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## Article

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# Emotional and Cognitive Impacts of Organisational Change

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## Summary

- Research questions:** Is there a relationship between the lack of a change vision and negative emotions in the affected employees? Does insufficient communication during organisational change lead to negative emotions?
- Methods:** Hypotheses are tested by means of quantitative primary research in the form of an employee survey at a medium-sized automotive supplier in Germany. The study is based on a questionnaire that was developed specifically for the topic of this study. The questionnaire was answered by 102 employees.
- Results:** The analysis shows that the lack of a change vision leads to negative emotions in the affected employees. In particular, a change vision that is not perceived as desirable leads to strong negative emotions. Against the findings of the literature review, this study did not find a significant correlation between the perception of the change communication and the emotions of the change-affected employees.
- Structure of the article:** Introduction; Literature Review; Research questions & methods; Empirical results; Conclusions; About the author; Bibliography

## Introduction

Organisations must constantly adapt to the continuously growing and highly competitive business environment to survive (Hussain et al., 2018). So far, the triggers for such changes have been, among others, new government regulations, new products, increased competition, technological developments, and a changing workforce (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). Within the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many organisations worldwide to adapt quickly and radically to an unprecedented extent (Amis & Greenwood, 2021; Li et al., 2021).

Although the importance of constant change for organisations has long been recognised, the success rate of such changes is surprisingly low. On average, 70% of organisational changes fail to achieve the desired results (D. Miller, 2001; Smith, 2002).

The main reasons for the failure of change are human resource barriers (Oakland & Tanner, 2007; Subrahmanya & Rajashekhar, 2009). During organisational change, affected employees experience various emotions. Some employees might have negative emotions, whereas others have positive ones (Bartunek et al., 2006; Huy, 2002). These emotions lead to cognitive

appraisals, which influence how affected employees respond to the change event (Oreg et al., 2018). Leaders who are aware of the critical role of employees' emotions during organisational change are more likely to successfully implement change (Huy, 2002).

Different change models indicate how to best implement change (Beer et al., 1990; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996). The models comprise a series of steps that should be followed to successfully implement change. Although the models differ, they have common aspects. The scope of this study is to analyse the influence of the change vision and the change communication on the emotions of affected employees.

## Literature Review

### Organisational change

In today's business environment, managers are faced with many challenges, such as new government regulations, new products, growth, increased competition, technological developments, and changing workforces (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Organisational change is described as the process through which an organisation adjusts its present structure, work procedures, strategy, or mindset in a substantial manner (Herold et al., 2008). Many planned organisational changes fail to achieve the desired outcome. Organisational change initiatives are frequently associated with a failure rate of 70% (Beer & Nohria, 2009; D. Miller, 2001; Smith, 2002). However, this failure rate varies depending on the type of change. Smith (2002) found that cultural changes (19%), business expansion (20%), and software development and installation (26%) had the lowest success rates. The most successful initiatives were strategy deployment (58%), restructuring and downsizing (46%), and technological change (40%).

Mosadeghrad and Ansarian (2014) analysed the major reasons for organisational change failure. They conducted a comprehensive review and meta-analysis of literature published between 1980 and 2011. The barriers to organisational change were grouped into five categories: *strategic*, *structural*, *procedural*, *contextual*, and *human resource barriers*. They found that *human resource barriers* are the most frequent reason why organisational change fails. Human resource barriers

include staff shortages, employee resistance to change, and poor human resource management practices.

### Employees' Responses to Organisational Change

A range of emotions are triggered in affected employees faced with a change event. These emotions lead to cognitive appraisals, which then influence how affected employees respond to the change event (Oreg et al., 2018). Even if the change is viewed as positive or rational, it involves some loss and uncertainty (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Employees that experience negative emotions and a dismissive attitude towards organisational change are most likely to respond with *change resistance* (Oreg et al., 2018). Employees that respond with *change resistance* are a significant threat to the change's success.

Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) suggest that the four most common reasons for change resistance are a desire not to lose something of value, a misunderstanding of the change and its implications, a belief that the change does not make sense for the organisation, and a low tolerance for change.

Leaders often underestimate the different reactions of employees toward change and are unaware of their own power to influence these responses for the better. Change leaders who are aware of the different responses that affected employees show and understand their cause can influence these responses positively. The different responses are caused by cognitions, which are triggered by emotions (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Based on the findings of Kotter and Schlesinger, this study concludes that the first three reasons for employees' change resistance (desire not to lose something of value, a misunderstanding of the change and its implications, and a belief that the change does not make sense for the organisation) can result from their uncertainty about the outcome of the change. This uncertainty could be significantly reduced if the employee had a clear understanding of the intentions behind the change.

### Employees' Emotions During Organisational Change

During organisational change, affected employees experience various emotions. Some employees have negative emotions, others have positive ones (Bartunek et al., 2006; Huy, 2002).

Particularly, the early stages of organisational change often result in uncertainty for everyone involved. This is mainly due to the lack of trustworthy information about the change and the difficulty of forecasting the consequences of each change-related decision. Therefore, involved employees often feel vulnerable and unsafe (Allen et al., 2007).

Several studies recognise the relevance of emotions and their critical impact on the outcome of organisational change (Liu & Perrewé, 2005; Vuori & Virtaharju, 2012). A number of different models have been developed to describe the different emotions that people experience when faced with change (Lewin, 1951; Bridges, 1980; Kübler-Ross, 1973; Castillo et al., 2018).

Kurt Lewin (1951) was among the pioneers in change research. He developed one of the earliest known change models, Lewin's three-stage model of change. This process includes the stages of unfreezing, transition, and freezing. Schein (1996) interpreted the model as a description of the emotions and cognitions affected employees experience during organisational change. In the first stage, *unfreezing*, employees must experience dissatisfaction with the current situation. In the *transition* stage, affected employees desire to change the current situation. The last stage is called *refreezing*, during which new behaviour becomes habitual, including building a new self-concept and self-identity.

*Lewin's three-stage model of change* is a simplified illustration of the complex emotions employees experience when faced with organisational change (Lewin, 1951).

Another simplified transition model resembling Lewin's model was suggested by Bridges (1980). Bridges' transition model also comprises three stages. The model includes the stages of *letting go*, *the neutral zone*, and *new beginning*. The first stage of the Bridges model, *letting go*, is practically the same as the first stage in Lewin's change model, *unfreezing*, where affected employees must experience dissatisfaction to be able to let go of the old situation. The second stage differs from Lewin's transition model. In the second stage of the Bridges model, *the neutral zone*, the affected employees have understood that the old situation is no longer sufficient, but they have not adapted to the new situation to be achieved by the change. At this stage, individuals can experience negative emotions such as resistance but also more positive emotions such as exploration. The last stage of the Bridges model, *new beginning*, is similar to the second stage of Lewin's transition model, *moving*,

where the employees desire to move to the new intended situation. The Bridges model ends after this stage. Here, Lewin's model goes one step further with the *refreezing* stage, where the new behaviour becomes habitual.

A more detailed transition model was developed by Kübler-Ross (1973). She published her seminal work on the topic, "On Death and Dying." She aimed to develop a model describing the five different emotional stages ill patients or relatives experience when confronted with shocking, life-changing situations. While somebody who is terminally ill is clearly in different circumstances than an employee confronted with organisational change, similarities can be found. The five stages of the model by Kübler-Ross (1973) are *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, and *acceptance*.

More than 30 years later, the "six emotional stages model" was derived from the Kübler-Ross model by Castillo et al. (2018). The scope of their research was to develop a model outlining the evolution of an individual's emotional phases and their behavioural patterns when organisational change is perceived as negative. In the Kübler-Ross model, the stage of *denial* includes behaviours and rituals reflective of life before the change has occurred. In the second stage (*anger*), the feeling of denial is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, and resentment (Kübler-Ross, 1973). In Castillo's model, the first two stages of the Kübler-Ross model, *denial* and *anger*, are combined in the stage *denial and anger* because they found that the two stages were strongly linked (Castillo et al., 2018). The stages of *bargaining*, *depression*, and *acceptance* from the Kübler-Ross model were maintained by Castillo et al. (2018). At the *bargaining* stage, affected people try to make bargains to postpone the inevitable. In the fourth stage, *depression*, people feel sadness, fear, and other negative emotions. In the last stage, *acceptance*, people start to accept the inevitable. They realise that life must continue (Kübler-Ross, 1973). Based on the work of Schalk and Roe (2007), Castillo et al. (2018) added two new stages, *revising* and *deserting*, to their model. At the revising stage, employees desire to change something in their lives. At the stage of *deserting*, the employees give up and leave the company. Therefore, the final model by Castillo et al. (2018) includes the following six stages: *denial and anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, *revising*, *deserting*, and *acceptance*.

The three stages of *denial and anger*, *bargaining*, and *depression* in Castillo's model can be interpreted as a more detailed description of the initial

stages of Lewin's (*unfreeze*) and Bridges' (*letting go*) models. The *acceptance* stage is similar to the *transition* stage from Lewin (1951) and the *new beginning* stage from Bridges (1980). The possibility that employees give up and leave the company, suggested as a possible reaction of employees by Castillo et al. (2018) with the stage of deserting, had not been considered by the other three models.

The models suggested by Lewin (1951), Bridges (1980), and Kübler-Ross (1973) describe a linearity regarding the transitions between the emotional stages. The findings of Castillo et al. (2018) contradict this suggestion. They found that during the organisational change process, individuals transition between the first four stages of *denial and anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, and *revising*. Only *deserting* and *acceptance* are final stages. Affected employees will not switch back from this stage. The two most likely initial stages are denial and anger (Castillo et al., 2018).

The four models discussed so far describe emotional stages that individuals pass through when confronted with organisational change. These models have mainly focused on emotions when the change effort is perceived as negative. Since not all organisational changes are perceived as negative, positive emotions resulting from organisational change must also be considered (Oreg et al., 2018). Sometimes, positive emotions are triggered because the need for the change is so obvious and the anticipated benefits are so favorable for an individual or the whole organisation (Huy, 1999).

Kirsch et al. (2010) conducted a study to evaluate the negative as well as positive emotional experiences of employees affected by organisational change. They invented a survey to measure several change aspects, such as communication, accountability, clarity of direction, and organisational values, as well as the emotions of affected employees. For the study, a feeling scale to measure the emotions was developed in four phases. The first phase started with a list of 200 emotions. In total, the responses of more than 38,000 individuals affected by organisational change were collected.

The result of the study was a shorter list comprising 22 emotions. These 22 emotions can be classified into positive and negative ones. They were further categorised into seven basic emotional categories. The three positive categories are *passion*, *drive*, and *curiosity*, while the four negative categories include *anger*, *distress and fear*, *damage*, and *defiance*. The final feeling scale is depicted in Table 1.

Compared to the previously presented models that describe the emotional stages of affected employees, the research of Kirsch et al. (2010) describes the emotions in more detail without placing them in stages. It can be assumed that the employees in the different stages of the four transition models can experience emotions from the different basic emotional categories simultaneously.

Table 1

22 Emotions During Organisational Change (Kirsch et al., 2010)

Positive/Negative Emotions	Basic Emotional Category	Emotions
Positive Emotions	Passion	excitement, creativity
	Drive	determination, decisiveness, humor, pride
	Curiosity	curiosity
Negative Emotions	Defiance	stubbornness, impatience
	Anger	anger, disapproval, cynicism, blame, struggle
	Fear and distress	helplessness, fear, sadness, avoidance
	Damage	boredom, guilt, humiliation, confusion

The emotions of employees affected by organisational change play a crucial role in the

success of the change. The emotional responses of employees are strongly associated with change

commitment, effectiveness, and the expectations of change (Helpap & Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, 2016). An organisation with a strong commitment to organisational change that does not pay attention to the emotions of its employees will probably fail in its change effort (Huy, 2002). Furthermore, if the change leaders ignore the emotions of employees affected by organisational change, this can result in increased employee turnover, low levels of commitment, cynicism, and other forms of obvious or hidden resistance to the change (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005).

### Change vision

The change models discussed previously focus on the human aspect of change. Other change models focus on the managerial aspect of change. The models describe different steps that should be performed to successfully implement change. The step of formulating a compelling change vision is proposed by various change concepts (Beer et al., 1990; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1951).

The literature provides different definitions of the term vision. Vision can be briefly defined as “a desired future state” (Gill, 2002, p. 312). Kanter et al. (1992) state that vision in the context of change is a powerful picture of the final objective or state of the change and should mark a break from the past. The vision should express where the change is expected to lead. A change vision must not be formulated too specifically; otherwise, it would become an end in itself (Kanter et al., 1992). A change vision represents attractive goals in pursuing change, an important aspect of change (Unsworth et al., 2013).

Due to the definition and the fact that the vision is part of many models, its importance for organisational change is beyond question. According to Baum et al. (2001), a good change vision consists of three components: attributes, content, and communication.

The lack of a change vision will lead to employees’ uncertainty toward the change. This uncertainty can lead to negative emotions, leading to resistance to the change (Beer et al., 1990). Haque et al. (2016) stated that systematic and empirical research is lacking on the relationship between the

change vision and resistance to change by affected employees.

The vision should show those affected the positive future this change will create for them. The employees must perceive the vision as feasible and understand their role and responsibilities during and after the change. Employees viewing this positive picture of the future that the vision paints are more likely to have positive emotions toward the change, which will lead to the responses of change proactivity or at least change acceptance.

### Change Communication

Above, we have discussed the importance of a change vision. Besides the change vision, communication is another important element that is part of different change models. (Beer et al., 1990; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996).

Employees often experience uncertainty when faced with organisational change. This uncertainty is related to the reason for the change, the implementation plan for the change, and the possible consequences for the organisation and its employees. The employees’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours toward the organisation may be negatively influenced by this perceived uncertainty (Cullen et al., 2014). Sufficient communication can help employees cope with the felt ambiguity and uncertainty (Brashers, 2001).

To improve communication Men and Stacks (2014) suggest to implement the transparent internal communication approach. Transparent internal communication includes three categories: *accountable*, *participatory*, and *informational transparency*.

According to Men and Yue (2019), *accountable transparency* emphasises the importance of complete and accurate information when communicating. The second category, *participatory transparency*, accounts for the important role of involving employees in information seeking, distribution, and creation. The last category, *informational transparency*, describes the importance of giving employees accurate, substantial, and relevant information.

By implementing a transparent internal communication practice, employees’ trust in the organisation, their engagement (Rawlins, 2008), their active communication behaviours, and the

organisation's internal reputation can be improved (Men, 2014). Due to the higher level of trust in the organisation, employees are more likely to appreciate the benefits and become more open to the change (Yue et al., 2019).

Hiatt (2006) emphasises that a change vision must be communicated to create awareness of the affected employees. Various channels, such as newsletters, articles, social media, and workshops, can be used to communicate the vision (Stouten et al., 2018).

## Research Questions & Methods

### Hypotheses

Change management is essential for organisations worldwide to remain competitive. Especially during the last two years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have had to quickly adapt to the unpredictable changes in the business world.

The literature review points out that *human resource barriers* are the main reason for the failure of organisational change (Mosadeghrad & Ansarian, 2014; Oakland & Tanner, 2007; Subrahmanya & Rajashekhar, 2009). Furthermore, the most critical *human resource barrier* is the employees' resistance towards change (Oreg et al., 2018). The employees' responses to organisational change, like change resistance, are influenced by emotions (Vuori & Virtaharju, 2012). Therefore, the emotions of affected employees play a crucial role in the success or failure of organisational change. Change leaders often underestimate the influence that they can have on the emotions of their employees (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

Therefore, the focus of this study is to analyse the influence of the leaders' actions on the change-affected employees.

Formulating a compelling change vision is a task proposed by different change models (Beer et al., 1990; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1951). The author expects that the lack of a change vision leads to negative emotions that will turn into change resistance. Therefore, the relationship between the change vision and the employees' emotions will be analysed in this study. To prove this relationship, Hypothesis 1 (H1) was formulated.

*H1: The lack of a change vision leads to negative emotions in the affected employees.*

Second, the influence of the communication during organisational change on employees' emotions will be investigated. Sufficient communication is supposed to reduce employees' uncertainty and anxiety towards the change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 2002). Therefore, the author expects that insufficient communication during organisational change will lead to negative emotions in affected employees. Hypothesis 2 (H2) was developed to verify this relationship.

*H2: Insufficient communication during organisational change leads to negative emotions.*

### Data collection

An appropriate data collection method was required to test the two hypotheses. The data collection method was required to collect data on the change vision, communication, and the participants' emotions. In particular, measuring emotions is challenging. Participants are likely to answer questions regarding their emotions based on social expectations and bias (Wallbott & Scherer, 1989). To reduce this risk, an anonymous questionnaire approach was chosen to assess the hypothesis. The questionnaire was designed to analyse the emotions of employees affected by the organisational change as well as the perception of the change vision and communication.

The questionnaire was sent to 112 employees of a medium-sized automotive supplier. The company was undergoing a major organisational change at the time of the survey. To reduce manufacturing costs, the production departments were supposed to move from the German side to a production facility in the Czech Republic.

### Design of Questionnaire

The hypotheses were tested by constructing a questionnaire to capture employees' perceptions of the change communication, the change vision, and their emotional responses to the change. The questionnaire was formulated in German, since the participants were all German natives.

The developed questionnaire was divided into four sections. The questions of the first section were designed to capture the participants' demographic data. The four demographic questions concerned the participants' gender, age, years with the company, and their affectedness by the change.

The second section was designed to investigate how the participants perceived the change vision. The beginning of this section described the concept of vision so that the participants would have a common understanding. Different statements were formulated. The statements were designed to cover the important components of a compelling change vision. The participants were asked to rate to what extent the statements were true on a 0–4 Likert scale, where 0 represented “untrue” and 4 represented “true.” For the purpose of this survey, the various characteristics described in the literature (Baum et al., 2001; Kantabutra, 2009; Kotter, 1996) were aggregated into three main characteristics. Therefore, a good change vision should describe a *desirable*, *attainable*, and *focused* picture of the future after the change that can be effectively communicated. Two questions regarding the change vision were derived from Coetzee et al. (2002), who developed a “communicating-for-change questionnaire.” The remaining questions were original.

The third section was designed to collect information on how the affected employees perceived the change communication. Again, statements were used that had to be rated on the same 0–4 Likert scale as the statements regarding vision. The statements for this part were derived from Men and Stacks (2014) and translated into German. The statements were chosen to cover the three categories of transparent communication (*participation*, *substantial information*, and *accountability*). Each category was represented by four to five statements.

The last part of the questionnaire was designed to capture the change-related emotions of the affected employees. Rather than measuring the 22 individual emotions, the scope of this part was to measure the seven emotional categories suggested by Kirsch et al. (2010). Each of these categories was measured with two to five statements regarding the emotions in this emotional category. The emotions had to be translated into German, which was challenging because different translations often existed for certain emotions. By measuring the

emotions in the seven categories, the influence of single inaccuracies in the translation could be reduced. Rather than asking about the emotions directly, statements were formulated that described the emotions. The same 0–4 Likert scale was used to answer the statements as for the vision and communication statements. This approach was chosen because it is difficult to rate certain emotions with no context. Two illustrative examples are as follows: It is more difficult to answer the question “how sad are you?” than to answer the statement “It makes me sad that this change is happening”; it is more difficult to answer the question “how much fear do you feel?” than to answer the statement “I am afraid of this change.”

The first version of the questionnaire did consist of 51 questions. A test group of six employees answered this first version via an online survey. The employees for the test group were chosen to represent the later sample group. The employees in the test group could comment on each question. Based on the input of the test group, the questionnaire was revised.

The final version of the questionnaire comprised three questions about *desirability*, two about *attainability*, two about the vision's *focus*, and two general statements regarding the vision. Table 2 shows the nine final statements regarding vision. The scope of the survey pre-test was to reduce the number of statements for each communication category to three. Statements that were too similar or not clearly understandable were deleted. The final questionnaire had three statements in each of the three communication categories (Table 3).

In the last section of the questionnaire, where the emotions are captured, some statements had to be rephrased because the participants were potentially influenced by how the statements were formulated. The emotion “enthusiasm,” for example, was represented by the statement “I can't wait to be a part of this change” and was replaced by “I think it's great that we are taking on this task.” Though the two statements are similar, the first describes the emotion as more distinct or intense than the second statement. The emotion “humiliation” was deleted from the questionnaire because it was viewed as too extreme by the test participants in the context of this change. The final version had two to four statements for each of the seven types of emotions that Kirsch



et al. (2010) suggested. Table 4 shows the statements for the different categories.

Table 2

*Statements From the Questionnaire to Capture the Perception of Change Vision*

Vision Attribute	Statement
General	I have the feeling that our management has a vision of what the companies manufacturing at the various sites should look like in five years. *The actions of managers are in line with the communicated vision.
Desirable	I think it is necessary that new projects are started in the Czech Republic and also produced there. Calculating new projects for the Czech Republic is the best way to compete in the competitive market. I have the feeling that in the end, the majority of those affected will benefit from this change.
Attainable	Starting new projects directly in the Czech Republic is challenging but feasible. I think that it is possible to reduce the manufacturing costs due to the relocation of production to the Czech Republic.
Focused	I have the feeling that the vision of this change has not changed in the last year. I have the feeling that there is a clear reason why this change is necessary.

*Note.* \*Statement derived from Coetzee et al. (2002)

Rating scale: untrue (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

Table 3

*Statements From the Questionnaire to Capture the Perception of Communication*

Communication Attribute	Statement
Participation	I received detailed information from the company about this change. The company asks people like me for my opinion about this change before decisions are made. The company takes the time to understand what is important to me and my colleagues about this change.
Substantial Information	The company gives us information about this change that is relevant to my colleagues and me. I have the feeling that I am fully informed by the company about this change. I trust the information I receive from the company.
Accountability	The company provides information about both the positive and negative aspects of this change. The company is open to criticism from people like me. The company openly admits when it has made mistakes.

*Note.* All statements are derived from Men and Stacks (2014)

Rating scale: untrue (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

Table 4  
*Statements to Capture the Participants' Emotions Toward the Change*

Emotional Category	Statement
Positive Emotions	
Passion	I think it's good that this change is happening.
	I have many ideas about how best to implement this change.
	I think it is good that we are taking on this task.
Drive	I am convinced/decided that this change is right.
	I find it easy to make decisions about this change.
	I am happy about this change.
	I am proud to be a part of this change.
Curiosity	I am curious to see how this change will unfold.
	I would like to learn more about this change.
Negative Emotions	
Defiance	I will not support this action.
	I hope this change will be over soon.
	I will not actively support this change.
Anger	This change makes me angry.
	I do not think much of this change/I am against this change.
	This change is happening because of someone else's failure.
	I feel overwhelmed by the tasks associated with this change.
Fear and Distress	I don't know where to turn with my concerns about this change.
	I am afraid of this change.
	It makes me sad that this change is happening.
	I want to get out of the way of this change.
Damage	I find the tasks involved in this change boring.
	I feel guilty about this change.
	I don't understand why this change is necessary; it upsets/confuses me.

*Note.* All statements are designed to represent single emotions and were formulated by the author.

Rating scale: untrue (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

## Empirical results

The data was collected via an online survey using the platform [www.survey-monkey.com](http://www.survey-monkey.com). The software SPSS® Statistics, Version 26 from IBM®, was used to prepare and analyse the data. It was necessary to prepare the raw data for further analysis. The data had to be categorised according to the vision's attributes, communication attributes, and emotional categories. For this purpose, the variables were transformed into arithmetic means as metric scale variables. In the later analysis, the arithmetic means were used to check for correlations.

For this purpose, two different methods are used in this study. Pearson's bivariate method is used for testing two metric values. The Spearman coefficient is the second bivariate method used to test for correlations between metric scale values and ordinal scale values. The coefficient  $r_s$  is used for the Pearson correlation, and the coefficient  $r_s$  is used for Spearman correlation tests. For both methods, the data must be normally distributed. For sample sizes of  $N > 30$ , both methods can be used even if the data are not normally distributed.

For this study, the coefficient was interpreted as follows: For the Pearson test, a moderate correlation at  $|r| = .30$  and a strong

correlation at  $|r| = .50$  were found. The same correlation limits were used for the Spearman test; a moderate correlation at  $|r_s| = .30$  and a strong correlation at  $|r_s| = .50$  were found. Correlations are significant at the  $p < .01$  level for both methods (two-tailed).

### Demographic Data

A link to the online questionnaire was sent to 112 employees by email. Of these 112 employees, 102 answered the survey. A total of 10 surveys were not entirely completed. This left 92 entirely completed surveys that could be used for further analysis. These 92 surveys reflect a return rate of 82%.

The survey was completely answered by 19 (20.7%) women and 73 (79.3%) men. More than half of the participants were aged between 25 and 44, while only three participants were below 25 years old.

The participants were asked how long they had been working for the company. This was done to be able to check for possible correlations between the years with the company and the perception of the different aspects of this organisational change. Table 5 shows the result. Notably, almost half (47.8%) of the participants had worked for the company for more than 14 years.

Table 5  
*Participants' Years With the Company*

Years With the Company	N
<5 years	16
5–14 years	32
>14 years	44

The question “How much does this change affect you in terms of your job?” was part of the questionnaire to measure the degree to which the employees felt affected by the change. Table 6 depicts the affectedness of the participants. Interestingly, half of the participants (51.1%) perceived that they were significantly affected to directly affected by the change. Only 18.5% of those polled felt slightly affected to not at all affected. Except for three participants, everyone felt that the change had affected them.

Table 6  
*Affectedness of Participants Resulting From the Change*

Affectedness	N	%
not at all affected	3	3.3
slightly affected	14	15.2
moderately affected	28	30.4
significantly affected	39	42.4
directly affected	8	8.7

### Perception of Change Vision

Data regarding the change vision was collected to analyse possible relationships between the change vision and employees' emotions. The participants were asked to rate nine statements in four categories regarding the change vision on a five-point Likert scale from 0 (not true), 2 (neither true nor untrue) to 4 (true). The results, investigating the change vision statements are shown in Table 7. This table contains the means ( $M$ ), and standard deviations ( $SD$ ). The column One-Sample t-test shows the  $p$ -value comparing the means ( $M$ ) of the statements to the hypothetical mean of two. The value two was chosen because it represents the middle value of the five-point Likert scale. The One-Sample t-test is supposed to test if the observed discrepancy between the sample mean of one category and the hypothetical mean is larger than would be expected by coincidence.

The first statement of this category was to determine whether the participants thought the management had a change vision. Therefore, they had to rate the statement, “I have the feeling that our management has a vision of what the company's manufacturing at the various sites should look like in five years.” Only three participants thought that the management had no vision. The result ( $M = 2.08$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ) shows that most of the participants believed the management had at least some type of change vision. The One-Sample t-test shows that the mean of this general vision statement is not statistically significant.

The scope of the three statements in the category *focused*, was to capture whether the participants believed a clear reason existed for the change and how consistent the vision had been for the past years. This category received the highest rating of the three vision categories, with  $M = 2.58$  ( $SD = 0.85$ ). The result indicated the participants

agreed that a good reason existed for the change. This implied that the participants had a sense of urgency, which is suggested by different change models as the first step when change is initiated.

The second vision category, *attainable*, was rated with  $M = 1.98$  ( $SD = 0.96$ ). This is the only category of the three vision attributes that is not statistically significant ( $p = .871$ ). The statements in this category aimed to capture whether the participants thought the implementation and goals of this vision were realistic. The third category concerns the *desirability* of the vision. The desirability of a vision means that the vision

represents a picture of a future worth striving for. This category received the lowest rating ( $M = 1.58$ ;  $SD = 0.90$ ) of the three vision categories.

The results in the category *focused* implied that the participants' believed the change was necessary. Particularly, they believed the goal of the change to reduce production costs was appropriate. However, the lower results in the category *desirable* implied that the participants did not agree on how the goal should be attained. Specifically, the participants were willing to change but not by moving production to the Czech Republic.

Table 7  
Means, Standard Deviations and *p*-values for the Vision Statements

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	One Sample t-test ( <i>p</i> )
General			
I have the feeling that our management has a vision of what companies manufacturing at the various sites should look like in five years.	2.08	1.05	.489
Desirable			
I think it is necessary that new projects are started in the Czech Republic and also produced there.	1.40	1.13	.000
Calculating new projects for the Czech Republic is the best way to compete in the competitive market.	1.84	1.05	.140
I have the feeling that in the end, the majority of those affected will benefit from this change.	1.51	1.08	.000
Total	1.58	0.90	.000
Attainable			
Starting new projects directly in the Czech Republic is challenging but feasible.	1.70	1.17	.017
I think that it is possible to reduce the manufacturing costs due to the relocation of production to the Czech Republic.	2.27	1.12	.022
Total	1.98	0.96	.871
Focused			
I have the feeling that there is a clear reason why this change is necessary.	2.61	0.99	.000
I have the feeling that the vision of this change has not changed in the last year.	2.58	1.09	.000
Total	2.58	0.85	.000

Note. Rating scale: untrue (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

A Pearson correlation test was performed to determine possible relationships between the three vision categories. The results are shown in Table 8. The two categories *desirable* and *attainable* were discovered to be positively related,  $r(90) = .57$ ,  $p <$

.01. This indicated that individuals who felt the vision was desirable were more inclined to believe the vision could be implemented. The third category, *focused*, was not strongly correlated with the other two categories.

Table 8  
*Pearson Coefficient for the three vision attributes*

Vision attributes	Spearman Coefficient $r_s$		
	Desirable	Attainable	Focused
Desirable		.58**	.294**
Attainable	.58**		.10
Focused	.294**	.10	

Note. Pearson coefficient. N = 92.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

### Perception of Communication

Transparent communication was identified as a key element for successfully implementing organisational change. This part of the study describes and interprets the data collected on transparent communication. The participants were asked to rate the statements regarding

communication on the same five-point Likert scale as the vision statements.

The means ( $M$ ) and standard deviations ( $SD$ ) of the change communication statements is depicted in Table 9. The same One-Sample t-test was performed as on the vision statements to test the statistical significance of the mean value of two. The One-Sample t-test shows that only one of the nine change communication statements was not statistically significant. The statement was from the category *substantial information*.

The category *substantial information* refers to the content of the communication. The participants had to rate statements regarding whether they had received complete information that was essential to them and that they could trust. This category received the highest rating of the three communication categories, with a mean of 1.59 ( $SD = 0.80$ ). This result shows that the participants only partly agreed that they received substantial information.

Table 9  
*Means, Standard Deviations and p-values for the Communication Statements*

Statement	$M$	$SD$	One Sample t-test ( $p$ )
Participation			
I received detailed information from the company about this change.	1.48	1.10	.000
The company asks people like me for my opinion about this change before decisions are made.	0.60	0.74	.000
The company takes the time to understand what is important to me and my colleagues about this change.	0.89	0.82	.000
Total	0.99	0.74	.000
Substantial Information			
The company gives us information about this change that is relevant to my colleagues and me.	1.48	0.97	.000
I have the feeling that I am fully informed by the company about this change.	1.10	0.98	.000
I trust the information I receive from the company.	2.20	1.07	.083
Total	1.59	0.80	.000
Accountability			
The company provides information about both the positive and negative aspects of this change.	1.02	0.91	.000
The company is open to criticism from people like me.	1.21	0.87	.000
The company openly admits when it has made mistakes.	0.93	0.80	.000
Total	1.05	0.67	.000

Note. Rating scale: true (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

The second category of communication is *accountability*. This category concerns the participants' perception of how the management handled situations when it made mistakes, how it addressed criticism from employees, and how it handled critical information. The category was rated with a mean of 1.05 ( $SD = 0.67$ ), implying that the participants thought that management accepted only partial liability for its information. The results imply that the participants did not believe the management was completely honest. This potentially leads to a low level of trust in the management, which could lead to greater resistance to this change. The standard deviation of all three statements was below one, indicating that perceptions among participants were similar.

The last category of the communication statements was *participation*. This category captured whether information was only given top-down or whether employees were also asked for their opinions and needs. This category received the lowest score of the three communication categories, with a mean of 0.99 ( $SD = 0.74$ ).

The overall mean of the communication section was 1.21 ( $SD = 0.64$ ). This suggests that the participants were hardly satisfied with the communication about the change from management. The lack of transparent communication was a reason for increased uncertainty among employees, which could lead to resistance to the change. No correlation was found between how people thought the company communicated and how much they were affected by the change or how long they had worked for the company.

### Factors Influencing Vision and Communication

A Spearman correlation analysis was performed to find possible correlations between the participants' years with the company, their affectedness by the change, and the change vision and change communication (Table 10). The Spearman correlation test was chosen because the datasets to be compared had different scales. First, the correlation between the years with the company and the participants' perception of the change vision and change communication was analysed.

Table 10

*Spearman Coefficient for participants' years with the company, their affectedness by the change, and the change vision and change communication.*

	Spearman Coefficient $r_s$			
	Change vision	Change communication	Years with the Company	Affectedness by the change
Change vision		.395**	.07	-.13
Change communication	.395**		.03	.06
Years with the Company	.07	.03		.053
Affectedness by the change	-.13	.06	.053	

Note. Spearman coefficient. N = 92.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Employees who had been with the company for a longer period were expected to have a higher level of trust or distrust than new employees because they had more experience with management behaviour. This increased level of trust or distrust might influence the perception of the change vision and communication. The findings of this study indicated that no relationship existed between the participants' years with the company and the change vision,  $r_s(90) = .07$ , or the change communication,  $r_s(90) = .03$ .

The relationship between the affectedness of the participant by the change and the change vision and communication was subsequently analysed. As for the years with the company, no correlations were found between the participants' affectedness and the vision,  $r_s(90) = -.13$ , or communication,  $r_s(90) = .06$ .

The author expected a positive correlation between perceived communication and change vision. Therefore, the Pearson coefficient was

calculated to test this relationship since both datasets had the same scale. The results showed a moderate relationship between change communication and vision. The correlation between the two variables was .40 ( $p < .01$ ). Participants who perceived the communication more positively were more likely to perceive the change vision as positive. This finding underlines the importance of communicating the change vision.

### Emotions During Organisational Change

The participants were asked to rate statements about their emotions regarding the organisational change. The same five-point Likert scale was used to rate the statements as for the vision and communication statements. Positive emotions were described by the three categories, *passion*, *drive*, and *curiosity* (Table 11). The mean of all the positive emotions was 1.90 ( $SD = 0.69$ ). This implied that the participants had partly positive emotions toward the organisational change. The negative emotions comprised four categories: *defiance*, *anger*, *fear* and *distress*, and *damage* (Table 12). The negative emotions ( $M = 1.27$ ;  $SD = 0.78$ ) were partially experienced by the participants.

To test the results of the statements regarding emotions for statistical significance, again a One-Sample t-test was used. The means were compared to the hypothetical mean of two. The results show that all of the emotional categories are statistically significant. Out of the 23 statements, four were not statistically significant. Two are from the positive category of passion, one is from the positive category of drive, and one is from the negative category of defiance.

The higher mean of the positive emotions is mainly driven by the emotional category of *curiosity* ( $M = 2.96$ ;  $SD = 0.92$ ). This emotional category received the highest rating of all emotional categories. The category *passion* received the second-highest rating, with a mean of 1.76 ( $SD = 0.79$ ). The mean of this category implied that the participants felt partly passionate about this change. The last category of the positive emotions was *drive*. This category had the lowest score ( $M = 1.47$ ;  $SD = 0.77$ ) of the positive emotion categories. This result implies that the participants, on average, were partially motivated to work on tasks regarding this organisational change.

Table 11

*Means, Standard Deviations and p-values of the Statements for the Positive Categories*

Statement	M	SD	One Sample t-test (p)
<b>Passion</b>			
I think it's good that this change is happening.	1.24	1.00	.000
I have many ideas about how best to implement this change.	1.87	1.13	.272
I think it is good that we are taking on this task.	2.16	1.12	.167
Total	1.76	0.79	.004
<b>Drive</b>			
I am convinced/decided that this change is right.	1.61	1.01	.000
I find it easy to make decisions about this change.	1.84	0.95	.104
I am happy about this change.	1.01	0.88	.000
I am proud to be a part of this change.	1.42	1.11	.000
Total	1.47	0.77	.000
<b>Curiosity</b>			
I am curious to see how this change will unfold.	2.86	1.09	.000
I would like to learn more about this change.	3.05	1.09	.000
Total	2.96	0.92	.000

*Note.* Rating scale: untrue (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

Table 12  
Means, Standard Deviations and *p*-values of the Statements for the Negative Categories

Statement	M	SD	One Sample t-test ( <i>p</i> )
Defiance			
I will not support the actions regarding this change.	0.81	1.11	.000
I hope this change will be over soon.	1.90	1.33	.484
I will not actively support this change.	1.05	1.18	.000
Total	1.26	0.94	.000
Anger			
This change makes me angry.	1.41	1.34	.000
I do not think much of this change/I am against this change.	1.61	1.35	.007
This change is happening because of someone else's failure.	1.23	1.26	.000
I feel overwhelmed by the tasks associated with this change.	0.62	0.79	.000
Total	1.22	0.88	.000
Fear and Distress			
I don't know where to turn with my concerns about this change.	1.36	1.32	.000
I am afraid of this change.	1.33	1.21	.000
It makes me sad that this change is happening.	2.43	1.28	.002
I want to get out of the way of this change.	1.22	1.19	.000
Total	1.59	1.00	.000
Damage			
I find the tasks involved in this change boring.	0.71	0.91	.000
I feel guilty about this change.	0.65	1.01	.000
I don't understand why this change is necessary; it upsets/confuses me.	1.36	1.10	.000
Total	0.92	0.70	.000

Note. Rating scale: untrue (0), moderately untrue (1), neither true nor untrue (2), moderately true (3), true (4)

### Factors Influencing Emotions of Employees During Change

The relationship between the employees' years with the company and their emotions was evaluated. The author assumed employees who had been with a company longer were likely to have stronger emotions toward organisational change than other employees. It is assumed that, over time, the employees became more connected to the company. The Spearman coefficient was calculated to determine relationships between the years spent with the company and the emotional category to test this assumption. The Spearman correlation analysis showed that no significant correlations existed between the employee's years with the company and the positive emotions (Table 13). Conversely, correlations can be identified in the case of negative emotions. A moderate negative correlation was found between the years with the company and the

emotional category defiance with a Spearman coefficient of  $r_s(90) = -.38$  and  $p < .01$ . The second emotional category showing a moderate correlation was anger. The correlation's significance was  $r_s(90) = -.32$  with a corresponding  $p$ -value below .01. Similarly, a moderate correlation existed between the years with the company and negative emotions as a whole. Here, the Spearman coefficient was  $r_s(90) = -.31$  ( $p < .01$ ). These negative correlations implied that employees who had been with the company longer were less likely to have negative emotions when confronted with organisational change. One reason for this correlation could be that senior employees had a higher level of trust in the management and therefore experienced less uncertainty regarding the outcome of such a change.

The next factor expected to influence the emotions was the employees' perceived level of



affectedness by the change. Therefore, the participants were asked how much this organisational change affected them in terms of their jobs. The author assumed employees more directly affected by this change had stronger emotions than those less affected by this change. The Spearman coefficient was calculated for each emotional category to analyse the possible correlations. The correlation analysis showed no significant correlation between the affectedness of the participants and the emotional categories. All correlation coefficients  $|r|$  were below .30 and therefore were not related. This result was surprising because it was expected that employees directly affected by the change would have stronger emotions than the others.

Table 13

*Spearman Coefficient for participants' years with the company, their affectedness by the change, and the emotional categories*

	Spearman Coefficient $r_s$	
	Years with the Company	Affectedness by the change
Positive emotional categories		
Passion	.22*	-.00
Drive	.23*	.03
Curiosity	.03	-.07
Total	.13	-.12
Negative emotional categories		
Defiance	-.38**	.10
Anger	-.32**	.22*
Fear and Distress	-.25*	.19
Damage	-.04	.09
Total	-.27**	.21

Note. Spearman coefficient. N = 92.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

A Pearson correlation analysis was performed on the vision's attributes and the emotional categories to test the first hypothesis (H1: The lack of a change vision leads to negative emotions in the affected employees). Table 14 depicts the detailed analysis. First, the correlation with positive emotions was analysed. The results showed a strong relationship between the participants' perception of the change vision and positive emotions,  $r(90) = .58, p < .01$ . The vision attribute *desirable* had a strong correlation,  $r(90) =$

.50,  $p < .01$ , with positive emotions. The vision attributes *attainable* and *focused* had a moderate correlation with positive emotions. For *attainable*, the Pearson correlation was .47, and for *focused*, the Pearson correlation was .37. Both correlations had a p-value below .01. This implied that employees perceiving a change vision as *desirable*, *attainable*, and *focused* were likely to have positive emotions toward the change. Employees perceiving a change vision as *desirable* were looking forward to the future. They experienced less uncertainty and therefore more positive emotions toward the change. When a change vision was perceived as *attainable*, the employees were not afraid of the tasks related to the change.

In the next step, the relationship between the change vision and negative emotions was analysed. First, the influence of the different vision attributes on the negative emotions was evaluated. The vision attribute *desirable* had the highest correlation with the negative emotions,  $r(90) = -.49, p < .01$ . Since the Pearson correlation  $|r|$  was below .50, this correlation was moderate. The vision attributes *attainable*,  $r(90) = -.37, p < .01$ , and *focused*,  $r(90) = -.39, p < .01$ , had similar correlations with the negative emotions. These results indicated that employees who did not consider the vision worth pursuing were likely to have negative emotions toward the change.

All three vision attributes were at least moderately correlated with the four negative emotion categories. This suggested that the lack of a change vision led to negative emotions. Therefore, Hypothesis H1 was confirmed. This finding highlights the importance of a change vision to reduce employees' resistance to change and therefore increase the chances of successful implementation of the change.

The importance of a change vision has been proven by confirming the first hypothesis. Without sufficient communication, even the best vision is worthless. Therefore, the second hypothesis states that change-affected employees who perceive the communication as insufficient will have negative emotions. (H2: Insufficient communication during organisational change leads to negative emotions). The Pearson method was used to test the correlations between the communication attributes and emotional categories. Table 15 shows the detailed analysis of the correlations.

Table 14

*Pearson Correlation Analysis for Change Vision and Employees' Emotions*

		Pearson Coefficient <i>r</i>			
		Desirable	Attainable	Focused	Total
Positive	Passion	.43**	.39**	.37**	.50**
	Drive	.50**	.47**	.24*	.52**
	Curiosity	.30**	.32**	.37**	.45**
	Total	.50**	.47**	.37**	.58**
Negative	Defiance	-.51**	-.29**	-.37**	-.49**
	Anger	-.45**	-.34**	-.34**	-.50**
	Fear and distress	-.41**	-.36**	-.32**	-.47**
	Damage	-.32**	-.26*	-.33**	-.39**
	Total	-.49**	-.37**	-.39**	-.53**

Note. Pearson coefficient. N = 92.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 15

*Pearson Correlation Analysis for the Transparent Communication Attributes and the Emotional Categories*

		Pearson Coefficient <i>r</i>			
		Participation	Substantial Information	Accountability	Transparent Communication in Total
Positive	Passion	.24*	.35**	.27**	.33**
	Drive	.28**	.45**	.35**	.41**
	Curiosity	.05	.28**	.10	.17
	Total	.24*	.44**	.31**	.38**
Negative	Defiance	-.19	-.30**	-.23*	-.28**
	Anger	-.12	-.31**	-.24*	-.26*
	Fear and distress	-.18	-.33**	-.28**	-.30**
	Damage	-.01	-.21*	-.13	-.13
	Total	-.15	-.34**	-.26*	-.29**

Note. Pearson coefficient. N = 92.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

The results show that two of the three communication attributes were moderately positively correlated with positive emotions. A moderate correlation was found between *substantial information*,  $r(90) = .44$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the positive emotions. With a correlation of  $r(90) = .31$ ,  $p < .01$ , the attribute *accountability* had a lower but still moderate correlation with the positive emotions. The third communication attribute *participation* had no clear correlation,  $r(90) = .24$ ,  $p < .05$ , with the positive emotions. These suggested employees were more likely to have positive emotions toward organisational change when they perceived the received information as relevant and complete.

After analyzing the relationship between communication and positive emotions, the influence on negative emotions is described. The Pearson coefficients for the communication attributes and the negative emotions were similar to those for the positive emotions but with lower correlations. Only the attribute *substantial information* showed a moderate negative correlation,  $r(90) = -.34$ ,  $p < .01$ , with the negative emotions. The attribute *accountability*, which was moderately correlated with the positive emotions, showed no significant correlation,  $r(90) = -.26$ ,  $p < .05$ , with the negative emotions. The third attribute, *participation*, showed no considerable correlation with the negative emotions,  $r(90) = -.15$ ,  $p > .05$ . The communication

attribute of *participation* had the lowest correlation with the negative emotions of all attributes. However, *substantial information* had the strongest correlation, similarly to the positive emotions.

The results showed that transparent communication was correlated with the positive emotions of employees during change. With two exceptions, the transparent communication attribute of *participation* was not correlated with positive emotions,  $r(90) = .24, p > .05$ , and total transparent communication was not correlated with the positive emotion category curiosity,  $r(90) = .17, p > .05$ .

Contrary to expectations, no clear correlation was found between perceived communication and negative emotions. However, two exceptions were found, the communication attribute *substantial information* was moderately negatively correlated,  $r(90) = -.34, p < .01$ , with the negative emotions as a whole, and the total transparent communication was moderately negatively correlated,  $r(90) = -.30, p < .01$ , with the negative emotion category *fear and distress*.

These results imply that no clear correlation existed between insufficient communication during change and the negative emotions of affected employees, although some exceptions were found, Hypothesis H2 could not be confirmed and was rejected. However, it would be incorrect to state that communication is irrelevant to change. The relationship with positive emotions shows that it is an important task. To conclude, it can be stated that a well-formulated change vision is more important than how it is communicated.

## Summary

The purpose of this article was to analyse factors that influence negative emotions of employees affected by change, that lead to greateder resistance towards the change. A scientific study-based approach was used to analyse the relationship between a change vision and communication during organisational change on the emotions of affected employees. The results of this study should help change leaders to reduce employee resistance towards organisational change.

A strong correlation was found between the change vision and the emotions of change-affected employees. Against the expectations and previous findings in the literature, no strong correlation could be found between the communication from management

and the negative emotions of the employees. Furthermore the Pearson coefficient was calculated to capture possible relationships between the affectedness of the employees and their emotions. Against all expectations no correlation was found. This result was surprising because it was expected that employees directly affected by the change would have stronger emotions than the others.

The results of this thesis support the notion that a compelling change vision has a strong positive influence on the emotions of affected employees. When formulating a change vision, special attention must be paid to ensuring that the vision is worth striving for. Transparent communication was found to have a moderate correlation with the positive emotions of employees. No correlation was found between communication and negative emotions. Only the communication attribute *substantial information* has a moderate influence on both positive and negative emotions. Contrary to expectations, no correlation was found between the affectedness of employees by the change and their emotions.

The key finding of this thesis is the importance of a change vision for the success of organisational change. It is particularly important that the vision is perceived as desirable by a broad range of stakeholders. The second finding is that communication has a lower influence on the emotions of affected employees than the change vision. However, when communicating about the change, attention must be paid to ensuring the distributed information is complete and relevant to the employees. The missing correlation between the affectedness and the emotions of employees implies that sufficient change management is important to all employees, regardless of their affectedness.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of the literature review, the main reasons for the failure of organisational change were analysed. Human resource barriers were found to be the main reason for change approaches to fail. The following literature review focused on the human resource barrier of employee resistance to change, while the other two aspects of staff shortages and poor human resource management were not further considered. The literature analysed led to the conclusion that employee resistance is mainly driven by the negative emotions of affected employees.

The scope of the second part of the literature review was to find measures that managers can take to positively influence employees' emotions. For this purpose, different change models were compared to find commonalities. The change vision and change communication were found to be part of most change models reviewed. Other measures named in multiple change models were not considered further. The chosen approach carries the risk that there are other measures that have an even greater impact on employees' emotions when they are faced with organisational change.

Besides the literature review, also the data collection method has some limitations. Since all participants worked for the same company and faced the same organisational change, other factors besides the perception of the vision and communication could influence the emotions experienced. Examples of such factors are the participants' experience of how the company handled such changes in the past or the outcomes of similar organisational changes implemented by other companies in the area.

The participants had two weeks to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, the collected data represents a snapshot in time. The questionnaire would need to be completed before and after a compelling vision was formulated and communicated to reduce the influence of other factors on the change vision and communication. However, this was impossible in this work, as it would have exceeded the time frame.

The most critical part of the questionnaire was capturing the participants' emotions toward the change. Initially, the 22 emotions suggested by Kirsch et al. (2010) had to be translated. This was especially difficult because different German translations existed for one English term. Statements were then formulated that described the emotions in the context of the change. The challenge here was to describe the emotions neutrally to avoid influencing the participants. The analysis of correlations was performed on the seven emotional categories instead of the 22 single emotions to reduce the impact of errors in individual statements on the overall result. Conducting the survey anonymously ensured honest responses, especially to the statements regarding emotions.

Possible future research areas include validating the translation of the 22 emotions suggested by Kirsch et al. (2010) into German. The validity of the statements to capture these emotions must be tested. More research should be conducted to obtain an overall picture of all the

factors influencing employees' emotions during change. Furthermore, the findings regarding the relationship between the change vision, the affectedness, and the employees' emotions must be confirmed by a more comprehensive study. Such a study should include a range of different organisations and should be conducted before and after a change vision is formulated.

### About the author

Daniel Wladar studied mechanical engineering at the University of Applied Sciences in Kempten and graduated as a Diplom-Ingenieur (FH). He then worked for three years for ept.inc in the United States of America, where he was responsible for the maintenance department and organised the move to a new production facility. After his foreign assignment he took over the position as head of production for ept GmbH, a mid-sized automotive supplier located in Bavaria. In 2020, he entered a part-time MBA program at the Professional School of Business and Technology in Kempten, where he graduated in 2022. His work experience led him to further his involvement in the field of change management, particularly gaining deeper insights about the reactions of by change affected people.

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