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**DIT035 - Assignment 2, Synthesize a set of theories**

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**Team**

Hannah Shiels  
Ramzi Abu Zahra  
Noah Márquez Vara  
Jan Manel Morales

*gusshieha@student.gu.se*  
*gusabuzra@student.gu.se*  
*gusmarqno@student.gu.se*  
*gusjanmmo@student.gu.se*

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# 1. Synthesize a set of theories

## **The role of adaptability on affecting the status quo**

By decreasing the amount of influence the management has on its employees, more space is given to an organization's employees to adapt to changes as they come up in a way that closely resembles their pre-existing values. In the example of Alpha, individuals were awarded instead of the whole team, which reflected poorly on the climate of the organization (Orlikowski & Hofman, 1997). Whereas in Zeta more collaboration was achieved by introducing an intermediary role, and collaboration shifted from a "reactive mode to a more proactive one" (Orlikowski & Hofman, 1997, p. 16). The weaker the vision of the leader the easier it will be for employees to adapt to the new changes (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 261). The process of integrating a new change could therefore be improved by giving the employees the chance to be part of the decision making process so that the organization adapts itself to the employee's vision and values instead of the opposite (Klein & Sorra, 1996).

Making people believe that change is needed and that it will improve their status quo is an essential part of the change process. Employees will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they believe that useful change is possible (Kotter, P. J., 2007). Without credible communication and real examples and practices, the hearts and minds of the people are never captured. A clear example of this is the Alpha case, in which the company's technologists thought that Notes would leverage the expertise of their firm while the users saw Notes as a mere substitute for existing technologies and to speed up communication flow. We see then that neither a path was created nor a proper explanation given to the users regarding the approach of the Notes implementation because such changes "involve shifting to radically different assumptions and modes of operation, with the shift reflecting a replacement of the status quo" (Gash & Orlikowski, 1991, p. 190).

## **Enabling Employees to lead organizations structural changes**

The structure of an organization is a key factor in successful change efforts. Without proper support, and moreover people actively involved in making a transformation, transformation will be impossible (Kotter, 2007). In order to have a shift in organizational structure, the need for cultivating a culture that is susceptible to change is of high importance. For example, MidCo which had a relatively traditional organizational structure had a culture that was focused "on organizational learning and employee empowerment" which made it compatible with the improvisational model (Orlikowski & Hofman, 1997, p. 18). Another example of helping employees

learn skills was also seen when the managers of Primavera concluded that they had to give “positive reinforcement to keep people in a learning mode” (Schatz & Abdelshafi, 2005, p38). The importance of letting employees in the center stage of decision making and implementing the new decision proved to have a more sustainable effect on the organizational structure which explains one manager's disbelief : "We've had ITSS for two years. I'm surprised that the enthusiasm hasn't gone away ..." (Orlikowski & Hofman, 1997, p. 19). By assuring the employees that the culture is supportive of implementing what the employees agreed on, they become more supportive of the shift in organizational structure and become committed for its sustainability.

We are able to see an example of this in Primavera, when a development team realized they needed to change to agile development. The team had the support of executives, who enabled them to instill a Scrum coach for the team, and the team were, despite concerns, committed to this change (Schatz & Abdelshafi, 2005). Through feedback from the other teams, they were able to recognise the need for change, have the determination to want to change, and with the support from higher management, carry out a successful change. In smaller organizations, such as startups, it can be difficult to determine when a change is needed or effective, without much support or resources available. On the other hand, it can be easier to implement change as people may have larger influence, unless they use a more deliberate strategy (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

Creating a change across many different departments, multiple locations comes with its own challenges. As Karlstrom & Runeson(2005, p. 49) point out “the greater the distance, the harder it was to coordinate the work to be completed and communicate how to do it”, regarding Vodafone’s attempt at combining agile methods with stage gate project management.

## 2. Peer Review

Overall your use of references are great, but we believe that you don't have to use page references (author, year, p.XX) as often as you are. Based on the APA official guidelines ([apastyle.apa.org](http://apastyle.apa.org)) page citation/references are to be used only when quoting or referring to an image or table.

In the first section you use a lot of different sources which help in giving your text more substance and credibility. We do find it a bit difficult however to follow each reference relation to the exact theme/aspect that you're discussing in that part.

Perhaps a bit more explanation would be helpful when using names or parts of a quoted paper. For instance you name "Alpha" and "Zeta" from (Orlikowski & Hofman, 1997) and giving a short explanation would help in understanding the specifics better.

We found that you have chosen well selected topics with which to apply the concept and themes. They make it very clear as to what aspects you're striving to synthesize for the reader.

In the section "In the Enabling Employees to lead organizations structural changes" where you mention MidCo and how it is structured in a traditional way in regards to the organization as a whole. As far as our interpretation goes, rigidity and some level of bureaucracy is quite often mentioned in conjunction with traditional company structures, which is the opposite of what Orlikowski and Hofman regards as "suitable" for the use of the improvisational model. To be fair, you also mention that they focus on organizational learning and employee empowerment, where the last aspect definitely is something that could be considered compatible with the use of the improvisational model. All in all, this could be the cause for some confusion and could perhaps be clarified a bit.

Overall we feel that the report was well written and followed the case well.

### 3. References

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