

ORGANIZATIONAL SENSEMAKING: EMOTIONAL-SEMANTIC CONSTRUCTS IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT (A case study of a retail bank in India)

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Annotation

Purpose of the study. To examine the influence of emotional-semantic constructs on organizational sensemaking to address employee resistance to organizational change using a case study of the sales department of a retail bank in India.

Research Methodology. The research is based on a case study of changing the subculture of the sales department of the bank using the concept of meaning generation and the co-evolutionary model of organizational sensemaking to reduce employee resistance to organizational change. The ADKAR change management model was used as the project framework.

Findings of the study. The result of the study is an improved approach to managing people's resistance to organizational change. The use of emotional-semantic constructs in combination with the co-evolutionary model of organizational sensemaking and the ADKAR change management framework had a multiplicative positive effect, expressed in the acceptance and openness of employees to organizational change, the transformation of the organizational subculture supporting the changes, and the positive reaction of the local community affected by the changes.

Originality and contribution of the author. Traditionally, change management has been addressed through approaches that describe frameworks for managing change and employee resistance. The academic world has debated the influence of emotional-semantic and the importance of using the concept of sensemaking in organizational change management. The research described in this paper aims to investigate the management of organizational sensemaking through emotional-semantic concepts in order to reduce employee resistance to organizational change based on the ADKAR model.

Key words: sensemaking, emotional-semantic construct, artefact of corporate culture, organizational subculture, organizational change, organizational transformation.

JEL: D24, M11, M12, M13, M14

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Introduction

Organizational transformation can often be met with resistance from employee (Hiatt, 2006) and can lead to the disintegration of subcultures (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Change management models that involve informing, motivating, and training employees are commonly used to encourage employees to adopt organizational change. However, it is important to consider the presence of different types of subcultures, such as supportive, orthogonal, and countercultures (Martin & Siehl, 1983), and their dynamics, which can be integral, fragmented, or differential (Martin, 2002).

Previous studies have shown that when introducing organizational change, some occupational subcultures may resist it (Aldhobaib, 2022; Martin, 2002; Raelin, 1985). Furthermore, research has shown that the successful implementation of organizational change is strongly linked to managers' ability to comprehend its necessity and effectively communicate the generated meanings to the organization's members for their acceptance (Cristofaro, 2022; Kumar & Singhal, 2012; Luscher & Lewis, 2008; Weick et al., 2005). At the same time, sensemaking is crucial for forming or changing organizational culture, which influences people's attitudes towards organizational change (Fligstein & McAdam, 2022; Schein, 2002; Dana et al., 2016; Hofstede, 1998).

According to Schein's most common formulation of organizational culture, group culture is defined as a system of collective basic beliefs that a group acquires in order to solve problems of adaptation to the external environment and internal integration. These beliefs have proven to be effective and are therefore regarded as a value, which is transmitted to new group members as the correct system of perceiving, thinking and feeling about these problems (Schein, 2002). Thus, organizational culture is underpinned by collective basic beliefs and assumptions about relationships with the world around us, methods and rules for determining truth, and the nature of human action and relationships.

However, members of the organisation may intentionally or unintentionally conceal organizational knowledge, which can hinder awareness of these basic assumptions and beliefs. According to Serenko and Bontis (2016), an individual's behaviour can become counterproductive, leading to the formation of a corresponding subculture of orthogonal or countercultural type. Additionally, Raelin (1985) suggests that organizational professional counterculture can arise due to factors such as professional training, activities, and socialisation.

The research that forms the basis of this paper is based on a change management project through the formation of underlying beliefs and assumptions in the subculture of the sales department of a retail Indian bank supporting a new business process of selling a credit product. The project framework at its core utilises the ADKAR change management model. The co-evolutionary model (Cristofaro, 2022) has been used as the main approach to generate organizational sensemaking. Using a combination of the two models mentioned above and specially designed emotional-semantic constructs allowed to change the subculture of the sales department, gain acceptance of organizational change from the employees of the department, improve sales performance and obtain additional social effects.

Research Methodology

Many organizations fail to successfully implement organizational change due to employee resistance. Resistance to change can be caused by low motivation, lack of ability, and lack of awareness about the objectives of the change (Ali et al., 2021).

The case study utilized the ADKAR change management model, which has demonstrated positive results (Hiatt, 2006), alongside the Sensemaking concept. The ADKAR model provided the framework for the change management project, while Carl Weick's Sensemaking concept formed the semantic component, shaping the basic beliefs and assumptions at each stage of the model implementation.

ADKAR Change Management Model

The ADKAR change management model is a widely used tool for managing employee resistance. ADKAR is an acronym for the main components of the model:

- Awareness - Awareness of the need for change;
- Desire - Desire to support and participate in the change;
- Knowledge - Knowledge of how to make change;
- Ability - Ability to implement the necessary skills and behaviours;
- Reinforcement - Reinforcing the sustainability of the change.

Each block of the model represents a stage in the process of reducing employee resistance, which is influenced by specific factors. Hiatt, J. presents this as a table in the book "ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government, and Our Community" (Hiatt, 2006) (Table 1).

Table 1: Factors influencing the elements of the ADKAR model

Model element	Factors
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person's view of the current state; • how a person perceives problems; • reliability of the sender of information messages; • spreading misinformation or rumors; • the reasons for the change are contestable.
Desire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature of the change (what the change is and how it will affect each person); • the organizational or environmental context of the change (his or her perception of the organization or environment that is being changed); • each person's personal situation; • what motivates a person (those internal motivators that are unique to a person).
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the individual's current knowledge base; • the opportunity for this person to gain additional knowledge; • resources available for education and training; • access or availability of necessary knowledge.
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychological blocks; • physical abilities; • intellectual abilities; • time available to develop the necessary skills; availability of resources to support the development of new capabilities.

Model element	Factors
Reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which reinforcement is meaningful and specific to the person affected by the change; • linking reinforcement to actual demonstrated progress or achievement; • absence of negative consequences; • an accountability system that creates an ongoing mechanism to reinforce change.

Source: (Hiatt, 2006)

Consistent implementation of the stages of the change management model, along with the necessary impact on relevant factors, forms the basic perceptions and attitudes required for change in the personnel. These are then consolidated in the corporate culture (subculture). It is important to note that both the organizational change itself and the activities implemented within the ADKAR model, which lead to small and large events in the organization, require reflection. Thus, organizational sensemaking is triggered by both planned and unplanned events (Weick et al., 2005).

Key aspects of the Sensemaking concept

The concept of Sensemaking was introduced in organizational theory by Carl Edward Weick. Sensemaking is the process of interpreting and making sense of an event or situation in the organizational process. It is a key aspect of organizational theory as it helps individuals to understand and take certain actions in situations of uncertainty or ambiguity. In this regard, it can be said that organizational change and the process of managing employee resistance are sources of meaning generation.

K. Weick characterised Sensemaking as a process that answers the question “What is happening?”. It is a cyclical process that has seven main characteristics, collected in the acronym SIR CORE:

Social context - social context of what is happening.

Identity - identifying oneself in relation to the world around and defining one’s place in that world.

Retrospect - retrospectivity, related to the individual’s experience and ability to relate what is happening to what has already happened.

Salient Cues - a noticeable signal that is a meaningful trigger for the start of an event or a significant change in an event.

Ongoing projects - deployment gives Sensemaking the characteristic of processuality.

Plausibility - characterisation is an indicator of credibility, common sense and logic.

Enactment – execution is a crucial moment in the generation of meanings as it relates to the reactive behaviour of the individual.

In his article, Cristofaro, M. presents a co-evolutionary model for generating and consolidating meaning in organizational culture. The process should be performed by an individual with power in the organisation to ensure that the generated meanings align with the institutional logic (Cristofaro, 2022; Fligstein & Macadam, 2022) (Fig.1).

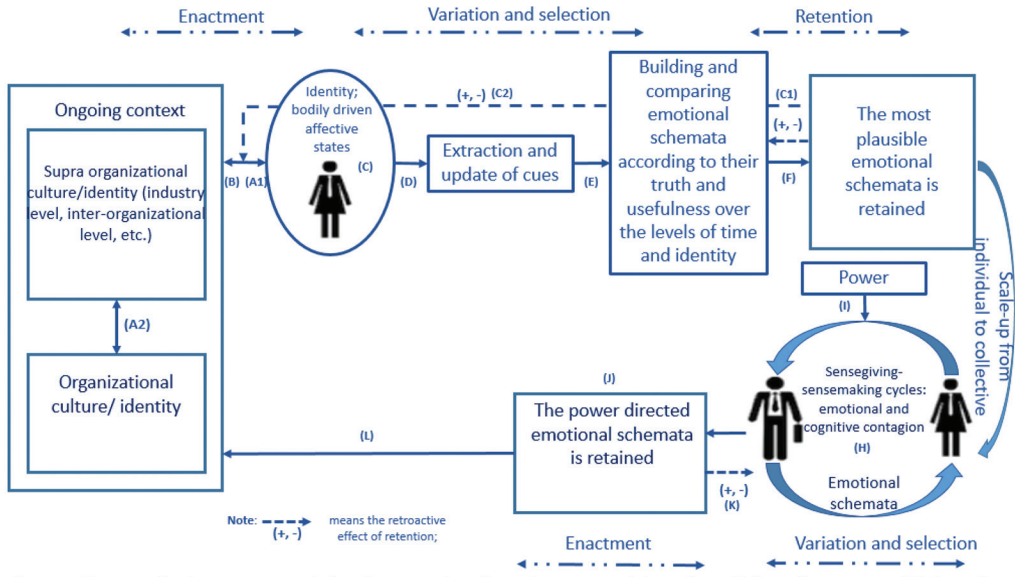


Fig. 1 Co-evolutionary model of organizational sensemaking by Cristofaro, M. (Cristofaro, 2022)

According to the proposed model, the process of organizational sensemaking consists of two sub-processes. The first sub-process, the manager’s individual sensemaking, goes through the stages of Enactment - Variation and selection - Retention. During this process, the manager, assuming a certain context of his/her functioning, identifies a signal that interprets and forms an emotional construct in the form of a narrative, text or other form (Ivanova-Gongne & Törnroos, 2017). The second sub-process is related to the transmission of the generated meaning in the form of an emotional construct from the individual, i.e. the manager, to the group. Two stages are recorded in the collective fixation of meaning - Variation and selection as well as Enactment. During the second sub-process, the manager transfers his/her generated meaning to the group for a cycle of group sensemaking, during which group members conduct plausibility checks of the transferred meaning, clarification of the correctness of the meaning with others in the group, and acceptance of the meaning (Weick et al., 2005). In the event that the manager’s power and authority is questioned in the group, the manager loses his or her de facto authority, which is transferred to the individual whose meaning has been accepted by the collective (Cristofaro, 2022). If the meaning communicated is accepted and appropriated by the collective, then the manager’s authority is consolidated and the meaning is transformed into cultural artefacts or basic statements or assumptions.

Research Design

Context of the study

This research project was conducted at one of the largest retail banks in India, which is part of an international financial group with branches all over the world. The bank in India (hereinafter referred to as Indian Bank) has its headquarters in Gurgaon, located

42 kilometres from New Delhi, and branches in 44 major cities in the country. The study is implemented in the sales department of the bank with a total strength of about 8000 employees including rank and file employees, supervisors, district, city and regional managers across India.

One of the Bank's main credit products (hereinafter - CP) is targeted interest-free lending to the population for the purchase of a mobile phone (smartphone) on favourable terms. A study of the sales process showed that ordinary employees of the sales department assigned to certain mobile communication salons are not motivated and do not strive to effectively sell CP to potential customers. Moreover, many employees had a workplace in the salon that did not allow direct contact with visitors. All this had a negative impact on the conversion of salon visitors into the bank's clients.

The audit solution was very simple and consisted of bringing the ordinary ordinary employees (OE) "out of the shadows" to the entrance of the salon. Every employee of the bank has branded clothing, which makes them recognisable and eye-catching. Thus, if the MS is positioned at the entrance inside the salon, every customer who enters realises that this outlet can offer an interest-free smartphone loan. This minor measure increased sales of the credit product by about 15 per cent.

However, an audit conducted after the process change revealed that many MSs were not complying with the new requirements and continued to be located in an inconspicuous area of the sales area of the mobile phone showroom. An investigation of this resistance to process change revealed several reasons:

- low motivation;
- employee embarrassment when interacting with the salon's customers;
- social constraints and barriers associated with the traditional structure of Indian society (caste system).

Based on the audit results, the management of the bank and the sales department decided to launch a change management project, for the implementation of which external consultants were engaged. The main objective of the project was to change the subculture of the sales department, achieve full implementation of the changed process by the bank's employees and ensure an increase in sales.

The three-person consultant team had three internal business coaches from the bank at its disposal. The management of the sales department actively supported all initiatives. The project was to reach out to 8000 people in 44 cities across India using the 6 most common languages used in the country.

In the context of organizational change, the task of the research project was to form personal sensemaking by group leaders, transfer emotional constructs to group sensemaking and its consolidation in the subculture of the bank's sales department in India, leading to a positive attitude of the department's organizational groups to the proposal to change the sales process (organizational change) and, consequently, to openness to change.

As the national culture of India was unfamiliar to the invited consultants, immersion into it, studying the peculiarities of the structure of Indian society, relationships between

representatives of different strata of Indian society, as well as familiarity with the national epic was required first of all.

In particular, given the caste system of Indian society and the closed nature of social groups protecting their cultural traditions (Sankaran et al., 2017), it was necessary to identify a common cultural basis that would allow addressing new meanings to representatives of any caste.

Model combination

In this study, a combination of the ADKAR models and the co-evolutionary model of organizational sensemaking was used. ADKAR, is a model of change management in its human part, which is a framework for preparing personnel to accept change. While defining the main stages of persuasion in the form of informing, motivating, training, and determining the ability to implement change and anchor in organizational culture, the model itself and the methodology of its use do not explain the mechanism of the emergence of basic assumptions necessary for the correct interpretation and comprehension of organizational change events. Such a mechanism, although insufficiently detailed, is described in the co-evolutionary model of organizational sensemaking. Thus, by using sensemaking approaches in the implementation of the ADKAR model, it is possible to influence the specific causes of resistance that can be identified through observation or interviews.

At each stage of the ADKAR framework, a question was posed to make sense of the necessary change and to generate the necessary beliefs in the employee. In this way a combination of models was provided (Table 2).

Table 2: Group sensemaking issues affecting change acceptance factors based on the ADKAR model

ADKAR model framework stage	Factors influencing resistance to change	A question for the department's group sensemaking session
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person's view of the current state; • how a person perceives problems; • reliability of the sender of information messages; • spreading misinformation or rumors; • the reasons for the change are contestable. 	What is happening and why? How do you formulate the information that needs to be communicated? Who should make the necessary messages?
Desire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature of the change (what the change is and how it will affect each person); • the organizational or environmental context of the change (his or her perception of the organization or environment that is being changed); • each person's personal situation; • what motivates a person (those internal motivators that are unique to a person). 	What will motivate the OE to perform the sales process in the required manner despite the identified constraints?

ADKAR model framework stage	Factors influencing resistance to change	A question for the department's group sensemaking session
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the individual's current knowledge base; • the opportunity for this person to gain additional knowledge; • resources available for education and training; • access or availability of necessary knowledge. 	How to give importance to new ways of working in the eyes of OE?
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychological blocks; • physical abilities; • intellectual abilities; • time available to develop the necessary skills; availability of resources to support the development of new capabilities. 	How can we help OE show their ability to do the work in a new way?
Reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which reinforcement is meaningful and specific to the person affected by the change; • linking reinforcement to actual demonstrated progress or achievement; • absence of negative consequences; • an accountability system that creates an ongoing mechanism to reinforce change. 	What artefacts need to be provided to OEs in order to consolidate the ability to do the work in a new way and to establish basic perceptions and beliefs in the relevant organizational subculture?

The questions posed for group sensemaking imply the use of the co-evolutionary model at each stage of the ADKAR model framework. In other words, the leader of a particular group should answer the relevant question for himself, form an emotional construct, and then submit it to group sensemaking.

At the same time, special attention is paid to the emotional component of the construct, which should arouse hope and confidence in personal and group positive changes, as well as inspire acceptance of changes. The positive emotions of the group, are an important factor in the spread of meaning and its consolidation in the group. This is because group sensemaking occurs as a result of in-group discussion and sharing of meaning by group members. Emotion is then a factor that influences the sensemaking process (Steigenberger, 2015). Moreover, it has been found that cognitive and emotional appraisals of change can differ, in which case emotional appraisals carry more weight (Loewenstein et al., 2001).

Thus, it is crucial to generate the necessary positive emotions that can influence the choice of meaning concept to be developed by the individual and the group as a whole (Steigenberger, 2015). Therefore, at each stage of change implementation, it is necessary to use the construct of desirable emotions and meaning that will most effectively help the group to generate the necessary group meaning. In addition, a “strong” construct will help the leader strengthen his or her leadership position in the group.

Emotional-Semantic Constructs Used at the Relevant Stages of Adkar Model Implementation

Awareness of the need for change

The most important factor in raising awareness of the need for change is the system of key messages that each employee should receive. To accomplish this, it is necessary to create a communication plan that includes messages from key individuals. It is important to distinguish between business messages intended for the entire organization and personal messages directed towards individual employees (Ball et al., 2020).

According to research conducted by Prosci, messages directed to the entire organisation are most trusted by employee when delivered by the first manager of the organisation.

Conversely, messages of a personal nature, directed to a specific group of people, are better received by employee from their immediate supervisor (Fig.2).

The communication plan should include a business message from the CEO of the bank, as well as key messages from managers at all levels, directed to the appropriate range of subordinates down to the level of the rank and file employee.

A business message announces the start of a change management project and sets the tone for future personalised messages. This can be realised by announcing the name of the project and disclosing the meaning of that name.

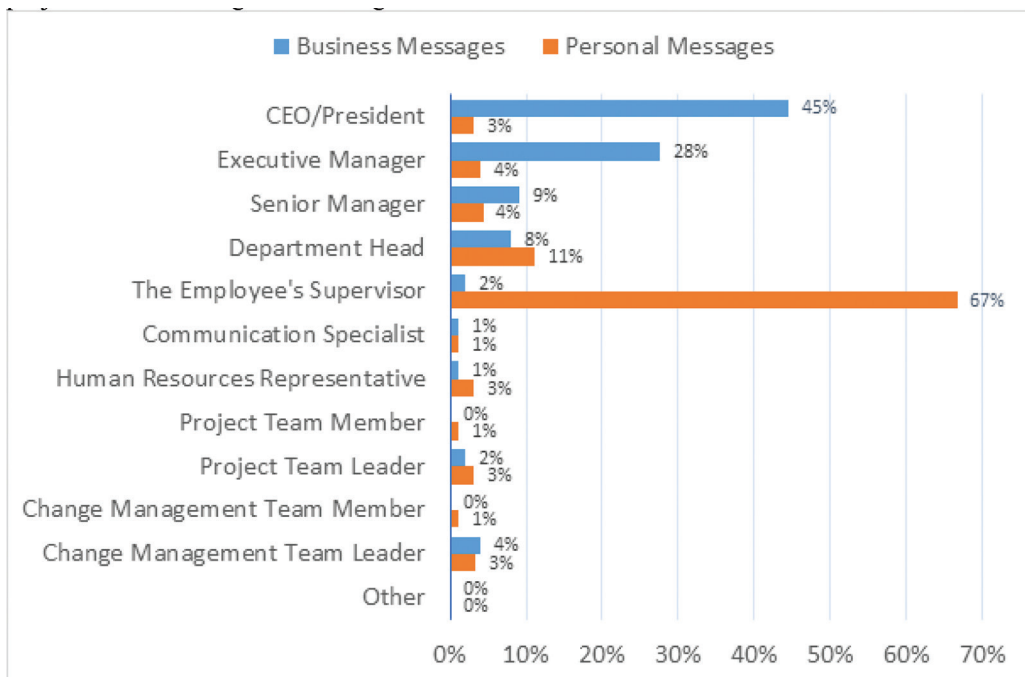


Fig.2. Preferred message sender. Source (Ball et al., 2020)

Primary messages should trigger cycles of organizational sensemaking within each sales team. Therefore, it is important that each supervisor delivers the message confidently, emphasizing the need for change. Additionally, the emotional tone should be uplifting and hopeful, conveying the positive impact that the change will have on both the organisation

and individual employees. This semantic concept should be continued and confirmed in the next stages of the ADKAR framework implementation.

In the study described, the necessary messages for employee at each level were developed, adapted by supervisors, and delivered to each group in the appropriate language and dialect.

Desire to support and participate in change

At this stage of the ADKAR model framework, the main focus of managers' attention was directed to motivating the participants of the change process to make a personal choice to support these changes based on their own desire. The emotional-semantic construct used by managers at this stage should help the employee not only to accept the necessary changes, but also to give confidence that when organizational changes are implemented, the achievement of personal goals becomes more realistic.

For this purpose, one of the first activities combined with the first stage devoted to initial communications was a short online training on defining personal goals and calculating their achievement.

Thus, through the formation of an emotion such as hope (Steigenberger, 2015), the vast majority of rank and file employees began to realise that despite personal psychological or outdated social barriers, the rank and file employee, through following the new sales process, can achieve a personal goal, which forms a desire to support the change (Hiatt, 2006).

In addition to the training provided on how to form a personal goal and how to achieve it, two motivational videos were produced by the change management team.

Knowledge of how to make changes

Knowledge about the new process and how to implement it should be made available to every employee, which requires some effort for distributed teams across the country. Therefore, a programme of online workshops was developed. The purpose of the workshops was to support each stage of ADKAR, to train on the new sales process and to create the necessary organizational sensemaking to support organizational change. The training programme included the following developed and digitised workshops:

- The Dream and its Achievement;
- Conducting daily morning team meetings;
- How to set up for a new working day;
- How to greet visitors to showrooms;
- How to establish friendly relations with partners (salespeople of a showrooms);
- How to establish an emotional connection with new clients of the bank.

A separate workshop for District Managers (DMs) focused on conducting daily morning meetings with the team. The plan for the daily morning meeting included:

- Greeting the team;
- Discussion of the previous day's results;

- Discussing plans for the new day;
- Training the team on how to use the elements of the new sales process;
- Setting up for the new day.

The daily morning team meetings should have an uplifting, emotional feel to them. The main purpose of the daily training is to consolidate knowledge of the new sales process and confidence, to share experiences with more efficient colleagues and to give determination for the new working day.

Ability to embed the necessary skills and behaviours

At this stage of the ADKAR model framework, the change management team should help managers to develop the employee's ability to implement the new process using the new tools. At the same time, the ways of implementing the process should be consistent with the emerging organizational meaning concept supported by emotional-semantic constructs.

For example, the knowledge gained at the seminar "How to greet visitors to showrooms" should be transformed into skills. However, for this to happen, the employee must have the ability to do the job in a new way. Factors influencing this ability can be psychological blocks, physical and intellectual abilities and the time available to develop and maintain the new skills. In this case, the most important factor affecting the ability to develop new skills was the psychological blocks associated with the traditional patterns of Indian society. This is a caste system in which it is often psychologically difficult for members of different castes to overcome the communication barrier.

In order to overcome this barrier, it is not enough just to have an employee's desire based on the possibility of realising a personal goal. A target emotional construct is needed to help interpret the event, i.e. to justify the elimination of the communication barrier and generate the appropriate personal and group meaning, which is formulated in the name of the project - "Change for Happiness!" Three targeted emotional-semantic constructs were developed to realise the process and establish emotional connections with other participants in the process.

1 construct - "Free service". The OE was asked to greet visitors to the showroom and offer a free phone cleaning service. The employee should not have offered credit products during this service. The service should be completely free of charge. Thus, the OE not only finds himself near the entrance to the showroom, which is one of the main changes in the sales process, but also begins to form an emotional connection with the potential client of the bank. Such an emotional-semantic construct corresponds to the name of the change management project "Change for Happiness!"

2 construct - "Good friends". This construct is an auxiliary construct to eliminate communication barriers with the employees of the showroom. The technique of providing positive emotions was also used here. In order to do this, the OE had to give free sweets to the employees of the salon every morning when they came to the showroom. For this purpose, the bank purchased a large batch of caramel in branded wrappers. It should be noted that, according to our observations, the positive effect was so obvious that many OEs

started offering treats to the showroom visitors as well. The resulting positive emotional bond between the OEs and the showroom employee not only improved relations between them, but also, as a consequence, improved business relationships.

3 construct - "Everyone around us is happy". In order to consolidate the positive emotions that OE provides to the showroom visitor, those who used the bank's service - interest-free loan - were offered to make the first call to a close relative, preferably their mother, and say the phrase "I love you". This condition was agreed with the bank's legal service and introduced as an optional condition of the agreement on granting an interest-free loan. This emotional construct allowed the emerging emotional connection to be taken beyond the mobile phone showroom and began to form a network of emotional connections with the wider community.

The main goal of the three constructs described above was to eliminate psychological blocks, in particular communication barriers that SWs had to overcome in their communication with salon employee and visitors. Based on the main meaning of "Change for Happiness", OEs began to feel themselves as people who give happiness to others.

Reinforcement of sustainability of change

The transition from one phase of the change management project to the next was smooth and based on the emotional-semantic constructs of the previous phase. At the same time, the emotional-semantic constructs that became cultural artefacts of the sales department were developed during the design phase of the project.

1 artefact - Mantra. The term Mantra, which is relevant to the culture of the people of India, means a speech construct based on the main meaning of "Change for Happiness" broadcasted in the project with the key role of an ordinary bank employee. The mantra is intended for self-motivation and emotional mood for the working day.

This construct provides the user with emotions such as pride, confidence, hope and excitement, which promotes personalised choice of support and openness to change. This artefact has more of an impact on audials, so a supportive artefact for kinaesthetic perception in the form of dance was developed.

2 artefact - The Dance. Chhau is a traditional Indian dance of the warriors of Bengal. The prima ballerina of the ballet company was engaged to select individual movements of the dance and justify their use. A video was recorded in which a national dance expert spoke about the history of the dance and the significance of the movements used. Thus, the Mantra beginning with the words "I am a warrior..." was supported by elementary dance movements, which is an emotional construct that has an impact on kinaesthetes.

3 and 4 artefacts are two videos. The length of each video was about three minutes to allow for full viewing. Each video included the emotional constructs described above, as well as the artefacts - a group performance of a mantra and a dance.

The first video focused on motivation to embrace change based on the formation of personal goals and the possibility of achieving them. The visuals and music of the video evoke emotions associated with confidence and determination to change one's life with the organisation.

The second clip described a narrative of a life change narrative of an ordinary bank employee working according to a changed process, including the use of emotional-semantic constructs, and achieving their own goals. The video concludes with a visual sequence including an image of a goal achieved, as well as a collective performance of a mantra and dance. The video evokes emotions related to the viewer's confidence in the effectiveness of the changed process, as well as the belief that OE is a warrior of goodness, giving happiness to others "...And I make happy everyone!"

The Results of the Change Management Project and Their Discussion

The change management project in the sales department lasted approximately nine months, encompassing preliminary research, project design, implementation, and change audit. The bank's management expressed high appreciation for the change management team's performance. Following project implementation, sales of the loan product increased by over 10%.

However, in addition to the financial result, an unexpected effect was also observed. The project is named 'Change for Happiness!'. To eliminate communication barriers, emotional-semantic constructs were developed and introduced into daily practice. These constructs aim to establish a positive emotional connection with visitors of smartphone showroom, salespeople, and close relatives of the bank's customers. Bank employees elicited positive feedback from the community in which they live and work through their simple actions. Showrooms owners have shown their support for the change management project by displaying posters with the project name in their salons. Additionally, many have invited the bank's employees and their colleagues to tea parties.

In addition, the emotional uplift observed during the project's implementation prompted groups of employees to put forward social initiatives, such as providing drinking water to street workers, purchasing consumables for local hospitals with their own funds, donating blood, and cleaning parks, streets, and embankments. It is worth noting that at the same time, the Clean India project was launched in India.

Thus, it can be confidently stated that the change management project had a wider impact than anticipated. Specifically, it had a positive effect on the bank's image in the local community and on overall corporate resilience.

The implemented project to reduce employee resistance to organizational change achieved its goals. The ADKAR model acted as a framework for managing the resistance of employees involved in organizational change. Since the sensemaking process is the way in which managers give meaning and importance to organizational change (Kumar & Singhal, 2012), following the logic of the co-evolutionary model of organizational sensemaking (Cristofaro, 2022), each stage of the project used emotional-semantic constructs developed by the consultants and directed through supervisors to group sensemaking. One of the terms used in Cristofaro's, M. co-evolutionary model is "emotional schema". Moreover, some scholars talk about the importance of emotions in the organizational sensemaking process (Steigenberger, 2015). However, the term "emotional schema", in our opinion, does not fully reflect the essence of the result of the individual sensemaking process in Cristofaro's,

M. model. This is due to the fact that in addition to the emotional load, the formed construct includes a component that is a carrier of a certain meaning. It can be a visual image (poster, video, animated action, etc.), narrative (video, literary form, oral narration), musical form, which, in addition to certain emotions, are carriers of interpretation of events. In such a case, the term “emotional-semantic construct” reflects more the result of personal sensemaking, which after individual acceptance and appropriation is transferred by the supervisor to the group sensemaking process. This construct should fulfil the SIR CORE criteria and include an interpretation of the event and attitudes towards it, an action aimed at accepting the interpretation, as well as elements that utilise certain channels of human perception of information and evoke the necessary emotions. The emotional component, which has a significant impact on positive perceptions of organizational change (Loewenstein et al., 2001; Steigenberger, 2015), is important to address employee resistance that may arise from anxiety and defensive reactions (Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

At the same time, the project recorded isolated failures in the use of emotional-semantic constructs. For example, some visitors of the showroom could refuse to play out the proposed scenario of the construct “Free service”. In this case, no emotional connection was established. However, if the visitor became a client of the bank, the construct 3 “Happy all around” came into effect, which established such an emotional connection.

Conclusion

This paper presents an study on the results of a change management project implemented in the sales department of a retail bank in India. Given the permanently turbulent external environment of today, companies around the world are entering a period where organizational transformation is becoming an ongoing process. In such an environment, the survival of organisations is directly dependent on the ability to adapt to change. In this vein, the scientific community is discussing the problems of managing the resistance of personnel and organizational subcultures to necessary changes.

Based on the conducted research on the problems of change management, the importance of the meaning generation process for managing employee resistance, as well as the influence of emotions on the process of sensemaking, the project design was developed taking into account the communication plan, training programme, a set of emotional-semantic constructs and artifacts of the target organizational subculture of the sales department of the bank.

During the analysis of the proposed solutions, the author proposed and justified the use of the term “emotional-semantic construct” as the result of the supervisor’s personal sensemaking process, which is transferred to the group sensemaking process on the need for organizational change. In doing so, the proposed tool reinforces the supervisor’s position with the developed construct of emotion and meaning.

The results of the project exceeded expectations and had an additional social effect. This suggests that this combination of models and approaches is effective and can be used in other companies in the future. At the same time, it should be taken into account that each new project will be influenced by new variables related to national culture, the essence of

organizational change, the size of the company, the type of its activity and the degree of involvement of top management in the process. It should also be taken into account that the development of emotional-semantic constructs and cultural artefacts of organizational culture is a creative process that requires a deep understanding of the principles of organizational behaviour.

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