in

relation to China, as well as falling global oil prices, have dealt a major blow to the company's business standing in recent years. Therefore, the company carried out strong restructuring and large-scale layoffs during the three years of the change initiative. Exacerbating the situation, the company failed to provide proper communication to its employees, with poor structure to guide employees during the restructuring. Consequently, employees were disappointed with the company's actions, which are contrary to the corporate values rooted in the human-focused philosophy. After this restructuring was completed, the interviews for this research were conducted with 37 respondents at different levels - organizational member level, team leader level, CEO level and change agent level.

5.5.2. Data Collection

The researcher conducted data collection via the case study strategy through semi-structured interviews and collection of documents and materials about the company and the change initiative. In terms of documents and materials collected regarding the change initiative, there are materials distributed throughout the company, materials used in workshops and training courses for the change intervention, bi-weekly newsletters distributed to all levels of leaders and documents and emails used to communicate between change agents. In addition, the documents and archival records about the company were collected.

First, the semi-structured interviews are the main method, as the researcher was concerned with perceptions, feelings, opinions and attitudes toward the change initiative as well as the company as the context of change. Collins and Hussey (2009: 144) define an interview as "a method for collecting data in which selected participants are asked questions to find out what they do, think, or feel". It is widely used in business research; Myers (2009: 121) describes interviews as "one of the important data gathering techniques for qualitative researchers in business and management". This method provides the flexibility to elaborate on some points to investigate further and seek more valid and accurate evidence, without losing direction in gathering data through a list of predetermined questions about topics. (Yin, 2003).

Moreover, with regard to the collected documents and materials, among the methods

for data collection, document analysis from these secondary data sources was used first to prepare the interview guides and second to corroborate and augment data from the interviews.

5.5.2.1. Participant Selection and Access

The focus of qualitative research should be on ensuring that the sample is appropriate (i.e. informative and knowledgeable enough to answer research questions) and representative (i.e. covering every relevant group within the population and selected from different levels), in order to permit an in-depth analysis (Saunders et al, 2009). In line with the aim and research questions of this research, the interviewees are selected from various functions at different levels in order to gain a rich understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, the researcher purposively selected 37 interviewees at different levels: 18 interviewees at organizational member level, 10 interviewees at team leader level, 3 interviewees at CEO level and 6 interviewees at change agent level. They participated in semi-structured interview on a one to one basis but only three organizational members had a focus group interview. The profile of interviewee is as below.

Table 5-2. The profile of interviewees

	Organizational member level	Team leader level	CEO level	Change Agent
Number	18	10	3	6 (Team Leader:4, Organizational member:2)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28~35: 15 • 36~40: 2 • 41~45: 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46~50: 2 • 51~55: 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51~55: 2 • 61~65: 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35~40: 2 • 41~45: 2 • 46~50: 2
Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3~5 years: 3 • 6~10 years: 13 • 11~15: 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16~20 year: 3 • 20~25 years: 5 • 26~30 years: 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1: 6 years (headhunted) • C2: 10 years (headhunted) • C3: 32 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10~15 year: 2 • 20~25 years: 4
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female: 9 • Male: 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male: 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male: 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female: 4 • Male: 2

Source: Compiled by the author

As shown in the table, there is an age component to the level due to the promotion system based on seniority which pervades Korean conglomerates. However, this age component was not considered as part of the data collection process because exploring the impact of the age is beyond the scope of this study. As generational conflicts become one of the cultural characteristics of Korean conglomerates due to the huge generation gap, further research may be needed with different methodological approach.

5.5.2.2. Interview design and process

For these participants, semi-structured interviews were mainly conducted on a face-to-face basis but only for three interviewees at organizational member level were conducted on a focus group interview. In order to achieve consistency during the semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was developed with main themes and a list of questions to help to remind the researcher of the information that needed to be collected, and why (Yin, 2014). This kept the researcher on track as data collection proceed, minimizing bias and producing credible outcomes during the interview; it was additionally updated with the pilot study as during data collection period. This is because the flexibility of the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to update the interview guide with the addition or modification of questions. In addition, this flexibility that allowed the researcher to have a degree of freedom to go beyond the set of question enabled her to gather new ideas or subjects that emerged during the conversations. The interview guide is below.

Table 5-3. Indicative Interview Guides for Fieldwork

Main research questions	Indicative interview questions
How do you perceive and experience the change initiative in terms of the change content and change process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you perceive the change initiative so far? - What were difficulties you experienced during the change processes? (Tell me about a time when you experienced difficulties during the change processes.) - Why do you experience difficulties during the change processes?

Main research questions	Indicative interview questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was the support from the company to make employees ready to accept the change initiative? - What kind of support is needed from your company to make employees ready to accept the change initiative? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How much do you think that the change initiative is needed for your company? (Change content) ✓ How much do you think that the change initiative is appropriate for the need of change? (Change content) ✓ How much do you think that the change initiative is able to achieve organizational change? (Change content) ✓ How much do you think that the change initiative is beneficial for you and your company? (Change content) ✓ Do you think there is effective communication during the change processes? (Change process) ✓ How much do you think the change processes was designed for your active participation? (Change process) ✓ Do you think you get sufficient information during the change process? (Change process)
<p>How do you perceive difficulties in relation to cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What kinds of (Korean) cultural characteristics impact on employees' acceptance of the change initiative? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What are the positive characteristics of effective change management? ✓ What are the negative characteristics of effective change management? - Are the cultural characteristics related to Korean culture, organizational culture or team culture? - What support should the company give to maximize readiness to change in terms of culture-relevant strategies?

Main research questions	Indicative interview questions
<p>How do you perceive your company in terms of employment relationship and why do you perceive it in the certain way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you perceive your company? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What words or images come to mind when you think about your company based on experiences you have worked so far? ✓ How do you talk about the meaning of working in this company in relation to your whole life? ✓ How much does your company care about you (your well-being, your general satisfaction at work) and why do you feel like that? ✓ Do you think your company provides personal growth and career development opportunities and why do you think that? ✓ How much do you feel ‘emotionally attached’ to your company and why do you think that? - How do you perceive the relationship with your company in terms of employment relationship?

Source: Compiled by the author

In terms of participant selection, in order to make sure that the sample is as appropriate as possible to this research, the interviewees are selected from various functions at different levels in order to gain a rich understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, the researcher asked her ex-colleagues to get potential participants from various functions at different levels. She sent potential participants an email invitation with a participant information sheet which fully described the aim and objectives of the study, the data collection procedures that they might expect to go through and their role in the research. This was provided to the potential participants to read and further explanation was given if participants needed. She emailed 62 people and there were 37 people who agreed to participate in the interview. They were given sufficient time to decide whether or not they wanted to participate. Once they had agreed to do so, the researcher arranged a time and venue for the interview at their convenience to avoid any discomfort. For example, some participants, especially at organizational member level, felt more comfortable with having the interview a café near the company rather than in a meeting room in the office. This is because they were burdened with interviewing at an office where they could encounter their bosses.

In terms of conducting interviews, prior to the start of the interview, the researcher checked whether the participants had read and understood the information in the participant information sheet and ensured that each participant had signed the consent form. Each interview was begun by introducing the researcher and briefly explaining the study. The researcher assured interviewees that their responses would be used for academic purposes only and emphasized anonymity and confidentiality with regard to the data and its analysis, making it clear that all identifiers will be removed to ensure no direct reference or identifications. This helped to build trust between interviewer and interviewees, encouraging the interviewees to answer more honestly and accurately with a more comfortable state of mind. With the permission of participants through the consent form, interview data was audio-recorded, supplemented by note taking. The researcher chose as a quiet place as possible, such as a meeting room or a non-crowded café, for interview recording. Also, she prepared special record equipment to reduce the noise, so that it would not interfere with interview recording in the cafe. Each interview lasted approximately 1.5-2 hours on average.

5.5.3. Data Analysis

Based on a social constructionist methodological philosophy, this study aims to interpret how participants at different levels socially construct their organization as well as the change initiative in a particular way. In this respect, this study carried out thematic analysis based on the conceptual framework. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” which is seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained the six phases of analysis as basic precepts, not rules, as seen in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4. Phases of thematic analysis

Phrase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research questions and the literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Braun and Clarke (2006)

The researcher followed the basic precepts that Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed and applied them flexibly to fit the research questions.

First, the researcher transcribed all of the recorded interviews and immersed herself in the data through repeatedly reading transcripts in an active way that searches for meanings and patterns, in order to be familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. Transcribing the interview data is also an excellent way to familiarize the researcher with the data (Riessman, 1993). Secondly, the researcher then generated initial codes from the data and matched them with data extracted using ‘Nvivo’ software for qualitative data analysis. Thirdly, based on the codes, the researcher combined the codes to form principal themes, sorting the codes into themes. In terms of the criteria for developing themes, as Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised,

there is no right or wrong method for determining prevalence in the analysis. The researcher largely determined the themes by focusing on frequency, but she also determined the themes by the tone and manner with which interviewees stressed points. In other words, even if a few interviewees, not a large proportion, mentioned a certain point, the researcher connected the point to determine a theme if their tone and manner were very strong at that time. Fourthly, the researcher refined the themes and created a thematic map, keeping in mind that there should be clear distinctions between themes. Fifthly, the researcher then defined themes, avoiding making any theme excessive or too diverse and complicated. Then, the researcher named the final themes, which need to be concise and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme concerns. Finally, the researcher produced her report based on the refined themes. The write-up serves to tell a complex story in a way that convinces readers of the validity of the researcher's analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The findings are presented in Chapter 6 in relation to the research questions, providing sufficient evidence and examples from extracts contained in the themes.

5.6. Ethical issues

The main ethical issues associated with this study are anonymity and confidentiality. As noted in the research design section, Korean conglomerates have a tendency to manage internal information confidentially and to be reluctant to release data and information. Under such circumstances, it is natural that interviewees want to be assured of anonymity, concerned as they are about disadvantages that can come to them from the company. To mitigate the impact of ethical issues, the data from the interviews were completely anonymised and codes were used to represent interviewees in the results chapters in order to protect their identity. In addition, all information and raw data were transferred onto the researcher's computer and encrypted and protected with a password.

5.7. Reflexivity

Given the complex nature of qualitative research, since researchers are the primary "instrument" of data collection and analysis, reflexivity is considered essential, highlighting critical reflection on the self as the "human as instrument" (Russell &

Kelly, 2002). This allows researchers to carefully consider how researchers' own assumptions and behaviors can influence research (*ibid*). One particular area for reflexive activity in the present research is the researcher's work experience as a change agent in Company A, the very case selected for her research. The researcher should admit that her experience as a change agent in the company may influence her interpretations to some extent, although the researcher has become aware of and endeavoured to be careful to avoid the impact of her own biases and interpretations. However, qualitative research can benefit from and simultaneously be constrained by one's particular approach to reflexivity (Pezalla et al, 2012).

With regard to a certain set of skills and qualities in a researcher in order to obtain reliable and valid information from social interactions, the present researcher has fortunately had some experience in this regard, having worked in training and development at her previous company, which entailed relevant training and the experience of conducting interviews. Additionally, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews during the MSc programme at the University of Manchester in 2007; this expanded her knowledge and experience in conducting sound academic research. Lastly, the researcher could also gain experience in data collection and analysis procedures by conducting pilot interviews in order to verify the research design. The pilot interviews were conducted with 4 people at team leader level and 6 people at organizational member level, 4 months before the main interviews. Although the pilot study was conducted by telephone interview due to issues of expense and time availability, the researcher could gain confidence in the research design as well as in conducting semi-structured interviews, by learning some lessons for the main study. For example, the researcher learned the importance of explaining the research purpose using terminology that the interviewees can understand more easily as well as building a rapport with them in order to receive detailed and honest answers from them. In addition, the interview guide, which includes main themes and a list of questions, was updated through the pilot study.

5.8. Summary of the chapter

In summary, this chapter has presented the research philosophy, strategy and design in relation to the research aim, objectives and questions. Based on the aim of this

study, the empirical research is able to focus on exploring individuals' perceptions of the company as well as the change initiative. In this respect, the research philosophy is based on constructionism as the ontological perspective and interpretivism as the epistemological perspective. In line with this, a qualitative case study has been adopted as the way forward to obtain the answers to the research questions, selecting a single company where the same context applies throughout in order to examine how individuals at different levels in the company see the same change initiative differently. This chapter has provided the research design, with the profile of 37 interviewees (18 interviewees at organizational member level, 10 interviewees at team leader level, 3 interviewees at CEO level and 6 interviewees at change agent level) and explained the process of analysis based on thematic analysis. Finally, ethical considerations regarding anonymity and confidentiality have been discussed.

CHAPTER 6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1. Introduction

As examined in the methodology chapter, the social construction perspective of organizational change places more emphasis on what the change means to people and how they make sense of it, because organizational change can be constructed by people in the organization (Weick, 1995; Weick and Quinn, 1999; Weick et al., 2005; Ford et al., 2008). Although much OD literature focus on change initiatives and change contexts based on the perspective of objectivism and positivism, various bodies of literature acknowledge the importance of the multiple realities which are constructed from a multiplicity of diverse voices in an organization (Bartunek et al., 2011; Bunker and Alban, 2006; Holman et al., 2007; Shmulyian et al., 2010). In addition, a number of scholars such as Armenakis et al. (1993), Jones et al. (2005) and Holt et al. (2007) have highlighted the significance of the individual perception in a change process via the concept of individual readiness. This is because individuals perceive the context as well as the change initiative in the context, formulating the meaning from their day-to-day dealings within the organization (Schein, 2010). In particular, in the context of Korea, in which there is a lack of research on OD, it seems to be crucial to understand how individuals perceive the interconnections between change content and process and also change context based on the social construction perspective. Exploring the individuals' perceptions of a change initiative in a change context enables OD practitioners to understand the contextual considerations in OD, matching the approach to the context at the time of the change, rather than assuming that there is a universal approach to be implemented in all circumstances (Burnes, 2014).

Therefore, this study examines the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding a change initiative through the conceptual framework based on individual readiness, which contains three categories - change content, change process and change context. Examining the perceptions of individuals at different levels (organizational member level, team leader level, CEO level and change agent level) helps to understand the multiple realities of the change initiative that individuals construct.

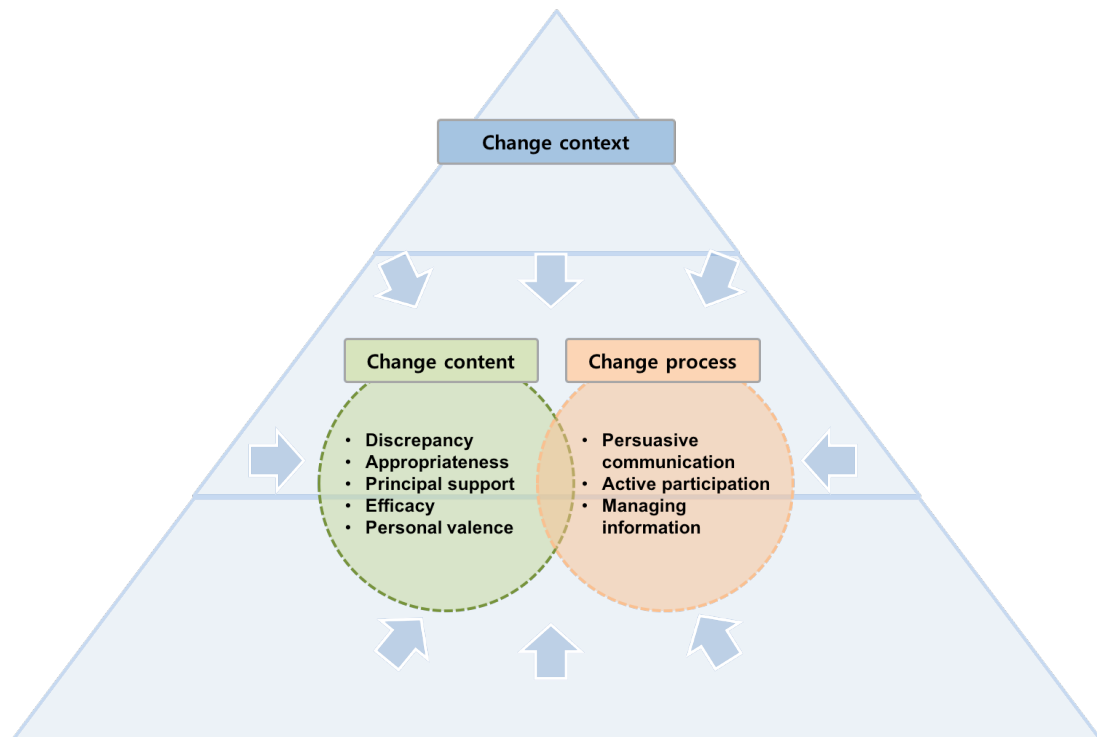


Figure 6-1: The influence of a change context on individual perception of a change initiative

Source: Adapted from Holt et al. (2007), Armenakis et al. (1993) and Rafferty et al. (2012)

This research findings chapter starts by examining the perceptions of individuals regarding their context and the difficulties in relation to the contextual conditions in the change context of a Korean conglomerate. The individuals’ perceptions regarding change context as the pre-existing force in an organization may have been developed through various interactions and experiences in the company from past to present (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003; Jones et al., 2005). This individuals’ perception of the context can influence the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding the change content and process. Therefore, this study has chosen to examine the individuals’ overall perceptions regarding their company and the cultural characteristics as a proxy for contextual factors in order to capture the internal contextual environment because cultural characteristics are formed integrally from the policies, processes, structures and systems of the organization. With regard to the first research question, which examines the individuals’ overall perceptions of their company, two interview questions were constructed. The first question is to examine overall perception of interviewees towards their company: “What words or images come to mind when you think about your company based on

experiences you have worked so far?” The second question is to examine their mindset in relation to the employment relationship: “How do you talk about the meaning of working in this company in relation to your whole life?”. With regard to the second research question, which examines the individuals’ perceptions regarding the characteristics of organizational culture, the interview question is: “How do you perceive the cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?”

The findings chapter then describes the perceptions of the change content and process from the individuals at different levels, to examine the multiple realities that individuals construct. Individuals at different levels may perceive the change content and process differently, even if the same messages are communicated by change agents and top management while implementing the change initiative.

6.2. Individuals’ perceptions regarding the change context

6.2.1. The overall perceptions of individuals towards their company

In order to examine the overall perception of individuals as regards their company, the researcher asked two questions: “What words or images come to mind when you think about your company based on experiences you have worked so far?” and “How do you talk about the meaning of working in this company in your life?”

6.2.1.1. The words or images that come to mind about my company

With regard to the question about the words or images that come to mind about their company, a substantial number of people cited the words ‘change’ and ‘people’. As about 70% of interviewees mentioned these two words, examining the reasons that these words come to mind shows how people perceive the company. Above all, when it comes to ‘change’, interviewees explained the reasons, as is shown by the following comments.

The word “change” comes to my mind. Since its foundation about 100 years ago, the company has been continuing to grow, with a variety of business portfolio changes for its continued survival and development. (Interviewee L1 at team leader level, male)

As seen from the transition of the business of our company, through many M & A activities, the philosophy of the owner that our company should change proactively and rapidly seems to be very strong (Interviewee M07 at organizational member level, male)

I felt that the company was constantly pursuing change and always looking for something new. This may be because top management and senior managers have continued to emphasize changing the working climate and organizational culture. However, when I left the company after the restructuring, I think that it was just a company for the benefit of the family of the owner, who was interested only in succession to third- and fourth-generation control, not for the benefit of the employees. (Interviewee L5 at team leader level, male)

Phrases such as “*continuing to grow, with a variety of business portfolio changes*”, “*change proactively and rapidly*”, “*constantly pursuing change*” and “*always looking for something new*” in these comments indicate that this company has continued to emphasize change to employees, reforming its business portfolio. In addition to this, as for words associated with ‘change’, one of interviewees used the metaphor of ‘*puberty*’ for the growing pains of change. The word ‘*evolving*’ was also cited because the company continues to change and is highly flexible, unlike the rigid image of large companies. Considering all words regarding ‘change’, analysis shows that people seem to perceive that their company has been consistently changing and more flexible than other Korean conglomerates, even reforming its business portfolio in order to survive in the highly competitive business environment.

The next word that is most often mentioned by respondents is ‘*people*’. When top management drove cultural change, launching revised corporate values in 2012 many employees had welcomed the revised corporate values, particularly focusing on some values among the corporate values such as ‘*people*’ and ‘*caring*’. Interviewee M04 noted that, especially, employees at organizational member level tend to exaggeratedly embrace the particular values along with the general values of the millennial generation, which place importance on ‘*growth and development in terms of their career and expertise*’. According to the views of interviewees CA2 and CA3, this trend has not only been reinforced by the values of the millennial

generation, but also by opposition to the existing culture where people have been exhausted by the performance-driven culture based on short-termism, for the last ten years. In line with the corporate values which emphasize ‘*people*’, employees might have the belief and expectation that the company would not use restructuring with redundancies until the situation is at its worst. In this respect, the two series of events - the cultural change initiative emphasizing ‘*people*’ and the recent restructuring which led to huge disappointment to employees - seem to cause many interviewees to come up with the word ‘*people*’, as shown by the following comments.

So far, ‘people’ comes to mind. It may be because of the advertisement and campaign message going on about ‘respecting people’. However, despite this value, the management would fire employees when the business becomes bad even if the management team was concerned a lot for the people. (Interviewee L3 at team leader level, male)

Although the top management team and leaders in the company say that people are important, sometimes employees feel betrayed by the company because of the huge gap between words and actions. (Interviewee FGI 3 in a focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

If the business is bad, we will do our best to solve it in various ways, and in the worst case, we will inevitably carry out restructuring. However, even if that situation comes, we had a belief that we should do something different because of the cultural change initiative which has been promoted over the last three years. I’ve lost my faith in the company... (Interviewee L4 at team leader level, male)

When I talk with my team members regarding the company, they said, “Does the company really believe in people?” We even doubt whether or not the company believes in the value of the individual. (Interviewee L7 at team leader level, male)

The expressions such as ‘*feel betrayed*’, ‘*of the huge gap between words and actions*’, ‘*lost my faith in the company*’ and ‘*even doubt whether or not the company believes in the value of the individual*’ imply that the recent restructuring might cause people to perceive corporate hypocrisy in terms of placing value on ‘*people*’

in cultural change rooted in corporate values. Therefore, the reason that they cited 'people' seems to involve two kinds of feelings relating to the company, which are their expectation and their disappointment about the company. Along the same lines, one of the interviewees at organizational member level also expressed a changed perception of the company, in the following words.

The word 'pretence' comes to mind. I think it's even worse, pretending that things are for the employees, and pretending to be transparent and fair. The company is no different from any other harsh big conglomerate. It is better for the company to evaluate people fairly and reliably, rather than emphasizing "caring", in this big conglomerate where performance is the most important. It seems that the company pretended to care more about employees than was necessary. Then, the situation got worse in the end, so the company underwent restructuring. I think the process of restructuring and the way of communicating it was really grubby and made the employees feel miserable. (Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

As can be seen from this comment, the phrases such as 'even worse', 'pretending to be transparent and fair', 'no different from any other harsh big conglomerates' and 'the way of communicating it was really grubby and made the employees feel miserable' reveal the disappointment of junior employees during the restructuring with large-scale redundancies. The interviewee used the word 'pretence' as an expression of disappointment. This disappointment is a reflection of the employees' expectations of the company.

Notwithstanding the enormous impact of the cultural change initiative and the restructuring, with large-scale redundancies at the organizational level, over the past few years, some respondents who cited 'people' explained the reason with reference to the influence of team leaders and their own interactions with team leaders. For example, Interviewee FGI 2 commented the following.

The words 'people' and 'caring' come up along with the feeling of being 'humane and warm'... The reason why these words come to my mind is because of my leader, who does regard people not as tools to achieve their goals, but as people whom they have tried to help grow through work. From my experience, I am sure that leaders have a great impact on the perceptions

of people about the company. Although the context of the company is similar or emphasises more the value of people due to having begun the cultural change initiative that the top management had strongly driven, I had got a feeling from the previous leader that she had used me as a tool to achieve her goal, which is totally different from the current leader, who gives me a feeling that we accomplish our goal together. (Interviewee FGI 2 in Focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

As can be seen from this comment, the quotation “*leaders have a great impact on the perceptions of people about the company*” implies that people seem to be influenced by the relationship with their leader even in talking about the words or images that come to mind when thinking about their company at organizational level. Therefore, the perception regarding the company seems to depend on who the leader is as well as the actions at organizational level. On top of the words ‘*change*’ and ‘*people*’, the other words or images that come to mind about their company from the rest of the interviewees are ‘*tenacity*’, ‘*too high aspiration*’, ‘*efficiency*’ and ‘*heaviness*’, which are the general characteristics of Korean conglomerates.

Overall, the majority of people to whom the word ‘*change*’ comes to mind regarding their company think along these lines because the company has a long change history with the transition of its business portfolio. Also, they cited ‘*people*’ because of their expectations of the cultural change initiative as well as a huge disappointment towards the company in light of the recent restructuring. Also, the perception of the company seems to be influenced not only by the decisions and actions at the organizational level, but also by the relationship with their immediate leaders. The next section further examines the perceptions of people in terms of employment relationship with the inquiry of the meaning of working at the company.

6.2.1.2. The meaning of working in a company

The inquiry as to the meaning of working in a company would help understand the perceptions of people more in terms of employment relationship. About 60% of interviewees cited ‘*the opportunity for growth and development*’; around 30% of them mentioned ‘*economic means*’ and approximately 10% of them regarded the company as their ‘*life itself*’. Interestingly, most of the employees at team leader

level (5 people out of 7) cited *'life itself'*, while majority of the employees at organizational member level and CA level (19 people out of 24) cited *'the opportunity for growth and development'* as the meaning of working in a company. This means that people in the older generations tend to regard the company as their very lives and people in younger generations place their importance on developing their career and expertise, perceiving the company as the place for the opportunity of growth and development. For reference, due to the promotion system based on seniority, team leaders who have worked on average 16 years are in the older generation.

First of all, opportunity for growth and development is considered a highly important factor, mostly mentioned by respondents at organizational member level. Some of the interviewees have a positive view of the company, appreciating the opportunities they have received. This is reflected in the following comments.

What this company means to me is a place where I have had a variety of experiences and opportunities for growth. The opportunities that this company provided with me make me feel so grateful. (Interviewee M03 at organizational member level, male)

I think this company has provided me with a lot of opportunities for growth. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

I believe that the company is a place where I can actually create value in the process of contributing something. Also, I believe that this experience of value creation creates better value for the company as well as making myself grow. (Interviewee M04 at organizational member level, male)

Working at this company seems to have given a lot of opportunities for me to grow. (Interviewee CA1 at change agent level, female)

The quotations from these comments such as *'a variety of experiences and opportunities for growth'*, *'provided me with a lot of opportunities for growth'* and *'creates better value for the company as well as making myself grow'* show that these interviewees have a positive perception about the company, appreciating the opportunities to grow and develop themselves. On the other hand, other interviewees who mentioned *'the opportunity for growth and development'* as the meaning of

working this company seem to place the most importance on their personal value of growth and development in their working life, as is shown by the following comments.

The company is just an environment or a field to advance my expertise, because it is my goal to develop my expertise in my job that I love. I regard the relationship with my company as contractual, nothing more than that. The recent restructuring has made this more certain. (Interviewee FGI 1 in Focus Group Interview at organizational member level, female)

Most importantly, I should be able to feel my own growth and development from working at this company. Otherwise, I would want to leave this company to find another company for my growth or go back to school to study more. (Interviewee FGI 2 in Focus Group Interview at organizational member level, female)

A company is a place to learn and contribute. I think it helps to grow and mature myself as a human being, working together with people who have different backgrounds. Experience and working in the company seem to be helpful for the goal of my life, which is to understand the world and people deeper and to be a more tolerant person. For me, the company is a place that allows such experiences to help me towards the goal of my life. (Interviewee M14 at organizational member level, female)

The company is a place where I can realise my dream and it is more than just an economic means. In other words, it is a place for my growth, learning and meeting good people. (Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

The quotations from these comments such as ‘just a field to advance my expertise’, ‘contractual’ and ‘Otherwise, I would want to leave this company to find another company for my growth’ reflect the main values of the millennial generation in terms of putting the growth and development for their career and expertise first such that these can be criteria for them to select and leave a company. This tendency is evident in the employees of the younger generations and it seems to influence the perceptions of people in terms of employment relationship. Analysis shows that they tend to consider ‘the opportunity for growth and development’ as an important

condition, viewing the employment relationship as '*contractual relationship*'.

Moreover, some interviewees regard the meaning of working at the company only as an economic means, with a cynical view towards their company, showing their low expectations of the company. Although the economic means is basic and essential to leading their lives, people who view the company only as an economic means seem to perceive the employment relationship as a contractual relationship, as is shown by the following comments.

Many people seem to have lost their affection for the company after the restructuring. But in fact, my personal perception of the company is the same before and after restructuring. I do not have any expectation of the company ... The company gives me money and I give the company my labour by doing my job... I think that my relationship with the company is such a contractual relationship, not more than that ... In my life, the company is only a means of making money. Therefore, I was not surprised at the recent restructuring because I thought that if the company encountered a bad situation, it could throw me away at any time. (Interviewee M12 at organizational member level, female)

The company provides me with the means to do what I want to do from an economic point of view... I haven't thought of the company as more than an economic means. (Interviewee M08 at organizational member level, male)

It is most important that the company is where I conduct my economic activities to make a living. Due to the frequent overtime work, I spent a longer time with my colleagues and leaders than with my family, which is the reality that I need to accept. Working at the company is important to support my family. (Interviewee M10 at Organizational member level, male)

The quotations from these comments such as '*lost their affection for the company after the restructuring*', '*The company gives me money and I give the company my labour*', '*do not have any expectation of the company*' and '*it could throw me away at any time*' imply that the interviewees do not have high expectations towards their company, viewing it just as economic means for a living. Besides, the comment of interviewee M10 implies his resignation to the reality that forces him to overwork

frequently in order to support his family, saying, *'the reality that I need to accept'*.

Next, some interviewees at team leader level, commented *'life itself'* as their response to the question about the significance of the company in their lives, as reflected below.

Since I joined this company, I have worked really hard and earnestly, being recognized for my achievement. With a sense of duty, I have worked hard with the belief that if I work really hard, my organization will get better. My nickname was 'working machine'. I have worked at the company even on weekends and I met my wife at the company as well... In this respect, this company is everything for me and will be the end of my working life. Although I have feelings of love and hatred toward this company, I hope that this company continues to grow and develop. (Interviewee L4 at team leader level, male)

It is a place of my life. I have grown, and I must continue to grow at this company... and this company also gives me a monthly salary... I think it's my life. (Interviewee L1 at team leader level, male)

It was my life that I was able to demonstrate my ability to work with my colleagues to achieve organizational goals, to feel bliss, to be rewarded and to be satisfied. (Interviewee L5 at team leader level, male)

Since the size of the company is small, I joined this company and I have grown up with it. I think this company will be the end of my working life, although I should think more about my life after retirement. (Interviewee CA6 at change agent level, female)

The concept of a job for life is gone and I am anxious about the company that is not going to do well. Therefore, I think it is too late, but I need to get ready before the company throws me away. (Interviewee L6 at team leader level, male)

As can be seen from these comments, phrases such as *'My nickname was working machine'*, *'this company is all for me'*, *'a place of my life'* and *I have grown up with it* imply that some team leaders who have devoted most of their working lives seem to identify the company with their lives. All of these comments come from the

interviewees at team level except for the comment of interviewee CA 6, but she is not only a CA but also has the position of team leader with over twenty years of working experience at the company. In this respect, analysis shows that team leaders in the older generations are bound to the company by a strong attachment, having feelings of love and hatred toward this company given how much they devote themselves to the company.

However, when going through the recent restructuring, employees were disappointed with the company's actions in the restructuring, which featured large-scale redundancies. In line with this disappointment, the comment from interviewee L5 reveals that he changed his perception of the company where he had worked for over 20 years, saying, "*it was just a company for the ... family of the owner ... not for the employees*". This recent restructuring must have been quite a shock to not only organizational members but also all leaders, including senior leaders. For example, one of the team leaders, interviewee L7 commented the following.

My perception of the company has completely changed. It became clear that the relationship between the company and myself was merely a contractual relationship. The idea of a job for life has disappeared. In the past, the employees of the company grew in the company and thought that they could go to the position of senior manager or CEO, and there was an implicit expectation of lifetime employment. At least for the team leaders who have devoted a lot of years to the company, there was such hope for them. However, this hope was completely shattered. (Interviewee L7 at team leader level, male)

As can be seen from this comment, the words such as '*completely changed*', '*became clear that the relationship between the company and myself*', '*merely a contractual relationship*' and '*this hope was completely shattered*' imply that many people seemed to change their perception of their company after the recent restructuring. The expression '*merely a contractual relationship*' shows that the people in the older generations experience a great shock from this restructuring as they had sacrificed much of their lives to the company. Korean conglomerates tend to emphasize strong family-like bonds among employees under paternalistic and authoritarian leadership, but this no longer seems to work, even for the people in the

older generations *'who have devoted a lot of years to the company'*, as can be seen from this comment.

All in all, it turns out that people seem to regard the relationship between the company and themselves as a contractual relationship. Although interviewees at team leader level tend to identify themselves with the company due to their sacrifice and devotion for a long time, even the people at team leader level seemed to change their perspective on the employment relationship, having a huge shock at the recent restructuring. In addition, the people in the younger generations tend to prioritize the need for growth and development in their working lives, so this tendency should be considered when the change initiative is implemented. Given the belief that the company would support their growth and development seems to be an important aspect for the people in younger generation.

6.2.2. The difficulties in relation to the cultural characteristics of a Korean conglomerate

This section explores the cultural characteristics commonly recognized by individuals at different levels and it explore how these cultural characteristics are perceived as difficulties for individuals of each level during the cultural change initiative as well as in their daily working life. These cultural characteristics, which are basic assumptions and prevailing stories that are implicitly shared and agreed among individuals in the company, may conflict with the main messages of the change initiative, making individuals feel difficult psychologically. In this respect, this section gives some clues regarding how individuals at different levels perceive the main messages of the change initiative due to the characteristics of the existing culture.

6.2.2.1. The main cultural characteristics people perceive

(a) A hierarchy-based Confucian culture

As a characteristic of the corporate culture that makes it difficult to change, substantial number of the interviewees, regardless of their position, cited a hierarchy-based Confucian culture which forces subordinates to be obedient unconditionally.

First of all, the hierarchical culture is described with the phrases of interviewee M08 and M09 such as ‘*obey whatever the boss instructs them*’ and ‘*immediately accepted*’. In a hierarchical culture, people in a lower position may find it difficult to express their own opinion freely, as is shown by the following comments.

It seems that the way we work does not place much emphasis on capability but rather on the position. At a meeting, people who are in a higher position tend to ignore the opinions of the people in a lower position or pass the buck to others in a lower position. It is the feeling of distributing the weight of opinion according to position and seniority. Therefore, it is hard for the people in a lower position to express their own opinions. (Interviewee M01 at organizational member level, male)

In the hierarchy-based Confucian culture, when your boss says something, you should listen to him and follow his opinion. It seems that there is a lot of stress from not being able to express such opinions for the younger generation. (Interviewee M14 at organizational member level, female)

As can be seen from both comments, the phrases such as ‘*does not place much emphasis on capability but on the position*’, ‘*ignore the opinions of the people in a lower position*’ and ‘*should listen to him and follow his opinion*’ implies the difficulty of people in a lower position in terms of open communication. Words such as ‘*hard*’, ‘*reluctant*’ and ‘*stress*’ show their frustration within this hierarchical culture.

In addition to this hierarchical culture, the authoritarian culture rooted in Confucianism seems to exacerbate the situation in terms of communication between subordinates and superiors.

In the Confucian culture where all the words of the superiors should be honoured and respected, there is a feeling that the opinions of superiors are always right because people tend to believe that the superiors have a lot of experience and wisdom. The feeling tends to force me to follow their opinions, even if I don’t agree with them. In connection with the Confucian culture of Korea, if a leader is upset by my opposition to his opinion, he reproaches me for my attitude or my implication, I cannot help but accept the rebuke because I am also educated within the Confucian culture.

(Interviewee FGI 2 in Focus Group Interview, at organizational member level, female)

In Korean culture, it is hard to talk about objections when the superiors speak. There is a culture that people should tolerate even when a superior speaks irrationally at home or at the company. Why? If you disagree with your superior in the family, then the family atmosphere will be spoilt. The culture of Korean society may be exaggerated within the hierarchical culture of companies. In addition, there is a culture where people unconditionally agree with the opinion of the owner because of the absolute power of the owner in the chaebol system. Compare it to the family, the owner can be the oldest senior in the family and even if the owner does an unreasonable act, you cannot say anything about it just like you cannot say anything in your family culture. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

These comments reveal that the authoritarian culture rooted in Confucianism is deeply prevalent in the Korean society, included not just in the corporate culture but also in the family culture. Under this hierarchy-based Confucian culture, it seems to be natural for subordinates to feel difficulty in voicing objections to their leaders. In this culture, they might be afraid of giving the impression that they are spoiled and unfaithful subordinates when they express their opinions that are against their boss's opinion. In this respect, in a culture where this authoritarianism is prevalent, it is likely that a very high level of communication skills will be needed to express their opinions against their boss's opinion while being careful not to let their boss be upset. Therefore, many people in the lower position tend to avoid this complicated situation where the high level of communication skills will be needed, and they do not express their own opinions. The words of the interviewees in the focus group interview such as '*force*', '*reproach*' and '*rebuke*' show their fear and worry in expressing their own opinions against their boss's opinion. In line with this, interviewee C1, the CEO at one of the subsidiaries, also compared the culture of silence in Korean companies to the family culture, drawing an analogy between '*the owner*' in the company and '*the oldest senior*' in the family. The words he used, such as '*irrationally*', '*unreasonable*', '*unconditionally*' and '*absolute*' indicate how strong this hierarchy-based Confucian culture is.

However, the subordinates in the younger generation would like to express their

own opinions because they have grown up in a more liberal and flexible home atmosphere rather than in a strict Confucian home atmosphere, and they have been educated in such a way as to encourage discussion and debates. The people in this younger generation seem to experience culture shock with the considerable gap between the reality in the hierarchy-based Confucian culture and their expectation of the corporate culture. For example, interviewees M14 and M06 commented the following.

When I expressed my opinion or asked some questions to one of my superiors, the response that I heard was very different from what I expected. I was hoping to hear her opinion regarding my opinion or if I had the wrong opinion, I wanted to know what point I had missed in my opinion. However, the superior rebuked me, saying that my question was not a proper question to a superior, which as I think is very authoritarian. I believed that communication with each other could narrow the generation gap or resolve our differences of thoughts. However, from this experience with my superior, I thought that I would not express my opinion again in the future. (Interviewee M14, at organizational member level, female)

Even if I have a good idea or opinion, I will not talk about it. This is because I think my opinion will be ignored in any case due to my lower position. What is worse, I fear that I have caught myself treating organizational members in a same way. I seem to be tinged by this hardened culture. (Interviewee M06 at organizational member level, male)

The comments show the frustration of the subordinates in the younger generation with the unreasonable and undesirable communication pattern that they have experienced, as can be seen from phrases such as ‘*different from what I expected*’ and ‘*would not express my opinion again*’. Above all, the fear that interviewee M06 expressed implies that it would be hard to change this hardened culture and it would be easy to become acclimatised to it. In line with this fear, interviewee M08 described how deeply rooted this culture is, so that it would be hard to change this culture, as is shown by the following comment.

It is difficult to change this hierarchy-based Confucian culture for a considerable period of time. If you express the opposite view to your leader,

you will be branded as an improper subordinate and then you will find yourself abandoned. (Interviewee M8 at organizational member level, male)

The phrase ‘*find yourself abandoned*’ implies that this culture is deeply intertwined with the hierarchical system and structure in which the opinions of the leaders are reflected and considered more important than the opinions of the team members. In this context, employees at lower level seem to be afraid of the following thought. ‘*If my leader feels bad about my opinion, the leader will talk badly about me, and I may get a bad reputation in this company.*’ The organizational culture and system, biased toward the leader, seem to make employees at lower level feel fear and helplessness. In line with this, interviewee M06 expressed his negative view regarding the cultural change, citing, “*the only way to collect the opinions of employees at organizational member level will be in an anonymous way*”. These negative views regarding the cultural change from the people at the lower level reflect how strong and pervasive this hierarchy-based Confucian culture is in Company A.

(b) The excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism

In addition to the hierarchy-based Confucian culture, as a characteristic of the existing culture that might influence the cultural change initiative, many interviewees cited the excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism. The comments of interviewees CA3 and M14 show how much the company has emphasized short-termism for its rapid growth and how exhausted the employees are in the process.

This company’s rapid growth rate demonstrates the intensity of the work which people have experienced during its the rapid growth. In the meantime, the management team and leaders have focused on only short-term performance and tried to show tangible results and performance in the pursuit of the fast growth. The team leaders’ way of working tends to be concerned only with short-term tasks, assigning tasks only to those who are good at their work. Then, those who are good at work have been exhausted. Team leaders might not have the time to consider the growth of team members through appropriate allocation of tasks in this process. (Interviewee CA03 at organizational member level, male)

In the prevailing Korean culture, leaders are accustomed to the culture in which subordinates unconditionally carry out tasks without question. They don't care how the subordinates are squeezed in the process. (Interviewee M14 at organizational member level, female)

These comments reveal how pervasive this result-oriented culture based on short-termism in the company is. In line with this, interviewee L4 expressed his concern that people would be exhausted and good people would leave this company, saying “*The performance orientation itself is not wrong. The problem is that we are too focused on short-term performance and profit, possibly even ignoring the right way.*” However, he added that it would be hard to change this result-oriented culture based on short-termism because leaders seem to have no benefit to be obtained by abandoning their style under the high pressures of short-termism.

Under this result-oriented culture based on short-termism, many leaders tend to attach weight to showing off, being petrified of looking bad.

My team leader likes to show off and boast of her achievements. Therefore, she reprimands her subordinates when subordinates do not help her to boast about her achievements. I was very uncomfortable when I was forced to talk about only good things, as she wanted. (Interviewee FGI 1 in Focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

During the cultural change, we have frequently seen that CEOs of subsidiaries seem to be in a hurry to show results quickly with great fear, as the chairman's willingness for change is very strong. It seems to be the biggest obstacle to organizational change. (Interviewee CA6 at Change agent level, female)

These comments imply that the pressure under short-termism and the hierarchy-based Confucian culture seem to make leaders focus to a very great extent on showing off. Even CEOs of subsidiaries seem to be in a hurry to show their results to the chairman, with the psychological burden of the result-oriented culture based on short-termism, which demonstrates how prevalent this culture has become in the company. This phenomenon causes people to waste their time and effort on spurious tasks rather than their core tasks due to the tendency to rush to show tangible results in a short time.

(c) The tendency of leaders to stick to their own opinions

In this culture where the hierarchy-based Confucian culture and result-oriented culture short-termism are combined, leaders tend to stick their own ideas and opinions rather than listen to the opinions of their subordinates under the guise of making quick decisions and execution faster, as is shown by the following comments.

I am confronted with the opinion of the team leader who is saying, "I've done it all before, let's just do what I did." Even though the team leader has done it before, the context has changed. However, the team leader insists on his experience, so it is difficult for me to communicate with him. Team leaders are familiar with pushing their opinions, so it seems hard to accept opinions from other people. It seems to be tied to many successful experiences in the past as a core talent at a large company. (Interviewee M06 at organizational member level, male)

My team leader never looks at me as a partner. She looks at me as a presence that needs to be taught and to be corrected. She has already had her own answer in her mind and she believes that only her answer is correct. (Interviewee FGI 2 in Focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

These comments indicate that many leaders tend to stick to their own opinion under the existing culture, emphasizing their experience and success in the past, as can be seen from the phrases such as *'I've done it all before'* and *'tied to many successful experiences in the past'*. It is analysed that the tendency comes from not only the confidence in their own opinion with their past experience but also their authoritarian attitude, as shown in the phrases such as *'pushing their opinions'*, *'hard to accept other opinions'* and *'never looks at me as a partner'*. As can be seen from the quotation from the focus group interview, *'looks at me as a presence that needs to be taught and to be corrected'*, leaders tend to look at their subordinates as people to be corrected rather than as partners with a belief that subordinates lack knowledge and experience. This authoritarian attitude of leaders causes subordinates not to express their opinions, as is shown by the following comments.

It should be a discussion ... but it was not a discussion. I felt that team

members had to meet all that the team leader wants. The team leader does not listen to our opinions properly unless the opinions match her thoughts. Then, I don't understand why she wants to talk with us at all. In fact, she just can do what she wants without any discussion with us. (Interviewee FGI 1 in Focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

I think that many team leaders seem to have already made up their minds. They pretend to listen to other opinions but in the end, they seem to ignore the opinions of team members. It seems like a game of twenty questions. We should find out what is the conclusion in their mind. (Interviewee M09 at organizational member level, female)

The senior manager speaks comfortably to me, but it is difficult to give an opposing opinion because I can notice that he implicitly seeks agreement. For example, the senior manager asked me what kind of design I liked last time and I chose one of them, worrying whether it is against his opinion. Then, the senior manager said, "So do I! Everyone has a similar view." I felt relieved at that time... When the senior manager asked me for opinions as a team leader, I unwittingly gave an opinion in favour of the senior manager. (Interviewee L06 at team leader level, male)

As can be seen from these comments, the phrases such as 'do what she wants without any discussion with us', 'seem to have already made up their minds', 'should find out what is his conclusion in his mind' and 'unwittingly gave an opinion in favour of the senior manager' indicate that leaders have already had their own solution in their mind, expecting that their subordinates can guess and agree with their solution. Many leaders tend to be used to forcing through their way for decades rather than listening to the various opinions of their subordinates under the guise of high need for rapid decision making and execution to obtain results quickly. In line with this tendency, some interviewees cited the informal definition of good followers who many leaders seem to have in mind, as it is shown by the following comments.

The definition of a follower who works well in the minds of many leaders is ... a person who is 100% consistent with a leader's thoughts, who represents the leader's thoughts, or even intensifies those thoughts and makes plans for their execution. My team leader welcomes such a person

and praises her greatly. That's the way my team leader wants us all to work. It's upon the premise that the perspective of the leader is always right. (Interviewee FGI 3 in Focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

It seems that leaders are looking for subordinates to be avatars of the leaders. Also, they tend to ask their subordinates to sacrifice their personal lives as much as the leaders have sacrificed themselves. (Interviewee M08 at organizational member level, male)

My team leader gave me feedback that I don't have proper 'followership'. According to his criteria for a good follower, a person who did not follow his word has no 'followership'. I was just telling him that there was a risk ... (Interviewee M09 at organizational member level, female)

As can be seen from these comments, the phrases such as '*represents the leader's thoughts*' and '*avatars of the leaders*' indicate that leaders seem to want their subordinates to follow their opinion rather than express the opinions of subordinates against the leaders. As long as the subordinates notice the desires and expectations of leaders regarding the followers, it would be hard for the subordinates to ignore the desires and expectations of the leaders. This is because leaders have a great influence on the evaluation and promotion of subordinates. Therefore, if possible, they do not want to be against the opinion of their leaders, as can be seen from the quotation from interviewee M09 "*No matter what irrational thing the team leader is asking, I cannot help doing it*".

In this situation, subordinates tend to be silent, not expressing their own opinions. For example, some interviewees made the following comments.

If I give an opinion that is against the leader, the team atmosphere become embarrassing. So, if possible, nobody talks. At a team meeting, it seems that almost everyone is silent except the leader. (Interviewee M08 at organizational member level, male)

The reason why I don't express my opinion to the team leader is that I do not think there is any advantage to me. I do not want to use my energy there because I know that my opinion will not be accepted. I do not need to give my opinion to those people. (Interviewee M09 at organizational member

level, female)

The two comments show the reason why subordinates tend to avoid expressing their own opinions. This tendency is found even in leaders because all leaders except the chairman are subordinates to their own leaders. It may be different depending on the leader, but subordinates tend to become silent when they realise that expressing their own opinions would impact them negatively. Regardless of their positions, all employees have this tendency toward being silent along with the tendency of leaders to stick to their opinions in the context of a hierarchy-based Confucian culture as well as a result-oriented culture based on short-termism.

6.2.2.2. Some different perspectives according to the position

(a) The perspective of organizational members

In addition to the characteristics commonly recognized by individuals at different levels discussed so far, substantial numbers of interviewees at organizational member level pointed to the poor leadership of their team leaders as a difficulty related to the cultural characteristics of a Korean conglomerate. This is a very important issue because leadership is an inseparable relationship in organizational culture. They have complained about the poor leadership of their team leaders, considering the huge influence of these leaders. This is reflected in the following comments.

I have been in this company for more than 10 years, and I have felt a lot about how important the role of the team leader is. I have experienced that my performance has been halved or doubled according to the team leader. I think that the influence of the team leader is crucial in the organizational culture change. However, there are many leaders who have poor leadership, so the company needs to support the leaders through replacement or through fostering them. (Interviewee M03 at organizational member level, male)

With regards to poor leadership, I think leadership needs to be changed from the senior manager level due to their great influence. In the context of Korean conglomerates, there is a vicious cycle of poor leadership because leaders become leaders when they are not ready, despite their substantial influence. (Interviewee M04 at organizational member level, male)

As can be seen from both comments, the phrases such as *'the influence of the team leader is crucial'*, *'their great influence'*, *'their substantial influence'* and *'a vicious cycle of poor leadership'* imply that there is a structural problem, which causes a vicious cycle of poor leadership, despite the huge influence of leaders. In line with this, the comment of interviewee M03 is worth noting as he can compare the structure for nurturing leaders with his working experience both in the USA and Korea. He cited the lack of a leader nurturing system in the Korean company as a fundamental problem, as is shown by the following comment.

In Korea, team leaders who can do people management have usually been a general manager who worked for at least 16 years as a team member. 'Performance management' and 'people management' are different but team leaders tend to become a leader in 16 years based on the performance they have achieved. In other words, the reality of Korean companies is that the person with sixteen years' experience can start 'people management' for the first time without any proven capability for people management. Therefore, there are many team leaders who lack the capacity for 'people management' to persuade both their superiors and their subordinates. The new team leaders must be confused and feel difficulty in doing the job of a team leader for the first time. What's worse, the number of team members that they are expected to manage is too high. Some team leaders are expected to manage about 20 people in their team. (Interviewee M03 at organizational member level, male)

The phrases such as *'a person with sixteen years' experience can start people management for the first time'*, *'without any proven capability for people management'*, *'who lack the capacity for people management'* and *'The new team leaders must be confused and feel difficulty'* indicate that there are leaders who are not ready for team leaders in terms of people management. Evidence shows that people who became team leaders are not very good at people management but rather at performance management. This is because team leaders are selected and promoted based on their high performance, not based on their people management skills. Therefore, the person who became a team leader for the first time would be a novice in terms of people management. This is because they do not have any practice and experience with people management while they have worked for sixteen years as a

team member. Therefore, interviewee M03 suggested that team leaders may be ready for people management, citing the following instance in USA.

In a global enterprise, the manager will be able to practise actual people management while we don't have any opportunity to practise it in South Korea. In the USA, opportunities are given to develop people management skills, starting on a small scale. The most important point, however, is that a person with competence in people management can be a Team Leader in this company in the USA. Therefore, those who sit here at key positions in the USA have at least proven competency in people management. (Interviewee M03 at organizational member level, male)

As can be seen from this comment, phrases such as, 'Don't have any opportunity to practise it in South Korea' and 'Those who...in the USA have at least proven competency in people management' indicate that people in Korean companies do not have the opportunity to practise people management, nor do they have proven competencies in people management. While the influence of team leaders is great in terms of the evaluation of subordinates as well as decision-making, their leadership seems to be poor due to the lack of a nurturing system for leaders. In this respect, many interviewees at organizational member level seemed to point out this poor leadership as an obstacle to cultural change in the company.

(b) The perspective of leaders

While the interviewees at organizational member level pointed out the poor leadership of their leaders, some interviewees at team leader level talked about the lack of professionalism in the younger generation. For example, interviewees L1 and L8 commented the following.

Team members do not want to change their lack of professionalism, and they just blame their leaders, which seems to be an obstacle to cultural change. The younger generation tends to be weak in professionalism. They have to work harder in their job. The reason why they come to the company is not to develop themselves but to work. They should work with responsibility rather than only thinking of their development and growth selfishly, considering only annual leave. (Interviewee L1 at team leader level, male)

I try to understand my team members despite the generation gap, but sometimes I feel uncomfortable. For example, when I suggest something they could study due to lack of expertise, they refuse... When I ask them to work overtime, they say that they should be due at another appointment. While our generation has intensity and passion for our work, putting in 110% and going the extra mile for whatever we are asked to do, people in the younger generations do not have any intensity and passion for their job. (Interviewee L8 at team leader level, male)

As can be seen from the two comments, expressions such as ‘*The younger generation tends to be weak in professionalism*’ and ‘*They should work with responsibility rather than only thinking of their development and growth selfishly*’ reflect the perspective of leaders that the younger generation is less preoccupied with work than their own generation and lacks expertise. They are concerned about this attitude of the younger generation, thinking it as an obstacle to cultural change. The frequent mention of ‘*younger generation*’ in both comments reflect the generation gap, although they did not admit this directly in the comments. Meanwhile, other interviewees at team leader level seem to recognize the generation gap as something to accept.

In the generation that led the existing culture and organization, the values of devotion and sacrifice were prevalent, but members of the younger generation are different. We need to accept it. (Interviewee L7 at team leader level, male)

The younger generations tend to value their personal growth rather than merely seeing employment as an economic means to an end. We seem to have had no time to think about personal growth in our generation. I do not think that I would move to another company. This company was everything to us. However, nowadays, young people are always ready to leave. This differences in generation should be acknowledged. (Interviewee L9 at team leader level, male)

The phrases such as ‘*different*’ and ‘*This differences in generation should be acknowledged*’ from the two comments reflect that these leaders seem to recognize the generation gap and try to accept the difference between their generation and

younger generation. Whether they accept the generation gap or not, it is clear that there are different perspectives between the older and the younger generation.

6.2.3. Summary of individuals' perceptions of the change context

This section has examined interviewees' overall perceptions concerning the change context with the two research questions regarding the perception of the cultural characteristics as well as the overall perception of their company in terms of the employment relationship. It is important to examine these perceptions of the change context because the change context may influence the individuals' perceptions regarding the change initiative, especially in relation to cultural change.

First of all, with regard to the first research question, which is 'How do individuals perceive their company in terms of employment relationship?', the researcher asked two questions. "What words or images come to mind when you think about your company based on experiences you have worked so far?" and "How do you talk about the meaning of working in this company in relation to your whole life?". In terms of the first question, about the words or images emerging regarding the company, over 70% of interviewees mentioned the words '*change*' and '*people*', because the company has a long history with the transition of its business portfolio, emphasizing '*people*' in the cultural change initiative. However, people seem to take a different view in terms of employment relationship after the recent restructuring, with huge disappointment towards the company.

In terms of the meaning of working, organizational members tend to prioritize the need for growth and development in their working lives, but some organizational members regard the meaning of working at the company as only an economic means, with a cynical view towards their company. However, in terms of employment relationships, both of them basically regard the employment relationship as a contractual relationship. The leaders in the older generation tend to regard their company as their 'the life itself', working hard and sacrificing themselves for at least 16 years. They are bound to the company with a strong attachment. However, the recent restructuring with large-scale redundancies must have been quite a shock even to team leaders. This clearly made people regard the employment relationship as a contractual relationship. In this respect, this changed

tendency in terms of employment relationship should be considered when the change initiative is implemented.

Moreover, with regard to the second research question, which is ‘How do people perceive the cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate? Regardless of the position that people hold, people commonly pointed out the main characteristics. First, interviewees mentioned ‘a hierarchy-based Confucian culture’ as a main obstacle that influences individuals’ perceptions regarding the change initiative. In addition to the hierarchy-based Confucian culture, ‘the excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism’ may exacerbate the situation, forcing people to focus only on obtaining tangible results based on short-termism. This phenomenon seems to cause people to devote their energy to ‘showing off’, to producing seemingly plausible but spurious results rather than to engage themselves in important tasks. In this culture, many leaders tend to stick to their own ideas and opinions rather than listening to the opinions of their subordinates, in order to make decisions faster. Therefore, employees tend to be silent along with the tendency of leaders to stick to their opinions in the context of a hierarchy-based Confucian culture as well as the excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism. In terms of the different perspective from organizational member level, people pointed out the poor leadership of their leaders as an obstacle to cultural change. Meanwhile, interviewees at the team leader level pointed out the lack of professionalism in the younger generations as an obstacle to cultural change.

These individual’s perceptions at different levels regarding the change context and the change initiative have interacted with each other on some points. Thus, next section focuses on examining the individuals’ perceptions at different levels regarding the two aspects of the change initiative: content and process.

6.3. The individuals’ perceptions regarding the change initiative

In order to examine how individuals perceive a change initiative, this section focuses on exploring the individuals’ perceptions in terms of change content and change process. According to the conceptual framework of this research, this section illustrates how individuals at different levels perceive and make sense of change

content in terms of discrepancy, appropriateness, principal support, efficacy and personal valence (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). In addition, it describes how individuals at different levels perceive change process in terms of persuasive communication, active participation and managing of information (Armenakis et al., 1993). The definitions of terms are provided in the following table.

Table 6-1. The definitions of components of the change content and process

	Component	Definition
Change content	Discrepancy	The need for change that individuals feel
	Appropriateness	The individuals' belief that the specific form of change is appropriate for the needs of change
	Principal support	The individuals' perceived capability to implement a change initiative
	Efficacy	The individuals' perceived capability to implement change initiatives
	Personal valence	The benefits from change that individuals feel
Change process	Persuasive communication	Many forms of communication including speeches and written communication
	Active participation	Participation in interventions or decision making
	Managing information	Using internal and external sources to provide information regarding the change

Source: Adapted from Armenakis and Harris (2002) and Armenakis et al. (1993)

This section begins with illustrating the perceptions of the organizational member level regarding change content and change process.

6.3.1 Organizational member level

6.3.1.1. Perception of the change content

(a) Discrepancy

Before top management launched the cultural change initiative through cascading the espoused corporate values throughout the company, individuals at organizational

member level generally believed that cultural change would be needed in their company. From the interviews at organizational member level, it is found that they are not satisfied with the existing culture. As examined in the previous section, regardless of their positions, employees tend to perceive the existing culture as a hierarchy-based Confucian culture as well as a result-oriented culture based on short-termism. These comments illustrate this dissatisfaction with the existing culture.

On average, I have to work long days and over the weekend about more than 50% of the time on a monthly basis. I have to work overtime not only because I have a heavy workload, but also because I have to wait merely to support my senior in my team, just in case. In that case, I have to be there at night without anything to do. It's really a waste of time. This terrible culture of working overtime at night has been taken for granted, for no pay. I work so much overtime that I hardly ever see my children during the week. In addition, as to the drinking culture of 'Hwoesik' [Staff dinner], we had to drink the same amount at the same speed regardless of our drinking capacity, and after drinking we all had to go to karaoke. It is required, not optional. I wish I could just do only my job without 'Hwoesik'. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

It has become a habit to work overtime at night. It's part of the everyday routine. I might be able to finish my job during working hours if I focus, but I just think to myself, 'Let's just work overtime'. This is because it is hard to leave work on time anyway, unless my team leader leaves. Whenever I need to go back home in time for a special occasion, I should read my team leader's face [In Korean, 'Nun-chi']. (Interviewee M12 at organizational member level, male)

I saw that some senior managers and middle managers who do wrong actions or behaviours do well, without any discipline or punishment, if their performance is good, and I thought, 'This company has still a long way to go and it does not treat those wrong behaviours as important.' (Interviewee M09 at organizational member level, female)

These comments highlight a restrictive environment where the culture is so rigid that employees feel a lack of control over their work environment. Interviewees

M16 and M12 complained about working overtime at night, considering it a chronic disease of corporate culture in Korea. As they complained, many Korean workers are struggling with chronically long working hours in a society where overtime work is seen as a symbol of diligence. In fact, Korean society has justified long working hours and wrongful labour practices in order to achieve rapid economic growth in the last 50 years. This longstanding practice that Korean society has justified and the Confucian culture of showing respect for one's superiors might combine to create the corporate culture of '*Nun-chi*', which means people are constantly on edge, trying hard not to get on the wrong side of their boss. This '*Nun-chi*' culture seems to be strengthened based on a very intense belief that employees working long hours are good employees. Another egregious cultural feature that many Korean workers have been suffering is the culture of '*Hwoesik*'. '*Hwoesik*' is a staff dinner which forces team members to attend for building teamwork at company expense after work. Korean leaders tend to force people to drink alcohol at a staff dinner, claiming that '*Hwoesik*' is also an extension of work. Therefore, most people have to attend '*Hwoesik*' even if they have a personal appointment or some family affair. This frustration with the existing culture evokes people's need for cultural change, as is shown by the following comments.

The corporate values that are propagated for the cultural change consist of very common-sense ideas that should obviously work. Honestly, I feel very bitter because the fact that top management has propagated these corporate values is further proof to the fact that those commonsensical values have not worked in our company. It's time to get our work life back on the right track as the espoused values emphasize, free from the oppressive and distorted culture. (Interviewee M04 at organizational member level, male)

The content of the corporate values is quite commonsensical. The cultural change initiative based on spreading the corporate values reminds us of what our working lives should be like. (Interviewee M10 at organizational member level, male)

These extracts reveal how people have struggled with the existing culture. Especially, the use of word '*commonsensical*' highlights the struggles of people with their existing culture. It means that they want their organizational culture just to obey common sense, not to be 'fancy' and 'great'. They want to escape from '*the*

oppressive and distorted culture'. Interviewee M04 described the existing culture as a culture in which '*commonsensical values have not worked*'. The existing culture that he perceives violates common sense. This dissatisfaction with the existing culture might turn into a need for culture change. Individuals at organizational member level hoped that the existing culture could be changed with the cultural change initiative with espoused corporate values including '*open communication*' and '*respecting people*'.

In addition, the need for change has been brought about due to the lack of existing systems and processes. Interviewee M10 expressed his hope that the process and system can be advanced by the change initiative, complaining at the existing systems and processes. The comment from interviewee M10 highlights the struggles with the inefficient process.

We don't have a proper procurement process. If I need some material for my job, I have to do everything related to the procurement process by myself, which is a waste of time for me. Therefore, we need to renew our process at any given point, improving the way we do business during this change initiative. (Interviewee M10 at organizational member level, male)

In line with this, the comment from interviewee M16 reveals a feeling of disenchantment with her work, which was created by the combination of the lack of system and the hierarchy-based Confucian culture.

People need to manually fix the things that should be modified by the system, due to the lack of a system. I spent a lot of time editing the divisional report for my senior manager and updating the data whenever the data changed, every hour. However, senior managers do not review the prepared report carefully and they review it briefly in less than an hour. I was tired of wasting my time on this meaningless and unnecessary work, and I felt a sense of disenchantment with my work. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

As can be seen from this comment, phrases such as '*meaningless*', '*unnecessary*' and '*disenchantment*' highlight her struggle with the lack of a system under the hierarchy-based Confucian culture. What she has been frustrated with comes from not only the lack of a system but also the hierarchy-based Confucian culture. She

expressed her feeling with the word '*disenchantment*' when she spent a lot of time editing the report for her senior manager due to the hierarchy-based Confucian culture, although the senior manager has not reviewed it with any interest. In this context, she has been frustrated with the way she works under the hierarchy-based Confucian culture with the lack of system, regarding her work as '*meaningless and unnecessary*'. This frustration evoked the need for change, which can be one of the motivations for change.

Furthermore, people need principles and standards that serve as a basis for decision-making in their job. Some interviewees emphasized the importance of the corporate values as the standards of decision-making, asserting that the lack of principles and standards has raised many problems in terms of consistency and rationality of decision-making. Along the same lines, interviewee FGI M2 made the following comment.

In the meantime, there have been no clear principles and standards for defining right and wrong decision-making thus far, and the decision was right or wrong depending on each leader's own judgement. This leads to a wide variation depending on middle managers or senior managers in terms of not only decision-making but also the sub-culture. (Interviewee FGI M2 in Focus group interview at organizational member level, female)

This extract implies that there was a lack of principles and standards in terms of decision-making. As can be seen from the comment of interviewee FGI M2, this lack of criteria for decision-making led to '*many problems in terms of consistency and rationality of decision-making*' and evoked the need for change based on the espoused corporate values. In line with this, interviewee M03 also emphasizes the corporate values as '*the principles that preclude going quickly by a short cut*', claiming that the short cut tends to cause long-term problems. In this respect, people expect that the espoused corporate values can be the principles and standards that they should pursue.

In summary, in terms of discrepancy that organizational members perceive, most people seemed to agree with the need for change, with dissatisfaction towards the existing culture as well as the existing system and process. They also believe that they need corporate values as the principles and standards for decision-making in

their job. Next, we turn to examine how individuals at organizational member level perceive the appropriateness of the change content.

(b) Appropriateness

Although the majority of organizational members feel the need for change compared to the existing culture, there are various pieces of feedback and comments regarding the appropriateness of the change content rooted in the espoused corporate values. In fact, before the change initiative, since the new chairman of the conglomerate was inaugurated, there have been small attempts at cultural change as a foretaste of the upcoming change, such as campaigns to change the drinking culture. In this respect, interviewee M16 cited the inauguration of a new chairman as the beginning of change.

Since the inauguration of the new chairman, attempts have been made to change the organizational culture. The chairman began to talk about the importance of open communication and promoted campaigns to change the drinking culture. In parallel with those change messages, for several years after the inauguration of the new chairman, the cultural change initiative rooted in the corporate values went on in earnest. It is said that the chairman spent lots of energy in preparing the change initiative before launching it. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

This comment implies that the cultural change initiative rooted in the corporate values has been prepared since the inauguration of the new chairman. In this context, first of all, with the aforementioned discrepancy, organizational members seem to perceive the espoused corporate values in themselves as a great change initiative to change their culture. For example, interviewee M14 expressed the following view.

The values resonated with us because I feel that they are not for the purpose of exploiting and manipulating employees for nothing but the performance of a company. I have seen many other corporate values that force employees to make sacrifices under the banner of the performance of a company. However, these corporate values talk about a win-win situation where the growth of people is the main driver of the growth in our company, which has a different approach from other companies. (Interviewee M14 at

organizational member level, female)

As can be seen from this extract, phrases such as *'not for the purpose of exploiting and manipulating employees'* and *'win-win situation'* imply that she is impressed with the espoused corporate values in terms of the different approach and perspective of the philosophy from ones of other companies. Some interviewees such as M13 and M15 also noted that the philosophy underlying the corporate values has supported not only the standpoint of the company but also the standpoint of its employees based on a win-win approach and respect for the employees. In line with this, interviewee M14 was excited with the hope for change, saying additionally, *'At the beginning of the change initiative, we expected that we could move forward if we worked together in the same direction based on a win-win approach.'* Like interviewee M14, it is found that the majority of interviewees such as M02, M13 and M15 think positively about the espoused corporate values, using words such as *'very attractive'*, *'really good content'* and *'a good direction'*, which highlight the positive perceptions of people about the corporate values.

Secondly, ironically, these enthusiastic responses from organizational members regarding the espoused corporate values imply that they have been exhausted by the existing culture where the company has urged short-termism on its employees for rapid growth over the past decade. In line with this, interviewee M04 claimed *"People tend to exaggeratedly embrace some particular values such as 'the importance of people' and 'cultivating people' against the existing culture which has forced people to sacrifice themselves for performance so far."* As can be seen from this extract, the phrase *'exaggeratedly embrace some particular values'* implies that the exhaustion from the existing culture causes people to selectively interpret the corporate values as biased. He added, *"This exhaustion with the existing culture made people miss the fundamental reason why the corporate values as a big picture should be propagated."* The phrase *'miss the fundamental reason why'* shows that many employees might not fully understand the purpose of the change initiative in connection with the whole value system of the business of the company. The following extract highlights the importance of the connection between the change initiative and the effectiveness of the whole business value chain.

If people knew the purpose of the change initiative and how the change initiative can connect to the whole business value chain, with a clear link between organizational goal and individual goal, they would find their own way to participate in the change process. (Interviewee M04 at organizational member level, male)

As can be seen from this extract, there seems to be a lack of connection between the change initiative and the effectiveness of the whole value chain which can make people feel keenly the necessity of change initiative and so evoke their intrinsic motivation. In line with this, M03 claimed, “*The change agent team should have helped employees understand the purpose of the change initiative, connected to the whole business value chain of our company*”. This comment implies that there is a lack of effort from the change agent team in terms of helping employees understand the purpose of the change initiative.

Thirdly, despite the positive perception of the espoused corporate values, there is disagreement with the espoused corporate values as a change initiative because the content of the corporate values is too complicated and broad. First, while people are impressed with the philosophy underlying the content of the corporate values, people perceive the content of corporate values as a change initiative that is too complicated and difficult to be understood. Phrases such as ‘*abstract*’, ‘*difficult to understand*’, ‘*too much*’ and ‘*should read between the lines*’ highlight the difficulty of understanding what the corporate values mean. In addition, the change initiative has been criticized for the wide-ranging content that the corporate values cover. Under the vagueness coming from a wide-ranging content, organizational members have been confused when their leaders have emphasized a different part of values which conflict each other. Not only organizational members but also leaders have interpreted differently the corporate values based on whatever happens to be the favourable aspect according to their own role and position. The following comments illustrate this.

I found the interpretation of the corporate values has changed according to the senior manager. The points we need to apply were changed depending on the perspective of the senior manager. For example, while the previous senior manager emphasized the value of ‘developing people’ among the corporate values, the current senior manager is prioritizing ‘profit’ among

the corporate values. Therefore, many organizational members are confused and feel anxious during the shift in stress depending on the points of view of senior managers. (Interviewee M06 at organizational member level, male)

People tend to accept only a part of the message of corporate values according to their advantage or preference relating to their position and roles. (Interviewee M10 at organizational member level, male)

As can be seen in these comments, phrases such as ‘*changed depending on the perspective of the senior manager*’ and ‘*accept only a part of the message ... according to their advantage or preference relating to their position and roles*’ indicate that the content of the corporate values are interpreted differently depending on the position and roles of people. In this regard, organizational members have struggled with not only the difficulty of understanding the content of the corporate values due to the complexity but also the confusion coming from the broadness and vagueness with different interpretation depending on the perspective of people in their daily working life.

Lastly, due to the complicated and broad content of the corporate values, especially in the first year, change interventions were forced to focus on helping employees to understand the content of corporate values first. In this regard, interviewee M04 claimed, “*The time spent helping people to understand the content was indispensable. Otherwise, people could not grasp the full significance of the corporate values and could not understand the change content. If we don’t know even what we need to change, how can we change it?*” The comment of interviewee M15 also admitted the importance of intervention to make people comprehend the corporate values exactly, using the word ‘*necessary*’. However, no matter what the reasons, main interventions such as company-wide workshops and meetings on a team basis have been criticized in terms of the appropriateness of the change initiative because they have been too focused on making people comprehend the content of corporate values, rather than helping people to change their behaviour for cultural change.

In summary, in terms of appropriateness, that is, whether individuals perceive the espoused corporate values as the change initiative to fix the gap identified by discrepancy, on the one hand, organizational members tend to perceive the espoused

corporate values as the great change content on their situation where people have become exhausted with the existing culture. On the other hand, the change content has been criticized because the content of the espoused corporate values is too complicated and broad as the change initiative to change their organizational culture.

(c) Principal support

With regard to principal support that individuals perceive for the change initiative, first of all, many comments highlight the powerful impact of sincere drive from the chairman, especially when the change initiative for propagating the corporate values was launched, in the first year of the change initiative. The chairman demonstrated his visible involvement in the change initiative through various channels. The comment of interviewee M14 reflects the active and visible involvement of top management, describing it with the phrase '*sincere drive*' along with the aforementioned positive perception of people about the espoused corporate values. In addition, the impact that people perceived was described with words such as '*huge*', '*strong*' and '*really powerful*' in the comments from interviewee M02, M04 and M15.

In line with this powerful drive from the chairman, interviewees M06 and M08 shared the suggestion of '*the forceful top-down approach*' as a necessary evil that they should accept in such a hierarchical culture as is found in conglomerates in Korea. They perceived that a strong drive from the chairman would be appropriate in this hierarchical culture. As an example, they mentioned a successful case of removing overtime work in one of the subsidiaries thanks to the strong support from the CEO. The CEO forced and supervised and made it possible for employees to leave work on time, which was previously considered impossible in their culture. With this example, they perceive the proposed change initiative as an appropriate approach to the context of their company, arguing that Korean companies still need that kind of compulsory measure.

While some people regard the involvement of top management as a powerful intervention, others are concerned about the strong way of approaching cultural change. For example, the subtext in these comments suggests more '*a pulling strategy*' than '*a push strategy*' especially in dealing with cultural change.

Rather than pushing the change initiative to the whole company in the same order and with the same strategy, what would happen if each team led the change initiative autonomously and proactively, considering the context or characteristics of the team? I felt that the change initiative was promoted uniformly in a top-down approach. Rather than urging them to inject change messages unilaterally, it would be better to look at how each team interpreted and accepted it differently. (Interviewee M02 at organizational member level, female)

One of the powerful interventions that the chairman used was the dismissal of some leaders who did not meet the organizational values. The strategy was a powerful signal to people in the whole organization, but it was still a push strategy, not a pulling strategy that people want to follow autonomously. (Interviewee M04 at organizational member level, male)

These comments reveal concerns about reducing people's autonomy during the change initiative, where the push strategy was promoted uniformly in a top-down approach. Along the same lines, although people are impressed with the passion and willingness of the chairman regarding the cultural change initiative, the following extract reveals concerns about the way of implementation.

Challenging or refuting the corporate values of the company was not allowed in the atmosphere at that time because the chairman was driving so strongly. Nobody talked about it. If you deny the values, you feel that your survival in the company is threatened. There was strong pressure that was difficult to express. At that time, there was an atmosphere of 'corporate values can solve any problem and we have to follow this all together'. The atmosphere was that if you don't agree with this, you are wrong. (Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

This comment of interviewee M13 highlights the compliance that the top management evoked. She feels that people are expected to comply with the corporate values without any challenging. She expressed her feeling using the phrase of '*survival in the company is threatened*'. This is a strong sign of a '*push strategy*' based on hierarchical authority.

Moreover, although top management changed the main organizational systems

including the personnel appraisal system to align them with the corporate values, most people seem to perceive that such systems and processes do not work properly in practice. For example, the personnel appraisal system is changed not just in terms of the content to be evaluated according to the corporate values but also the process to focus on caring for team members with more interactive feedback sessions is institutionalized. The changed appraisal system and process have forced team leaders to have more feedback sessions with their subordinates, providing the leaders with training courses regarding how to give feedback effectively. Due to the changed appraisal system and process, people have inevitably spent more time in processing the changed personnel appraisal system. Although people spent more time on feedback sessions due to the changed the personnel appraisal system and process, the quality of feedback did not seem to be related to the increased feedback time. For example, interviewee M16 made the following comment.

I had to do several meetings with my team leader for the changed appraisal system, but I do not think the meetings took place properly based on the purpose of changing the system. I am not happy with the increased frequency of meetings with my team leader. In my case, when I meet with the team leader, my boss talks more than 90%, so I feel like I have been injected with something rather than having a conversation with her. I could not tell her what I really wanted to say in the feedback meeting. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

This extract implies that the changed appraisal system with more time for the feedback session was not effective for her due to the leadership of her boss. In line with this, the expressions from the comments of interviewee M01 and M04 such as *'really annoying'* and *'It's just a specious remark. It's silly.'* reveal their frustration as well as cynicism regarding the new system. In this regard, people seem to perceive that the new appraisal process would not be working properly, such that it is insufficient to support the change. Along with the frustration at the new appraisal process which is not working properly, people have been disappointed that the new system might not be fair enough, as much as top management and HR team emphasized the fairness in the new HR system. The following extract highlights this feeling.

A message of 'fair appraisal' was the message most appealing to those at organizational member level. However, in the case of restructuring or promotion, we felt a sense of deprivation as against special groups such as senior managers' children and people who have a McKinsey background. In reality, we need to belong to one of these factions not to feel disadvantaged. (Interviewee M01 at organizational member level, male)

People expected the fairness in the new system that the corporate values emphasizes, but they perceive that the reality has not changed, they *'feel disadvantaged'*. In addition, organizational members feel the gap between the reality and the espoused values when they perceive that more of those leaders who just focus on performance have survived than the leaders who are role models aligned with the cultural change initiative. Along the same lines, interviewee M06 cited, *"If those who are role models aligned with the corporate values are evaluated well by the HR system, people can believe in the change initiative with hope. However, it doesn't happen that way in reality"*.

Finally, one of the principal supports that organizational members perceive is from the team leader who leads the main intervention on a team basis. The intervention is to have a discussion time once a month in order for the whole team to talk about how to practice the corporate values at the team level. With the impact of the team leader on team culture, people perceive differently depending on their team leader and their team culture. Some interviewees including interviewee M10 talked about the intervention on a team basis positively because it is helpful to talk with their colleagues, those related to their work, in order to understand the corporate values concretely. However, he emphasizes that it is *'thanks to the team leader and the existing team culture where people already respected each other's opinion'*.

However, many interviewees perceive the intervention negatively, describing it as a way to control and manipulate people. Phrases from the comments from interviewees M02, M08, M13 and M16 such as *'Actually, it was awkward.'*, *'It was contrived and unnatural.'*, *'only the leader is talking'* and *'meaningless and a kind of additional work'* reflect team cultures where people cannot discuss properly. In those cultures, taking into account the influence of their team leader on their daily working lives, people tend to say what they perceive that they should say, as can be

seen in the comments from interviewee M16: *'just say what the team leader wants to hear'* and *'just nice things to my team leader'*. In this respect, team leaders who have a great impact on team culture would be one of the principal supports that organizational members perceive.

In summary, in terms of principal support, organizational members perceive the strong drive from the chairman as the most powerful support, although there are pros and cons to this. Moreover, top management changed the main systems, including the appraisal system, to be aligned with the values, but organizational members perceive that these systems and processes do not work properly. Finally, people perceive the support from their team leader as one of the principal supports and they perceive differently entirely depending on the existing team culture and the leadership of the team leader.

(d) Efficacy

As for efficacy, which refers to an individual's perceived capability to implement a change initiative, there are various comments and opinions. Some people who perceive the change interventions as insufficient tend towards scepticism about efficacy, while others who are impressed at the strong support from top management tend to be positive in relation to efficacy.

On the one hand, organizational members tend to be sceptical about efficacy because the change interventions that occurred were not connected to their daily work. Although they understood that some change interventions to help them comprehend the complicated and broad content would be essential, they perceived that the change initiative was focusing to too great an extent on deepening people's understanding of the values, not focusing on making real change connected to their daily activities. The comment of interviewee M15 reveals the lack of interventions aligned to their daily work, saying *"there was a lack of effort to make changes in practice."*

In line with this, some interviewees criticize the company-wide campaign as the one that has made the corporate values dissociated from the business of real work. Quotations from the comments of interviewee M02, M04, M6 and M09 such as *'really vague what we should do for the change'*, *'campaigns tell us that we should*

be nice employees, *'campaigns seem to focus on creating an entirely spurious impression'*, *'It is just music to the ears.'* and *'hard to figure out how to apply it'* highlight people's struggles in terms of applying the change initiative to their workplace in the context of these campaigns. Along the same lines, interviewee M11 also described the campaigns as *'an ivory tower'*. He complained that the content is too abstract and vague, saying, *"I don't know what to do to change."* This is because the series of campaigns that emphasized the espoused corporate values abstractly were perceived as not helping to apply the change to their workplace.

In addition to the series of campaigns, people are sceptical about the action plans that they have set up but have never followed up. Every team leader was supposed to have a meeting with his or her team members, according to the toolbox that provides various topics for discussion regarding the corporate values and the cultural change. The Change Agent (CA) team forced every unit to submit an action plan as a result of discussions on a team basis. However, many team leaders who were too busy striving for business performance based on short-termism did not seem to be interested in implementing the action plans with the cultural themes on an on-going basis. However, due to the strong drive from the chairman, team leaders were forced to follow the instructions of the CA team. They seemed to try to do only the minimum they had to do during the change process, i.e. to submit the action plans set up with their team members on a team basis. These following comments illustrate this.

During the meetings on a team basis for the change initiative, all we did was discuss how to set up action plans based on the theme that the CA team distributed every week. This is because we had to submit the action plan to the CA team. But that's all. Team leaders seemed to have no will to follow up on the action plans. (Interviewee M15 at organizational member level, female)

The template to discuss and report the action plans on a team basis was just additional work to do for me. (Interviewee M03 at organizational member level, male)

These extracts reveal their state of mind towards the change intervention. Phrases such as *'have no will to follow up on the action plans'* and *'just additional work to*

do for me' imply that team leaders consider the intervention to be no more than the additional work to do and of lesser importance. If team leaders have such a view, team members might be affected by the team leader's mind, with the result that interventions on a team basis will not work properly. As described earlier, there would be variation depending on the team culture and team leader. However, there is the similarity that they do not implement their action plans. Although the following comments are from interviewees who are comparatively satisfied with their team culture and team leader, such quotations as '*we only talked about the values but did not move into action*' and '*have not talked about a solution that can be implemented*' highlight that the discussion did not translate into action. In summary, action plans that were not implemented, as well as change interventions like company-wide campaigns which were not connected to the daily work of employees, seem to decrease the efficacy of organizational members.

On the other hand, people tend to be positive about efficacy due to strong support from the chairman. First of all, people are impressed because such a sincere and strong will for cultural change from the chairman is uncommon in the context of conglomerates in Korea. Moreover, some people perceive that the strong top down approach would be appropriate in such a hierarchical culture as that of conglomerates in Korea. The following extracts highlight this positive feeling about the efficacy.

For me, the degree of confidence in the success of the change is likely to be around 90%. However, only if these activities for the change initiative continue ... It seems to be crucial how long it will continue to drive change. (Interviewee M10 at organizational member level, male)

Most of all, the person pushing forward with a powerful drive was the chairman who is in the highest position of this company, so I believed that he would be able to make the change succeed within three to five years. (Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

These extracts imply that how powerful support from the chairman for the change initiative can impact on the efficacy of people, especially in the context of Korean conglomerates. Because of the strong commitment of the chairman to the change initiative, many leaders are nervous about whether their leadership may be seen as

not aligned with the corporate values. This cautious behaviour of the leaders makes organizational members feel positive about the possibility of change. Along the same lines, interviewee M16 regarded this cautious behaviour of leaders as the biggest organizational support, as is shown by the following comment.

The managers and the senior managers, who did not seem to be changing at all, tended to walk on eggshells, acting cautiously since the chairman launched the espoused corporate values with his strong commitment. For me, it feels like a big change that I never expected. I can say that this changed attitude of leaders is one of the biggest sources of organizational support for organizational members. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

The changed attitude of such leaders makes the members perceive their efficacy to implement the change initiative. However, even in the aforementioned comment of interviewee M10, who shows high confidence in successful change due to the strong commitment of the chairman, he emphasized the consistency and continuity of the change initiative as a precondition for successful change.

However, unfortunately, it is found that many people were disappointed with the inconsistency that the company showed during the restructuring. This disappointment might weaken the efficacy that people perceive, despite the strong support of the chairman. Many interviewees indicated that they were very disappointed with the way that the restructuring was handled, as is shown by the following quotations from interviewees M01, M10 and M13 such as ‘*top management does not say anything about ‘why’ in restructuring*’, ‘*no effective communication about the criteria for why those people were made redundant*’ and ‘*no consideration for people who get laid off.*’ Especially pertinent is the quotation of interviewee M13: ‘*it became clear how the company was going to see its employees*’ connotes a sense of a separation between him and his company, with great disappointment.

Lastly, some interviewees pointed out that the competence and experience of not only leaders but also organizational members are not sufficient to lead the cultural change effectively. In fact, from the point of view of organizational members, many interviewees tend to blame leaders for not making an effort to change their

leadership and culture despite the great impact of leaders on the cultural change, as can be seen from phrases from M13 and M14 such as ‘*just trying to rationalize his wrong behaviour*’ and ‘*superficially pretend to agree with the corporate values*’. However, some interviewees feel pity for leaders who have to change their leadership style under the pressure of lots of work for business performance. For example, interviewee M09 (at organizational member level, female) cites, “*team leaders are so pitiful. In fact, no one wants to be a team leader because team leaders have to work a lot and at the same time, they have to change their leadership style*”. In line with this, interviewee M07 cited the national education and culture as the one of the reasons for the lack of competence and experience, as the following comment indicates.

The educational environment and culture in our country, where we grew up, was not close to a horizontal and flexible culture encouraging open communication. So, people might not know how to do things that they’ve never experienced before. This lack of experience has made it difficult for both leaders and members to adapt to change. (Interviewee M07 at organizational member level, female)

This comment expresses the difficulty of the leader as well as the members who have to do things that they have never done before. Especially, team leaders who have a strong influence on team culture have in many cases never undertaken open communication with their boss. Organizational members also are not familiar with communication in the workplace where a huge generation gap exists, although they have been educated in a way of encouraging discussion and debates.

In summary, organizational members perceive the extent of efficacy in proportion to the perception of principal support as well as the gap between reality and expectations. In addition, the competence and experience of both leaders and organizational members would influence the efficacy they perceive.

(e) Personal valence

During organizational change, people will assess the outcomes of change in terms of fairness as well as the manner in which individuals are treated, asking themselves ‘What is in it for me?’ (Clarke et al., 1996; Cobb et al., 1995). As for this interview

question regarding the benefit of the change initiative for them, some interviewees, such as interviewees M15 and M13, talk about their hopes and expectations for the change, imagining their benefits from the change if the change initiative is successful. They hope that their workplace can have ‘*a great culture where they can share their opinions freely with respect*’ and ‘*healthier culture where people work transparently*’, if the cultural change is achieved successfully according to the philosophy of the corporate values.

However, the big gap between the reality and the expectation does not allow people to feel the benefit of the change initiative realistically enough. Especially for organizational members who have been struggling with the leadership of their team leaders and have a negative view on changing the leadership of the team leader, the benefit would be like pie in the sky. The following comments illustrate this.

I feel that it is unattainable to achieve the change, and the possibility of change seems too slim, unless my team leader is to be replaced. (Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

It will change if the team leader disappears or changes, which is out of my control. We feel helpless and hopeless because we cannot do anything to change the organizational culture. (Interviewee M14 at organizational member level, female)

It seems that helplessness has become widespread, that there is not much we can do at organizational member level if leaders do not change. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

These comments reveal that the realistic benefit that people perceive is tied to the culture and context in which they find themselves. Organizational members can imagine benefits with hope and expectation of change but in the end, the strength of the existing culture that they perceive is believed to make the change unlikely to be realised without the change of the team leader with vested rights. The direct leader’s leadership has a great influence on the gap between reality and expectation which organizational members recognize. Especially in the hierarchical culture of a conglomerate in Korea, organizational members would be overwhelmed by the impact of their boss’s leadership, feeling ‘*helpless and hopeless*’. In this respect, the answer to the question ‘What is in it for me?’ would be bounded by their own

context.

6.3.1.2. Perception of the change process

Three strategies are considered important, in terms of change process, that change agents could utilize to convey the change content in order to create individual readiness: persuasive communication, active participation and managing information regarding the change (Armenakis et al., 1993). This section examines how individuals experience and perceive the change process based on the three conveying strategies.

(a) Persuasive communication

Persuasive communication can take many forms including speeches, either live or recorded, and written communication such as newsletters, memos, and magazines. In terms of the extent to which organizational members hold positive views about persuasive communication to successfully undertake the cultural change, most interviewees said that diverse attempts at communication with strong commitment from the chairman were the most persuasive communication. They cited examples such as “*Q&A session of workshops not just in South Korea but also in subsidiaries around the world*” and “*The video where the chairman directly explains the cultural change initiative*”. It was the authenticity that stimulated organizational members to be persuaded by the chairman's speech. This can be discerned because the word ‘*authenticity*’ is frequently mentioned (M04, M13, M14, M15, M16). For example, Interviewee M16 spoke thus.

I was impressed with his heartfelt and deep sincerity in his speech. I could sense that he was talking about what he really wanted to do, not artificial decoration. I could feel his authenticity. (Interviewee M16 at organizational member level, female)

The authenticity that people felt has made the chairman's speech the most effective communication. However, the way of implementing Q&A sessions with the chairman was also influenced by the rigid organizational culture, although the content of his speech is persuasive.

The chairman walked around each of the subsidiaries, emphasized the corporate values and had a Q & A time. Of course, the questions were

mostly prepared, but ... In fact, otherwise, nobody will ask. No, no one can. If I asked something of the chairman directly, I would receive some flak from my boss later. I don't want to be a troublesome person... (Interviewee M11 at organizational member level, male)

This comment reveals the limitations of rigid and hierarchical culture. In that culture, organizational members seemed to be reluctant to ask questions directly at that time, concerned about what might happen to them later from their direct leaders, as can be seen from the quotation “*I would receive some flak from my boss later*”. Besides, the strategy of communication was too dependent on the chairman. Although other CEOs of subsidiaries tried to communicate, their communication was not as persuasive as that of the chairman. As a result, organizational members felt very superficial about the speeches of senior managers as well as CEOs of subsidiaries because they might not be so strong in their willingness to change as the chairman. For example, Interviewee M13 made this comment.

Unlike the chairman's speech, I could not feel any sincerity even in the speech of the CEO as well as the senior managers. I did not feel that they had a good understanding of corporate values. It was very superficial.... (Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

This comment reveals that the change initiative is too dependent on the one person, the chairman, which can be a problem in terms of effective communication strategy. People thought only the chairman's speech was persuasive and they were not impressed with the speeches of top management other than the chairman.

Moreover, organizational members seem to be more influenced by their immediate bosses than by the chairman, although the speech of the chairman is highly persuasive. This is because they communicate with their leaders more than with the chairman, as is shown by the following comments.

Even though I discerned sincerity in the speech of the chairman, it is my leader who has the most influence on me. If my leader demonstrates a sincere effort to change, the persuasive power of the communication increases, or vice versa. (Interviewee M15 at organizational member level, female)

This comment highlights that organizational members are much more influenced by their immediate bosses, regardless of the persuasive speech of the chairman.

Lastly, many interviewees perceived the public relations, such as a series of campaigns and TV advertising, as ineffective indirect communication, although the company spent a huge amount of money for them. For example, interviewee M10 commented the following.

Campaigns, magazine and even TV advertising ... I don't know what else to say. In fact, they are not so impactful and I do not remember much about them. (Interviewee M10 at organizational member level, male)

This comment shows that these in-house public relations are not effective for cultural change. People were not persuaded by those indirect communications despite the considerable investment in them. Overall, it is found that the communication by the chairman was persuasive but other communication strategies were not effective enough to convince people to participate in the change initiative.

(b) Active participation

The company had implemented several formal events in order to encourage organizational members to participate in the change initiative. First of all, when the espoused corporate values were launched, all organizational members and leaders in every unit under the ambit of each senior manager had to attend company-wide workshop at the beginning of the change initiative, with the help of the CA team. The main aim of the workshop was to introduce the corporate values and to develop a shared vision of unity for cultural change rooted in the corporate values.

I still vividly remember the workshop. All of the leaders and organizational members in our unit gathered together and had been visualising how our unit will look and what the culture in our unit will be like in the next decade once the espoused values are internalized. It was a very hopeful time, and it seemed to be imminent. However, when we returned to work after that time, everything was exactly same as it had been and the way the leaders dealt with us was no different from in the past. It was a kind of torture in spite of the fact that it was really hopeful in some ways. This is because we are too far from reaching our vision. I feel that It is a vain hope.

(Interviewee M13 at organizational member level, female)

This comment reveals people's hope as well as disappointment through the workshop. For many organizational members, it was the first experience of participating in visualising so that it was very hopeful. However, the hope they found might turn to huge disappointment without any difference in terms of the way the direct leader dealt with them.

Moreover, all of the organizational members had to participate in a meeting led by their team leader at least once a month, having a discussion of their team culture and the way of working based on the corporate values. As described earlier, in the intervention on a team basis, the quality of communication in this meeting totally would depend on *'the philosophy and belief of the team leader regarding the corporate values as well as the leadership style of the team leader'* which is taken from the comment of interviewee M13. There are a few people who have a positive view of the team discussion, and most of the interviewees including interviewees M08, M13, M14 and M15 reveal their struggle in the meeting with phrases such as *'uncomfortable and embarrassing'*, *'ridiculous'* *'stay silent as much as possible'* and *'all about showing off'*.

Finally, some interviewees commented about a meeting with change agents who were appointed in every unit under the ambit of each senior manager, as an experience of active participation during the change process. In the meeting with change agents, people talked about issues that would improve their culture to bring it into alignment with the corporate values. However, organizational members did not feel that their participation was worthwhile because they could not feel any small changes through the participation, as can be seen from phrases such as *'no action to follow'* and *'cannot experience any small changes'*. In this situation, people would consider these activities as additional work that makes people waste their time and energies, although there are many opportunities to participate in several activities in change process.

In summary, organizational members have to participate in some compulsory interventions for the change initiative, but they have experienced more negative feelings such as disappointment and struggle. This is because they can experience the interventions with their direct leaders, who do not have enough confidence and

willingness to lead the change initiative. In addition, organizational members felt frustrated with the change interventions in which they participated when they could not see any small changes through their participation.

(c) Managing information

In terms of managing information for the change initiative, it seems that the company has provided employees with enough information to help people understand the corporate values in the early stages of the change initiative. However, there seems to be little information on how the change initiative has progressed since the corporate values were launched. Many interviewees did not think that useful information to help people to change was fully communicated. For example, several interviewees, such as interviewee M13, M15 and M16 noted that they had conducted an organizational culture survey based on the corporate values, but no results were shared after the survey. They were disappointed that the information which would be helpful and useful for the change was not fully communicated, as is shown by quotations such as *'The information was being managed very confidentially'* and *'I do not understand why this information was confidential'*. These comments point to a culture where the high degree of confidentiality precludes people from receiving the information that would be helpful for the change initiative. All in all, the company did not provide people with appropriate information regarding the progress of the change initiative, with the result that they did not feel any changes without the proper information.

6.3.1.3. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at organizational member level

So far, this section has examined the perception at organizational member level in terms of the change content as well as the change process during the cultural change initiative. With regard to the five message components of change content, people had high expectations for cultural change in connection with their dissatisfaction with the existing culture. However, they were disappointed with the change initiative as the great results they expected came to nothing: they did not feel much change despite their participation.

Table 6-2. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at organizational member level

	Component	Summary
Change content	Discrepancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfaction with existing culture. (Too rigid, not even commonsensical) • Frustration with the lack of system under the hierarchy-based Confucian culture. • Lack of principles and standards for decision-making.
	Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching the corporate values for cultural change is appropriate (High expectations for deep philosophy based on win-win approach, enthusiastic response regarding the corporate values, which might be derived from exhaustion with the existing culture.) • Not appropriate (The content of the values is too complicated and broad. The change initiative focused too much on making people understand the complicated values.)
	Principal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong drive from the chairman. (Very powerful in a hierarchical culture but may stifle autonomy.) • Changed the main systems including appraisal system to be aligned with the values but people perceive that these do not work properly. • Team leaders who lead the main intervention on a team basis. (Totally depends on the existing team culture and the leadership of the team leader.)
	Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sceptical about efficacy due to the insufficient change interventions they perceived. (Not connected to the daily work, not implementing action plans, wide gap between the espoused values and practice.) • Being positive about efficacy due to the strong support from the chairman. (The cautious behaviour of leaders is a big change but need the consistency and continuity of the change initiative for successful change.) • Lack of competence and experience in both leaders and members.
	Personal valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefit from cultural change is clear but people cannot perceive it as a benefit due to the huge gap between the ideal and the reality. • The realistic benefit they perceive is tied to their team culture.

	Component	Summary
Change process	Persuasive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The communication of the chairman was persuasive because people felt the authenticity and sincerity in his speech. However, the strategy of communication was too dependent on the chairman. • People were more influenced by their immediate boss than the chairman. • Indirect communications such as campaigns were not persuasive.
	Active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People experienced hope as well as disappointment through the introductory workshop that all leaders and members were expected to participate in. • The quality of the meeting on a team basis depends on the team leader but most people have struggled with the discussion led by their team leaders. • The change interventions with the change agents made people feel frustrated because they did not feel any small changes and follow-up actions after their active participation.
	Managing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People were not provided with appropriate information regarding the progress of the change initiative.

Source: Compiled by the author

First, as for the discrepancy of the change content, organizational members who had struggled with the existing culture such as ‘*Hwoesik*’ (staff dinner after work) and frequently working overtime at night have identified the discrepancy and they have held high expectations concerning the cultural change initiative due to the difficulty caused by the existing culture. As for the appropriateness of the change content, many interviewees have a positive view towards the philosophy of the corporate values, but people have perceived that the content of the corporate values is too complicated and broad. This led most of interventions to focus on making people understand the complicated values rather than helping people to change their behaviour to align to the corporate values. As for principal support, although organizational members had perceived the sincerity and strong willingness of the chairman regarding cultural change, they were frustrated with the institutional support as well as the support from their direct leaders. Therefore, they became sceptical about efficacy due to insufficient change interventions which were not

connected to their daily work, with a wide gap between the espoused values and reality. Although some people have a positive view of the efficacy, witnessing that the strong drive of the chairman has made many leaders behave very cautiously, they argued that such leaders' cautious behaviour, caused by fear based on the strong drive, would disappear if the promotion of change slows down. Another important factor relating to efficacy for change that they pointed out is the lack of competence and experience in both leaders and members. As for 'personal valence', organizational members can imagine the benefit if the change initiative can be achieved. However, the wide gap between expectations and reality does not allow them to see the benefit as realistic enough.

With regard to the three strategies for conveying the change messages, organizational members were impressed with the sincerity and strong willingness of the chairman in terms of persuasive communication. However, they were more influenced by their immediate bosses, meaning that they were frustrated with the intervention on a team basis due to the leadership of their team leaders. Just as with the persuasive communication aspect, as for active participation, they have experienced both hope for change and disappointment in the reality. During the company-wide workshop led by the change agent team, organizational members have experienced hope for cultural change. However, after the workshop, when they have been involved in a team-based intervention led by their team leaders, they struggled with the discussion led by their team leaders, who do not seem to have the willingness to change. In addition, despite their active participation, with suggestions to improve the existing culture, there were no follow-up actions, which made them feel frustrated. Finally, as for managing of information during the change process, organizational members have not thought that the company provided them with appropriate information regarding the progress of the change initiative.

Given the perceptions of organizational members regarding the change content and process, based on the characteristics of existing culture that they perceive, as well as the overall perceptions towards their company, it would be hard for organizational members to accept the change messages themselves as they are.

The next section examines the perspective of those at team leader level in terms of

the change content as well as the change process during the cultural change initiative.

6.3.2. Team Leader level

6.3.2.1. The perception of change content

(a) Discrepancy

When the researcher asked whether they had felt the need for change in terms of organizational culture before the change initiative was launched, it seemed that some interviewees at team leader level did not feel the need to change the existing culture as deeply as organizational members felt it. However, she found that they also felt the need for change in terms of the existing culture, although they might not notice the need in their mind due to the performance pressure and stress of a stinging rebuke from their authoritarian superior. For example, interviewee L06 expressed the thought that was in his mind regarding the pressure, as well as the need for change, thusly.

At that time, I might have immersed myself in the culture for a long time, to the point where I might not recognize which aspects of the culture need improvement. To be honest, I could not afford to think about organizational culture aspects because of the tremendous pressure on performance and the burden of a heavy workload. (Interviewee L06 at team leader level, male)

After a little pause, saying that he could not afford to pay any attention to organizational cultural aspects, the team leader began to express his difficulties in an authoritarian and hierarchical culture.

I am overwhelmed with too much work and frequent overtime. Even when I get home from work at night, my direct boss calls me to give an urgent task by tomorrow morning. When such a situation continues to repeat, I am really sceptical as to how I'll be able to manage my job in this way. Then, I thought to myself 'How would my team members look at me in this situation? When team members see this situation, do they want to become team leaders later? (Interviewee L06 at team leader level, male)

These comments from interviewee L06 reveal how much he was suffering from the

leadership style of his boss, which is very dogmatic, peremptory and authoritarian. Interestingly, at first, he initially answered that he did not have much to say regarding the interview question as to whether he felt a need for change in terms of the existing culture, although he was suffering from the boss's dictatorial way of treating people. As seen in his earlier comment, he might not recognize the need for change, saying, "*I might have immersed myself in the culture for a long time.*" Behind the comment that he did not recognize the need for change, he seemed to accept as inevitable such a very dictatorial and disrespectful way of communication from his boss, regarding it as unchangeable. In addition, his primary concern is apparently more about the performance than organizational culture as a team leader who is responsible for the team performance because it is obvious that his boss will push him to get results fast in a peremptory way. It is analysed that the performance pressure and stress have prevented him from recognizing even the need for change, although he has the need for cultural change.

In line with this, interviewee L07 commented that team leaders seemed to have the most stress on performance under the authoritarian culture where it is difficult to discuss some issues that they cannot solve on their own.

Although I have a problem in in terms of the progress of the project, it would be difficult to say "no" or "difficult" in any difficult situation, unless I had an alternative solution. This is because many senior managers do not want to talk about the issue or problem and are reluctant to report it to top management. (Interviewee L07 at team leader level, male)

The comment from interviewee L07 reveals the difficulty of team leaders who cannot raise issues in such an authoritarian culture. Therefore, he felt very strongly the need for cultural change, saying "*This organizational culture in which we cannot discuss and debate issues or problems should change as soon as possible.*"

Moreover, team leaders tended to feel the discrepancy in terms of people management and operational procedure in the company.

As the company has grown rapidly, a lot of experienced employees from various other companies have come in. As team leaders, we might need something to tie people who came from various companies together into one team for effective people management. (Interviewee L05 at team leader level,

male)

I felt the discrepancy in terms of improving our work efficiency. There are many cases where people waste time due to the lack of process and system. In fact, the lack of system makes communication more difficult, reducing working efficiency. (Interviewee L03 at team leader level, male)

These comments reveal that their need for change is related to their responsibility as a team leader. As the size of the company has grown through various M&As globally, each team had to perform with team members with various cultural backgrounds. In this respect, many team leaders felt that something that can unite team members was needed in terms of people management. In addition, since the systems and the processes were not efficient enough, the way they work was inefficient, making people waste time and energy. In this situation, team leaders believed that the cultural change initiative should be promoted along with the improvement of systems and processes.

In summary, interviewees at team leader level who are suffering under the hierarchical culture and authoritarian leadership tended to feel the need for cultural change, although they might not notice how strongly they feel the need due to the performance pressure coming from their immediate superiors. In addition, their need for change is related to people management and operational procedure in the company, which is their responsibility as a team leader.

(b) Appropriateness

As for the appropriateness of the change initiative, most interviewees at team leader level regarded the change initiative based on the corporate values as an appropriate one, although a few people were concerned about the timeliness of change in the depressed business situation.

First of all, some interviewees at team leader level highly praised the content of the corporate values in terms of providing people with the direction and vision of the company, while organizational members tend to be impressed with the philosophy of corporate values based on a win-win approach. For example, interviewee L02 cites, *“In order for our company to become a truly sustainable company, I could not agree more with the philosophy and its way of working as presented in the espoused*

corporate values.”

Moreover, the majority of interviewees at team leader level agree that the cultural change initiative should prioritize changing leadership style and the perspective of leaders towards people, although they are also not familiar with the new approach and leadership. The corporate values and philosophy highly emphasize that leaders should treat their subordinates not as a resource but as humans who have potential for growth, being respectful of them. The comment of interviewee L03 describes the new approach rooted in the cultural change as can be seen below.

As I see it, the corporate values are based on being human-centred. 'Human-centred' means that the company respects me as a human being with emotions and personality. Such an approach based on respect for people might be seen as the opposite of pushing people too much in the pursuit of efficiency, treating them as machines. (Interviewee L03 at team leader level, male)

He believes that changing the leadership style with a new perspective and approach to people is essential for changing corporate culture. However, it would not be easy for leaders to achieve a new perspective and approach based on being human-centred, which seems to be the opposite way of treating people from the last 20 or 30 years in their career, as can be seen from the phrase of interviewee L07 “*would be like clothes that did not fit them*”. In addition, team leaders are also subordinates who suffer under the leadership of their own direct boss, senior managers who tend to be more authoritarian with a high propensity for short-termism as contract workers. Therefore, team leaders understand that cultural change would be difficult unless the leadership would change and they agree with the approach of the cultural change initiative which focuses on changing leadership.

However, especially some interviewees in a subsidiary which is in a very difficult business situation thought that the cultural change initiative was untimely and inappropriate. For example, interviewee L08 questioned the necessity of cultural change in a company where its business situation is at its worst, saying, “*I wondered what it means to change organizational culture in this situation.*” Emphasizing the urgent situation, he added, “*I think it is time to push people more strongly to obtain good results rather than emphasizing the corporate values and culture.*” It would be

much harder to use an unfamiliar way of leadership, even if the cultural change based on corporate values is attractive and ideal for changing the leadership style.

In summary, in terms of appropriateness of the change content, it is found that most leaders accept that the direction of change is right and inevitable in order for their company to become truly sustainable in the long term. In addition, they are aware that it is essential for leaders to change their perspective and approach in order to change organizational culture. However, some interviewees argued that the change initiative was perceived as inappropriate, especially for leaders in subsidiary companies where business conditions were very bad. Next section examines the perceptions of team leaders regarding principal support for the change initiative.

(c) Principal support

As can be seen from the section on discrepancy, team leaders have encountered difficulty in changing their leadership style, especially as subordinates of their dictatorial and authoritarian bosses. In this respect, they agree that changing leadership is a prerequisite for cultural change but they argue that the leadership style of the upper management should first change entirely. Also, they need various organizational support for cultural change, to assist them in changing their leadership style within the existing culture of the Korean conglomerate.

First, as one example of the principal support for leaders, some interviewees such as interviewees L01, L02 and L07 mentioned the leadership training programmes, which were delivered to leaders at all levels at the beginning of the change initiative in order to help leaders to change their perspective and approach via their leadership style rooted in the corporate values. They had high opinions of the leadership programmes in terms of “*raising awareness of their current leadership style*” as well as “*gaining valuable advice from the experts*”. These comments show that the leadership training programmes served as a useful starting point for improving their leadership. However, it would be still hard for leaders to change the leadership styles with which they have been familiar for a long time.

Second, in addition to this support of leadership programmes for leaders at all levels, the strong willingness and commitment of the chairman would be the principal support, even though it had created a tense atmosphere in which all leaders must

change their leadership style. In this atmosphere, many leaders who are struggling to change their leadership have perceived the strong willingness and commitment of the chairman with fear and apprehension. This tension with fear increased dramatically, as several leaders who have used some abusive language or sexual harassment were dismissed, as is shown by the following comment.

The effect was really strong. Not only in the beginning of the change initiative but also up to the present, many leaders seem to have a sense of crisis, fearing that they can be fired regardless of their performance if the organizational culture is ruined due to a leadership style that is against the corporate values. (Interviewee L07 at team leader level, male)

The dismissals made many leaders feel that they were also constantly being monitored and challenged in terms of their leadership style. Although there remains the concern about the oppressive approach based on the fear, the strong willingness from the chairman has a great impact on the change effort with reference to leaders and it made them cautious so as not to give offence to their subordinates.

Third, various compulsory interventions which had been implemented as one part of the principal support for leaders along with the atmosphere of fear, however, have not seemed to be effective for cultural change. Many interviewees at team leader level felt that the interventions were too numerous and too hasty, as organizational members experienced the aforementioned struggles with the interventions. Team leaders were able to feel the strong will and commitment of top management regarding the change initiative through many interventions and the way of implementing them. However, many comments reveal that it was not efficient to implement many interventions by being so pushy (L02, L03, L05, L06, L07, L09). The use of words like *'perfunctory'*, *'steamrollered'*, *'inefficient'*, *'like homework'*, *'too many'*, *'too hasty'*, *'as fast as'* and *'rush too hastily'* highlighted the team leaders' perceptions regarding the way of implementing the interventions. As the interventions that require compulsory participation are strongly promoted in an atmosphere that creates fear and worry, many leaders showed a reaction to the intervention in a perfunctory and absent-minded way and they made do with minimal duties in the intimidating atmosphere, as is shown by the following comment.

In the atmosphere of the powerful change initiative, most of the team leaders seemed to take care not to be obtrusive, just doing perfunctorily whatever they are told. The team members were saying self-deprecatingly, "It is not possible to change the way we work based on the corporate values in this harsh workplace." The team members are not kids and they knew that it would not happen. (Interviewee L05 at team leader level, male)

Fourth, team leaders who suffer from changing their leadership in the atmosphere with pressure to get results rapidly in a short-termism environment have needed organizational systemic support for cultural change. Many team leaders have had difficulty in the situation where the cultural change initiative has been promoted along with the fear from the strong drive of the chairman but at the same time the short-termism has still been prevalent, with its huge pressure on performance, as is shown by the following comment.

Upper management tends to push to get results faster, but the organizational members want a balance between work and life along with the cultural change initiative. Therefore, team leaders must play a coordinating role in the middle, which is the hardest job for me. (Interviewee L09 at team leader level, male)

This comment implies that team leaders were asked to play a coordinating role with the two different messages, which made them frustrated. In this situation, not only team leaders but also organizational members have been confused by two different kinds of messages from the company. Interviewee L03 points to '*the atmosphere with pressure to get results fast*' as the main obstacle to their efforts to change their leadership style. In other words, it is found that team leaders want organizational systemic support to create an atmosphere that would help them to exert the leadership based on the corporate values, rather than shifting a burden on to the team leaders.

In this situation, one of the systemic supports that team leaders can perceive strongly is an appraisal system that should support the change initiative with evidence that those who are role models aligned with the cultural change should be evaluated positively. However, people have been disappointed with the appraisal system in terms of the alignment with the cultural change initiative, as is shown by the

following comment.

Unfortunately, the boss who has tried to change his leadership style in order to be a role model was forced out from his work as part of the restructuring. Many people, including me, were disappointed with his resignation. This is because the senior managers who did not fit the corporate values were promoted but the boss who had been trying to lead by example related to the corporate values was forced out from his work. (Interviewee L03 at team leader level, male)

This comment reveals that team leaders feel a lack of systemic support for cultural change. In the lack of the systemic support, team leaders have come to the view that asking team leaders to play a coordinating role in the middle would be like passing on the burden to the team leader.

Fifth, one of the most powerful areas of support that most team leaders cited was the support of their immediate superior. However, as interviewee L04 cites, “*many team leaders seem to have a negative view*” of the support of their boss. Interviewee L02 also complains that his boss did not make an effort to change his leadership, as is shown by the following comment.

I think that my boss has not made an effort to change himself but nonetheless asked me to change my leadership style. He should change himself before asking me to do so. When superiors request their subordinates to change, not practising themselves what they preach, it is doubtful how persuasive the request will be to their subordinates. (Interviewee L02 at team leader level, male)

Interviewee L06 also expressed his disappointment at his boss, “*if something urgent happens to him, he tends to go back to acting in a more peremptory way.*” While most interviewees at team leader level have a negative view of the support of their boss for the cultural change, interviewee L03 noted his positive experience in terms of ‘leading by example’ of his boss.

Though my boss wasn't originally a person who tends to care very much about people, during the cultural change based on the corporate values, he was trying hard to respect people more and listen to the opinions of their

members more, despite his quick temper. Therefore, when I saw my boss trying so hard, I thought I would do that to my juniors as well. His endeavours and actions were an example to me and helped me a lot in terms of improving my leadership style. (Interviewee L03 at team leader level, male)

This comment shows how a boss's endeavour for change motivates people to change. Seeing the boss's efforts made him motivated to change, creating a virtuous circle of change. However, as mentioned earlier regarding the appraisal system which did not align to the corporate values, the boss was forced out from his work as part of restructuring, although other senior managers who did not fit the corporate values were promoted. Therefore, it made people very disappointed with the appraisal system which does not support those who are role models aligned with the cultural change initiative.

Lastly, in line with their negative views in terms of the change effort of their direct bosses, some interviewees argued that this issue of not taking the initiative would come from the top management. Some interviewees, such as L01 and L02, talked about CEOs of subsidiaries who have also tried to read the chairman, the owner of the company, regarding the cultural change initiative. Phrases such as '*did not feel the authenticity*', '*their actions do not correspond with their words*' and '*pretend to know the philosophy rooted in human-centricity*' highlight the importance of 'leading by example', especially from top management. They thought that the impact of 'leading by example' from the top management would be much greater than that from team leaders or senior managers. In line with this, interviewee L06 pointed out the overall tendency of Korean companies in terms of authority concentration. "*Most power and authority in the company are weighted towards top management so that everybody, whether they are team leaders or senior managers, tends to care only about the top management's attention.*" He claimed that this tendency can be the main obstacle or the main driver for cultural change because this tendency would trigger the cultural change, using the impact of authority concentration. In this respect, it would be powerful for top management to be a role model for cultural change.

(d) Efficacy

As for efficacy, on the one hand, some interviewees at team leader level perceived that cultural change would be possible if the change initiative continued to be implemented intensively. For example, interviewee L04 cited “*whatever it is, it seems to be achieved, if it continues at this pace and with this intensity.*” The strong drive from the chairman has been combined with the tendency of the leaders unconditionally to obey their boss in a hierarchical culture. This combination stimulated some changes in the words and behaviours of leaders, as is shown by the following comment of interviewee L02.

I have been with the company for over 25 years, and I am a person who has done what company asked me to do, just following the direction of the company. Perhaps, many leaders over my age would be similar to me. We tend to follow the direction of the company unconditionally. So, if the company continues to drive change at this intensity, then change will surely happen. (Interviewee L02 at team leader level, male)

In this atmosphere, some team leaders believe that it will change at the leader level in this fearful atmosphere, as can be seen from the quotation of interviewee L06 “*Some senior managers who never seemed to change are fearfully trying to change their words due to the change initiative.*” Therefore, from the point of view of leaders, many leaders tended to think that the culture of respecting people and listening to subordinates has improved in the current company compare to the past. As a result, they thought that since the change initiative, organizational members have expressed their opinions more confidently. In this respect, they perceive the strong commitment from the chairman as the main driver for change and they believe that the change will happen if the drive for change continues. Along with this strong commitment from this chairman, there seemed to be a belief that the cultural change also cannot be avoided as a result of changes in the values of the younger generation as well as socio-cultural changes in Korea. This belief made them perceive the efficacy positively, as can be seen from the quotation of interviewee L01 “*As a leader, we cannot deny it. We should inevitably change the leadership.*” He thought that rejecting the change would be a retrograde step for leaders. In this respect, in terms of efficacy, he believes that leaders will inevitably

end up changing.

On the other hand, other interviewees have been concerned about the oppressive way of implementing the change initiative, which cannot inspire the intrinsic motivation of people. Interviewee L07 argued, “*Changing culture requires a lot of time and patience from leaders in terms of the organizational systems and processes to support the cultural change.*” This comment reveals why people perceived matters negatively in terms of efficacy. For the real cultural change, various things should be supported such as the authentic endeavour of leaders in changing their leadership style as well as the systems and processes to support the culture based on the corporate values. Under the atmosphere of fear from the strong will and commitment of the chairman, it might be impossible to change organizational culture because cultural change requires the intrinsic motivation of people to change their mindset. In such a repressive situation, people will be no more than pretending to do this.

One of the most negative factors in terms of efficacy is the weakened will and commitment of top management for cultural change as well as the lack of systemic support that can help the cultural change, as is shown by the following comments.

At the beginning of the change initiative, the belief in the feasibility of change was very large. However, the company seems to have made a lot of mistakes when trying to push it too quickly. Besides, before the cultural change in the corporate values was settled, business conditions became worse, meaning the commitment from the top management became weaker. I am afraid it seemed that successful change could not be achieved.
(Interviewee L06 at team leader level, male)

As emphasized in the beginning of the section on efficacy, the essential factor for the efficacy of cultural change is to ‘*continue to implement the change initiative intensively*’, but this comment implies that the continuity of change initiative was frustrated by the worsening business.

In summary, on the one hand, some team leaders had a positive perception regarding efficacy due to the strong will of the chairman at the beginning of the change initiative, thinking that cultural change would be possible only if the strong drive for

change continued. In addition, the belief that the change is inevitable made people perceive the efficacy positively. On the other hand, other team leaders were concerned about the oppressive manner of implementing the change initiative because it would not inspire the intrinsic motivation of people to make a real change in their mindset and their leadership style. In the end, the worsening business might frustrate the change initiative, which leads to negative perceptions in terms of efficacy.

(e) Personal valence

In terms of personal valence for team leaders, most interviewees could not find their own benefit from the cultural change. Especially under the atmosphere where team leaders have a pressure to obtain results fast, changing the leadership style would be a burden for leaders, as is shown by the following comment of interviewee L01.

I do not think there's anything beneficial for team leaders. The new style of leadership is harder and tiring than beneficial for leaders. In the past, there was a quick turnaround when I was angry with team members, but now I have to start by explaining why team members should do the job and give feedback in the process. In fact, we cannot see any quick results in the short term, exercising this new leadership style. It is not the style that team leaders are familiar with, so it is difficult rather than beneficial for team leaders. (Interviewee L01 at team leader level, male)

This comment implies that team leaders regard the change initiative not as a benefit but as a burden. The new leadership style that is required for cultural change would not be easy for team leaders under the pressure of short-termism. In this respect, it would be hard for them to find any benefit in their difficulty during the cultural change.

However, some interviewees mentioned that the improved communication with team members could be a benefit, although they did not see it as a great benefit. For example, interviewee L05 commented the following.

Regarding benefits from the cultural change, I feel that communication with my team members is a little improved. In addition, I can expect that the company will not be so inhuman to me because the company has emphasized

the respect for humans via the corporate values. (Interviewee L05 at team leader level, male)

This comment reveals that he is feeling change in his leadership style through improved communication with his team members and also hoping to be treated with respect as a human as the corporate values emphasize. This change in his leadership that he was beginning to feel for himself seemed to be small, but it would be a real change and a benefit. Along with the small change that some team leaders perceived, interviewee L07 pointed to the improved image of the team members about the company as a benefit of the cultural change.

I felt that my team members got a better sense of the company. Their pride in the company seemed to be rising. Having a good impression about the company is good for team management from the perspective of the team leader. However, after the restructuring and workforce reduction, I am afraid that it has been ruined, with great disappointment about the company. (Interviewee L07 at team leader level, male)

As can be seen in the comment, team leaders might be pleased with the pride of team members in the company, but after the restructuring they found it more difficult to deal with the great disappointment of team members as well as their own.

All in all, many leaders have rarely found any benefit to themselves from the cultural change initiative. For team leaders as an intermediary between senior management and organizational members, the change initiative can be more a burden than a benefit. Although some interviewees tried to find the benefit in the better communication with their team members, most team leaders seem to participate in the change initiative without any clear benefits that they perceived.

6.3.2.2. Perception of the change process

(a) Persuasive communication

In terms of persuasive communication in the change process that team leaders perceive, a majority of interviewees also pointed out the persuasive communication from the chairman, similarly to organizational members. This is because they believed that it is very effective for the owner to strongly deliver a change message, especially in the hierarchical structure of a Korean conglomerate. Interviewees L06

and L07 perceived the direct communication from the chairman as constituting the most powerful and persuasive messages, as can be seen from quotations such as *'feel how strongly the company is driving the culture change initiative'* and *'this change initiative is different from past attempts to change.'* Interviewee L06 felt how strongly the company was driving the cultural change, quoting part of the chairman's speech, *"Leaders who do not strive to improve the organizational culture based on the corporate values cannot work with me at this company"*.

However, as the change message which was delivered persuasively by the chairman's speech turned into indirect communication strategies such as campaigns, magazines and newsletters, interviewee L07 perceived that the change message was much less persuasive, in the following words.

I think that the launch of the change initiative was powerful, with the direct communication by the chairman. However, since then, suddenly it seems to have changed to just a campaign, so the impact of communication has become weaker and weaker. (Interviewee L07 at team leader level, male)

In addition, some interviewees felt a wide gap between reality and expectations within the speech of the chairman. For example, interviewee L02 wondered whether the chairman was aware of the reality of a company that has a poor environment with a lack of resources, as can be seen from the quotation *"The situation is that too much workforce reduction has taken place in order to meet the determined profit rate. It is doubtful how much the chairman knows about this situation."*

All in all, team leaders perceive the speech of the chairman as the most persuasive communication, similar to organizational members. However, the direct communication was delivered only at the beginning of the change initiative and changed to indirect communications such as campaigns and magazines. In addition, some interviewees doubted whether the chairman was aware of the reality of the company.

(b) Active participation

In terms of active participation that team leaders perceive, most interviewees felt that there were too many compulsory interventions for team leaders, because they were obliged to participate in additional leadership training and workshops for

leaders, over and above the interventions for all employees. With the belief that changing the leadership and their perspective is a prerequisite for cultural change, the company supported those additional leadership training sessions for team leaders. However, most leaders such as L02, L04 and L06 were overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions which they had to attend despite a heavy workload due to the ongoing short-termism, as can be seen from phrases such as ‘*so tired*’, ‘*overwhelmed*’, ‘*kept grumbling*’, and ‘*dissatisfied*’.

In addition to the frequency of the interventions in which team leaders had to actively participate, they had burdensome duties to lead the discussions regarding the corporate values on a team basis as one of the change interventions. For example, interviewee L07 commented the following.

It would be unfamiliar for team leaders to lead this kind of discussion. In addition, the topics of discussion relate to the cultural change initiative, which are very much related to the leadership of the team leader, so it would be uncomfortable for the team members to speak up with their opinions regarding the topics. It was embarrassing for me to encourage my team members, who tended to be reluctant, to discuss the topics, including topics related to my leadership style. (Interviewee L07 at team leader level, male)

This comment highlights the embarrassment and perplexity of the team leaders who had to lead the discussion in an unfamiliar way. As seen in the perspective of organizational members, team members were also struggling with the weird atmosphere where team leaders had difficulty leading the discussion. Both the team leaders and the team members were unfamiliar with the way of discussion as well as the topics of discussion.

All in all, team leaders were overwhelmed not only by the frequency of interventions they had to participate but also by a considerable burden to lead the discussion on a team basis, encouraging team members to participate in the intervention.

(c) Managing information

As for managing information in the change process, while organizational members felt that they did not receive enough information for the change initiative, team

leaders felt the burden of getting too much information. The phrases of interviewees L02 and L03 such as *'too much'*, *'Too much information was pouring out'*, *'frankly it was too burdensome'* and *'could not afford to assimilate a lot of information'* show their considerable burden, with too much information coming from the CA team and top management. The reason that leaders tended to consider the information burdensome is that the greater part of the information was related to the skills and mindset to change their leadership and cultural change, which is unspoken pressure to request leaders to change their own leadership style.

However, in terms of the information from the bottom to the top, some interviewees argued that information did not flow smoothly and it was delivered in distorted form to the top management. Along the same lines, interviewee L04 cited the example of Q & A sessions with top management which were created to listen and respond to the opinions and complaints of the employees in the process of change in order for top management to support them in the change.

For example, during the discussions and Q & A sessions with top management, all questions and opinions from organizational members were pre-screened. In the end, the information cannot be conveyed properly from the bottom to the top and top management seems to have the impression that the change is going well based on the distorted information they received. Therefore, it seems that top management and organizational members had a different view in terms of the progress of cultural change. (Interviewee L04 at team leader level, male)

This example reveals a facet of the hierarchical and authoritarian culture, which is reluctant to listen bad news or problems. Therefore, bad news or information cannot reach the top management properly. Interviewee L05 also cited another example of a business information session with top management.

We had already heard informally from the team leaders at finance and sales that the company was in a very difficult situation. However, at the business information session where the CEO was present, we saw that the financial numbers had been changed and announced. It was not honest and accurate. It is said that this happened because some senior managers changed the financial numbers on their lines to avoid being reprimanded for their fault.

(Interviewee L05 at team leader level, male)

As can be seen from this quotation, the hierarchical and authoritarian culture which is reluctant to listen to bad news or problems has been shown not only in the cultural change initiative but also in the business situation.

All in all, while organizational members felt that they did not receive enough information for the cultural change initiative, team leaders tended to feel overwhelmed by too much information, being asked to change their leadership style. However, in terms of the information passing from the bottom to the top, the information was delivered in distorted form due to the culture that is reluctant to listen to bad news or problems.

6.3.2.3. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at team leader level

This section has attempted to describe the individuals' perceptions at team leader level in terms of the change content as well as the change process during the cultural change initiative. With regard to the change content, on the one hand, it is found that team leaders felt that the cultural change was an irresistible change which they should accept. On the other hand, it is analysed that they thought that the existing culture was too strong to change.

Table 6-3. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at team leader level

	Component	Summary
Change content	Discrepancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a need for cultural change due to the dogmatic, peremptory and authoritarian leadership of their bosses, although they did not even recognize it with the performance pressure under the authoritarian leadership. • Ineffectiveness in terms of people management and operational procedure brought about the discrepancy.
	Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate (Providing people with direction and vision, changing the leadership style is essential for cultural change.) • Not appropriate in terms of timeliness, especially for the leaders in some subsidiaries where business conditions were very bad.
	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership courses served as a useful starting point for the

	Component	Summary
	support	<p>improvement of their leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived the strong will of the chairman with fear and apprehension. • Reacted in a perfunctory and absent-minded way against many change interventions that require compulsory participation. • Needed organizational systemic support for cultural change, avoiding the propensity for short-termism. • Need “leading by example” from upper management.
	Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive about efficacy due to the strong will of the chairman, but only if the strong drive for change continues. • Belief that the change is inevitable made people perceive the efficacy positively. • Concerned about the oppressive way of implementing the change initiative because it cannot inspire the intrinsic motivation of people.
	Personal valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could not find their own benefit from change initiative under the pressure of getting results fast. • Some team leaders perceived improved communication with team members as a benefit.
Change process	Persuasive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direct communication of the chairman was persuasive, much as for organizational members. • However, team leaders felt frustration at the huge gap between ideal and reality in the chairman’s speech because the gap would be a burden on them with insufficient organizational support.
	Active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions including leadership training and workshops. • Had burdensome duties in effectively leading the discussion on a team basis.
	Managing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much information was burdensome for team leaders. • Information from the bottom to the top was delivered in distorted form due to rigid culture that is reluctant to listen to bad news or problems.

Source: Compiled by the author

First of all, as for the discrepancy, they have the need for cultural change due to the dictatorial leadership of their immediate bosses, although some interviewees even did not recognize this need for change at first because of the performance pressure as well as their heavy workload. In addition, their need for change arose from concerns about ineffectiveness in terms of people management as well as operational procedure in the current state of the company. As for the appropriateness of change content, most interviewees at team leader level have admitted that changing the leadership style is essential for cultural change, positively perceiving the change initiative as the right direction for change. However, some interviewees have doubted its appropriateness in terms of the time scale because their business environment was deteriorating. As for principal support that they perceive, they received organizational support from the leadership training programmes, even if the training programmes were merely the starting point for changing their leadership style. However, it would be very hard for leaders to change their leadership style with which they have been familiar for their entire career. This difficulty was a fundamental cause for team leaders to recognize the strong willingness of the chairman with fear and apprehension, which led them to participate in the change interventions in a superficial way. To make matters worse, their business situation had worsened and the company was forced back into its propensity for short-termism, which was in opposition to the direction of the cultural change. As for the efficacy of change content, some leaders perceived it positively not only because of the strong willingness of the chairman but also because of their belief that the direction of change is right and inevitable. However, they have been concerned about the oppressive way of implementing the change initiative based on fear, which cannot inspire the intrinsic motivation of people. In this situation, it would be difficult for team leaders to find any benefit to themselves from the change initiative, although some team leaders experienced improved communication with their team members as a personal valence.

With regard to the three strategies to convey the change messages, team leaders also pointed to the sincerity and the strong willingness of the chairman as a very persuasive communication strategy, similar to the perception from the organizational member level. However, they felt frustration at the wide gap between reality and expectations in the chairman's speech because the gap would be a burden

on themselves under insufficient organizational support. As for active participation in the change process, a majority of team leaders were overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions in which they had to play an important role in the change process. They have been burdened not only by active participation but also by receiving too much information during the change process. In addition, some leaders argued that the information from the bottom to the top management was delivered in distorted form due to the culture that is reluctant to listen to bad news or problems, which made the cultural change as well as the business situation worse.

Overall, compared to organizational members' perceptions, team leaders seem to have burdensome duties connected to the cultural change due to too many compulsory interventions as well as the pressure to change their leadership style for the cultural change. In fact, in the hierarchical culture of a Korean conglomerate, it is true that leaders play a significant role in changing organizational culture. However, it is found that too much burden causes team leaders to participate in the interventions in a perfunctory and absent-minded way.

The next section examines the perspectives on the change initiative at CEO level as well as at the level of the change agents who have designed and led the cultural change.

6.3.3. CEO level

6.3.3.1. Perception of change content

(a) Discrepancy

In line with the comments from those at team leader level and organizational member level, interviewees at CEO level also pointed out the culture of silence where employees are reluctant to speak their own opinions, especially about critical issues and problems. Interviewee C3 claimed that the culture of silence is a problem that most Korean conglomerates have, saying "*People cannot speak their own opinions under the culture of 'Nun-chi' where people are walking on eggshells and trying hard not to upset their boss.*" He expressed the disappointment that was in his mind regarding the deficient product which has caused significant damage to the company via the following comment.

Some people knew about the problem three years ago but they did not say anything. We would have been able to solve the problem more easily if someone had spoken out about it at least a year ago. It is a pity that those who knew it did not speak at all. It is a shame that they did not realise that the damage of 50 million won at that time increased to several hundred billion won a few years later because they did not say anything.
(Interviewee C3 at CEO level, male)

This comment demonstrates the negative effect of the culture of silence. Additionally, he insisted that leaders are basically responsible for the organizational culture where subordinates never speak to the boss even if they have desirable opinions. This is because if the leader does not respect his subordinates and does not have a willingness to listen to his subordinates, the subordinates will perceive it instinctively and they will never talk. Interviewee C2 also pointed out the culture of silence as one of the serious problems in the existing culture, saying “*People cannot say ‘No’ or ‘It will be difficult’ and then no matter what work is going on, nobody talks.*” His concerns about the culture of silence connote people’s unconcern about work with the quotation of ‘*no matter what work is going on*’.

Along with the concern about the culture of silence, interviewee C2 criticized two more main problems which influence the corporate culture of Korean conglomerates. He explained the negative feedback loop caused by the three problems, citing, “*In such a silent culture, inappropriate leaders push people in the pursuit of an ambiguous goal. These three factors seem to be exacerbated as they become tangled together.*”

All in all, interviewees at CEO level felt the need for change, most feeling concern about the culture of silence where employees are reluctant to speak their own opinions, especially relating to critical issues and problems.

(b) Appropriateness

Similar to the comments from team leaders as well as organizational members, the interviewees at CEO level also believed that the direction of cultural change rooted in the corporate values was right. They might think it would be the solution to the culture of silence, which they regard as the main problem of the existing culture. For example, interviewee C3 expressed his delight with the corporate values as a core

philosophy of the cultural change, saying *"when the cultural change rooted in the corporate values launched, I was pleased because the content of the change initiative seemed to solve the problems resulting from the culture of silence."* Interviewee C3 believed that the cultural change rooted in the corporate values could be helpful to solve the problem of the culture of silence. This is because he believed that the corporate values are a systematic and well-organized philosophical system able to deal with fundamental problems such as the culture of silence. In line with this, interviewee C1 rated the corporate values highly in that the values take into account human nature, saying *"The corporate values contain aspects of human nature such as autonomy and the need for development, so people can accept them without resistance."*

Although interviewees at CEO level have also agreed that the direction of cultural change is right, interviewees perceived that the way of implementing the cultural change would not be appropriate in terms of the concreteness of the approach in a context where there were few leaders aligned to the corporate values. For example, interviewee C2 claimed that it is important to clearly clarify what kind of leadership should be exercised in the workplace, as it is shown by the following comment.

Some leaders who show the worst behaviours, such as abuse or sexual harassment, seem to have been controlled because those people got fired. The effect is likely to be continuing until now. However, it seems that we have not really shown to leaders the concrete leadership we expect. In other words, we have provided leaders with just a "Do not" list, not a "Do" list in terms of the leadership behaviour we expect. For this reason, cultural change will be difficult unless the change initiative is approached in a concrete way.
(Interviewee C2 at CEO level, male)

This comment reveals that the company has not provided people with concrete aspects of leadership. In line with the lack of concrete aspects, interviewee C3 argued that the cultural change would lack specificity with regard to the business operation side, saying *"It's a pity that the aspect of operations, such as quality and customer value, which is important for the cultural change in the workplace, is abstract and conceptual."*

As for the appropriateness of the change initiative, interviewees at CEO level were

positive about the direction of cultural change. However, they perceived that the way of implementing the cultural change would not be concrete enough in the context where there were few role models, so people need concrete and specific examples or ways.

(c) Principal support

As for the principal support in the change initiative, interviewees at CEO level cited mainly three sources of principal support for the cultural change. First of all, interviewee C3 emphasized that the most important thing would be the change emanating from top management in the hierarchical culture of conglomerates in Korea, emphasizing the influence of the top management on the corporate culture.

The change will be possible only if top management demonstrate their change effort by changing their leadership first. However, it will be hard... In fact, it is problematic that organizational culture is highly influenced by the top leader, especially in conglomerates in Korea. (Interviewee C3 at CEO level, male)

Interviewee C3 perceives the top leader in the highest position as the key to the cultural change because the influence of the top leader is crucial in any organizational culture in the Korean context. However, he seems to have a negative view regarding a change starting from the top leader first, expressing with the word ‘hard’ in his comment. In line with this, interviewee C1 also criticized top management ‘not internalizing the end image of the change fully’, which might negatively influence employees in the cultural change.

Moreover, interviewees at CEO level emphasized steady and continuous change effort as one of the most important pieces of organizational support. Interviewee C1 asserted that there is no shortcut for change and especially, cultural change requires steady and hard work, as the following comment indicates.

The only way to change is to work steadily. Every change is a series of exercises to form habits. We must make the habit step by step. Does organizational culture change at once? There is nothing cool in the process of change. The change requires a step-by-step process. The process of going at it step-by-step would be tedious, but if we try changing small things one

by one, we'll discover that we are going to be cool someday. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

He stressed '*The process of going at it step-by-step*' in his comment despite the view that it would be tedious and boring. Additionally, he emphasized '*internalizing the end image of the cultural change*' which helps people to endure and go through the tedious process of change. He asserted that company should have provided people with the opportunity and time to fully internalize the end image, which could be a good starting point for change. However, he thought that many people who unwillingly went for cultural change with a fear stemming from the strong drive of the chairman seemed to '*have no energy to endure the tedious process of change*'. In this regard, he regretted that it would be hard to change steadily and continuously, which he emphasized as part of the most important organizational support.

(d) Efficacy

As for the efficacy of the change initiative, interviewee C2 has a negative view, unless the current way of implementing the change initiative is complemented. Although the company has provided employees with the new appraisal system in the change initiative, it had been criticized with considerable negative feedback. Interviewee C2 criticized the new appraisal system with quotations such as '*the process is just too complex*' and '*no effect on the leaders who are against the cultural change*'. In line with this, interviewee C3 also emphasized the proper appraisal system aligned to the cultural change, saying, "*The right leaders who are acknowledged by people should get the right places. However, if an inappropriate leader occupies an important post, the organizational culture will be destroyed.*" In this respect, interviewee C2 asserted that it would be necessary to rearrange the evaluation criteria for the new appraisal system such as promotion and compensation of leaders, so as not to make employees perceive the cultural change and work as separate domains.

If we redefine the role of leadership at different levels and create a system that can be linked to appraisal and promotion based on it, filtering out inappropriate leaders and allowing employees to have a good leadership experience, then the cultural change will succeed. Also, leaders would be evaluated in accordance with the criteria for leadership as redefined based on

the corporate values, to perceive the cultural change and their work as a merged whole. How good would it have been if the leadership behaviour changes were embedded within work, within daily life? I'm sorry that it has not happened. Unless the appraisal system is complemented, I think change would be difficult. (Interviewee C2 at CEO level, male)

The comment of interviewee C2 is worth noting as he had experienced planning the change initiative with the chairman ten years ago when the change initiative was intended to be announced but it was postponed due to a difficult business environment at that time. He believed that unless the change initiative is complemented by an appraisal system aligned to the cultural change, the change initiative would not succeed.

Contrary to these negative views, interviewee C1 has a positive view of the efficacy of the cultural change. He has a firm positive conviction regarding efficacy in the change initiative because he believes that the direction of change is right.

I think the corporate values contain the right things to do. That is the reason we should keep doing it. Everyone is looking for the right thing... Eventually instinctual behaviour finds the right thing. We're looking for happiness in our life, aren't we? To be happy, we have to do the right thing. Of course, if the owner does not change, it will be difficult to change. However, even if the owner does not change first, I think I can change my organization, where my influence is based. I will keep going for cultural change rooted in the corporate values because it is the right thing to do. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

This comment reveals his philosophy about his life as well as the cultural change. Unlike most people, who think that cultural change is difficult unless the chairman changes his leadership first, he asserts that because culture change is the right direction, it will someday be possible and he will continue to work for the change. However, this positive view of his efficacy in the change initiative seems to be rare.

(e) Personal valence

With regard to personal valence, all interviewees at CEO level agreed that there are benefits from the cultural change initiative, although they mentioned different

reasons. Above all, interviewee C1 strongly believes that there are considerable benefits from the cultural change because doing the right thing rooted in the corporate values can create a virtuous circle within the company.

If we are doing the right things, what feeling do employees have about the company? Good feelings! Good feelings make people do their job well, and if they do their job well, then they will perform well. Eventually, doing the right thing creates a virtuous circle. If you work in the right way, rooted in the corporate values, there are many benefits, such as minimizing alignment issues in communication. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

Interviewee C1 strongly believes that the cultural change can create a virtuous cycle with considerable benefits. This belief seemed to make him persevere for cultural change by reorganizing and trying it again when it comes to difficult situations.

Moreover, interviewees C2 and C3 mentioned the benefits that the cultural change initiative, linking with the meaning and the goal of their lives.

If the organizational culture is wrong, it is not sustainable and the company cannot be good, which means that my life, all that I have put into my company, will be meaningless. In this respect, the cultural change, with its right direction which helps make the company sustainable, will give the greatest benefit to me. (Interviewee C3 at CEO level, male)

He believes that the cultural change will be helpful for the sustainability of the company to which he has devoted his entire life. Interviewee C2 also mentioned a benefit from the culture change in connection with his goal.

One of my goals was to change the typical Korean corporate culture. To do that, I believe that top management's willingness for change is important. I am strongly committed to the right direction of the change initiative and I feel the chairman's strong willingness. That is why I joined this company and have been working here so far. (Interviewee C2 at CEO level, male)

All interviewees at CEO level found the benefits from the cultural change, commonly valuing 'the right direction' of the change initiative, although they have different reasons.

6.3.3.2. Perception of the change process

(a) Persuasive communication

With regard to persuasive communication in the change process, there are some important comments in terms of what makes the communication strategy persuasive. First of all, as interviewees at different levels mentioned, the chairman's direct speech is likewise perceived to be the most persuasive at CEO level because of his heartfelt comments. For example, interviewee C2 remarked said this.

I think the direct speech of the chairman was very persuasive because the chairman, who is in the highest position, sincerely expressed his belief that we should go in the right direction. His heartfelt comments were really persuasive. (Interviewee C2 at CEO level, male)

The comment implies that what the comments' persuasiveness consists of is three important factors - 'who', 'what' and 'how'. The person in the highest position ('who') emphasized the corporate values rooted in the right things ('what') in a heartfelt way ('how'). Interviewee C2 emphasized that if the person was not the chairman, if the content was not right, if the way of communication was not heartfelt, then the comments would not be as persuasive. In line with this, he perceived that other communication strategies were not effective and persuasive as much as the direct speech of the chairman was.

Moreover, while many interviewees perceive other communications apart from the chairman's direct speech as ineffective, interviewee C1 had a different view on the persuasive communication strategies. He asserted that the persuasiveness comes from the change effort of one's direct leader, not from the strategy of communication itself. He thought the tactical aspect of the communication strategies was good enough but the critical point that makes people persuasive is not the tactical aspect of the communication but rather the behaviours of one's leader that help people apply the change in their workplace. He cites, "*There seems to be enough communication in various ways. However, whether members feel persuaded or not depends on how their leaders go along with it. I think a leader's example is much more important than the communication tactics in terms of persuasiveness.*" His comment implies that how persuasive the communication of the change message itself is does not have a major impact on how much the members actually feel

persuaded in their workplace. The behaviours of their leaders have a greater impact on persuading organizational members. In this respect, he insists that all the leaders show their efforts to change, as this comment suggests.

I know that there are not many leaders to be role models, but all the leaders have to try to change steadily. They should show a 10% improvement this year, a 20% change next year. It is truly persuading for members to let the members observe that the leader is constantly trying to change. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

Although it would be very difficult for leaders to try to change constantly, he believes that it would be the only way to keep doing cultural change.

Finally, interviewee C3 insists that in order to communicate persuasively, the company must listen to the employees' thinking and opinions in the process of change and adjust the appropriate approach to the cultural change, as is shown by the following comment.

I think that it is not enough to listen to the opinions of the employees, while the top management continues to unilaterally cascade down the change message. Maybe top management wanted to listen... However, employees will have had a lot of things that they could not talk about, depending on what their leaders had in mind and what attitudes their leaders had. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

This comment implies that listening to the opinions of employees is a prerequisite for persuasive communication during the change process. In addition, the comment reveals that it is important to consider the difficulties where employees cannot express their opinion due to the attitudes of their leaders.

(b) Active participation

The company-wide workshop for the cultural change initiative started with the workshop for CEOs, where CEOs at all subsidiaries could perceive the strong will of the chairman during discussion and Q&A sessions. With regarding to active participation, the workshop for CEOs seemed to be appreciated as a good starting point for cultural change, as can be seen from the quotations of interviewees C2 and C3 such as '*felt the strong drive from the chairman*', '*corporate values are so good*'

and 'a lot of expectations'. Interviewee C2 added *"The CEOs of subsidiaries might feel responsibility toward the change initiative because during the workshop, it was emphasized that the responsibility of the CEOs is to promote change in each subsidiary."*

However, interviewee C1 expressed his feeling that the people at CEO level seemed to be so authoritarian that it would be very hard for them to change their style of leadership to be aligned to the leadership that the corporate values emphasize. The comment of interviewee C1 is worth noting as he was born and raised in a foreign country, headhunted from a foreign company, and has a different background and view from ordinary CEOs. This comment illustrates this.

When I saw the people at CEO level during the workshop for CEOs, their actions appeared to be nowhere near the corporate values in their behaviour or the style of their leadership. I thought that they had to make a lot of effort to change it, but I was wondering if they had a willingness to make such an effort. (Interviewee C1 at CEO level, male)

This comment implies that the people at CEO level seem to be the most authoritarian, such that it seems to be hard for them to change the style of their leadership, which means their authoritarian leadership as a CEO seems to have a huge impact on managers in each subsidiary. Therefore, interviewee C1 predicted that such authoritarian leadership would prevail at both the senior manager level and the team leader level under the CEO level so that many employees would seem to feel frustrated in the process of the cultural change.

(c) Managing information

With regard to managing information in the change process, interviewee C2 argued that the company did not share useful information for change in the name of confidentiality. He cited an example, saying, *"The result of a 360-leadership assessment information which contains how people perceive their leaders can be helpful for changing the leadership to align it with the cultural change."* He expressed regret that this important information was not well utilized for cultural change for reasons of confidentiality.

Moreover, interviewee C3 criticized that it was not effective to identify and analyse

how people perceive and accept the change initiative in the change process despite the significance of the information, as the following comment indicates.

It is essential to identify and analyse how employees feel about and perceive the change initiative, which is very important information for change. We can realign the direction of how to lead change with this information in the future. If we ignore the information in this process and just push for change, change will be difficult to achieve. (Interviewee C3 at CEO level, male)

This comment implies that the information regarding how people perceive the change initiative has been lacking, while top-down information has abounded. From the point of view of interviewee C1, he insisted that the information for change from the company was sufficient, but for people to utilize and apply the information for change is much more important than the information itself.

6.3.3.3. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at CEO level

CEOs, who are responsible for each subsidiary's change, have had common concerns about the culture of silence in the company. They positively recognized that cultural change rooted in corporate values is the right direction for change. However, it was perceived negatively to be appropriate in terms of not being sufficiently concrete regarding how to implement cultural change. In line with this, the interviewee C1 expressed regret that despite the strong willingness of the chairman, the ultimate image of the change did not seem to be internalized even in the chairman's mind. However, he believed that we should continue to strive for change in the same direction, even though the process of change would be a very tedious process. In terms of personal valence, there was the opinion that it can be very beneficial in that it creates a virtuous circle within the company by constantly doing the right thing.

With regard to the change process, it was commonly agreed that the direct communication of the chairman was most persuasive. However, there was also the opinion that the evaluation of the communication strategy is not important in that persuasion is not coming from a communication strategy but coming from all of leaders' efforts to change. In addition, there was another opinion: that it was not enough to listen to the opinions of the employees, which is a prerequisite for persuasive communication. In terms of active participation, it was a good starting

point for the CEOs of all subsidiaries to participate in the company-wide workshop to promote cultural change. However, as people at CEO level are the most authoritarian, the view was prevalent that it would be difficult to change their leadership style. In terms of managing information, while top-down information regarding the change has abounded, there was a lack of understanding and information as to how people perceive change. In addition, there was the opinion that important information such as the result of 360-leadership assessments for leaders was not well utilized for cultural change for reasons of confidentiality.

Table 6-4. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at CEO level

	Component	Summary
Change content	Discrepancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the need for cultural change due to the culture of silence. • A vague goal just like a pipe dream, as well as ineffectual leaders, influence the corporate culture negatively.
	Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate (The cultural change rooted in the corporate values has the right direction.) • Not appropriate (The manner of implementing the cultural change would not be concrete enough.)
	Principal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change from top management is the most important support, but even the top management might not internalize the final image of the change fully. • The steady and continuous change effort is the most important support despite its being a tedious process.
	Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative about efficacy unless the new appraisal system is complemented with alignment to the cultural change. • Positive conviction about efficacy in the change initiative with the belief that the direction of cultural change is right.
	Personal valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing right things with the cultural change gives considerable benefit, creating a virtuous circle within the company. • Benefits from the cultural change link with the meaning and the goal of their life.

	Component	Summary
Change process	Persuasive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direct communication of chairman is perceived to be most persuasive. • Persuasiveness comes from the change effort of leaders, not from the strategy of the communication itself. • It was not enough to listen to opinions from the employees, which is a prerequisite for persuasive communication.
	Active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workshop for CEOs seemed to be appreciated as a good starting point for cultural change. • However, since the people at CEO level seem to be the most authoritarian, it seems to be hard for them to change the style of their leadership.
	Managing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important information such as the results of 360-leadership assessments was not well utilized for cultural change for reasons of confidentiality. • The information regarding how people perceive the change has been lacking, while top-down information has abounded.

Source: Compiled by the author

6.3.4. Change Agent level

6.3.4.1. Perception of change content

(a) Discrepancy

With regard to the discrepancy in the change initiative, most of the interviewees at CA level agree with the necessity of change for several reasons. First of all, they assert that it is time for Korean companies to change their distorted corporate culture which takes for granted the sacrifices of the employees for the rapid growth of their company. Interviewee CA 2 states *“We have taken such a distorted culture for granted”*. Alongside the rapid economic growth of South Korea, the company has likewise grown very fast, especially for the last ten years with its global M & A activities, urging its employees’ sacrifice for rapid growth. For example, Interviewee CA 3 commented the following.

Most leaders have been concerned only about performance and do not care about the growth and development of organizational members. Therefore, organizational members were exhausted from constantly dealing with urgent tasks. In this situation, people might feel sceptical about their development and career, thinking, 'How can I grow here?' (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

However, with the rapid growth and global M & A activities bringing a transformation into a global company, top management realised that the strategy in the meantime was not sustainable. The cultural change initiative promoted in this context seems to give CAs meaning and pride in their job, as can be seen from the quote of interviewee CA 1 *"I was proud to be involved in promoting this change because the change is in the right direction."* In this respect, it is found that most people at CA level believed that the time was right to change the distorted culture, which had been a great motivation for their job.

Moreover, in common with the interviewees at other levels, CAs also recognize the need to the change authoritarian and hierarchical culture. In this culture, employees in a lower position should obey those in an upper position unconditionally, which induces organizational silence. For example, the comment by interviewee CA 5 is worth noting as she joined this company as a team leader with over 10 years of experience in one of the multinational corporations, meaning that she can compare the cultures between them.

I felt that the culture of this company is outdated. For example, I heard from my team members that my predecessor in the job overemphasized protocol, that is, etiquette, to upper management. The predecessor says, "I can forgive all of you not being able to work well, but I cannot forgive you for not being able to formally serve upper management." In addition, the climate was very rigid. The office was very quiet like a library. In most meetings, there was only instruction and delivering messages from upper management, no discussions at all. There was no disobedience. (Interviewee CA 5 at CA level, female)

This comment shows that how authoritarian and hierarchical the culture is from the perspective of the person who has the experience of working in one of the MNC

companies. She seems to have struggled with the existing culture to adjust herself to the company. When she joined the workshop for CAs and received the briefing regarding the cultural change rooted in the corporate values, she thought that it would not be easy for this change initiative to succeed due to the wide gap between the espoused values and the existing culture in reality.

In summary, CAs seem to understand the great need for cultural change in the company because they believe that the existing culture is distorted and outdated.

(b) Appropriateness

With regard to the appropriateness of the change content, first of all, similar to individuals at other levels, all interviewees at CA level evaluate the content of the corporate values as the right direction for the change initiative but take the view that it is too complicated and extensive to understand and apply the change content to the field, saying *"not easy to understand varied and convoluted concepts"*, *"interpret the values differently depending on the position and roles people have"*. As interviewee CA 4 criticized, *"This complicated and extensive content has made it difficult to identify key messages of change and seems to suggest that leaders become good all-rounders."* The comment of interviewee CA 6 also reveals the difficulty faced by leaders: *"The most difficult thing for leaders was that they did not know what to do. What they have been doing so far for their job is clear, but this change seems to be so vague to them"*. On top of this, the leaders who showed extremely bad behaviours on the ethical side, such as sexual harassment and immoral behaviour, were symbolically fired. As interviewee CA 2 cited, *"Unfortunately, this dismissal of leaders who were against the corporate values has led to emphasis on bullying rather than on role models who make decisions and work properly with the mindset of cultivating people."* This quotation reveals that leaders tended to be careful not to look like bullies but that it seems to be difficult for leaders to actualize the abstract words and concepts of the corporate values without any experience and role models. Along with the atmosphere where leaders were very careful not to be seen as bullies, interviewee CA 1 claimed, *"Leaders have a tendency to appear to be soft leaders who do not swear or lose their temper, which is not a model that the cultural change initiative pursues. This tendency might come from a distorted interpretation where people choose some concepts selectively."* In this respect, the

change content is appropriate in terms of the right direction, but the complicated and extensive content made it difficult for people to interpret the content in a distorted way and thus it was difficult to make changes in the field.

Moreover, some interviewees at CA level have a positive view that the change initiative has promoted under the long-term plan with the effort to improve institutions and system aligned to the cultural change in terms of the appropriateness in the change content. For example, interviewee CA 2, who is involved in improving the institutions and systems to align with the corporate values before the launch of the change initiative, perceived it positively, as can be seen.

The most important central axis of the change that top management has considered was the improvement of institutions and systems based on the corporate values before the launch of the change initiative. In other words, it was a very important task to prepare a system of evaluation and compensatory punishment, which is a mechanism that enables people to change. The rest is an issue of execution. (Interviewee CA 2 at CA level, female)

This comment implies that the change initiative has been prepared well under the long-term plan, being considered to have the institutions and system to align with the corporate values. However, when it comes to the stage of execution of some interventions under the long-term plan, it would not work well, as is shown by the following comments.

Although the long-term plan was well established, I think that many small interventions for execution under the long-term plan were nothing more than empty talk rather than practical. The premise of planning small interventions was that the team leaders would actively participate in the change after attending the leadership programme, but team leaders did not participate in change as much as we expected. Due to the lack of true participation from leaders, the direction of the change and the purpose of the intervention did not really seem to reach the organizational members. (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

This comment implies that the interventions under the long-term plan were promoted on the presupposition that leaders would actively participate in the

interventions with the help of the leadership training programmes resonating with leaders. However, more effort on the leaders would be needed to persuade them, as can be seen from the quotation of interviewee CA3 *“We should have tried hard enough to persuade the leaders”*.

In summary, first of all, interviewees at CA level also highly rate the content of the corporate values as the right direction for the change initiative. However, due to the complicated and extensive content of the corporate values, people including even CEOs have difficulty in understanding the content fully. Moreover, interviewees thought that attempts to drive the change with the long-term plan with consideration of the institutions and systems aligned to the corporate values was good but it would not work well when it came to the stage of execution.

(c) Principal support

With regard to principal support, first of all, regardless of their specific roles or positions, all of the interviewees at CA level agree that they have been strongly supported by the chairman. For example, interviewee CA 1, who is at the headquarters, says, *“Thanks to the great support from the chairman, it was really helpful to ask for cooperation from subsidiaries.”* Interviewee CA 5, who is at one of the subsidiaries, cites *“The CA organization which has been created for the cultural change initiative is evidence for the tremendous support from the chairman.”* The comments show that they have received the great support from the chairman during the change process.

Second, some interviewees expressed their regrets regarding the support for CEOs in subsidiaries because they have a great impact on the employees in their own subsidiaries. As described earlier from interviewee C2 at CEO level, the CEOs in subsidiaries might feel responsibility through the workshop for CEOs. In line with this, interviewee CA 2 explained that the CEO workshop was designed to make the CEOs of each subsidiary feel responsible for and burdened with the promotion of change in each subsidiary. However, some interviewees at CA level were concerned about the approach of the CEOs in subsidiaries to the change initiative, as detailed in the following comments.

In fact, it is true that CEOs feel responsible and burdened with the

promotion of change in each subsidiary, but they seem to be very cautious not to appear to the chairman to fail to join the change sincerely. They seemed to have the burden of showing that they are doing well. (Interviewee CA 2 at CA level, female)

The chairman's message to CEOs gave a strong message that those who could not participate in the change would leave this company. Therefore, the CEOs seem to have felt a lot of pressure. (Interviewee CA 1 at CA level, female)

The problem was that many CEOs only approached it by way of showing their change progress to the chairman. (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

As can be seen from quotations such as 'very cautious', 'have the burden of showing that they are doing well', 'a lot of pressure' and 'way of showing their change progress to the chairman', their responsibility seems to be based on fear towards the chairman. Therefore, the attitude of CEOs tends to be pretending to join the change initiative, focusing on 'showing', not the attitude of leading the change sincerely in their organization. Therefore, interviewees CA 1 and CA 2, who are at the headquarters, argued that they should have given more support to the CEOs in subsidiaries for successful change, considering this attitude based on fear as well as the impact of the CEOs in their organization.

As I visited the workshops held by the CEOs of each subsidiary as the CA from headquarters, I felt that many CEOs lacked self-awareness and awareness about the company. It would not have been possible to move into action because of this lack of awareness (Interviewee CA 1 at CA level, female)

I think we should have helped the CEOs in subsidiaries regarding how to promote the change initiative and communicate the change in a way that was appropriate to each subsidiary's situation. We have been pushing a lot without enough support. The reason that the change was not promoted well is that even CEOs do not have enough understanding of the content of the change initiative and they do not have ownership of the cultural change initiative. Rather than empowering the CEOs, we should have helped to fill the big gap in their competence in promoting the change. (Interviewee CA 2

at CA level, female)

In line with this, one of the main change strategies was to integrate business with the change initiative, by encouraging CEOs in subsidiaries to add the plan for the change initiative to their Long-Range Planning (LRP) for business, but this did not work well due to the lack of commitment of CEOs in subsidiaries.

On the surface, the logic of the strategy was good, but it did not work well. This is because the CEOs at subsidiaries have not communicated convincingly to their employees what they reported in their LRP regarding the change initiative. In fact, how the CEOs are talking about the change initiative is a great influence on the extent to which the employees can accept the change. However, the attitude of many CEOs seemed to be based on fear towards the chairman. (Interviewee CA 2 at CA level, female)

This comment implies that only the chairman seems to have a passion for the change initiative and other CEOs in subsidiaries seem to have a fear of the chairman rather than a passion for change. The owner-centred management is powerful enough to drive change, as many interviewees at different levels agree. However, it also has its limitations in that the CEOs in subsidiaries do not have ownership as much as the owner has. Also, it reveals the limitations of the change initiative based on fear. Considering this situation, interviewees CA 1 and CA 2 as the CAs at the headquarters regretted that they failed to give more support to the CEOs in subsidiaries for successful change.

Lastly, although there was the advantage of pushing the change initiative under the strong support of the chairman, many interviewees at CA level opined that it would be more important to lead the change genuinely and continuously with sufficient time as the principal support for successful change. In particular, interviewee CA 1 emphasized the support for leaders who are the key for the execution of change, lamenting that more support should have been provided in order to make leaders practise making change.

We have provided leaders with enough support in terms of understanding the change initiative, but there should have been more support at the trigger point from brain to action. I heard a lot of feedback from leaders that they did not know what to do. The support in the transition period from brain to

action is the most important, but I think we did not have enough support at that time. (Interviewee CA 1 at CA level, female)

This comment implies that there was not sufficient support for the leaders who need the opportunity and time to practice the change, especially in the transition period from cognition to action. Along with the lack of time and support for leaders, the comment of interviewee CA 2 shows that the cultural change was urgently promoted without sufficient preparation time, as witnessed by her comments.

The CA team at headquarters might have enough time to understand the cultural change, having a year of preparation time. However, the CA teams of each subsidiary were also created by the HR team based on the urgency, meaning that many people didn't have enough of a preparation period for the change initiative. Only the chairman had been getting ready for it. We should have made more comrades to lead the change together. (Interviewee CA 2 at CA level, female)

Pushing for change urgently on the part of a handful of people such as the chairman and CAs at headquarters has failed to make many comrades who are willing to change and lead change together. The comment of interviewee CA 5 implies that change needs continuity and authenticity during the change process, rather than pushing it strongly.

I believe that it will develop if we continue to observe and learn by trial and error in this process, with authenticity. The change is not the same as pressing a switch button once. It is the constant accumulation of smaller and smaller experiences... We have to make changes based on authenticity. We are familiar with doing as we are told, just following the manual, but we are not used to putting heart and soul in it. (Interviewee CA 5 at CA level, female)

In summary, first of all, interviewees at CA level have been strongly supported by the chairman in terms of principal support. In addition, they lamented that more support for CEOs in subsidiaries should have been provided, considering the impact on the employees in each subsidiary. Finally, as the principal support, interviewees emphasized that change would need some time and authenticity with the steady effort for change.

(d) Efficacy

As for the efficacy of the change initiative, in the first year when the company started to drive the cultural change initiative, many interviewees at CA level were likely to be able to change along with the strong and genuine drive of the chairman. For example, interviewee CA 3 expressed his efficacy for the change initiative after working as a CA for one year in the following words.

At the beginning of the change, I believed that it was going to happen, so I also really worked very sincerely as a CA. I thought that it would go well when I felt the authenticity of the chairman behind the change and the expectations of and the positive responses from the employees about the cultural change. Besides, I was surprised to hear that even the institutions and systems would be supported for the change. (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

The phrases such as '*felt the authenticity of the chairman*', '*the expectations of and the positive responses from the employees*' and '*surprised to hear that even the institutions and systems*' reveal his excitement at working as a CA. In addition, the phrase '*I also really worked very sincerely as a CA*' implies how hard he worked with pride as a CA.

However, as the business of the company became more difficult with time, even CAs began to be disappointed with the actions of the company during the restructuring. Therefore, their efficacy for the change began to decline and they came to feel that it would tend not to be feasible. For example, interviewee CA 1 expressed her disappointment with the action of the company during the restructuring, saying "*The communication in the process of restructuring can be a kind of intervention. However, it was contrary to what the company had done in the cultural change initiative.*" Apart from this comment, the quotations of interviewees CA 2, CA 3, CA 4 and CA 5 such as '*There is not much trust in the top team*', '*The core values were gradually being pushed backward*', '*The company has done an act which betrayed authenticity and consistency with the cultural change.*' and '*behaviour that makes employees feel betrayed*' reveal how deeply the interviewees at CA level were disappointed with the company, contrary to the belief, excitement, pride and sincere work that they had felt in the first year of the change initiative.

(e) Personal valence

With regard to personal valence, interviewees at CA level mentioned their benefits in terms of the role of CA as well as the personal growth. For example, interviewee CA 3 described his benefit as the pride of contributing to the cultural change.

Through the cultural change initiative, I thought that people could work in a more reasonable culture, and they would be more motivated when they worked in such an atmosphere, so that they could get more opportunities for personal growth and improve the company's performance. I thought that as a CA, I could contribute to this change and this expectation of such a change would be a benefit. (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

However, he also mentioned his disappointment, saying *"The expectations for such a change were great, but the result was not enough. Therefore, I was disappointed or even betrayed due to such great expectations of the change."*

In addition, interviewee CA 5 talked about the valuable experience of her growth as a benefit as can be seen from her words.

I think that this experience of thinking about how the corporate values permeate into the company is a valuable experience that cannot be obtained elsewhere, and it is also helpful for my future career, enabling me to foster a broad understanding. (Interviewee CA 5 at CA level, female)

Interviewee CA 5, who has recently changed company, cited that it was a meaningful experience for her career although she had been struggling with many things during the change initiative.

6.3.4.2. Perception of the change process

(a) Persuasive communication

With regard to persuasive communication, interviewees at CA level also perceived the direct speech and Q&A session led by the chairman to each of the subsidiaries as persuasive communication. For example, interviewee CA 3 thought that it was good because there were good responses. The employees really liked the chairman's direct speech to the cultural change. However, he criticized the fact that the questions were filtered out in the Q&A session due to the authoritarian leadership of

the chairman.

At that time, I thought that the chairman wanted to hear the real voices of the employees, but the CA team at the headquarters was filtering out the questions of the employees, being worried that the chairman would be unhappy with their questions. I thought that because of the CA team, the opinions of the employees did not seem to be passed on to the chairman. However, now I understand why the CA team at the headquarters did that. It must be hard for them to support such an authoritarian leadership as that of the chairman. (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

This comment implies that the CA team at the headquarters which directly supports the chairman has been tough due to the authoritarian leadership behind the appearance of the chairman, which was only good for the public.

While the direct communication of the chairman and the workshops conducted throughout the company were very persuasive at the beginning of the change initiative, interviewees at CA level criticized the communication and action afterwards as being insufficient. For example, interviewee CA 6 cited the communication after the survey as inadequate.

One year after the change initiative was implemented, the company conducted a survey across the company, including all subsidiaries. However, after the survey, communication about what was lacking and what further to do throughout the company was not effective and was handed over to each subsidiary. (Interviewee CA 6 at CA level, female)

This comment implies that the communication was persuasive during the first year of the change initiative but it was not effective in communicating persuasively afterwards.

(b) Active participation

With regard to active participation, CAs were very enthusiastic at the beginning of the change initiative but they were disappointed when there was no follow-up action from CEOs in subsidiaries. For example, interviewee CA 3 explained how his enthusiasm has flagged, as one can see.

As a change agent, I was very enthusiastic at the beginning and I had been working hard to gather the opinions of all the members and report their opinions to the management team. However, the problem was that there was no next action after delivery to the CEO. Management seems to have heard a lot of the opinions of the members, but people have been disappointed because things seem not to have changed at all. In the end, I also felt I was losing my passion for change, with the same mind as the employees. (Interviewee CA 3 at CA level, male)

This comment shows how his enthusiasm for his work waned. Along with this disappointment, even interviewee CA 1, who works for the headquarters, began to be disappointed with the actions of the company during the restructuring, saying, *“I was so disappointed at the time that it took away my passion for the cultural change. Trust in top management is gone, but there are many good colleagues in our company who are working on our organizational culture... so I have faith only in them.”* As can be seen from the comment of CA1, many members including CAs were disappointed with the way of communicating in the process of the restructuring when the business of the company was bad and restructuring was taking place.

(c) Managing information

With regard to managing information in the change process, interviewee CA 3 who works for one of the subsidiaries asserted that the opinions of employees were not delivered properly to the CEO, saying, *“I heard from CAs in other subsidiaries that the senior managers are filtering out the opinions of the members, and it is hard for them even to be passed to the CEO of the subsidiary.”* This comment reveals that the opinions of employees, which constitute important information for change, might not even reach the CEO.

Moreover, CAs have had difficulty communicating with employees because they have been unable to share the right information with their employees because of the corporate culture, which is overly confidential. For example, interviewee CA 6 expressed his difficulty in communicating openly between management team and employees in these words.

The employees are not fools. I think that nobody would think that this would change in a short time. People were aware that it is a change that needs a

really prolonged effort. However, what was lacking in the CA team was that the CA team could not explain and share why something could not be done, along with the company's situation. The CA team have not communicated these things properly in the name of confidentiality, so many people have guessed, forming their own assumptions, and rumours were spread by word of mouth. These phenomena seem to have worked negatively. On the CA side, we were suffering from the whims of the top team in the change process, but we could not talk to employees as things are... In the process, it seems that misunderstandings occurred and people could not understand things better. (Interviewee CA 6 at CA level, female)

This comment reveals that CAs were distressed with making employees misunderstand and distrust due to the emphasis on the confidentiality of information, although they understand the employees who must feel the lack of communication during the change. She expressed his difficulty of communicating and sharing information with people in the existing authoritarian and hierarchical culture where confidentiality was overly emphasized.

6.3.4.3. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at CA level

The change agent team which was organized to promote company-wide change did have the passion for change with the belief that the existing culture based on an authoritarian and hierarchical culture is outdated and distorted in terms of taking for granted the sacrifice of employees for rapid performance. They had a great zest and pride in the idea that the cultural change is the right direction and approached it from a long-term perspective, considering the institutional change. In addition, the strong willingness of the chairman was their greatest support in the hierarchical organization. However, even CAs expressed difficulties in terms of leading change, as the corporate values were too complex and broad to apply. As time went on, however, the chairman of the parent company asked the CEOs of the subsidiaries for the outcome of the change and the CAs of each subsidiary had to spend a lot of energy and time in preparing documents to defend their CEOs, who were urged to make visible achievements in the promotion of change in their subsidiaries. The CAs of each subsidiary expressed regret at the impatience of the parent company which requested the outcome of the change.

With regard to the change process, they were very enthusiastic at the beginning of the change initiative but they were disappointed with the lack of follow-up action from the CEOs of subsidiaries. They expressed their difficulty in communicating information in terms of not only failing to deliver the opinions of members to the CEO due to the senior managers filtering out the opinions of the members, but also failing to share appropriate information on the promotion of change due to confidentiality in the hierarchical culture.

Table 6-5. Summary of perceptions of the change initiative at CA level

	Component	Summary
Change content	Discrepancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is time for Korean companies to change their distorted corporate culture which takes for granted the sacrifice of employees for the rapid growth of the company. • Need to change authoritarian and hierarchical culture, which is outdated.
	Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of the corporate values is the right direction for the change initiative but it is too complicated and extensive to understand and apply it. • Attempt to drive the change with long-term plan with consideration of institutions and systems aligned to the corporate values was good but it would not work well in terms of execution.
	Principal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have been strongly supported by the chairman. • Expressed their regrets regarding support for CEOs in subsidiaries. • It would be more important to lead the change genuinely and continuously with sufficient time.
	Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the beginning of the change initiative, many interviewees at CA level were likely to be able to change with the strong and genuine drive of the chairman. • As the business of the company became more difficult over time, even CAs began to be disappointed with the actions of the company during the restructuring.
	Personal valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride of contributing to the cultural change as CA. • Valuable experience for personal growth in terms of career development.

	Component	Summary
Change process	Persuasive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direct speech and Q&A session led by the chairman to each of the subsidiaries. • Criticized the communication and actions, which were not persuasive since the middle of the change initiative.
	Active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very enthusiastic at the beginning of the change initiative but were disappointed at absence of follow-up action from CEOs. • Even CAs were disappointed at the way of communicating in the process of the restructuring.
	Managing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opinions of employees were not delivered properly to the CEO. • Difficulty of communicating and sharing information with people due to too much emphasis on confidentiality in the hierarchical culture.

Source: Compiled by the author

6.4. Summary of the chapter

This research findings chapter has examined the perceptions of individuals regarding the change context, content and process, all of which are interrelated. First of all, this research has explored individuals' perceptions at different levels regarding the change context by examining individuals' overall perceptions regarding their company and regarding the cultural characteristics as a proxy for contextual factors. According to the findings, a majority of interviewees, regardless of their level, cited 'change' and 'people' as the words that come to mind about their company. In terms of the meaning of working there, while organizational members tend to prioritize the need for their own growth and development, leaders tend to regard their company as their 'life itself'. However, individuals at all levels tend to regard the employment relationship as a contractual relationship, especially in light of the shock coming from shock coming from the large-scale redundancies that accompanied the recent restructuring. With regard to the perceptions of the cultural characteristics of the change context, individuals at different levels commonly pointed out three characteristics: a hierarchy-based Confucian culture, an excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism and the tendency of

leaders to stick to their opinions. In addition, as for the cultural characteristics which were mentioned differently depending on the commenter's level, individuals at the organizational member level pointed to the poor leadership of the leaders, and individuals at team leader level indicated the lack of professionalism at the organizational member level.

Moreover, based on these perceptions regarding the change context, the research has examined the multiple realities that individuals at different levels (organizational member, team leader, CEO and CA level) construct regarding the change context and process.

First, individuals at organizational member level who had struggled with the existing culture responded enthusiastically to the cultural change initiative, especially in terms of the philosophy of the content based on a win-win approach. They felt the sincerity and authenticity of the chairman's strong drive but they were frustrated with their immediate leaders' attitudes to change as well as the institutional support which failed to work properly. Although they have a positive perception of the strong drive of the chairman, they cannot perceive the benefit of the change initiative due to the wide gap between the espoused values and reality coming from change interventions which were not connected to their daily work. In addition, no follow-up actions and insufficient information regarding the progress of the change initiative made them feel frustrated.

Second, individuals at team leader level admitted that the cultural change was an irresistible change but they felt burdened in that they were expected to change the leadership style with which they had been familiar for their entire career. Furthermore, team leaders who struggled with the performance pressure as well as their heavy workload were overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions in which they had to play an important role in the change process. Although they also positively perceived the strong willingness of the chairman in terms of principal support, at the same time they perceived it with fear and apprehension. All of this made them pretend to participate in the interventions in a perfunctory and absent-minded way.

Third, individuals at CEO level positively perceived the cultural change in that they saw that it was the right direction for change but they perceived negatively the

content which was not concrete enough. They also regarded the strong willingness of the chairman as principal support. However, the view was prevalent that it would be difficult to change their leadership style because they are the most authoritarian.

Lastly, individuals at CA level had a passion for change with the belief that the existing culture is outdated and distorted and that the cultural change is the right direction. They perceived the strong willingness of the chairman as their greatest support. However, given the atmosphere based on 'a push strategy', they were busy protecting their CEOs, who have the huge burden of showing results quickly to the chairman. As time went on, their enthusiasm at the beginning of the change initiative gradually turned to disappointment with the lack of follow-up action from their CEOs. In addition, they expressed their difficulty in managing information regarding the change initiative due to confidentiality in the hierarchical culture.

The findings chapter has examined how the perceptions regarding the change context, content and process interrelate and what difficulties individuals at different levels experience in the interaction of their perceptions regarding the change initiative in the context of a Korean conglomerate. Based on these findings, the next chapter explores contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea by answering the research questions and delivering the objectives.

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

This final chapter brings together the theories reviewed in the literature and empirical research results in order to answer the research questions and achieve the research aim and objectives through a critical discussion. In addition, the conclusion section presents the key points that have been studied in this research through a summary of the thesis and then it highlights the implications of this study for academia and practitioners, suggesting the directions for future research with the limitations of this study in mind.

7.2. Discussion

In order to explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization, the researcher conducted this empirical study based on the following three research questions.

[RQ 1] How do individuals at different levels perceive their company in terms of employment relationships?

[RQ 2] How do individuals at different levels perceive the difficulties in relation to the cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?

[RQ 3] How do individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative?

From now on, based on these research questions, the discussion focuses on comparing and analysing the multiple realities perceived by individuals at different levels based on the literature reviewed in chapter 2,3 and 4.

7.2.1. RQ1: How do individuals at different levels perceive their company in terms of employment relationships?

Examining the overall perception of the company, that is, how individuals perceive the relationship with their company, is important because this overall perception can have a significant impact on perceptions of the change initiative (Jones et al., 2005).

The individuals' overall perceptions regarding the company can be shaped by contextual factors they experience such as policies, procedures, organizational culture, change history and CEO attitude (Eby et al., 2000; Cummings and Worley, 2014; Jones et al., 2005; Schein, 2010; Devos et al., 2007; Rafferty and Restubog, 2010; Musteen et al., 2006).

Analysis of the individuals' overall perceptions of Company A shows that three major emerging considerations along with its existing contextual factors affect the individuals' overall perception of the company. Therefore, when the researcher asked the interviewees the first question regarding the overall perceptions of their company, which is "What words or images come to mind when you think about your company based on experiences you have worked so far?", The responses analysed were related to these three key considerations. The three major considerations are described below with a summary of the response to the first question of the overall perception of their company.

The first consideration that influences the overall perception of the employees regarding the company is that company A has a history of change via rapid growth with the transition of business portfolio as well as global M & A activities. This is the reason that many interviewees cited 'change' as the word that comes to mind regarding their company (see section 6.2.1.1). Company A has grown very fast, especially over the last ten years, urging its 'employees sacrifice' to contribute to this growth, as the interviewees CA 2 and CA 3 demonstrated saying "*many employees were exhausted from constantly dealing with urgent tasks.*" (see section 6.3.4.1). This exhaustion of the employees seen behind the company's rapid growth inevitably reflects the perspective of the company in the meantime. This is in line with the critique of Legged (2003) of the many enterprises which commit obsessively to short-term profits can place excessive pressure on employees. Johnson and Broms (2000) are also concerned about enterprises in a capitalistic society which tend to pay little attention to the humanistic approach, primarily focusing on financial results. In this respect, in a company that pursues excessive short-term results, its employees are exhausted from heavy work which makes it difficult for them to feel that they are respected as human beings by senior management. This condition negatively affects the overall perceptions of the people regarding Company A.

The second consideration that influences the overall perceptions of the employees regarding the company is that company A has promoted a major cultural change initiative rooted in the corporate values as espoused since new chairman was inaugurated. This cultural change initiative is perceived by employees as contrary to the main characteristics of the existing culture which has previously supported the rapid growth of the company. This is why interviewees cited 'people' as a word that comes to mind about their company, with enthusiastic responses regarding the cultural change initiative rooted in the 'people-centric' philosophy. This made employees "*embrace some particular values such as 'the importance of people' and 'cultivating people' against the existing culture which forces people to sacrifice themselves for performance*", as interviewee M04 claimed (see section 6.2.1.1). Employees who were exhausted and struggling with the existing culture seem to be enthusiastic for the cultural change which views employees as 'human beings'. It is clear from the literature that the cultural change initiative based on a humanistic approach can provide an opportunity to fulfil people's intrinsic motivations (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010; Hodson, 2001).

The third consideration that influences the overall perception of the employees regarding the company is that the company A underwent a major restructuring with large-scale redundancies due to the recent business downturn, which made employees perceive a different message from the previous cultural change initiative that has been promoted over the last three years. Employees seemed to experience corporate hypocrisy especially with the way in which the restructuring was communicated. It shattered employees' faith regarding the idea that the company which has placed value on 'people' in the cultural change initiative. Even if the restructuring is inevitably caused by a sudden change in the environment, the perceptions of employees triggered by strong organizational values, as repeated in other studies, can increase the risk of hypocrisy, unless employees are explicitly provided with appropriate information on the possibility of difficulty or conflict due to the environmental change (Cha and Edmondson, 2006; Evans, 2002). The perception of corporate hypocrisy caused by the difference between the message from the large-scale redundancies and the message from the cultural change initiative is another cynical reason why interviewees cited 'people' as the word that comes to mind about their company (see section 6.2.1.1).

These three major considerations were also analysed as having had a great impact on the answers to the second question: “How do you talk about the meaning of work in this company in relation to your whole life?”. This question, which examines their mindset about the meaning of working in the company in terms of employment relationships, was analysed as different depending on level. This is because the main values at the generation level seem to be reflected inevitably, in relation to the promotion system based on seniority. In this respect, the discussion of the answers to the second question is now described according to the level.

From the perspective of individuals at organizational member level, they tend to have the strong values of millennials, which recognizes the meaning of working in the company as the opportunity for their growth and development. This characteristic of individuals at organizational member level shown in the empirical research coincides with the main characteristics shown in the existing literatures regarding the millennial generation (Meister and Willyerd, 2010; Ye and Chin, 2009). As for the responses to the question about the meaning of working at the company, the comments of individuals at organizational member level such as *‘a variety of experiences and opportunities for growth’* and *‘just a field to advance my expertise’* demonstrate this characteristic of millennials, which prioritizes their growth (see section 6.2.1.2). However, there are other responses from interviewees who regard the meaning of working at their company only as an economic means, with a cynical view towards their company, which seemed to be influenced by the recent restructuring. Comments such as *‘lost their affection for the company after restructuring’*, *‘The company gives me money and I give the company my labour’*, *‘do not have any expectation for the company’* and *‘it could throw me away at any time’* show their low expectation toward their company (see section 6.2.1.2). It is clear that individuals with such a cynical perspective towards their company are unlikely to exert their potential and creativity in the company. Although the answers are different, both of these responses clearly reflect that individuals perceive the employment relationship as a contractual relationship with obligation pertaining to each side. It is clear from the literature that in order to secure competitive advantage in a global economy, employers need to pay attention to the changed employment relationships based on ‘contract’ as well as the change in values and attitudes of individuals (Guest, 2004; De Vos and Meganck, 2008). For Company A this is

because it will not take very long for this generation of employees to constitute the largest portion of the staff. Therefore, in order to maximize the potential of employees for the company's global competitiveness, it cannot ignore the value of the generation of millennials. Individuals at organizational member level are no longer motivated only by financial rewards, as they value more opportunities for development, autonomy, flexibility, meaningful work experiences and connections with others to acquire new knowledge and skills (Chen and Choi, 2008; Hall, 2002).

From the perspective of individuals at team leader level, there is a tendency to show a strong sense of perceiving the company as *'the life itself'* because of their dedication and enthusiasm to the company during their period of work. Comments such as *'the company and I have grown up together'*, *'My nickname was a working machine'*, *'this company is all for me'* and *'feelings of love and hatred toward this company'* demonstrate their devotion to their company (see section 6.2.1.2). According to the promotion system based on seniority in Korean companies, an average of at least 16 years is required to become a team leader, which inevitably causes a generation gap between the team leader level and the organizational member level. Due to the long periods that they have spent in their company, the leaders' generation, whose age range is between 43 and 55, seem to be bound to the company with a strong attachment. However, even at this team leader level, the perception of corporate hypocrisy caused by the recent restructuring has impacted their perception of the employment relationship as a contractual relationship.

In terms of the perspective of individuals at CA level, the CA interviewees consisted of four people at team leader level and two people at organizational member level, all of whom had the strong need for their growth and had a strong attachment to the company.

In terms of the perspective of individuals at CEO level, two of the three CEOs who were interviewed were relatively young CEOs who had been headhunted from multinational companies, while most CEOs are generally the oldest in the organization. The other CEO, on the other hand, was one who has continued to grow and become a CEO in a subsidiary of company A. For the young CEOs interviewed, the company had a meaning as a place to grow in connection with the goals of their lives. Although they were struggling with the strong influence of the chaebol

owners, the researcher felt their sense of ownership of the company with the comment of interviewee C1, “*As long as I am in this company, I will do my best to the extent that I can exert influence.*” (see section 6.2.1.2). From the perspective of interviewee C1, other CEOs of subsidiaries were so authoritarian that it would be difficult to change their leadership style. The headhunted CEOs who were interviewed assume that the impact of the authoritarian CEOs was so great for each subsidiary that it would not be easy to change the culture of the subsidiaries. For the other CEO, who has spent his entire working life there, the company was ‘*the life itself*’ in terms of the meaning of the working at the company. However, even for him, the recent restructuring was a shock and he thought it would take a long time to regain the employees’ hearts and their trust.

In summary, individuals tend to perceive their employment relationships as contractual regardless of level including even those at leader level who had regarded the company as ‘*the life itself*’. The perceptions of individuals regarding the employment relationships seem to be influenced not only by sociocultural change in Korean society but also by the three major considerations about the company. Through the experience of employees in relation to these major considerations, they seem to be aware of the perspective of the company towards themselves and how they feel it treats them. These overall perceptions of individuals may have a mutual influence on their perceptions regarding a change initiative.

7.2.2. RQ2: How do individuals at different levels perceive the difficulties in relation to the cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?

Since the perceptions of individuals regarding a change initiative are strongly affected by cultural influences, it is significant to examine the difficulties in relation to the characteristics of the existing culture (Ingersoll et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2005; Chonko et al., 2002). Therefore, the second research question examined the perceptions of individuals at different levels in reference to the difficulties in relation to the cultural characteristics of a Korean conglomerate, which can be critical data for exploring the contextual considerations of OD in the Korean context.

As examined in the literature review in Chapter 4, the Korean national context, including the historical, socio-economic and cultural context, appear to play a significant role in shaping the corporate culture in Korea (Song and Meek, 1998; Jun and Rowley, 2014). The main backgrounds can be divided into historical, socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. In terms of the historical background, a series of oppressions such as the Japanese colonial subjugation for 35 years and military governments for about 30 years can be an influential factor (Kearney, 1991; Chuk Kyo, 2005). In terms of the socio-cultural and economic background, the economically focused policy of the government, favouring employers of 'chaebol' companies and an atmosphere that encourages the indomitable spirit in any difficult situation for the sake of economic growth, appears to have been influential upon the corporate culture in Korea (Suh and Kwon, 2014; Chang, 2012; Koo, 2001). Another important socio-cultural element is the strong Confucian culture in the society as well as in the family (Kim and Park, 2003). This national context is assessed influence the corporate cultures directly or indirectly. The long-lasting close ties between government and chaebols have led the government's economic concentration policy, which had favoured the employers of chaebols. Consequently, it has strengthened the chaebols' excessive power concentration. In addition, the military governments had indirectly influenced the formation of a hard-working corporate culture by encouraging workers to sacrifice as a patriotic act for national economic growth along with the strong Confucian culture (*ibid*).

In line with these backgrounds associated with the national context, the corporate culture of chaebols which are Korean conglomerates based on family-run businesses, can be described via three characteristics: the hierarchical culture caused by the excessive concentration of power in the owner of a chaebol, the CEO hubris stemming from the succession rights inherited in family-run conglomerates, and 'dynamic collectivism' combined with collectivism and progressivism (Park et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2014; Kim, 2013). These characteristics of corporate culture of chaebols in Korea which are described in the literature, are consistent with the difficulties perceived by employees in relation to the existing cultural characteristics in the findings chapter. These difficulties are largely classified into three categories based on respondent views: a hierarchy-based Confucian culture, an excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism and the tendency of leaders to stick to

their opinions regardless of any possible contradictory evidence.

Based on the analysis of the cultural characteristics that cause the difficulties of the employees, the root cause that makes these three characteristics stand out seems to be the excessive concentration of an owner's power in the chaebol system. The excessive concentration of an owner's power is perceived to have become stronger due to the direct and indirect influence of the background of the national context in the last few decades based on the close ties between government and business. It is analysed that respondents perceive this excessive concentration of power has made the hierarchical culture of chaebols even more extreme and it has caused the difficulties of employees in the interaction between individuals at different levels as will now be described.

First, in terms of the interaction between CEOs of subsidiaries and the owner of the chaebol, the owner's absolute power in the chaebol system has created a tendency for CEOs of subsidiaries to unconditionally agree with the owners' opinions and this, in turn, seems to increase the CEO hubris of the owner in the chaebol system. Although CEOs of subsidiaries were concerned about the culture of silence among their members in their company, it is ironic that the silent culture seemed to work more strongly among CEOs of subsidiaries due to the owner's absolute power. The tendency not to oppose the opinion of the owner seems to be further strengthened by the hierarchical-based Confucian culture deeply embedded in Korean society. For example, interviewee C1 explained that the tendency of unconditionally agreeing with the owner's opinion was due to the combination of the owner's mighty power in the chaebol system and the hierarchy-based Confucian culture which is strongly prevalent in Korean society. He drew an analogy between '*the owner*' in the company and '*the oldest senior*' in the family, describing the mighty power of the owner with words such as '*irrationally*', '*unreasonable*', '*unconditionally*' and '*absolute*' (see section 6.2.1.2). This tendency of unconditionally agreeing with the owner's opinion and indulging him or her with recognition and praise increases his or her CEO hubris (Park et al., 2015). It is not surprising that the tendency to high CEO hubris is prone to arise in a situation where there are hardly any checks and balances of the power, in the chaebol system.

Secondly, in terms of the interaction between CEOs of subsidiaries and team

leaders, the tendency of CEOs of subsidiaries to rush to show rapid results to their owner has been putting pressure on them, which has increased the tendency for them to stick to their opinions. This urgency of the excessively result-oriented culture seems to allow team leaders to stick to their opinions under the guise of quick decisions and execution, preferring subordinates who follow the leaders' words and move quickly to execution. The comment of interviewee M14 shows an indictment of the result-oriented culture based on short-termism. "*..leaders are accustomed to the culture in which subordinates unconditionally carry out tasks without questioning. They don't care how the subordinates were squeezed out in the process.*" In line with this tendency, some interviewees cited the informal definition of good followers that many leaders seem to have in mind as "*a person who is 100% consistent with a leader's thoughts, who represents the leader's thoughts and makes plans for execution.*" (see section 6.2.1.2). The hierarchy-based Confucian culture in which the opinions of the seniors should be respected seems to promote the tendency of the leaders to stick to their opinions more easily. In this respect, the tendency of CEOs of subsidiaries to rush to show rapid results to the owner has amplified the urgency as it has been passed down to the team leaders, justifying a tendency to adhere to leaders' opinions. Consequently, it has created a vicious cycle in the form of an excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism in the organization.

Lastly, in terms of the interaction between team leaders and organizational members, the chaebol culture seems to be the greatest difficulty for the individuals at organizational member level not just because of the extremely hierarchical culture but also because of the values of the organizational members' generation, which are very different from the values expressed by the leaders' generation. The promotion system based on seniority in Korean conglomerates inevitably reflects the generation gap between individuals at team leader level and individuals at organizational member level. In addition to the hierarchical culture, due to the authoritarian culture rooted in Confucianism where people should honour and respect the words of their superiors and seniors, organizational members have difficulty in expressing their own opinions against their superiors' opinion, as seen from words such as '*force*', '*reproach*' and '*rebuke*'. Especially the younger generation called millennials, who were born from the 1980s to the early 2000s,

express their frustration, describing communication with their team leaders as *'the unreasonable' and 'undesirable' communication pattern'* (see section 6.2.2.1). These difficulties that organizational members expressed are consistent with the characteristics of millennials who tend to be sensitive to undue formality, unfairness, or non-transparency (Ye and Chin, 2009). The millennials who prefer to express their own opinions and receive proper feedback in their work may have more difficulty in accepting the characteristics of the existing culture (Meister and Willyerd, 2010). For this generation with these values and characteristics, it would have been difficult to accept the facets of the existing culture described by words such as *'irrationally'*, *'unconditionally'* and *'absolute'*, since these words are in opposition to the main values and characteristics of their generation. However, although individuals at team leader level have also been struggling with the authoritarian and hierarchical culture, they tend to regard their context as an *'inevitable and inescapable'* attribute to endure with patience. Based on this perspective, they tend to underestimate organizational members who cannot tolerate such a culture, describing younger generation with the words such as *'weak'*, *'irresponsible'* and *'selfish'*. In this respect, this tendency stemming from the generation gap multiplies the difficulties of organizational members in terms of the interaction between team leaders and organizational members.

In summary, the extreme hierarchical culture due to the excessive concentration of power of the owner in the chaebol system seems to be a root cause of the difficulties that employees perceive in relation to the characteristics of the existing culture. As seen in the discussion above, this extreme hierarchical culture has been analysed as having a tendency to undermine a humanistic approach in interactions between individuals at different levels. In line with this, Pirson and Lawrence (2010) criticize that many enterprises based on the economic paradigm have maintained total controls through agency theory and vertical structures. Legge (2003) also criticized that many enterprises which commit obsessively to short-term profits inevitably may disregard human dignity at work, treating organizational members as a cost to be minimized. In this respect, as long as the extremely hierarchical structure is maintained in Company A, it is very difficult to give the impression that employees are truly respected as human beings. This is because the paradigm that views employees as passive cogs for business efficiency is likely to prevail in the

extremely hierarchical culture (Morgan, 2006). Therefore, even if the cultural change initiative is based on a humanistic approach, employees may be confused by or perceive hypocrisy in a dual message where the message from the extremely hierarchical culture runs contrary to the message from the humanistic approach. The next section discusses how individuals at different levels perceive the cultural change initiative in this extremely hierarchical culture.

7.2.3. RQ3: How do individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative?

So far, the researcher has discussed the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding the change context, by examining not only the overall perceptions of the company in terms of employment relationships but also the perceptions of difficulties in relation to the existing cultural characteristics. This section discusses how individuals at different levels perceive change content and process, exploring how the perceptions of change context affect the perception of change content and process.

7.2.3.1. Perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding the change content

Change content refers to the particular initiative and its characteristics, creating certain core sentiments of individuals (Holt et al., 2007). In order to examine the perceptions of individuals regarding change content, this research examined the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding the five components of change content which are discrepancy, appropriateness, principal support, efficacy and personal valence (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

First, in terms of the discrepancy, individuals at all levels commonly recognized that the current organizational culture should be changed, even though the focus on the needs of change at each level did vary. For example, individuals at organizational level as well as at change agent level perceived the existing culture as '*the oppressed and distorted culture*', which brought about their high expectations and hope for change. For individuals at team leader level, although they also have struggled with the authoritarian and hierarchical culture, it is found that their difficulties have been perceived as something to be endured and did not elicit a motivation for change in them. Individuals at CEO level have been particularly concerned about the culture of

silence, but their need for cultural change does not seem to be as strongly perceived as the need for cultural change which organizational members and change agents hold. In this respect, the analysis reflects that the degree of discrepancy which addresses the sentiment regarding whether change is needed is different depending on the level. In particular, the analysis shows that the degree of discrepancy which individuals at organizational member level perceive is sufficient to motivate the cultural change, adding to the conflict between the main values of their generation and the existing culture. This is because the main values in the generation are the opposite of the extremely hierarchy-based Confusion culture thitherto existing (Ye and Chin, 2009). The analysis thus reflects that this motivation of the individuals at organizational member level can be an important point that should be taken into account when promoting change, because it can be used to positively influence the driving of the change initiative (Armenakis and Harris, 2002)

Second, in terms of appropriateness, the positive aspect that all levels recognized is that the newly stated corporate values, which are the basis of the change content, have a philosophy which makes people perceive *'a win-win approach'* and *'the respect for employees'*. This positive perception of individuals at all levels has convinced the employees of *'the right direction'* of the change (see section 6.3.3.). However, as for the negative aspect of the appropriateness of the change content, the analysis was that only team leaders had a different viewpoint. While individuals at organizational member level and CA level pointed out that the content of corporate values is *'too broad and complicated'* and CEOs also cited that it is *'not concrete enough'*, only individuals at team leader level mentioned that *'the timing of the change is not appropriate'*. The analysis thus reflects the fact that the cultural change has been a great burden for the team leaders who are also in charge of the business performance of their respective teams. Armenakis and Harris (2002) emphasise that it is important to ensure that individuals are positively aware of this appropriateness because the disagreement with the specific content provides a well-intentioned and reasonable reason for causing resistance to change. In this respect, the great burden of the team leaders regarding the cultural change and the complexity and the lack of concreteness of the change content need to be taken into consideration when promoting change.

Third, in terms of principal support, regardless of the level, no one denied that the

strong willingness of the chairman for the cultural change was the most powerful support in promoting change. It has also been emphasized in the literature that top management support and commitment to change play a crucial role in success (Burke, 2017; Carnall and Todnem By, 2014; Johnson and Leavitt, 2001; Kotter, 1995; Nadler, 1997; Yukl, 2013; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006). However, while in the existing literature the support and commitment of the top management have a positive influence on the success of the change (Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006; Musteen et al., 2006), in this case study, analysis reveals that the strong willingness of the chairman was perceived differently depending on the roles required of individuals at different levels in terms of the context of Company A. On the one hand, individuals at organizational member level were confused by a dual message from their company. They had hopes for cultural change rooted in the 'people-centric' philosophy, receiving change messages which emphasized 'respecting people', 'developing people' and 'open communication' with the powerful support from the strong willingness of the chairman. At the same time, they were frustrated with the leadership of their immediate superiors, exposing the prevailing messages of the excessively hierarchical existing culture. However, in the end, the research findings show that the individuals at organizational member level each are more influenced by their immediate superiors than by the chairman. Bushe and Marshak (2014) emphasize that a disruption is stimulated as a prerequisite process for transformational change in order to weaken the prevailing narratives and stories which are endorsed by the privileged power in the existing culture. Otherwise, people may struggle with a dual message triggered by a strong message of the existing culture in the process of change. In this respect, it is necessary for employees to recognize the strong message from the existing culture as an obstruction standing in the way of change, and a systematic effort is necessary to weaken the existing messages.

On the other hand, for individuals at leader levels, the cultural change seems to be a huge burden. They had a huge burden in the role of leaders in making the change as well as from many change interventions that required compulsory participation from each team leader. The analysis reveal that CEOs of subsidiaries also have a very defensive attitude, with the huge burden of showing results requested quickly due to the pressure of change coming from the strong willingness of the chairman.

Especially, the CAs of subsidiaries were concerned about the manner of implementing the change based on a *'Push strategy'* from the headquarters resulting from the chairman's strong drive for change. In this intimidating atmosphere of change, the CAs who are the subordinates of CEOs of subsidiaries, were, as a consequence, ultimately busy protecting their CEOs rather than pouring their energy into driving real change. The comment of interviewee L07 shows why leaders have a defensive attitude rather than expressing difficulties in the change process. He revealed the difficulty caused by a hierarchical and authoritarian culture, where it is difficult for team leaders to say "no" or "difficult" in any difficult situation because senior managers are reluctant to expose issues or problems to top management. In this respect, although the strong willingness of the chairman was one of powerful sources of principal support, it was perceived as the greatest burden on the leaders at all levels. It led to their defensive attitude as they struggle with the burden from the change initiative in the excessively hierarchical and authoritarian culture.

Fourth, in terms of efficacy, individuals at different levels perceive differently their own belief in the capability to implement a change (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). The analysis shows that regardless of the levels, individuals agree on how powerful the strong willingness of the chairman is and how it affects their perceived efficacy. This is because, given the strong influence of the chairman in the context of the extremely hierarchical culture, there was a belief that it would be possible to do what seemed impossible, if the chairman were to push hard enough. However, although the willingness of the chairman was strong, it is found that there was a perception of a lack of confidence in the capability of individuals to successfully make the change, based on different expressed reasons for individuals at different levels. On the one hand, as discussed in relation to principal support, individuals at organizational member level were struggling between the hope for change derived from the strong drive from the chairman and the frustration resulting from the existing culture as emanating from the leadership of their immediate superiors. However, eventually they felt the helplessness to change despite their passion and hope for change because of the stronger message from the existing culture. In this situation, even in the process of change being promoted, individuals at organizational member expressed that their opinions were not accepted and were ignored, and that they were afraid whether they could be disadvantaged by the

authorities. The analysis reveals that this experience prompted their helplessness, with the perception that there is nothing they can do for change as organizational members. On the other hand, individuals at team leader had concerns about the oppressive way of implementing the change initiative based on the fear, which they recognise cannot inspire the intrinsic motivation of people. The analysis thus reflects that the efficacy perceived by employees is derived only from the strong drive of the chairman, not from their own capabilities, as seen in comments that pointed out the lack of competence and experience in both leaders and members (see section 6.3.1.1). Changes can be made to the extent that individuals are confident that they can successfully make the change (Weiner, 2009). In this respect, apart from the strong driving force of the chairman, the analysis suggests that more attention and support were needed to increase the efficacy of individuals to make changes.

Fifth, in terms of personal valence, it is found that individuals at any level were not clear about the benefits of change. Organizational members could not perceive any benefit of the change due to the huge gap between the expectations of the change initiative and the reality of their daily working life. The analysis reveals that team leaders have been recognized the change initiative as just another job under the pressure to show the business result based on short-termism. Only individuals at CA level were motivated with the pride of contributing to the cultural change in order for employees to work '*in a more rational culture*'. Some interviewees at CA level had linked their experience with the change initiative to their future career. In order for individuals to link meaning related to personal beliefs in the change initiative, the analysis suggests that more support and attention are needed, as it has a great influence on the attitude of the individuals to change (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

7.2.3.2. Perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding the change process

With regard to the change process which individuals at different levels perceive, this research examined the three strategies including persuasive communication, active participation and managing information during the change process (Armenakis et al., 1993).

First, in terms of persuasive communication, individuals at all levels agree that the direct communication of the chairman is perceived to be most persuasive. The analysis shows that the direct communication of the chairman was very persuasive,

not only because direct communication through primarily verbal means, which is recommended for persuasive communication in the literature (Gopinath and Becker, 2000; Armenakis et al., 1993; Rafferty et al., 2012), but also because the chairman, who has the strongest power in the hierarchical culture, communicated directly. Although many employees felt the authenticity and sincerity in the chairman's speech, it is found that they perceived it differently in relation to their roles and situations. As seen in the principal support for the change content, while individuals at organizational level felt hope for change through the chairman's direct communication, the analysis reflects that leaders feel a sense of psychological burden from the change message that their leadership had to be changed first to enable cultural change. Since leadership style is not easy to change, the strong drive of the chairman was perceived with fear by the leaders. Team leaders felt frustration at the huge gap between the espoused corporate values and reality in the chairman's speech, and they even felt that the responsibility for filling the gap was handed over to them without any organizational support. Overall, in terms of persuasive communication, while there was a positive view that the direct communication of the chairman was very persuasive, there was a negative opinion that the communication strategy was too dependent on the chairman. In this respect, this analysis reflects that it is necessary to consider enabling more leaders to participate in such persuasive communication rather than relying too much on top management.

Second, in terms of the active participation strategy, the company provided an opportunity for all levels of individuals to participate actively in the form of company-wide workshops. According to studies, an active participation strategy can be the most effective strategy to transmit the change message because people can learn by participating in activities which lead to self-discovery in terms of the change content such as discrepancies facing their organization (Rafferty et al., 2012; Armenakis et al., 1993; Gagné et al., 2000; Wanous et al., 2000). In this respect, individuals' perceptions of the company-wide workshops were generally positive in terms of giving them the opportunity to participate in change, which made them feel a different approach to change from ever before. However, individuals felt difficulty with the way of implementing interventions, which is influenced by the existing hierarchical culture. Individuals at organizational member level were passionate about the cultural change initiative but they felt a sense of helplessness - that there

was nothing they can do in the hierarchical culture. They were disappointed with the way the CA team was forced to submit reports regarding action plans for change in the intervention on a team basis, which were implemented under the leadership of their team leaders who appeared to *'have no will to follow up the action plans'*. The comment of interviewee M03, who said *"the action plans on a team basis were just additional work to do for me"* demonstrates the frustration of the individuals at organizational member level. Team leaders who were too busy striving for business performance based on short-term outcomes were overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions for change. In the enforcement atmosphere of the change initiative, they tended to participate in the interventions in a perfunctory and absent-minded way and they just made do with minimal duties. The CEOs of the subsidiaries, who were responsible for the change of subsidiaries, also have focused on business performance based on short-termism and took a defensive attitude toward the change initiative. In this situation, even CAs of subsidiaries who had a great zest for and pride in the cultural change were disappointed at the lack of follow-up action from their CEOs. All in all, change had been promoted in a way that generated in leaders a sense of responsibility for change in the same way that they do business, but this proved to be a bridge too far. Consequently, in this way, the analysis shows that leaders were overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions for change, taking a defensive attitude toward the change, while organizational members were not given enough opportunity to put their great passion for change into action. In this respect, the findings analysed suggest that rather than pursuing change in the same way as business is practiced, it is necessary to consider the form in which more opportunities for active participation could be given to organizational members who could exert more enthusiasm for change.

Third, in terms of managing information, there is a difference in perceptions of the information regarding the change initiative between leader level and member level. While individuals at organizational member level felt that appropriate information about the progress of change was not provided to a sufficient degree, leaders were overwhelmed and burdened with too much information. In line with this, CAs expressed their difficulty in communicating and sharing information with individuals at organizational member level in the existing authoritarian and hierarchical culture where confidentiality was overly emphasized. This phenomenon

does not corroborate the literature suggestion that sufficient information is provided during the change process (Rafferty et al., 2012). This issue of sufficient information is very important in that people can avoid being cynical or deceived by rumours of change (Wanous et al., 2000; Bordia et al., 2004; Rafferty and Restubog, 2010). From the findings, it can be concluded that the lack of adequate information provided at organizational member level, which is the group with the largest number of employees, was generally seen as an obstacle to the change. In addition, there was criticism that information from the bottom to the top was delivered in distorted form due to the rigid culture that is reluctant to listen to bad news or problems.

Overall, the expressed change content is positively perceived by those at all levels as a right direction for change in terms of the philosophy rooted in a 'people-centric' philosophy, emphasizing 'respecting people', 'developing people' and 'open communication'. It embraces a humanistic approach aligned with the main values of the millennial generation, which should be considered so as to elicit their potential and motivation to gain the global competitiveness (Meister and Willyerd, 2010; Ye and Chin, 2009). With regard to the change process, the way of implementing change interventions is also positively perceived in terms of newly attempted approaches such as encouraging the active participation of employees based on company-wide workshops and providing forums to listen to employees' opinions. The company-wide workshops were positively perceived in that they were designed to obtain opinions and feedback from employees, and especially the young employees felt hope for change through the workshop where their opinions seemed to be taken seriously. In this respect, it is found that the company-wide workshops were designed and delivered as a pertinent OD intervention aligned with the principal values based on the humanistic approach which Deaner (1994) proposed. In addition, the authenticity and sincerity of the chairman in his direct communication was positively perceived by employees, promoting the motivation of employees for change. The analysis thus reflects that there were unusual positive attempts to promote cultural change, which differ from the seemingly fancy superficial changes that many other companies had attempted.

However, even if the change content and interventions as expressed in the workshops were designed based on a humanistic approach, unfortunately, the analysis shows that subsequently the cultural change that was promoted did not

overcome the prevailing message of the existing hierarchical culture. It is found that while the change content rooted in corporate values delivered through the company-wide workshops emphasizes the humanistic approach with messages such as ‘respecting people’, ‘developing people’ and ‘open communication’, the message given to employees in the extremely hierarchical culture was a dual message due to the prevailing message from the existing culture which is opposite to the humanistic approach. The analysis thus reflect that it made employees confused or cynical.

7.2.4. The perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding change message in the extremely hierarchical culture

The findings suggest that in the extremely hierarchical culture, individuals have accepted the change messages from the cultural change initiative differently. In this context, this section discusses how individuals at different levels accept the change message against the background of the existing hierarchical context.

Firstly, individuals at organizational member level have been frustrated with not only the team leaders who have no willingness to participate in the change initiative but also with the CA team that was forced to submit reports on action plans for change on a team basis intervention in order to check the team’s change promotion activities. In the change process, they have experienced that their opinions were not accepted and they were afraid that they would be disadvantaged by the privileged power. It is found that this experience, as well as the frustration regarding the manner of promoting the change initiative which is influenced by the existing culture, made them feel helpless: that there was nothing they could do to promote change in the existing culture, even if they had high expectations and hopes for it.

Secondly, for individuals at team leader level, the strong drive of the chairman was perceived with fear and as a burden because the cultural change initially requires changing their leadership. The cultural change, led by the chairman with his strong drive was literally perceived with fear. The change to a new leadership style that they had not experienced previously was obviously not easy to attain, meaning that team leaders tended to take a defensive attitude to change, relying on the defence of the excessively hierarchical culture in which their superiors, including senior managers or CEOs, did not try to change their leadership. In addition, since this

cultural change was driven in a way that gave team leaders greater responsibility, taking into account the importance of team leaders in organizational culture, team leaders were overwhelmed by too many compulsory interventions on which they were required to act. Furthermore, the excessively hierarchical and authoritarian culture prevented them from expressing opinions like “no” or “difficulty” in any challenging situation. This difficulty, with a sense of psychological burden, has strengthened the defensive attitude of the leaders. Based on the defensive attitude to change, the strong drive of the chairman has made team leaders pretend to participate in the interventions, acting in a perfunctory and absent-minded way.

Thirdly, CEOs of subsidiaries, who are responsible for the change in their subsidiaries, have also felt the greatest burden, dealing directly with the chairman who strongly drives the change. The chairman’s enormous power, as the owner of the company, has prompted them to rush to show results in their subsidiaries, rather than expressing their opinions on the drive to change. Thus, they have pushed their CAs to produce tangible results that should be visible, despite the fact that the results of cultural change could not manifest themselves quickly. Consequently, it is found that attempts to make the cultural change initiative into tangible results distract from the essence of cultural change, inevitably leading to the manipulation of change activities and evoking cynical attitudes in employees.

Lastly, individuals at CA level who had a great zest for and pride in the cultural change were also frustrated with driving the change initiative in the extremely hierarchical culture. They had concerned about the appropriateness of the change content before propagating the corporate values, since the content rooted in the corporate values were too complicated to deliver for change. However, it was difficult for them to give proper feedback on the change content in the extremely hierarchical culture, because it was created and driven by the chairman. In addition, especially the CAs of subsidiaries were concerned about the manner of implementing the change based on a ‘*Push strategy*’ which has frightened the CEOs of the subsidiaries. In such a fearful atmosphere, they were busy protecting their CEOs who have a very defensive attitude with the huge burden of showing results quickly rather than pouring their energy into driving real change.

As seen so far, this section has discussed how individuals at different levels accept

the change messages differently in the process of promoting cultural change which has been influenced by existing hierarchical cultural characteristics. While the individuals at organizational level felt helplessness in the change process despite their passion and hope for change, leaders including CEOs of subsidiaries had a great psychological burden regarding the cultural change due to the strong drive of the owner. Especially, team leaders were overwhelmed, with too many compulsory interventions which were designed with the belief that team leaders have a great influence on organizational culture.

In fact, the cultural change initiative in Company A is a very unusual and remarkable change promotion in that the change content was designed based on a humanistic approach which intended to intrinsically motivate employees, and the change initiative was supported by the strong willingness of the owner of the company. However, despite the great change content and the strong support of top management, the analysis reflects that the manner of implementing the cultural change which has been influenced by the extremely hierarchical culture prevents individuals at different levels from properly accepting the message of cultural change. While positive in intention, the constraints of the existing culture have prevented the delivery of the change message properly and this has led to misunderstanding at every level in Company A.

7.3. Conclusion

Many global enterprises are working to increase their effectiveness through a range of change tactics to adapt quickly to the contemporary environment (Meaney and Pung, 2008). In line with this, Korean conglomerates that have hitherto achieved rapid growth have encountered difficulty in changing their organizational culture to adapt to a global business environment transitioned into the 4th industrial revolution (Kim et al., 2017). In this respect, this research has been undertaken with the aim of helping to implement more successful OD by exploring contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea. In order to achieve this aim, this study examines how individuals at different levels perceive their change context, content and process. Table 7.1 therefore offers a summary of key findings against each of the objectives and research questions.

Table 7-1: Summary of the thesis

Aim	Objectives	Research Question	Summary of Finding
To explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea, based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization	To examine important principles throughout the development history of OD in order to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The humanistic approach is the starting point for successful OD, which increase the willingness of people. 2. It is important to consider the multiple realities for successful OD, rather than acknowledging only one entity and ignoring the others. 3. For successful OD, it is critical to disrupt the prevailing narratives or stories and to provide new ways of thinking in the change process.
	To examine how individuals perceive the change context.	How do individuals at different levels perceive their company in terms of employment relationships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is analysed a majority of interviewees cited 'change' and 'People' as the words that come to mind about their company. • Juniors tend to prioritize growth and development while leaders tend to regard their company as their 'life itself'. • It is found that individuals at all levels tend to regard the employment relationship as a contractual relationship
		How do individuals at different levels perceive difficulties in relation to cultural characteristics in the change context of a Korean conglomerate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is analysed that individuals at different levels commonly pointed out three characteristics: a hierarchy-based Confucian culture, an excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism and the tendency of leaders to stick to their opinions. • For the characteristics which are differently mentioned by level, juniors pointed to the poor leadership of the leaders, and leaders indicated the lack of professionalism in juniors

Aim	Objectives	Research Question	Summary of Finding
	To examine how individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative.	How do individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With regard to the change content, employees at all levels commonly recognized that the existing culture should be changed. They all have convinced the content has ‘the right direction’ for the cultural change. However, there are negative responses regarding the content such as ‘not concrete enough’, ‘complicated’ and ‘inappropriate timing’. Although they commonly perceived the strong willingness of the chairman as a principal support, there were concerns about ‘a push strategy’, because it created a fearful atmosphere which failed to elicit the intrinsic motivation from employees. • With regard to the change process, employees all agree that the direct communication of the chairman is perceived to be most persuasive but it is found that the change initiative was too dependent on the chairman. In terms of the active participation strategy, while organizational members tended to feel a sense of helplessness, leaders were overwhelmed by the change interventions. In terms of information for the progress of the change initiative, while organizational members felt the lack of information, leaders felt burdened with too much information.
	To explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The humanistic approach of OD is also crucial in the context of Korea. 2. OD practitioners need to first take into account ways to weaken the prevailing message of the existing culture. 3. A change approach that takes into account the circumstances and characteristics of individuals at each level is needed. 4. Employees should be given the opportunity to try and practise the ‘new way’ of the change message by participating in change interventions

Source: Compiled by the author

7.3.1. The summary of thesis

Before examining individuals' perceptions, the research has examined important principles and lessons learned for successful OD with various theories and approaches in the development history of OD. Then, in order to understand the individuals' perceptions regarding the change context, the research has examined two kinds of perceptions of the change context, which are the perception of the difficulties in relation to the cultural characteristics of a Korean conglomerate and the overall perception of the company in terms of employment relationships. It then examined how individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative, broken down into two aspects: change content and change process. Based on the examination of these points, this research has explored contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea.

7.3.1.1. Objective 1: to examine important principles throughout the development history of OD in order to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD

In line with the aim of this research, in order to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD, the researcher examined the important principles which are found throughout the development history of OD, as the first objective. First of all, one of the crucial insights for successful OD is a humanistic approach, which is preserved as a central principle throughout the development history of the OD field. As recorded in many studies, by going through the trial and error of OD practice with the emergence of a performance-oriented focus, OD has reinforced the importance of people in achieving successful change, reinvigorating its humanistic approach applicable to current relationships in the business world (Melé, 2003). From the perspective of the individual, a humanistic approach induces the intrinsic motivation of people and from the perspective of the organization, it helps an enterprise to reconsider its purpose based on business ethics as well as sustainability. Moreover, 'Dialogic OD', which has emerged based on very different underlying ontological and epistemological positions from the classical OD, has given useful insights to OD practitioners and researchers in terms of drawing attention to the multiple realities which are continuously constructed and changed through people's interactions and conversations (Bushe and Marshak, 2015).

7.3.1.2. Objective 2: to examine how individuals perceive the change context

Based on the conceptual framework, the empirical research has been conducted based on a single case study to explore in depth how individuals at different levels perceive the same cultural change initiative in the same context. In this respect, with the second objective, the researcher examined individuals' perceptions of the change context, which have a reciprocal influence on the individuals' perceptions regarding the change initiative, by examining the overall perceptions of individuals regarding their company as well as the perceptions of difficulties caused by the cultural characteristics of a Korean conglomerate. The findings conclude that individuals at different levels all tend to perceive their relationship with the company as contractual regardless of their level. The constraints reported by employees related to the existing cultural characteristics, are consistent with the characteristics of a Korean conglomerate examined in the literature review (Park et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2014; Kim, 2013). These constraints are classified into three categories: a hierarchy-based Confucian culture, an excessively result-oriented culture based on short-termism and the tendency of leaders to stick to their opinions. Analysis has shown that the root cause of these difficulties is derived from the extremely hierarchical culture which results from the excessive concentration of an owner's power in the chaebol system. As discussed above, this extremely hierarchical culture runs counter to the humanistic approach which is one of the central principles of successful OD.

7.3.1.3. Objective 3: to examine how individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative

Based on the examination of perceptions of change context, the third objective examined how individuals at different levels perceive the change content and process. With regard to the change content, it was positively perceived as the right direction for change in terms of the philosophy rooted in a 'people-centric' approach, emphasizing 'respecting people', 'developing people' and 'open communication'. In line with this positive perception of the change content, the change process was also partially perceived as positive by some change interventions such as company-wide workshops and leadership training programmes which were designed to encourage the active participation of employees. However,

the extremely hierarchical culture is identified as a major obstacle to the promotion of change, attenuating the change message and making the members feel confused and see hypocrisy.

7.3.1.4. Objective 4: to explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea

The fourth objective is to explore the contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of Korea. For this, the researcher examined how individuals perceive the change initiative and how they experience psychological difficulties in the process of internalizing change in the context of a Korean conglomerate. Based on the examination these points, this research explores contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of Korea to be helpful for OD practitioners and Korean enterprises that promote cultural change, as discussed below.

Firstly, the analysis reflects that the humanistic approach of OD is also crucial to successful OD in the context of Korea. The reasons for the importance of the humanistic approach of OD in the Korean context are consistent with the literature in that not only can it be a source of intrinsic motivation for individuals to participate genuinely in a change initiative, but also it helps an enterprise to reconsider its purpose based on business ethics as well as sustainability, particularly in response to the concerns of wider society (Burnes and Cooke, 2012). The change content of Company A is based on corporate values in which the company's purpose was reconsidered based on sustainability with a long-term perspective. For the purpose of Company A with its renewed corporate values, the willingness of top management to change the culture in the right direction has intrinsically motivated employees. In this respect, at the beginning of the change initiative, individuals at all levels positively perceived the change content based on the humanistic approach with its main messages such as 'respecting people', 'developing people' and 'open communication'. In line with this, as many interviewees commented, the authenticity and sincerity of the chairman regarding the changes that employees felt through his direct communication was the most persuasive communication to the employees at all levels. These aspects, which made individuals perceive that the change initiative is based on the humanistic approach, have motivated people to open their minds and participate in the change initiative. In contrast, the extremely

hierarchical culture of a Korean conglomerate has conveyed the message against the cultural change initiative based on a humanistic approach. Consequently, the cultural change initiative faced difficulties due to conflict with the prevailing message of the extremely hierarchical culture which undermines the humanistic approach. Furthermore, as seen in individuals' overall perceptions of the company, even the leaders who have regarded their company as *'the life itself'* are changing their perception of working for the company towards seeing it as a contractual relationship. Given this situation of changes in employment relations, researchers suggest that it is more necessary to have the humanistic approach of respecting employees as human beings in order to open up their minds and to motivate them to participate in change (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010; Hodson, 2001). Therefore, OD practitioners and Korean enterprises need to keep in mind the significance of the humanistic approach in actions as well as in words which can motivate the internal change in employees needed for cultural change, viewing employees as partners who work together for change rather than as targets of change.

Secondly, in line with the conflict between the existing culture and the change message, OD practitioners need to take into account ways to weaken the prevailing message of the existing culture in order to implement OD more successfully in the context of a Korean conglomerate. This is because the prevailing message of the extremely hierarchical culture is too strong to be ignored. This research, which describes in detail how the cultural characteristics perceived by employees are integrated into the change initiative and how the characteristics cause the difficulties experienced by them at different levels, shows that the key difficulties of employees in the change initiative are mainly derived from the excessively hierarchical culture. In addition, it describes how the evils of such an extremely hierarchical culture have a negative impact on business as well as on the change initiative. In terms of the change initiative, the existing culture has made the CEOs of subsidiaries rush to show quick results to the owner regardless of the validity of the change impact, which has eventually led to cynical feelings among employees. In addition, a culture that is reluctant to report problems has hidden or distorted the opinions and issues raised by organizational members to top management during the change process. In this situation, it has been difficult to carry out the tasks essential for promoting real change. In terms of business aspects, as interviewee C3 presented in the section on

the difficulties caused by cultural characteristics, the negative impact of the excessively hierarchical culture was demonstrated by the example where the problem was concealed and eventually caused enormous damage to the company (see section 6.3.3.1). As such, tendencies to rush to show tangible results based on short-termism, or tendencies to give good opinions to their leaders, not conveying issues or problems to them, are extremely negative for successful change.

It is clear from the research findings that given the negative impact on business as well as on the change initiative, Korean conglomerates need to make a commitment to reducing the negative impacts caused by the extremely hierarchical culture in order to increase global competitiveness. Since the root cause of this excessively hierarchical culture derives from the structural characteristics of the chaebol system based on the concentration of power of the chaebol owners, the commitment and cooperation of the owners of chaebols are entirely necessary for the transformation of the culture. However, at the same time, leaders at all levels need to make efforts to reduce the negative impact of this excessively hierarchical culture. Therefore, in order to implement change successfully in the context of a Korean conglomerate, OD practitioners require enterprise-wide initiatives for all levels of leaders to work together to weaken the prevailing message of the hierarchical culture. Otherwise, even if new change message is delivered, a dual message will be formed due to the prevailing message of the existing culture, which makes employees tend to be confused or even see hypocrisy in the change process. In this respect, facing and resolving this issue regarding the extremely hierarchical culture is not an optional extra but a prerequisite for securing global competitiveness.

Thirdly, a change approach that takes into account the circumstances and characteristics of individuals at each level is much needed. In Korean conglomerates, the way in which the companies operate their business is centred on the team leaders; the tendency of leaders to stick to their opinions is strong, as presented in the difficulties in relation to the cultural characteristics of a Korean conglomerate. This way of operating and leaders' tendencies of decision-making drive all decisions to team leaders, and team leaders are struggling with being overloaded in their work. In this situation, taking into account the importance of the leader in achieving change, the change initiative driven in the same way that the business operates centred on the team leaders means that they are overwhelmed with

a double workload. Consequently, this situation makes them pretend to participate in the change interventions by acting in a perfunctory and absent-minded way, taking a defensive attitude regarding their responsibility towards the change initiative. By contrast, individuals at organizational member level are not able to do much in this process of change that is driven by team leaders, despite their enthusiasm for change. Especially, the millennial generation who prefer to express their own opinions and are sensitive to undue formality, unfairness or non-transparency, can exude their passion for change in connection with their values (Meister and Willyerd, 2010; Ye and Chin, 2009). In this respect, when designing and implementing change initiatives in the context of Korean conglomerates, it is necessary to fully consider the circumstances and characteristics of individuals at different levels in a way by which the change initiative promotes more participation opportunities for members in the quest for change, and alleviates the burden currently felt by team leaders. While this problem is complex in nature, OD practitioners can approach its solution by utilising the paradigm of social constructionism, which helps them to make sense of a social reality as multiple realities formulated from a multiplicity of diverse voices in an organization (Weick et al., 2005; Ford and Ford, 2008). This approach based on social constructionism can provide complementary benefits in implementing OD successfully, by seeing things that can be missed by the approach in which only one reality regarding change is perceived. In order to promote cultural change appropriate to a given context, this approach is very helpful in designing OD interventions taking into account the circumstances and characteristics of individuals at each level.

Finally, it is necessary to help employees feel the efficacy of promoting change and convince them that change is possible, through providing change interventions designed to give employees the opportunity to try and practise the ‘new way’ of the change message. Cultural change is neither easy nor achievable on a short timescale, especially under the strong existing culture. Practice is necessary to change the existing culture that has been deep-rooted for decades. Interviewee C1 also emphasized in his comment that *“Every change is a series of exercises to form habits. The change requires a step-by-step process which would be tedious”*. As he indicates, change requires a certain period of time with tedious practice in a way which allows employees to practise the new approach while participating in change

interventions so as to disrupt the prevailing message of the existing hierarchical culture. In this respect, it is important for employees to experience small successes through new attempts and practices in the change process whereby the way of implementing change itself reflects the change message. If these attempts and practices continue with the feedback process stimulated by OD practitioners, then employees will be more likely to change with the efficacy and realise that change is possible.

The implications of this research are discussed in the following section.

7.3.2. Implications

This research into how individuals perceive a change initiative and how they experience psychological difficulties in the process of internalizing change is expected to provide theoretical and practical implications for OD practitioners and Korean enterprises that promote cultural change.

7.3.2.1. Theoretical implications

Firstly, this study has contributed to OD literature on individuals' perceptions of a change initiative from the employee's point of view with particular reference to Korea. Traditionally, studies on OD mainly concentrate on the perspective of OD practitioners or management teams, primarily focusing on how to implement OD successfully. This research has moved the paradigm forward by generating employee perspective at different levels in a cultural change process, one aspect on which there are not many studies. Consequently, this study also provides practical implications for successful OD from the various aspects of the employees' point of view.

Secondly, this study based on the qualitative case study methodology has contributed to the body of studies focusing on individuals' receptivity to change in terms of exploring the complexity of individuals' perceptions in a change process from a phenomenological perspective. Although recent studies focusing on individuals' receptivity to change serve as the pivotal dimension in adapting to change (Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce and Jussila, 2011; Pierce et al., 2009; Fiorito et al., 2007; Salminen, 2012), most studies on individual readiness have been based on the deductive methodology. However, this inductive approach adopted has the

strength to explore the complexity of individual receptivity to change.

Thirdly, this study contributes to extending the body of knowledge in relation to the contextual considerations of OD, in which organizational change needs to be approached and implemented in a way that is appropriate to each culture and context (Rees et al., 2012). The demand for cultural change in Korean enterprises has increased with the aim of securing global competitiveness. However, the history of OD in Korea is short and there is not much research on OD based on the Korean context. Therefore, this study extends the knowledge of OD practice in Korea in terms of the contextual considerations of OD.

Finally, this study has shed new light on a humanistic approach as a sign pointing towards a breakthrough for challenges such as the lack of sustainability and the continuous decline in societal trust. By exploring what the humanistic approach is, why it is important and how it applies to OD and business management, this study provides OD practitioners with guidance for the direction of interventions which can motivate people to genuinely participate in OD.

7.3.2.2. Practical implications

Based on the research findings, the research presents the practice-driven implications given below.

The first of the implications for practice from this research come from the aim of this research, which is to explore contextual considerations of OD with reference to the context of Korea, based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization. Despite the high demand for cultural change at Korean enterprises, there is a lack of research into the contextual considerations of OD. Large consulting firms that help Korean enterprises are struggling to make changes by introducing change models without considering the Korean context. Since cultural change requires internal change in the mindset of the employees, this study on the perceptions of individuals at different levels of an organization regarding change helps OD practitioners to understand not only the various perceptions of change initiatives but also difficulties that people experience in the interactions of individuals at different levels in relation to cultural characteristics. Thus, it offers OD practitioners and Korean enterprises practical insights and guidance for

designing and implementing OD, taking into account the factors that cause employees' difficulties in relation to potential changes in Korean culture.

Secondly, the findings reveal the enormous negative impact of the prevailing message of an extremely hierarchical culture affecting a change process. This negative impact and its root cause - the extremely hierarchical culture, identified in vivid and detailed descriptions in this study - reveal that the prevailing message of the existing hierarchical culture runs counter to a change message based on a humanistic approach. In this respect, the study recommends enterprise-wide initiatives for all levels of leaders to work together to reduce the impact of the prevailing message driven by the existing culture. As long as the prevailing message of the existing culture reveals a strong message, no matter what OD techniques or change models are introduced, they cannot truly motivate employees.

Thirdly, this study on exploring individuals' perceptions regarding a change initiative provides practical implications for designing and implementing OD interventions, taking into account the circumstances and characteristics of individuals at different levels. In particular, given the situation in which Korean companies operate, with their business is centred on the team leaders, this study suggests that the enthusiasm for change at organizational member level needs to be actively utilised in promoting change. The main values and characteristics of millennials are aligned with the message of cultural culture, meaning that it is optimal to use their change energy to disrupt the existing culture. It also alleviates the burden of promoting change for team leaders who are struggling with overloading in their work.

7.3.3. Limitations and Suggestions for future research

Although this study makes some contributions theoretically and practically as presented above, there are several limitations which need to be acknowledged. Based on the limitations, the following directions for further research beyond the present study are proposed.

Firstly, the researcher recognises that one of the limitations of this study is that it is very difficult to separate out the influence of age within each level. By analysing the perceptions of individuals at different levels, the researcher inevitably introduced the

age component to the level due to the promotion system based on seniority pervading Korean conglomerates. The researcher recognised there is an age component to the level but controlling for this is beyond the scope of this study. As generational conflicts become one of the cultural characteristics of Korean conglomerates due to the great difference in recognition among generations, exploring the influence of the generational differences in the individuals' perceptions of change initiatives will also be helpful to promote more successful cultural change in the context of Korea enterprises. In this respect, exploring the impact of the age component would require further research, using a wholly different philosophy and methodological approach.

Secondly, this research focuses on individuals' perceptions regarding their change initiative and cannot include all potential determinants of OD practices. Based on the belief that examining individuals' perceptions regarding the change initiative should precede the search for successful implementation of OD in the context of Korea, where there is a lack of research on OD, this study has focused on the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding a particular change initiative. However, it is recognised that there are many potential determinants of OD practices for successful OD, including the perceptions of employees, although exploring the perceptions of individuals can be the first step for successful OD in the context of Korean enterprises. In line with this, further research on conditions such as leadership, systems and structural support related to difficulties identified by exploring the perceptions of individuals will also be significant. In addition, this study focusses on influence of a change context on the perceptions of individuals regarding a change initiative. Thus, it does not look at individual attributes such as personality or characteristics. All of these potential determinants including individual attributes warrant further research so as to deepen contextual considerations for OD in Korea. The present study has been carried out based on a social constructionist approach because it focuses on the perceptions of individuals at different levels regarding a change initiative. However, it would be helpful for further research on those potential determinants to be conducted with different philosophies and methodological approaches in order to provide OD practitioners with wider understanding of the design and implementation of OD intervention.

Thirdly, this study intentionally chose the single case study approach to explore the

interaction of the different perceptions of individuals at different levels concerning the same change initiative in the same context. Given the focus of the study, the focus is not on covering the representative cultural characteristics of Korean conglomerates. The selected case company operates mainly in the manufacturing and construction industry, although it includes various industries such as IT, biotech, and sales as is common of Korean conglomerates. Although this case can provide meaningful implications with the common characteristics of Korean conglomerates, there may be cultural differences from other conglomerates that focus on other industries. Therefore, further research with more diverse industry groups and a larger number of cases will enrich the contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of Korea, whose OD history is relatively short and shows a lack of research.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

My PhD journey, based on my experience as a practitioner for the last 15 years, was a big change in my life. Everything was 'new' for me, from adapting to the new environment and culture with my family, to adapting to and learning new academic terms in the academic environment. The experience itself of adapting myself to such a big change was a great learning process regarding change with a complex feeling which frustration and joy have been repeated. There have been three kinds of valuable lesson learned through this PhD journey.

The first lesson is a new perspective on 'change', which has been gained through experiencing the drastic change of my PhD journey. In my past work experience as a practitioner who is charge of designing and implementing change interventions for leadership change and organizational change, leaders and organizations are merely targets for change that I need to transform efficiently and successfully. However, after experiencing the great changes myself as the target of the change, I realise that change was not as simple as what I asked of the leaders. It was painful process where regression and progress was repeated, and there were a lot of ups and downs in the mind during the change process. Given the pain of people in this process of change, as a practitioner, I realised that it is important to make the changes together by considering the difficulties in their changes rather than throwing the people's difficulties into their share and asking for only quick change. I am grateful to my PhD journey for reflecting on my perspective on change, because I believe that it can be an important first step to the next level.

Secondly, I have rediscovered the reason why a humanistic approach is important in OD not just at organizational level but also in national level. In line with the reexamination of a humanistic approach in the development history of OD, I realised that it is important to make change with people based on a humanistic approach rather than based on a control paradigm of people and change. It also gave me the reflection that the trials and errors in my past experience as a practitioner were caused by a lack of humanistic approach. The humanistic approach offers a very important direction to Korean enterprises which have hitherto achieved rapid growth but are facing the need for change in organizational culture and leadership with the

aim of securing global competitiveness. Fortunately, Korean politics and democracy, which had been dark and distressed at the beginning of my PhD, are now growing in hope for change with the new government which was put in place by the candlelight revolution and impeachment. Along with the hope of this change, I hope that Korean society will be able to correct many things which have been overlooked for the sake of rapid economic growth, based on the direction of the humanistic approach.

The third lesson is learning various research methodologies with various philosophies and developing primary skills for qualitative research methodology. The research methodology in Korean academia is still focused on the quantitative research methodology and thus, I hesitated to choose the qualitative research method due to a lack of confidence in the qualitative research method. However, I concluded that qualitative research methods are effective for the aim and research questions of this thesis, and I have learned and developed qualitative methodology skills with the understanding that qualitative research can be more meaningful in certain situations. I hope that the qualitative research methodology will be developed in a balanced manner in the Korean academic study of OD, which will help to develop more successful OD in practice.

Along with these lessons learned, the PhD journey was a reflection process in itself, in which I have been able to reflect on my preconceptions and views that I had taken for granted in my life in Korea. I hope that this reflection process continues to be applied to my future life so that I can make my future life more gratifying, sharing and growing.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Participant Information Sheet

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet regarding the study that you have been invited to participate in, as part of my doctoral research study at The University of Manchester. The research study is aimed at exploring contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea, based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization.

Your contribution to the study is thus highly significant and deeply appreciated. However, before you make a decision on whether to participate, it is important that you fully comprehend what the study may entail and what it would involve. For this reason, please take the time to read the following information. Should there be any issue or concern which you wish to raise, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information.

To assure you, your employer has kindly agreed to your taking part in this study during work hours. You will therefore not be liable for any sanctions due to your absence from work to participate in this study. Thank you for taking the time to consider taking part.

Who will conduct the research?

The study will be conducted by Youngsun Lee, a Candidate under the supervision of Dr. Chris Rees and Mr. Paul Barry of the Institute for Development Policy and Management; School of Environment, Education and Development of the University of Manchester.

What is the aim of the research?

The study aims to explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea, based on analysis of individuals' perceptions at different levels of an organization. Based on this research aim, the study intends to achieve the following objectives.

1. To examine important principles throughout the development history of OD in order to gain insights and lessons learned for successful OD.

2. To examine how individuals perceive their change context.
3. To examine how individuals at different levels perceive the change initiative.
4. To explore contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea.

What is the background and rationale of the study?

Many organizations fail to achieve their aims for change, not because of the change initiative itself, but because of implementation failure (Klein and Sorra, 1996). Even if an exemplary change-promoting model is implemented, inevitably it comes down to the individuals who must connect with that change model, so the individuals' level of acceptance of change is very important (George and Jones, 2001).

Studies about individuals' attitudes are heavily affected by the corresponding organization's culture and contextual conditions at the time; studies must be conducted in a way that is appropriate to each culture and context (Rees et al., 2012). However, due to a lack of studies dealing with the contextual considerations of South Korea, many organizations tend to lead their change initiative in a form originating in western culture.

In line with this background, this research has been undertaken with the aim of helping to implement more successful OD by exploring contextual considerations in OD with reference to the context of South Korea.

Why have I been chosen?

The study intends to select organizations which have a clear message regarding organizational change that the top team has consistently emphasized. This is because the aim of the study is to explore culture-relevant strategies for maximizing readiness to change in a change management process with a better understanding of difficulties employees experience in change initiatives. In the selected organizations, participants at four different levels will be selected for one-to-one semi-structured interviews, these being top team, change agent & human resource department, team leader and organizational members who have about 5 years of work experience. You will be among 40 participants chosen for this study and your inputs will help me to accomplish the objectives of this study.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

On participating in this study, you will be invited to engage in a face-to-face semi-structured interview where the researcher will ask a series of open-ended questions. The interview is intended to be an interactive process through which you are encouraged to share your experiences of the change process of your organization. Each interview will last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours. All interviews will be audio recorded for the purpose of transcription and analysis.

What happens to the data collected?

All interviews will be collected by the researcher either manually or digitally. The data gathered from the interview will be collected, analysed and presented in a thesis. However, all identifiers will be anonymised to prevent your identity from being known. No part of the data reported will refer to any person openly without their prior consent. Summaries of this report may be forwarded to participants for further discussion and consultation. At their request, the final report or a summary of findings of the study will be made available to participants. In addition, any recommendations generated from the findings, relevant to improving the organizational change, may be forwarded to selected organizations for their consideration, with the consent of participants. Any parts of the findings emerging from the study may be published in academic and peer reviewed journals in the future, as a contribution to building knowledge in the area of organizational change and development.

How is confidentiality maintained?

No names of persons or organisations will be used in the data and reports generated from it. All identifiers will be removed and data access will be restricted to the principal investigator and the supervisory team. In addition, all data and related reports will be encrypted, password protected and kept under lock and key. Then, the data will be saved on P-drive, where encryption is effected by the University of Manchester. Data will be destroyed within a period of ten years after the interview is conducted.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

The entire process and your participation are entirely voluntary and so, you are entitled to change your mind. This is your right and can be exercised at any point in the process. You will not be required to provide any reasons why you decline further participation. If you decide to exercise this right, it will be respected and the data collected from you will be destroyed at your request.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

No allowances will be paid to participants.

What is the duration of the research?

The duration of the data collection for this research study will take place from January 2016 to August 2016. Each participant will be required to be involved in a one-to-one semi-structured interview. Each interview session is estimated to last about 1.5 to 2 hours. In some cases, it may be necessary to reschedule the interview because of time constraints.

Where will the research be conducted?

The study will be conducted in your organization so that you do not incur travelling time and transport costs. Your name and organisation will not be known to the other organisation and participants in this study and theirs will similarly not be made known to you.

What if something goes wrong?

If, during the research process, there are issues, concerns, questions or if you want to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research do please contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by an independent group of people known as ‘the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee’ and given a favourable opinion to commence the study.

Contact for further information

I can be contacted through the following address:

Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM),

School of Environment, Education and Development

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Appendix 2. List of main themes, sub-themes in thematic analysis

	Main themes	Sub-themes			
		Organizational member	Team leader	CEO	CA
Change content	Discrepancy	Dissatisfaction with the existing culture	Performance pressure and stress	The culture of silence	Distorted corporate culture
		Lack of system in the existing culture	Inefficient people management		Authoritarian and hierarchical culture
		A lack of principles for decision-making	Inefficient operational procedure		
	Appropriateness	A great change initiative based on win-win approach	The direction and vision of the company	The solution to the culture of silence	Complicated and extensive content
		Enthusiastic responses	Changing leadership style	The lack of concrete aspects	The long-term plan
		Too complicated and broad	Untimely and inappropriate		
		Focused on understanding			
	Principal support	The sincere drive of the chairman	Leadership training programmes	The influence of the top leader	The great support from the chairman
		Concerns about reducing people's autonomy	The strong willingness and commitment of the chairman	Steady and continuous change effort	The support for CEOs of subsidiaries
		Changed the main systems	Inefficient interventions		change with sufficient time
		Team leaders' leadership	Lack of support		

	Main themes	Sub-themes			
		Organizational member	Team leader	CEO	CA
	Efficacy	Not connected to daily work	Continuity of change	Separated cultural change	Strong drive of the chairman
		Campaigns, action plans with no follow-up	Cannot avoid the general trend of change	Positive view about the right direction of change	Disappointment with the restructuring
		Support of the chairman	Oppressive way		
	Personal valence	Benefit is not realistic	Cannot find any benefit	Create a virtuous circle	The pride of contributing
		Depending on team culture	Improved communication	The meaning of their lives	Valuable experience growth
	Change process	Persuasive communication	Authentic communication with from the chairman	The most persuasive speech of the chairman	The chairman's direct speech
More influenced by their immediate bosses			Inefficient indirect communications	A leader's example is the most important	Not persuasive from the second year
Ineffective public relations			does not aware of the reality	listen to employees' opinions	
Active participation		Company-wide workshop	Too many interventions	The workshop for CEOs	no follow-up action of CEOs
		A meeting on a team basis	Burdensome duties	Most authoritarian CEOs	The restructuring
		A meeting by change agents			
Managing information		Lack of information	Too much information	Confidentiality	Filtering opinions
		Confidentiality	Not deliver opinion to top	Lack of people's perception	Too much confidentiality

Source: Compiled by the author