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# **The Impact of Leadership on Organizational Transformation**

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Year:

**2025**

## Dedication

First and foremost, I express my deepest gratitude to Almighty **Allah** for granting me the strength, patience, and perseverance to complete this journey. His divine guidance and blessings have been my constant companions, illuminating the path through every challenge and triumph.

To my esteemed **mentors**, whose intelligence, wisdom, faith, and encouragement inspired me to pursue this academic journey — your belief in my potential has been a source of profound motivation and pride. This achievement stands as a reflection of your guidance and influence.

To my **friends** and **family**, your genuine care, unwavering support, and encouragement have been a constant source of comfort throughout this pursuit. Your belief in my potential inspired me to pursue and complete my postgraduate degree, and for that, I am deeply thankful.

This work is dedicated to all who believe in the power of perseverance, learning, and faith, for they are the true architects of growth and accomplishment. May it serve as a reminder that every step taken with purpose, every lesson learned with humility, and every challenge faced with courage brings us closer to the person we are meant to become.

Indeed, **the harder the journey, the sweeter the victory.**

## **Abstract**

This study has discussed the role of leadership in organizational transformation across various global cases, including Microsoft, Ford, Google/Alphabet, the Government of Dubai, General Electric (GE), Starbucks, and Majid Al Futtaim (MAF). The study employed a qualitative research design based on a multiple-case study to understand how various forms of leadership, including transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, and situational leadership, influenced strategic renewal and transformation in organizations. The results indicate that successful transformations involve a set of global leadership practices, which include providing a clear vision, developing short-term wins, eliminating structural obstacles, and demonstrating new cultural values. Nevertheless, the performance of the respective leadership styles depends on the situation in which an organization operates, whether in the public or private sector, in industries driven by innovation, or in traditional industries, as well as in founder-led or professionally managed organizations. Mapping the cases against the existing change models (the 8-Step Model by Kotter, the 3-stage theory by Lewin, and the ADKAR model), the study demonstrates that transformational and participative leadership are the most efficient in the change and movement scheme.

In contrast, transactional leadership provides sustainability in the refreezing phase. Past research findings are also incorporated into the discussion, supporting the observation that leadership effectiveness is not solely a function of personal attributes but also of alignment with the context, structural processes, and cultural sensitivity. Altogether, the study contributes to the general understanding of transformational leadership styles in operationalizing change, providing both theoretical and practical implications for organizations seeking to implement sustainable change.

**Keywords:** Leadership styles, Organizational transformation, Transformational leadership, Change management, Kotter's model, Lewin's theory, ADKAR.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1. Research Background**

The modern, dynamic business world is placing firms under unprecedented pressure to change, reorganize, and innovate. The volatility of the market, shifting customer demands, emerging globalization, and technological changes demand more than gradual improvements; they often require radical change. This process of organizational transformation entails changing structures, culture, methods, and behaviors to successfully address internal and external challenges (Celep et al., 2016). Within this complex structure, leadership is not merely an administrative role; it is also a strategic requirement for guiding and sustaining change.

The corporate and public sectors require revolutionary transformational change within their organizations. Incremental changes and minor improvements will be inadequate. Everything should be implemented in a better, smarter, and faster way, thereby maximizing efficiency and attracting and retaining competent leaders and personnel. Organizations that respond to this call for change and take a proactive approach to the necessary modifications are likely to succeed. Others might struggle to survive in a modern organizational environment characterized by uncertainty, constant change, intense competition, restructuring, downsizing, budget cuts, and layoffs, as more established organizations become insolvent.

Leadership is a significant factor that contributes towards the success of a business. The importance of a leader who can guide change and motivate staff cannot be overstated in a fast-paced, dynamic workplace. An organization that successfully addresses change is more likely to survive and prosper in the competitive market. Transformational leadership transcends the common direction of operation. It involves the capacity to inspire a vision, engage stakeholders, defy conventional wisdom, and empower the development of emergent

organizational capabilities. Effective leaders influence the vision of change and its implementation process because they become change agents who organize resources, motivate people, and bridge the gap between the current position of the organization and the desired state it should achieve.

Different approaches and leadership styles are relevant to transformation initiatives. Research (Carrington, 2025) suggests that command-and-control leadership, also known as transactional leadership, may be effective in achieving compliance and maintaining order; however, it is ineffective in facilitating deep-seated change and innovation. On the other hand, styles that emphasize empowerment, involvement, and organizational learning typically accelerate change. Mansaray (2019) found that various leadership styles, including participative, strategic, and transformational, can be employed to manage change. Moreover, consistency between leadership behavior and the specific change situation may affect the degree of success.

The influence of various leadership styles on employee engagement during organizational transition situations has been previously studied (Agote et al., 2016; Bakari et al., 2017). According to some researchers, the transformational leadership style can be especially effective when it comes to affecting the attitude of employees in the context of changing an organization (Sharma & Krishnan, 2012), and the study found that the transformational style of leadership has a beneficial impact on work engagement (Yasin Ghadi et al., 2013). Organizational change is not necessarily a straight and steady process. It entails managing resistance, reconstructing the organizational culture, adopting new technologies, restructuring processes, and redesigning jobs. Both structural and human aspects of change should be encountered in leaders of ambitious undertakings. Transformational leadership is also found to enhance self-efficacy, change flexibility, and positive affect among employees, allowing them to take an active part in the transformation. The context is significant, and the culture of an organization may

significantly contribute to the correlation between the outcomes of the transformation and leadership.

The process of organizational change is not always linear and consistent. It involves handling resistance, reshaping organizational culture, integrating new technologies, reorganizing processes, and redesigning positions. Leaders in ambitious undertakings must face both the structural and human dimensions of change. Transformational leadership has also been found to boost employees' self-efficacy, flexibility to change, and positive affect, thereby helping them participate actively in the transformation process. The culture of an organization plays a significant role in the relationship between transformation results and leadership, and the context is crucial.

## **1.2. Research Aim**

This study has reviewed the roles of various leadership styles (transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, situational, etc.) in transforming an organization, using established models of change management, including Kotter's 8-Step Model, Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR framework.

## **1.3. Problem Statement**

Though there is a growing recognition concerning the critical role of leadership in organizational change and transformation, there are still significant gaps in our current understanding of how different leadership styles (such as transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, situational, etc.) impact such deep-seated and organizational-wide process of organizational change, especially when the styles are aligned with existing change-management models like the 8-Step Model of Kotter, the Three-Stage Theory of Lewin, and the ADKAR model. Past research has shown that leadership style is a significant factor in determining the successful implementation of change. According to other studies,

transformational leadership is also considerably correlated with organizational learning and transformation outcomes. However, many studies focus on personalities, particular situations, or change processes with a limited scope. Empirical comparative analysis of different types of leadership across various industries (technology, public, private corporate, and family companies) and diverse cultural and contextual settings (Middle Eastern versus Western/global) is lacking.

In the community of practice, that is, in organizations undergoing significant transformation, there is a problem of practice of this kind in which the leaders might not know what is the best style of leadership or what combination of styles will be more effective at a particular stage of transformation, and how their leadership style can be aligned with change-management frameworks and factors of contexts. This, in turn, creates an acute need for studies that bring together the mentioned cases across various industries and locations to identify which leadership styles, how, and under what conditions can substantially contribute to successful organizational transformation. In this attempt, the paper seeks to fill this gap by conducting a qualitative multiple case study analysis of relevant transformation journeys in technology, public, corporate, private, and family business settings (both in the Middle East and globally) in order to distinguish patterns, differences, and practical implications of the role of the leadership style and mechanisms of transformation.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

**The main research question: -**

- What is the influence of leadership on organizational change?

**The sub-questions are: -**

1. What leadership styles (transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, situational, etc.) can be observed in the chosen organizational transformation cases?

2. How do these leadership styles influence the transformation process in each case when viewed through the lens of Kotter's 8-Step Model, Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR framework?
3. How do sectoral (technology, public, corporate private, family business) and contextual (Middle Eastern vs global) differences affect the relationship between leadership style and organizational transformation success?
4. What recommendations can be developed to guide leaders in applying effective leadership practices that support successful organizational transformation?

### **1.5. Research Objectives**

- To understand the leadership styles that have been utilized in the key organizational transformation examples in the chosen sectors and contexts.
- To analyze how these leadership styles influenced the transformation processes, we will use Kotter's 8-Step Model, Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR framework as analytical lenses.
- To compare and contrast the leadership-transformation relationship across different sectors (technology, public sector, corporate private, family business) and cultural contexts (Middle Eastern and global) to identify sector- and context-specific patterns.
- To analyze multiple organizational transformation cases and derive evidence-based recommendations for effective leadership practices that enhance transformation outcomes.

### **1.6. Research Significance**

The study makes a contribution to the scientific knowledge and practical application of leadership. This study contributes to understanding how leadership styles can influence organizational change by integrating leadership theory with established change management

theories, such as Kotter's 8-Step Model, Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR model. Although past studies have often examined leadership styles alone or in limited organizational settings, studies that assess different leadership styles across a large number of industries and diverse cultural contexts are relatively few. The research paper successfully fills a significant gap by synthesizing the findings from numerous examples of technology, public, corporate, and family businesses in the Middle East and beyond. This enhances the conceptual debate among leadership and change management scholars, creating a more unified view of how leadership practices relate to, and bring into existence, the stages of change.

In addition, the study has methodological value due to the application of a qualitative multiple-case study design, which is supported by the case methodology developed by Yin (2018) and based on triangulated secondary data sources. Such an approach defines the scholarly value of comparing case syntheses in drawing plausible, theoretically grounded conclusions out of documented evidence. The paper enriches conceptual models of transformative processes and leadership effectiveness by mapping leadership acts to organizational outcomes across various circumstances.

The study offers pragmatic insights for corporate leaders, change agents, and policymakers aiming to enhance the effectiveness of transformation initiatives. The study explains the relationship between certain leadership practices, such as vision articulation, empathy, empowerment, and communication, and effective transformation outcomes, hence offering guidelines on how to select and adjust leadership approaches to various stages of change. Transformational and authentic leadership can prove more efficient at the early stages of vision building, while transactional and situational leadership can be utilized at the implementation and consolidation stages. The results, therefore, support leadership development practices, succession planning, and organizational design endeavors by demonstrating how consistency in leadership style and change models can enhance the success of transformations.

## 1.7. Definition of Key Terms

**Leadership Style:** The way a leader conducts himself through organizing, motivating, and controlling teams and organizations. This includes such styles as transformative, transactional, servant, authentic, and situational (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024).

**Organizational Transformation:** A fundamental, structural change in the working of an organization, its strategy, organization, processes, culture, or performance, that leads to a new state of being as opposed to incremental change (Ipinazar et al., 2021).

**Change-Management Model:** A theoretical or practical framework that outlines the way in which organizations operate to undertake the change process (Phillips & Klein, 2023). The three frameworks used in this study are Kotter's 8-step Model (urgency, coalition, vision, communication, empowerment, short-term wins, consolidation, anchoring), the Three-stage Theory of Lewin (unfreeze, change, refreeze), and the ADKAR framework (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement).

## 1.8. Scope of Study

This study examines how different leadership styles influence organizational transformation across various industries, including technological, public, corporate, and family companies, using documented cases from the Middle East as well as the global context. The research investigates the secondary sources, such as scholarly articles, books, and business reports, deploying the leadership and change-management theories (Kotter's 8-Step Model, the Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR model) to explain the functions of leaders in transforming and sustaining a change. It is limited to large, well-documented organizations to ensure data reliability and facilitate comparative understanding, offering cross-sectoral and culturally informed insights into leadership effectiveness in driving change within an organization.

## 1.9. Limitations of the Study

- The use of secondary data implies that the researcher must rely on publicly available documentation, which may vary in terms of level, quality, bias, and reliability across contexts. This might limit the richness of the data.
- The cases are not randomly selected (non-random) and include large organizations that have a considerable amount of data; therefore, it is difficult to extrapolate the findings to small organizations or less-reported situations.
- The qualitative comparison method is helpful for identifying patterns but does not allow for causal statistical inference; therefore, the results are not conclusive and are more explanatory in nature.

## 1.10. Structure of Thesis

- *Chapter one* introduces the research background, problem statement, aim, research questions and objectives, research significance, definition of key terms, scope, and limitations of the study.
- *Chapter two* presents the literature review and research gap.
- *Chapter three* explains the study methodology.
- *Chapter four* comprises the case analysis.
- *Chapter five* explains the discussion.
- *Chapter six* provides the conclusion and practical recommendations.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1. The Concept of Leadership**

Like any other word, leadership terminology is influenced and shaped by various approaches and forces over time, eventually leading to one or more definitive definitions. The history of the concept of leadership can be traced over time, and it has often been related to significant events that occurred at specific moments. At the beginning of the 20th century, the concept of leadership was defined primarily in terms of the leader's central control and dominance over the group. They dictated the obedience and respect in the group. Then, several years passed, and in the 1930s, features were considered the primary determinant of leadership development. At this point, personality traits, attributes, and innate characteristics predetermined the possibility of a person becoming a leader and the type of leadership style they will follow (Northouse, 2025).

The 1940s saw leadership as entailing what one does. Accordingly, there was a distinction in leadership through persuasion and that of coercion. These three themes were broad and general themes that were common during the 1950s, a mid-century period. One of them was group theory, which considered the behavior of group leaders. The way leaders might influence the behavior of their whole organization was associated with their own behavior. The 1960s introduced a narrower definition of leadership, one that involves influencing people to take a shared direction. However, during the 1970s, both bosses and subordinates had defined the objectives of the organization. The definitions of leadership have evolved over the years due to academic research in the subject area, although general principles have remained relatively constant. For example, they demonstrated that transformational leaders could motivate their

followers to do their bidding without using coercion, thereby deepening their knowledge and giving rise to the transformation movement.

When the 21st century began, a debate emerged regarding the unique leadership and management processes. These were four leadership styles: authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership (Singh, 2021). To begin with, authentic leadership is characterized by the leader's determination to be genuine. Second, spiritual leadership used values and identity as a motivating factor among followers. In addition, servant leadership makes the leader a servant; that is, the leader is put in a subordinate position, where their followers are in a position of prominence. A servant leader considers the needs of their followers, whereas adaptive leadership encourages followers to adapt to situations and become problem solvers.

The issue of leadership is considered one of the most controversial issues in modern management, as it is significant to the functioning of an organization. In the most basic sense, the term leadership is the ability and act of leading people. It is the ability of a person or a group of people to be the initiators or lead the rest of the followers. Leadership has been a topic of debate, especially regarding the qualities that characterize an effective leader.

It is expected that a leader possesses qualities, which are not limited to, integrity, vision, tact, prudence, and the ability to lead by example, since people usually equate leadership with those who they believe can realize and achieve their goals or objectives. Imhonopi & Ugochukwu (2013) state that leadership is a dynamic process that brings people together to create change by jointly developing a common vision of how the world should be, thereby interpreting their experiences and shaping their choices and behaviors.

According to Jerab & Mabrouk (2023), leadership is a dynamic process aimed at achieving a vision of change. Still, it relies on two key groups: followers within the leader's organization and key stakeholders in the broader external environment.

Leadership, according to Lewa et al. (2022), is a deliberate encounter that develops over time among individuals who utilize their unique abilities to inspire and promote transformative change.

Being a leader is all about the ability to inspire and motivate others to achieve common goals. A leader is anyone who is able to inspire others to follow their path. A leader may be a formal leader, chosen by the company, or an informal leader, selected for the position and able to promote followers through their personal system of skills and experiences.

Fiaz et al. (2017) state that leadership is associated with the achievement of organizational goals by mobilizing and coordinating the resources of cliques, coworkers, and associates to achieve a single goal. Alternatively, leadership has been defined as the process of mentoring or guiding the growth of groups and the completion of a specific assignment in the interest of the greater good. Liao (2017) states that a leader is someone who prescribes tasks and tasks-oriented thinking, and that this is an essential role in relation to other leaders, followers, and circumstances.

According to Kumar et al. (2014), "leadership is the process through which an individual pushes others to attain a goal and steers the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent." According to Kumar, the leadership traits of values, beliefs, character, knowledge, and ethics are what make this possible.

## **2.2. The Leadership Styles**

Leadership styles have become increasingly critical in determining an organization's effectiveness in the modern corporate environment. Regardless of size and industry, organizations face the challenge of identifying and establishing leadership approaches that lead to improved performance, increased employee involvement, and ensure long-term success. This challenge is pressing because the firm needs to adapt to the rapidly evolving market, technological advances, and changing employee demands. The practical value of good leadership is evident in its ability to create immediate change in an organization's capacity to cope with complexities and achieve its goals. The concept of leadership has been analyzed in detail; however, it remains an intricate and multifaceted phenomenon that continues to spark academic debate and discussion. There are several types of leadership, which include but are not limited to transformational, transactional, servant, and autocratic leadership, each with distinct features and the potential to influence organizational success. The dynamic aspect of leadership, influenced by continuous change in the business environment, necessitates ongoing research to enhance our understanding of how various leadership styles function in different situations.

Leaders typically possess a leadership style that inspires them and motivates others. Leadership style refers to the approach a leader chooses to use when leading and interacting with their followers (Northouse, 2025). It summarizes the actions, attitude, and behavior of the leader in influencing and affecting people. Leadership style also has a significant influence on how a leader makes decisions, communicates expectations, motivates followers, and fosters a positive working environment.

### **2.2.1. Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their full potential and exceed their expectations. This transformational leadership is typified by leaders who inspire and empower their subjects, facilitating excellent outcomes. Charisma, clear vision, and inspirational and morale-boosting leaders are some of the traits that such leaders show. Transformational leaders play a crucial role in fostering a shared understanding of objectives and a deep commitment to achieving high standards within the organizational culture. They have an influence that involves collaboration, creating an inclusive and participatory environment.

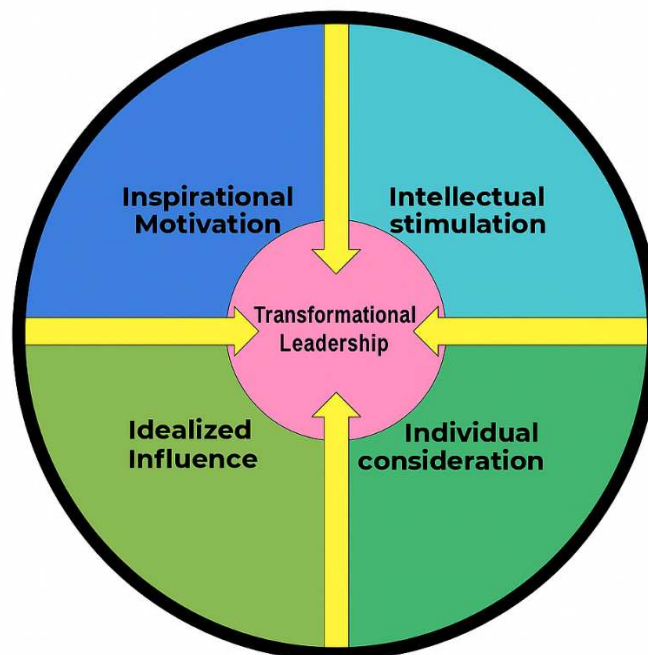
This leadership style involves the leader motivating subordinates and instilling their qualities, which gives subordinates a sense of identity and responsibility towards the mission and the organization. Leaders inspire, encourage, and empower individuals to change and introduce something new that will enable the organization to grow and succeed in the future (Hawela, 2019).

Transformational leaders do not micromanage their staff; instead, they empower and motivate them to make decisions on their delegated tasks. It is a managerial style that encourages innovation, futuristic thinking, and the finding of creative solutions to long-term problems. Employees who aspire to become leaders will also be mentored and guided to develop into transformative leaders.

This kind of leadership is able to encourage the team members to perform above expectations by making changes at various levels. Transformational leadership is based on empowering leaders and teams through constant challenges and the creation of new goals and objectives, resulting in high performance and productivity (Liang, 2021).

Transformational leadership helps to increase the maturity and innovation of employees. Additionally, transformational leaders encourage their citizens to strive for performance levels that exceed mere satisfaction. Employees trust the transformative leader and are assured that they will efficiently use their ideas. Incremental progress toward the goal strengthens the commitment and emotional attachment of the employees to their boss.

Transformational leadership aims to empower followers with opportunities to develop into future leaders by offering them with opportunities for self-improvement and growth. Transformational leaders recognize the abilities and limitations of their followers, distributing roles based on their strengths. The transformational leadership style comprises four elements of influence: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, as illustrated in Figure 1.



***Figure 1: Four elements of a transformational leader (Rana, 2022)***

Idealized influence, according to Khan et al. (2022), refers to the presence of traits or the display of behaviors that followers admire and consider the person a role model. These are

great leaders who are respected, worshipped, and relied upon. The leader provokes interest, creates awareness, and develops followers to visualize their interests in a way that benefits them individually. This leader will give employees' needs priority over their own personal interests. This feature fosters confidence and admiration among followers. They tend to do the right things, exhibit high ethical and moral conduct, and refrain from using power to serve their own interests.

Inspirational motivation means that the leader has a clear vision and relays it to the staff. The leader will instill enthusiasm and hope in employees, enabling them to perform their jobs effectively. Effectively. It must inspire passion and motivate people to strive for higher standards of performance. It is a form of art that inspires and motivates people (Kreyenberg & Seriki, 2023). One of the qualities of a good transformational leader is encouraging the team to accept the vision and motivating them to work towards tasks.

Additionally, they promote continuous learning, skill transfer, and career growth within the company. They are confident in the employee's skills. These are the sources of building confidence. Furthermore, they create an appreciation culture to form employees and emphasize their role in achieving set goals.

One-on-one consideration is vital in cases where people work in teams. A team is a group of diverse individuals, and the differences they possess should be acknowledged and accepted. The transformative leader understands the importance of teamwork and values the efforts of the employees towards realizing the vision. The leader is in a position to identify the needs and ambitions of an individual. The leader works as a teacher who takes time to train and coach employees. The leader understands the different qualities and potential of the employees and helps them to improve their strengths. To inspire and empower employees to achieve their full

potential in support of the vision. The leader also provides the employees with professional development opportunities.

Intellectual stimulation is an essential element of effective leadership, as described by Ogola et al. (2017). The qualities of an intellectually stimulating leader are those who challenge their employees to be innovative, promote methodical problem-solving, motivate them to think critically, and encourage innovative thinking in their undertakings. The concepts suggested by the subordinates are not followed. Solutions are seen not as a burden but as potential and challenges. The employees are encouraged to employ problem-solving tactics, and their efforts and innovations are recognized and praised. They improve the intellectual ability of subordinates. They boost their innovativeness in management and problem-solving. They are also open to learning with their subordinates.

### **2.2.2. Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership, according to Jaqua & Jaqua (2025), is a form of leadership that focuses on the provision of rewards and punishments between the leaders and the subordinates. The approach involves the use of rewards and sanctions to encourage people to achieve specific objectives. The responsibility of transactional leaders is to ensure that tasks are completed within a specified system of structures with clear expectations and related sanctions. Such an approach can increase efficiency; however, its effect on collaboration and innovation is based on job fulfillment, rather than creating a culture that encourages creativity and empowers employees.

According to Naeem & Nawaz (2017), personal attributes of transactional leaders form the basis of their leadership style, as they motivate employees and achieve corporate goals primarily through power, reward, and punishment procedures. Transactional leaders require confidence and motivation, and should have clear goals and plans, as well as the ability to

communicate them effectively. Effective decision-making will enable executives to make quick and accurate decisions under pressure, thereby ensuring that the firm maintains a competitive edge in the market. However, too many of these traits can make the leaders dictatorial, selfish, or lacking in empathy, thus affecting the level of teamwork and unity. As a result, transactional leaders should be empathetic and flexible, understanding the desires and feelings of their employees, and adjust their leadership approach to meet different circumstances and needs.

Transactional leaders recognize the importance of organizational change and are skilled at implementing and driving change and improvement (Khairy et al., 2023). They are skilled at identifying opportunities and issues, and taking action to address change, enabling the firm to adapt to market competition and environmental changes. Despite the need to be adaptable, transactional executives must remain focused on the core values and long-term strategy of the organization as they seek to change.

Another critical aspect of transactional leadership is its emphasis on teamwork. These executives emphasize teamwork and strive to build viable teams and effective organizational cultures. Positive communication and interaction also foster the development of trust and teamwork among team members, ultimately enhancing the organization's performance. However, the question remains to find a balance between teamwork and personal freedom, where too much attention is paid to collaboration, which could hinder independent thinking and decision-making.

In this type of leadership, leaders encourage employees or subordinates to work hard in order to receive rewards. A reward could take the form of promotions, additional responsibilities, higher pay, or bonuses. Incentives and penalties can encourage employees to follow regulations, with the best performers receiving more rewards and incentives. In transactional leadership, managers reward individuals based on their performance and productivity.

In a transactional sense, employees are willing to perform tasks in exchange for payment. Rewards can include monetary compensation, psychological benefits, or an escape from a penalty. Rewards and gifts are given for the successful accomplishment of tasks. The effectiveness of transactional leadership requires a two-way connection, in which the leader sets the goal and the employee accepts and commits to achieving it. Leaders who adopt the transactional model of leadership must accept mediocre performance and dedication from their followers.

### **2.2.3. Servant Leadership**

The servant leadership approach has its roots in ancient monarchy and was therefore focused on serving people and the country. However, the term “leadership style” was not fully applied until 1970, with the research by Greenleaf. The servant leadership pattern has gained greater popularity in the scholarship on leadership, as it is viewed as a comprehensive strategy towards work, leading to a sense of community and shared power in decision-making (Tripathi et al., 2021).

Servant leadership is a leadership model that emphasizes the leader's commitment to meeting the needs of others. This is a strategy that emphasizes providing services to others, fostering teamwork, and cultivating a sense of community within the organization. The concept of servant leadership promotes employee empowerment, encouraging a more positive organizational culture and creating a team environment where employees feel valued.

The concept of servant leadership, as described by Robert Greenleaf (1977), is characterized by the idea that leadership is a service to others. Servant leaders are more concerned with people and less concerned with company profit, as they believe in empathy, active listening, stewardship, and the personal development of their followers. This approach fosters trust, collaboration, and community, which aligns well with ethical and humanistic values. When it

comes to situations of transformation, servant leaders empower employees to take charge of change, thereby reducing resistance and fostering participatory engagement. It has been demonstrated that strengthening social relationships enhances the behavior of corporate citizenship and long-term sustainability through servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019). The focus on collective decision-making and ethical behavior will ensure that the transformation processes are open and value-based, particularly in knowledge-based and service companies, where employee morale is a crucial factor in success.

The servant leadership style is gaining popularity, enabling leaders to adapt to diverse cultures. The style of leadership, on the other hand, may be viewed as a comprehensive strategy that involves followers through the development of positive relationships, moral values, emotional intelligence, spiritual values, and the empowerment of subordinates to maximize their strengths, guided by the altruism and ethical principles of the leader. A servant leader is a product of an internal need to serve, where a person is gradually motivated to become a leader (Su et al., 2020). As a leader, one should serve society regardless of their location, and in the process, they will be automatically recognized as a leader. However, the leader in charge can adopt a low-profile method, enabling all to experience the benefits of a good leader. A servant leader should always be humble, insightful, and have the willingness to develop.

The primary goal of a servant leader is to meet the needs of their followers, whereas the primary goal of a manager is to achieve the organization's objectives. The obsession of managers with results and control often creates an attitude of intimidation towards failure among subordinates, at the expense of growth. People should be encouraged and deliberate in their efforts to excel in their work. This does not mean that a servant leader is not concerned with the organization's goals. This implies that the organization's objectives will be fulfilled, as followers will be enabled to reach their full potential. A servant leader is a person who is committed to serving others, as opposed to a manager who is committed to serving the organization through its

personnel. In turn, a servant leader attaches importance to individuals who make up the organization (Dutta & Khatri, 2017).

Servant leaders in goal setting express the vision, project the future, and have a broader vision. Managers put into practice plans, improve existing conditions, and adopt a narrow perspective. Servant leaders focus on the future through enabling their followers to reach their full potential (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Managers, on the other hand, focus on the best current abilities of their juniors. Managers often have a narrow vision aimed at fulfilling organizational goals, and thus, they implement preset strategies. However, servant leaders have a broader understanding of their followers, the organization, and the environment. This is one of the primary reasons why many managers fail in stressful situations.

#### **2.2.4. Authentic Leadership**

Authentic leadership is a positive approach that epitomizes the process of running a company. With good psychological qualities, authentic leaders can either directly or indirectly influence their followers to achieve the organization's developmental goals. Kelly (2023) proposes a complex and multifaceted look at real leadership. Many researchers argue that the authentic theory of leadership must encompass four fundamental aspects: self-awareness, relational transparency, inner moral values, and moderate processing.

Hilson (2018) asserts that leaders who display authentic leadership behaviors stimulate their subordinates to acquire positive characteristics such as self-awareness, internalization of moral values, balanced handling of information, and open communication between the subordinates and superiors. Authentic leaders inspire their followers to emulate them by being trustworthy, objective, knowledgeable about the organization's mission, and by demonstrating optimism, hard work, transparency, morality, a future-focused mindset, and dedication to doing the right

thing. True leaders are also confident, hopeful, optimistic, determined, resilient, open, highly dedicated, and ethical.

Authentic leaders possess a clear understanding of their thoughts, actions, and inner convictions. In addition, a true leader is confident, optimistic, strong, and has good morals. Lehman et al. (2019) claim that authenticity encompasses holding personal values, such as thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, and the congruence of actions with these specific values. To the genuine leader, it is paramount not to hide the essential facts or make a choice without the awareness of the affected person.

Authentic leadership is based on self-awareness, openness, and ethical uprightness. It was developed in the early 2000s by Avolio & Gardner (2005) as a response to the crisis of trust in corporate leadership. True leaders are consistent with their core values, foster open channels of communication, and create psychologically safe environments where individuals feel appreciated and motivated. Authenticity in the context of change fosters trust and reduces anxiety by demonstrating consistency in a state of uncertainty. Research suggests that authentic leadership leads to improved employee engagement, organizational identification, and adaptability to major changes (Zhu, 2025; Dartey-Baah et al., 2025). When transformational activities are grounded in the values of ethical and emotional honesty, true leaders ensure that change initiatives are not only practical but also ethically sustainable.

### **2.2.5. Situational Leadership**

Influence is the core part of leadership. A leader, regardless of their position, is someone who can influence others. To achieve and sustain a high-performing organization, leadership plays an important role. Lack of proper leadership can cause numerous problems that undermine a firm's performance, including poor resource management, high turnover rates, and low returns on investment.

In the modern business environment, where competition is the norm, companies must recognize the importance of developing their leaders and the impact it can have on the business. Organizations must equip their leaders with the necessary tools and resources that enable them to effectively manage the challenges of a more diverse workforce and a dynamic global economy. The effective acquisition of leadership initiates this.

Situational leadership was developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard in the late 1960s and described in the book “Management of Organizational Behavior” (1982) as having the understanding that no particular leadership style is the best one; effective leadership depends upon the preparedness and maturity of followers and on the task or situation at hand. The concept states that leaders should make two primary variables assessment:

1. The Competence (abilities and talents).
2. The Commitment (motivation and confidence) of their subordinates.

Leaders adapt their behaviors according to these standards in two dimensions: task behavior (the degree of guidance provided) and relationship behavior (the degree of socio-emotional support provided). This results in four basic leadership styles: telling (high task, low relationship), selling (high task, high relationship), participating (low task, high relationship), and delegating (low task, low relationship).

According to the situational leadership theory, which was proposed by Hersey & Blanchard (1982), effective leadership depends on the willingness and ability of followers, as well as task characteristics. Leaders need to adapt their style to support based on the situation's needs. This flexibility makes situational leadership especially relevant in the context of transformation, as companies often face a changing environment and evolving employee skills during the change process. Depending on how new processes are being applied, leaders might have to rely on a directive style but shift to a participative approach as teams gain confidence. Graeff (1997)

claims that situational leadership enhances flexibility and responsiveness, enabling leaders to strike a balance between structure and empowerment. Situational leaders can facilitate changes in behavior as they become aligned with both the maturity of the team and the complexity of the job; this allows the organization to maintain productivity even during periods of transformation.

Situational leadership is especially beneficial in the context of organizational transition, due to the unpredictability of the situation, the related changes in responsibilities, and the need for workforce readiness. During the implementation of a change initiative, employees and leaders may experience confusion or doubt, and leaders will need to employ a more prescriptive and directive strategy to provide structure and outline new expectations. When leaders become more proficient and understanding, their leadership style becomes more supportive and participatory, allowing teams to take responsibility for new procedures.

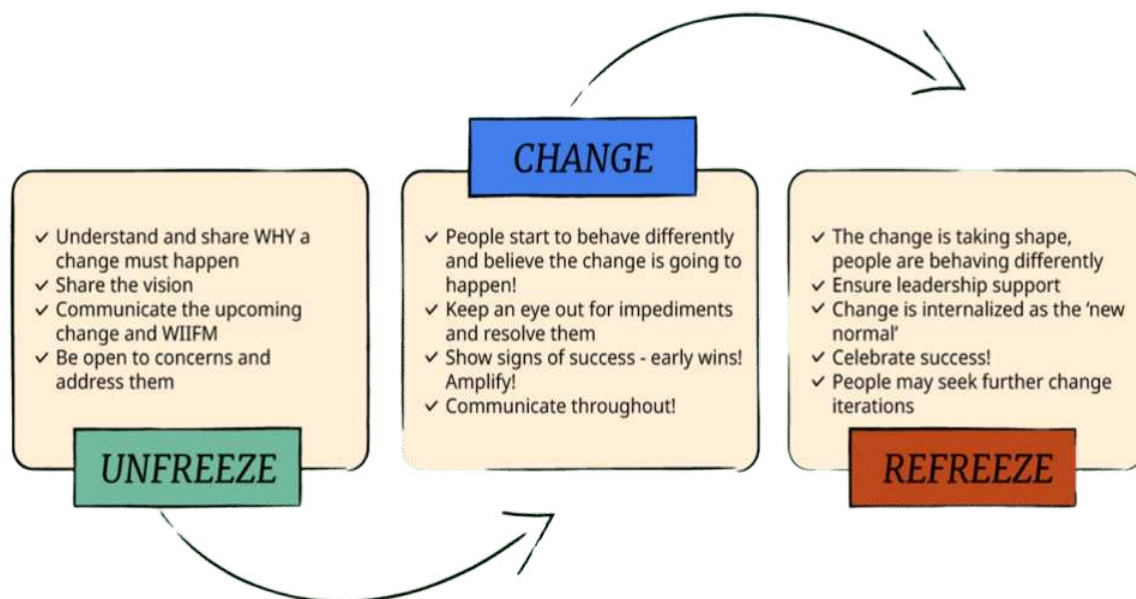
Situational leadership is a flexible style of leadership that is supported in the literature by empirical studies as one of the significant aspects of managing change. Graeff (1997) claimed that leaders who precisely evaluate the level of team preparedness and adjust their behavior, respectively, achieve better performance and satisfaction outcomes. Similarly, Novelli & Souza (2024) also found that situational leadership enhances employee flexibility in response to organizational changes, particularly when leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence in aligning their leadership style with the needs of their teams. Critics, such as Yukl et al. (2019), argue that the model oversimplifies leadership behavior and fails to adequately consider situation-specific factors, including company culture and external influences. In spite of these criticisms, situational leadership has remained vastly applied in leadership development programs due to its practicality and flexibility.

## 2.3. Organizational Change Models

Any business organization is compelled to operate in a dynamic environment that constantly evolves, necessitating numerous concepts, tools, and theories related to organizational change. It is imperative that these ideas must be incorporated into their systems to facilitate the effective and successful implementation of the entire work process. Some of the change management models that can help an organization to embrace changes are described as follows:

### 2.3.1. Lewin's Model of Change

The first and most basic theory of organizational transformation is the Three-Stage Model of Change, developed by Kurt Lewin (1947). The model highlights change as a cyclical process consisting of three phases: unfreezing, changing (or moving), and refreezing, as illustrated in Figure 2.



*Figure 2: Lewin's Model of Change (Junnaid et al., 2020)*

The unfreezing phase is characterized by breaking the existing habits, attitudes, and structures to create awareness about the need to change, either through articulation of dissatisfaction with the status quo or through external forces. The transition stage brings new approaches, driving forces, and practices, which are facilitated through education and trial. Ultimately, these new behaviors are being incorporated into the company's culture, policies, and norms (Santos et al., 2025). The Lewin paradigm is instrumental in analyzing the psychological and cultural aspects of transition because the long-term maintenance of the process requires both changes in attitudes and systems. Despite its simplicity, the model maintained a profound impact on the study of leadership and organizations due to its inclusion of the human element of change, the recognition of the fact that people need to unlearn before they can relearn. It can be argued that it is too static to fit modern, rapidly changing situations, though modern revisions, including those of Schein (1996), make it more relevant to continuous learning and adaptive leadership practices.

### **2.3.2. Kotter's 8-Step Model**

One of the most common models used for administering change in an organization is John P. Kotter's (1996) 8-Step Process of Leading Change. Kotter assumed that successful change follows a systemic process of eight steps in his study at Harvard Business School that included (1) creating a sense of urgency, (2) building a strong guiding coalition, (3) developing a vision and a strategy, (4) selling the change vision, (5) enlisting a mass action, (6) producing short term wins, (7) sustaining change and consolidating gains, and (8) institutionalizing the new approaches into the culture as demonstrated in figure (3).

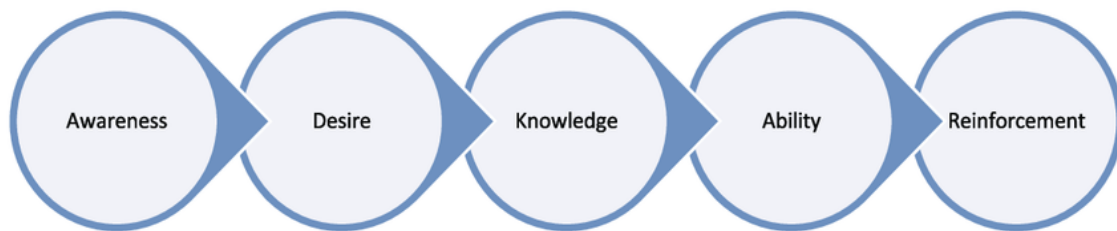


***Figure 3: Kotter's 8-Step Change Model (Ghani et al., 2016)***

Each step creates momentum and reduces resistance as it aligns employees with the transformation vision. This approach is instrumental when it comes to large-scale, structural changes that require a cultural rejuvenation and reorganization of operations. It has been proven that the model developed by Kotter enhances clarity and communication during the transition period, ensuring that leadership activities are structured to maintain engagement and confidence (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Opponents note that the linearity of the model does not align with the dynamic condition of iterative change (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Its orientation towards vision, communication, and cultural foundation makes it necessary to study leadership-based transformation.

### 2.3.3. ADKAR Framework

The model developed as an individual-oriented approach to change management in 2006 is the ADKAR Model by Jeff Hiatt. ADKAR is an acronym that represents the five key elements individuals must go through to achieve sustainable change, as illustrated in Figure 4: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement.



*Figure 4: ADKAR Change Model (Walshe, 2025)*

Unlike Kotter's detailed organizational process model, ADKAR focuses on individual change, arguing that the success of organizational change is achieved only when people adopt new behavioral patterns and attitudes. In the awareness stage, the employees understand the need to change, the desire helps in motivating them to take part, the knowledge equips them with skills and knowledge, the ability helps them translate what they have been learning into practice, and the reinforcement ensures the continuation of the change process through feedback, recognition, and rewards. The paradigm is particularly skillful in terms of guiding executives in their approach to employee engagement, training, and communication as vital elements of digital or cultural transitions. The relevance of ADKAR to different fields, including healthcare, education, and corporate restructuring, has been supported by empirical research, which also highlights that it can succeed in harmonizing human behavior with organizational goals. The ADKAR model places greater emphasis on the human element of change, thereby underscoring the need to complement broader strategic approaches, such as the Kotter and Lewin models, and ensure that changes spearheaded by leadership are both psychologically and operationally sustainable.

## **2.4. Organizational Transformation**

Organizational transformation refers to a systematic and necessary change in an organization's strategy, structure, processes, culture, or operations with the view of improving performance and ensuring long-term sustainability in an unstable environment. Unlike incremental change, which involves gradual improvement, transformation implies a radical, strategic change that re-establishes the value creation process and competitive strategy of an organization (Burke, 2023). It is often a response to external forces, such as technological shifts, globalization, or changes in consumer habits, or internal challenges, including ineffective performance, cultural stagnation, or leadership renewal. According to Waddell et al. (2016), change encompasses both tangible dimensions (systems, processes, and structures) and intangible dimensions (leadership, culture, and employee attitude). These aspects are aligned and determine the success or failure of transformation programs.

The process of reinvention of strategies under the guidance of leadership vision and involvement as a whole is the main feature of organizational transformation. It involves redefining corporate identity, restructuring strategic priorities, and developing flexibility. Kumkale (2022) claims that transformation requires companies to achieve ambidexterity, which is the ability of a company to utilize existing skills simultaneously with exploring new opportunities. Such a dual focus ensures that companies are efficient in their current processes and, at the same time, create new innovations to remain relevant in the future. It is commonly carried out by recognizing the need to change, developing a compelling vision to sell, involving stakeholders, and implementing new behaviors and systems into the organizational system.

The importance of organizational transformation has been on the rise significantly over recent years. The term refers to the fundamental change and redefinition of an organization's structure, culture, and activities, which enable an organization to adapt to changes or seize new opportunities. Organizational transformation aims to transform the organization into a desirable

state. To ensure the success of changes, organizations must reconsider and redefine their approaches, focusing on the needs and experiences of people. The leadership plays a crucial role in facilitating this transition. The leaders should be change agents, guiding and monitoring the process, and influencing others to embrace and promote the new vision.

According to Anderson (2017), successful organizational change is based on competent leadership. Leaders should play the role of the center of change, initiating and guiding the process, and mitigating risks and possible resistance. Their role is not just in decision-making; they are visionaries who present an attractive vision of the future, hence bringing the entire organization to a shared purpose.

Leaders have to promote a sense of urgency and set clear expectations. Change is never an easy task, but it is driven by the compelling need to adapt to ever-changing market conditions or respond to industry changes. The leaders should ensure that everyone understands the emergency of the situation and their essential role in the change process. Leaders should be capable of setting clear, measurable goals that serve as a guide for the organization as it undergoes the change process.

Leadership alone is not enough for successful transformations. It is a team effort that requires all people at all levels of an organization to be empowered and motivated to embrace change. The involvement of all people throughout the organization is vital, and each individual is assigned a specific job with thorough knowledge of how to undertake it in a productive manner. The leaders have a role in creating an environment that encourages creativity and responsibility, which will allow their staff to be proactive, innovative, and contribute to the change. This involves developing trust, support, and resource allocation, as well as creating open communication channels that facilitate feedback and cooperation.

## **2.5. Importance of Leadership in the Change Process**

Leadership is the process of influencing people to do what they should in a way that facilitates the easier achievement of group goals. Leaders are able to motivate employees, build confidence, and instill trust (Ghavifekr & Adewale, 2019). Modern institutions require skilled leaders who possess knowledge of the intricate and dynamic business environment. There are a significant number of approaches to leadership, and therefore, there are no universally required leadership skills or styles to adopt. Moreover, leadership plays a crucial role during times of transition, as it helps initiate transformation successfully by providing guidance, support, and direction to the desired path.

Burnes et al. (2018) argue that transformation and leadership cannot be separated because they are mutually exclusive. This view is supported in the article by Al-Haddad & Kotnour (2015), who argue that leadership is the only way through which organizations will be able to react to changing business conditions in a timely and efficient manner. According to the authors, leadership acknowledges the necessity of change in organizations, as this change can be critical to a firm's existence. Despite this complexity, executives embrace change because they believe it improves the organization and boosts performance.

Van den Heuvel et al. (2014) argue that research on change management has focused on process management. However, not every organization has managed to reach its objectives of a change initiative, despite extensive research on change management. With the continuous changes being experienced in organizations, including reengineering and the development of new methodologies, it is becoming increasingly important for employees to adapt to change, especially in adjusting their behavior to maintain the organization's competitive advantage. Corporations are seeking radical changes in processes, and the ability to restructure firm success depends on how well information technology is coordinated within the firm.

Researchers have been encouraged to focus on the behavior of employees during times of change, as this topic has not received sufficient attention.

As Dominguez et al. (2015) note, the paradox of change involves organizations craving stability while simultaneously opposing change, yet they must also evolve constantly to remain successful in a competitive business world. Even though change is considered essential, changes that conflict with the firm's logic can be viewed by staff as illegitimate. It is therefore vital that changes be aligned with the company's vision and objectives. Most of the factors that influence a firm's adjustment include market competition, government laws and regulations, as well as environmental considerations. All these reasons can force the organization to act. Moreover, even when numerous measures are proposed for implementing change, the rate of failure in organizational change programs remains substantial. Effective organizational change requires an organization and its employees to be adaptable. Another common aspect that has been noted as important in avoiding failure in the event of change is the staff's preparation to embrace change.

The more the organization can learn and adapt rapidly in a changing environment, the higher its chances of survival are. According to Zafar and Naveed (2014), effective communication is a necessary aspect for countering resistance to change. The key messages employees should receive during the changes include clarifying how the change will impact the current situation, restating the organization's core values, explaining the benefits of the shift in both the organization and its employees, defining the final goals, and informing employees about the availability of alternatives and resources. One of the significant reasons behind the failure of change initiatives is a lack of adequate communication. Furthermore, van den Heuvel et al. (2014) assert that organizations are unsuccessful in implementing change when such change jeopardizes employees' identification with the organization. This concept is also referred to as employee organizational identification. Organizational leaders play a pivotal role throughout

transitions as the organization adapts to the demands of the external environment. Failures in organizational change vary; they might result from minor technological faults, operational breakdowns, or significant failures stemming from transformational change plans and associated missteps.

## **2.6. Effectively Leading Change**

Good leaders can foresee the negative consequences of change in an organization and prevent them. Among scholars, there is a general consensus that the inclusiveness of organizations, institutions, and countries in the face of dynamic change is facilitated by transformational leadership (Lewa et al., 2022). Some scholars argue that charismatic-transformational leadership is a more effective leadership approach, especially when an organization is undergoing transition. Leaders who regard their followers' needs and treat them with respect and dignity ensure that their followers are encouraged to achieve higher performance and a greater commitment to their work.

Hartge et al. (2019) provide an outline of the functions of leadership that are critical to ensuring organizational change, which include providing accuracy in the scope and importance of the change, communicating its worth, providing feedback to the employees regarding the process of change, leading change, motivating employees, and allocating resources. Adil (2014) also developed a theory of leader encouraging behavior to change, which is essential and cannot be achieved without change. The concept suggests that executives should assess the strength of available resources and the needs of employees, communicate clear goals to them, and cultivate trust among employees.

Similarly, Caulfield & Senger (2017) identified themes such as ideal leadership, which are related to the functions that leaders perform during periods of change. The first of these functions is the role of an inspirational communicator, concerning how leaders communicate

and why change is worthwhile. Second, there is honesty, that is, the quality of trusting the leadership of the firm. The third competency is the leader's knowledge and ability to implement change. Fourth, inclusion, or recruiting the assistance of the entire staff in the change process. The fifth principle is respect, which concerns how leaders should treat their workforce. Ultimately, decision-making refers to the leader's ability to make difficult decisions during a complex transformation process.

## **2.7. Previous Studies**

As Sami et al. (2024) explain, this study examines the ways in which multinational corporations operating in Baluchistan, Pakistan, apply transformational management to enhance the effectiveness of their organizational options. This paper highlights the significance of leadership in managing organizational change, considering the dynamic and rapidly evolving business environment. The strategy is grounded in transformational management theory. It is said to play a significant role in organizational change strategies, promoting creativity, inspiring, and fostering in-group insight and foresight in employees. The data were gathered using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Project Implementation Profile (PIP) survey instruments to conduct a quantitative study among mid-level managers at Mondelez International (Hub) and Cnergyico Pakistan Limited (Hub). To enhance the success of other projects, the findings have indicated an excellent correlation between transformational leadership and organizational trade effectiveness. This is a behavior that involves intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, as well as personalized consideration, and is key to transformational leadership. The introduction of empirical data illustrating the greatness of transformational management in organizational change within the specific socio-economic and cultural context of Baluchistan can be discussed as one effort to enrich the current body of knowledge.

As Cianos (2025) notes, based on the three-stage change model, socio-technical systems (STS) theory, digital transformation, and transformational leadership, this manuscript explores the topic of organizational change. The necessity for leaders to have a solid understanding of the dynamics of change and the ways to guide their teams through these change processes is more critical than ever, as they are confronted with the challenge of digital disruption of unprecedented complexity. STS theory presents an approach based on examining the ways social structures influence and are influenced by organizational environments, as well as the ways in which technical progress interacts with them. The change model proposed by Lewin is a process-based model that initiates, manages, and sustains change, divided into three stages: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. This paper presents a complex and comprehensive perspective on digital transformation through the integration of two theoretical models, where the role of transformational leadership is vital in influencing the integration of an organization's technical systems with its culture, structures, and human dynamics.

According to Maisyura et al. (2022), leadership in organizational transformation, encompassing the traits associated with this style, is attempted to be explored in this paper through the use of the literacy study approach, which involves gathering information from books and scientific journals and then combining it with the author's perspective. In this study, the authors examined organizational transformation through the prism of leadership and the change it brings about, focusing on the charismatic and instrumental roles that leadership plays. Organizational change that is responsive to and even thrives in the face of sudden, unpredictable shifts in external factors is best facilitated by transformational leadership. A transformative leader is one who not only possesses the necessary information but also has the courage to act on it, take calculated risks, and implement a plan to bring about innovations that will ensure the transformation's success. Utilizing the 4R model of organizational

transformation put forward by Gouillert and Kelly, which consists of reframing, restructuring, revitalization, and renewal, as well as the eight steps of Kotter's change model.

Mekonnen & Bayissa (2023) examined several public hospitals in Ethiopia's North Showa Zone, Oromia Region, to investigate the impact of different types of leadership — transformational and transactional — on the organizational readiness of health professionals to undergo change. In April 2021, researchers used a cross-sectional study strategy based on institutions for one month. Results are based on information gathered from 212 lower-level health professional staff. For both transactional and transformational leadership styles, the Pearson product correlation of organizational change readiness was determined to be low, positive, and statistically significant. The results showed that among health professionals, both transactional and transformational leadership styles significantly influenced the variation in organizational readiness for change. Healthcare workers' organizational readiness for change is best predicted by leaders with a transformational rather than a transactional style of leadership. The study found that when administrative personnel display transformational and/or transactional leadership characteristics, health professionals are more prepared for organizational change in terms of dedication and efficacy. Additionally, the study found that the two leadership styles can influence organizational change preparedness to a certain extent.

Baldomir & Hood (2016) argue that servant leadership is the most effective form of leadership for driving organizational change. Organizational change is facilitated by utilizing the three-step change model developed by Lewin (1958) and the five-factor servant leadership model proposed by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006). Leaders in organizations may do a better job of preparing their followers for change and guiding them through it if they adopt a servant leadership style. Organizations will inevitably undergo change. However, servant leaders can mitigate resistance to transformation by adopting a selfless leadership style and allowing it to drive the change.

Seifu & Jalata (2022) examined how Authentic Leadership (AL) practiced by branch managers influenced the execution of planned organizational changes by assistant branch managers. The study used a random selection of public sector banks (Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, or CBE) and private sector banks (Oromia International Bank, or OIB) to guarantee representativeness. Managers and assistant managers from branches in the Addis Ababa districts were randomly selected to participate in the study. Authentic leadership is a favorable predictor of the planned execution of organizational transformation, according to the research premise. A quantitative and two-stage cross-sectional research strategy was utilized in the study. Results showed that AL was a good predictor of POCI, or planned organizational change implementation, lending credence to the theory.

Said & Triatmanto (2024) examine the relationship between situational leadership, organizational change, and performance in the hotel sector. Data from 222 hotel management specialists in South Kalimantan Province, specializing in three- and four-star establishments, are analyzed using a quantitative manner. In order to examine the impact of both situational leadership and organizational change on performance, the data analysis technique utilizes SEM Amos in tandem. Empirically, this study found that the most decisive attitude in situational leadership is the ability to issue commands to hotel staff, particularly when overseeing their members during the settlement process. Furthermore, the most valuable contribution to organizational change is readiness to change, a mindset and attitude that must be implemented. Positive guest feedback on the quality of the hotel's products and services is the most important performance metric for five-star hotels in South Kalimantan. The impact of situational leadership on organizational performance can be mitigated through organizational reform.

## **2.8. Research Gap**

Although numerous studies have been conducted in the area of leadership and organizational change, a considerable gap remains in understanding how diverse leadership styles impact organizational change across various sectors and cultures. Most earlier research has focused on transformational leadership alone, with little regard for the interplay of other forms of leadership, including transactional, servant, authentic, and situational leadership, with organized change-management models such as Kotter's 8-Step Model, Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR model. In addition, the majority of existing studies have focused on a specific industry, resulting in a lack of cross-sectoral and cross-cultural knowledge, particularly in the case of the Middle East, where socio-cultural peculiarities significantly influence leadership. Furthermore, the prevalence of quantitative methods in previous research has limited our understanding of the multifaceted, contextualized processes by which leadership fuels transformation. Hence, the study bridges these gaps by examining multiple qualitative cases across technological, public, corporate, and family business environments worldwide, as well as in the Middle East, to determine how leadership styles can be aligned with change-management frameworks to achieve sustainable organizational transformation.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The study employs a qualitative multiple-case study design to investigate the effects of leadership on organizational transformation across various industries. The case study method is the most appropriate approach to the topic due to the ability to study complex social phenomena (leadership and change processes) in their organizational setting in a profound way. Through the application of several cases, the study will attain a comparative outlook, making the results and findings stronger and more generalized. The case studies are the units of the analysis that dwell on the transformation experience of a specific organization and the role of its leadership in the process.

Its general design is directed by the approach that Yin uses to develop case studies, including defining the case, gathering numerous sources of proof, building a case study database (in this case, recorded materials in literature and reports), and supporting a chain of evidence (citations and references to the source data) to establish reliability and transparency. As the present thesis is more a synthesis and analysis of written cases (rather than primary fieldwork), it can be regarded as a type of historical case study research that utilizes secondary data.

#### **3.2. Case Selection**

The cases were chosen strategically to meet the requirements of entailing substantive organizational change and establishing a record of the leadership activities/ styles. The selection was also made to cover the four interest areas: technology, the government, the corporate sector, and family business. In every industry, international and Middle Eastern examples were used whenever possible to provide the cultural and contextual variety requested.

- In the **technology segment**, the main ones are Microsoft and Google (Alphabet). The example of Microsoft (2014-2015) under CEO Satya Nadella is one of the most striking examples of a cultural and strategic change in a large multinational technology company, and much information about the leadership strategy of Nadella is available. An example of a change in leadership style (the founder-driven, engineering culture leadership) can be seen in the reorganization of Google into Alphabet (2015) because this shift involved structural and strategic change initiated by the founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin.
- A case from the **public sector** in the Middle East is selected, specifically the Government of Dubai, UAE, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The fact that Dubai is in the midst of a rapid transformation (2000s-2020s) from a small local center to a global city with a world-class infrastructure and governmental services has been covered extensively in the media, as well as the visionary leadership of Sheikh Mohammed. One such example is a national government project (e.g., digital government reforms in Estonia or the Government Digital Service in the UK). Still, for the sake of focus, the analysis will primarily be based on the Dubai case, with anecdotal references to other cases as necessary.
- In the **private sector (corporate)**, General Electric (GE), during Jack Welch's tenure (1981–2001), was selected as a classic case of sustained, enterprise-wide transformation driven by leadership. Welch's leadership style and programs (e.g., Work-Out, Six Sigma, globalization strategy) are extensively chronicled, making it a rich case. To incorporate a Western contemporary example, Starbucks under Howard Schultz (especially his return as CEO in 2008) is included as a brief sub-case focusing on cultural transformation and turnaround in a private company. This illustrates a values-driven transformation in contrast to GE's performance-driven change.

- In the **family business category**, a Middle Eastern example is Majid Al Futtaim Group (MAF), a large family-owned conglomerate based in the UAE. MAF's evolution from a regional family business to a global player in retail, entertainment, and real estate – and its efforts to professionalize management and governance – provide insight into the impact of leadership in a family enterprise context. Additionally, a comparative example from a Western family-influenced firm, Ford Motor Company (the Ford family as majority owners), during Alan Mulally's turnaround (2006–2014), is included to highlight how bringing in external leadership transformed a legacy family-influenced corporation.

These cases were chosen not only for their relevance but also because they have a wealth of available data from credible sources: academic journals, books, business press, interviews, and company reports. For instance, the Microsoft case draws on Nadella's own book, *Hit Refresh*, as well as case studies and analyses in business media. The GE case draws on academic case studies and Welch's autobiography and analyses. The Dubai case references leadership studies and biographies of Sheikh Mohammed, among others.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Data for each case was collected through desk research of secondary sources. The sources include:

- **Academic literature:** journal articles, conference papers, and dissertations focusing on leadership and change in specific cases or similar contexts. (e.g., a study on transformational leadership in the Saudi telecom industry, a doctoral dissertation on Sheikh Mohammed's leadership, scholarly analysis of Jack Welch's GE, etc.)
- **Books and biographies:** e.g., "Leading Change" by John Kotter for theoretical context, "Jack: Straight from the Gut" by Jack Welch for the GE narrative, "Hit Refresh" by

Satya Nadella for Microsoft insights, and relevant chapters from leadership books featuring these cases.

- **Business and news articles:** reputable publications such as Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Fortune, and The Economist, as well as industry analyses (for example, Knowledge@Wharton podcasts/transcripts for Google, Business Insider charts for Microsoft's performance, Arabian Business, or CEO Magazine for Middle East family business insights).
- **Interviews and speeches:** transcripts or reports of interviews with leaders (e.g., Alan Mulally's interview with McKinsey, Nadella's interviews, Sheikh Mohammed's public addresses and writings, such as "My Vision"), as they often reveal leadership philosophies and decisions in the leaders' own words.
- **Consulting and practitioner reports:** e.g., Prosci reports on ADKAR usage, McKinsey or PwC reports on family business transformation or leadership in the Middle East.

Each piece of information incorporated into the case analysis has been cross-verified where possible or attributed to its source. The thesis employs extensive in-text citations (in APA-like format, with the source and line numbers notation) to maintain a transparent chain of evidence. This approach ensures transparency – the reader can see the basis for claims about what happened and what leadership actions were taken.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The analysis was performed at two levels:

- **Qualitative Within-Case Analysis:** Each case was divided into data based on a timeline of transformation and leadership interventions. A story was created explaining:

- The situation and the precondition (including the problems, which necessitated change).
  - Changes implemented and the transformation process.
  - Particular actions, behaviors, and choices of the leaders at different levels.
  - Results of the change (improvement in performance, cultural change, etc.).
  - Any written connection between the leadership and the results (e.g., statements such as employees attribute the success of the launch to the vision of the CEO or the improvement of the metrics during the time of the leader).
- **Cross-Case Analysis:** A comparative analysis was then made after building up the within-case stories. This sought out trends and opposites:
- **Patterns:** Do all successful transformations have common leadership behaviors? (e.g., effective communication of a clear vision seems to be present in almost every case, in the same way as the personal embodiment of change by the leader). Is there evidence of all the steps that Kotter had to cover, and was a step omitted? Did that lead to any problems? An example that can be seen is that in numerous instances, there were short-term wins (Microsoft's early cloud wins, GE's quick cost-cutting wins, and quick successes in Dubai, such as the one-stop government service shops, etc.). Where there were no early wins, stakeholders became doubtful.
  - **Sectoral differences:** What is the difference between leading change in a government and a tech company? An example is that the public sector may be more stakeholder-based in politics, and the case of Dubai demonstrates the significance of visionary leadership at the very top (the ruler) with the capacity to dictate change, unlike a U.S. corporation such as Microsoft, which also has to appease shareholders. Family business vs non-family: both MAF and Ford experienced the problem of succession, the involvement of professional management; we examine the effect of

the presence of the family owner in the approach of the leader (e.g., they have to appeal to the trust of the family or to the employees accustomed to the family culture).

- **Differences in style:** Do most successful cases explicitly contain transformational leaders? (Nadella, Welch, and Sheikh Mohammed were all thought to be transformational and certainly had good results). How about more transactional leaders? (We have not selected a mainly transactional leader example of an effective transformation, which in itself is indicative, because most of those discussed are inspirational; but there may be some cases of operational turnaround, such as a restructuring of costs, which is not much discussed in our cases because we are dealing with large-scale transformations).
- **Outcome differences:** Here, we also compare where leadership has failed. To illustrate, GE under Welch (and subsequently under Immelt) has been so unsuccessful; was it something in the leadership style that did not adapt to a new environment? This is briefly mentioned to acknowledge that even iconic changes may be succeeded by challenges when the leadership strategy does not progress further (although the digital pivot of GE, commonly examined as having mixed outcomes, may be partially attributed to the large-scale and potentially overly top-down implementation, which lacked sufficient cultural adoption).

The cross-case analysis was based on the consideration of whether the factors from the literature (such as whether each leader was able to generate urgency and empower people) and the styles were present. Some pattern matching was employed - a comparison of the anticipated pattern of behavior of effective change leadership that had been acquired in theory, with the behaviors that are a part of the observed cases. The cases that have been, as a rule, markedly

successful largely corresponded to the pattern (they filled most of the boxes suggested by Kotter and had the traits of transformational/authentic behaviors), which supports the theory.

In both instances, triangulation of sources contributed to the credibility: in the case of Microsoft, the achievement of its transformation is supported by financial indicators (market cap, revenue growth), as well as by the score on employee culture, and many commentators attribute it to the leadership change by Nadella, indicating that there is a believable correlation. The apparent results (infrastructure, e-government indices) and the vision proposed by the leader align in the context of the Dubai case. The combination of several pieces of evidence in the analysis lends more weight to the argument about the influence of leadership, rather than basing it on the opinion of an individual.

### **3.5. Reliability and Validity**

- **Reliability:** A case study protocol was structured to provide consistency. The write-ups of each case were written in a similar format (Context, Change Initiatives, Leadership Actions, Outcomes). Cases have been documented in notes and references, and the final text contains citations to facilitate verification. Taking into account that this is primarily secondary research, the reliability of these sources is also established through references to well-established sources (e.g., quoting the words of CEOs themselves or using statistics from credible sources). Other individuals following the same procedure and sources should also reach the same conclusions, which are descriptive of what the leaders did in those situations.
- **Validity:** Construct validity was addressed through multiple sources of evidence for the leadership constructs in both cases (e.g., to demonstrate that Nadella developed a culture of growth mindset, we have his quotes, employee anecdotes, and survey results on the culture). Internal validity (to assert an explanatory claim) is somewhat more complex, as we cannot be certain that causation (leadership leading to transformation

success) has taken place due to the possible confounding variables (such as market conditions). However, through within-case process tracing (where the actions of the leader led to or were parallel to improvements) and the salience of the expert attributions within sources, we reinforce the causal inference. External validity (generalizability) - here, we seek analytic, rather than statistical, generalization. By comparing various settings, we will be able to extrapolate the rules of successful change leadership (such as urgent vision and stakeholder engagement) with context-dependent details. The multiple-case design itself enhances external validity, as it is not based on a single unique setting.

- **Bias management:** The researcher was conscious of potential bias (e.g., retrospective glorification of successful leaders). An attempt was made to incorporate more critical views, such as references to subsequent problems in GE, to avoid the presentation of the Welch transformation as one that was without flaws, or that some of the changes that Sheikh Mohammed has performed can raise questions on sustainability, or that his approach cannot be duplicated in other settings where power is not as centralized. The analysis will be balanced by referring to a wide variety of sources (where possible), including academic critiques.

To summarize, this chapter outlines the methodology used to address the thesis question. Through the scrutiny of actual cases with a stringent connection to leadership theories, we will be able to engage in a knowledge-rich discussion of the role of leadership in driving transformation within an organization.

## Chapter Four

### Case Analysis

The chapter contains within-case analyses and a synthesis across cases of the chosen transformations: Microsoft and Google (technology), Government of Dubai (public sector), General Electric and Starbucks (corporate), and two family/legacy business cases (Majid Al Futtaim Group and Ford Motor Company). The analysis of each case has a standard form: (1) context and pre-conditions, (2) leadership practices and style, (3) using change-management models (Lewin / Kotter / ADKAR), (4) outcomes.

#### 4.1. Microsoft

##### ➤ Background & Context

When Satya Nadella became the new Microsoft CEO in February 2014, he entered the company facing significant cultural and strategic challenges. As per the London Business School instance, **“he inherited a firm fading toward irrelevance, plagued by internal fights and inertia”** (Ibarra et al., 2018, p. 2). Microsoft has faced challenges from mobile platforms, cloud competitors, and internal technologies, resulting in the loss of its historical monopoly in software, primarily driven by Windows and Office. The new CEO recognized the need for a radical change in the organizational culture and strategy.

##### ➤ Leadership Intervention & Style

Nadella made the concept of growth mindset the key point in his leadership plan.

**“The idea he and his leadership team introduced at Microsoft was to shift employees from the firm’s historical ‘know-it-all’ culture to embrace a ‘learn-it-all’ curiosity”** (Ibarra et al., 2018, p. 6).

This observation is indicative of a definite shift in leadership style towards an authoritative, all-knowing attitude, rather than one of empowerment and lifelong learning, which are central features of transformational and authentic leadership.

With regard to the classification of leadership style:

- ✓ **Transformational:** Nadella set a new vision (empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more), inspired and motivated the staff, encouraged intellectual interest (e.g., cloud, AI, cross-platform), and showed personalized attention (e.g., listening to the customers, inviting employees to share innovation).
- ✓ **Authentic:** He demonstrated self-realization by acknowledging that Microsoft was encountering cultural issues, relational openness through meetings with employees and clients, internalized morality through supporting inclusivity and attitude towards a growth mindset, and balanced processing by employing structural changes while involving stakeholders.

➤ **Transformation Process**

**1. Lewin's Three-Stage Theory**

- ✓ **Unfreeze:** Nadella challenged the established norms by publicly accepting issues. According to the case at the London Business School, Nadella claimed that: “Nadella recognized that cultural transformation was essential prior to the success of technology.”
- ✓ **Change (Move):** He introduced the mobile-first, cloud-first strategy, reorganized teams, got rid of the stack-ranking system, and introduced cross-product integration.
- ✓ **Refreeze:** Nadella re-introduced novel behaviors into the systems and culture, including cooperation, a single identity of “One Microsoft, and a growth mindset.

## **2. Kotter's 8-Step Model**

### **✓ Step 1: Create urgency**

Nadella highlighted the threats posed by mobile technology, cloud services, competitors, and internal decay.

### **✓ Step 2: Form a guiding coalition**

He has reorganized top management, removed silos, and empowered new teams.

### **✓ Step 3: Develop vision & strategy**

The vision of empowering every person and the borderline mobile-first, cloud-first strategy has been delivered many times over.

### **✓ Step 4: Communicate the vision**

Nadella traveled around the world, consulting with consumers and employees at every level.

### **✓ Step 5: Empower broad-based action**

Stack-ranking (eliminated structural impediments), consolidation of several product teams across business units.

### **✓ Step 6: Generate short-term wins**

Initial successes encompassed Azure growth, Office 365 deployment across several platforms, and the acquisition of Minecraft.

### **✓ Step 7: Consolidate gains & produce more change**

Microsoft has expanded its presence in the sphere of artificial intelligence, forming partnerships (especially with OpenAI), adopting cross-platform projects, and engaging in acquisitions, all of which indicate a tremendous shift.

### **✓ Step 8: Anchor new approaches in culture**

The growth mentality culture, inclusive leadership, and the One Microsoft identity have been incorporated into the HR systems and reporting.

### 3. ADKAR Framework

- ✓ **Awareness:** Employees were notified about the commercial issues and cultural issues facing Microsoft.
- ✓ **Desire:** Nadella challenged her staff to adopt the culture of life-long learning, development, and innovation (learn-it-all) over obedience.
- ✓ **Knowledge:** The company has made investments in its capabilities, including cloud technology, AI, and cross-platform technologies, as well as reskilling its employees.
- ✓ **Ability:** Teams had been given resources and freedom to devise new products and business ideas.
- ✓ **Reinforcement:** Cultural change metrics, leadership recognition, new compensation systems, and external successes were used to support new behavior.

#### ➤ Outcomes

Under Nadella's leadership, Microsoft attained significant transformative results:

- ✓ **Financial:** Between the fourth quarter of 2020 and 2022, the business achieved significant financial performance, with revenue growth of 8 percent to \$56.2 billion and a 20 percent increase in net income to \$ 24.3 billion (Liu, 2023).
- ✓ **Cultural:** The level of employee engagement improved, the so-called learn-it-all spirit spread, and the cooperation between products increased.
- ✓ **Strategic:** Microsoft positioned itself as a leader in cloud computing (Azure), embracing artificial intelligence (GitHub Copilot, OpenAI alliance), and shifted its focus from being a Windows-based platform to a platform and productivity company.
- ✓ **Innovation:** Services such as Microsoft Teams, integration in Office 365, and cloud services.

The case serves as a practical illustration of how transformational and authentic leadership styles can be effectively combined with planned change strategies to implement significant organizational change. The way Nadella presents his vision, empowers his teams, and focuses on culture aligns with a transformational leadership style; his authenticity, transparency, ethical sense, and growth attitude are those of a true leader. His leadership skillfully steered the stages of change (ADKAR) and organizational change (Kotter/Lewin) at both individual and organizational levels. However, the supporting factors that were fundamentally in place enabled him to do so, and they comprised the backing of the Microsoft board, a comprehensive range of resources, and external legitimacy to effect changes. This implies that the presence of strong leadership entails a favorable environment. The existing culture of competition and divisions posed significant resistance in the first place and required time before change.

## **4.2. Google**

### **➤ Background & Context**

A high level of diversification at Google includes not only its main search and advertisement services but also such provocative projects as Other Bets (Waymo, Verily, Calico, Nest, etc.), which were announced by August 2015. This announcement caused administrative issues and left investors confused (Graham, 2017). The company founders announced a restructuring in which Alphabet became the primary holding company and Google the primary operating company. The reorganization aimed to separate the core income-generating business (search/ads) from the long-term experimental business, enabling each business to operate with greater managerial clarity and autonomy.

➤ **Leadership intervention & style**

The restructuring was a strategic move by the founders, involving visionary management (with a long-term objective of changing the world) and a decentralized, participatory governance model (devolving operational authority to unit heads). In contrast to using rhetoric to bring about a massive cultural transformation, the founders employed organizational design as a structural mechanism to facilitate innovation and preserve core operations.

**“We think we can make it cleaner and more accountable. So we are creating a new company, called Alphabet.”** (Grant, 2019, p.2)

➤ **Transformation process**

**1. Lewin’s Three-Stage Theory**

- ✓ **Unfreeze:** Leadership publicly framed Google in terms of its broad scale and investor concern over the issue as a governance challenge, necessitating a change in structure; the founders' statement marked a symbolic renunciation of the old structure.
- ✓ **Change:** The creation of legal and management distance in Alphabet, the assignment of different CEOs to its operating companies (Sundar Pichai at Google; Page and Brin in portfolio roles), and the introduction of new reporting configurations were among the transition stages during which independence and new operating procedures were established.
- ✓ **Refreeze:** A new set of governance procedures (separate profit and loss reports, board oversight, capital allocation practices) and frequent financial reporting made the change permanent, as the new model of holding company became the paradigm of regular operation. According to Grant’s case notes (2019), the duration of this paradigm was planned to be long, and other questions were raised about its consistency.

## 2. Kotter's 8-Step Model

- ✓ **Create urgency:** The founders defined the problem (complexity, loss of focus) in order to seek an intervention.
- ✓ **Form a guiding coalition:** Page, Brin, and top-level management designed the overall governance framework of Alphabet and appointed leaders in operations (Blau & Kimmig, 2024).
- ✓ **Develop and communicate a vision:** The letter of the founders outlined a vision of a more transparent and responsible model, one that continues to make long-term investments and explains the very essence of the business.
- ✓ **Empower action & remove barriers:** The pragmatic empowerment was achieved through the ability to give the heads of units operational power and specific financial allocation.
- ✓ **Short-term wins & consolidation:** Preliminary segment reporting and investor feedback provided initial assurance; since then, the framework has helped make additional investments in Other Bets.

## 3. ADKAR Framework

The Alphabet change was not a cultural shift among employees but a structural change; still, ADKAR can help to clarify how the senior managers and the heads of units accepted the new operational practices: **Awareness** (the announcement of the founders), **Desire** (promised autonomy), **Knowledge** (new reports and roles definition), **Ability** (delegated powers and resources), **Reinforcement** (performance reporting and capital allocation).

### ➤ Outcomes

Better financial segment reporting that allowed investors to evaluate the core performance of Google without speculative projects; more operational autonomy in experimental departments (e.g., Waymo, Verily) to do disruptive research and development, and not to be tied to the

quarterly cycle of Google (Zehtabchi, 2019); a management structure that allowed founders to have long term investments and leave daily operations to the experimental divisions.

The restructuring of Google Alphabet highlights the importance of strategic leadership by the founder, using organizational design as one of the instruments of change. Unlike the culture-first reforms (e.g., the case of Microsoft under Nadella), this case exemplifies a leader's decision to redesign the firm to strike a balance between exploration and exploitation. A strategic/participative model of leadership is most appropriate since the founders established the purpose of the long run, and delegated functional power to empowered unit leaders.

### **4.3. Government of Dubai, UAE**

#### **➤ Background & context**

The rapid metamorphosis of Dubai, which occurred between the years 2000 and 2020, was brought about by institutional innovation, strategic planning, and infrastructure investment by the city administration, a leadership-based measure aimed at transforming the city into a global hub. Under the rule of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai has adopted long-term strategic plans (e.g., the Dubai Strategic Plan), major infrastructure projects (Burj Khalifa, Dubai Metro, free zones), and a national goal of becoming a global trade, tourism, financial, and technological hub (Krzyszowski, 2020). These initiatives were planned throughout the government through executive councils and special delivery units, which translated the vision into projects (e.g., Smart Dubai, Dubai Paperless, Dubai Data). The Dubai Strategic Plan outlines the government's excellence, quality of services, and accountability as core purposes of the transformation strategy.

#### **➤ Leadership intervention & style**

The style of transformational leadership adopted by Sheikh Mohammed in Dubai is visionary, strategic, and directive, and adapted to the centralized political system. The leader established a high-profile vision of the city and used the powers of the state to create institutions (executive

councils, Smart Dubai Office), distribute resources, and impose the cooperation of agencies. This combination of a clear sense of individual vision, command imperative, and institutional novelty helped to coordinate policy swiftly and implement it on a massive scale.

Sheikh Mohammed believes that leadership is not service and vision, but rather authority:

**“At the heart of Dubai’s remarkable transformation lies the unwavering vision and leadership of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.”** (My Vision, p. 1)

This claim aligns with the concept of transformational leadership, where leaders encourage their followers to focus on the common goals of the community rather than their individual needs. Dubai, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed, has adopted a development philosophy based on excellence, innovation, and sustainability, with the goal of becoming a world city.

### ➤ **Transformation process**

#### **1. Lewin’s Three-Stage Theory**

By voicing a burning national objective (**unfreeze**), followed by instituting rapid structural, policy, and technological changes (**change**) between free zones and mega-projects to the Smart Dubai digital movement, and finally creating new routines and measures (**refreeze**) through the Dubai Strategic Plan, governance forums, and performance KPIs that incorporate new practices (Plan, 2015).

#### **2. Kotter’s 8-Step Model**

By applying the model of Kotter, Sheikh Mohammed created a sense of urgency by providing a unique story of global competition and opportunity, developed and managed powerful coalitions (Executive Council, Smart Dubai, cross-agency taskforces), expressed and spread a powerful vision (public speeches, published strategic plans), gave power to action (delegation and assignment of resources to implementation teams), generated small-time wins (high-profile events and visible service improvements like DubaiNow and UAE PASS), solidified success

(expansion of digital service offerings, legal and regulatory changes) and harnessed The chain of leadership actions conforms to some of the necessary steps of Kotter.

### **3. ADKAR Framework**

The implementation of ADKAR, at the individual and managerial levels, included Awareness created by way of communicating with the masses and publishing strategic publications, Desire through incentives and narrative of national pride, Knowledge and Ability through capacity-building exercise, Smart Government training, and technical platforms, such as Dubai Pulse (Khan et al., 2022), and Reinforcement by the means of KPIs, awards, and the Government Excellence Program, making civil servants and partners embrace the necessary digital and service delivery behaviors to achieve sustainable transformation.

#### **➤ Outcomes**

Improved infrastructure and urban infrastructure, growth in tourism and foreign investments, recognition on the global e-government and smart city lists, widespread digitization of governmental services (DubaiNow, UAE PASS, Dubai Paperless), and developed platforms to support continued innovation (Dubai Future Foundation, World Government Summit) (Sarker et al., 2023). According to Smart Dubai, more than 1,000 electronic services and city goals, including the improvement of the Happiness Index, are the first signs of operational changes and general acceptance by the population (Salem, 2016). These findings explain a mutual development of infrastructural investments and human-focused digital services.

The Dubai case demonstrates that centralized, transformational, and visionary leadership can be leveraged to accelerate transformation on a massive scale, particularly in the presence of strong state capacity, a coherent institutional framework, and concentrated digital platforms. The key enabling mechanisms were: (1) a clear and clearly explained vision that created strategic priorities; (2) the creation of specialized delivery entities (Smart Dubai, Dubai Data, executive councils) that concentrated authority, expertise and financial resources; (3)

performance management systems and key performance indicators (KPIs) that strengthened adoption; and (4) signature, iconic projects (mega-projects, global events) that displayed commitment and opportunity to legitimize.

#### **4.4. General Electric**

##### **➤ Background & Context**

When Jack Welch became the CEO of General Electric in 1981, the company was a large, diversified conglomerate with numerous businesses under its umbrella, a substantial bureaucracy, and average growth. He inherited a company facing internal inefficiencies and external forces, including international competition and economic downturns. Under his leadership, during the 1980s and 1990s, GE underwent a radical corporate transformation, which included the sale of non-performing segments, a focus on achieving leadership in every segment, operational efficiency, and a shift toward globalization and service-based growth.

##### **➤ Leadership intervention & style**

**“In nearly four decades with GE, I have never seen a company initiative move so willingly and so rapidly in pursuit of a big idea.”** (Bartlett & Wozny, 1999)

The leadership styles that Welch adopted were a combination of transformational, transactional, and strategic. He projected a bold vision of a boundary-less organization, where hierarchies, barriers, and silos would be eliminated, with each business unit and person being driven to excellence. At the same time, he introduced performance metrics, compensation plans, and a rank-and-yank performance system (firing the bottom 10%) that reflect aspects of transnationalism (Rice et al., 2024). He made strategic moves to shut down nonperforming units, acquire others, globalize GE, and focus more on services than products. This combination implies that his leadership cannot be restricted to one style; however, his approach focuses on the end aims of change, emphasizing urgency, structural change, cultural development, and performance rigor.

➤ **Transformation process**

**1. Lewin's Model**

- ✓ **Unfreeze:** Welch challenged the established standards, arguing that GE needed to transform into a simpler, agile, more global, and focused system. He scrapped management levels, dissolved the strategic planning team, and demanded real-time planning.
- ✓ **Change:** He implemented far-reaching structural changes by selling hundreds of companies, buying many others, starting Work-Out sessions in order to get the employees into problem-solving, and implementing Six Sigma to improve the quality.
- ✓ **Refreeze:** He incorporated new practices, culture, and governance in the boundaryless company, instituted performance reviews on an ongoing basis, instituted leadership development (Crotonville) (Paine, 2016), and introduced strict accountability.

**2. Kotter's 8-Step Model**

Welch created a sense of urgency by posing strict goals and challenging business units; he formed a leadership coalition of top management; he formulated a clear vision of speed, simplicity, self-confidence and the boundaryless organization; he spread it throughout the organization; he empowered business units; he succeeded in short-term achievements (rapid growth in profits, higher margins); he entrenched gains using Six Sigma and globalization (Kolhe et al., 2018); and he imprinted on the culture of GE with new ways of doing things through leadership development and continuous change.

**3. ADKAR**

The person-level methodology by Welch included Awareness (group need for change), Desire (motives, opportunities), Knowledge and Ability (education, leadership training, Six Sigma application), and Reinforcement (performance control, reward and penalty systems).

➤ **Outcomes**

During Welch's reign, GE achieved significant revenue and profit growth, earning a reputation for outstanding financial results and consistently ranking among the world's most successful corporations (Rice et al., 2024). The transformation included a shift to services (e.g., GE Capital), global growth, and cost-efficiency outcomes from Six Sigma initiatives. However, critics then pointed to the costs of constant movement, work exhaustion, ethical issues within the financial units, and the problems the corporation experienced after Welch left.

The example of Welch shows that massive transformational change often requires the combination of a wide range of leadership styles and the use of structural and cultural processes. His visionary approach provided focus, his performance structure brought discipline, and his culture initiative (boundaryless, employee empowerment through Work-Out) involved the employees. The achievement was attributed to several factors, including the size of GE, its extensive resource base, global coverage, and the leadership qualities and personality of Welch, who was a formidable figure.

## **4.5. Starbucks**

➤ **Background & Context**

After being a pioneer in shaping the future of the so-called third place, Starbucks experienced a steep drop in 2007/2008 due to the over-expansion, low-quality products, and cultural inauthenticity. This situation has worsened due to the global financial crisis, which has led to layoffs and even the closure of stores. "Starbucks had evolved from a purveyor of the coffeehouse experience to a retailer of coffee," Schultz noted (Schultz, 2018). When Howard Schultz returned as CEO in 2008, he was compelled to quickly refocus the operations, culture, and values of the firm on its original mission: to bring people together through coffee.

➤ **Leadership Intervention & Style**

Schultz was a good leader who exemplified servant leadership characteristics combined with transformational leadership. He offered a new sense of purpose to the staff members by providing a compelling vision that emphasized collective responsibility, product quality, and emotional involvement. His focus on idealized influence and inspirational motivation energized partners (workers) through sincerity, modesty, and empowerment. He put the well-being of partners in the central spot, in a servant-leader fashion, by increasing healthcare, stock benefits, and community programs, and thus established trust and mutual respect as the foundation gears of change.

➤ **Transformation Process**

**1. Kotter's 8-Step Model**

- ✓ **Creating Urgency & Guiding Coalition:** He organized free forums revealing the waning course of Starbucks and hired trusted executives and store managers to sit together at the helm of the revitalization.
- ✓ **Developing Vision & Communicating Change:** The Transformation Agenda revised Starbucks' mission as "one cup, one customer, one experience at a time."(Schultz, 2011, p.156)
- ✓ **Empowering Action & Short-Term Wins:** Over 10,000 managers were retrained in customer service-related leadership, and store closings served as a cultural reset (Meilani & Ellitan, 2024).
- ✓ **Anchoring New Approaches in Culture:** Formalized through the Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) practices, new standards for coffee quality, retail design, and ethical sourcing became formalized.

## 2. Lewin's Three-Stage Framework

Howard Schultz's leadership at Starbucks exemplified the implementation of Lewin's Three-Stage Change Model, integrating transformational and servant leadership to facilitate organizational regeneration. During the unfreezing phase, Schultz addressed the company's deteriorating quality and identity by recognizing that **“Starbucks had become something we never intended, a retailer of coffee, not the purveyor of experiences”** (Schultz, 2011, p. 24), which symbolically closed 7,100 stores to be retrained back to craftsmanship and pride. Innovation was the core of the Transformation Agenda that he launched during the transformation period, featuring principles such as the inclusion of new espresso machines, digital ordering, and ethical sourcing through the C.A.F.E. program. Finally, during refreezing, Schultz solidified these changes through ongoing engagement with its partners, community activities, and group successes. This unifying process reinvigorated Starbucks' culture and strengthened its moral values, restoring it to a purpose-driven, internationally respected brand grounded in authenticity and human-focused transformation.

### ➤ Outcomes

The reinvention gave a boost to Starbucks' business performance and image. In 2008, operating income turned to a loss; however, it exceeded \$ 1.7 billion in 2011 (Fariss, 2021). Customer satisfaction and partner involvement have risen significantly, establishing Starbucks as a brand with values. The company's turnaround demonstrated that it is possible to restore organizational health through an emotionally intelligent, servant-leadership approach that allows not only financial health to be restored but also cultural health.

The leadership of Schultz is a model of a revolution based on a human-centered worldview. He applied emotional capital by combining inspiration and empathy to enable behavior and cultural change. Unlike transactional turnarounds, which are focused on efficiency, the

Schultz strategy placed an emphasis on meaning, trust, and purpose, which are critical drivers of lasting transformation. His approach highly conforms to the cultural anchoring phases of Kotter and the refreezing phase of Lewin, as it ensures cultural change is maintained even after short-lived gains. Ultimately, the Starbucks case demonstrates that the principles of leadership and servant leadership can transform a crisis into a new identity and foster greater resilience.

#### **4.6. Majid Al Futtaim Group (MAF)**

##### **➤ Background & context**

Majid Al Futtaim is a family-owned, UAE-based conglomerate with interests in malls and properties, retail (including the Carrefour franchise), entertainment, leisure, and financial services (Ayyagari & Parahoo, 2022). Founded in 1992 and experiencing rapid growth in the 1990s and 2000s, MAF has evolved into a regionally dominant, diversified conglomerate with operations spanning MENA and Central Asia regions. When the founder retired as an executive in 2006 and the leadership and governance became professionalized, it marked a turning point, as the Group transitioned from founder-led entrepreneurial development to institutional governance and change. The transformation programme of MAF in the 2010s and 2020s focused on digital competencies, governance, talent development, and community influence as key tools for sustainable growth and international partnerships.

**“Governance is the journey of a mindset.”** (Pearl Initiative, 2021, p. 53)

This brief quote, from the Pearl Initiative family-firm case, summarizes MAF's recognized requirement to move beyond the informal founder practice to formalized governance and a cultural shift necessary to sustain professionalization.

##### **➤ Leadership intervention & style**

Strategic and transformational leadership by professional CEOs. Later professional leaders, including Alain Bejjani, CEO of MAF Group in the mid-2010s, defined a digital and customer-centric vision for digital platforms, data analytics, and integrated retail and leisure experiences, employing organizational resources to transform the enterprise, as captured in HBSP case synopses and practitioner reports. The programs of the company to create super users to promote governance and to institutionalize talent and governance processes are also an example of how the executives use rhetoric and practices of a transformational nature to change attitudes, and use the oversight through transactional mechanisms (boards, committees, KPIs).

➤ **Transformation process**

**1. Lewin Model**

- ✓ **Unfreeze:** The departure of the founder in 2006 and the decision to professionalize management led to the end of the informal founder period, which necessitated improvements in governance. Leadership clarified the limitations of systems founded on leaders and the need for alternative models.
- ✓ **Change (Move):** MAF formed subsidiary boards, including the CEO Forum, governance super-users, and cross-group talent and digital teams. The Group introduced structured training in governance and centralized regulations, and increasingly delegated operational power to its subsidiaries, a process of restructuring behaviors.
- ✓ **Refreeze:** Governance processes, such as boards, audit and remuneration committees, the CEO Forum's routines, and reporting, were institutionalized and embedded in business routines, which supported the process of making consistent decisions, acquiring talent, and establishing external finance credibility.

**2. Kotter's 8-Step model**

- ✓ **Create urgency:** The difficulties of growth after the founding period, along with the need for finance and staff, provided a compelling argument for change.
- ✓ **Form a guiding coalition:** Leadership created subsidiary boards and a governance team at the holding level; change champions, who were internal to the company, were referred to as super users.
- ✓ **Vision & communication:** The vision of sustainable, professionally managed growth for the holding and the legacy of its founder were communicated both within the company and externally to attract partners and talent.
- ✓ **Empower action:** Subsidiary boards and delegated decision-making authority. Operational executives are empowered to act within a governance structure through the delegation of decision-making authority to subsidiary boards.
- ✓ **Short-term wins:** Strategic alliances (Carrefour, entertainment brands) and improved credit ratings (the highest privately-held BBB rating recorded by practitioner reports) help to provide confirmation (Ayyagari & Parahoo, 2022).
- ✓ **Consolidate & institutionalize:** Changes were integrated into regular routines through continuous governance training, the CEO Forum, and measurement systems (to be used for reporting on community impact and operations).

### 3. ADKAR

- ✓ **Awareness:** Staff members were informed about the shift toward establishing formal governance and the need for digitalization.
- ✓ **Desire:** Engagement was encouraged by career pathways, talent programs, and the opportunity to have international partnerships.
- ✓ **Knowledge:** Competencies were enhanced through training programs, governance super-user initiatives, and inter-company learning.
- ✓ **Ability:** Structural reforms, such as subsidiary boards and delegated authority, enabled people to act.

- ✓ **Reinforcement:** New behaviors were reinforced through external validation, which took the form of credit ratings, partner endorsements, as well as internal reporting.

➤ **Outcomes**

The governance structure adopted by MAF improved the composition of boards, risk management, and access to funds; Enhanced independent evaluation shows that the company has improved its creditworthiness and the ability to attract international partners. In the 2010s and 2020s, MAF invested heavily in digital capabilities (e-commerce, analytics, loyalty), improved the customer experience across malls and stores, and unified data initiatives to support collective decision-making (Chopra, 2022).

The development of MAF is a good example of the professionalization of a first-generation family conglomerate. The leadership approach represents an integrative model: transformational goal of preserving the legacy of the founder and going global; situational- and transactional-based measures to implement governance (boards, committees, KPIs); and servant and ethical focus reflected by community-related efforts. This merger was effective in the context of MAF: the legacy of its founder was the concept and brand building upon which the company was still established; professional management and governance allowed it to grow in size, handle risks, and gain recognition among foreign collaborators and investors.

## **4.7. Ford Motor Company**

➤ **Background & context**

In September 2006, when Alan R. Mulally was appointed as the CEO of Ford Motor Company, the company was facing serious structural, cultural, and financial issues. Before his arrival, Ford had suffered heavy losses, lost market share, a bloated brand portfolio, and a dysfunctional global structure that lacked consistent measurements and inter-business coordination (Larabee et al., 2017). Mulally became the head of a firm that was about to declare one of the most significant annual losses, in an U.S. car industry that was on the verge of a total meltdown; he publicly defined the dilemma facing Ford and then presented a broad plan to completely reshape Ford, with four primary concerns: ruthless restructuring, accelerated product development, financing the effort, and building an effective teamwork.

**“One Plan: ... to completely transform Ford, to improve our efficiency, cut costs and champion innovation.”** (Mulally, 2008, p.1).

➤ **Leadership intervention & style**

The leadership of Mulally combined transformational and authentic/servant elements with a solid, disciplined operational approach. He emphasized positive and inclusive management, a distinctive, single, and integrative approach (One Ford), as well as precise and transparent execution through systematic review procedures.

➤ **Transformation process**

**1. Lewin’s Three-Stage Theory**

- ✓ **Unfreeze:** Mulally created urgency through an open acknowledgement of the weak position of Ford, through raising financing, and setting concrete restructuring goals (plant shutdowns, labor cutbacks, and divestitures). The purchase of \$ 23.5 billion and the announcement of the One Ford agenda meant that business as usual would no longer work (Mulally, 2008).
- ✓ **Change (Move):** Global product rationalization, sharing of platforms across regions, massively reduced costs, a lean supplier base, and weekly Business Process Reviews,

which required transparency and inter-functional cooperation. The leaders were asked to bring up matters as red things that they could solve together.

- ✓ **Refreeze:** Institutionalization of new behaviors was achieved by embedding new routines (BPRs, the traffic-light process, streamlined governance, and shared KPIs) into Ford's operating system and leadership development programs. Acknowledgment, performance indicators, and governance changes were among the factors that supported the transition to a unified Ford approach by consolidating the previously isolated business units (Kirkland, 2013).

## 2. Kotter's 8-Step Model

- ✓ **Create urgency:** Demanded urgent and transformative actions and got funding to do so.
- ✓ **Form a guiding coalition:** Mulally created and empowered a solid global leadership team that engaged in BPRs.
- ✓ **Develop vision & strategy:** One Ford was a concise vision which incorporated product, brand, and organizational issues.
- ✓ **Communicate the vision:** Frequent communication, town hall meetings, and leadership actions solidified the One Ford notion.
- ✓ **Empower broad-based action:** Delegation with responsibility; managers were given authority, but they had to provide honest reports in BPRs.
- ✓ **Generate short-term wins:** First divestitures, facility restructurings, and product reinvigoration produced visible improvements, giving them greater credibility.
- ✓ **Consolidate gains:** The systemized application of international platforms and the Six Sigma quality programs has improved the gains.
- ✓ **Anchor new approaches:** The weekly BPR and the behaviors associated with it were developed in response to the working pace (Vallabhaneni, 2023).

### 3. ADKAR

- ✓ **Awareness:** The leadership expressed the need to change (public testimony, internal communications).
- ✓ **Desire:** The enthusiasm was developed through the inclusive communication and clear rewards (job security depends on performance, consistent leadership) that Mulally implemented.
- ✓ **Knowledge:** The training and BPR process enlightened leaders on metrics, interregional trade-offs, and product prioritization.
- ✓ **Ability:** Structural changes (reduced brands, merged platforms) as well as empowered managers to act.
- ✓ **Reinforcement:** New practices were supported by performance standards and disclosures, as well as Mulally's active participation.

#### ➤ Outcomes

Ford, under Alan Mulally, has managed to achieve one of the most remarkable company transformations in the history of business today. Mulally transformed the Ford culture that used to be fragmented and defensive to a collaborative and accountable culture through a combination of the One Ford plan, the purchase of \$23.5 billion in liquidity in 2006, and the development of tough Business Plan Review meetings. The company escaped bankruptcy in 2008 and has since generated annual profits (Mulally, 2008). Ford streamlined its brands, reduced costs through global platform integration, and invested in new fuel-efficient vehicles, as the One Team ethos replaced blame and secrecy with transparency and respect for one another.

## **4.8. Case Comparison**

### **4.8.1. Contexts, Patterns, and Contrasts in the Effectiveness of Leaders.**

There are several similar leadership behaviors that are linked to successful large-scale change in the six cases: a clearly stated and repeated purpose, the initial establishment of believable small-scale successes, the systematic removal of structural barriers, and the overt modeling of new standards by leaders. The frequent use of the phrase "empower every person" by Nadella, along with the removal of stack-ranking, specified not only strategic direction but also commitment, which enabled Microsoft's initial victories in the cloud industry (Ibarra et al., 2018). Similarly, the pre-funding and weekly Business Plan Reviews conducted by Mulally established the rhythm and trust necessary for Ford's operational turnaround (Mulally, 2008). These parallels give reason to believe that transformational leadership encompasses both symbolic (vision, rhetoric) and programmatic (structures, metrics) mechanisms. The differences in the importance of specific levers, however, appear to be the contrast. Google/Alphabet preferred organizational design by founder-led restructuring giving independence to its units instead of widespread cultural re-education; Dubai used a top-down strategy and major mega-projects to create a momentum; GE under Welch combined a charismatic vision with strict system of performance (rank-and-yank and Six Sigma); Starbucks focused on emotional reconnection and servant leadership; and MAF preferred professionalization of governance to turn founder legitimacy into institutional capacity (Grant, 2019; Bartlett and Wozny, 1999). To conclude, vision and the plausible action are a fundamental pattern, but the combination of structural, cultural and political levers depends on the nature of the situation explaining the differences in speed, scale, and maintainability of results.

### **4.8.2. The ways leadership styles fit particular transformational phases**

In bypassing staged change models (Lewin, Kotter, ADKAR), certain leadership styles are associated with specific phases in a predictable manner. The best leaders are those who are

visionary and directive, creating urgency and quickly rallying resources (e.g., Sheikh Mohammed's authoritative statements, as well as Mulally's liquidity initiatives in front of the crowd), because these phases require decisive messages and the eradication of complacency (My Vision; Mulally, 2008). Transformational and participative styles of leadership that stimulate intellectual stimulation, empowerment, and experimentation, including the growth mindset of Nadella and retraining and local manager empowerment of Starbucks, and Work-Out of GE, are adopted in the change/movement phase, which encourages widespread learning and experimentation (Schultz and Yang, 2011; Bartlett and Wozny, 1999). The presence of transactional elements (explicit KPIs, incentives, Six Sigma, and accountability among employees) is particularly notable in the installation and refreezing phases when it is necessary to execute the solution consistently and reuse it (Welch at GE, the CEO Forum, and subsidiary boards at MAF). The example of Google/Alphabet redesign demonstrates that the primary type of intervention was not behavioral, but structural, and the process of unfreeze/change/refreeze was mainly associated with the legal and reporting systems that introduced new governance patterns (Grant, 2019). The individual-level view of ADKAR clarifies the importance of servant and authentic leadership styles (Schultz, Mulally) in Desire and Reinforcement, as it fosters a sense of psychological safety and intrinsic motivation that continue to drive change even after the initial mandates have been implemented.

#### **4.8.3. Context role (sector, culture, ownership) in determining outcomes**

The contextual factors, including sector dynamics, ownership structure, political framework, and resource endowments, play a crucial role in determining how leadership is translated into results. Centralized power, financial means, and political legitimacy in the public sector of Dubai enable a ruler to engage in radical and conspicuous interventions, institutionalizing change in a short period. In technologically focused firms (Microsoft, Google), fast-moving markets and high innovation premiums favor executives who combine strategic foresight with

economies of experimentation (growth mentality, autonomous ALTs, holding-company structure), as agility and the movement of talent are paramount. The scale and complexity of operations in traditional industrial firms (e.g., GE, Ford) necessitate transactional processes (stiff measurements, control, and structural flattening); however, without a compelling transformational narrative, these strategies can result in discouragement and reduced organizational flexibility over the long term. The conglomerates owned by families (MAF) are faced with their own corporate governance dilemma: the legitimacy of the founders can help the company make decisions faster and provide an easy way to network, but the professionalization (boards and CEO forums) of the company is often the key to its further development and attracting external sources of funds; the leaders of the family business have to balance respect towards tradition with the introduction of formal control practices (Pearl Initiative, 2021). The importance of culture, as demonstrated by CEOs like Schultz at Starbucks, lies in authenticity and servant leadership, which can help restore credibility in consumer service-based industries where emotional attachment is a source of competitive edge. After all, the available resources (money, talent, institutional reputation) are the determinants of undertakable undertakings by leaders. Mulally's ability to pre-fund Ford and Dubai's capability to build mega-projects are illustrations of the facilitating environment that augments leadership initiatives. In turn, successful leadership changes are not a style-free zone; they must be adapted to the sector's needs, tenets of ownership, institutional constraints, and socio-cultural values.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

In this chapter, the research results will be discussed in relation to the existing literature. This section presents an analysis of the combination of various leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, situational, and visionary, alongside

established change management models such as Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, Kotter's 8-Step Model, and the ADKAR model, as discussed in Chapter Four. The study questions are addressed in the discourse. In this chapter, the author relates the observed cases of the empirical cases to the existing research.

The results of the current study support and elaborate on previous studies, demonstrating that leadership is a key factor in determining which organizational changes are effective and sustainable. Similar studies have been conducted in the past, such as those by Sami et al. (2024) and Maisyura et al. (2022), which emphasized that transformational leadership has a significant impact on project success and organizational change, as it helps to engage, empower, and motivate employees to think intellectually. That aligns with the examples of the present study, such as Microsoft under Satya Nadella and GE under Jack Welch, where leaders employed transformational approaches, such as the ability to portray a clear vision, encourage innovation, and harmonize the goals of the employees with the company's objectives. Zafar and Naveed (2014) demonstrated a correlation between transformational leadership and the psychological well-being of employees, indicating that emotionally intelligent leadership fosters trust and motivation during change. The current analysis of Starbucks under Howard Schultz supports this perspective, demonstrating that servant and transformational leadership helped enhance morale and loyalty to the organization during a time of transformation.

This study has demonstrated that leadership efficacy in transformation is highly contextual and multidimensional, unlike previous research, which has primarily focused on transformational leadership alone. Al-Haddad & Kotnour (2015) argued that leadership and change management are two processes that are closely connected to each other. This paper supports such a view and expounds upon the way different leadership styles align with a number of distinct stages in change models, such as the Three-Stage Theory by Lewin, the Eight-Step Model by Kotter, and the ADKAR approach. During the unfreezing phase, visionary and directive leadership, as

exemplified by the top-down approach of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum of Dubai, played a significant role in developing a sense of urgency and mobilizing institutions. In addition, at the stage of change, participative and transformational behaviors, such as team empowerment at Microsoft by Nadella and investment in partners training by Schultz, played a pivotal role in ensuring innovation and psychological readiness to change. This finding aligns with the results of Yasin Ghadi et al. (2013), which demonstrate that transformational leadership fosters psychological empowerment and proactive work behavior.

The study also supports the fact that national and organizational cultures influence the impact of leadership style on transformation outcomes, as introduced by Tseng (2017). Strong institutional legitimacy and respect for authority in Dubai enabled rapid and high-level restructuring processes led by a dominant leader. However, Western companies such as Google/Alphabet and Microsoft have less hierarchical organizational structures and collaborative decision-making processes that reflect the cultural values of empowerment and innovation, demonstrating that one leadership style cannot be suitable for all companies. The cross-cultural interactions emphasize the importance of situational and authentic leadership elements, which allow leaders to manipulate their approaches, as dictated by situational and cultural realities.

The comparative findings of the six studies highlight the fact that successful organizational change requires an integrative fusion of leadership styles. Transformational and visionary traits are inspirational and give direction, whereas transactional and structural mechanisms are disciplinary and continuity-based, as seen in the dual focus of their quantitative studies (Fiaz et al., 2017). The examples of the Majid Al Futtaim (MAF) organization illustrate the balance between transformational vision and transactional governance in the process of professionalizing a family-owned company, stipulating that the key to transformational

leadership is to combine legacy and modern frameworks of governance to guarantee the sustainability of the change.

**5.1.The first research question asked: What leadership styles (transformational, transactional, servant, authentic, situational, etc.) can be observed in the chosen organizational transformation cases?**

There were apparent differences in leadership styles within the six case studies: Microsoft, Google/Alphabet, the Government of Dubai, General Electric, Starbucks, and the Majid Al Futtaim Group, not to mention Ford Motor Company Indicatively, in the case of Microsoft, led by Satya Nadella, there was a strong transformational and authentic leadership style with a strong focus on a growth mindset, emotional intelligence, and participatory empowerment. Under the leadership of Jack Welch, GE combined a transformational vision and a highly transactional system, including rank-and-yank and Six Sigma, which proved that large operation size might require a combination of leadership approaches. Under Howard Schultz, Starbucks was a model of transformation based on a servant-leadership style, focusing on people, emotional bonds, and rediscovering its culture. The politics of the region, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, have been visionary and directive, characterized by a centralized political structure and top-down leadership. The case of Google/Alphabet reorganization is an excellent example of a participative and intended leader who values structural empowerment over cultural assimilation. The case of family business (MAF) is the illustration of a change in leadership that comprises a founder-centric entrepreneurial model to professional governance with the strategic and servant components. The findings also show that there is no particular leadership style that is sufficient; instead, effective transitions employ a combination of leadership styles based on the environment, stage of change, and the needs of the stakeholders.

**5.2.The second research question asked: How do these leadership styles influence the transformation process in each case when viewed through the lens of Kotter's, Lewin's, and ADKAR models?**

According to the comparisons made in the cases, a clear trend emerges that leaders with visionary behavior, directive, and audacious tendencies are more effective in promoting a sense of urgency and commitment during the initiation/unfreeze phase. Nadella clearly noted the cultural inertia at Microsoft, whereas Mulally raised \$ 23.5 billion in funding at Ford to prevent a crisis, and this is why business as usual would not happen. These significant steps are related to the unfreezing stage in Lewin's model and the urgency creation phase in Kotter's model. During the change/movement phase, the most dominant styles are transformational and participative, focusing on empowerment, intellectual engagement, and decentralized action. Examples include the retraining of 7,100 stores in Starbucks and the removal of stack ranking, as well as the encouragement of cross-product integration at Microsoft. These can be associated with the steps of Kotter concerning the empowerment of action and the attainment of short-term wins, as well as the stages of ADKAR, including Knowledge and Ability. Finally, transactional and structural leadership processes, such as governance boards, key performance indicators, and reward systems, play a crucial role during the embedding/refreeze stage, as exemplified by the institutionalization of Six Sigma at GE and the establishment of subsidiary boards at MAF. The Reinforcement step of the ADKAR model and the anchoring of change in the Kotter model are illustrated in this section. This leadership style evolves over time, shifting from participative to governance transactional. This indicates that leadership greatly depends on the stage, and therefore, the theoretical claim that aligning one's style with the stage is crucial to success is reinforced.

**5.3.The third research question was: How do sectoral (technology, public, corporate private, and family business) and contextual (Middle Eastern vs. global) differences**

## **affect the relationship between leadership style and organizational transformation success?**

Upon the relationship between leadership and outcome, there was a significant impact due to contextual factors. The centralized political and fiscal power of the public sector in Dubai facilitated the rapid implementation of a set of massive changes through visionary top-down leadership; however, such concentration inhibits replicability in less centralized settings. Swift innovation and high talent mobility in technology firms have made leadership strategies based on learning, agility, and emotional intelligence, such as the growth mindset of Nadella, more productive. Structural reorganization, exemplified by Google's transformation into Alphabet, has also been effective in solving its problem of complexity, rather than addressing culture per se. The scale, process structures, and systems of ingrained cultures in the traditional industrial and corporate organization (as seen in GE and Ford) required that the leadership had both strong transactional mechanisms (governance, metrics) in addition to vision; the lack of operational system reform in favor of vision alone undermined the sustainability of the performance as shown by the performance of GE. The twin requirements of founder legacy and institutional professionalism that existed in the family business environment (MAF) necessitated leadership to maintain culture and values (servant/transformational) alongside formal governance. The role of cultural context plays an important role; examples of the Middle East require the knowledge of the socio-cultural norms (family ownership, social networks, state legitimacy) that, in turn, influence the credibility and effectiveness of the leadership styles. This implies that leadership cannot be general but should be tailored to the specific industry, ownership, institutional capabilities, and resource endowments.

The findings exceed the requirements of the research questions, as they encompass both theoretical and practical aspects. This paper provides a theoretical validation of the fact that the combination of leadership styles and change-management frameworks (Kotter, Lewin,

ADKAR) offers a more holistic explanation of the success of transformation than either leadership or the model alone. The phase-related difference in effective leadership styles (visionary, directive, participatory, governance, transactional) can provide a further advanced model that can supplement the previous research, which often views leadership style as a constant. Leaders and change agents need to analyze the styles they would like to adopt, as well as the right timing and reasons why they should apply different strategies. The first phases of change must entail a bold vision and mobilization; the mid phases must entail empowerment and encouragement of invention; the final phases would involve discipline, measurement, and creation of new routines. This chronological congruence makes the instillation of a sustainable change more probable. The professionals acting as consultants must be careful to ensure that development programs and executive education focus on helping leaders change the way they approach the change process as it unfolds, rather than relying on a single approach.

To sum up, this paper builds upon and expands the work of past scholars by redefining leadership as a process of mobilizing structures, cultures, and individuals that creates long-term change, rather than as a style or personality trait.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study and offers recommendations outlining the findings on the role of leadership in organizational transformation across various case scenarios. The chapter draws major conclusions based on empirical evidence, theoretical underpinnings, and comparative lessons, transforming them into valuable, practical, and evidence-based suggestions for leaders, policymakers, and researchers.

## 6.1. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of leadership on organizational change in various settings, including technology (Microsoft and Google/Alphabet), government (Dubai), corporate (General Electric and Starbucks), and family business (Majid Al Futtaim and Ford). The current study employed a qualitative multiple-case design, grounded in the framework of case study research by Yin (2018), to examine the impact of different leadership styles, behaviors, and ideologies on the effectiveness of organizational change. The study has shown that using standard change theories such as Kotters (1996) 8-Step Model, Lewins (1951) Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR framework (Hiatt, 2006), the basic stages of change, which include creating urgency, empowering stakeholders and institutionalizing change are universal, but their application also highly depends on the style of the leader, the organizational environment, and the cultural frame.

This study has examined how leadership influences organizational transformation in various industries and situations, providing a comprehensive insight into how leadership styles, behaviors, and decisions can impact the outcomes of these changes. The study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to examine the experiences of transformation in six reputable companies: Microsoft, Google (Alphabet), the Government of Dubai, General Electric, Starbucks, and Majid Al Futtaim Group. The findings revealed that, despite significant differences in environment, framework, and issues, leadership was always the decisive element in successfully bringing about change. Good leaders share some common traits: they develop clear and inspirational visions, communicate them to others, enable people to act, and sustain change through institutional means that strengthen new habits and attitudes.

The results confirmed the hypothesis that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in guiding the organization towards addressing a major challenge. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Satya Nadella demonstrated how a vision-driven, creative, and people-

oriented leadership can transform a company's culture and significantly enhance performance on a grand scale. The servant leadership demonstrated by Howard Schultz at Starbucks highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence and employee engagement in restoring organizational values and customer confidence. These findings can be traced back to the existing literature providing insights on the relationship between transformational leadership and successful change (e.g., Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015; Maisyura et al., 2022; Sami et al., 2024), which indicates that the efficacy of leadership depends not only on the strategy but also on the ability to inspire a shared purpose and develop a learning culture.

In addition, the study came up with the conclusion that leadership was required to be contextually flexible. Participative and transformational leadership can encourage innovativeness and responsiveness in the corporate and technology sectors. Still, visionary and authoritative leadership may be needed in government or family businesses to effect far-reaching changes. According to the comparative study, the most successful changes were those that balanced visionary leadership and operational rigor, emotional appeal, and institutional governance. In turn, effective leadership cannot be linked to any single speculative style, but rather to the leader's ability to combine a variety of styles in line with the circumstances and organizational realities.

The study proposes that leadership is the initiator and a power that maintains organizational change. It is only through a clear vision that effective transformation is achieved, but this is achieved through the continual alignment of vision, strategy, culture, and structure, under the guidance of leaders who are adaptive, authentic, as well as value-oriented. These findings enhance both scholarly and practical comprehension by emphasizing that transformation is a comprehensive process that necessitates not only structural and strategic interventions but also robust, human-centered leadership that can unify individuals around a common destiny.

## 6.2. Recommendations

### ➤ *For Practitioners*

- Leaders should know that there is no single style of leadership that will bring success in every organizational setting.
- Organizations should incorporate leadership development programs into proven change management models, such as Kotter's 8-Step Model, Lewin's Three-Stage Theory, and the ADKAR model. This integration ensures that leadership activities align with every phase of change when it comes to creating urgency to entrench change.
- Leaders must communicate visions that are both emotionally and intellectually compelling to their employees.
- The organization should incorporate such values and behaviors, which are instituted by leaders, in the form of rules, reward systems, and continuous learning.
- Leaders should place an emphasis on openness, ethicality, and a service-oriented approach to develop the engagement and commitment of followers, which is a necessity for sustainable transformation.

### ➤ *For Policy Makers*

- Governments in the Middle East and other parts of the world must institute formal leadership competence models to combine visionary leadership with participatory governance.
- The policymakers should support leadership training programs that integrate cultural intelligence, particularly among executives of multicultural or multinational companies.
- Policymakers should facilitate cross-sector leadership exchange programs to disseminate transformative methods across various industries.

### ➤ *For Future Research*

- Further research should encompass a broader range of geographic and industry contexts to clarify the relationship between leadership in diverse socio-political and cultural contexts.

The major driver of sustainable development is essentially leadership. Future leaders should possess flexibility, moral standards, as well as the ability to align their vision and actions in a systematic manner. It is necessary that organizations and politicians undertake leadership education, organizational alignment, and reinforcement of culture to ensure that transformation programs result in long-term institutional excellence rather than short-term success.

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جامعة ميد أوشن  
كلية الإدارة  
قسم ماجستير إدارة الموارد البشرية

## أثر القيادة على التحول التنظيمي

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السنة:

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## المستخلص

ناقشت هذه الدراسة دور القيادة في التحول التنظيمي في حالات مختلفة عالميًا، بما في ذلك مايكروسوفت وفورد وجوجل/ألفابت وحكومة دبي وجنرال إلكتريك (GE) وستاربكس وماجد الفطيم (MAF). استخدمت الدراسة تصميم بحث نوعي قائم على دراسة حالة متعددة لفهم كيفية تأثير أشكال مختلفة من القيادة التحويلية والمعاملاتية والخدمية والأصيلة والظرية وما إلى ذلك على التجديد والتحول الاستراتيجي في المنظمات. تشير النتائج إلى أن التحولات الناجحة لديها مجموعة من ممارسات القيادة العالمية، والتي تشمل القدرة على تقديم رؤية واضحة وتطوير مكاسب قصيرة الأجل والقضاء على العقبات الهيكلية والقدرة على إظهار قيم ثقافية جديدة. ومع ذلك، يعتمد أداء أساليب القيادة المعنية على الوضع الذي تعمل فيه المنظمة في القطاع العام أو الخاص، والصناعات التي يقودها الابتكار أو الصناعات التي تعمل بالطرق التقليدية، والمنظمات التي يقودها المؤسس أو التي يديرها محترفون. من خلال ربط الحالات بنماذج التغيير الحالية (نموذج كوتر ذي الثماني خطوات، ونظرية لوين ذات الثلاث مراحل، ونموذج أدكار)، تثبت الدراسة أن القيادة التحويلية والتشاركية يمكن أن تكون الأكثر كفاءة في مخطط التغيير والحركة، بينما توفر القيادة التبادلية الاستدامة في مرحلة إعادة التجميد. كما أدمجت نتائج الأبحاث السابقة في المناقشة، ودعمت الملاحظة القائلة بأن فعالية القيادة لا تتعلق فقط بالسمات الشخصية، بل أيضًا بالتوافق مع السياق والعمليات الهيكلية والحساسية الثقافية. إجمالاً، تُسهم الدراسة في الدراسة العامة لأنماط القيادة التحويلية في تفعيل التغيير، مما يوفر آثارًا نظرية وعملية للمؤسسات التي ترغب في تنفيذ تغيير مستدام.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** أنماط القيادة، التحول التنظيمي، القيادة التحويلية، إدارة التغيير، نموذج كوتر، نظرية لوين، أدكار.

