Self-leadership coaching for employees during organisational change

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The role of self-leadership coaching to enhance bi-directional communication for Singaporean employees undergoing organisational change

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Abstract

Organisational change is a constant issue that is becoming increasingly more challenging, especially for employees. Past research identifies the importance of having an effective relationship with the supervisor so that employees can engage in bi-directional communication to clarify issues related to the changes. This research topic, ‘The role of self-leadership coaching to enhance bi-directional communication for older Singaporean employees undergoing organisational change’, is seeking to test the effectiveness of a strategy, namely coaching to improve the development of employee self-leadership so that they can better cope with organisational change. As a result, the research examines the effectiveness of using coaching to build individual attributes so as to promote self-leadership for older Asian Singaporean employees so that they can overcome personal and cultural factors negatively impacting bi-directional communication with supervisors within an Asian context.

This research which was conducted in Singapore, uses qualitative interviews along with coaching to solicit information from 10 Asian Singaporean employees aged 45 to 65 from seven organisations about their ability to communicate about the change process with their supervisor before and after coaching. The findings indicate that individual attributes, particularly psychological capital, was a major factor negatively impacting communication with supervisors during the change process. After the coaching sessions, all participants perceived higher levels of internal strength (probably because of their increased individual attributes), and were able to engage in greater bi-directional communication during the change process.

Hence, the evidence supports a role for coaching older Asian employees undergoing organisational change who struggle with bi-directional communication with their supervisors. The advantage for organisations is that, when employees have higher levels of individual attributes, they have greater confidence to discuss change issues with their supervisor and as a consequence their resistance to change is reduced.

Keywords: Asian Singaporean employees, bi-directional communication, self-leadership, coaching.
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### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Cs</td>
<td>Cash, Car, Credit card, Condominium, and Country Club membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioural Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Costly or risky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS</td>
<td>Chinese value survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGM</td>
<td>Deputy general manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Emotional regulation (model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESM</td>
<td>Enterprise-wide Strategic Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFM</td>
<td>Five-factor model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBE</td>
<td>Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>General manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROW</td>
<td>Goal setting. Reality. Options. Will – a coaching model (see also T.T.GROW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R1</td>
<td>1st Interviewee-cum-coachee – Round 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R2</td>
<td>1st Interviewee-cum-coachee – Round 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX</td>
<td>Leader-Member Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multinational company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>Organisational Citizenship Behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMET</td>
<td>Professionals, managers, executives, and technicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POB</td>
<td>Positive Organisational Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Positive Organisational Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Permanent Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PsyCap</td>
<td>Psychological Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REACH</td>
<td>Recall the hurt, Empathize with the transgressor, offer an Altruistic attitude of forgiveness, Commit to forgive, and Hold on to forgiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Singapore citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFEP</td>
<td>Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I also certify that to the best of my knowledge all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.

John T.B. Ong

June 2016
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1 INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE

1.1 Introduction

In today’s highly competitive and dynamic business environment, organisations are faced with the challenge of gaining competitive advantage through revolutionary business strategies if they are to stay ‘globally appropriate’ in the global marketplace (Glover, Jones & Friedman, 2002, p.15). The challenge is not just confined to the external business environment, but applies to the organisation’s internal environment as well. Management responds to these external challenges by driving change in their organisations in order to survive and thrive. Employees respond to organisational change according to their culture, individual traits, and socio-emotional lenses, as well as through the relationships they have developed with their superiors. Walsh and Charalambides (1990) simply describe that employees interpret external events through their individual mental models.

The next section sets out the objectives of the current research.

1.2 Research objectives

The key objective of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of a self-leadership coaching program to enhance bi-directional communication between Singaporean employees and their supervisors. The aim of the coaching is to help employees accept change during times of challenging organisational change. The target age group comprises individuals between the ages of 45 and 65. This is because it is these older Singaporeans who are at most risk of being adversely impacted during change (Tambyah et al., 2009), and they therefore need to be capable of establishing a healthy line of communication with their superiors. In the process of this study, the willingness and degree of openness of Asian Singaporean employees to discuss their feelings and reactions during organisational change will be closely observed. The researcher will focus specifically on Asian Singaporeans. Singapore comprises 74.3 percent Chinese, 13.3 percent Malay, and 9.1 percent Indian ethnicity (Singapore Department of Statistics, Population Trends, 2015). While there remains a small minority of Singaporeans, termed as ‘Others’ who are
Eurasians (being of mixed European and Asian descent), this group is excluded from the study as they would appear to have tendencies which are reflective of European culture. The reason for focusing specifically on Asian Singaporeans is that individuals from an Asian culture are less likely to communicate candidly with their superiors (Feng, 2004), which in turn could affect their acceptance of change. Hence, this thesis examines the way in which Asian Singaporeans communicate with their supervisors and the resulting relationships that develop, as well as their views on change. Most theories about organisational change seem to originate from Western cultures. There is a pressing need for the discovery of a theory that is appropriate for the Asian Singaporean culture since organisational change is here to stay. The way the organisation’s management projects itself using Shore et al.’s (2009) ‘Leader-Member Exchange’ (LMX) theory will be discussed in detail because it is posited as having an influence on the response of the organisation’s members and their subordinates.

This research will provide new evidence-based knowledge about the role of coaching programs for the management of change, with an emphasis on managing change, on how Asian Singaporean employees respond to organisational change. Much of the change literature is somewhat Western-centric and therefore is not necessarily suitable for understanding the Asian Singaporean employee. The next issue is that Asian-authored literature on managing change has largely been derived from Western models which may not be suitable for understanding the responses of Asians, including Asian Singaporeans. Organisational change is not only a constant issue, but also is becoming increasingly arduous, despite the fact that since 1946 there have been an extensive number of research projects by experts on organisational change. It has been reported that 50 to 70 percent of organisational change efforts have totally or partially failed to achieve their intended objectives, and the main factor appears to be employee resistance to change (Balogun & Hailey, 2008; IBM, 2008; Kotter, 1995). The contribution of this thesis is that it examines the extent to which the Asian factor, or ‘Asian-ness’, affects older employees’ responses to change. Additionally, a second contribution is that the thesis shows the positive contribution of coaching on employees’ attributes for establishing communication for successful organisational change.
1.3 The generational factors

Today’s organisations will frequently comprise four generations of employees working alongside each other (Bennett et al., 2012). These four distinct generations are referred to in the literature as Traditionalists or Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (Zemke et al., 2000; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). The Traditionalists are those born between 1900 and 1946; the Baby Boomers between 1946 and 1966; Generation X between 1967 and 1979, and finally Generation Y between 1980 and 1995. The behaviours and values of each generation have been moulded by their respective ‘worlds’, or in this context, their Singapore experiences. Haeberle et al. (2009, p. 64) articulate that ‘Generational differences impact communication styles, technology needs, professional development preferences, workplace expectations, compensation and benefits needs, desired leadership styles, and the effectiveness of reward and recognition systems.’ It is therefore important to consider generational differences when investigating coaching programs that focus on change management efforts.

Today’s organisations are experiencing a prevalent change in the composition and diversity of their workforces, with such organisational diversity posing challenges to management styles (Dobbs, 1996; Kandola & Fullerton, 1994; Liff, 1997). In the context of generational diversity in the workplace, McGuire et al. (2007) opine that this challenge to management styles has increased the emphasis on the capability of managing the expectations of the multi-generations within organisations. During the periods of stress and chaos which typically characterise transformational change, intergenerational conflict is likely to be another factor making open, bi-directional communication between employees and management a challenge.

However, the research will consider only those aspects of the employee, such as work values and manner of communication, that are likely to affect the context of change. The next section begins by examining those aspects of the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers that may have an impact on organisational change.

1.3.1 Traditionalists and Baby Boomers

Traditionalists and Baby Boomers have several features or traits in common, especially for the Asian population, and therefore will be treated as a single group. Typically, the members of this combined group value obedience to authority. They respect the authority
and power of their superiors (Salahuddin, 2010) and believe that work is a principal driving force in their lives (Twenge et al., 2010). Typically, they are loyal to their employers, respect seniority and experience in their organisation. Both generations prefer personal, face-to-face communication with their superiors (Gibson, 2009). Gursoy et al. (2008) believe that Baby Boomers have difficulty learning new tasks or multitasking, and are resistant to change. In terms of leadership, Baby Boomers respond well to a participative leadership style (Crampton & Hodge, 2007), and therefore there is a possibility that they are willing to work harder at accepting change if the leadership styles are appropriate. Ironically, Salahuddin (2010) observes that when Baby Boomers attain the position of leadership, they may not espouse a participative leadership approach with other generations, although the evidence for this is unclear.

Although Salahuddin and Twenge et al. were not conducting their researches specifically for the Singapore workforce, the values such as ‘obedience to authority’ and ‘respect the authority and power of their superiors’ are synonymous with the Asian culture particularly with the Asian Traditionalist and Singaporean Baby Boomers. Therefore, it would be relevant to the Singapore context.

1.3.2 Generation X

Timmerman (2007) argues that Generation X (Gen X) workers are very comfortable with change as they grew up in a world that was faster paced with the advent of enhanced information technology, and in a workplace that is more ethnically diverse compared to the world in which their parents grew up. It is quite natural that this generation does not equate productive work with long hours, and tends to seek ways to work smarter, unlike their parents. They prefer to receive regular feedback and to have open communication with their superiors. They also seek empowerment (Adams, 2000). Likewise Tan and Ling (2012, pp. 3-4) advice on communicating with the Singaporean Gen Xs employees is ‘to be direct and straightforward and avoid corporate speak’ and that they, the Gen Xs ‘expect a lot more feedback - and also more immediately’. Gen Xs believe in working to fulfil their desires for promotion and recognition of competence, rather than to secure their tenure in the organisation (Lieber, 2010;). Yet they tend to allocate a higher priority to a
work-life balance compared with Baby Boomers (Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Twenge et al., 2010).

Gen X has been earlier defined as those born between 1967 and 1979 – people aged 37-49 years. However, in the current research, the interest is focused particularly on Gen Xs born between 1967 and 1970 – people aged 45 years and older(as at 2014). This group will be referred to here as the ‘older Gen X’.

1.3.3 Generation Y

Generation Y (Gen Y) seeks freedom and flexibility in the workplace. Gen Ys generally expect clearer directions and supervisory engagement compared with past generations (Twenge et al., 2010). They have grown up in an internet connected world and expect instant communication. They are also more confident and expressive (Gursoy et al., 2008; Iyer & Reisenwitz, 2009) and therefore they are less likely to grapple with the issue of establishing open communications with their managers. Like the earlier generations, this experience has fashioned their understanding of the world and their expectations. Just as they seek instant gratification, they have a desire for regular and immediate feedback (Martin, 2005;). These factors also contribute to the rationale for leaving Gen Y out of this research.

The characteristics of this generation reveal a situation that is at variance with that of the other groups. This is the group that has a greater proclivity than any of the other groups to enter into open discussion with management about issues. In view of the above discussion, it is submitted that the Baby Boomers and older Gen Xs (further from the Gen Ys and closer to the Baby Boomer age group), should be the primary emphasis of this research effort. In order to see how sizable this targeted category of Asian Singaporean employees ages 45 to 65, the Singapore workforce characteristics provide the needed statistical gauge.

1.3.4 Singapore workforce characteristics

Digne Consult Asia Pacific Pte Ltd (DCA), a business research company with offices in Europe and Asia, has been implementing new business strategies for the day-to-day
functioning and behaviour of people in the workforce since 1995. DCA conducted a study of these four generations in the Singapore context from Oct 2009 to January 2010. This was initiated by the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) as part of ongoing efforts to make it easier for employers in Singapore to adopt fair and responsible employment practices. The TAFEP board is comprised of officials from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), with members ranging from senior executives from various industries, to union leaders, and government officials (www.tafep.sg). DCA (2010) found that Gen X and Gen Y made up 60 percent of Singapore’s workforce. This means that 40 percent of Singapore’s workforce is approximately over 45 years of age. This researcher intends to focus on this older age group, which is made up of the Gen X to Baby Boomer generations. The target group will be aged 45 to 65 years old. This group, being relatively steeped in Asian traditions, would, accordingly, be more cautious in the way it communicates. This group of 45 to 65 year olds still holds on to some of the Asian traditions, such as respect for the elders or for managers, and tends towards introversion, being careful not to ask questions that might be perceived as too direct. It is characteristic of Singapore’s national culture to be accepting of unequal power, to emphasise group interests, and to have a concern for status and order (Cecil & Entrekin, 2001; Hofstede, 1984, 2001). Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) identified Asian-Confucian and Anglo cultures as two of ten cultural clusters (House et al., 2004). GLOBE (2008) considers Singapore to be in the Asian-Confucian cultural cluster, which fundamentally practises in-group collectivism and institutional collectivism.

In contrast, Hofstede (2001) found that, since 1980, the main change in the position for countries such as Singapore, is that, in terms of the cultural dimensions, there has been a movement away from the collectivist towards a more individualistic approach. This could influence the strategies adopted in the workplace, which are modelled on Western institutions, more than the social context. Fu et al. (2004, pp. 16-17) observe that Singaporeans exercise a high degree of indirect-assertive strategies to influence their colleagues or superiors to whom they report:

Unexpectedly, collectivism was also linked to the assertive strategy. The components of the assertive strategy are inimical to effective team cohesion (e.g. use of demands, threats,
persistent reminders, or appeals to higher authorities) and hence should be perceived as less effective by managers socialised by collective family traditions.

From these views, the researcher perceives that although the Asian Singaporean employees are, by virtue of their education, deemed to be Western-educated, and are generally proficient in the English language, the majority seem not to have completely forgotten their traditional beliefs and inclinations, which is to be indirect when communicating their thoughts or opinions.

The underlying premise of this research project is that the cultural differences described above, based on expert literature written from a Western perspective for the benefit of Western employees, have to be addressed. In the last two decades or more, these cultural and social differences have militated against the effectiveness of management doctrines in the area of communication and change management.

1.4 Asian culture

As this research is focused on a group that includes both Asian Baby Boomer and the older Gen X Singaporean employees, it is important to examine how Asian these multi-generational Singaporean employees are as that will affect the way they communicate with their managers. First, there is a need to define who the Singaporeans are, and which ethnic groups are found in Singapore.

**Chinese:** The salient characteristic of the Chinese culture of respecting elders is based on the Confucian values of hierarchy and obedience to superiors (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Knutson, Hwang, & Deng, 2000). The family system values (principles) exist not just in Asian society, but in organisations, particularly organisations with Asian managers. Chen and Chung (1994) expound that superiors have responsibilities such as care and concerns for subordinates, while employees are expected to reciprocate with their loyalty and commitment.

**Malay:** In the 15th century, Admiral Cheng Ho, a Muslim, was instrumental in propagating Islamised Confucian ideas through the works of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, the most influential of Chinese Muslim theologians (Tan, 2009). For example, the Confucian Five Constant Regulations (wuchang), humaneness (ren), righteousness (yi), propriety and
ritual (li), wisdom (zhì), and faithfulness (xin), were likened to the Five Islamic Pillars (wugong), faith, prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage which form the basis of Muslim social behaviour. The Southeast Asian Malays, who have adopted the Muslim faith since the 15th century, can easily identify themselves with the Confucian concept of Ethics and Cardinal Human Relationships. Humaneness (ren), specifically relates to Islamic ethics and behaviours such as loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and respect for one another, respect for elders. The Analects (Slingerland 2003, p.241) elaborates on propriety and ritual (li), as ‘a set of traditional religious and moral practices …’ which agrees well with four of Islam’s pillars, although the fifth pillar on faith drastically differs from the Confucian concept of heaven (Tien).

Furthermore, Malays practise the culture of gotong-royong, which means communal living and working together. Malays are taught not to be too forthright, so as not to be regarded as rude or disrespectful, and they are aware of the importance of ‘saving face’ (jaga maruah). It is likely that Malays do not resort to openness in the interest of maintaining social harmony. This is particularly true of the older generations such as the Baby Boomers and the Veterans.

Indian: According to Gorrill (2007), the concept of ‘Karma’ is prevalent among the Indians, particularly the Hindus, as they believe that everything happens for a reason. Indians have a strong sense of community and are generally more inclined towards collectivism, avoidance of conflict, and a more indirect approach to communication. The Singaporean Indians, too, view collective identity, cohesiveness, and social interdependence as dominant values (Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). These authors confirm the conclusion of Hofstede (1980) that Indian society is ‘collectivist’. It is not surprising that, like the Chinese and Malays, Indians also practise being harmonious.

While Indian Singaporeans may strive for individual achievement, they are also willing to strike a balance by sharing their expertise with others. Indian culture respects the wisdom and experience of the older generation visibly through their greetings and the manner in which they communicate with their elders. Therefore, Indian culture has many similarities to that of the Singaporean Chinese and Malays.

‘Others’: This term has been used in the Singapore Department of Statistics, Population Trends (2015) for Singapore’s fourth ethnic group who are of mixed nationalities. As this
group of mixed heritage represents only 3.2 percent of Singapore’s population, it will not be included for study in this thesis. This group of Singaporeans is primarily Eurasians as indicated above, would not be included in this research. According to Ho (2013), the British first referred to the people of mixed European and Asian parentage as ‘Eurasian’ around 1820, though this term was only officially used only in 1849. The issue of ethnicity needs to be examined in terms of how it affects communication practices only.

An important element in Asian culture is the philosophy of yin-yang. This Eastern concept accepts that it is natural for opposites to co-exist (Fletcher & Fang, 2006). According to Fang (2005-2006, p.10), in cross-cultural management, yin-yang philosophy preaches that ‘human beings, organisations, and cultures intrinsically embrace sheer existence and healthy development’. It is human nature to perceive organisational change as a challenge or even as a potential danger. However, the Chinese word for ‘crisis’ consists of two characters: the first character is ‘danger’ and the second is ‘opportunity’. This is another classic example of the yin-yang complement, where there is the white dot of opportunity within the black area of danger (see Figure 1.1). The curved line signifies the absence of absolute separation between the opposites, but complements them instead. If this symbol is to be adopted as a mindset to meet any type of impending change, it can encourage a very empowering attitude.

![Figure 1.1: The yin-yang symbol](image)

Yin-yang suggests that each half contains the seed of the other half, without which neither can survive (Chen, 2001, 2002). How yin-yang works is highly contextual, especially in relation to how individuals perceive their relationships and their work environment. The Western concepts are typically binary. Unfortunately, owing to the major challenge of identifying Asian-appropriate models to help solve Eastern issues, Western models are resorted to. Foa and Foa’s (1976) theory of Relational Employment Relationship is considered to better understand Asian Singaporean employees. In Figure 1.2 below, the Relational factor is represented by the area above the diagonal line. This is an exchange
dominated by ‘particularistic’ and ‘symbolic’ resources, for instance love, which could mean good collegial relationships, caring management, and job security for most Singaporean employees. When the model is applied to Singaporeans, the argument is that Singaporean employees would most likely interpret these resources to mean that a psychological contract exists whereby their employers would care about them enough at least to offer appropriate advice about their job status should it be impacted during the change process. In other words, Asian Singaporean employees have an expectation of their employers or their supervisors to practise ‘relational employment relationship’ as summarised in Figure 1.2. This expectation is greater when organisational change could adversely impact employees, whom today’s management refers to as ‘our most important asset of the organisation’ (Guest, 2001).

In contrast, the transactional employment relationship, which is represented by the area below the diagonal line, is an exchange characterised by concrete and universal resources such as money, goods, and services. In other words, it is purely business. This area pertains to the fulfilment of contractual obligations as well as to psychological contracts between the parties concerned. Goffee and Jones (1996) develop two dimensions of corporate culture: sociability and solidarity. The principle of sociability advocates the practices of team spirit, an openness to innovative ideas, and information sharing.

![Figure 1.2: A Resource perspective of the employment relationship. Source: Foa and Foa’s (1976) Resource Model; adapted by Leung and White (2004)](image-url)
The principle of solidarity is focused on key strategic goals, a swift response to the competitive environment, and an intolerance to non-performance. Goffee and Jones’s sociability and solidarity dimensions seem to coincide with Foa’s theory of Relational Employment Relationship. These models typically characterise the Western ‘binary’ concepts.

Most employees would prefer a supervisor who possesses the best qualities identified in both a relational and transactional employment relationship. Based on the understanding of the Asian element about the acceptance of duality, both conceptualisations reflect a trustworthy relationship between supervisors and employees, and therefore open bi-directional communication is required. Therefore, it is necessary to ascertain the degree of Asian-ness of Asian Singaporean employees, as presented in the next section.

1.4.1 The degree of the Asian-ness of Asian Singaporean employees

Birch et al. (2001) describe that ‘Asia has a total population well in excess of three billion people; its peoples speak several hundred different languages and dialects; and it is characterised by a cultural, political, economic and social diversity far greater than anywhere else in the world. Contemporary Asia cannot be considered a homogeneous entity. It is a difficult task to attempt to define Asia and its people, Asians in the context of this research. Leung and White (2004, p.493) (see Figure 1.4) further describe Asians with terms such as ‘extensive communication (formal and informal), diffused obligations and cohesive and obligatory aspects of the relationships’. Because of the difficulty with defining the “Asian way of communicating,” – this study is focused only on one cohort - Asian Singaporean employees ages 45-65, and Hofstede’s Asian cultural dimensions was used to assist in focusing on this group. Whilst Hofstede’s work has received some criticism in the literature, his research remains the framework used by many researchers.

It is necessary to calibrate the Singaporean degree of Asian-ness as it will guide them towards our solutions and contribute to knowledge in this research.
Figure 1.3 shows that Singapore (SIN) reflects a ‘low’ on individualism and a ‘high’ on power distance. However, significant changes to Asian Singaporeans are likely to be moderated in Asian culture, due to the influence from and during the British colonial days, and from an education system that has focused particularly on the English language and Anglo-Celtic values since Singapore’s independence in 1965. Li, Ngin and Teo (2008) describe Singapore as a country infused with Asian and Western cultural influences.

Figure 1.4 by MacNeil (1980) and adapted by Leung and White (2004) presents additional evidence to accurately describe Singaporeans. The diagram reveals that average Singaporeans are not ‘perfectly Asian’: they sit halfway along the Relational/Transactional axis between China (Relational) and US (Transactional). Therefore the degree of Asian-ness in the Singaporean make-up certainly has a bearing on the way in which they communicate with their supervisors.
1.5 Factors influencing Asian Singaporean employees’ willingness to adapt and move forward during a time of change

Through its system of meritocracy, workfare, finance, infrastructure, and by providing a stable environment, the Singapore government has facilitated the fulfilment of the Singaporean dream: the 5 Cs of Singaporeans – Cash, Car, Credit card, Condominium, and Country Club membership. These Singaporean aspirations could also be the factors that contribute to the fear of failure and ultimately contribute to the resistance of change.

Table 1.1 provides an insight into the life priorities of typical Singaporean workers – priorities which may influence Asian Singaporean employees’ willingness to adapt and move forward during a time of change. The five resources or activities that they value most are highlighted at the top of the table. Item 3 in this table, ‘Having a Job’, is precisely what Creasey and Hiatt (2009) identifies as why employees’ resist change. Job loss could affect many of these listed in the table such as Item 2, ‘Having a comfortable home’, and Item 21, ‘Owning lots of nice things’, both of which relate to Singaporean dream of the 5 Cs.
### Table 1.1: Life priorities of Singaporean workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Resource / Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Being healthy</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Having a comfortable home</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Having a job</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spending time with family</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Having enough to eat</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Having access to good medical care</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Raising children</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Earning a high income</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Safe and clean environment</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Being able to live without fear of crime</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Living in a country with good government</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Being successful at work</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Being on good terms with others</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Enjoying a pastime</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pleasant community to live</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Having access to higher education</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Being devout</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Freedom of expression and association</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Expressing your personality or using your talents</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Contributing to your local community or to society</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Owning lots of nice things</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Appreciating art and culture</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Dressing up</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Winning over others</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Being famous</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tambyah et al. (2009)*
Table 1.2: The top five worries of Singaporean workers by gender, age, and education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top five worries – Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top five worries – Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top five worries – Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tambyah et al. (2009)*
From Table 1.2, which outlines the top five worries of Singaporean workers, it is clear that unemployment is a major cause of concern for both males and females, especially those aged 40-65 years with a low to medium level of education. From within this group, this research will focus on ages 45-65 (the older Gen X to the Baby Boomers).

Although organisational change is initiated with the objective of improving the organisation in the longer term, the process to reach its specific objectives would certainly be fraught with tension, uncertainty, and distress for both the ‘victims’ as well as the ‘survivors’ of the change (Cascio, 1993; Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Marks, 1994; Roskies & Lewis-Guerin, 1990). Should the ‘victims’ or prospective ‘victims’ fall within this study’s targeted 45-65 age category, the degree of distress must be intense enough to affect the confidence to communicate on sensitive issues openly to warrant this research. This concern needs to be addressed. If employees do not communicate freely and openly, the consequences can be negative for both employees and employers alike.

1.6 Organisational change and the management-employee balance

In this century, organisations across the world are confronted with increasingly complex economic, social, marketing, environmental, and technological dynamism which is compounded by the escalating power of customers and industry stakeholders. This creates a less predictable global business environment.

Meyer and O’Brien-Pallas (2010) describe organisations that are exposed to such emergent uncertainties in both their internal and external environment, as ‘open systems’. Operating in such a highly dynamic and demanding era, management has to contend with complex organisational change. It is such a challenging environment that the organisation’s management-leadership capability has become a critical component for successful organisational change. Rune (2005) recommends that management explores the successful emergent change models, such as Kotter’s (1996) eight-step process for successful organisational transformation.

Darling et al. (2007) encourage a re-commitment to a management mentality that focuses on the opportunities for creative change for the enhancement of organisational excellence through appropriate leadership strategies to make successful transformation a possibility.
Unsurprisingly, Byrne (2006) advocates that the key to success in today’s organisational development is found in the way that managerial leaders apply their core attitudes, appropriate thoughts, feelings, and actions. Moreover, Welch and Welch (2008) reinforce the idea that successful managerial leaders must establish and maintain positive-related values such as joy, hope, charity, and peace, particularly during organisational change, by taking action expeditiously and with straightforward honesty. Therefore, it makes sense to consult the rich literature available on management–leadership integration as well as to encompass the managerial leadership aspect for successful change. The reported outcomes of Kotter (1995), Balogun and Hailey (2008), and IBM (2008) that 50 to 70 percent of today’s management’s change efforts have totally or partially failed This has happened despite the fact that expert management-leadership advice is available from renowned management consultancies, reinforced with insights from theories of acclaimed authorities and fresh theories derived from academic research. These reports and concepts serve to illuminate the gaps and guide the direction of the researcher in the literature review to create a precise context to appraise the Asian factor in the change process.

The researcher has also reviewed publications on change management by Asian authors such as Farh and Cheng (2000) and Tan (2002). The difficulty here once again is that all such literature seems to form a certain genre. This genre has one common denominator: the authors perceive the solutions to organisational change from the angle of management. Although this researcher recognises the need for management to have a shrewd strategic stance – the top-down approach – to lead the organisation through the changes of the era, it is a more balanced approach – the bottom-up approach – which encompasses the perspectives of their human capital (employees) to enhance the potential for organisational change to be successful (Kirkpatrick, 2001). Farh and Cheng (2000) speak of paternalistic leadership, while Tan (2002) stands by the need of effective leadership style and work culture. More recently, Zhang (2008) advocates balance leadership for effective change, which is closer to the balance as in having people at the heart. In this specific context, the management-employee equation is about involving Asian Singaporean employees in organisational change. Failing this, the onus will be on the employees to apply – the bottom-up approach, the self-leadership in contributing to successful change as the major impetus for this research.

Western thoughts on dialectics are applicable to organisational change. For instance, according to Hegelian philosophy, the central tenet of dialectics is contradiction. There is
unity in contradictions and opposites. Benson (1977) and Tsoakas and Chia (2002) believe that a dialectic perspective is an inherent focus on change, on the process of ‘becoming’, which is adopted into Western management thinking. The concept of yin-yang, from Asian thinking, resembles this philosophy of contradiction. This is because organisational change could be perceived by Asian employees as ‘danger’ and simultaneously as an ‘opportunity’.

Simply having a specific change-intended dialogue could lead to collaborative learning about initiating change (Kofman & Senge, 1995). According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), the nature of such a dialogue is typically based on dialectical oppositions which facilitates communication for the organisational change initiatives. Many authors have coined several terms for dialectical oppositions, for instance, design–emergence, competition–collaboration, and control–autonomy dialectics (De Rond & Bouchikhi, 2004). All these thoughts are distinct from management thinking. Finally, Mason (1996, p.294) refers to Churchman’s (1979) dialectical inquiry method as a reaction to ‘the almost exclusive emphasis placed at the time on purely rational methods of inquiry in normative and descriptive theories of managerial decision making’. This statement seems to reinforce the impression that organisational change initiatives tend to be approached from the management perspective, with little evidence of employee participation. The current research determines to verify this impression, commencing with a literature review of the entire process of qualitative research, and continuing by seeking a viable solution which primarily encompasses the efforts of Asian Singaporean employees during every organisational change initiative.

It is very telling that the Western belief in dialectical thinking bears some resemblance to the Eastern philosophy of yin-yang. The Western concept of dialectical logic perceives that the issue paradox has to be resolved (Li, 2008). Fairhurst (2001) highlights several important dualisms, such as leadership–managership, transformational–transactional, organic–mechanistic, and participative–autocratic, but above all, he specifically pinpoints the primary dualism as that between the individual and the collective that is found in leadership communication literature. Further, he emphasises that such research generally concentrates on the leaders to the extent that the integral dynamics of the collective are missed. This view supports the researcher’s suspicion. Fairhurst (2001, p.3) advocates the dialectical forms of inquiry that would stretch beyond the opposing poles of dualism to
experience its potential ‘dynamic tension’ and ‘interplay’. Fundamentally, Fairhurst (2001) advocates research that encompasses the individual and the system as one integral component of leadership, echoing what Chen (2001, 2002) refers to as the yin-yang philosophy: that each opposite contains the seed of the other, without which neither can survive. Peng and Nisbett (1999, p.743), in their reference to yin-yang philosophy, describe the Chinese as earning an established reputation for being ‘dialectical thinkers’. Therefore, Asian Singaporean employees could be just as ready to embraces the yin-yang concept of paradox in the context of organisational change (Li, 1998, 2008); for instance ‘where there is danger, there is an opportunity’. Perhaps where there is perceived danger by the employees during change, coaching may serve to remind the Asian Singaporean employees that it concurrently offers an opportunity to better themselves.

1.7 The research gap and coaching opportunities

There is a gap that this research intends to narrow by looking at how Asian Singaporean employees can enhance their communication with management, to their mutual benefit, during difficult periods of organisational change.

A Watson Wyatt (2004) survey known as the ‘Watson Wyatt Asian Survey’ involved interviews with more than 115,000 respondents in more than 500 companies in 11 different Asian countries, revealed that:

- Less than one-third of salaried workers surveyed had a favourable impression of senior management in the area of trust.
- Only 37 percent of Asian workers believed or perceived their senior managers to be behaving in a way that was consistent with their company values.

Only 38 percent gave their senior management credit for their ability to make decisions or changes needed for their companies to compete effectively.

These findings support the concept that the foundation of communication between employers and their employees is the trust that employees have in the management of their organisation. A lack of trust serves only to aggravate the high-context communication style of the Asian Singaporean. The need to communicate openly is especially integral to organisational change. Lewis (1999, p.44) establishes ‘the general importance of
communication during planned change’. Armenakis and Harris (2002) reinforce the imminent need of effective communication during organisational change. Palmer (2004) elaborates that employees should be considered the cornerstone of every organisational change because the major issues derive from their resistance to change. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) emphasise the importance to have leadership that practises psychological safety for open communication. This is where the Asian Singaporean employees come into the focus of this research. Communicating organisational change becomes even more important, particularly, as Raina (2010) points out, communication is most pivotal in the success or failure of an organisation’s change.

This research will focus on self-leadership coaching for effective communication for Asian Singaporean employees rather than on management. Employee coaching will focus on self-leadership by adopting the principles of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) to elevate self-awareness and confidence before attention is turned to communication skills. This research will analyse how effectively this adapted form of coaching could enable the Asian Singaporean employees to enhance their role in establishing candid bi-directional communications with their supervisors, especially when there are sensitive issues to broach during the pressured and uncertain phases of organisational change. The role of a coach could be an important enabler for these Singaporeans. In the early years of coaching interventions for organisational change, Hudson (1999) not only identifies coaching as an effective tool for enabling employees to better manage the consistency of change, but also further predicts that the intensity and pace of change in the future will increase, leading to a greater need for coaching. Today, Rock and Donde (2008b) confirm that just one hour per week of concerted, well-structured coaching can raise both the coach as well as the coachee’s (‘person who receives training from a coach’, Collins English Dictionary) performance. Wales (2003) acknowledges that the coaching process provides an opportunity for profound personal development and enables employees and managers alike to develop the personal insights which allow for higher individual effectiveness, which could result in enhanced organisational effectiveness. According to Corbett and Colemon (2006), coaching represents the shortest distance between where an employee is and where they would want to reach professionally.
Not only does coaching have the promise of meeting the communications needs of Asian employees, Hunt and Weintraub (2016) note that coaching is deliberately tied to a specific issue and can be conducted in as brief a timeframe as a few minutes. These indications mean that coaching is a highly versatile intervention which could be relatively easy to make available to busy employees.

Up to the present, most coaching programs have been focused on managers and not on employees. Rock and Donde (2008a) discovered in a recent study of 55 large companies that all of them were using external coaches to improve change management activities, but that only 1% of employees were part of these coaching programs.

1.7.1 The impact of management communication on Asian Singaporean employees

There is a great deal of literature on communication between management and employees from both the Western and Eastern perspectives, although for this thesis the focus is on communication between management and Singaporean employees. Importantly, the current research does not disregard the critical role of management-leadership in organisational change, as its success has proven time again to be due to this management-leadership component. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) emphasise that leadership is of critical importance in the context of organisational change and regeneration. However, a strong theme is summed up by Darling et al. (2007, p.13), who argue that many organisations have a tendency to be ‘over-managed and under-led’.

1.7.2 A prospective communication model for Asian Singaporean employees

Asian Singaporean employees would, perhaps, respond positively to a communication style that is extensive and active. For instance, in Section 2.4.6.2 of the literature review in this thesis, Gardner et al. (2005) advocate a leadership style that is authentic, and would therefore be naturally transparent and consistent with their personal values and convictions. This could potentially promote the trust needed for employees to open up. Also in Section 2.4.6.2 are the studies of Shore et al. (2009) on ‘Leader–Member Exchange’ (LMX) theory and how the existence of trust could build such exchanges. A possible alternative would be to resort to an informal channel. Gao, Ting-Toomey and
Gudykunst (1996) enlighten us that Asians are capable of being just as open and direct as their counterparts from any low power distance cultures (Figure 1.3), particularly within the informal channels.

Section 2.4.6 of the literature review examines leadership that is able to foster an environment that synergises the Eastern Paternalistic Leadership concept with the Western theory of Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), specifically Psychological Capital (PsyCap), as prescribed by Luthans et al. (2007a). This approach could shape a organisational culture which is conducive to bi-directional, supervisor–subordinate communication being used during every organisational change initiative. However, it seems likely that this is an ideal scenario, as indicated earlier.

1.7.3 The need for Asian Singaporean employees to take ownership

There is a need for a coaching model designed specifically for Asian Singaporean employees to enhance bi-directional communications. Such a model is particularly important when supervisors are unable to establish the critical degree of communication with their subordinates that is needed to promote acceptance of change.

1.8 The thesis structure

The structure of this DBA thesis is based on Perry’s (1998) recommended structure.

Table 1.3: The thesis structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
<th>Highlights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Introduction and outline</td>
<td>The background and objective of this research are presented as a ‘road map’ for every reader: generational factors, Asian cultures, Asian Singaporean employees, the research gaps, leading to the research questions. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief explanation of the methodology adopted.</td>
<td>The Asian Singaporean employees of the Baby Boomers and older Gen X.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>Highlights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>The literature review of the research take us through the historical focus on communications during organisational change, scientific inquiries to understand resistance to change, several management-leadership models for promoting bi-directional communication, Asian employee self-leadership in promoting bi-directional communication, and exploring the process of coaching for the Asian Singaporeans to self-lead in promoting bi-directional communication.</td>
<td>The process of coaching is specifically explored for Asian Singaporean employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>The methodology and methods relating to the research are discussed, beginning with the research paradigm, the Asian Singaporean factor, data collection approach, and ethical considerations, the research process, the experiences derived from the actual interviews and coaching sessions, data analysis, and finally, the critical element of trust resulting from leader–member exchange.</td>
<td>Initiating a revised data collection process owing to a discovery during the initial process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>This chapter analyses the data to identify the emergent themes which are crystallised here for the potential development of a new theory.</td>
<td>Emergent themes and potential theoretical developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>This chapter discusses the various cases which either confirm or refute paradigms. It also revisits theories that have been reinforced by the behaviours from the cases.</td>
<td>Recommendation of a potentially effective coaching model for Asian Singaporean employees undergoing organisational change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**1.9 The research questions**

This research aims to answer the following primary questions:

1. What factors affect the older Gen X and Baby Boomers Asian Singaporean employees’ acceptance of change?
2. What factors affect the quality of bi-directional communication between supervisors and the targeted Asian Singaporean older Gen X to Baby Boomer employees within their organisations?
3. What is the effect of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian Singaporean employees of the older Gen X to Baby Boomer generations?

In addressing these research questions, the researcher will approach the research from two perspectives. The first is a thorough investigation of the literature (Chapter 2 Literature review), and the second is from interviews with the targeted Asian Singaporean employees, predominantly from multi-national organisations (Chapter 3 Research methodology).

Chapter 2 examines the factors and theories which relate to the research questions posed in Chapter 1, and identifies the current solutions they offer in the context of the Asian Singaporean employee. The chapter reviews relevant evidence-based journals and books about the impact of these factors on organisational change and explores the historical focus on theories and communications relevant to organisational change, taking Lewin’s (1943, 1951) ‘Force Field Analysis’ as a starting point. The next step will be to examine the cultural, generational, and psychological factors of the targeted participants, before evaluating the leadership-management perspectives and models for a solution.

To describe the varieties of possible employees’ responses to organisational change, the following theories will be cited and investigated in Chapter 2:

- Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) theory of stress
- Mishra and Spreitzer’s (1998) theoretical model
- Luthans’s (2002a, 2002b) POB, PsyCap
- Piderit’s (2000) three domains of resistance
- Carnall’s (2003) five-stage coping cycle.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information and context for this research in relation to the effectiveness of coaching for enhancing communication for Asian Singaporean employees during periods of organisational change. Although the focus of this research is on employees, the manager-leaders’ part of the equation will be just as closely scrutinised as it is also concerned with bi-directional communication during organisational change. Overall, most literature on organisational change is Western-centric, offering well-researched theories over the decades, mainly from the United States. These theories provide the insight that most change efforts fail on account of the resistance of employees. The theories begin with the ‘father of experimental social psychology’, Kurt Lewin (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011, p.21), although many subsequent authorities on organisational change will be closely scrutinised for applicability in the Singaporean context.

An examination of the Asian cultures could offer an appropriate communication solution to Asian Singaporean employees seeking clarifications from their supervisors about how the impending organisational change might impact their livelihood and their careers.

2.2 Historical focus on organisational change theories

Well-known authorities on change management, such as Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992), have discussed and written comprehensively on the various forces that set in motion the process of change; namely, the ‘big three’ models of change. Fundamentally, Kanter, Stein and Jick’s (1992) ‘big three’ models of change describe changes at the ‘macro-evolutionary’ level, at the ‘micro-evolutionary’ level, and at the ‘revolutionary’ level. At the macro-evolutionary level, change concerns restructuring and transforming the organisation’s identity and operations, whereas at the micro-evolutionary level change relates to the elements of culture and to downsizing to remove unnecessary managerial layers. Change at the revolutionary level pertains to power relationships and the changes
that take place simultaneously at all levels during a time of change in an organisation. Fundamentally, the change process has to be meticulously managed for it to be successful and permanent. Lewin (1943; 1951), who is widely regarded as the founder of social psychology, has also contributed greatly to an understanding of the forces of change through his Force Field Analysis paper. His writings have offered a much needed insight into how change can be planned and managed more effectively. However, he did not research the idea of ‘human reactions’ in the way that Kanter, Stein and Jick have so done. Carter (2008) concludes that resistance to change could be the likely human reaction when there is a perception of undesirable impact on them. In other words, Lewin has not provided any insights into how to manage such reactions or potential resistance to change when they arise. Lewin (1947a) proposes that in order for change to be successful, three steps are necessary: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing.

**Step 1: Unfreezing.** Lewin believes that a ‘quasi-stationary equilibrium’ of human behaviour needs to be unfrozen before the old behaviour could be replaced with a new behaviour. Change occurs when the driving force becomes stronger than the opposing force. How an organisation’s management or its change leaders enable this unfreezing process is not specifically elaborated upon. This leads to multiple interpretations as well as to criticism of its relevance.

**Step 2: Moving.** Lewin (1947a, p.229) recognises the need for ‘emotional stir up’ to move employees out of their comfort zone. Schein (1996, p.62) echoes the thoughts of Lewin, when he opines that unfreezing is not final in itself, but it ‘... creates motivation to learn, but does not necessarily control or predict the direction’.

**Step 3: Refreezing.** Lewin is convinced that successful change materialises through the formation of a new group behaviour, not just individual behaviours. For the group behaviour to sustain itself, individual behaviours have to be congruent with the rest of the group, otherwise there could be a possibility of regression to the old ways.

### 2.3 Resistance to change

During organisational change, human beings go through a psychological process, which Carnall (2003) describes in his five-stage coping cycle as 1) Denial, 2) Defence, 3)
Discarding, 4) Adaptation, and 5) Internalisation. In recent years, it is believed that resistance is due to a psychological trauma that has to be ‘overcome’ (e.g. Kusstatscher & Cooper, 2005). Employee resistance to change has been a recurring theme in organisational change (Coch & French, 1948; Lewin, 1952). Bovey and Hede (2001a, b) postulate that resistance to change is identified as the most important reason for the failures of organisational change. From the survey conducted with 575 participants from 65 countries, the top five most important reasons of employees’ resistance to organisational change were published in the Prosci Benchmarking Report (Creasey & Hiatt, 2009).

i. Lack of awareness
ii. Impact on current job role
iii. Organisation's past failures with change
iv. Lack of visible support and commitment from managers
v. Job loss.

This represents the typical traditional belief, which is from only one perspective. There is relevant literature that examines the positive perspectives of resistance as well. Resistance to change could be considered a resource (Ford & Ford, 2009), and even a type of commitment (Burke, 2011). As far back as the 1990s, Maurer (1996) contended that resistance to change brings with it an energy from employees who surface their assumptions about the impact of organisational change on their careers and voice their doubts about the organisation’s direction. In later years, Garner and Wargo (2009) reinforced the idea that resistance safeguards against self-delusion and groupthink. Therefore, it is necessary for management to get under the layers of assumptions to communicate change effectively. Understanding both ethnic and organisational cultures would enable management to better understand human behaviours and thereby derive a more comprehensive approach for helping their employees through change. Schein’s (1990) three-dimensional view of organisational culture, comprising assumptions, values, and artefacts, has been very appealing to many researchers. For instance, assumptions are the unconscious, taken-for-granted values and beliefs which are likely to trigger a behavioural response to the environment. Espoused values are the ideals, rationales, and aspirations that are embedded at the deepest level of the members of the culture. Schein (1988, 2010) postulates that ensuring employees’ readiness for change would create a
better chance to induce the need to unfreeze and therefore reduce the probability for resistance. This implies that management needs to make a concerted effort to go beneath the less visible cultural level of the assumptions to fully understand their employees. Finally, artefacts are the most visible and tangible structures and processes, as well as being the most the observable behaviours of its members. This critical concept of culture enables management not only to anticipate its visible aspects, but also to anticipate the less visible psychological contracts of their employees.

The current research is particularly interested in discovering the self-efficacy of Asian Singaporean employees in establishing open communication with their supervisors when there is a need to discuss any form of resistance to change. Understanding their psychological state through scientific inquiry could offer a viable coaching solution for these employees.

2.3.1 Scientific inquiry into resistance to change and its relationships with positive organisational scholarship

Based on scientific inquiry and evidence-based practice, Cameron, Dutton and Quinn (2003, p.5) define Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) as ‘the examination of factors that enable positive consequences for individuals, groups, and organisations’. Subsequently, Cameron and Caza (2004, p.731) define POS as ‘the study of that which is positive, flourishing, and life giving in organizations’.

POS comprises three factors:

i. Positive – the elevating processes and outcomes in organisations.

ii. Organisational – the interpersonal and structural dynamics; the context in which the positive phenomena occur.

iii. Scholarship – the scientific, theoretically-derived, and rigorous investigation of that which is positive in organisational settings.

One area of study that has applied POS is positive organisational behaviour (POB). Luthans (2002a, 2002b) uses the term ‘positive organisational behaviour’ to introduce the field of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology focuses on three related topics: subjective experiences, the study of positive individual
traits, and the study of the institutions that enable positive traits. Although positive psychology was principally focused on clinical applications, Luthans believes it is also applicable to work settings. Fundamentally, positive psychology has a forward-looking orientation, promoting a hopeful, productive approach to work or life. The belief is that a satisfying future can potentially emerge for people who have fallen on difficult times.

The root of Luthans’s positive organisational behaviour (POB) is defined as ‘the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace’ (Luthans, 2002b, p.59). An important aspect of POB is psychological capital (PsyCap), which is about:

\[
\text{...an individual’s positive psychological state of development characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success. (Luthans et al., 2007a, p.3).}
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Employees resist change because they are likely to be deficient in the positive psychological state that psychological capital (PsyCap) enables, or because their workplace environment lacks that which is ‘positive, flourishing, and life giving’ which POS could create. This is especially evident from another study, in which Oreg (2003) states that there are three domains of resistance to organisational change: affective (emotional), cognitive, and intentional (behavioural). Affective resistance pertains to feelings about change in the form of anger or anxiety, fear, shock and disgust about change. Piderit (2000) suggests that affective resistance may impact cognitive resistance. Both affective and cognitive resistance can lead to intentional resistance to organisational change.

PsyCap appears to possess the potential to ease employees’ fears and concerns about organisational change, regardless of the employees’ ethnic culture. Palmer, Dunford and Akin (2009) warn that management failures to understand the reactions of their employees to change initiatives would result in the organisation bearing the brunt of costly resistance and rejection. Oreg (2006) and Van den Heuvel and Schalk (2009) further caution about
the considerable effects of resistance to change in the form of job satisfaction, employee commitment to the organisation, harbouring the intention to leave the organisation, and ultimately leaving. The studies of Avey et al. (2008), Norman et al. (2010), and Zhong (2007) suggest that PsyCap is a predictor of Organisational Citizenship Behaviours (OCB). As early as 2001, Fredrickson (2001) described the relationship between PsyCap and OCB as ‘broaden-and-build’ theory because positive emotions could broaden employees’ attention. This enables employees to focus their cognitive and behavioural repertoires on more positive responses to a situation.

Therefore, PsyCap would be a factor to be incorporated into self-leadership coaching to observe its efficacy in strengthening the resolve of typical Asian Singaporean employees between the ages of 45 and 65 (the Baby Boomers and older Gen Xs) when they are subjected to the challenges of organisational change. PsyCap could psychologically equip Asian employees – who typically observe a high degree of power distance – to improve their ability to communicate with their immediate supervisors when seeking more information about the direction of organisational change. These employees could acquire a more positive psychological state enabling them to approach even the least communicative supervisor for a dialogue on their job status which could be affected by an organisational change. This issue will be analysed in section 2.5 – Asian employee self-leadership in promoting bi-directional communication.

2.3.2 Positive organisational scholarship enables communication during transition

Jolke and Duhan (2000) define communication in two ways: direct communication strategy, which is predominantly one-way communication from managers to employees, and bi-directional communication, which refers to the existence of feedback loops between supervisors and subordinates. Elving’s (2005) six propositions for communication to ensure employees’ readiness for change could offer a solution to employees during the change process. The first proposal suggests that a low resistance to change, or a high degree of readiness for change, are indicators of successful organisational change. The second proposal emphasises the need to communicate to employees about the change and how it will affect their work. The third proposal suggests using communication to build a community which could enhance trust and commitment and facilitate alignment with the
organisation’s management. The fourth proposal identifies that a high degree of uncertainty can disrupt employees’ readiness to change. The fifth proposal draws attention to job security, the lack of which would certainly be a stumbling block to the readiness to change. The sixth and final proposal is the blending of the fourth and fifth proposals, and acknowledges the impact of both uncertainty and job security on every employee’s readiness to change.

Gardner et al. (2005) reveal that transparent and consistent leadership promotes open communication. Yukl (2009) states that leadership is the process of influencing followers, and therefore there is a compelling need to examine various aspects of management-leadership practices to create such a positive communication culture. Barrett’s (2002) research-based literature identifies that it is of the utmost importance that management provides comprehensive information about the purpose and goals of the organisational change, and thoroughly explains the underlying vision to offer orientation, especially during the early phases of an organisational change. This research is premised on the assumption that there would be instances of poor leadership that would stifle communication and thus sabotage the transition from resistance to change to acceptance of change. Therefore, the focus of this study is on how to capitalise on PsyCap to enable Asian employees to initiate an open dialogue with their supervisors on issues they feel uneasy about regarding the change.

As previously stated, Carnall (2003) introduces a five-stage coping cycle: 1) Denial, 2) Defence, 3) Discarding, 4) Adaptation, and 5) Internalisation. Though it has some similarities with past models, the contribution of his model is that there are aspects which directly suggest that communication on the part of the employees is critical for helping them through a transition.

Table 2.1: Carnall’s five-stage coping cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Denial</td>
<td>This is the stage in which employees are shocked and may deny that change has commenced. This could affect their level of concentration and productivity. PsyCap would help the employees recover from this initial reaction to better decide on the appropriate next step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Defence</td>
<td>This is when employees may resist change by bargaining to maintain the old ways and to remain in their comfort zone. Failing which, they could react with anger and resentment, while others could experience frustration and sabotage. Once again at this stage, having PsyCap would enable the employees to better manage their emotional reactions when deciding on a more appropriate next step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discarding</td>
<td>Employees entering this stage could experience sadness or grief as they face the reality that the old familiarities have to be replaced with the new, and they have to move on. They begin to investigate the new and unfamiliar during this sense-making process. Self-leadership enabled through Emotional Intelligence and PsyCap have the potential to strengthen the resolve of employees to seek information and new knowledge, and to discuss their expectations of the change with their supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adaptation</td>
<td>Consequently, the hope is that bi-directional communication has been established and employees have made sense of the change initiative. Employees enter this stage with more confidence as they begin to adapt and accept the new norm, and as they get more familiar with the change. The primary emotions experienced here, Carnall (2003) cautions, are frustrations and anger. This is no longer due to resistance to change, but to their acceptance of change, which comes with the frustrations of working with unfamiliar people, processes, procedures, and performance criteria. Management-leadership support is most needed here. Self-leadership is also needed should employees not receive the necessary management support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Internalisation</td>
<td>Employees at this stage have become more familiar with the new norm. Adaptation has now led to internalisation and a new comfort zone is established. Productivity is likely to be enhanced as the employees’ performance begins to increase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The organisation’s management and effective leadership is needed to ensure the smooth transition of the employees through these five stages of change. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) affirm that leadership is integral to the success of organisational change.

2.4 Management-leadership models and the promotion of bi-directional communication

This section explores several management-leadership models. The models could provide useful insights when searching for a solution to improve bi-directional communication between Asian Singaporean employees and their management. Rainey (2009) maintains that in today’s demanding business environment, a higher level of strategic thinking in the form of enterprise-wide strategic management (ESM) is needed. ESM focuses on ‘making dramatic changes, improvements, and developments to the underlying foundation of the business through strategic innovation’. The elements of ESM are value creation, inclusiveness, connectedness, responsiveness, innovativeness, effectiveness, productivity, leanness, cleanliness, and openness. Highlighting just two of these elements here, ‘inclusiveness’ is described by Rainey (2009, p.41) as:

… the strategic framework should include all of the critical entities of the external world to the business environment and extended enterprise. This includes the integration of the internal strategic and operating systems with their external partners, allies, supplier networks, customers, stakeholders, related industries, infrastructure and other support relationships.

This description reflects how vital ESM is to the success and the lifespan of any organisation operating in a rapidly changing world. It clearly defines the ingredient needed to promote clear and open communication between management and employees, which is also valid for Asian Singaporean employees.

Another of Rainey’s (2009, p.41) elements, ‘openness’, states that:

… strategic leaders must be open and honest in all of their relationships and ensure they employ best policies, processes, and practices. Company philosophy and principles must build trust, integrity and awareness across the extended enterprise …
Openness provides the assurance of honest disclosure of information requested by stakeholders, through appropriate communication strategies and mechanisms. The two elements of inclusiveness and openness point to the fact that enterprise-wide strategic management has to be supported by enterprise-wide strategic leadership. Rainey (2009) believes that good strategic leaders will also promote trust and integrity in everything the enterprise’s management-leadership does, which would certainly facilitate communication between management and their employees. Shamir and Lapidot (2003), like many other authors, postulate that a subordinate’s trust is a prerequisite for leadership. Additionally, Urch-Druskat and Wolf (2001) assert that the core ingredients of trust, identity, and efficacy could foster team collaboration. Covey and Merrill (2006) propose that when trust exists, it facilitates management and leadership, because employees do not want to violate the trust between the leaders and their teams. These findings would strongly support models for improving supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication.

Kotter (1990; 1996) indicates that management is about process, and leadership is about perspective, which, although they serve different functions, they are not antithetical but instead complement each other. Today, as Darling et al. (2007) observe, many organisations undergoing change are often over-managed but under-led. Kirkpatrick (2001) postulates a seven-step guide to help managers lead change successfully. Since leadership is about perspective, this model offers an appealing start for exploring appropriate perspectives on enabling employees to better accept organisational change.

2.4.1 Kirkpatrick’s seven-step guide: ‘a manager’s model of change’

Kirkpatrick’s (2001) model provides managers with a seven-step guide to organisational change. He advocates that the first step is to ‘determine how necessary the organisational change is’ (1). He suggests that this analysis is not confined to management’s factual appraisal, but that it involves the perspective of the employees’ feelings as well. The next step is to ‘prepare tentative plans’ (2). The practice of rolling out a tentative plan seems to suggest a test bed that is highly adaptable to environmental responses or to employees’ reactions. After this, the third step is to ‘analyse probable reactions’ (3). This is another critical step for preparing management well by analysing in great detail the diverse employee profiles such as age and talent, and the probable causes of their reactions to the
changes. Kirkpatrick summarises that during the change process there would be three types of employee reactions; positive, negative, and mixed reactions. Managers’ understanding of such emotional reactions would equip them better for decision-making. Managers would then be ready to move to the next step, ‘make a final decision’ (4), in which they would then make a final, fine-tuned decision, having considered the responses and reactions from the previous ‘analyse probable reactions’. Managers then move to ‘establish a timetable’ (5). The speed of the change cannot be dictated purely by management as there would be a degree of resistance they would have to manage. The more successfully they can manage resistance, the faster the speed of the change can be. Management is then ready to ‘communicate the change’ (6).

The first six steps of Kirkpatrick’s model help clarify Lewin’s (1947a) version of ‘unfreeze’. Fundamentally, this clarification of ‘unfreezing’ has already been described as a broad strategy encompassing proactive reactions in anticipation of finally being ready to implement change. ‘Communicate the change’ (6) also refers to a ‘two-way process of a telling and selling, listening’ plan. Most importantly, there is an emphasis on listening to reactions and suggestions through face-to-face feedback. Kirkpatrick goes on to elaborate that successful change can be triggered as managers make a concerted effort to get to know each of their subordinates very well, building rapport and relationships with them to help them through the change. Kirkpatrick even suggests identifying natural leaders to facilitate change who are not in official positions of leadership. The natural leaders are those who their colleagues look up to and are therefore well-placed to effectively promote bi-directional communication.

Finally, management would be ready to move onto the last step of Kirpatrick’s model which is to ‘implement the change’ (7). Kirkpatrick’s implementation is still sensitive to changing environmental factors. During implementation, there is still a lot of communication required to ensure clarity of direction as well as to sense any need for adapting to the changing situation. Kirkpatrick further elaborates with his ‘three keys to successful change’ concept in which, for change to be successful, leaders must have empathy, must communicate, and must encourage employee participation.

Kirkpatrick’s reinforcement of bi-directional communication from his sixth step is clear: ‘communicate the change’. As described earlier, Kirkpatrick’s sixth step is a more comprehensive model that builds on Lewin’s three steps. However, an analysis of these
models suggests a major shortcoming: although the focus is from the manager-leaders’ perspective, the people who could promote better communication which could result in their employees’ acceptance of change, the models fail to address the issue of communication tendencies within Asian cultures.

There could be valid reasons why managers and leaders who have been trained to lead change are still inadequate when communicating change. There is the probability that managers leading change are under tremendous pressure, which therefore undermines their capability to be effective. Kotter (1988) alludes to a ‘syndrome’ associated with inadequate leadership which correlates with inadequate change management. While Kirkpatrick’s (2001) seven-step guide and Carnall’s (2003) five-stage coping cycle explain how employees might respond to change, studies from as early as Kotter (1988) to more recent studies such as Van Dyne et al. (2003), indicate the possibility that the leadership component can influence employees’ reactions. Therefore, it is certainly of value to managers to explore Kotter’s (1996) valuable leadership advice.

2.4.2 Kotter’s eight-step change management approach

Kotter (1996) begins his eight-step approach with the need to ‘establish a sense of urgency’ (1) by discussing today’s commercial realities, looking at possible future scenarios, and heightening the ‘felt-need’ for change. This supports Lewin’s steps of unfreezing and moving. The next four steps enable employees to move ahead as they are about ‘forming a powerful coalition of leaders’ (2): assembling a powerful group of individuals who can work well together. This is followed by the third step of ‘creating a vision’ (3): building a vision to guide the effort together to bring about change, with strategies for achieving this. After which ‘communicating the vision’ (4) is the next step where Kotter emphasises the need to communicate to a level at least ten times the effort normally expected to achieve such results. The vision and accompanying strategies and the new behaviours need to be communicated in a variety of ways. In this respect, the first guiding principle should be to model the new behaviours. To be able to progress forward is to ‘empower others to act on the vision’ (5). This step includes removing obstacles to change, such as unhelpful structures or systems, and then allowing people to experiment. Then the refreezing begins, with first successes through ‘planning for and creating short-
term victories’ (6): looking out for short-term and superficial improvements, planning for these superficial improvements, and rewarding people publicly for the improvements – although this is more of a perfunctory exercise than a heartfelt activity. Refreezing then proceeds with the ‘consolidating of improvements and producing yet more change’ (7): promoting and rewarding those who are able to help promote and move towards the vision; energising the process of change with the implementation of new projects, the acquisition of new resources, and putting in place a team of ‘change agents’. Finally, the process is completed by ‘institutionalising whatever has been newly implemented’ (8): ensuring that everyone understands that the new behaviour will lead to corporate success.

Kotter’s recommendations for effective change management are certainly comprehensive. However, these prescriptive approaches have not specifically catered for the context of the Asian Singaporean employee’s resistance to change. Kotter’s view of communication seems to be irrelevant, particularly regarding the degree of supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication.

The next approach for reinforcing these themes is to adopt the engineering concept of ‘piloting’ to better understand Asian Singaporean employees’ responses to change. Piloting provides a testing ground to observe these responses to changes. In this context, this approach pertains to distributed leadership. As this pilot approach is adopted from the field of engineering, it is utilised to detect potential failures for ensuring an enhanced success rate. Both Quinn (1980, p.10) and Balogun and Hailey (2008, pp.29-31) advise blending ‘pockets of commitment’ into the political process. The pilot approach is very important as, in essence, the political current could be hazard-prone and difficult to anticipate (Ford, 2006). Piloting allows the observation of unexpected events in a situation aggravated by an Asian culture that even a well-planned organisational change could find difficult to understand. This approach enables management to reconsider the situation, make sense of it, and make a strategic response that could be a vital success factor.

2.4.3 Distributed leadership: a leadership approach

Effective management is one which pilot tests certain critical aspects of the intended organisational change, so as to determine first hand how the change could be best implemented with the least employee resistance. It is not about examining the motive of
any potential resistance to change; instead it is about seeking to understand the nature of
the resistance (Thomas & Hardy, 2011).

Johnson-Cramer et al. (2003) deem that, for effective change to happen, change
management efforts have to be conducted in a complementary manner. Kempster, Higgs
and Wuerz (2014, p.149) developed the concept of distributed leadership further and
outlined it to commission ‘this elusive complementarity’.

Figure 2.1 is the theoretical framework that Kempster, Higgs and Wuerz (2014, p.160)
expound. They describe the four interconnected sub-triangles:

i. The central triangle (system) is the pilot mechanism. This enables the other three
   triangles (system) to occur.
ii. Rational (top-down) planning triangle (system).
iii. Emergent/bottom-up triangle (system) – this incorporates learning.
iv. Politically governed triangle (system).

Figure 2.1: Dimensions of distributed change leadership through pilots
Source: Kempster, Higgs and Wuerz (2014, p160)
The emphasis is on the concept of sequencing pilots which enable testing, learning, and involvement. Testing is to ensure that there is an adaptation of the change design to the needs of the respective organisational circumstances. Kempster, Higgs and Wuerz (2014, p.158) describe ‘the experimental nature of the pilot places emphasis on learning’ before proceeding with the implementation. The management would be able to better understand the Asian Singaporean employee from the experienced derived through the pilot mechanism. The learning aspect is to capitalise on past learning and on adaptations to the likely change of context and situation. Finally, involvement allows participation in the process, with the objective of shared ownership, which in turn leads to lower resistance to change. Another elaboration on this comes from Bennett et al. (2003, p.7) who describe distributed leadership as a focus on the need to embrace the type of leadership that is an ‘emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals working with an openness of boundaries…[and] the varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few’.

To summarise the concept of distributed leadership, Thorpe et al. (2008, p.38) elaborate on it as ‘collaborative and reciprocal relationships’, and Parry and Bryman (2006, p.455) encapsulate it as ‘an emergent property of a social system in which “leaders” and “followers” share in the process of enacting leadership…[and] effective leadership depends upon multiple leaders for decision-making and action-taking’.

A review of this literature suggests that this is the only emerging concept of leadership with a distribution concept that could potentially support localisation for the diverse Singaporean context. This could be the missing link and the catalyst to enable adaptation of leadership styles and communication approaches which fit into the relatively reserved Asian communication style. Pendleton (2001) appropriately identifies a change champion as someone who belongs to the culture and who is also an accepted member of the culture. Therefore, this change champion with distributed or shared leadership could on behalf of the management, establish open bi-directional communication with employees. This would begin the process of encouraging employees to voice their concerns about the prospective change. Kotter’s (1996) eight-step approach, ‘forming a powerful coalition of leaders pertains to assembling a powerful group of individuals who can work well together’, comes close to this distributed leadership model, but stops short of the coverage and depth offered by Kempster, Higgs and Wuerz’s (2014) four interconnected subsystems of distributed leadership shown in Figure 2.1.
The primary objective of this research is to identify the communication factor for Asian Singaporean employees with their supervisors, and how enhancing this communication factor can impact their acceptance of organisational change, and ultimately enhance their performance. Employee resistance to change is part of organisational change. The review thus far has been centred on the concept of formal leadership, although it is possible that formal leadership alone may not suffice to offer the best intervention. There are sufficient indications that the collaborative forces of formal and informal leadership could potentially ensure leadership effectiveness.

2.4.4 Informal and formal leadership synergies: a leadership approach

According to Peters and O’Connor (2001), the role of the informal leader in an organisation is usually a competitive advantage that is overlooked. Pielstick (2000) discloses that although there have always been informal leaders, there is little to no understanding of their influence and power within an organisation. This is despite the fact that both formal and informal leadership has been recognised since the early 1940s (Selznick, 1948). In more recent years, it was Smart (2005) who identified an evolving phenomenon in informal leadership, which exists outside the operation of formal leadership, and yet is capable of making things happen through its subtle power and influence. Formal leaders are visible on organisational charts or seated where the position or height of the cubicles or rooms are symbols of authority. Informal leaders do not have such visibility but are nonetheless significant. For an organisation to succeed in its endeavours, both formal and informal leadership must co-exist with a healthy degree of interdependency.

The organisation’s vision and mission, together with the intended message that the formal leaders present to their employees, may lack the context and the meaning needed to promote acceptance. Pielstick (2000) articulates that communication within an organisation is vital to inculcate in its employees the understanding of its vision, values, and beliefs. In the absence of a perceived, effective formal leadership, employees could be inclined to seek individuals who are capable of filling the void (Hongseok, Labianca & Chung, 2006). This is where employees might resort to informal channels where information relating to the current change could be obtained. From another perspective,
where the context pertains to employees who have experienced redundancy, authorities such as Kotter (1995) and Lippitt (1997, p.20) highlight that ‘having gone through downsizing and outsourcing, employees are less likely than ever before to accept information from their companies at face value’. Glover (2001) states that, if there is an absence of believable information, employees are likely to resort to listening to the informal rather than to the formal channels.

Management has to elaborate on how the change initiatives would affect employees’ jobs, drilling down into their roles and responsibilities, and ultimately into their career directions. Goodenow (2001, p.16) suggests that ‘this division is a common weakness in corporate strategic planning; there is no systematic structure for translating individual vision into shared vision’. Asian employees may be too reserved to share their personal visions, such as their ‘Life priorities of Singaporean workers’ as shown in Table 1.1, or their ‘Top five worries’ as shown in Table 1.2, Informal leadership could facilitate open communication and offer formal leadership a clearer understanding of their employees’ motivations which would enhance leadership communication during the pressurising phases of change. Crampton et al. (1998) and Quirke (1996) estimate that management could receive up to 70 percent of its critical information through informal channels.

The potential of tapping into this positive, informal leadership is important to the formal leadership, inasmuch as PsyCap’s positive and promising elements can be accurately ascertained. Informal leaders possess informal powers which may better influence task strategies, group norms and values enough to represent their group when communicating with formal authority (Kramer & Neale, 1998). Informal leaders are likely to earn credibility from the respective groups who seek their opinion on practically every initiative the formal authority seeks to implement (O’Connor, 2000). Furthermore, it is the informal leaders who can better interpret and translate the meaning of the on-going organisational change effort and therefore effectively guide their colleagues through the change process (Gergen, 1994).

Cross and Prusak (2002) assert that informal leaders are capable of assuming the role of information brokers, one who supports information exchange among groups. They identified three other key roles within companies or within groups:

i) Central connector – connects many people in an informal network.
ii) Boundary spanner – connects an informal network to other groups or people.

iii) Peripheral specialist – provides specific knowledge, but is peripheral to the information network.

Pielstick (2000) emphasises the value of informal leadership when he states that in order to be successful, organisations require both formal and informal leadership. The informal channel operates well for Asian employees as they tend to be more relaxed in situations where open bi-directional communication is likely. Gao, Ting-Toomey and Gudykunst (1996) maintain that, in karaoke bars, Asians are capable of being just as open and direct as their counterparts from any of the low power distance cultures. As Fang (2005–2006, 2010) observes, although Asians are generally reserved in formal settings, the same people can become vocal in informal settings. Authorities such as Hofstede (1980) observe that, in high power distance cultures, there is an inclination for people to rely on informal channels where they can meet people, feel more confident and free to receive information, exercise influence, and regain legitimacy.

2.4.5 Kim and Mauborgne’s ‘kingpins’ concept: a leadership approach

Kim and Mauborgne’s (2003, p.26) ‘kingpins concept’ demonstrates the potent synergy of formal-informal leadership that must be explored. This is particularly interesting, as their kingpins concept concerns the point at which management can ‘trigger an epidemic movement of positive energy, the key is to concentrate efforts on your kingpins’. This bears similarities to the concept of distributed leadership. Incorporating informal leaders with suitable kingpin profiles could be used as one of the change agents to improve the effectiveness of the organisation’s distributed leadership without the need for coaching its employees.

Managers can influence the way their employees respond to organisational change. From the perspective of Kim and Mauborgne (2003, p5), today’s managers can effect dramatic change if they were to learn to overcome the:

i. ‘cognitive hurdle that blinds employees from seeing that radical change is necessary’

ii. ‘resource hurdle that is endemic in firms today’
iii. ‘motivational hurdle that discourages and demoralises staff’
iv. ‘political hurdle of internal and external resistance to change’.

Kingpins are natural leaders who are persuasive, or who have an ability to overcome these hurdles to achieve dramatic changes. The approach is still from the side of the leaders, both formal and informal. As the use of natural leaders is similar in concept to Kirkpatrick’s seven-step model, this form of informal leadership could be adopted as part of the management-employee equation. This means that there is now an opportunity that Asian Singaporean employees could be included as one of the change agents if they are identified as having kingpin profiles.

The possibility of synergising Asian leadership inclinations with the Leader-member Exchange (LMX) theory could potentially pave the way towards a solution for Asian Singaporean employees. If this proves to be viable, coaching as a solution for Asian Singaporean employees would no longer be the primary focus of this research, and perhaps may not even be needed.

2.4.6 Asian paternalistic leadership synergies with Leader-member Exchange theory (LMX): a leadership approach

Leadership is an important factor for surmounting the challenges of the business environment in the 21st century (Kotter, 2007). Kotter (1998) affirms that it takes good leadership to enable employees to overcome resistance to change. Nevertheless, it is the issue of an appropriate Asian Singaporean leadership that is called into question. Combining Asian paternalistic leadership with LMX practice, value added with POB, and PsyCap (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b), could meet the leadership needs of organisations that have a substantial number of Asian Singaporean employees. This section will comprehensively investigate leadership concepts that are both formal and informal, and both Western and Eastern.

Adler (1997, p.174) suggested that there are various definitions of leadership, but that ‘there are no global leadership theories’. The reason he offers for this is that these definitions reflect an American perspective and the practices are predominantly determined by American cultural values and experiences. Hofstede (1991) explains that, in high power
distance countries, subordinates are unlikely to approach their supervisors and contradict them directly. Therefore, if there are issues to be discussed pertaining to resistance to organisational change, it takes a lot more diplomacy and courage for Asian Singaporean employees to broach such a subject with their supervisors.

2.4.6.1 Leadership Inclinations of Asian managers

Supervisor-subordinate bi-directional communication could be more challenging for Asian Singaporeans who report to Asian managers. This is because Asian managers are inclined to gravitate towards the Asian paternalistic leadership style. Cheng et al. (2004) established that paternalistic leadership comprises three dimensions: authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral character. Authoritarianism is characterised by leaders who exercise power and authority, and who expect subordinates to respectfully comply and obey. Whereas when leaders exercise benevolence, subordinates comply and obey in reciprocation (Aycan, 2006; Farh et al., 2004). Leaders are expected to behave with high moral integrity and benevolence, thus enabling their Asian subordinates to willingly accept authoritarian leadership as well-meaning guidance. According to Schoorman et al. (2007) the concept of integrity, competence, and benevolence can result in trust at three levels: group, organisational, and inter-organisational. This is a particularly important factor to note. As Galford and Drapeau (2003) postulate, employees’ trust in management’s change efforts can contribute to the success of those efforts.

This paternalistic style of leadership has generally been identified as more prevalent in Asia (Chan et al., 2012; Chen & Farh, 2010; Cheng et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2012). Farh et al. (2006), in particular, acknowledge that authoritarian paternalistic leadership usually creates fear, resentment, and anger. When leaders adopt such an authoritarian leadership style that is absent of benevolence, the reaction of Asian subordinates can be subtle. Morrison and Milliken (2000) posit that managers who are inclined towards a high power distance mindset tend to foster a climate of organisational silence. This study will also provide some insight on how authoritarian paternalistic leadership applied in a high power distance culture could result in organisational or individual silence. Silence could be a critical factor in denying the success of open communication during organisational change.
2.4.6.2 Mitigation of paternalistic leadership from LMX theory for Asian managers

Since the quality of benevolence is of high value to Asian subordinates, LMX theory is appealing. Shore et al. (2009) conducted studies on the basis of their LMX theory, which focuses on a leader’s empathy, ethical values, and relationship-oriented behaviour. It has been ascertained that LMX is the mediating variable between benevolent leadership and the followers’ organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). Podsakoff et al. (2000) confirm in their research that there is a positive correlation between leadership behaviour and employees’ OCBs. Cheng et al.’s (2003; 2004) research into the Asian paternalistic style of management suggests that, when there is positive relationship, the outcome of organisational change is also likely to be positive owing to the existence of trust and gratitude in the relationship. In other promising discoveries of fostering OCBs, Larson and Luthans (2006), Youssef and Luthans (2007), and Avey, Wernsing and Luthans (2008) confirm that OCBs flourish in organisations that have applied the concept of PsyCap during organisational change. More recently, Beal, Stavras and Cole (2013) found a positive relationship between PsyCap and OCB in the context of organisational change. Furthermore, these authors have also identified resistance to change as a moderator of PsyCap’s effect on OCB. A positive psychological state (which PsyCap measures) can be used to target specific interventions so as to foster a positive work environment which is well-prepared for organisational change to take place.

As detailed in section 2.3.1 of this chapter, Cameron, Dutton and Quinn’s (2003) Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) study has applied POS in Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB). An important aspect of POB is psychological capital (PsyCap), which comprises self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. PsyCap researchers have discovered that, although PsyCap is a valid theoretical and applied construct in a Western context, it has meaning in non-Western cultures as well. Luthans et al. (2007a, 2007b) and Tettegah (2002) ascertain from their research into a Confucian Asian societal culture such as China, that PsyCap is also relevant to its non-Western counterpart. Singapore has the same Confucian Asian societal culture as China, and therefore PsyCap would also be applicable, although Hofstede (2001) deems Singapore to have become more individualistic than China.

Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2010) discovered that there is a correlation between organisational change and psychological distress. The element of uncertainty stirs the need for
information because uncertainty generates anxiety and discomfort (Morrison, 2002). Fugate et al. (2012) share the finding that stress during organisational change could be due to anticipated or actual negative outcomes such as job losses, reduced autonomy, and the transition process, which may lead to extra workloads and generate considerable uncertainty and anxiety. If organisational change results in downsizing, the strain of uncertainty is a natural outcome for survivors who suspect that they may be next in line (Armstrong-Stassen, 2005). This recent theory echoes the earlier theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which amply classifies the responses of the survivors of organisational change as potentially constructive or destructive. Their responses depend on how well they are endowed with, or deprived of, the existence of the trust, sense of justice, empowerment, and job redesign that their organisational culture fosters.

In a situation like this, with an Asian culture that typically observes high power distance, psychological distance is created between superiors and subordinates which could result in information gaps, thus compounding the uncertainty. However, it is poor communication that could result in greater stress (Riolli & Savicki, 2006) as it aggravates uncertainty (Paulsen et al., 2005) and perceptions of injustice (Fugate et al., 2012). If Asian Singaporean employees are not coached to overcome the disadvantage of the Asian indirect communication style, the organisational change process could be hampered by this communication impediment.

Another leadership quality to be adopted to reinforce the positive LMX is ‘authentic leadership’. There is empirical evidence that authentic leadership, a pattern of behaviour that promotes and is inspired by positive psychological capacities, predominantly reflects an even higher-order, four-component construct – self-awareness, balanced decision-making, transparency, and ethical moral reasoning – that can be validly measured (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The most popular definition of authentic leadership is offered by Avolio et al. (2005, pp. xxii-xxiii) who describe authentic leaders as those who:

(a) know who they are and what they believe in; (b) display transparency and consistency between their values, ethical reasoning and actions; (c) focus on developing positive psychological states such as confidence, optimism, hope, and resilience within themselves and [their] associates; (d) are widely known and respected for their integrity.
This version of authentic leadership clearly defines PsyCap’s positive influence. Authentic leadership results in followers’ positive outcomes because it promotes subordinates’ positive PsyCap (Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004). Luthans et al. (2010) and subsequently Peterson et al. (2011), in their longitudinal studies, discovered that employees who had developed high PsyCap relied less on LMX relationships to be successful in their work. However, low PsyCap employees are likely to struggle in the face of adversity and have difficulty maintaining a positive outlook to pursue the path to success. LMX relationships would matter more to them than to their high PsyCap colleagues. Since the goal in PsyCap is to shift organisations towards adopting a caring, empathetic, and honouring approach towards human relationships, the findings suggest that adopting PsyCap variables into the development of organisational leadership could be the factor needed for successful change. This further reinforces the view that an organisation’s leaders should lead according to the ethnic mix involved in the change process. However, the findings also suggest that leaders must have empathy for their employees’ anxieties and must provide an antidote for dealing with such a magnitude of anxieties, as well as meet their need for more information from which to make sense of the changes being implemented.

An appropriate leadership factor could potentially make the difference. According to Avolio et al. (2005), leaders who are truly authentic would be highly transparent and their behaviour would be consistent with their personal values and convictions. Schein (1996, p.61) elaborated that ‘... unless sufficient psychological safety is created, disconfirming information will be denied or in other ways defended against, no survival anxiety will be felt, and consequently no change will take place’ (Schein, 1996, p.61). This means that in order for employees to embrace change, they need to feel that there is safety in changing. This sense of safety is possible, Pandya and Shell (2005) conclude, because authentic leaders possess the character to lead with their hearts, build strong relationships, and live out their values. This is more so in a collectivist culture. Hofstede and Bond (1988), Hofstede (2001) and Brewer and Venaik (2011) concur that Asian employees are best motivated through strong relationships and bonds. The degree of relationship is particularly important during the challenging time of organisational change.

In the context of the Asian Singaporean employee, the concept of Asian paternalistic leadership, with the added value of LMX with PsyCap and authentic leadership, appears to be promising for organisations in Singapore or for organisations with a substantial number
of Asian Singaporean employees. Today, capable leaders could be encouraged by management to double up as internal coaches during upheavals like an organisational change.

2.4.7 The manager-as-coach: a leadership approach

The concept of introducing coaching as a managerial skill has been discussed in the literature since the 1980s (McLean et al., 2005). Today, it is perceived as a necessary capability to enhance the relationship between superiors and subordinates. McLean et al. (2005) emphasise the discovery of actions and power-sharing practices which empower employees to contribute more significantly to productivity compared to the traditional managerial practices of appraisal and evaluation. This practice is more relevant to today’s work environment as the ‘manager-as-coach’ approach fosters relationships around trust on a day-to-day basis which would be most applicable during the time of organisational change.

Evered and Selman (1989) attribute success in coaching to the ability of building a supervisor–subordinate partnership, focusing on goals, developing communication skills which generate actions, giving due respect of the coachee’s individual differences, and the coachee’s willingness to being coached. Managerial behaviour patterns and communication styles affect employee reactions. Today’s organisations recognise the need to incorporate the coaching of employees by managers as a component of organisational success (Ellinger et al., 2010; Gilley et al., 2010). Seligman (2002, p.12) regards coaching as fitting squarely with positive psychology as ‘a psychology of rising to the occasion’. Organisational change makes all staff uncertain, including management, so resilience is needed to manage such circumstances.

Goleman et al. (2002) reinforce the idea that Emotional Intelligence plays a vital role in successful coaching as it is a psychological, interpersonal process, and emotions in a coaching relationship have an effect on learning and development. Howard (2006) elaborates that managers who possess Emotional Intelligence are more likely to have the self-awareness to understand their own motives, and the empathy to perceive the motives of others. They therefore have the capability of establishing social relationships that could positively impact organisational performance.
However, there are other studies that offer a less promising outlook on managers as coaches. Cox et al. (2010, p.3) admit that doubling up as coaches is both difficult and controversial for managers, even for managers with the qualities and qualifications of a coach. Baker-Finch (2011) found that a few managers she was researching, although comfortable when they conducted prepared, formal coaching sessions with their staff, still lacked the confidence or the time to use their coaching skills in daily conversations with their staff. According to Rostron (2009), coaching begins with an assumption of equality, which is typically not the case when managers possess formal authority over their staff. Welman and Bachkirova (2010) further argue that the element of power will always exist in a coaching relationship, yet professional ethics must be observed and the manager-as-coach must respect confidentiality. This implies that whatever is disclosed in a coaching session will not be used against the subordinate (the coachee). However, Riddle and Ting (2006) acknowledge that at times it could be very difficult for the coaching manager to maintain these principles.

In terms of whether the ‘manager-as-coach’ approach is appropriate for Asian Singaporean employees in Singapore, Rosinski (2003) points out that the increasingly popular Western perspective on coaching lacks validity in other parts of the world. This is because ethnic culture has to be taken into account during the coaching process. Therefore, Asian Singaporean employees are more likely to succeed in acquiring self-leadership for effective communication if an appropriate coaching model could be identified for external coaches to adopt. This would increase employees’ chances of establishing bi-directional communication with their managers during challenging organisational changes.

2.4.8 The efficacy of the management-leadership models

Many promising management-leadership models derived from various authorities have been carefully explored in the previous sections. The highlights are summarised below.

1. The available literature on change management normally focuses on organisations’ leadership. For instance, Lewin’s (1943, 1951) ‘Force Field Analysis’, Cummings and Huse’s (1989) ‘eight-phase’ model, and Dunphy and Stace’s (1994) ‘Contingency’ model, do not deal with how to encourage or develop employees’ willingness to accept change.
2. Although there is much to learn from the current literature on communication between management and employees, most has been written about communication in the context of Western society. While there are basic concepts that apply to both Western and Asian employees undergoing organisational change, this study examines whether there are key principles relating specifically to Asian Singaporean employees which have yet to be discovered or publicised. Kanter et al.’s (1992) ‘big three’ model of change deals with individual employee’s behaviour at the ‘revolutionary’ level, but not with their need to communicate with their supervisors, nor with their ineptness in having a candid conversation with their superiors. There are still more leadership authorities who regard communication to be central to leadership (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997; Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Riggio et al., 2003; Kim et al., 2009) and who go to great lengths to ensure that management knows how to deal with or to communicate with employees during a time of change.

3. Dawson (2008) advises that by stimulating employees’ interest and commitment, communication facilitates overcoming resistance to change. Dolphin (2005) posits accurately that communication has to address the queries of the employees, their issues on motivation, and their management of change. Unfortunately, many organisations consistently fail to ensure that their managers and employees are amply updated on the progress of their respective change initiatives and the effect of the changes on them (Allen et al., 2007; Lewis, 2002).

4. The account of Kim and Mauborgne’s (2003) ‘kingpins concept’, which demonstrates the synergistic value of formal–informal leadership, must be studied for organisations’ management to adopt as an integral part of its change strategy.

5. Finally, the potential of the synergistic concept, rephrased as the ‘Asian paternalistic leadership with the added value of LMX with PsyCap and authentic leadership synergy’, could be the ideal solution for Asian Singaporean employees, but may not be within reach yet. Until this concept is firmly established, Asian Singaporean employees need to take ownership of the situation by adopting an interim approach to self-management, be it in a favourable or an unfavourable change context. This also pertains to encouraging employees to learn how to self-lead in order to enhance communication should their managers fall short of the
The models above are likely to create a positive environment in which trust between superiors and their subordinates can be developed. This is the ideal scenario. However, despite the range of training and the coaching programs available to corporate executives, many are not effective, as reflected in the ‘Watson Wyatt Asian Survey’ (see section 1.7). The pressure for appropriate and effective leadership could increase during the demanding phases of organisational change. Whether or not the reason for managers not being effective leaders of change is a deficiency in applying the various leadership models examined thus far, leadership is a factor in successful change. In addition, Asian managers’ cultural characteristics could also be aggravating this scenario.

Morrison and Milliken (2000, p.708) conclude that it is managers who hold on to ‘a set of implicit beliefs’ that results in organisational silence. The culture of organisational silence would certainly stifle communication. They elaborate that organisational silence is the result of managers believing that their employees are untrustworthy, coupled with an organisational culture that reinforces this belief. However, Pinder and Harlos (2001, p.334) describe organisational silence as the ‘withholding of genuine expression about one’s organisational circumstances to persons capable of effecting change’. This is elaborated on and reinforced by Van Dyne et al. (2003), who argue that individual employees’ silence is a response to injustice.

Agyris (2000, p.5) expounds on managers’ ‘theories-in-use’ values: ‘being in control; winning and not losing; suppressing negative feelings, and acting as rationally as possible’. He groups these values together as ‘Model I’. In Model II he proposes the principles of information sharing, being capable of discussing the ‘undiscussables’, and avoiding defensiveness. The key point Agyris is highlighting is that, from his experience, managers who strongly espouse Model II sometimes practise Model I instead, and this has an impact on employees’ ability to accept change. Given this possibility, an organisation’s management determines that in order for every change effort to be successful, it would need to focus on planning and consulting organisational change experts. However, this effort could be crippled if practising Model I instead of Model II is allowed to happen. Bi-
directional communication then becomes a theory which is not put into practice. The practice of Model I and the inclination of Asian Managers towards a paternalistic leadership style may create a situation in which employees become resentful. This may lead to employees’ silence, which in turn is detrimental to their acceptance of organisational change.

Since it has been ascertained that professional managers in organisations sometimes lapse into practising Model I instead of Model II, particularly during the stressful periods of organisational change, the research questions have been deliberately focused on the perspective of the employees’ learned behaviours in applying self-leadership. After all, Fu and Yukl (2000), Higgins, Judge and Ferris (2003), and Seifert and Yukl (2010) all acknowledge that significant attention has been paid to managers' top-down tactics, yet little attention has been paid to subordinates' bottom-up influence on their supervisors. Self-leadership offers enabling characteristics for Asian Singaporean employees to enhance supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication, leading to their acceptance of change. The next section is specifically dedicated to investigate this concept.

2.5  Asian employee self-leadership in promoting bi-directional communication

This chapter has so far ascertained the importance of leadership for successful organisational change yet it is not easy to define leadership or self-leadership. Adler (1997, pp.174-5) comments on leadership in this way:

For example, based on 221 definitions of leadership from the twentieth century, Rost (1991) concluded that leadership has most frequently been seen as rational, management-oriented, male, technocratic, quantitative, cost-driven, hierarchical, short-term, pragmatic, and materialistic. Not surprisingly, many of these listed descriptors reflect some of the core values of American culture.

Likewise, Blunt and Jones (1997) contend that East Asian and African developing countries harness a different perspective pertaining to loyalty, authority, and interpersonal relationships from which the Western leadership models derive. This means that although section 2.4 presents many leadership-management models for promoting bi-directional communication, those models may not be appropriately applied to Asian Singaporean employees.
Figure 2.2 is a conceptual framework for Asian Singaporean employees to consider acquiring to establish bi-directional communication with their leaders. If there is positive LMX, self-leadership would enable them to effectively reciprocate and synergise. Poor leadership, however, such as a leadership style without authentic leadership qualities, would lead to a negative LMX, although self-leadership would still serve to effectively influence the leaders.

Self-leadership would be required when employees begin to lose confidence in their managers. Luthans et al.’s (2004) PsyCap and the capability to demonstrate transparent and open communication, as advocated by Korsgaard et al. (2002), Luthans and Avolio (2003), Avolio and Luthans (2006), and Avolio and Gardner (2005), is needed to enhance self-efficacy when employees begin to doubt their managers or question what the future holds for them.

Furthermore, decades of research and theories have focused on downward influence (the top-down approach), management-leadership, and managerial-leaders’ influence, as attested by Deluga (1990), Yukl and Tracey (1992), Farmer et al. (1997), Kramer and Neale (1998), and more recently by Seifert and Yukl (2010), but little attention has been paid to upward influence (the bottom-up approach) in which subordinates attempt to influence their supervisors. More specifically, very little research has been conducted on
today’s frequent transformational changes, when upward influence of transformational leadership could be applied (Cable & Judge, 2003; Deluga, 1990). Therefore, this research has developed a focus on exploring the role of coaching Asian Singaporean employees who are undergoing organisational change to self-lead and to establish supervisor-subordinate bi-directional communication.

The concept of self-leadership originated from the practice of self-management and specifically relates to the process of influencing oneself (Manz & Neck, 2004; Manz & Sims, 2001). Self-leadership is conceptualised in the following three individual-level strategies (Houghton & Neck, 2002) for enhancing personal effectiveness:

- Behaviour-focused strategies
- Natural reward strategies
- Constructive thought strategies.

As the term ‘personal effectiveness’ implies, it is applicable to both management and employees alike. This concept is appealing to any organisation confronted with the prospect of organisational change. Every organisation these days is increasingly pressured to enhance its performance in the face of the increasingly challenging business environment. Organisational change can be a strategic plan, although during the phases of this change, ironically, performance sometimes dips owing to the challenges which typically accompany organisational change. While the need for the type of leadership relevant to successful organisational transformation has already been discussed, the type of employee self-help, specifically self-leadership, is to be explored at this juncture.

Self-leadership originated in the United States and is still best suited to the American culture, which practises low power distance with individuals who have the freedom to practise autonomous self-leadership (Dickson et al., 2003). Nevertheless, this concept of self-leadership seems too promising not to be considered for Asian Singaporean employees. The application of self-leadership to cultures with a high power distance will likely result in an acceptable Asian version of restricted or contingent self-leadership (Dickson et al., 2003). A salient factor which warrants close scrutiny comes from Druskat and Wolff (1999), who discovered that face-to-face developmental peer appraisal in a self-leading team promotes more open communication and a team culture. Even though this seems to relate to superior–subordinate bi-directional communication, this kind of work
environment could possibly foster such a positive communication culture. Paradoxically, Kirkman and Shapiro (1997, 2001) observe that employees in collectivist cultures are more open to self-leading teams when compared with those in individualistic cultures. Neck and Manz (1992) postulate that self-efficacy is a major component of self-leadership. Earley (1989) discovered that employees from countries with a high level of collectivism tend to develop group efficacy more readily than self-efficacy.

In Asian culture, self-concept is a sense of self with a consideration of other individuals and reciprocal exchange (Su et al., 1999). Hofstede (2007) advocates that, on account of more recent findings from Asian and European researchers on the renowned five-factor model (FFM), there is a need to expand the model with a sixth factor, ‘Dependence on Others’, to ensure the model is culturally universal. Therefore, if each Asian Singaporean employee could foster such a team culture, there is the potential for trust and empowerment to be generated which could result in open communication. Therefore, this research has evolved to focus on and to explore the role of coaching Asian Singaporean employees who are undergoing organisational change to self-lead so that they can improve supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication.

### 2.6 Coaching Asian Singaporean employees to self-lead in promoting bi-directional communication

This section investigates coaching as an enabler for Asian Singaporean employees to self-lead, particularly during the stressful phases of organisational change, when their managers might not adopt the appropriate style of leadership for the situation. Rock and Donde (2008a, p.10) indicate that ‘Change is pain: any kind of major change initiative requires people to apply focus and effort, to pay attention to bring about change’, Rolfe (2010, p.291), and ‘Change is a constant requiring a coach’. Wasylyshyn (2003), Bluckert (2005), and Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) consider the coaching relationship as a vehicle of change. In the Asian context, a positive coaching relationship promotes trust which is of supreme importance for coaching to be successful. In contrast, Thompson et al. (2008) disclose in their studies that 65 percent of unsuccessful coaching programs were caused by poor coach-coachee relationships. Furthermore, Nangalia and Nangalia (2010) point out that most coaching models derive from the West and are based on Western thinking, which
was identified earlier as being different from Asian thinking. They conclude that coaching needs to be adapted for the influences of Asian social hierarchy. As stated in Section 2.4.8, Rostron (2009) believes that the Western coaching model begins with an assumption of equality, which typically is not the case when managers coach their staff, and even less so with hierarchy-conscious Asian managers.

Pardey (2011) notes that the Institute of Leadership and Management conducted a research in 2010-2011, and out of the 250 organisations that responded, 78 percent used coaching, and of which 65 percent used external coaches. It is clear that the organisations’ preference is for external coaches. While internal coaches have the advantage of understanding the culture and climate of the organisational change, they might also feel inhibited when offering frank feedback. On the coaches’ part, issues of trust and confidentiality are of primary concern (Strumpf, 2002; St. John-Brooks, 2010; Maxwell, 2011). Blackman (2006) affirms the need for an environment of trust between the coach and the organisations’ employees in creating an effective coaching environment. In this regard, external coaches could be preferred by employees over internal coaches, particularly in managing issues arising from the sensitivity of supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication. The main advantage of having external coaches is their detachment from the issues confronting the employees. Not being in the organisations’ circle of influence allows a sense of objectivity to be maintained, because there is of a chance that coaches can be influenced by political undercurrents. Moreover, employees have the freedom to disclose their problems and difficulties with a sense of total security and safety. All that remains is for coaches to be thoroughly familiar with the organisation’s cultural characteristics in order to work effectively with the targeted age group of the Asian Singaporean coachees.

2.6.1 Cultural characteristics in coaching

Hofstede (1980, 1991) identifies four dimensions of cultural variance: individualism versus collectivism, power distance, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Individualism/collectivism addresses the issue of identity and as well as how it deals with the power of the group over the individual. Ady (1998, p.112) describes collectivism as ‘individual people holding their goals as second to those of a group of
people to which they belong’. Englehart (2000, p.549) specifies that ‘Asian cultures are characterized by a set of values that include obedience to authority, intense allegiance to groups, and a submergence of individual identity in collective identity.’ This practice of collectivism may be beneficial for employees if there is a need to foster team bonding to overcome the formation of cliques, or when the change becomes disconcerting for the individual.

The next dimension that can disrupt the flow of the needed supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication is power distance. The term ‘power distance’ was coined in Mulder’s (1976; 1977) research into subordinates’ emotional distance from their supervisors. It pertains to how willing the less powerful accept or expect inequality. Generally speaking, Asians are more willing to accept inequality in the workplace, be it due to seniority in terms of age or tenure. Morrison and Milliken (2000) assert that managers who adopt the high power distance and collectivistic culture are likely to create a climate of silence. This subordinate reaction could potentially reinforce the inhibiting communication tendencies of a high power distance culture during the periods of stress and uncertainty when there is a need to seek more information during the transitional phases of organisational change.

Another dimension that might affect the reaction or response of the subordinate is ‘masculinity versus femininity’. Hofstede (2001, p.297) defines these roles as: ‘Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life’. Managers who practise the masculine version of Asian paternal leadership (without the benevolence) could be inclined to impose the direction of the organisational change on their employees. A society which practises masculinity emphasises assertiveness, performance, possessions, and the success of social position. In the case of a female-centric society, it is tenderness, relationships, and the value of life that prevail. The concern of this continuum of values is that it could impact the Asian manager-leader’s style in communicating change. For employees undergoing change there would be the need to acquire information that made sense in order to overcome their resistance to the change. The organisation’s objectives could be favoured over understanding the factors underlying the resistance to change. There would be an inclination towards avoiding uncertainty in favour of known, tested and
proven systems, and norms. This would be an issue for the affected employees to contend with.

Hofstede (2001, p.29) describes the dimension of ‘uncertainty avoidance’ as the level of stress within a society that is confronted with an unknown future. In the context of the organisation undergoing change, there would be people who are highly anxious due to the uncertainty. This dimension of Asian culture, as in other cultures, will be a factor contributing to the way in which Asian Singaporean employees avoid or resist such unknowns.

One cultural aspect of organisational change in Singapore can be interpreted from the works of Hofstede (2001) in which he states that employees may choose to conceal their true feelings just to conform to group behaviour or to defer to authority, whether that organisational change brings about conflict or uncertainty. Although much of the literature on change management correctly emphasises communication as a prerequisite for success in a time of change, it typically takes the form of information or instructions flowing down from management to the employee: ‘two-way process telling-and-selling’ (Kirkpatrick, 2001, p.37). This is the crux of the problem. The principle of communication should also take into account ‘bi-directional communication’; that is, communication that comes from employees after they receive instructions and explanations from management. This is because communication is not a one-way process. When management does not actively elicit bi-directional communication, it has to assume that in the absence of communication from employees, all is well; that the employees have accepted management’s instructions and explanations. This approach is flawed because, in most situations, silence does not mean agreement. Jolke and Duhan (2000) attest that bi-directional communication is the foundational element for achieving successful change. According to Yang (1998), a positive reciprocal exchange perspective corresponds with the subordinates’ perception of the nature of LMX. Communication comes in the form of a well-guarded response in accordance with cultural practices if LMX is not perceived positively.

Hofstede (2001) includes long-term versus short-term orientation as the fifth dimension of culture. This dimension relates to people’s efforts for the present or the future, and is based on the Chinese Value Survey (CVS) developed by Bond (1988). Its fundamentals are drawn from Confucianism, also known as ‘Confucian dynamism’. Hofstede (1984, 1991) defines long-term orientation as ‘the degree to which people’s actions are driven by long-
term goals and results’. Employees from a society that favours long-term orientation are willing to forgo the present goals for a perceived gain in the future. Therefore, when sense and purpose are clearly communicated by supervisors, employees will be most likely to reciprocate with their loyalty and commitment. This understanding prepares the coach to remind the Asian Singaporean coachee of their individual ‘5 Cs’ and their career aspirations, and coach them to communicate with their supervisor to identify the meaning of the change for a better future. This openness is possible when the coach is exemplary in establishing coach-coachee bi-directional communication despite the possibility that an Asian coachee could regard the coach as a teacher or an elder to be respected (Ng, 2013).

Since it has been ascertained that Asian managers or supervisors in a more masculine and high power distant culture could be more inclined towards Agyris’s (2000) model of ‘being in control; winning and not losing’ (Model I), they are less likely to gravitate towards ‘advocating the principles of information sharing, being capable of discussing the “undiscussables” and avoiding defensiveness’ (Model II). It is unlikely that organisational culture would promote two-way communication if management had no such tendencies. Two-way communication serves to reduce the necessity of the self-leadership coaching, needed to equip Asian Singaporean employees to better manage the situation for an outcome that is mutually positive for themselves and for management.

Hall (1959, p.217) comments that ‘culture is communication, and communication is culture’. For instance, Asians prefer communication techniques that are indirect and implicit for promoting harmony and saving face (Zhang, 2008). This cultural challenge in communication is evident in the application of 360° assessment in Asia. In the words of Heath (2010, p.99), ‘360° assessment is a dangerous weapon in the hands of an untrained user’. The Asian Singaporean employees may not be in the context of conducting a 360° assessment on their superiors, but in the context of change when the need to be as candour arises in their communication on matters that are sensitive and could relate to the management. This aspect of Asian culture could be the key factor standing in the way of candid and open communication between Asian Singaporean employees and their supervisors during phases of organisational change, and leads to a possible viable solution: applying coaching as a necessary intervention to enable Asian Singaporean employees to overcome this cultural disadvantage.
2.6.2 A coaching model for Asian Singaporean employees

The need to coach Asian Singaporean employees to enhance their ability to establish an open dialogue with their supervisors has been comprehensively examined in the previous sections. The most appropriate coaching model for Asian Singaporean employees will now be considered.

Edwards (2003, p.298) offers this definition of coaching:

A great coach will draw on his/her expertise to facilitate and accelerate individual learning and dramatically increase the personal effectiveness of the coachee. Coaching delivers results when a relationship is established between coach and coachee that is based on mutual respect, the intent of the coach and the effectiveness of the communication used. Essentially, coaching is a highly personalised one-to-one personal development programme.

In searching for an appropriate coaching model that is simple to implement, and given the very brief, yet effectively used, process for communication, the researcher has decided to apply the globally renowned GROW model. This model, based on the works of Fine (2010), Whitmore (2009), and Alexander (2006), offers an appropriate framework to enhance self-leadership, and thereby to enhance communication skills, during each coaching session.

The GROW acronym stands for:

Goal Setting – What does the person being coached desire as an outcome?

Reality – How does the coachee perceive the current situation?

Options – What alternative strategies are available to the coachee?

Will – What does the individual coachee commit to?

Alexander (2006) and Whitmore (2009) mention that the GROW model is widely known and widely practised in the coaching world. According to Alexander and Renshaw (2005) the value of the model is that it involves the basic skills of questioning, listening, summarising, and offering feedback and suggestions. The popularity of this approach with organisations is due to its simplicity and its relevance to the workplace.
Another reason for its popularity is that GROW takes a non-directive approach to coaching, which means that the coach depends on coachees’ creativity and determination to come up with their own solution. Megginson and Clutterbuck (2009) share their experience that GROW is not easy to practise when the context – the ‘Topic’ – has not been identified. The model can be adapted to identify the context of the Asian Singaporean by adding ‘T’ – the ‘Topic’ – to the original GROW model. Therefore, the ‘T.GROW’ model will be the initial concept this study adopts.

2.6.3 The coaching process for employees

The second ‘T’ to be added into the T.GROW model is ‘Trust’; a critical element not only for Asians, but also for developing a viable coaching model for Asian Singaporean employees. The GROW model now becomes T.T.GROW and incorporates the new elements of the Topic (context) and Trust.

Trust is a critical element to be applied to the Asian coaching process. Lam (2016) encourages the coach in coaching the Asians to build a relationship based on trust. Although the element of trust is not part of the recommended coaching process, establishing trust between coach and coachee is considered an important step. This is because trust is a critical aspect of the coaching relationship (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; De Haan & Sillis, 2012; O’Broin & Palmer, 2010; Passmore & Gibbes, 2007). Section 2.4.6.2 Mitigation from LMX theory for Asian managers, stated that Hofstede (2001) and Brewer and Venaik (2011) concur that Asian employees are best motivated through strong relationships and bonds. In Section 2.4.6, trust is due to the Asian paternalistic–LMX leadership synergy, in which Wilson et al. (2010) declare that employees have a willingness to share important information with their leaders after a high LMX relationship has been established.

The paradox of Asian culture that could pose a challenge to organisational change is that while Asian culture has collectivist beliefs in relationships and team bonding, the research conducted by the AsiaBarometer Survey (2006) shows that a major impediment is that Singaporeans are one of the least trusting people in Asia. One of the survey questions – ‘Generally, do you think people can be trusted, or do you think that you can’t be too
careful in dealing with people? – shows that only 31.6 percent of Singaporeans think that people can be trusted.

Therefore, to encourage an Asian coachee to be candid and to accept the truth of the situation, building trust between coach and coachee is critically important, and should not be overlooked when searching for an Asian Singaporean-appropriate coaching solution. In Section 2.6, it was reported that Blackman (2006) affirmed that trust between coaches and an organisations’ employees is vital for creating an effective coaching environment, and that an external coach would have a clear advantage over an internal coach in this respect.

2.6.3.1 Topic – defining the context for the GROW model

The context for the GROW model in this thesis is the enhancement of supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication by self-led Asian Singaporean employees. This context is complex as coaching certainly has to be contextualised for specific bi-directional communication during the stressful periods of organisational change. Neck and Manz (2010, p.4) broadly define self-leadership as ‘the process of influencing oneself’. Coaching instils in employees the need to focus on ‘influencing oneself to establish bi-directional communication’ with supervisors. If the context of the organisational change does not align with Asian Singaporeans’ career aspirations, each employee must be able to engage in an open, respectful dialogue befitting an Asian. Chew and Lim (1995) add support to this when describing the Confucian concept of authority, which refers to showing respect or reverence to others, particularly to elders or to people in a position above an individual.

Chen and Chung (1994) enlighten on the concept of guanxi, the need to cultivate long-term relationships from the start of a relationship, whether in a business, family, work, or social context. Hwang (1997) elaborates on ren, the practice of forbearance, adopting self-control, and suppressing one’s emotions and impulses. In modern Singapore, Asian Singaporean coachees could easily adopt Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) ‘emotional intelligence’ to align with this Asian practice. Salovey and Mayer (1990, p.189) define their term ‘emotional intelligence’ as ‘the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions’. This definition closely aligns with the Asian Confucian concept of ren. With an emphasis on guanxi and
ren, especially if the coachee has an Asian supervisor, such an approach to coaching may offer a potential solution. Incorporating into the coaching program the elements of psychological capital (PsyCap), self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience seems to be a promising solution for the Asian Singaporean.

2.6.3.2 Goal setting – the coachee’s desired outcome
The coach will ensure each coachee’s progress towards self-awareness. Neck and Manz (2010) postulate that self-awareness guides other self-leadership behaviours such as self-goal-setting. This serves well for both the coach and the coachee in determining the effectiveness of the coaching. According to Grant (2012), coaching ‘effectiveness’ is described as the coachee showing evidence of proximal or distal outcomes. Proximal outcomes are achieved when the coachee experiences behavioural, attitudinal, and cognitive changes. In the case of distal outcomes, the coachee acquires functional improvements which may lead to personal or organisational success. The coach could enhance this ‘effectiveness’ from the ‘reality’ of the current situation with the coachee. This will then be established as the goal during the coaching session as well as the attempt of the coachee to apply it at the workplace.

2.6.3.3 Reality – the coachee’s perception of the current situation
Through coaching conversations, coaches assist coachees to objectively determine the reality of the status of the current bi-directional communication with their supervisors. Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005), Whitmore (2007), and Parker, Hall, and Kram (2008) describe a typical coaching conversation as using questioning techniques to arrive at self-awareness, offering feedback and feedforward, reframing and reflection, learning and the development of relationships that support learning, and finally being action-oriented and solution-focused. The concept of yin-yang complements this approach – the white dot representing opportunity within the black area of danger (the crisis of organisational change); refer to Figure 1.1 – and can be a very empowering attitude to instil in the coachee, thus reinforcing the concept of PsyCap. The Indian philosophy of yoni-linga possesses certain aspects that are similar to yin-yang philosophy. According to Ding (2009), Linga refers to the aroused male sex organ which represents the half-unity of consciousness while Yoni is the female sex organ which forms the structure in which the
Linga rises. Yoni-Linga unity represents the positive and negative polarity, which means: 1) two opposites are the basic elements, and 2) the opposites are interdependent, intersupportive, interactive, and intertwined.

2.6.3.4 Options – generating alternative strategies for the coachee

Coaches will elicit from coachees several alternatives towards the goal or the solutions. Coachees are encouraged to apply Buzan’s (2005) concept of mind-mapping as a visual tool. Mueller, Johnston and Bligh (2002) were able to demonstrate how mind-mapping techniques are more effective in developing appropriate business skills when compared with non-visual techniques. Buzan’s mind-mapping techniques have become part of the national curriculum in Singapore, increasing the probability of coachees being able to capitalise on this familiar tool to formulate multiple options.

2.6.3.5 Will – the individual coachee’s commitment

Coaches help coachees to become aware of their own career aspirations and to identify the value of how the current change could bring them closer to their personal vision. Coaches discuss with their coachees the need to focus on valuable and controllable aspects during the change process, such as shifting away from the likely unpleasant aspects that change could bring about (Manz & Neck, 2004; Manz & Sims, 2001). Peterson and Miller (2005) and Gregory et al. (2008) suggest that the coachees’ commitment is critical for effective coaching, particularly for completing the challenging goals discussed with the coaches. Therefore the coachees’ sense of attachment to their organisation has a possible bearing on their willingness to invest their time and effort in the coaching process (Baron & Morin, 2009). However, the most important motivational factor lies in the fact, as Bandura (2008, p.167) declares, that ‘unless people believe they can produce desired effects through their actions they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties’.

2.7 Chapter summary

There is a dearth of information in the literature concerning the characteristics and peculiarities of Asian Singaporean employees. Furthermore, the vast amount of literature
written about supervisor–subordinate communication focuses little, if at all, on communication during times of change. The other major shortfall in the literature is that most discussions are of limited help because they are not written in the context of the Asian Singaporean employee. This literature review suggests that there is a void regarding effective communications in the context of the Asian business environment, particularly communications during times of organisational change. The findings of the literature review, however, do suggest the need for a more collaborative approach to change, with greater collaboration between employers and their employees, and between supervisors and their subordinates.

In summary, the literature discussed within this chapter suggests the need for better bi-directional communication between superiors and their Asian Singaporean employees. Improved communication could be a way of increasing the employees’ willingness to adapt and to move forward during a time of organisational change, as well as increasing the positive impact of coaching on employees to achieve positive changes.
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology for examining the role of self-leadership coaching for improving the bi-directional communication of older Gen X and Baby Boomer Singaporean employees undergoing organisational change. The chapter details the methodology based on ontological and epistemological fit, so as to identify the most appropriate paradigm and research methods.

3.2 The research paradigms

It is important for the researcher to be explicit in identifying the research paradigm right at the beginning of the research process. This is to provide clarity of the objectives and the process for both the researcher and the reader alike. As reflected in Figure 3.1, the positivist paradigm is characterised by the development of hypotheses, empirical testing and analysis of descriptive and inferential data on a phenomenon. It premises on the existence of \textit{a priori} fixed relationships within phenomena, which is not the case in this research.

An interpretivist paradigm is used as the lens for examining phenomena. Qualitative methods are used to gather data within this methodological framework, as elaborated in Figure 3.1, and a deductive approach is used to analyse this data. This means that the researcher attempts to interpret meaning as the participants associate their personal experiences within the context of organisational change. Yin (2003) advises inexperienced researchers to use the case studies approach where some theoretical perspectives already exist. Since the single-case approach has its inherent weaknesses such as no possible comparison with other cases, the researcher will not only use the case studies approach, but will adopt the multiple-case study approach, in which one case from each representative of an organisation will be carefully studied in the first round of data collection. The second round of data collection is to ensure data credibility and dependability. Therefore, the methodology to be adopted in this research will be a multiple-case study methodology using an interpretivist paradigm.
Figure 3.1: Positivist and Interpretivist perspectives of research.

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985)

How each individual employee reacts to or responds to change is a very personal matter. Dahlberg et al. (2001, p.51), declare that ‘objective findings ... are of limited value. Understanding other humans and their existence can never be complete without the perspective of the subjective experience’.

The current research examines the impact of the following factors on the responses of older employees undergoing change: the Asian culture, and each individual’s positive psychological capital, for example self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. Therefore, qualitative research would be the most appropriate approach in this context, when the
researcher needs to understand holistically individuals’ experiences and gain a perception of their respective situations.

Hence, the multiple-case study approach will be utilised to capture individuals’ multiple realities. The reason for using the multiple-case study methodology is because of the need to apply ‘empirical research that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 1994, p.13), as well as to ‘include a method that is comprehensive, with the logic of planning, gathering and data analysis’. The identity of the participants will remain confidential as their participation is voluntary and they are free to opt out of the project at any time.

3.3 The data collection approach

Observations and informal, in-depth interviews to gather qualitative information (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000) are more relevant as a data collection approach in this context. The method chosen will be conducted according to accepted interviewing protocols to achieve results that are credible and dependable (refer to Section 3.5.2). Essentially, two types of data will be collected: data from primary sources and data from secondary sources.

3.3.1 Primary data source

The following sections provide the rationales for different approaches.

3.3.1.1 Case Studies

The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust. At the same time the rationale for single-case designs usually cannot be satisfied by multiple cases. The unusual or rare case, the critical case, and the revelatory case are all likely to involve only single cases, by definition. (Yin 1994, p.45)

Creswell (2003) appears to support this approach as he suggests that, in order to obtain perspective, qualitative research has to utilise a wide selection of open-ended data, meaningful sampling, and the respective individual’s interpretation of the research
findings. Below are the ontological and epistemological arguments that reinforce the use of case studies as a qualitative methodology.

**Determining existing realities (Ontology)**
Eisner (1985) advocates that qualitative researchers need to pay closer attention to, and recognise the individuality of, personality and the attributes of the individual involved in the research process.

**Knowledge and understanding (Epistemology)**
The researcher’s chief objective is to obtain pertinent information to formulate a coaching program that would be effective in helping Asian Singaporean employees go through the process of change. This would be achieved by way of friendly and spontaneous two-way conversations between the researcher and each of the research subjects.

**Suitability of the case study approach**
According to Miller (1991), the case study approach is appropriate if the research indicates the following key aspects:

i) A relatively in-depth analysis of a single instance of the phenomenon that is being investigated.

ii) The investigator has to interview individuals or companies to gain insights into human behaviour.

iii) The discovery or uncovering of unique features and common traits in the subject or subjects under study.

To design an effective case study, Yin (1994, p.64) lists the following protocol elements:

i) An overview of the project (project objectives and case study issues).

ii) Field procedures (credentials and access to sites).

iii) Questions (specific questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection).

iv) A guide for the report (an outline, format for the narrative).

**The nature and purpose of interviews**
Research interviews have been regarded as the most frequent and most appropriately used approach despite the availability of other useful techniques ranging from case studies to
observation of participants (Creswell, 2007; Silverman & Marvati, 2008). This is possibly due to the fact that interviewing can generate useful facts and data from the participant’s world under study for the applied purposes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale (1996, p.1) argues that the qualitative research interview is regarded as neither an objective nor a subjective methodology because it is primarily concerned with subjective interactions and ‘objectivity in itself is a rather subjective notion’.

When the final outcome of this research is about discovering whether Singaporean employees need, and could benefit from, a suitable coaching solution, the interview appears to be the most relevant starting point. Targum (2011) and Weiss (1994) maintain that the researcher has to be clear that the nature of qualitative research interviews pertain to establishing facts and gathering data. The researcher-as-interviewer has to ensure that the interview process is effective in soliciting information, hence the first step is for the interviewer to focus on building rapport with the participants (MacKinnon et al., 2009).

Haworth (2006) cautions that, by virtue of the role of an interviewer in asking questions, power is naturally vested in the interviewer. However, Kvale (2006) asserts that interviewees could possibly express what they think the interviewer wants to hear, and subtly mislead the interviewer. Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009) offer the solution that, to elicit the interviewee’s personal experiences and issues truthfully, the interviewer must be capable of building a rapport with the interviewee during the research interview so as to establish a relationship built on trust.

The next step in soliciting truthful information from the interviewee is to adopt a mindset of neutrality, and demonstrating empathy and reassurance where appropriate (Haynes, 2006). Together with the willingness to engage in active and supportive listening (which means restating or paraphrasing the interviewee’s replies), this process will encourage fruitful in-depth discussion (Baxter & Babbie, 2003). Murphy and Dingwall (2003) believe that science is the attitude of the mind, hence they argue that demonstrating a mindset of neutrality is the most important function of the interviewer.

Therefore, when a qualitative researcher approaches the interview with an open and reflexive mindset, it is argued that a high probability of an open and in-depth reflection exists; an interaction which could potentially result in a positive psychological change for the interviewee, while at the same time providing valuable data which strengthens the
validity of the data (Birch & Miller, 2000). This would potentially pave the way for an effective coaching session. This approach is systematic and professional, it certainly promotes effective exchanges, and it encourages interviewees to express their thoughts freely. Furthermore, the interviewer is able to listen objectively without being biased.

To ensure that the interviews lead to an accurate account of the interviewees’ real-life world, a semi-structured interview format with a convergent interviewing technique (Dick, 2000) was adopted. Dick (1990, p.2) described ‘convergent interviewing’ as ‘a way of collecting qualitative information about people’s attitudes and beliefs through the use of interviews’.

This convergent interviewing technique satisfies the criteria for methodological soundness in establishing internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The terms ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ are typically associated with quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established the gold standard in setting the criterion for validity as having ‘true value’ and ‘credibility’, and subsequently, Guba and Lincoln (1989) deemed validity as having ‘authenticity’. Internal validity refers to the object of measurement being effective based on the outcomes of the study within the context of the participants in their respective organisations. External validity pertains to the object of measurement being effective from the results of the research applied to other employees in their respective organisations. According to Joppe (2002, p.1), reliability is:

…the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability, and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

Rege and Nair (2004) reinforce the notion that convergent interviewing is highly suitable for exploratory, inductive research. Up to this point, the current research process has adopted the major elements of the convergent interviewing technique, which is its process for selecting participants and undertaking the interviews. All that remains is the third element which is to repeatedly apply the same process to each round of interviews until all interviews have been completed. The opportunity to verify the answers collected from the first round of the interview is taken during the coaching sessions. This iterative approach is typically adopted in action research, and is advantageous in some cases because, as Rao
and Perry (2003, p. 237) argue, it is an ‘in-depth interviewing technique with a structured data analysis process’. Figures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 summarise the entire process of data gathering, analysis (incorporating the concept of iteration reinforced with reflexivity), and further consultations of literature, to achieve the required quality of data.

**Figure 3.2: Convergent Interview Process**
Adapted from: Dick(1990, p. 3).

**Figure 3.3: Data Collection and Analysis with Convergent Interview Concept**
Source: Developed for this research
When the interview process is complete, Walsh and Downe (2006) advise the researcher to use self-reflection to capture intuitive perceptions and afterthoughts about what the interviewee says. Cope (2009) reports that many researchers transcribe their interviews because it offers them the opportunity to reflect and re-examine the information, leading potentially to richer contextualised results.

### 3.3.1.2 Sampling choices

*Reasons for choosing Singapore*

Singaporeans living in Singapore are the subject of this study. Singapore was specifically chosen because in many ways it is a unique country and its people have undergone a unique journey. Since 1966, one factor that has contributed positively to creating an effective Singapore education system has been the use of the English language. The late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, founding Prime Minister of Singapore, in his book *My Lifelong Challenge: Singapore’s Bilingual Journey* (Lee, 2012, p.59), wrote: ‘With barely 700 sq km of land, agriculture was out of the question’. Lee argued that trade and industry were the way for Singapore to achieve success. However, to attract investors to Singapore so that they would set up manufacturing plants, the Singaporean people would have to speak English. Hence, since the end of World War Two, the use of the English language in Singapore has spread. English has become the language of international diplomacy, the language of science and technology, and the language of international finance and
commerce. Consequently, Lee argued in 1966 that Singaporeans would have more opportunities if they developed a strong mastery of English (Lee, 2012).

The adoption and widespread use of English seems to have had an impact on other cultures too. Hofstede (1997, p. 42) suggests that the language used in a culture has a bearing on the power distance of that culture. For instance, the Germanic languages which can be found in the The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Norway, and certainly English-speaking countries, are medium to low power distance cultures. Power distance and its impact were examined in Chapter 2, Sections 2.3.1, 2.4.4, 2.4.6, and 2.6.1. In the context of Singapore, it seems that the widespread adoption of English has positively contributed to Singaporeans to overcome its political and social challenges and to achieve its economic objectives.

Adopting English has also impacted the diversity of Singapore’s Asian culture. It is argued that the use of English has had a strong influence on the degree of ‘Asian-ness’ of Singaporeans. The process of learning English changes and shapes mindsets as it enculturates English language adopters too. The use of the English language is not only capable of shaping beliefs and concepts, it is also capable of influencing cognitive processes (Lucy, 1992a; Nelson, 1996; Bowerman & Levinson, 2001). Therefore, for Singaporeans who adopt English in the very early years of their life, it is argued that the impact is that it has contributed to the nation’s economic success, by shaping their thinking and affecting their perceived degree of ‘Asian-ness’. The explanation of the impact on the degree of Asian-ness was explained in Chapter 1 section 1.4.1.

The researcher will also examine the level of power distance of participants in the research interviews. Power distance and Asian-ness are two dimensions specifically chosen to examine because of their impact on the quality of bi-directional communication between supervisors and their Asian Singaporean subordinates. It is expected that a better understanding of these characteristics will provide greater clarity for determining whether employees undergoing organisational change require coaching intervention as a means of improving communications with their supervisor. Having undertaken extensive literature reviews, in which the gaps have been identified, the researcher now seeks new knowledge through research. Singapore was chosen because it provides the “home” advantage for the researcher to use as a test-bed for developing an appropriate Asian model for coaching self-leadership so as to improve supervisor-subordinate bi-directional communication. The
lessons from this study can then be used to inform a more general model that could be used in the broader Asian region.

This section will summarise and justify the adoption of the strategies and the methodology used in the conduct of the research.

Components of the Asian Singaporean factor

The composition of Singapore’s total workforce in Figure 3.5 is taken from the website of the Ministry of Manpower (2012).

![Figure 3.5: Composition of Singapore’s Total Workforce](image)

As at December 2011, Singapore’s total workforce was 3.02 million, excluding foreign domestic workers. Residents (Singapore citizens [SCs] and Permanent Residents [PRs]) formed the majority of the workforce at 67 percent, with foreign workers making up the remaining 33 percent. More than half of the resident workforce was made up of professionals, managers, executives, and technicians (PMET) (Ministry of Manpower 2012).

The term ‘residents’ refers to SCs as well as PRs. This research focuses only on the Asian SCs. According to the Singapore Department of Statistics, at the end of June 2013 (Table
1.1), Singapore’s total population was 5.4 million, of which 3.31 million were Singapore citizens. The ethnic composition of the total population at that time was 74.2 percent Chinese, 13.3 percent Malay, 9.1 percent Indian, and ‘others’ at 3.3 percent. It is inferred from these figures that the workplace has a similar composition which makes up of the Singaporean workforce. Past research on Singaporean employees, detailed in the 2012 Towers Watson Global Workforce Study (GWS, 2012), found that Singaporean employees are less engaged with and less loyal to their employers compared to their peers in other parts of the world. During periods of uncertainty, this situation is likely to be aggravated. Therefore, this gives the researcher the added motivation to pursue the current research, and certainly there will be new evidence for both employers and employees to consider.

3.3.1.3 Research participants

Yin (1994) advises that 10 participants would be regarded as sufficient to offer compelling support for the research. The companies the participants worked for were selected purely for the purpose of the DBA research requirement. The targeted group of participants were professionals from across diverse industries, from the 2,500 local and foreign-based multinationals (MNCs) operating in Singapore. The researcher decided not to target the Singapore civil service due to its unique corporate culture, which may not have been suitable for the purposes of this research. The reason for excluding the civil service is because it has a ‘bureaucratic’ corporate culture which perceives organisations as ‘machines’ (Morgan, 1986). A more recent study on the Singapore civil service shows that it still retained this corporate culture (Low, 2005). The implication here is that communication is less open in this kind of organisation which tends to have uni-directional communication, that is, a top-down and procedurally governed practice. This type of corporate culture is likely to limit the impact of coaching, and since the aim of this research is to examine whether coaching improves employees’ acceptance of change, the culture would negate the purpose of the research. Yeung’s (2000) study confirms that such a bureaucratic culture exists in Singapore. Today, although the civil service has made a concerted effort to be more open, the structure of its hierarchy and the bureaucratic nature of public organisations tend to reduce bi-directional communication compared to the private sector. Hence, only private sector employees were considered in the sample choice.
The researcher’s original intention was to use focus groups for the research, comprising employees from the target organisations. However, for consistency and from the experience derived from the first batch of twelve interviewees which resulted in seven coachees being coached, a decision was made to focus on a further round of interviews to validate the data collection model.

The first round of recruiting interviewees, in March-April 2014, used an email blitz to these targeted MNCs organisations with a letter of invitation (Appendix A). This process was repeated three times, and as a result a total of more than thirty responses were received. These responses were then examined and a friendly rapport-building, pre-interview telephone conversation was undertaken to verify that the participants were truly Asian Singaporeans of the older Gen X to the Baby Boomer generations (45 to 65 years old). The next step was to ensure that the participants clearly understood the purpose of the research and the process involved. Most important of all was for them to go through the consent form (Appendix B) to understand that their participation was purely on a voluntary basis and at any point in time they were free to opt out.

Out of the more than thirty respondents, twelve qualified participants were interviewed over the telephone for a session of about 30-40 minutes. Some participants received further phone calls to clarify issues raised by them in the first interview. This idea of completing the interview within a 40-minute session derives from the suggested protocol of Yin (1994) and reinforced by Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004).

In the same way that reliability is utilised in quantitative research, transferability and dependability relate to qualitative research. Polit and Hungler (1999, p.717) describe transferability as ‘the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings or groups’. Therefore the second target group was identified by emailing the same letter to several local and foreign-based MNCs operating in Singapore, but instead of selecting one participant from multiple organisations as in Round 1, several participants were identified from one or two responding organisations for Round 2 by their own human resource department. The responding organisations were then followed up with a personal call. The objective was to gather another group of seven Asian Singaporean interviewees/coachees from the older Gen X to the Baby Boomer generations (45 to 65 years old) to confirm or disconfirm the emerging themes derived from the first sample group. The final actual qualified participants’ details are in Appendix D.
3.3.1.4 The interview questions

The interview questions (see Appendix C) posed provide a degree of flexibility so that the participants themselves are able to ask questions as they want.

a) How well have you been communicating with your supervisor/s?

b) What are the factors affecting your ability to discuss the impact of the current organisational change on you?

c) Describe how you would initiate a discussion with your superior to overcome an issue you may be faced with during a period of change.

d) Has there ever been a situation when you feel you could discuss openly your problems with your superior? Explain.

e) What would you need to help you to discuss with your superiors concerning any problems that you may face?

f) What will you need from management to help you to take the challenge of change?

gh) What changes would you suggest to management if you have a chance regarding the changes that are taking place in your company?

h) What changes would you like to see in yourself so that you can meet the challenges before you?

i) What kind of support have you experienced in your work that has been most helpful to you?

j) Is it important to you that management shows appreciation for the work that you do? Would a verbal expression of appreciation make you feel happy and motivated?

k) If given the opportunity, would you be willing to propose new ideas to management, ideas which you think would make a difference to the company and staff well-being?

l) Do you think that a person’s tone of voice contributes to a good conversation or a bad one?

m) Are you prepared to learn new things along the way, including learning to speak up or initiate a conversation with a person in authority?

The answers given during the pre-coaching interview sessions will provide this researcher with part of the basic information or the ideas to create a coaching program for ‘self-leadership to enable supervisors and Asian Singaporean employees to foster bi-directional
communication leading to acceptance of organisational change’, which was scheduled to take place four to five weeks thereafter.

3.3.2 Secondary data source

The secondary data source is derived solely from the literature review in Chapter 2. The information, past studies and theories related to this study are relied upon to identify the gaps. The researcher has used this information to guide the direction and thoughts of this research.

3.3.3 Validity and reliability in qualitative research

As far as quantitative research is concerned, ‘validity’ is about measuring what the researcher sets out to measure. ‘Validity’ is defined by Hammersley (1987, p.69) as follows: ‘An account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise.’ On the other hand, ‘validity’, according to the qualitative researchers’ paradigm, is personal and interpersonal rather than methodological. Berg (2004) reiterates that the researcher needs to remain neutral in response to the participant’s answers to the interview questions. This was the approach adopted by this researcher.

Mays and Pope (1995) acknowledge that qualitative research has been criticised for lacking scientific rigour compared with quantitative research. However, qualitative research according to Vishnevsky and Beanlands (2004) is a different approach to studying humans, and is by no means inferior as it emphasises the exploration of individual experiences, specific phenomenon, and it ultimately results in good theory. Instead of ‘validity’ being defined the way it is in quantitative research, qualitative research is focused on establishing the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. Initially, Lincoln and Guba (1985) presented four criteria as the basis for achieving credible data: credibility, authenticity and confirmability, triangulation, dependability, and transferability. In 1994, a fifth criterion was added to the fold: authenticity.

These five criteria are discussed in the next sections.
3.3.3.1 Credibility

Credibility has been defined as the accurate interpretation of the data which relies on the researcher’s interpretation as well as the respondents’ representations and opinions (Polit & Beck, 2012). Patton (1987) suggests that the first question regarding credibility arises when deciding on the focus of the research: in this case, bi-directional communication. The next approach towards establishing credibility of the data, as Yin (2000) recognises, is that its validity would be strengthened if a researcher is willing to challenge the original interpretation, particularly after a thorough discussion of the rationale for accepting or rejecting the original paradigm. Miles and Huberman (1994) speak of researchers’ search for disconfirming evidence, should the case warrant it, that would lend further weight to the credibility of the data. Campbell (2009) and Yin (2000) further reinforce this approach by adopting a sceptical mindset by identifying and testing probable rival explanations throughout the entire research process that would strengthen the data’s credibility. In addition, Guba and Lincoln (1989) define credibility as being parallel to the internal validity of quantitative research. Qualitative researchers are obliged to ensure credibility of their data, as Lincoln and Denzin (1994) have cautioned, as researchers can influence the respondents’ ability to speak authentically. Marshall (1990) summarises that quality in research is determined by honest and forthcoming investigations. This brings us to the next aspect of validity.

3.3.3.2 Authenticity and confirmability

Polit and Beck (2012) discuss whether authenticity exists. Authenticity is defined as a researcher’s ability to express the views and feelings of the participants’ experiences consistently. For the next aspect of validity, Tobin and Begley (2004) and Polit and Beck (2012) affirm the necessity of establishing confirmability, which refers to the ability of researchers to prove that the data purely represents the participants’ responses and not the opinion of the researcher involved. Confirmability can be established by elaborating on how the conclusions and interpretations are derived directly from the collected data. According to Nachimas and Worth-Nachimas (2008, p.257), ‘Qualitative researchers attempt to understand behavior and institutions by getting to know the persons involved and their values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and emotions’. To understand behaviour and
institutions so as to determine the trustworthiness of the data, it is important to be in close proximity to the source of the data. This leads to the concept of triangulation.

### 3.3.3.3 Triangulation

Merriam (1988, p.120) suggests that ‘trustworthiness of qualitative research is derived from the ... researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions and rich, thick description’. This degree of trustworthiness is achieved owing to the multiple data sources (refer to Figure 3.4) that triangulation provides to derive a comprehensive data record for analysis. Triangulation gives greater perspective and enhances the credibility of researchers’ findings as it enables the necessary thoroughness, consistency, and robustness of the research, drawing from a combination of two or more plus data sources, theories and methods in the study of an issue or topic (Halcomb & Andrew, 2005; Williamson, 2005). This approach is still inadequate as there is still the need for ‘reliability’. Under the quantitative paradigm, ‘reliability’ pertains to the replicability and consistency of the data. In the case of qualitative design, the findings are typically contextual, emergent, and specific, thereby ruling out the possibility of achieving reliability. This is because dependability refers to the consistency of data collected under similar conditions (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Koch (2006) regards a study as dependable if the findings are replicable using similar participants in similar conditions. Finally, Yin (2014) makes reference to Patton’s (2002) four types of data triangulation which could be used in qualitative case study data and this encourages qualitative researchers to continue to include this as an analytical tool, not to be missed.

### 3.3.3.4 Dependability

The idea of ‘dependability’ was examined by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.300). As cited earlier, Stile (1993) referred to the trustworthiness of procedures and the data generated rather than to their reliability. Guba and Lincoln (1989) regard dependability as the equivalent of reliability in quantitative research. The next aspect of trustworthiness relates to transferability.
3.3.3.5 Transferability

Polit and Hungler (1999) argue that transferability is the extent to which the data is transferable to another work situations or groups of employees. Bryman (2001) supports the concept that transferability concerns the extent to which the results of a study is replicable in a different situation. As Singapore is a unique country with a workplace situation that makes transferability a challenge, the coaching process that has been incorporated into the research process hopes to overcome this challenge.

To achieve the validity and reliability of results, as required for a qualitative design, it is critical that the researcher is in close proximity to the participants during the interviews and coaching workshops to achieve credibility, and thus attain transferability instead of achieving the validity required for a quantitative design. As for dependability, that will be achieved through the authenticity of the data collected, the confirmability of the data (i.e. verified and recorded), and the triangulation process. As this researcher is conversant with English, Malay, and Mandarin, he is in a position to meet these requirements. Speaking the learner’s native language assists towards engendering the greatly needed rapport for such activities.

3.4 Ethical protocol and standards

The researcher is mindful of the words of Glesne (1999) who warned that researchers adopt numerous roles during the process of data collection. These roles have been termed as exploiter, reformer, advocate, and friend’. The first ethics approval for this research, Approval Number ECN-13-297, was issued by the SCU Ethics Committee on the 12th December 2013. The second ethics approval, Renewal Approval Number ECN-15-069 was issued on the 2nd April 2015. The third and final ethics approval, Renewal Approval Number ECN-16-073 was issued on the 22nd March 2016. In ensuring that there is a compliance of ethical protocol and standards expected, Berg (2004) advises that the researcher needs to remain neutral so that the participants answer the interview questions without undue interviewer influence, a protocol which was also observed during the telephone interviews and the face-to-face coaching sessions.
3.4.1 Honesty and objectivity

As a first step, there should be a frank and honest disclosure communicated to the subjects’ human resource department in relation to the true aim and the purpose of the research project. Once this has been communicated, the researcher will activate a series of safeguards that will ensure that the project’s integrity will not be compromised, and that the results will achieve the study’s intended objective: to contribute to the current store of knowledge in this area of investigation.

3.4.2 Respecting participants and their sensitivities

The researcher appreciates his limitations as a member of the human race and he is conscious that he may possess certain weaknesses and prejudices towards certain groups of people, or towards the behaviour of certain classes of people, which may affect his judgement. With that understanding or consciousness in mind, he will have to place upon himself certain stringent rules that have to be adhered to as he conducts and leads the project. This researcher will, as a matter of necessity, ponder over the equality of human beings, and regard every participant in a spirit of compassion and understanding. Regardless of the subject’s opinions, mannerisms, or reactions, he will regard each individual with understanding and compassion so that he will not be a victim of his own subjective views of the participant. In the same vein, the recording of the input from participants will omit nothing that does not meet with the researcher’s original beliefs on the subject in question. He will record the information received as comprehensively as it is humanly possible.

3.4.3 Confidentiality

Similarly, the management of data is of great concern to this researcher. The information proffered by participants is to be regarded as being given out of a spirit of goodwill. Their confidentiality, therefore, is of paramount importance and must not be breached by anyone who has nothing to do with this research project.
Trust between client and coach is a critical and multifaceted element (Hall et al., 1999). The researcher, in playing the role of a coach, will not reveal any information collected from the participating employees to their management. In this connection, this researcher will endeavour to keep the collected data safely in a database, which will be duplicated on external storage and kept for a period of seven years.

### 3.5 The research process

The research process comprises an initial and a revised process. A revised process was adopted after acquiring the experience from the initial data collection with the intention of attaining the highest possible credibility and dependability for this qualitative research.

#### 3.5.1 The initial proposed process

The initial proposed process in Table 3.1 was determined without any prior experience of data collection.

**Table 3.1: The initial process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>This involved a telephone call to the human resource department of the company selected for this research project. A brief explanation was given as well as information highlighting the possible benefits from the research to the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>This was followed by a formal written request to the human resource department within three days of the initial telephone contact. (See Appendix A – Letter of Invitation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Within ten days of the arrival of the letter of agreement the researcher sent a carefully sealed envelope to the human resource department containing the list of questions to be asked of the subject employees (refer to section 3.5.1 or Appendix C Interview questions), at the relevant time. In the same document, a request was made for possible dates and times for the interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>This stage involved waiting for a reply to the request for dates and times, and responding to the replies. If the dates were suitable, confirmation was sent to the department. If the dates were not suitable, a second letter with different dates was sent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>This stage involved conducting the preliminary interviews at the agreed dates and times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6.    | This stage involved coaching the participants based on the results of their interviews. Coaching the participants to communicate well during a time of organisational change involved the following:  
  - a 60 minute or 2 x 30 minute (2 x 40 minute maximum) individual interview(s) for each participant. This was followed by a three-hour coaching session for the interviewee, six weeks after the interview.  
  - the three-hour coaching session will double up as a triangulation instrument so as to ascertain the quality of the information provided by each interview. This was done by meeting the interviewee face to face to better verify the information collected, prior to proceeding to the coaching component of the research agenda to gauge the impact of certain factors on the individual. These factors included culture (Asian-ness), emotional resilience (PsyCap), and the extent to which employees had engaged in bi-directional communication with their supervisor.  
  - each case study could ultimately provide a rich collection of data for determining the value of a potentially significant contribution to knowledge. |
| 7.    | Compile the report on the outcome of the research (without mentioning names) to be approved by the participants. Once approved, the report was submitted to the human resource department. |
| 8.    | Modify or improve the report for greater clarity or easier understanding, if necessary. |
| 9.    | Prepare the final version of the report for the participants’ perusal and agreement, and submit the final report to the human resource department. |
| 10.   | Analyse the data collected and draw conclusions to form a theory or a set of principles from what has been learnt. |
3.5.2  The revised process

When the researcher began using the research process, experience from the first round led to a refinement of the initial process to create the revised process shown in Table 3.2.

### 3.5.2.1 The first round

The first round of the revised process involved five stages.

**Table 3.2: The revised process – First round**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>An email blitz to the targeted organisations occurred in March–April 2014, with an attached letter (Appendix A). This stage was repeated three times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assessed the respondents through a friendly rapport building pre-interview telephone conversation to verify that they were truly Asian Singaporeans of the older Gen X or Baby Boomer generations (45 to 65 years old).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ensured that the participants had clearly understood the purpose of the research and its process. Most important of all was for participants to go through the consent form (Appendix B) to understand that their participation was purely on a voluntary basis and at any time they were free to opt out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Qualified participants were interviewed over the telephone for a session of about 30–40 minutes, with a repeat interview if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Coachees were identified as those displaying a lack of confidence in engaging with their supervisors in candid conversation, thus justifying the three-hour self-leadership coaching sessions for supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication competence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5.2.2 The second round

The revised process of the second round involved seven stages, as shown in Table 3.3.
Table 3.3: The revised process – Second round

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Emailed the human resource department of several targeted organisations in July-September 2015, using the same letter as in the first round (Appendix A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Followed up calls to the human resource departments that qualified and selected one or two of the most appropriate organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Discussed with the qualified human resource employees about how to generate a pool of potential respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Examined and identified potential respondents via a friendly rapport-building pre-interview telephone conversation to verify that the participants were truly Asian Singaporeans of the older Gen X or Baby Boomer generations (45 to 65 years old).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ensured that the participants had clearly understood the purpose of the research and its process. Most important of all is for them was to go through the consent form (Appendix B) to understand that their participation was on a voluntary basis and at any point in time they were free to opt out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Qualified participants were interviewed over the telephone for a session of about 30-40 minutes, with a repeat interview if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Coachees were identified as those displaying a lack of confidence in engaging with their supervisors in candid conversation, thus justifying the three-hour self-leadership coaching sessions for supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication competence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 The interviews

The pre-coaching interviews were an important first step for data collection. The interviews, as stated earlier, were conducted on a one-to-one basis, and efforts made to provide the participants with mutually convenient arrangements for the interviews. All interviewees preferred to have the interviews conducted over the telephone at a mutually convenient time, after working hours.
3.6.1 The first round of data collection: one interviewee each from twelve unrelated organisations

There were twelve volunteers interviewed, each from unrelated organisations, and each interviewed separately over the telephone. The initial seven volunteers were interviewed over the telephone, but finally only six of these volunteers qualified for the interview-cum-coaching sessions. A qualitative interview is defined as ‘a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons’ (Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954, p.449). More recently, Nunkoosing (2005) reinforces the importance of the interview protocol adopted as a method of data collection as it encourages the participants to reflect and express their experiences, perceptions, understandings, expectations, and their needs with regards to their situation. Furthermore, Nunkoonsing (2005, p.699) cautions that during the qualitative research interviews ‘both the interviewer and the interviewee are constantly seeking to (dis)equalize their respective authorities’. To minimise this effect, Hammarstrom and Alex (2007) advocate the application of reflexivity: looking at the interview situation from multiple angles to perceive one’s own responses or reactions within the circumstances during each interview.

The face-to-face aspect was only applied to the participants who mainly used indirect communication styles, and consequently, had difficulties in adapting a more assertive self-leading capability needed to build bi-directional communication with their supervisors. This took the form of a three-hour coaching session. In preparing for the interview, the researcher deliberately self-reflected to be reminded of the advice of:

- Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009), on building rapport, and establishing a trustful relationships with interviewees.
- Haynes (2006), on adopting the correct mindset for maintaining neutrality.
- Hammarstrom and Alex (2007), on using reflexivity throughout the interview in order to identify ways of addressing the power imbalance likely to form between the coach and the person being coached.
3.6.1.1 Rapport:
When the researcher started to interview each interviewee, either face to face or ‘virtually’ through the telephone, he began by thanking the interviewee for volunteering to be a part of this research, and started a friendly rapport-building conversation in order to put the interviewee at ease. Following this, the researcher reiterated the purpose of the research and encouraged the interviewee to be as open as possible so that the researcher could identify the communication gaps and provide a way of narrowing the gaps identified.

3.6.1.2 Semi-structured interviews
A semi-structured interview format was chosen as ‘it is defined as the interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.3). This approach is advantageous because it enables the interviewer to define the purpose of the interview, and allows interviewees the freedom to describe their life world, and the interviewing researcher to interpret its meaning.

The interview, as described in 3.3.1 Primary source data, began with open questions and towards the end asked more closed questions. This format encouraged the conversation right from the start and verified the information towards the end of the session. Miles and Huberman (1994) warn that two major threats to the quality of qualitative research are the researcher’s subjectivity and the respondent’s reaction to the researcher’s presence. Therefore, the researcher made a concerted effort to report the interviewees’ perspectives objectively. To ensure the accuracy of what was said the researcher summarised the session before the interview ended. The researcher invited interviewees to comment on any other matters before expressing his appreciation for the sessions. He established the next appropriate step and then closed the interview.

3.6.1.3 Data recording
Every interview was digitally recorded, and within a day after the interview was transcribed into a tabular, written record for easy reflection and analysis. A coaching session comprised an initial interview for data verification before proceeding to meet the
objectives of the coaching process. The coaching data was recorded as field notes before being re-typed into the computer as verbatim data, which was also in a tabular form. In order to ensure accuracy of the field notes, the coachee was telephoned if there was a need for immediate verification. This idea of recording the data in tabular format is derived from Yin (2009). This visual tool serves to facilitate analysis, resulting in the identification of emerging themes. If the field notes contained too much information, the need to maintain focus was drawn from the concept of binding or filing. To address excessive data, several authors suggest filing a case by:

- time and place (Creswell, 2003)
- time and activity (Stake, 1995), and
- definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Walsh and Downe (2006) caution that researchers need to have a systematic approach to interpreting transcripts as much as they need to clearly represent the subjective thoughts and feelings of each participant. The researcher calibrated the collected data for dependability, authenticity, credibility, confirmability, and transferability, as suggested by Tobin and Begley (2004) and Polit and Beck (2012), and revisited the data to ensure it was devoid of any possible personal opinions or biases. The verbatim responses of every interviewee were recorded before being transcribed, as advised by Charmaz (2006) and Miles and Huberman (1994).

The approach to the interview was fundamentally the same as the first round except that the data was derived from one selected organisation. The selection of the organisation and its interviewees was partially influenced by Carson et al. (2001), who suggest that the first interviewee is the one who can give a lot of information and can direct the researcher to find the next interviewee. In this context, the first round of data collection and discovery opens the mind of the researcher to confirm or disconfirm the new paradigm obtained. The intended objective was to obtain another seven interviews from one organisation. However, out of the seven qualified candidates that were interviewed, only four interviewees were selected due to the degree that the current organisational change would affect them. The interview duration was adjusted to 60 minutes instead of 40 minutes, the rationale being that the researcher had become more experienced with his reflections on each interview as well as referring to the literature on the efficacy of convergent
interviews, as compared to the in-depth interviews which were initially applied. Dick (2000) advises that convergent interviews can take as long as 60 minutes to reach the level of detail needed to identify the key issues. An iteration technique was effectively applied after the experience of the first round. The researcher learned from Dick (2000) to utilise probing questions to improve interviewees’ responses to issues. The researcher verified the coachees’ replies to find out whether they were influenced by the coaching process itself, or by their Asian cultural, or by some other contributing factor. The researcher’s questioning technique was particularly sharpened. For instance, having obtained the answers from the telephone interviews using semi-structured questions, as discussed in Section 3.3.1 Primary source data, the researcher used probing questions such as:

- ‘Which aspect of communication would you feel is most needed?’

This question elicited more information. The next probing question was dependent on the reply. If there was a lack of confidence or a reluctance to approach the superior, the follow-up questions could be:

- ‘What stops you from approaching your supervisor should you see the need to inquire about an issue arising from the current change?’
- ‘Would you feel that it could be disrespectful to your supervisor if you were to voice your honest opinion on how the current change process could be better managed?’

The researcher heeded the advice of Silverman (2001, p.13), who states that questions should be as open-ended as possible to ensure ‘authenticity’. This seems to suggest that although open questions could be leading questions, close-ended questions tend to be more inclined to be leading and therefore needed to be more carefully phrased.

These ideas of enhancing the credibility and dependability of the collected data are derived from Dick’s (2000) two types of probes. When the interviewee/coachee seems to agree on a key issue, the interviewer/coach needs to ascertain whether the coachee agrees on the key issue, but it is coincidental or generalised, or whether the coachee agrees on the key issue, but disagrees on the nature or the direction of the issue. This is when probing questions were applied to verify the origins of such opinions.
This nature of probing to verify the coachees’ responses enhances the degree of accuracy compared with a quick assumption. It ascertains the actual key issues or causes of these issues. Mason (2002, p.1) recognises that qualitative research has traditionally been frowned upon for being ‘anecdotal’ or ‘illustrative’, and for being conducted in an unstructured manner. Three decades ago, Kirk and Miller (1986, pp. 29-30) identified two types of ‘anecdotal error’ in the context of the validity of data from qualitative research:

- A type 1 error occurs when a researcher believes an account of an interviewee to be true when it is not.
- A type 2 error occurs when a researcher rejects an account of an interviewee despite the fact that it is true.

The processes used in probing are an attempt to overcome these flaws. During the coaching itself, the use of the questioning techniques is aimed specifically at achieving this objective.

### 3.6.2 The second round of data collection: four interviewees, all from one organisation

Although the human resource department offered seven interviewees, only four of these qualified for the interview-cum-coaching sessions. These four were selected because they were significantly impacted by current organisational changes thus serving the objectives of the second round. The approach to the interviews and coaching were fundamentally the same as the first round. The primary difference was that the researcher was more focused on the ‘management’ component of the organisational factors which influence the employees’ communication and their responses to management. The next focus is on individual attributes in terms of self-leadership during the stressful period of change.

### 3.7 The coaching sessions

A time of three to four hours was allocated to each coaching session, with a break after approximately one hour. The coaching sessions had two components:
• the interview – to verify selected issues identified in the telephone interview (one hour)
• the coaching – to fulfil the objectives of the research questions to improve the communication skills of the participant (two and a half to three hours)

This is the session where the T.T.GROW model, as discussed in section 2.6.2. A coaching model for employees, is blended with the coach’s experience of applying it. The coach entered this coaching session bearing in mind the research of Tambyah et al. (2009) that only 31.6 percent of Singaporeans think that people can be trusted. By virtue of the fact that each of the participants accepted the invitation to be involved in the research, a healthy degree of trust must exist and was not taken for granted. In this study, the coach showed an attitude of humility and sincerity, with a willingness to listen. Every possible prejudice and unhelpful mental deliberation was blocked using the mental technique of ‘meta-programming’ as described by Bandler (2008). Meta-programming is about organising thoughts and actions to produce the desired outcomes. Trust is an integral factor to be maintained from the start to the end of the session. Meta-programming is derived from Bandler’s research on Chomsky’s published PhD thesis, Transformational Grammar in 1957, on how humans can delete, distort, and generalise information without being conscious of their action.

Two of the meta-programs that have been utilised include, allowing the ‘External frame of reference’ instead of the ‘Internal frame of reference’ to dominate, as well as practising the concept of ‘Sort by others’ rather than ‘Sort by self’. This is an elaborated version of self-reflection as suggested by Grant et al. (2002). This approach is evidently effective and it has been reinforced by Lyke (2009): people who have a high level of self-reflection tend to possess a high level of openness to experience.

To enhance this effect, a mutually neutral venue for the interviews was chosen. The coach ensured that the rapport built from the first telephone interview continued to develop by emphasising that the role of the coach is that of a ‘humble sounding board’. There was no corporate business card exchanged. This was to prevent the perception of authority and power, be it in terms of the role of either the coach or the coachee. Self-disclosure by the coach related to the coach being a family man and his interest in the study of human behaviour to create a better world.
Once the coach felt that the particular coachee was ready, the coaching conversation began with the verification of the selected answers collected from the first round of the telephone interview. Elaboration of the answers was encouraged by the communication cue given by the coach. Furthermore, the coach incorporated several modalities into the coaching conversation, such as an adapted version of Socratic dialogue. Skordoulis and Dawson (2007) advocate the Socratic dialogue to enable those undergoing change to better understand the desired outcomes of the change process. The Socratic dialogue is particularly important for enhancing communication in the context of a situation in which the typical cause of failure has been a lack of information or a lack of understanding about the process and its desired outcomes. Since poor communication is a significant contributor to such a failure, the coach started with the usual first open question to kickstart a specific self-awareness about the degree of Asian-ness of each coachee, before facilitating a rich and open dialogue. According to Charvet (1997) it is extremely important to listen and pay close attention to the choice of words people use and how they use them. This is because language discloses the speaker’s reality. Therefore, approaching the coaching session with the willingness to listen attentively to the communication needs of the interviewer is the basis of researching what impediments these coaches are faced with. Careful listening is therefore an important part of the T.T.GROW model during the coaching session:

Goal – How have you been initiating open dialogue with your manager? (This question has been asked during the tele-interview – Question c.- therefore, as a follow up this could be changed to: ‘You mentioned that you have difficulties initiating open dialogue with your manager, but in some situations – as answered in Question d – you described that you had the confidence to have an open dialogue. What was the primary factor present?’ ‘How can you build on this to be a regular capability?’ (Goal 1 in this session.)

This was the moment of truth when each coachee began to disclose the real issues that challenged the coach’s assumption that Asian-ness was the primary factor contributing to the inability to establish healthy supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communications.

Reality - After the goal was set by this coachee, the next step was the next appropriate questions such as:
• ‘In what situation could you use this?’ The coaching conversation came from a set of follow-up questioning techniques which led to self-awareness, feedback and feedforward, reframing and reflection, and learning and reinforcement of the learning experience.

• ‘Where did you received this information from?’

Options – This is a very important section of the coaching process as the questions are carefully constructed only after further reflection on each case’s communication issue. This is the section in which the coach uses the opportunity to apply convergent interviewing techniques for refining the questions and to converge the communication issue relevant to the research objective the coachee faces to the specifics of the supervisor-subordinate work relationship. There were ample opportunities for the researcher, as coach, to be reflexive and to ensure the credibility and dependability of the data. Keso, Lehtmaki and Pietilainen (2009, p.52) posit that reflexivity ‘promotes critical self-awareness throughout the research process’. This not only keeps the researcher in check, it makes the coaching session more productive and effective.

• ‘What alternative strategies are available to you?’ – this question elicits from each coachee several alternatives towards the jointly agreed set of action-oriented solutions.

• ‘Which of these strategies are you most confident with?’

Will – pertains to identifying the coachee’s attitude toward taking action or avoiding action.

• ‘How willing have you been to initiate an open dialogue with your manager with the purpose of discussing an aspect of the change which you may not agree with?’

• ‘To what extent do you see this change supporting your career aspirations?’

• ‘How willing have you been to initiate an open dialogue with your manager with the purpose of discussing an aspect of the change which has generated a lot of anxiety (for yourself or for the team)?’

The answers would indicate the coachee’s motivation, be it for self or for the team, and the potential for success in making it happen. The coach responded accordingly to provide the skillset to meet their motivations.
3.8 Critical reflexivity

This section reiterates that the researcher adopted the ontological position that reality was constructed from the interviews, and that the coaching process either confirmed or disconfirmed the emerging ‘reality’. Researchers such as Russell and Kelly (2002) postulate that through reflection the researcher’s self-awareness is heightened and this enables them to see or hear what would otherwise inhibit their seeing or listening. Hastings (2010, p. 309) states that the application of critical reflectivity “to listen dialogically to three voices - the voices of the participants, in unison with the theoretical framework, and while reflexively monitoring the interpretation”. Subsequently, experts such as Tobin and Begley (2004), Keso, Lehtmaki and Pietilainen (2009), and Polit and Beck (2012) advise that increased reflexivity of the data collected throughout the entire process is required. Hence the researcher reviews and critically reflects on the data before interpreting the information gathered from each participant after each interview. This process defines the level of objectivity and manages any possible human relationship influences that could affect the interviewer.

3.9 Case identification

Eisenhardt (1989) advocates that the cases to be identified for studies should not be a random sample, but must possess theoretical values that extend theories by filling conceptual categories. Yin (2009, p.18) defines a case study as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’.

After the first round of data collection from the interviews and the coaching sessions, a multiple case study methodology was confirmed to be the most appropriate for the intentions and purposes of this research. This approach offered the value of comparing cases from the first round of interviews with the second round to obtain credible and dependable empirical evidence.

Yin (2009) suggests that multiple cases offer more compelling evidence, compared to a single case. From the first round of data collection the visual tabular representation made it clear that there were six cases: IC1-R1, IC2-R1, IC3-R1, IC4-R1, IC5-R1, and IC7-R1 deemed worthwhile for study. The data from case IC6-R1 was not used as, during the
coaching session, it was ascertained that case IC6-R1’s organisation was not undergoing change as indicated during the telephone interview. The communication issue, it was determined, raised had nothing to do with the context of this research. As for the second round, all four cases, IC1-R2, IC2-R2, IC3-R2, and IC4-R2 were used and were valuable to this research.

3.10 Data analysis

Primary data collection comes in the form of case studies from interviewees from their respective companies. Cases are derived from carefully conducted interviews, leading to a coaching session which is also part of the triangulation and iterative research methodology. As mentioned in Section 3.3.2 Secondary data source, the secondary data from the literature review, as cited and described in Chapter 2, has been used to inform and guide the direction and thoughts of the researcher. Yin (2003, 2009) advocates providing a chain of evidence, whereas Anfara et al. (2002) suggest the use of an audit trail which represents the activities that have taken place during the data analysis process. The need to organise and code the data facilitated the identification of emerging themes, enabling the potential discovery of a new theory or model. The tabular data enabled analysis that facilitated the identification of more gaps in the theories reviewed in Chapter 2. This led to more literature reviews, particularly on self-leadership, PsyCap, and emotional intelligence.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter illustrated the proposed research design used in the current research, with the sole purpose of carrying out the research in the most objective manner as possible. The two rounds of data collection were conducted with the intention of achieving the highest data credibility and dependability possible for qualitative research. The chapter ends with an emphasis on the effort used to collect both primary and secondary data. The careful recording of the data facilitated its analysis to identify emerging themes. Finally, there is a self-reflection to ensure that an ethical mindset was maintained throughout the research process, as Glesne (1999) cautions, before proceeding to the discovery phase of the research in Chapter 4.
4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 reviewed relevant theories that explained how employees respond to organisational change. However, as stated, the theories fail to take full account of the impact of Asian-ness for older Generation X and Baby Boomer Singaporean employees. Chapter 3 presented the methodology and methods employed for data collection to help search for a solution to this deficiency. Chapter 4 is specifically focused on analysing the efficacy of this solution for this targeted group of Singaporeans.

The literature review in Chapter 2 attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors affect the older Gen X and Baby Boomers Asian Singaporean employees’ acceptance of change?
2. What factors affect the quality of bi-directional communication between supervisors and the targeted Asian Singaporean older Gen X to Baby Boomer employees within their organisations?

A critical review of the literature identified a gap which led to the development of specific secondary research questions. This chapter will review the analysis of the data collected using the process outlined in section 3.5. It identifies the themes emerging from the analysis of the data. In Chapter 5, pattern matching occurs when the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is compared with the emerging themes from the analysis in this chapter.

The analysis guides the researcher to investigate the remaining research question:

3. What is the effect of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian Singaporean employees of the older Gen X to Baby Boomer generations?

The first interviews were conducted from March to May 2014, and the second from July to September 2015. The analysis of data from these interviews begins in Section 4.2: The impact of organisational factors on bi-directional communication and continues in Section 4.3: The impact of individual attributes on bi-directional communication. The methods for data collection in the second round of interviews were redesigned based on the experiences of the first round of data collection and frequently led back to the literature. This approach
met the objectives of triangulation during which iteration of the data was made possible during the convergent interviews.

After the analysis, the factors that reinforce the concepts as well as challenge the paradigms were examined, leading to a more comprehensive approach to effective bi-directional communication. The first factor to examine was the extent to which Asian-ness affects communication, either positively or negatively. The findings were mixed, in particular if the right circumstances (organisational factors) were in place, such as the presence of a positive LMX or an Asian paternalistic leadership style (with benevolence), then bi-directional communication was effective. Nevertheless, two Asian cultural elements – power distance and collectivism – did emerge from the data analysis as important factors. Therefore, high power distance and collectivism could be issues that require closer attention. The concept of self-leadership for overcoming negative reactions, which may be due to an expectation of a lack of bi-directional communication because of the high power distance factor, was identified as an emerging theme. The second factor examined was the impact of individual attributes and the need for PsyCap and emotional intelligence. The literature review in Chapter 2 shows that the PsyCap and emotional intelligence factors can significantly contribute to the manner in which employees communicate, regardless of their ethnic group. Thirdly, another important factor that was identified was the importance of interpersonal trust as it seems to influence employees’ propensity to reciprocate to good management and leadership.

The collected data is transcribed in Tables 4.1a to 4.3 below.

4.1.1 Collected data – First round: seven interviewees from twelve unrelated organisations

The emerging themes, drawn from the interviews are factors which affect the quality of bi-directional communication between supervisors and the targeted Asian Singaporean employees (from the older Gen X to Baby Boomer generations) within their organisations. Table 4.1a with the selected key quotes which reflect the positive or negative emerging responses of the participants.
### Table 4.1a: Round 1: Coded data (Interviews and coaching)

Example: Code-IC1 means 1st Interviewee-Coachee; R1 means Round 1
Source: Developed for this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Positive emerging</th>
<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. What are the factors that enable you to accept change?</td>
<td>Change is the Norm in this Company (n=7)</td>
<td>Equity compromised (n=1) Learning required (n=1)</td>
<td>Change Enablers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**
- IC1-R1 ‘Working for more than 25 years. Gone through all types of change. Am open.’
- IC2-R1 ‘Basically, I see the current change as a normal part and parcel of a job. So just accept it.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Working for more than 9 years in this company. Had about 2 org change. I have no issues so far.’
- IC4-R1 ‘Fairness. Currently, it is far from it.’
- IC5-R1 ‘10 years in the company. Seen it done it so no problem.’
- IC6-R1 ‘7 years in the company. So far I am always very open.’
- IC7-R1 ‘It is on technology. At my age, I need to learn too. I am open to learning new things so it is ok.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2. How are you coping so far with these changes?</th>
<th>Coping Well (n=3)</th>
<th>Stressful (guarded, emotionally drained) (n=4)</th>
<th>Psychological Capital/ ‘Ability to cope’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**
- IC1-R1 ‘Emotion wise it is neutral, although initially a little frustrating.’
- IC2-R1 ‘Stressful; Religion helps me– going to church - helps in de-stressing.’
- IC3-R1 ‘My boss is also a lady. She is my new DGM posted from our China office, from the current change. I’ve got to be very guarded.’
- IC4-R1 ‘Painful; new supervisor, an American introduced procedures, appraisal system, puts most of us at a disadvantage, people know that he is unpopular and people disagree with him.’
- IC5-R1 ‘It’s ok. I still report to J. He is ok.’
- IC6-R1 ‘Smooth. This GM has ops exp., so it's smooth.’
- IC7-R1 ‘Think I am managing well.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3 What are the factors affecting your ability to discuss the impact of the current organisational change on you?</th>
<th>Easy to Communicate (n=3)</th>
<th>Difficult to communicate (n=4)</th>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**

IC1-R1 ‘My boss is very open and we have short but good discussions.’
IC2-R1 ‘Don’t communicate with my superior, colleagues now. I do not trust all of them.’
IC3-R1 ‘I think it is a gender and cultural issue... she is very bossy.’
IC4-R1 ‘I must speak up on behalf of my colleagues....... I felt unfair to my colleagues.’
IC5-R1 ‘I was surprised with myself. I was so calm when I told him off. ‘you need not have to raise your voice...’.....’
IC6-R1 ‘Never have this idea of approaching him in my mind. Just accept.’
IC7-R1 ‘I can bypass my immediate supervisor. I kept her informed of what transpired. I have gained her trust in this 4 years as I am so much older than her.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4 Describe how you would initiate a discussion with your superior to overcome an issue you may be faced with during a period of change.</th>
<th>Observe the Opportunity to Communicate (n=3)</th>
<th>Communicate only when necessary (n=4)</th>
<th>The Will to Communicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘He is very busy so I would use different approaches. Through the secretary, email, texting or observe the opportunity.’
- IC2-R1 ‘Given up. Already said there is no trust, no communication.’
- IC3-R1 ‘She is very sensitive I must watch my words, tone and my face. Cannot be too serious she doesn’t like’
- IC4-R1 ‘Just knock on the door ‘can I talk to you’ and proceed, no formalities.’
- IC5-R1 ‘No need to initiate just let it happen naturally.’
- IC6-R1 ‘Never really thought I need to initiate anything. Only when situation demands,
then I am forced to talk to him.'

- IC7-R1 ‘Oh with my director its very casual all the time. My immediate supervisor, I need to see if she is busy or not. She is busy most of the time, so here I just talk to the director.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5 Has there ever been a situation when you feel you can discuss openly your problems with your superior? Explain.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discretion and Trust in Communication (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Will to Communicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes and quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R1 ‘Yes, first of all knows that I won’t initiate a conversation unless it’s important so he always listens.... communicates well whenever there is an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R1 ‘Given up. Already said there is no trust, no communication.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R1 ‘Must see her mood and watch my words.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4-R1 ‘Just knock on the door ‘can I talk to you’ and proceed, no formalities.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC5-R1 ‘No need to initiate just let it happen naturally.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC6-R1 ‘Never really thought I need to initiate anything. Only when situation demands, then I am forced to talk to him.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC7-R1 ‘Oh with my director it’s very easy all the time.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6 What would you need to help you to discuss with your superiors concerning any problems that you may face?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Performance and Relationships (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing helps with this superior (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes and quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R1 ‘Bosses are like this. When they are happy with your performance, they will know how to build a relationship with you... good relations to raise any problems become easy.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R1 ‘No, I won’t make the same mistake twice.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R1 ‘I think I am beginning to see her likes and dislikes so just watch my step should be able to bring up matters in soon.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- IC4-R1 ‘The point is that it is not me but my colleagues that I need to help them voice their unhappiness to this supervisor.’
- IC5-R1 ‘I will need to learn that from you.’
- IC6-R1 ‘Will consider this.’
- IC7-R1 ‘Just have to remind myself to update my immediate supervisor whenever I had to go directly to her boss, so we still can talk things over as and whenever we need to.’

### Q7 What will you need from management to help you to take the challenge of change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Leadership (n=7)</td>
<td>Open dialogue with key people. Building the entire strategy together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace poor leaderships (n=1)</td>
<td>Actually, I have ideas, but I think it's no use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Expectations</td>
<td>Pre-empt us so we can prepare for change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The new management should learn to be more thoughtful and consider our feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk to us. Tell us what we can gain from this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am always willing to follow their plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They are doing it right, giving us the support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Codes and quotes

- IC1-R1 ‘Open dialogue with key people. Building the entire strategy together.’
- IC2-R1 ‘Actually, I have ideas, but I think it's no use.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Pre-empt us so we can prepare for change.’
- IC4-R1 ‘The new management should learn to be more thoughtful and consider our feelings.’
- IC5-R1 ‘Talk to us. Tell us what we can gain from this.’
- IC6-R1 ‘I am always willing to follow their plans.’
- IC7-R1 ‘They are doing it right, giving us the support.’

### Q8 What changes would you suggest to management if you have a chance regarding the changes that are taking place in your company?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productive Impact on Everyone (n=7)</td>
<td>I can see that there is planning, good planning impacts productivity, perhaps just a little more on observing the change that is taking place within the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace poor leaderships (n=1)</td>
<td>When our team is discouraged, we under perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership with a Heart</td>
<td>Pre-empt us so we can prepare for change. Also keep us in the loop until the process is completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Codes and quotes

- IC1-R1 ‘I can see that there is planning, good planning impacts productivity, perhaps just a little more on observing the change that is taking place within the change.’
- IC2-R1 ‘When our team is discouraged, we under perform.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Pre-empt us so we can prepare for change. Also keep us in the loop until the process is completed.’
IC4-R1 ‘The new management should discuss with us and understand our situation instead of just plunging ahead.’

IC5-R1 ‘We can perform when we understand.’

IC6-R1 ‘I am always willing to follow their plans and contribute.’

IC7-R1 ‘So far they have proven themselves to be very capable. We are all productive.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q9 What changes would you like to see in yourself so that you can meet the challenges before you?</th>
<th>High Job Satisfaction (n=6)</th>
<th>Clear Supervisor- Subordinate Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codes and quotes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R1 ‘Have different approaches to my current tactics in getting to discuss with my busy boss on sensitive matters.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R1 ‘Don’t know….continue to pray…’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R1 ‘Am learning to be more sensitive to her. Think it’s working.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4-R1 ‘Coach my colleagues to open up….They are not talking…’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC5-R1 ‘Like you asked, ‘how to initiate a dialogue with the boss’ instead of letting it happen naturally.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC6-R1 ‘To improve my communication. Able to elaborate my points’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC7-R1 ‘Actually, I don’t regard this as a challenge as there is sufficient support from the management. At my age, I have learned to have the right attitude and accept things’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q10 What kind of support have you experienced in your work that has been most helpful to you?</th>
<th>Supportive Managers and Colleagues (n=7)</th>
<th>Clear Supervisor- Subordinate Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codes and quotes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R1 ‘Anticipating all resources needed to support the strategy and availing them to us, our level. This is very important and it makes so much difference. Otherwise, it’ll be tough to meet the expectations.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R1 ‘All the team needs is being reasonable don’t force things on us. One by one is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
leaving. This team was so motivated before this person took over.’

- IC3-R1 ‘I wish the DGM can be like the GM that is so supportive but I know this is impossible. I only hope that we can discuss things and I can freely share my experience with her and we can work together.’

- IC4-R1 ‘The old system was good. I know we need improvements, but my colleagues don’t see improvements at their expense is fair.’

- IC5-R1 ‘Being in HR you know, having mutual understandings of work expectations lead to performance.’

- IC6-R1 ‘Everyone knows their job…. Yes everyone knows each others job, can build teamwork.’

- IC7-R1 ‘It’s there… the support…when I approach my director and suggest improvements he always listens and takes action.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q11 Is it important to you that management shows appreciation for the work that you do? Would a verbal expression of appreciation makes you feel happy and motivated?</th>
<th>Encouraging and Caring Leaders (n=7)</th>
<th>Appreciation is fake (n=1)</th>
<th>Authentic Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘Our management is professional. They are generally good leaders and know how to show appreciation and motivates the people well. Yes, it does.’

- IC2-R1 ‘Of course and I know we have lost a good manager and about to lose a good team soon unless she has been replaced with a good one.’

- IC3-R1 ‘My GM is quite good at this and I have yet to see this in this DGM yet. Certainly an important factor.’

- IC4-R1 ‘I am quite surprised with this supervisor who is so lacking in this area. Yes the predecessor knew how to do this. It’s quite disappointing.’

- IC5-R1 ‘It is expected of management to be capable to apply this very basic managerial conduct. Unfortunately, sometimes I see this and sometimes I don’t.’

- IC6-R1 ‘Yes, it is important and we have this.’
- IC7-R1 ‘I am glad they are all very good.’

**Q12** If given the opportunity, would you be willing to propose new ideas to management, ideas which you think will make a difference to the company and staff well-being?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing Ideas with Trustworthy and Caring leaders (n=6)</th>
<th>Trust cannot be repaired (n=1)</th>
<th>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘Yes, this is my practice and will continue to be so.’
- IC2-R1 ‘It is clearly no.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Yes, with my GM. Not yet, but slowly getting there with my DGM.’
- IC4-R1 ‘Yes. For him I think I can’t do this alone. I need the support of the team.’
- IC5-R1 ‘I think he has mood so has to be during the good mood.’
- IC6-R1 ‘I am not at that level so I won’t.’
- IC7-R1 ‘Anytime and I am already giving my ideas all the time. In fact, they always welcome me.’

**Q13** Do you think that a person’s tone of voice contributes to a good conversation or a bad one?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Conversation with Trustworthy and Caring leaders (n=6)</th>
<th>Poor Communication (n=2)</th>
<th>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘Most certainly. I believe all of us leaders have been quite good in our conversation at all levels.’
- IC2-R1 ‘Her tone is very good and the smile is there all the time. This is where I discovered that it is the most dangerous.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Yes, that is why I have to watch all this with her. Last time I need not worry about such thing.’
- IC4-R1 ‘It doesn’t matter to me. Just be sincere.’
- IC5-R1 ‘That’s when I could tell the good or the bad mood.’
- IC6-R1 ‘Never really thought about this. Will look out for this in future and see.’
- IC7-R1 ‘Yes. I have no problem with the directors. It is better for people up there to project positive tone right? A little more patience with my immediate supervisor. It can affect people.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q14 Are you prepared to learn new things along the way, including learning to speak up or initiate a conversation with a person in authority?</th>
<th>Initiating Conversation with Trustworthy and Caring Leaders (n=6)</th>
<th>Trust cannot be repaired (n=1)</th>
<th>The Importance of Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Codes and quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘I am ready to learn anything that helps me to help others. Certainly for my bosses and colleagues.’
- IC2-R1 ‘I need to reactivate this part of me.’
- IC3-R1 ‘I am learning how not to speak up with this new boss as I had become used to speaking up with my previous GM. So it’s the opposite.’
- IC4-R1 ‘As I have said earlier, I must learn how to help my colleagues to speak up to this guy. They all have been very vocal until this guy showed up.’
- IC5-R1 ‘I will learn that from you soon right?’
- IC6-R1 ‘I said just now, I have done this before once when there was an urgent issue. I remembered this English man don’t understand my English.’
- IC7-R1 ‘I like this company as I could just strike a conversation with the management and most of my colleagues too. A little more skills with my supervisor.’

Table 4.1b shows the evidence of the effect of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian Singaporean employees – the older Gen X and Baby Boomer generations. The evidence of improvements after coaching is transcribed from the field notes after a telephone follow-up with the coachees six to eight weeks after their respective coaching session.
### Table 4.1b: Round 1: Coded data (Coaching evidence)

Source: Developed for this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes on evidence of improvements after coaching</th>
<th>Positive emerging</th>
<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRAG. Self-Leadership-Intrapersonal:</strong> Succeeded in visualising Goal: to seek clarification with an opening statement</td>
<td>Visualised Goal (n=4)</td>
<td>Loss of Will (n=1) Unable to Visualise Goal (n-1) No response (n=1)</td>
<td>The Goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes**

- **IC1-R1** ‘I had done a long time ago. Just started again. I see the value now.’
- **IC3-R1** ‘Tried once in a while.’
- **IC4-R1** ‘Yes. I can do it.’
- **IC5-R1** ‘Not consistent yet’
- **IC7-R1** ‘Quite difficult.’
- **IC2-R1** ‘I prayed instead’

| **INTRAO. Self-Leadership-Intrapersonal:** Succeeded in Visualising Option1 Approached Supervisor and he responded positively so proceed with Question 1 | Visualised Approached Supervisor (n=4) | Loss of Will (n=1) Unable to Visualise Approaching Supervisor (n-1) | The Goal |

**Quotes**

(As above)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERO1. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in identifying a good opportunity in informal/formal channel and executed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approached Supervisor (informal channels) (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approached Supervisor (formal channels) (n=4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘At ease’
- IC3-R1 ‘A usual affair’
- IC4-R1 ‘Has to be this way.’
- IC5-R1 ‘Trying to be more relaxed in the formal and more relax in the informal.’
- IC7-R1 ‘More at ease in the formal than the informal’
- IC1-R1 ‘First opportunity in the informal came I took it.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Good that I tried both ways.’ ‘I am getting used to this.’
- IC2-R1 ‘No’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bi-directional Conversation with Supervisor (n=5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes**

- IC1-R1 ‘Nothing unusual.’
- IC3-R1 ‘Good conversation.’
- IC4-R1 ‘Better conversation now.’
- IC5-R1 ‘Good experience.’
- IC7-R1 ‘A good session.’
- IC2-R1 ‘No’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTER-CC. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in having new confidence in communication</th>
<th>New Confidence in Communication (n=4)</th>
<th>Loss of Will (n=1)</th>
<th>The Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Quotes**
- IC1-R1 *Yes.*
- IC3-R1 *Confidence is always there. Just more techniques*
- IC4-R1 *My skills have improved.*
- IC5-R1 *More Creative ideas.*
- IC7-R1 *Very good.*
- IC2-R1 *No*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTER-CDA. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in having new confidence in communication a different perspective with my supervisor</th>
<th>Manage Power Distance (n=3)</th>
<th>Loss of Will (n=1) Unable to Manage Power Distance (n=2)</th>
<th>The Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Quotes**
- IC1-R1 *I have my way.*
- IC3-R1 *I am managing.*
- IC4-R1 *I am managing very well.*
- IC5-R1 *Not an easy approach.*
- IC7-R1 *He has a power need.*
- IC2-R1 *Not with this person please.*
4.1.2 Collected data – Second round: four interviewees/coaches from one organization

The emerging themes from the interviews are factors which affect the quality of bi-directional communication between supervisors and the targeted Asian Singaporean employees (from the older Gen X to Baby Boomer generations) within their organisations.

**Table 4.2a: Round 2: Coded data (Interviews and coaching)**

Source: Developed for this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Positive emerging</th>
<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. What are the factors that enable you to accept change?</td>
<td>Attitude (n=2)</td>
<td>Good management (n=2)</td>
<td>Change Enablers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2. How are you coping so far with these changes?</td>
<td>Coping Well (n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychological Capital/ ’Ability to cope’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes**
- IC1-R2 ‘6 months here. My willingness to learn.’
- IC2-R2 ‘I am familiar with computerisation.’
- IC3-R2 ‘The management knows best so just accept.’
- IC4-R2 ‘I think this management is good as this 15 months the major change is about my personal choice. This is new but I like it.’
- IC1-R2 ‘I am able to cope well.’
- IC2-R2 ‘I can cope very well.’
- IC3-R2 ‘I have no issue with this.’
- IC4-R2 ‘I like this job. My director is friendly and helpful. So I can cope.’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Positive emerging</th>
<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3 What are the factors affecting your ability to discuss the impact of the current organisational change on you?</td>
<td>Am Comfortable to Communicate (n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Describe how you would initiate a discussion with your superior to overcome an issue you may be faced with during a period of change.</td>
<td>Observe the Opportunity to Communicate (n=2)</td>
<td>Communicate only when necessary (n=2)</td>
<td>The Will to Communicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quotes

- IC1-R2 ‘First of all one of the director is my friend. Whenever there are issues, I am able to discuss matters openly with both my director or my immediate supervisor.’
- IC2-R2 ‘I am a very direct person coming from a sales background for more than 13 years I know how to be diplomatic. My immediate supervisor is loud and rough with her words. She shouts. But I have no issue in confronting her on whatever matters, I encounter on the current change.’
- IC3-R2 ‘NO. Very cautious and polite with immediate Boss, Mr. S because bosses are the expert. They know what they are doing. I am in this company only 18 months.’
- IC4-R2 ‘YES. I dare to talk with my director. He is very approachable. I have spoken to him many times on issues I faced and he is always ready to talk.’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
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<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IC1-R2 ‘I know him well, but I don’t take advantage, see the situation. If I have something important I will just tell him I need to see him for an important matter and so far he will welcome me.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC2-R2 ‘Just tell her ‘I want to talk to you.’ You see she is loud, but she knows I can be very direct with her and she knows I am older than her.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC3-R2 ‘So far no need. I just take it. Can cope. Only if very necessary I will be very polite with him.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC4-R2 ‘He is very easy. Just go ahead and say, excuse me, I want to ask you about this…..He is a very nice boss.’</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q5 Has there ever been a situation when you feel you can discuss openly your problems with your superior? Explain.</strong></td>
<td>Observe the Opportunity to Communicate (n=2)</td>
<td>Communicate only when necessary (n=2)</td>
<td>The Will to Communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>IC1-R2 ‘Yes, All the time we are very open.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC2-R2 ‘I feel very confident all the time to discuss any problems with her. Now she is not so loud with me.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC3-R2 ‘Only if it’s very necessary. I have been very polite with him, and I avoid such discussion.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC4-R2 ‘Sure as I said earlier, he is so nice so just bring it up.’</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q6 What would you need to help you to discuss with your superiors concerning any problems that you may face?</strong></td>
<td>Good Performance and Relationships (n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview questions</td>
<td>Positive emerging</td>
<td>Negative emerging</td>
<td>Emerging themes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC1-R2 ‘Just continue to maintain good relationships everything will be fine.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC2-R2 ‘I think I am always very direct. I am not like those colleagues that would suffer in silence. What do you think?’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC3-R2 ‘I still think only if it is very necessary. Otherwise, don’t want to disturb them.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC4-R2 ‘Because he is always so nice I know if there is any problem, just bring it up to him.’</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q7 What will you need from management to help you to take the challenge of change?</strong></td>
<td>Good Management and Leaderships (n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC1-R2 ‘Just continue to be as supportive as ever there will be no problems. I believe that is how most of us would feel.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC2-R2 ‘She must learn to be sensitive and learn to respect others. To me she is ok now.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC3-R2 ‘I find this management is much better than my previous company’s so I just need them not to change.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC4-R2 ‘I want the management to always let me report to Mr T I will be able to take any change.’</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q8 What changes would you suggest to management if you have a chance regarding the changes that are taking place in your company?</strong></td>
<td>Productive Impact on Everyone (n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview questions</td>
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<td>Emerging themes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>IC1-R2 ‘I can tell this management cares for their staff. They prepare us for the change, they provide the support, the training, keep us informed. My boss’s door is always open.’</td>
<td>Maintain Good Support for High Job Satisfaction (n=4)</td>
<td>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R2 ‘The management is very good… I know the boss has spoken to her on the way she communicates.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC3-R2 ‘No. All is good. They don’t need my suggestions.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC4-R2 ‘Can’t see any need to improve.’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Q9 What changes would you like to see in yourself so that you can meet the challenges before you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R2 ‘Maybe you can tell me where you see I can improve.’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IC2-R2 ‘What do you think of the way I handle her?’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R2 ‘I always trust God.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4-R2 ‘I am alright. Right?’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q10 What kind of support have you experienced in your work that has been most helpful to you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R2 ‘The first thing I enjoy is my boss is proactive and prepares us.’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IC2-R2 ‘The best support I see is my manager accepting my suggestion, although not so with my colleagues.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R2 ‘Giving us clear instructions and I simply can accept.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4-R2 ‘Having a good boss is the best support.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview questions</td>
<td>Positive emerging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q11 Is it important to you that management shows appreciation for the work that you do? Would a verbal expression of appreciation make you feel happy and motivated?</td>
<td>Encouraging and Caring Leaders (n=4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes**

- IC1-R2 ‘It is clearly important. Since working here, I can generally tell that the people here are happy as bosses know how to appreciate.’
- IC2-R2 ‘I see this good practice in the senior level. My boss needs to learn this from them. But I am alright without all this.’
- IC3-R2 ‘Since working in this company, I have been appreciated, so it's good.’
- IC4-R2 ‘It’s very good. No regrets working here.’

| Q12 If given the opportunity, would you be willing to propose new ideas to management, ideas which you think will make a difference to the company and staff well-being? | Sharing Ideas with Trustworthy and Friendly Leaders (n=4) | | Effective Leader-Member Exchange |

**Quotes**

- IC1-R2 ‘Yes, always.’
- IC2-R2 ‘I must see the situation.’
- IC3-R2 ‘No. Unless they ask me.’
- IC4-R2 ‘I just focus on my job. Don’t think they need any idea from me.’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q13 Do you think that a person’s tone of voice contributes to a good conversation or a bad one?</td>
<td>Initiating Conversation with Trustworthy and Friendly leaders (n=4)</td>
<td>Poor Leadership (n=1)</td>
<td>Effective Leader-Member Exchange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quotes
- IC1-R2 ‘I have learnt from my own past behaviour that our body language and tone are very important in relationships.’
- IC2-R2 ‘Yes, that’s why I mentioned her tone of voice must change.’
- IC3-R2 ‘Very important. I learnt this in sales.’
- IC4-R2 ‘Yes. I always make sure my tone is friendly.’

| Q14 Are you prepared to learn new things along the way, including learning to speak up or initiate a conversation with a person in authority? | Initiating Conversation with Trustworthy and Friendly Leaders (n=4) | The Will to Communicate |

### Quotes
- IC1-R2 ‘I am ready to learn anytime.’
- IC2-R2 ‘I have learnt to speak up all these years. Anything else I need to improve on?’
- IC3-R2 ‘I think I can speak up to authority if there is a need to. I believe we must always be polite to our bosses.’
- IC4-R2 ‘Maybe with Mr T. I am alright, but not sure with other supervisors.’

This section presents evidence on the effect of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian older Gen X and Baby Boomer Singaporean employees. The evidence of increased personal strength after coaching is transcribed from the field notes after a telephone follow-up with the coachees six to eight weeks after their respective coaching session.
**Table 4.2b: Round 2: Coded data (Coaching evidence)**

Source: Developed for this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes on evidence of improvements after coaching</th>
<th>Positive emerging</th>
<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Quotes**
- IC1-R2 ‘I tried a few times. Very interesting’
- IC2-R2 ‘Only once. Not use to this’
- IC3-R2 ‘Yes. I have done something like that before.’
- IC4-R2 ‘Yes. It is easy.’

| INTRAO. Self-Leadership-Intrapersonal: Succeeded in Visualising Option1 Approached Boss and he respond positively so proceed with Question1 | Visualised Approached Supervisor (n=3) |                     | The Goal        |

**Quotes**
(As above)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes on evidence of improvements after coaching</th>
<th>Positive emerging</th>
<th>Negative emerging</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERO1. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in identifying a good opportunity in informal channel and executed.</td>
<td>Approached Supervisor (informal channels) (n=1) Approached Supervisor (formal channels) (n=3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes**
- IC1-R2 ‘Several times.’
- IC2-R2 ‘A few times.’
- IC3-R2 ‘Only once and awkward.’
- IC4-R2 ‘Only once and it was good.’

| INTERO2. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in having a bi-directional conversation. | Bi-directional Conversation with Supervisor (n=4) | | The Achievement |

**Quotes**
- IC1-R2 ‘It is a natural thing.’
- IC2-R2 ‘Though succeed, still a little cold.’
- IC3-R2 ‘Yes a short conversation.’
- IC4-R2 ‘I approached him as usual, he talks more so I listen.’

<p>| INTER-CC. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in having new confidence in communication | Same Confidence in Communication (n=3) New Confidence in Communication (n=1) | | The Achievement |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes on evidence of improvements after coaching</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC1-R2 ‘Very.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC2-R2 ‘I sensed that I am more confident than her.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC3-R2 ‘I felt a little funny.’</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC4-R2 ‘It seems like normal.’</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTER-CDA. Self-Leadership-Interpersonal: Succeeded in having new confidence in communication a different perspective with my supervisor</th>
<th>Manage Power Distance (n=2)</th>
<th>Somewhat able to Manage Power Distance (n=2)</th>
<th>The Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC1-R2 ‘No ranks. No formalities’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC2-R2 ‘Still can improve.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC3-R2 ‘I talk better when he is relaxed.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• IC4-R2 ‘He makes me feel very at ease.’</td>
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</table>
Table 4.3: Round 1 and 2: Coded data (Cumulative positive and negative responses)

Source: Developed for this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Positive responses from Round 1 and 2 Interviews</th>
<th>Negative responses from Round 1 and 2 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Q1. What are the factors that enable you to accept change? | - IC1-R1 ‘Working for more than 25 years. Gone through all types of change. Am open.’
- IC3-R2 ‘The management knows best so just accept.’ | - IC4-R1: ‘Fairness. Currently, it is far from it.’
- All-R2 nil |
| Q2. How are you coping so far with these changes? | - IC6-R1 ‘Smooth. This GM has ops exp., so it’s smooth.’
- IC4-R2 ‘I like this job. My director is friendly and helpful. So I can cope.’ | - IC2-R1 'Stressful; Religion helps me – going to church - helps in de-stressing.’
- All-R2 nil |
<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3 What are the factors affecting your ability to discuss the impact of the current organisational change on you?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|  | • IC5-R1 ‘I was surprised with myself. I was so calm when I told him off. ‘you need not have to raise your voice...’  
• IC2-R2 ‘I am a very direct person coming from a sales background for more than 13 years I know how to be diplomatic. My immediate supervisor is loud and rough with her words. She shouts. But I have no issue in confronting her on whatever matters, I encounter on the current change.’ | • IC2-R1 ‘Don’t communicate with my superior, colleagues now. I do not trust all of them.’  
• All-R2 nil |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Positive responses from Round 1 and 2 Interviews</th>
<th>Negative responses from Round 1 and 2 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Q4 Describe how you would initiate a discussion with your superior to overcome an issue you may be faced with during a period of change. | • IC4-R1  ‘Just knock on the door ‘can I talk to you’ and proceed, no formalities.’
• IC1-R2  ‘I know him well, but I don’t take advantage, see the situation. If I have something important I will just tell him I need to see him for an important matter and so far he will welcome me.’ | • IC3-R1  ‘She is very sensitive I must watch my words, tone and my face. Cannot be too serious she doesn’t like.’
• All-R2  nil |

| Q5 Has there ever been a situation when you feel you can discuss openly your problems with your superior? Explain. | • IC5-R1  ‘No need to initiate just let it happen naturally.’
• IC2-R2  ‘I feel very confident all the time to discuss any problems with her. Now she is not so loud with me.’ | • IC2-R1  ‘Given up. Already said there is no trust, no communication.’
• All-R2  nil |
<table>
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<tr>
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</table>
| **Q6** What would you need to help you to discuss with your superiors concerning any problems that you may face? | • IC1-R1 ‘Bosses are like this. When they are happy with your performance, they will know how to build a relationship with you... good relations to raise any problems become easy.’  
• IC4-R2 ‘Because he is always so nice I know if there is any problem, just bring it up to him.’ | • IC4-R1 ‘The point is that it is not me but my colleagues that I need to help them voice their unhappiness to this supervisor.’  
• All-R2 nil |
| **Q7** What will you need from management to help you to take the challenge of change? | • IC7-R1 ‘They are doing it right, giving us the support.’  
• IC4-R2 ‘I find this management is much better than my previous company’s so I just need them not to change.’ | • IC2-R1 ‘Actually, I have ideas, but I think it's no use.’  
• All-R2 nil |
<table>
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<th>Negative responses from Round 1 and 2 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q8 What changes would you suggest to management if you have a chance regarding the changes that are taking place in your company?</td>
<td>• IC3-R1 ‘Pre-empt us so we can prepare for change. Also keep us in the loop until the process is completed.’</td>
<td>• IC4-R1 ‘The new management should discuss with us and understand our situation instead of just plunging ahead.’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• IC1-R2 ‘I can tell this management cares for their staff. They prepare us for the change, they provide the support, the training, keep us informed. My boss’s door is always open.’</td>
<td>• All-R2 nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9 What changes would you like to see in yourself so that you can meet the challenges before you?</td>
<td>• IC3-R1 ‘Am learning to be more sensitive to her. Think it’s working.’</td>
<td>• IC4-R1 ‘Coach my colleagues to open up….they are not talking..'</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• IC2-R2 ‘What do you think of the way I handle her?’</td>
<td>• All-R2 nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
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</table>
| Q10 What kind of support have you experienced in your work that has been most helpful to you? | • IC1-R1 ‘Anticipating all resources needed to support the strategy and availing them to us, our level. This is very important and it makes so much difference. Otherwise, it’ll be tough to meet the expectations.’  
  • IC3-R2 ‘Giving us clear instructions and I simply can accept.’ | • IC4-R1 ‘The old system was good. I know we need improvements, but my colleagues don’t see improvements at their expense are fair.’  
  • All-R2 nil |
| Q11 Is it important to you that management shows appreciation for the work that you do? Would a verbal expression of appreciation makes you feel happy and motivated? | • IC3-R1 ‘My GM is quite good at this and I have yet to see this in this DGM yet. Certainly an important factor.’  
  • IC1-R2 ‘It is clearly important. Since working here, I can generally tell that the people here are happy as bosses know how to appreciate.’ | • IC2-R1 ‘Of course and I know we have lost a good manager and about to lose a good team soon unless she has been replaced with a good one.’  
  • All-R2 nil |
<table>
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<th>Negative responses from Round 1 and 2 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Q12 If given the opportunity, would you be willing to propose new ideas to management, ideas which you think will make a difference to the company and staff well-being? | • IC3-R1 ‘Yes, with my GM. Not yet, but slowly getting there with my DGM.’  
• IC3-R2 ‘I just focus on my job. Don’t think they need any idea from me.’                                                 | • IC2-R1 ‘It is clearly no.’  
• All-R2 nil                                                                 |
| Q13 Do you think that a person’s tone of voice contributes to a good conversation or a bad one? | • IC5-R1 ‘That’s when I could tell the good or the bad mood.’  
• IC3-R2 ‘Very important. I learnt this in sales.’                                                                             | • IC2-R1 ‘Her tone is very good and the smile is there all the time. This is where I discovered that it is the most dangerous.’  
• All-R2 nil                                                                 |
| Q14 Are you prepared to learn new things along the way, including learning to speak up or initiate a conversation with a person in authority? | • IC3-R1 ‘I am learning how not to speak up with my boss as I have been too used to speaking up with my GM. So it’s the opposite.’  
• IC2-R2 ‘I have learnt to speak up all these years. Anything else I need to improve on?’                                      | • IC3-R1 ‘I need to reactive this part of me.’  
• All-R2 nil                                                                 |

4.2 The impact of organisational factors on bi-directional communication

This section analyses the organisational factors examined in the Chapter 2: Literature review. The overarching emerging themes identified from the Round 1 and Round 2 data gathering under organisational factors are the mutual expectations, clear supervisor-
subordinate expectations, effective leader-member exchange, and the importance of trust. These factors are categorised as ‘management’ components of the organisational factors.

4.2.1 Management and managerial support and its impact on communication

Management is an important function affecting organisational effectiveness. In particular, Mintzberg (2009) argues that a key role of managers is their interpersonal role with employees. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) believe that the development of positive perceptions and the good support their organisations provide will eventually lead to positive relationships and outcomes for supervisors, employees, and their organisations. This discovery is relevant to coaching communication because it enables the coach to focus on educating the coachee to have the internal strength to be able to communicate with a supervisor – irrespective of the quality of management. There are emerging themes as appended in the tables in Section 4.11 in the research relating to supportive management practices.

The emerging themes from the analysis of the interviews suggest the importance of interpersonal relationships that affect the older Gen X and Baby Boomer Asian Singaporean employees’ acceptance of change. The paragraphs numbered 1a to 8b in the sections below highlight the various categories of discoveries from the data in Tables 4.1a to 4.3. These paragraphs serve to reinforce the new paradigm and the insights formed at this juncture, and provide a new direction towards the development of possible solutions in Chapter 5.

1a. Discovery about the importance of interpersonal relationships responses

The impact of coaching is evident in the review of the following interviews. For example, even though employee IC7-R1 believed that his supervisor was not supportive or communicative enough compared to management, after coaching he was able to begin communicating with his non-communicative supervisor. Even though IC7-R1’s immediate supervisor had an Asian paternalistic leadership style (without benevolence), resulting in negative ‘leader–member exchange’ (LMX) behaviour, the coachee could still acquire the skills required to establish bi-directional communication. Case IC7-R1’s experience of
good management practice of listening and acting on feedback, impacts his mindset and has proven to be a vital protection against the effect of a weak supervisory LMX exchange.

In Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1, Kirkpatrick’s (2001), seven-step guide, ‘a manager’s model of change’, was discussed. One of those stages involves examining whether the management culture of listening and feedback is evident. As stated in Chapter 2, bi-directional communication refers to the existence of feedback loops between supervisors and subordinates. This description coincides with Kirkpatrick’s perspective about the role of communication during the change process which emphasises listening and feedback.

The second round of data collection and analysis examined interpersonal relationships further. In Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1 Scientific inquiry on resistance to change, Avey et al. (2008), Norman et al. (2010), and Zhong’s (2007) studies suggest PsyCap as a predictor of Organisational Citizenship Behaviours (OCB). Furthermore, past research has identified that effective interpersonal relationships are the basis of a good LMX, and that when the conditions are positive, OCB can be the result (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Moreover, research on the Asian paternalistic style of management suggests that when there is a positive relationship between manager and employee, the outcomes for the organisation have a higher probability of being positive because a positive relationship fosters trust and gratitude (Cheng et al., 2003; Cheng et al., 2004). Case IC1-R2 demonstrated the existence of good managerial practice coupled with Asian paternalistic leadership (with benevolence), leading to a positive LMX. Case IC1-R2 spoke positively of management support, which in turn was reflected in his demonstration of OCB. This close affinity to the organisation had developed in a short time. The reason for the development of a good LMX was healthy supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication that allowed for an open discussion of sensitive matters relating to the implementation of the current change.

1b. Discovery about the ‘management’ category from the negative responses which reinforce the theories

Case IC4-R1 revealed that prior to the organisational change, the previous supervisor had created a good working environment such that there were no surprises in the context of change. The next supervisor had surprised everyone by introducing a drastic change
without considering the employees. Having been in this company for over seven years, she (case IC4-R1) had undergone several change processes and had found that these changes were unfair to her colleagues, who were primarily American and European. She believed that her supervisor did not adopt good management practice when introducing the change process which had then triggered strong resistance to the change. She stated that her usually vocal and exuberant colleagues had become withdrawn and inhibited in communicating with this supervisor. She therefore plucked up the courage to speak to this new superior on behalf of her colleagues.

Case IC2-R1 shared that she used to be very communicative with her previous manager as well as with the team. This had changed drastically due to the perceived oppressive management practices of the present manager. Trust, which was a prevailing characteristic of the previous team, had been replaced with suspicion. The present manager had encouraged subordinates to share their thoughts openly. Accordingly, they did share their thoughts, after which the supervisor became very angry and began targeting them in a negative way. When asked about her reply to research question Q13 (‘Do you think that a person’s tone of voice contributes to a good conversation or a bad one?’ Reply: ‘Her tone is very good and the smile is there all the time. This is when I discovered that it is the most dangerous.’), she elaborated that on one occasion in a meeting this supervisor, with a broad smile and a nice tone, had encouraged everyone to voice their opinions openly, which they did. Immediately after the meeting, the supervisor started to verbally abuse her and the team members one by one for speaking up. It was the beginning of a chain reaction which affected the trust and morale of the entire team. This management practice immediately stifled any spontaneity in communication that had been the predominant departmental culture under the previous manager.

Chapter 2, Section 2.4.6.1: Leadership Inclinations of Asian managers, discusses the issue of trust in the context of Asian paternalistic leadership. According to Schoorman et al. (2007), the concepts of integrity, competence, and benevolence can result in many levels of trust. Trust is an important leadership quality for encouraging open communication, although when this trust is betrayed, silence results. Clearly, the themes that emerged from the data gathered in Round 1 and Round 2 about organisational factors must consider the importance of clearly defined mutual expectations, including the expectations of the supervisor’s authentic leadership, effective Leader–Member Exchange (LMX), and trust.
In Chapter 2, Darling et al. (2007) maintain that many organisations undergoing change are often over-managed but under-led. Therefore, it is useful to observe the presence of leadership and its impact on employees. These factors are categorised as the ‘leadership’ component of the organisational factors and will be analysed next.

4.2.2 Leadership and Asian paternalistic leadership and their impact on communication.

In Chapter 2, Rainey (2009, p.41) advocates that ‘strategic leaders must be open and honest in all their relationships and must ensure that they employ the best policies, processes, and practices. Company philosophy and principles must build trust, integrity, and awareness across the extended enterprise’. Rainey, like several other authors, believes that good strategic leaders will also promote trust and integrity in everything the enterprise’s management-leadership does which facilitates communication between the management and their employees. Therefore, the researcher, when reviewing the collected data, expected to find that relationships based on trust would reflect better supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication. The interview questions are designed to elicit data which would enable the recognition of themes and patterns that could address the research questions. The intention now is to analyse the meaning of the data collected, beginning with the most salient quality which is the ‘leadership’ category, through both positive and negative responses to the interview questions.

2a. Discovery from the data collected on the ‘leadership’ category from the positive responses which reinforce the theories

Questions 2, 6, and 8 have elicited the participants’ responses to good leadership, exemplified when there is added stress during organisational change. The responses from participants IC1-R1, IC3-R1, IC6-R1, IC7-R1, IC1-R2, IC3-R2, and IC4-R2 indicate positive LMX behaviour. This is particularly notable in case IC4-R2, for she indicated that she is an introvert, but that she has always been at ease having bi-directional communication with the current supervisor, in contrast to her previous employer. Case IC3-R1 elaborated that she could candidly disagree with her previous general manager on any matters regarding the progress of the change. She was also free to give feedback to the
general manager that she appreciated his forethought in preparing employees prior to the commencement of the organisational change. This is an example of healthy bi-directional communication, and since the interviewees mentioned their high degree of supervisor–subordinate openness and trust, it is likely that these were the factors promoting communication.

In Chapter 2, Section 2.4, we discussed Rainey’s (2009) leadership openness- and trust-building. Covey and Merrill (2006) similarly maintained that, where trust exists, it facilitates management and leadership as employees do not want to violate the trust between their leaders and their teams. These cases clearly demonstrate effective LMX, which in turn, appears to be a perfect recipe for supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication for embracing change.

2b. Discovery from the data collection in the leadership category from the negative responses which reinforces the theories

Questions 2, 4, 7, 12, 13, and 14 in Round 1 identified the participants’ reactions to poor leadership. Good or poor leaders become more apparent during challenging and stressful periods of an organisation’s operations, and organisational change is definitely one of those stressful periods. The reactions from participants IC2-R1, IC3-R1, and IC2-R2 showed that negative LMX behaviour could sabotage the organisation’s objectives as it reinforces resistance to organisational change.

Case IC2-R1 missed the good management-leadership style that she and her colleagues once enjoyed. She used to enjoy her job and the working environment. It was her hope that the new supervisor would show better management-leadership so as to restore the good employee–supervisor relationships. She stated that her personal career aspirations had died. To have an organisational change in such an atmosphere was distressing for her and her colleagues, and she was too drained to welcome any form of change.

As a result of the change, Case IC3-R1 now reports to a manager who displays many of the characteristics of an Asian paternalistic leader, such as expecting the subordinate to respect the manager’s position and authority, and to observe the power distance at all times. Unlike the current general manager (GM) to whom she had previously reported and with whom she could communicate openly, this deputy general manager (DGM), had a
more authoritarian and paternalistic leadership style, but did not appear to demonstrate the benevolence component of a paternalistic leader. As a consequence, in response to Question 14, case IC3-R1 said, ‘I am learning how not to speak up with this new boss because I had become used to speaking up with my previous GM. So it’s the opposite’.

Case IC2-R2 reported to a loud and domineering supervisor, and it was fortunate for her that, prior to the coaching, she was capable of responding effectively by initiating a meeting to resolve a sensitive issue. The outcome was positive, although she recognised that it could have been better had she been coached before the incident.

After the analysis of these organisational factors, the individual attributes which influence the employees’ responses to the management-leadership practice will be explored.

4.3 The impact of individual attributes on bi-directional communication

This section analyses the individual attributes which were examined in Chapter 2: Literature review. The emerging themes identified from the Round 1 and Round 2 data gathering, and captured within the broad heading of ‘individual attributes’, are: change enablers, the psychological capital/ability to cope, the will to communicate, communication skills, and mutual expectations. These factors are categorised as ‘self-leadership’ attributes. Self-leadership was discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.5: Asian employee self-leadership in promoting bi-directional communication.

4.3.1 Asian employees self-leadership and its impact on communication

In Chapter 2, it was ascertained that the concept of self-leadership originated from the practice of self-management. It specifically relates to the process of influencing oneself (Manz, 1983, 1986, 1992; Manz & Neck, 2004; Manz & Sims, 2001). Houghton and Neck (2002) posit that self-leadership is conceptualised for the purpose of enhancing personal effectiveness in the following three aspects of individual-level strategies:

i. behaviour-focused strategies

ii. natural reward strategies, and

iii. constructive thought strategies.
Manz and Sims (2001) recognise that self-regulatory behavioural strategies, such as constructive self-reflections and correction, can be highly useful for achieving specific goals for the situation. Chapter 2 examined Luthans et al.’s (2004) PsyCap, and the capability of adopting transparent and open communication, as advocated by Korsgaard et al. (2002), Luthans and Avolio (2003), Avolio and Luthans (2006), and Avolio and Gardner (2005). These frameworks are used as a lens to understand the emerging themes.

4.3.1.1 Self-leadership to enhance psychological capital/ability to cope (PsyCap)

This concept emerged during data collection as a positive response from Round 1 and Round 2 interviews relating to ‘self-leadership (the psychological capital/ability to cope)’ as a potential factor for assisting individual employees to overcome any inclination to doubt their self-worth and efficacy.

3a. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through psychological capital (PsyCap) from the positive responses

Chapter 2 discussed psychological capital (PsyCap), which is about:

… an individual’s positive psychological state of development characterised by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success.

(Luthans et al. [2007a], p.3).

Case IC5-R1 disclosed that she was an introvert who would prefer to let events develop naturally. Even if there was a need to seek clarification, she preferred her supervisor to initiate any communication. On one occasion, when she was presented with an opportunity by her supervisor to communicate her honest thoughts on the progress of the change, she communicated her feelings about a sensitive issue. This supervisor reacted angrily. Even though her own anger was also triggered, she was able to maintain her composure and respond appropriately. The outcome was positive and this experience helped to enhance her self-efficacy. With regard to the discussion about PsyCap and emotional intelligence in
Chapter 2, self-leadership coaching increased her self-confidence and self-efficacy – both positive attributes.

3b. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through psychological capital (PsyCap) from the negative responses

Case IC2-R1 is a good example of the effectiveness of coaching using the T.T.GROW model with the key elements of PsyCap, as this person was steeped in resentment and negative emotions. To deal with this case comprehensively, emotional intelligence needs to be discussed.

4.3.1.2 Self-leadership to enhance emotional intelligence

There is evidence in this study of employees demonstrating high levels of emotional intelligence. The positive responses from the combined results of the Round 1 and Round 2 interviews support the literature about high emotional intelligence being a necessary component for promoting effective bi-directional communication with the supervisor. Mellao and Monico (2013) propose that there is a significant relationship between PsyCap and emotional intelligence. Asian Singaporean coachees could adopt Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) emotional intelligence or Gardner’s (1983) intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence to overcome management-leadership practices which may impede supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication. The next section begins by analysing the intrapersonal aspect. In the words of Gardner (1983, p.25), intrapersonal intelligence is ‘a correlative ability turned inward. It is a capacity to form an accurate, veridical [truthful or realistic] model of oneself and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life’. These concepts were used as a lens for examining the data in this study.

4a. Discovery on the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through emotional intelligence (intrapersonal), from the positive responses

The following is an analysis of the responses from Round 1 and Round 2 interviews, which relate to the ‘self-leadership category’. Past research suggests that a high level of the individual attributes could be used to provide the skills that assist Asian Singaporean employees to establish an open dialogue with their supervisors on sensitive matters.
Case IC1-R1 had a high internal locus of control, anticipated ‘all resources needed’ in the form of human resources, equipment, and training, and believed in being proactive to facilitate the change by negotiating with management if resourcing was not adequate. Case IC4-R1 was unique. Although her reaction was classified as a negative response, it was also positive because she was able to redirect her supervisor’s angry response and facilitate a positive action. She became the spokesperson for her team despite not being in a formal leadership position. She approached the supervisor calmly and with confidence and engaged in a candid discussion about the injustice perceived by her colleagues caused by the way her supervisor had implemented the new system. This demonstrates the strength of self-leadership in harnessing individual attributes to be able to overcome indignation with diplomacy.

Cases IC5-R1 (paragraph 3a above) and IC4-R1 indicate the possibility of capitalising on those individual attributes that enhance intrapersonal communication and assist individuals to manage potentially negative reactions, turning them into actions that lead to positive outcomes. In both of these cases, the employees took positive steps to seek clarification, which in turn led to positive outcomes. The impact of individual attributes on enhancing self-leadership will be explored further in Chapter 5: Discussion.

4b. Discovery on the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through emotional intelligence (intrapersonal), from the negative responses

There were also negative responses from the Round 1 and Round 2 interviews which relate to self-leadership enabled through emotional intelligence (intrapersonal), which could potentially help to overcome the tendency towards emotional reactions.

During a coaching session, coachee IC2-R1 disclosed that there was a subtle resentment against her supervisor, who practised Asian paternalistic leadership style without benevolence. Her colleagues regarded the supervisor as untrustworthy and a ‘slave driver’ during the change phases. Hofstede (2001) ascertains that supervisors in high power distance cultures tend to treat their subordinates as if they have no right to articulate their opinion. This explains the various reactions and responses evident in this section. IC2-R1 is a perfect example of this. As described in Section 4.2.1 (paragraph 1b above), IC2-R1’s supervisor had ‘encouraged’ everyone to speak up, but when they did, she reacted with
anger, which led to resentment. Case IC2-R1 did not see the need to learn to communicate. She articulated that she communicated very well with her previous supervisor and with the team, until the second supervisor took over. In contrast, in Round 2 none of the cases responded negatively to change. For example, case IC2-R2, who had some conflict with her immediate supervisor, could nevertheless self-lead to ensure that resentment would not incapacitate her, and she confidently approached her supervisor. This result will be further elaborated in paragraph 5a in this section.

Cases such as IC1-R1, IC3-R2, IC4-R1 and IC5-R1 in Round 1 suggest that self-leadership enabled through high levels of individual attributes is much needed to promote healthy communication in organisations. Case IC2-R2 in Round 2 further confirms the individual attribute of self-efficacy for self-leadership to be able to approach a loud and domineering supervisor to achieve a positive outcome through open communication.

5a. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through emotional intelligence (interpersonal), from the positive responses

This section examines the positive responses from Round 1 and Round 2 interviews which relate to the ‘self-leadership category enabled through emotional intelligence (interpersonal)’, as a necessary skill for enhancing the communication skills of Asian Singaporean employees.

Case IC2-R2, most surprisingly, was capable of broaching sensitive issues with her immediate supervisor, despite being a new employee of only four months. This was even more surprising considering that her supervisor practised an Asian paternalistic leadership style, but without demonstrating benevolence. Her conclusion was that after her many years of working for an American MNC and a locally-based MNC, and with her sales and customer service training, she felt well placed to manage the relationship with her supervisor. She possessed the intrapersonal self-efficacy to approach her supervisor for an open discussion and therefore coaching for her was directed at refining her interpersonal skills instead.

In contrast to case IC2-R2, case IC3-R2 demonstrated that despite having been in sales in a top European company for more than 20 years and reaching the level of a sales manager and trainer, she had not developed her interpersonal skills to establish effective bi-
directional communications with her immediate supervisor. She was hesitant to initiate a conversation with her supervisor even when the situation warranted an open dialogue on sensitive matters that were pertinent to the organisational change. The justification for holding back was her belief that ‘management are experts and they know what is best for us’. Accordingly, this was her preferred behaviour.

Case IC5-R1 appears to have anger as an emotion, which causes her to abandon the typical Asian’s high-power-distance culture and turns her into a vocal person. For instance, case IC5-R1 revealed that the Asian tendency to be inhibited could be triggered by the right catalyst. This coachee revealed that she found it a challenge to initiate a conversation with her immediate supervisors, particularly if there was a sensitive element to be discussed. If an opportunity unfolded in the natural course of events, she would then be capable of broaching such an issue. That event did happen, and case IC5-R1 initiated a sensitive conversation with her immediate supervisor but was criticised angrily for her action. She was surprised by her own response, and as she calmly articulated, ‘you need not raise your voice’ and ‘you should explain nicely…’. The negative responses from Round 1 and Round 2 interviews, which relate to self-leadership enabled through emotional intelligence (interpersonal), show that there is a need to know how to communicate with management.

5b. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through emotional intelligence (interpersonal), from the negative responses

This section deals with the negative responses from the Round 1 and Round 2 interviews, which relate to the ‘self-leadership category enabled through emotional intelligence (interpersonal)’ as a necessary skill for overcoming the inhibited communication tendencies of Asian Singaporean employees.

Case IC3-R2 possessed interpersonal skills that were not capitalised on when the situation warranted. Therefore, case IC3-R2 in Round 2, and cases IC4-R1 and IC5-R1 in Round 1, support the concept that self-leadership, enabled through emotional intelligence (intrapersonal) or PsyCap, is still needed to acquire the self-motivation or self-efficacy for applying interpersonal skills when needed. Case IC1-R2 used self-leadership to manage a good supervisor–subordinate relationship without creating envy or animosity in others in the team. This issue is further examined in Chapter 5. Cases IC2-R2 and IC3-R2
reinforced the concept that self-leadership could possibly be the necessary enabler to enhance good supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication for Asian Singaporean employees between the ages of 45 and 65. As previously stated, bi-directional communication is required to ensure that employees can discuss issues that might otherwise jeopardise their acceptance of change. In the case of IC4-R2, the results showed that with self-leadership well applied, employees can observe Asian culture while still being able to discuss sensitive matters candidly with their supervisors.

4.4 The impact of cultural factors on bi-directional communication

This section analyses the extent to which individual attributes (which were examined in Chapter 2: Literature review) emerge in the analysis of the collected data in section 4.3. Based on the overarching emerging themes ascertained from Round 1 and Round 2 data gathering under the individual attributes, poor bi-directional communication between supervisors and employees can be addressed using coaching. Hence, the following factors were examined as factors to be examined: change enablers, the psychological capital/ability to cope, the will to communicate, communication skills, and mutual expectations, all of which have been categorised as ‘self-leadership’ attributes.

4.4.1 Asian employee self-leadership (cultural factors) and its impact on communication.

The literature review in Chapter 2 ascertained that Asian culture, which adopts the practice of high power distance, appears to encourage a communication style that is cautious or that even results in ‘organisational silence’, as discussed in Section 4.2.2: Leadership and Asian paternalistic leadership (paragraph 1b). Perlow and Williams (2003, p.52) caution that ‘silence can exact a high psychological price on individuals, generating feelings of humiliation, pernicious anger, resentment, and the likelihood that, if unexpressed, contaminate every interaction, shut down creativity, and undermine productivity’. Therefore, poor communication between the supervisor and the employee, possibly caused by high power distance, appears to lead to silence. Hence, the issue of the impact of high
power distance on employee communication practices is explored in depth. The data gathered from Round 1 appears to support Perlow and Williams’s theory.

4.4.1.1 Capitalising on power distance to discuss resistance to change

Chapter 2 investigated Hofstede’s (1980, 2001) proposition, arguing that there are negative implications for power distance cultures resulting from the inequality of people in different positions of authority being deemed natural and desirable. The effect of high power distance on Asian Singaporean employees is that because of their respect for hierarchy, it stops them from engaging in a discussion with their Asian supervisors.

6a. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through culture (power distance), from the positive responses

This section explores the impact of power distance (perceived as Asians’ respect for their elders) on bi-directional communication between supervisors and employees. In case IC2-R2, the reaction of her loud and domineering immediate supervisor changed to one of respect when, during an important private meeting, a sensitive matter about the perceived pressures of organisational change on particular employees was discussed. In spite of her cultural beliefs, she could capitalise on her past training in interpersonal skills as a means of initiating a conversation about a sensitive subject, be it with her supervisors, with difficult customers, or with colleagues. Therefore, coaching was focused on refining her interpersonal skills instead. ‘J, you need to give some thoughts to this, as I think it is very harsh to….It affects me…I’m older than you…’. She used the age factor effectively and this caused the manager to gradually open up and restore a healthy dialogue with her again. This manager, who was also Asian, acknowledged the age factor and became more cautious in her communication style with the employee. This approach apparently worked and both the supervisor and the employee managed to build good bi-directional communications. This is a demonstration of high power distance from the position of a supervisor respecting an older subordinate. Abdullah (2005) interprets power distance as being not just about authority, but also about age, in that elders (age) take the lead (authority) and become wise elders. If IC2-R2’s supervisor had been from the ‘low power distance’ culture, the outcome would likely have been negative. Coaching for IC2-R2 was directed at building interpersonal relations with this difficult supervisor and working
towards mutual respect. As a consequence, this case provides support for the premise that coaching can increase self-leadership, encompassing the integral ‘T’ for ‘Topic’ representing the context of Asian Singaporean culture, which can in turn be used to improve the bi-directional communication between the supervisor and the employee.

Case IC1-R2 demonstrates how coaching can be used to give employees greater clarity about when to use formal or informal bi-directional communication with the supervisor. This case is an example in which there was an established healthy supervisor–subordinate relationship. In this case, coaching was used to give the employee insight into when to maintain a high power distance with the supervisor because the supervisor was Asian, and in the presence of other colleagues there was a need to be diplomatic enough not to display their special bond. In this way, IC1-R2 removed any perception of favouritism which could have generated mistrust. The employee believed it important to maintain interpersonal trust, not just with the supervisor, but with other colleagues and team members as well.

6b. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through culture (power distance), from the negative responses

An emerging theme from the analysis of the data was that culture had both positive and negative implications. For example, in her responses, case IC3-R1 said: ‘My boss is also a lady. She is my new DGM, posted from our China office as part of the current change. I’ve got to be very guarded.’ ‘I think it is a gender and cultural issue…she is very bossy.’ Case IC3-R1 realised that her new DGM had to be given the respect normally given to managers. She admitted that ‘I am learning how not to speak up with my boss as I have been too used to speaking up with my GM. So it’s the opposite [now]’. The employee had been so used to going directly to her GM’s office to discuss matters, and over time she realised that if she did not observe the sensitivity of the hierarchy, there would be negative outcomes. There were initial conflicts with the DGM. In Chapter 2, the concepts of ‘guanxi’ (the need to cultivate long-term relationships) and ‘ren’ (the practice of forbearance, adopting self-control, and suppressing one’s emotions and impulses) were discussed in relation to coaching. Although IC3-R1 possessed a knowledge and understanding of Asian culture, her tendency not to observe traditional Asian power distance was due to her familiarity with her previous GM, developed over many years. Heath, D. (2010) has wisely advised coaches. In response, the coaching aimed at
incorporating elements of psychological capital (PsyCap), synergised with activating higher levels of emotional intelligence, and this apparently worked well. A brief telephone follow-up revealed that IC3-R1 constantly reminded herself to respect the hierarchy of authority, both in the protocol as well as in the manner of her interpersonal relations of observing the culture of power distance with the DGM. The result was that their relationship and their dialogues went very well.

However, self-leadership can provide the personal strength an employee needs to address hurts and resentment. Unexpectedly, although this strength is drawn from the same culture, it is drawn from a different facet of that culture: collectivism. The following responses could offer insights into the element of collectivism for self-leadership.

4.4.1.2 Capitalising on collectivism to discuss resistance to change

Chapter 2 referred to Ady’s (1998, p.112) description of collectivism as ‘individual people holding their goals as second to those of a group of people to which they belong’. Englehart (2000, p.549) elaborates further that, ‘Asian cultures are characterized by a set of values that includes obedience to authority, intense allegiance to groups, and a submergence of individual identity in collective identity’. This concept of collectivism is observed in the data collected for this research. Positive responses from Round 1 and Round 2 interviews and from the coaching sessions relate to self-leadership and capitalising on collectivism to discuss resistance to change.

7a. Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through culture (collectivism), from the positive responses

Case IC4-R1 spoke up for her colleagues whom she perceived as having been unjustly treated during the organisational changes. The Asian characteristic of collectivism appears to harness the strength to override the other cultural element of power distance. This case has been discussed in Section 4.2.1 and in Section 4.4.1

Case IC4-R1 found the organisational change to be unfair to her colleagues when she listened to their rationale for resisting the impending change. She realised that her usually vocal Western colleagues had given up as they had come to the conclusion that the new
management was adamant about the change and would not listen to employees. Despite the fact that she was the least affected employee in the team and not in a formal leadership position, her sense of camaraderie, reinforced by a sense of injustice, spurred her to approach the key authority to discuss her team’s grievances.

It was a major challenge for those with an Asian culture to be able to go against that part of the culture which emphasises high power distance, and instead to capitalise on ‘justice’, another aspect of the same culture which emphasises collectivism. Furthermore, case IC4-R1 grew up in China: the birthplace of Confucianism. She had been in Singapore for 15 years and became a Singaporean citizen only five years before this interview and her coaching session. She agreed that in normal circumstances she would have observed power distance and would have respected the decisions of authority. However, she now felt compelled to stand up for her colleagues. Her reason for speaking out was because ‘we have been colleagues for more than seven years’, stated with a tinge of emotion. This demonstrates the strength of collectivism which could override the power distance factor if the individual perceives an action to be justifiable based on their own perception of ‘Asian-ness’.

IC4-R1’s account appeared to have created an internal paradigm shift for the individual in terms of believing that Asians are typically inhibited in their communication, probably owing at least in part to power distance. Case IC4-R1 may be construed as an outlier to Goodwin and Goodwin’s (1999) theory because employees in high-power-distance cultures are unlikely to challenge their supervisors’ inappropriate attitudes. However, IC4-R1 was determined to be an ‘internal organisational coach’ so as to enable her colleagues to apply self-leadership and to stand up for their rights. On the other hand, there were also negative responses from the Round 1 and Round 2 interviews and the coaching sessions about self-leadership. These were inspired by collectivism for esprit de corps caused by a strong friendship with senior management.

7.b Discovery about the ‘self-leadership’ category, enabled through culture (collectivism), from the negative responses

Spector et al. (2002) posit that in a collectivistic culture the belief in an external locus of control is more dominant compared with an individualistic culture. Contrary to this theory,
as examined in Chapter 2, case IC4-R1 is a perfect model for self-leadership that demonstrates that a collectivistic culture can still adopt a belief in an internal locus of control for the good of the team. Although the outcome of her proposal to management was not successful, the intention of establishing justice consequently fostered *esprit de corps* and was worth the attempt. She articulated her desire to learn coaching in order to restore her confidence and to enhance her colleagues’ ability to be brave and to stand up for their own rights. The data from Round 2 further confirms the data in Round 1, namely that the concept of self-leadership can be enabled through culture (collectivism), and this can result in establishing bi-directional communication, even with superiors who have poor communication skills.

**4.4.1.3 Enhancing interpersonal trust: the propensity to reciprocate**

The concept of enhancing interpersonal trust is taken from the literature review and has been confirmed by the data collected in this study. Interpersonal trust has been described as ‘the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party, based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party’ (Mayer et al., 1995, p.712). This is the response that any employee might adopt with their superiors, based on past experience. Interpersonal trust is formed through interpersonal relationships. Whitener et al. (1998) allude to the belief that interpersonal trust portrays a belief or an expectation that the other party will act benevolently, and that trust involves a risk and a willingness to be open to the possibility of being disappointed due to the fact that the relationship may not fulfil this expectation.

One of the individual attributes that the collected data focuses on is trust. As determined in Chapter 2, the irony of Asian culture that could pose a challenge is that while the Asian culture of collectivism believes in relationships and team building, the AsiaBarometer Survey (2006), the comparative survey in Asia, covering East, South East, South and Central Asia, found that Singaporeans are one of the least trusting people; only 31.6 percent of Singaporeans think that other people can be trusted. Positive responses from the Round 1 and Round 2 interviews refer to interpersonal trust – the propensity to reciprocate.
8a. Discovery about the ‘interpersonal trust: the propensity to reciprocate’ category from the positive responses

In Chapter 2 it was established that, in Asian culture, self-concept is a sense of self with a consideration for other individuals and a reciprocal exchange (Su et al., 1999). Hofstede (2007) recognises that the five-factor model (FFM) needs to be adapted to Asian culture by including a sixth factor: ‘Dependence on Others’. Case IC7-R1 and all the cases from IC1-R2 to IC4-R2 have positively demonstrated interpersonal trust and the propensity to reciprocate due to positive LMX and organisational culture.

Moreover, Farh and Cheng (2000) and Cheng et al. (2004) discovered that Asian subordinates reciprocate to benevolent paternalistic leadership with respect, gratitude, and loyalty. Case IC1-R2 in particular disclosed that there had been a good friendship with an immediate supervisor who was in senior management. This was due to a high degree of interpersonal trust, built up over their past dealings and prior to his joining the organisation. IC1-R2 reciprocated by being supportive of management’s endeavours to the best of his ability. The most salient characteristic was being absolutely honest with management about his opinion on matters pertaining to the change; positives as well as negatives. This approach would likely be a perfect combination for open supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication.

The coaching session was then adapted to focus on the need to maintain high power distance. This was because the supervisor was Asian, and in the presence of colleagues there was a need to be diplomatic enough not to display this special bond so as to avert the perception of favouritism, which could then generate mistrust. Interpersonal trust has to prevail, not just with the supervisors, but among team members as well.

Case IC7-R1 and cases IC1-R2 to IC4-R2 affirmed that Asian Singaporean employees are capable of reciprocating and building a team culture, and that this results in healthy bi-directional communication with everyone including their supervisors. These employees were very pleased with their working environment and strongly supported the management initiatives. These cases will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

8b. Discovery about the ‘interpersonal trust: the propensity to reciprocate’ category from the negative responses
Case IC2-R1 had been able to communicate openly with her previous supervisor and with her team. After the organisational change, however, she said: ‘I don’t communicate with my superior colleagues now. I do not trust all of them’. Case IC2-R1 was examined in section 4.4.1 (paragraph 1b). This episode relates to the betrayal of trust by the supervisor who had initially encouraged everyone to voice their opinions frankly, but who responded with anger when her team members did voice their opinions. The team members reacted by adopting ‘personal silence’.

### 4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter represented an opportunity to examine how interpersonal experience could be a strong factor when considering coaching sessions for Singaporean employees. The most valuable discovery from the coaching sessions was that, coaching is of significant importance as an intervention that impacts bi-directional communication between supervisors and their Asian Singaporean subordinates during the stressful period of organisational change. Three of these cases, IC1-R1, IC2-R1, and IC7-R1 are relevant to the objectives of this research precisely because they answer the research questions, particularly Q3: ‘What is the effect of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian Baby Boomer to the older Gen X Singaporean employees?’

The next three cases, IC4-R1, IC5-R1, and IC3-R1 are especially interesting. The first two, IC4-R1 and IC5-R1, are filled with unexpected responses from employees who observe high power distance culture, yet still addressed the aspects which affect supervisor–employee bi-directional communication: PsyCap and self-leadership, and specifically the answers to research questions Q1: ‘What factors affect the Baby Boomer and the older Gen X Asian Singaporean employees’ acceptance of change?’, and Q2: ‘What factors affect the quality of bi-directional communication between supervisors and the targeted Asian Singaporean Baby Boomer to the older Gen X employees within their organisations?’. The third case, IC3-R1, is especially important because it provides evidence for re-examining the deeper emotional aspects of LMX. As pointed out by Creswell (2003, p.190), ‘the process of data analysis involves making sense out of text … moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data’.

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From the Round 2 data, four relevant cases were examined. Case IC4-R2 provides emerging themes relevant to addressing research question Q3 ‘What is the effect of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian Baby Boomer to the older Gen X Singaporean employees?’ Cases IC1-R2 and IC2-R2 serve to confirm the expected employees’ responses which encourage the acquisition of self-leadership competency in the context of developing supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication. Case IC2-R2 is another interesting case that stands out from the others as it contains another facet of the unexpected and surprising Asian employees’ responses, and certainly demonstrates the factors which impact supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication. The cases obtained from both rounds of data collection have made invaluable contributions to refining the solutions for self-leadership coaching that is designed especially for Asian Singaporean employees. At this point in the present study, three of the research questions have been amply addressed (see Section 1.9).

Round 2 also served to reinforce the concept that a high power distance culture, coupled with Asian paternalistic leadership without benevolence, leads to silence and resentment. This is because self-confessed ‘introverts’ or power distance-inclined individuals, for example cases IC3-R2 and IC4-R2 who preferred to remain quiet because they were reporting to a less-than-desirable leader, demonstrated after their coaching sessions that they were capable of engaging in bi-directional communication with their superiors, even on sensitive matters. Therefore, in the absence of a positive LMX, cases such as IC3-R2 and IC4-R2 would certainly need self-leadership to succeed in a very challenging work environment.

In summary, the emerging themes from the study suggest that effective managers use bi-directional communication as a basis of building trust and rapport which in turn reduces resistance to change. The positive responses in the collected data confirm the theories and concepts about organisational factors as well as about individual attributes. The negative responses provide the direction for the researcher-as-coach to apply the adapted T.T.GROW coaching model appropriately to the targeted Asian Singaporean employees. The benefit of the coaching was that it demonstrated improvements in the participants’ emotional intelligence and PsyCap levels such that they were capable of establishing bi-directional communication with their supervisors where that communication was previously lacking. As a consequence, in some cases, bi-directional communication
improved, and trust began to build. The next chapter will discuss the individual attributes of those employees who needed more coaching, with the intention of calibrating the effectiveness of the T.T.GROW coaching model.
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in the context of the literature review in Chapter 2, thereby answering the research questions put forward in Section 1.9. It discusses the emergent themes which suggest that coaching does assist employees to build personal attributes that encourage self-leadership, which in turn increases their ability to undertake bi-directional communication during organisational change. The analysis of the collected data in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 confirms the research questions that identified the gaps in the literature in Chapter 2, and extends the literature by identifying the importance of organisational factors as well. In particular, based on the literature, Chapter 5 details the pattern-matching of the findings in this study with what was expected.
The figures below show the preliminary theoretical framework for this study (Figure 5.1) and the revised theoretical framework (Figure 5.2). The researcher based this study on the revised theoretical framework.

The preliminary theoretical framework (Figure 5.1) describes the external macro-micro environment which drives every organisation’s leaders to respond or react to it. Tan and Tan (2004, p.1) declare that change is a ‘hallmark in this new era of the knowledge-based economy’. The response could come in the form of a well-thought through or well-planned change, or it could also be management’s reaction in the form of an unplanned change. Preferably, every organisational change is consultative and expertly planned, and generates a positive response from the employees. However, this ideal has repeatedly been proven to be elusive. As Glover, Jones, and Friedman (2002, p.18) point out, organisational ‘change does not always create adaptation’. Up to this point, the collected data, as reflected upon in this chapter, has indicated that Asian Singaporean employees, particularly from the older Gen X and Baby Boomer generations, could react in a culturally unique manner that is unfamiliar to their supervisors, especially if they are well-versed in the valuable but
Western-centric models of managing employees’ reactions to change. After the data collection, this research evolved into a study to discover a possible solution that would enhance supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication for accepting change through self-leadership coaching.

The changes to the preliminary theoretical framework in Figure 5.1 include the role of coaching as a means of building individual attributes to promote self-leadership for older Asian Singaporean employees. In particular, the aim of building self-leadership was to foster the personal attributes and skills needed to ensure healthy supervisor-subordinate bi-directional communication during organisational change. Therefore, this revised role of coaching would address the third and final research question about the positive effects of coaching during organisational change for the targeted Asian Baby Boomer to older Gen X Singaporean employees.
A coaching time of three to four hours was allocated to each of the 10 coachees, the findings provided evidence of improvements either in intrapersonal or interpersonal aspects of self-leadership.

5.2 Resistance to change

Firstly, one of the strongest themes emerging from the literature is the importance of individual attributes for understanding resistance to change. Chapter 2 identified that employees resist change because of many factors, one of which is a low level of PsyCap. PsyCap comprises employees’ perception of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007a). Secondly, the employees’ involvement in the change and the extent of their participation could influence their readiness to accept the change (Fedor et al., 2006). Also in Chapter 2, according to Coch and French (1948) and Lewin (1952), human resistance to change is a recurring theme. It appears that these researchers have not examined the root causes at the personal motivational level, and certainly have not examined how the individual attributes of Asian Singaporeans would react or respond to management’s change initiatives. The researcher identified in the literature review in Chapter 2 that, despite extensive research identifying a multitude of individual and organisational factors that inhibited the implementation of change, issues specific to older Asian employees had not been adequately explored. In particular, the importance of self-leadership had not been examined in depth. The individual attributes uncovered during the interview–coaching sessions served to identify the importance of building individual attributes and skills of older Asians through coaching, and as a means of facilitating greater bi-directional communication during the change process.

An emerging theme from the analysis of the interviews is that some employees react to change with organisational silence and passive resistance. For example, Case IC2-R1 had an emotional reaction of personal silence and engaged in a subtle resistance to change in response to the supervisor’s actions. The supervisor’s style of Asian paternalistic leadership without benevolence made IC2-R1 feel resentful of her immediate supervisor and she resisted every management initiative. In terms of Lewin’s theory (1947a), IC2-R1 would require much convincing before she would be willing to ‘unfreeze’.
5.3 Communication and resistance to change

In Chapter 2, the scientific inquiry into resistance to change and its relationships with positive organisational scholarship (POS) were examined. This was followed by an investigation into how POS factors affect communication during organisational transition. One area of study that has applied POS is positive organisational behaviour (POB). Luthans et al. (2007a) developed a variable within the umbrella of POB called ‘psychological capital’ (PsyCap). PsyCap defines a person’s positive psychological state as characterised by developing self-efficacy, acquiring the optimism about succeeding now or in the future, persevering toward goals, and redirecting paths to goals (hope), in order to succeed. When faced with challenges and adversity, a person’s ability to bounce back (resilience) to attain success is also a characteristic of PsyCap. It was anticipated that the data collected in this study would confirm that employees with high PsyCap would be psychologically equipped to communicate effectively with their supervisors, and those with low psychological capital would less able to communicate effectively with their supervisors. Employees with low PsyCap would be more likely to observe the Asian cultural norm of believing that the power distance between themselves and their supervisor was too great for them to be capable of improving at least one element of PsyCap when seeking information from their immediate supervisors about the direction of the organisational change.

It was observed from the data that there were two conflicting responses to Asian paternalistic leadership: positive and negative. The coaching process used the T.T.GROW model and adapted it for Asian Singaporeans, particularly those with difficulty communicating with their supervisors. This means that Singaporean employees need to be aware of the organisational factors in terms of the management–leadership dichotomy. Coaching could provide this supporting knowledge to give them a choice of their responses to different management-leadership styles. Self-leadership coaching aims to enable employees to grow their personal strengths and to capitalise on their individual attributes through the synergy of emotional intelligence and PsyCap. In this way, they can improve bi-directional communication with their supervisors.
5.3.1 Organisational factors in bi-directional communication

The management-leadership models examined in Chapter 2 promote bi-directional communication but fail to take account of the Asian Singaporean cultural context. The contribution of this thesis is that it extends the management models by adding a coaching intervention for building older Asian employees’ personal attributes so that they can engage in effective bi-directional communication with their supervisors.

5.3.1.1 Asian paternalistic leadership with benevolence and its impact on communication

The degree of Asian-ness still plays a part in the way that Asian Singaporeans employees communicate with their supervisors. Since Asians have a collectivist culture, and team harmony is the essence of that culture, coaching has to incorporate the element of respect for authority, regardless of whether the leaders act according to the Asian paternalistic-cum-LMX leadership style or not. It has been ascertained that Asian subordinates are willing to accept such paternalistic leadership as well-meaning guidance. When there is organisational change, a high level of trust in management-leadership, employees exhibit a more positive and open mindset. Should the leadership style lack integrity or benevolence, which means that only the authoritarian component is apparent, the reaction of Asian subordinates can be one of a subtle resistance to change. They can resort to individual silence or to venting their resentment by spreading rumours, or by refusing to perform to their potential. More recently, Rafferty and Restubog (2011) pointed out that badly treated subordinates restore their balance if there is a poor LMX relationship by withdrawing their Organisational Citizen Behaviour (OCB). In such circumstances, these employees might not be motivated to create a bi-directional line of communication when they resent their supervisor resented and is perceived as being untrustworthy. If this could be the reaction of low power-distance-inclined Western employees, then high power-distance-orientated Asian employees might be even more adversely affected. The Round 2 interviews served to reinforce the concept that coaching can be used successfully to increase employees’ personal attributes so that they can communicate with their supervisors irrespective of the supervisor’s style.
The data gathering process in Round 1 and Round 2, as tabulated in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, has shown evidence that a coaching intervention improved supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication by increasing the individual attributes of the employees so that they have the courage to communicate with their supervisors. This section seeks to discuss the effective elements identified from the collected data that contribute to the effectiveness of the coaching model.

5.3.2 Self-leadership coaching for the employees, inclined towards a negative response

In Chapter 2: Literature review, Section 2.3.1 states that ‘PsyCap appears to possess the potential to ease employees fears and concerns about organisational change, regardless of the employees’ ethnic culture’, and, in Section 2.6.3.1, ‘Asian Singaporean coachees could easily adopt Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) “emotional intelligence” as it is aligned to [the] Asian cultural practice[s]’ such as ren, the practice of forbearance. These factors will be discussed in this section.

Case IC1-R1 was resourceful and maintained healthy bi-directional communication with her supervisor during the stressful period of change. Reviewing the literature and exploring more deeply beyond emotional intelligence and PsyCap is due to the resentment that case IC2-R1 experienced towards her supervisor. Case IC3-R1 learned to adapt to the new supervisor who had a dominant, Asian paternalistic leadership style. In another case, IC4-R1 behaved unexpectedly by being outspoken in the face of a perceived injustice. Assuming these participants are representative of all older Singaporeans, there may be a very high probability that most typical Asian employees might choose to remain quiet and observe a high power distance between themselves and their supervisors.

5.3.2.1 Self-leadership enabled through emotional intelligence and PsyCap

This section elaborates on how the data in this study revealed that Asian Singaporean employees communicated with their supervisors, even when they perceived an injustice. Case IC4-R1 showed that the intrapersonal aspect of emotional intelligence enables managing a sense of injustice appropriately, and does not lead to indignation but rather to
seeking a solution. Next, being an Asian Singaporean of the older Generation X, IC4-R1 would likely have the tendency to observe power distance. Instead, she chose to lean towards collectivism and spoke up on behalf of her team mates, who, she felt strongly, had been treated unfairly during the change. The emotional intelligence component here is identified as being intrapersonal as it pertains to self-awareness and self-management in choosing the appropriate action rather than to the person’s own inclinations. Her coaching session was also about coaching her colleagues to adopt the concept of PsyCap to restore enough self-efficacy to communicate with the negative LMX with which they were faced.

Sanfey et al. (2003) disclose that neuroscientific research suggests that a sense of justice is hardwired into the human brain. The sense of justice or the issue of fairness could be a compelling reason for resistance of change when employees regard the impending, ongoing or the final outcome of the organisational change (Komodromos, 2013). According to Cropanzano et al. (2003), such research into organisational justice has been growing. Greenberg (2002) and Turillo et al. (2002) observe that this research reveals that individuals seek fairness at work even when this could post a risk to themselves. Lind (1992, 1995, 2001) proposed the Fairness Heuristic theory, which explains that individuals possess mental models defining just and unjust treatments. Heuristic are ‘good enough’ cognitive shortcuts, developed through experiences at work and in life, which enable people to handle injustice. Bolino and Turnley (2005) highlight that speaking up is potentially ‘costly and risky’ (COR), and demands effort, time, and energy. Detert and Edmondson (2011) and Ng and Feldman (2012) reason that this is because employee who intend to speak up have to prepare themselves and get their facts right, and then observe and wait for the right opportunity to articulate the case in a diplomatic manner. Detert and Trevino (2010) and Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin (2003) warn that people who dare to speak up take the risk of being marked as troublemakers, and that by being viewed as such by management could result in the loss of management support, or the loss of career opportunities.

Further research into the literature about case IC4-R1’s behaviour uncovers the theory suggested by Haidt (2012) and Li and Cropanzano (2009b) that Westerners have a strong tendency to emphasise justice compared with other cultures. In case IC4-R1, the sense of injustice that compelled this Asian Singaporean to speak up for her Western colleagues seems to run contrary to the original belief that Asian culture is a potential impediment to employees’ ability to communicate candidly with their superiors about sensitive issues. Of
the 10 employees interviewed, case IC4-R1 is the only person who demonstrated this behaviour therefore this result could be an aberration or an outlier. To Miles and Huberman (1994, p.270), ‘the outlier is your friend’, and as described in Section 4.4.1.2, there is a possibility that Asians’ cultural characteristic of collectivism may have overridden the other cultural element of power distance, thus converting this outlier to a positive assertive response. Su et al. (1999) also suggest that the characteristic of self-concept in Asian culture is embedded within groups of individuals. Finally, Hofstede (2007) advocates the expansion of the five-factor model (FFM) to include ‘Dependency on Others’ as the sixth factor to ensure the model’s cultural universality.

The rationale for such differences in behaviour can possibly be found in Oyserman et al. (2002), who theorise that the core element of collectivism is based on the assumption that groups bind together and are mutually obligated to each other. Perhaps case IC4-R1 could reinforce the findings of Kirkman and Shapiro (1997, 2001), who conclude that employees from collectivist cultures are more open to self-leading teams compared with those from individualistic cultures. Coincidentally, Moor (2005) postulates that individual meanings would typically converge into collective meaning through interactions, and that the collective values and beliefs could potentially be embraced by the individual. This could mean that in this context of defending the rights of a team, Western and Eastern cultures seem to converge.

Case IC1-R2 demonstrated good managerial practice coupled with Asian paternalistic leadership (with benevolence) and a positive LMX. Moreover, this case had the added advantage of low power distance, but with mutual respect due to a friendship between the parties that had been established over the years. Hence IC1-R2’s coaching session focused on self-leadership to maintain power distance as well as to build an interpersonal aspect to promote team spirit. The outcome was very positive, on account of both the maturity of the coachee as well as to his positive learning attitude. Based on IC1-R2’s descriptive account of his interactions with his supervisors and colleagues, the personal attributes of self-efficacy and optimism were evident. For instance, he said about his superior: ‘I know him well, but I don’t take advantage of the situation. If I have something important, I will just tell him I need to see him for an important matter and so far he will welcome me’.

Case IC5-R1 could speak up for herself in response to being reprimanded angrily for raising a sensitive issue. Even though IC5-R1’s anger was also triggered during the
exchange with her supervisor, she was able to maintain her composure and responded appropriately, thus resulting in a positive outcome. She stated that the coaching session had given her a new confidence for initiating a dialogue with her supervisor rather than relying on her preference to ‘… just let it happen naturally’.

The next section explores the details of the T.T.GROW coaching model, which Asian Singaporean employees might find useful.

5.3.2.2 Self-leadership enabled through an adapted T.T.GROW coaching model

The responses discussed above reinforce the theories about emotional intelligence and PsyCap as a potent combination. This combination could be offered as an effective enabler through self-leadership coaching sessions for those employees with negative responses to management-leadership, one of the organisational factors. This section explores how employees in this study communicate when there is an inclination to adopt the negative response of personal silence.

In Chapter 2, Morrison and Milliken’s (2000) assertion that managers who adopt a high-power-distance and collectivistic culture are likely to create a climate of silence was discussed. Case IC2-R1 seems to reinforce the concept that self-leadership can overcome resentment, but only to a limited extent for such intense negative emotion. Wu et al. (2002) find that authoritarian paternalistic leadership is strongly associated with fear, resentment, and anger, as reflected in case IC2-R1. This case has another facet which challenges another aspect of the Asian culture: collectivism. The supervisor had sown seeds of discord within the team, and the researcher concluded at this point in the organisational change, when there was resentment towards the supervisor and the feeling of animosity had escalated into group mistrust, that collectivism had collapsed and individual survival had replaced it. Case IC2-R1’s reaction to the supervisor could have stemmed from the perception of a dominant, Asian paternalistic leadership without the element of benevolence.

Schoorman et al. (2007) put forward a strong case that a combination of integrity, competence, and benevolence could result in multilevels of trust. In this case, such leadership devoid of benevolence created a prevailing sense of mistrust amongst
subordinates. In such a workplace environment, supervisor–employee bi-directional communication would be of no value as it is tinged with mistrust. In this context, this mistrust is not about communication itself, but about a deeper psycho-emotive dimension. This is because, in the context of high power distance, Asian subordinates are still expected to respect their Asian leaders, and this could compel them to suppress their resentment.

Self-leadership seems to be a more comprehensive solution for overcoming mistrust in a case like IC2-R1. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) affirm that the aim of positive psychology is to enable the shift from focusing on psychological deficits to an appropriate balance of finding solutions to one’s challenges and making a concerted and proactive effort to build on one’s strengths (self-leadership). Butler et al. (2003) and Huang (2004) have determined that suppressing an emotion such as resentment has been found to inhibit relationship building. In Chapter 4, Scherer (2005) wisely cautions that employees’ adaptive behaviour is influenced by their emotions, and Luthans et al. (2007a, 2007b) propose that forgiveness and gratitude are dimensions of PsyCap that could potentially offer a solution for overcoming an issue of interpersonal relationships.

Enright and Coyle (1998), McCullough and Witvliet (2002) and Seligman (2002) discover in their studies that forgiving does not mean forgetting, condoning, pardoning, or excusing a transgression, and that the goal of forgiveness is not necessarily reconciliation. It is the physical, mental, and positive emotional benefits of forgiving that make forgiving essential as it influences the way people communicate. In essence, forgiveness is part of self-leadership by enabling victims to become victors, and to restore their power to handle their situations more effectively. Fredrickson’s (1998, 2000, 2001) ‘broaden-and-build’ theory of positive emotions proposes that when people experience negative emotions they are likely to have a narrow view of the world, whereas when they experience positive emotions they are able to see all the possibilities that exist. Accordingly, positive emotions promote broadened cognitions such as innovative thoughts to resolve challenging issues such as individual encounters with poor management-leadership.

Based on the emerging themes, in particular, the psychological capital/ability to cope, case IC2-R1’s intense resentment towards her supervisor has further led the coach-as-researcher to consult the literature on counselling versus coaching as an alternative intervention to restore, rather than to enhance, bi-directional communication. According to McMahon
Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC), a relatively new concept adapted from the counselling modality Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), could work in cases of mild resentment. CBC adopts CBT’s ‘ABCDE’ model. Fundamentally, the coach would emphasise five points to a coachee who has been affected by a negative event:

A. Events or other people do not cause C (the consequences) but contribute to …
B. the beliefs, which largely determine …
C. the consequences. Up to this step, this truth empowers the coachee as it develops a new set of beliefs and paves the way for …
D. disputing or examining these self-defeating beliefs, and finally creating …
E. a new and effective outlook.

It is then concluded that IC2-R1 is clearly a case for a different form of counselling intervention. In other words, the conventional coaching process of the T.T.GROW model, reinforced with the trust element, would still not be adequate for the targeted Asian Singaporean employees undergoing change if they are experiencing intense resentment. Therefore, to design an appropriate coaching model for Asian employees without changing from coaching to counselling, perhaps the coach could be trained to apply Luthans et al.’s (2007a, 2007b) forgiveness and gratitude dimension of PsyCap under which there are these forgiveness exercises:

- Forgiving oneself for personal shortcomings.
- Applying Worthington’s five-stage model of forgiveness, REACH (Ripley & Worthington, 2002; Worthington, 1998, 2001; Worthington & Drinkard, 2000). REACH is an acronym for recall the hurt (R), empathize with the transgressor (E), offer an altruistic attitude of forgiveness (A), commit to forgive (C), and hold on to forgiveness (H).
- Writing a forgiveness letter describing the transgression that one has been subjected to, the emotion/s one is grappling with, and finally committing to forgive the transgressor. Do not send this letter.

The effectiveness of the application of Luthans et al.’s (2007a, 2007b) forgiveness and gratitude dimension of PsyCap could be factors to be recommended for further research. If employees have no intense resentment, but merely negative emotions due to the lack of ideal leadership, as defined, Gross’s (1998, 2002) model of emotion regulation (ER) offers
individual strategies such as exercising self-influence over emotions for self-leadership. Gross (1998) and Gross and Thompson (2007) postulate that strategies for ER can be divided into antecedent-focused or response-focused strategies. Fundamentally, as elaborated by Gross (2002), antecedent-focused strategies involve making self-regulated mental decisions before potentially more harmful emotional responses are triggered. For example, when an individual is faced with a negative situation, such as the challenges of organisational change which provoke negative emotions, an effective strategic mental decision is made to promote positive emotions by intentionally selecting a pleasant work activity. This activity serves to interrupt the negative emotions, and thus turns them into positive emotions. Older Asian Singaporean employees aged 45 to 65 could make a concerted effort to seek out the benefits of the current change initiative that potentially satisfy their personal aspirations, as represented in Chapter 1, Table 1.1: Life priorities of Singaporean workers. An antecedent-focused strategy such as this could encourage employees to embrace change.

Alternatively, affected individuals could work on altering work processes to enhance their enjoyment, thus triggering positive emotions to overcome their negative emotions. In a more recent development, Zaki and Williams (2013) propose an interpersonal emotion regulation model which comprises two orthogonal types of processes: intrinsic versus extrinsic, and response-dependent versus response-independent. The purpose of intrinsic interpersonal regulation is to initiate interpersonal contact to regulate one’s own emotional experience. This contrasts with the purpose of extrinsic interpersonal regulation which is to regulate the emotional experience of the targeted person. Regulated emotions can either depend on the targeted person’s response (i.e. response-dependent), or be independent of the targeted person’s response (i.e. response-independent). Examples of interpersonal emotion regulation are given in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1:** Examples of interpersonal emotion regulation

(Adapted from Zaki and Williams, 2013)

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<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Intrinsic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response-independent</td>
<td>‘I will initiate this conversation to regulate my own emotion.’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The concept of interpersonal emotional regulation, as presented in Table 5.1 and in the context of this research into self-leadership, seems to be applicable for fostering better supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication, specifically by regulating intrinsic interpersonal emotions. For IC2-R1, this concept seems to be able to provide an added tool for regulating intense resentment and offering an opportunity to restore the damaged communication lines between supervisor and subordinate. As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.6.3.1, ‘Asian Singaporean coachees could easily adopt Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) “emotional intelligence” as it is aligned to [the] Asian cultural practice[s]’ such as ‘ren’, the practice of forbearance. However, when the practice of authoritarian paternalistic leadership was such that fear and resentment were provoked, the ability for the victim and her colleagues to practise ‘ren’ was incapacitated. Emotional intelligence offers the capacity to regain the intrapersonal ability to self-lead and to rebuild interpersonal relationships again.

The ability to manage one’s emotions has also been identified in Emotional Intelligence (EI). Salovey et al. (1999, p.161) theorise that individuals with EI are capable of managing and coping with an emotionally demanding situation as they could ‘accurately perceive and appraise their emotions, know how and when to express their feelings, and can effectively regulate their mood states’. Most relevant in this research context, Goleman (1998), Mayer et al. (2004), and Weisinger (1998) elaborate that EI leads to enhanced effectiveness in communication. ER and EI would be an effective combination, greatly complementing each other in developing both intrapersonal and interpersonal competency in the context of communication during organisational change. The encouraging aspect for Asian Singaporean employees is that EI can be learned (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). To facilitate this learning, elements of EI will be incorporated into the next phase of the coaching sessions to better fulfil the objectives of this research.

Case IC3-R1 used to communicate openly with her general manager but could not communicate openly with the newly posted deputy general manager. Having been in the organisation for nine years, and having reported to three other GMs, she had experienced
power distance for a long time, except for the current GM. Although the GM came from China, his non-Asian paternalistic leadership style has fostered a high supervisor-subordinate bi-directional communication. Case IC3-R1 believed that the current GM’s character overrode his ethnic cultural practices. Like all his predecessors, he was also of a mature age: over 50 years. When the new DGM arrived, also from China, IC3-R1 grew to be extremely cautious in the way she communicated with her as the new DGM practised a predominantly Asian paternalistic leadership style. It was stated in Chapter 2 that Van Dyne et al. (2003) argue that an individual employee’s silence is a response to injustice. This case further confirms the words of Morrison and Milliken (2000) that managers with high power distance inclinations tend to create a climate of organisational silence.

The most notable factor in communication is the leadership factor as it appears to be a vital element that impacts the quality of bi-directional communication with the employees, and ultimately affects their acceptance of organisational change. Interestingly, in Round 2 of the interviews, the same set of questions as in Round 1, Question 2, 4, 7, 12, 13, and 14 elicited from the participants the same supportive responses to good leadership, indicating very healthy bi-directional communication. Both positive and negative responses strongly reinforce the theories of LMX behaviour and Asian paternalistic leadership.

In case IC4-R1, the Asian employee’s behaviour in speaking up for her colleagues was atypical for an Asian. Her supervisor was American. The situation would likely have been different if the supervisor had also been Asian. An Asian high-power-distance response could have deterred IC4-R1 from speaking out, possibly leading to a less-desired outcome. This has led to some reflection in the current study about how the exploratory T.T.GROW coaching model could offer an effective intervention in times of change for the Asian Singaporean employee who might not have the good fortune of reporting to an effective leader.

Finally, one way to ensure that the self-leadership coaching model appeals to older Gen X and Baby Boomer Asian Singaporean employees, is to capitalise on the Asian yin-yang mindset should their supervisor be a poor leader. Peng and Nisbett (1999, p.742) state that ‘middle-aged and older people are more likely to accept contradictions in reality, and to synthesize contradiction in their thinking, than are young people’. As was ascertained in Chapter 2, the Eastern concept of yin-yang accepts that it is natural for opposites to co-exist (Fletcher & Fang, 2006). The Chinese word for ‘crisis’ consists of two characters: the
first character is ‘danger’ and the second character is ‘opportunity’. As described in section 2.6.3.3, the Asian philosophies of yin-yang and yoni-linga, poor leadership (danger) could be interpreted as the ‘opportunity’ for life’s valuable lessons. This would be a very empowering idea, and conducive for cultivating self-leadership. Those Asian Singaporean employees who subscribe to different philosophical or religious values and beliefs would have their own versions of the co-existence of opposites. Since references to the ethnic Chinese and Indian philosophies have been made, the Malay ‘philosophy’ completes our description of ‘Asian Singaporeans’. The Malay philosophy is more imbued with religious values and beliefs because it is strongly influenced by the teachings of Islam.

Malay employees, being Muslim, have Islam’s teachings to guide them when facing leadership situations, specifically during the challenging phases of organisational change. In Islam’s teachings, Surah 4:78-79 explains that good events come from God, but unpleasant or traumatic events could be from themselves or could be sent as a trial from God. The Noble Quran, Surah 3:159 has taught Muslims to deal with such situations like this:

... by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over their faults, and ask Allah’s Forgiveness for them; consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.

This knowledge enables the coach to adopt a coaching philosophy for targeted Asian Singaporean employees of the Islamic faith and to recognise the opportunity for them to develop self-leadership if they are ‘blessed’ with an ineffective supervisor. The coach can also encourage a focus on the controllable factors (themselves), and to forgive, and ‘gently’ work towards a positive outcome with their supervisors.

5.4 The value and the limitations of the research

To maintain the original objective of this research, observation, and informal and in-depth interviews were used as the most relevant methods for gathering qualitative information (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000). To this end, this research identified a source of emerging themes when searching for an appropriate coaching intervention for Asian Singaporean employee
to assist them to engage in bi-directional communication with the supervisor, and thereby to assist successful organisational change. The value of this research, as well as its limitations, need to be identified to ascertain the level of effectiveness of the coaching intervention and to provide direction for future research.

5.4.1 The value of the research

There is certainly value to be derived from this research. Firstly, it has identified critical themes, captured within the broad heading of ‘individual attributes’ such as ‘change enablers’, ‘the psychological capital/ability to cope’, ‘the will to communicate’, ‘communication skills’, and ‘mutual expectations’. These individual attributes have significantly contributed to the effectiveness of the self-leadership coaching in enhancing bi-directional communication for Singaporean employees undergoing organisational change. Secondly, the motivation behind this research is the quest to contribute knowledge, specifically for the benefit of Asian Singaporean employees, because much of the change literature appears to be Western-centric and thus not necessarily suitable for Asian Singaporean employees. Therefore, the primary value of this research is that the coaching intervention the researcher has developed has the potential to enhance self-leadership in Asian Singaporean employees aged between 45 and 65 to better establish supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication for successful organisational change.

5.4.2 The limitations of the research

Despite its value, this research does have several limitations. Firstly, the researcher decided to adopt a qualitative approach only, although a quantitative approach could have contributed another set of data which might have resulted in another perspective of the coaching intervention. There were two rounds of data collection. In the first round, participants were engaged through an email blitz using a letter of invitation to the targeted organisations (Appendix A). This email blitz was repeated three times during March and April 2014. There were thirty respondents, twelve candidates were selected from which only six candidates qualified for the research process (interview-cum-coaching). In the second round, several organisations were targeted between July and September 2015, from
which one company was selected, and seven candidates were identified to be interviewed. However, only four interviewees were selected based on the degree to which the current changes would affect them. In total, there were ten participants who underwent the interview-cum-coaching process. There is a possibility that those who did not respond could have contributed to a richer set of data, and this could have led to a broader perspective for developing more appropriate coaching interventions for Asian Singaporean employees.

5.5 Implications for better management-leadership practices

The findings of this research also have the potential to contribute to knowledge about coaching which could be used to improve bi-directional communication between older Asian employees and their supervisors so that they can cope better with organisational change. This research identified four emergent themes under organisational factors: mutual expectations, clear supervisor-subordinate expectations, effective leader-member exchange (LMX), and the importance of trust.

The workplace would be more productive if self-leadership to improve bi-directional communication during change could be capitalised for promoting bi-directional communication for other work aspects such as clarity of performance expectations. Management could ask the human resource department to design a training and development program for employees to enhance employee self-leadership with the aim of achieving effective supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication for all circumstances. This research has more potential, because, as suggested by Sadri and Tran (2002), supervisor-subordinate communication improvements could create a workplace that is capable of managing diversity and cultural differences. In an increasingly diverse workplace, the results could be more promising than the conclusions indicated in this study. Furthermore, Yukl (2010) believed that self-leadership instituted by management would develop employees to become future leaders of the organisation. Those future leaders who acquired a self-leadership competence would in turn be capable of practising levels of LMX that would foster an organisational culture that would embrace organisational change.
Researchers have proven the relationships between different management-leadership styles and organisational culture which ultimately results in OCB (Bass, 2000; Jogulu, 2010), visually represented in Figure 5.3. This finding seems to coincide with the experiences recorded from the coaching sessions in the current study.

* Except for intense resentment.

Figure 5.3 is a revised diagram, adding a surrounding ‘corporate culture’ circle to the original Figure 2.2 in Section 2.5: Asian employee self-leadership in promoting bi-directional communication. This diagram visually shows the ‘corporate culture’ circle surrounding the various leadership models with the Asian paternalistic leadership-LMX as its core. As determined in this study, in the context of the Asian Singaporean employees, this wheel has to access two other wheels to achieve bi-directional communication. There is the wheel of Asian Singaporean appropriate self-leadership in promoting bi-directional communication that has been enabled through the wheel of the adapted TT.GROW coaching model.

Schein (2010) acknowledged that organisational culture is a fundamental consideration when implementing organisational change. Therefore, the management-leadership of an organisation undergoing change has to create a culture which is conducive to the intended change. In the context of the current study, a culture which encompasses every component...
surrounding Asian paternalistic leadership with LMX theory, which this research has already explored, would be conducive to the intended change.

The final thoughts for management to consider, are: 1) understanding Asian Singaporean employees aged 45 to 65; 2) the importance of being versatile when adapting to the various degrees of Asian-ness, particularly if the dominant leadership style is inclined towards Asian paternalistic leadership, and 3) the quality of benevolence to be incorporated into its management practices.

### 5.6 Chapter summary and emerging themes derived-solutions

The emerging themes derived from this study are broadly classified under organisational factors and individual attributes. The themes which emerged from this study reflect the effectiveness of coaching for assisting individual employees to overcome ineffective individual attributes. Although the focus of the study has been on the employees’ individual attributes, it is valuable for the organisational factors as well. Therefore, this coaching enabler could potentially synergise with the management-leadership to create a culture that is conducive for organisational change.

### 5.6.1 Implications of further research for the coaches of Asian Singaporean Baby Boomer and older Gen X employees

Today’s change agents or coaches who seek to help Asian Singaporean employees through organisational change need to seriously consider combining the Eastern concept of the co-existence of opposites, as defined in Section 5.3.2.2, with the Western theory of psychological capital (PsyCap), as advocated by (Luthans et al., 2007a, p.3).

In Chapter 2, Carnall (2003) advocates a five-stage coping cycle: 1) Denial, 2) Defence, 3) Discarding, 4) Adaptation, and 5) Internalisation. While PsyCap and *intrapersonal* emotional intelligence would be particularly useful in helping employees through stages 1 and 2 of the coping cycle, *interpersonal* emotional intelligence would be the primary enabler for those employees seeking information in stage 3 of the cycle. This thesis strongly advocates a higher standard of competence through self-leadership as a personal
philosophy, which would be applicable before, during, and after organisational change. The coaching solution is likely to be the T.T.GROW coaching model; a model strengthened by the element of trust. The solution has to be specifically designed to address self-leadership to overcome resentment of a moderate intensity.

It is recommended that self-leadership is applied using intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional intelligence, as tabulated for easy reference in Table 5.2 Theoretical solutions for applying self-leadership, and Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC), described in the paragraph following Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Theoretical solutions for applying self-leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two major components of emotional intelligence</th>
<th>Theoretical solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Intrapersonal                                 | • Yoni-Linga or yin-yang philosophy.  
• Luthans et al.’s (2007a, 2007b) Psychological Capital (PsyCap) with forgiveness and gratitude exercises.  
| Interpersonal at formal and informal channels | • Salovey et al’s (1999) Emotional Intelligence (EI): this covers the interpersonal techniques of observing the right and opportune time, reading body language, opening a conversation with the right tone and right words before broaching a sensitive topic.  
• The application of active listening.  
• Promoting a self-leading team which appeals to the Asian culture. |

A viable intra-organisational solution to be further researched by interested parties is McMahon’s (2007) Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC). This could be an optional solution to be incorporated into training and development programs. This approach was
not used in the coaching sessions in this research because it is not within the ethical protocol and standards approved for this research.

An external coach would only need to put together a program for Asian Singaporean employees to adopt, and to apply the program for the benefit of both employees and supervisors. Therefore, if Asian Singaporean employees’ managers or immediate superiors do not apply the necessary leadership to help their employees through organisational change, employees would be enabled, through ‘self-leadership’ coaching to accept change, to establish vital supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication. The suggested model for this intervention is presented in Figure 5.4.

This research proposes that the types of change implemented by management provoke degrees of resistance to change. For instance, management can adopt different type of organisational change, as represented in Figure 5.5.
It is uncertain how ready Asian Singaporean employees could be to self-lead and to restore or maintain supervisor-subordinate bi-directional communication for embracing change. The intensity of their reactions to change would be different to different types of change. The degree of severity of the change is likely to be highest within the ‘Re-creation’ quadrant in Figure 5.5. If management had resorted to the Re-creation quadrant, and if cases such as IC2-R1 were common throughout the organisation due to inappropriate leadership styles, the success of the organisational change might have been adversely affected. Even though the ‘Tuning’ quadrant would be regarded as the most ideal type of change, the reaction of a case like IC2-R1 could still be an issue. This is still pertinent, even though well-meaning professional consultants might be involved in implementing the organisational change, but be oblivious to the psycho-emotional components concealed beneath the Asian culture. The intensity of IC2-R1’s resentment was unexpected and posed a challenge to coaching, with the degree of resentment being more visible during the coaching session compared with the interview.

The researcher is convinced that there is a need to encourage further research on the effectiveness of the recommended T.T.GROW Level 2 coaching model in Figure 5.6, when there are intense negative emotions before or during organisational change.

\[\text{Figure 5.5: Types of Organisational Change} \]
\[\text{Source: Nadler and Tusman (1995)}\]
5.6.2 Recommendations for the human resource departments

Even though unexpected emergent themes were identified, such that the original communication coaching was revised to self-leadership coaching for Asian Singaporean Baby Boomer and older Gen X employees to enhance supervisor–subordinate bi-directional communication, the potential value of the coaching goes beyond change management. It also has the potential to help human resources management address critical aspects relating to talent management, knowledge management, and performance management. Human resources departments might consider the findings from this research to determine their organisation’s current level of:

- appropriate management-leadership practices (as indicated in section 5.5)
- Asian-ness of their Asian Singaporean employees aged between 45 and 65

Having evaluated the findings, the human resources departments could develop a relevant training and development program for their organisations. Figure 5.3: The Post-research Conceptual Bi-directional Communication framework, could be used to guide this training and development program. The organisational factors derived reinforce the importance of effective management-leadership practices, relevant to the dynamic and challenging 21st
century as well as appropriate for today’s Asian Singaporean employees. Even though the management may have already undergone leadership training and coaching, it is still of value to consider updating the training and development programs with the added understanding of the Asian component. The employee’s self-leadership coaching program, particularly ‘self-leadership enabled through emotional intelligence and PsyCap’ factor has proven to be a potent combination, could be extended to the management as well. This initiative could be further refined with Kempster, Higgs and Wuerz’s (2014) pilot mechanism, discussed in Section 2.4.3 Distributed leadership: a leadership approach, to ensure that there is an adaptation of the change design to the needs of the respective organisational circumstances.

The Human resources departments could survey the degree of Asian-ness of their Asian Singaporean employees ages between 45 and 65 represented in their organisations. Once this degree of Asian-ness is confirmed, they could then design the self-leadership coaching program, guided by Table 5.1: Examples of interpersonal emotion regulation, together with Table 5.2: Theoretical solutions for applying self-leadership, to help their affected employees overcome the ineffective individual attributes which probably could be similar to those surfaced from this study: change enablers, the psychological capital/ability to cope, the will to communicate, communication skills, and mutual expectations.

5.6.3 Conclusions and a personal lesson

The key finding from this study is that a self-leadership coaching program could enhance effective bi-directional communication between Asian Singaporean employees ages of 45 and 65 and their supervisors, it has also presented the broader potential that self-leadership coaching could accomplish for the organisation in this dynamic and challenging 21\textsuperscript{st} century. This study has been a valuable personal experience of how the use of a combination of emotional intelligence and PsyCap for self-leadership could enhance individual attributes, not just to increase communication effectiveness, but with the potential to expand its value to achieve organisational excellence, and subsequently promote a meaningful work life and personal life for the effective self-leader. The words of Frankl (2006, p.154), ‘between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is
our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom’, now has a profound personal meaning after this arduous but fulfilling journey.
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Appendix A: Letter of invitation

Messrs.
XXX (S) Pte Ltd
XXX
#5-01 XXX
Singapore 012345

Dear Sir,

RE: Invitation To Participate in a Doctoral Research Project
Approval Number ECN-15-069

I am John Ong, a doctoral candidate, Southern Cross University. I am currently conducting a research on the effectiveness of coaching in enhancing communication effectiveness of the Singaporean working professionals.

This coaching programme is targeted at employees building communication with their superiors particularly during the stressful time of organisational change. We would like to invite participants between the ages of 45 to 65 to be part of this research project.

I will interview the participants face to face to understand more about their current communication preferences with their superior. About 6 weeks thereafter, the participants will be invited to a 3-hour intensive communication coaching workshop.

Benefits to your organisation:
   i) professionals of the company will be enlightened on the approaches in initiating open communication with their superiors.
   ii) the skills set learnt can be utilised beyond the context organisational change.
   iii) it is free of charge.

I take this time to express my sincere appreciation for your kind assistance and look forward to commence this research at your most appropriate date and time. I will be following up with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

John Ong
Doctoral Candidate-Researcher,
Southern Cross University
Email: johno@singnet.com.sg
Appendix B: Consent form

This research entitled:
The role of self-leadership coaching to enhance bi-directional communication for Singaporean employees undergoing organisational change

The purpose of this research project:
This research on the current organisational change is with the intention to:
1) be in search of a more practical and effective change coaching programme for Asian Singaporean employees, who includes you and
2) for the a DBA candidate to use this process and outcome to be part of a report on my DBA thesis at Southern Cross University.

Volunteer Participation: You as a volunteer participant may request a copy of this consent form.

Name of researcher: John Ong

Tick the box that applies, sign and date and give to the researcher

I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand the information about my participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researchers. Yes ☐ No ☐
I agree to be interviewed by the researcher. Yes ☐ No ☐
I agree to allow the interview to be *audio-taped and/or *video-taped (strictly for our coaching purpose only). Yes ☐ No ☐
I agree to make myself available for further interview if required. Yes ☐ No ☐
I agree to attend a 3-hour workshop on 'Enhancing communication with my superior' within 2 months after this interview. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I understand that I can cease my participation at any time. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that my participation in this research will be treated with confidentiality. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that any information that may identify me will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that no identifying information will be disclosed or published. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that all information gathered in this research will be kept confidentially for 7 years at the University. Yes ☐ No ☐
I am aware that I can contact the researchers at any time with any queries. Their contact details are provided to me. Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee. Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant’s name: ______________________________________________________
(*NB: Your name will NOT be reflected at any point during an interview

Participant’s signature: ____________________________________________________

Date: ______________________

☐ Please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below if you wish to receive a summary of the results:

Email: ________________________________________________________________
Appendix C: Interview questions

Date: ________________

The interviews will be conducted 30-45 minutes after their office hours.

The Questions that I, the researcher will use are:

    a) How well have you been communicating with your supervisor/s?
    b) What are the factors affecting your ability to discuss the impact of the current organisational change on you?
    c) Describe how you would initiate a discussion with your superior to overcome an issue you may be faced with during a period of change.
    d) Has there ever been a situation when you feel you could discuss openly your problems with your superior? Explain.
    e) What would you need to help you to discuss with your superiors concerning any problems that you may face?
    f) What will you need from management to help you to take the challenge of change?
    g) What changes would you suggest to management if you have a chance regarding the changes that are taking place in your company?
    h) What changes would you like to see in yourself so that you can meet the challenges before you?
    i) What kind of support have you experienced in your work that has been most helpful to you?
    j) Is it important to you that management shows appreciation for the work that you do? Would a verbal expression of appreciation make you feel happy and motivated?
    k) If given the opportunity, would you be willing to propose new ideas to management, ideas which you think would make a difference to the company and staff well-being?
    l) Do you think that a person’s tone of voice contributes to a good conversation or a bad one?
    m) Are you prepared to learn new things along the way, including learning to speak up or initiate a conversation with a person in authority?
## Appendix D: Participants’ Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Nature of organisational Change</th>
<th>Work status</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Mode of Communication used for Interviews</th>
<th>Mode of Communication used for Coaching</th>
<th>Language used during Interviews and Coaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R1</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R1</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Non-executive</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R1</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4-R1</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Non-Executive</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC5-R1</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*IC6-R1</td>
<td>None (discovered during coaching)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC7-R1</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Non-executive</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC1-R2</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Non-executive</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC2-R2</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Non-executive</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3-R2</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Non-executive</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4-R2</td>
<td>Systems and Procedures</td>
<td>Non-executive</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Executive=supervisory position with people reporting to them; C=Chinese; M=Malay;

*Disqualified as there was actually no organisational change in process