

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE LEADERS AS CHANGE AGENTS DURING TRANSFORMATION IN EMERGING KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATIONS: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rachel Barker

Department of Communication Science
University of South Africa, South Africa

ABSTRACT

From a postmodern perspective, the organisational environment is significantly different because of the globalised technological advances that affect communication and knowledge. The commonality of most recent research indicates an emphasised focus on knowledge management (technical, human and communication components) and knowledge leaders to implement strategic integrated communication to ensure the sustainability of knowledge organizations. Knowledge management focuses on two main theoretical perspectives, namely human capital and knowledge based theory; and the theory on strategic integrated communication emphasizes that knowledge leaders should acknowledge the premises of the strategic intent of the emerging knowledge organizations through the management of information, innovation, creativity, cultural aspects, participation and inputs from the environment based on trust, loyalty, integrity and credibility. The research problem is that in spite of the tremendous research opportunities to examine these constructs, limited research has been conducted from emerging organizational and knowledge leadership perspectives, especially during change and transformation. This study seeks to address this gap and to enhance the field's discussion with the main aim to critically review existing literature based on an interpretivist approach predominantly from a postmodern perspective and to propose a theoretical framework to indicate the interrelatedness of these concepts. The main findings will make recommendations for future research and/or perspectives which need to be considered by knowledge organizations to ensure long-term beneficial relationships with all stakeholders. The study hence sets out to research beyond the concepts itself and actually examine the theoretical implications and relevance thereof.

From a postmodern perspective, the organisational environment is significantly different because of the globalised technological advances that affect communication and knowledge. The commonality of most recent research indicates an emphasised focus on knowledge management (technical, human and communication components) and knowledge leaders to implement strategic integrated communication to ensure the sustainability of knowledge organizations. Knowledge management focuses on two main theoretical perspectives, namely human capital and knowledge based theory; and the theory on strategic integrated communication emphasizes that knowledge leaders should acknowledge the premises of the strategic intent of the emerging knowledge organizations through the management of information, innovation, creativity, cultural aspects, participation and inputs from the environment based on trust, loyalty, integrity and credibility. The research problem is that in spite of the tremendous research opportunities to examine these constructs, limited research has been conducted from emerging organizational and knowledge leadership perspectives, especially during change and transformation. This study seeks to address this gap and to enhance the field's discussion with the main aim to critically review existing literature based on an interpretivist approach predominantly from a postmodern perspective and to propose a theoretical framework to indicate the interrelatedness of these concepts. The main findings will make recommendations for future research and/or perspectives which need to be

considered by knowledge organizations to ensure long-term beneficial relationships with all stakeholders. The study hence sets out to research beyond the concepts itself and actually examine the theoretical implications and relevance thereof.

INTRODUCTION

Although research has been conducted on knowledge management the last 20 years, it was only in the early 2000s that the focus shifted from the learning organization to the realization of the importance of the use on knowledge management as an innovative tool for leadership and change. This was echoed by various researchers like Baines (1997), Bollinger and Smith (2001) and Scharmer (2001) who suggested that in learning organizations, leaders were responsible for learning at an individual and organizational level through the creation of a culture that respects knowledge, reinforcing its sharing to retain people and to build loyalty to the organization through training, empowerment, etc. and to create knowledge infrastructures. In spite of this realization, research conducted by Johnson (2002), Politis (2001) and Bryant (2003) found that although leaders paid attention to the learning organization initiative, it was not implemented in organizations. The most significant idea based on their research was the realization that knowledge management should be applied to the entire organization from top to bottom to ensure that this learning takes place through knowledge creation, codification, storing and sharing and that leadership styles are related to the organization. The need for further research between leadership, knowledge management and change in the organization, society and environment has been pointed out by Bryant (2003:41) who said: *Researchers my want to explore the link between transformational leadership and managing knowledge at the individual and group levels* as well as Bo (2013:3) who noted: *... there has little research been done aimed at exploring the relation between knowledge management strategy and leadership systems*. Furthermore, in an empirical study conducted by Crawford (2005:9) he came to the following conclusion: *Given the substantial relationship between innovation and transformational leadership seems deserving of further investigation*. These statements provided impetus for the research problem that a lack of studies exists to investigate the relationship between the use of knowledge management by knowledge leaders as change agents during organizational change and transformation to create knowledge organizations.

Based on recommendations made by Fariza, Rusly and Corner (2012:349) that *further analysis of knowledge management implementation from a change perspective could possibly offer new insights and explanations regarding the increasing number of knowledge management failures*, this study sets out to address this gap and develop a theoretical framework for the use of knowledge management by knowledge leaders during change and transformation to create in what is referred to as knowledge organizations. Implications are drawn from an interpretivist approach by offering a critique of the literature to set the scene for an alternative viewpoint mainly from a postmodern perspective. The new proposed theoretical perspective presented emerged as a response to the need for relationship building and management through strategic integrated communication by knowledge leaders during change and transformation inside and outside the organization.

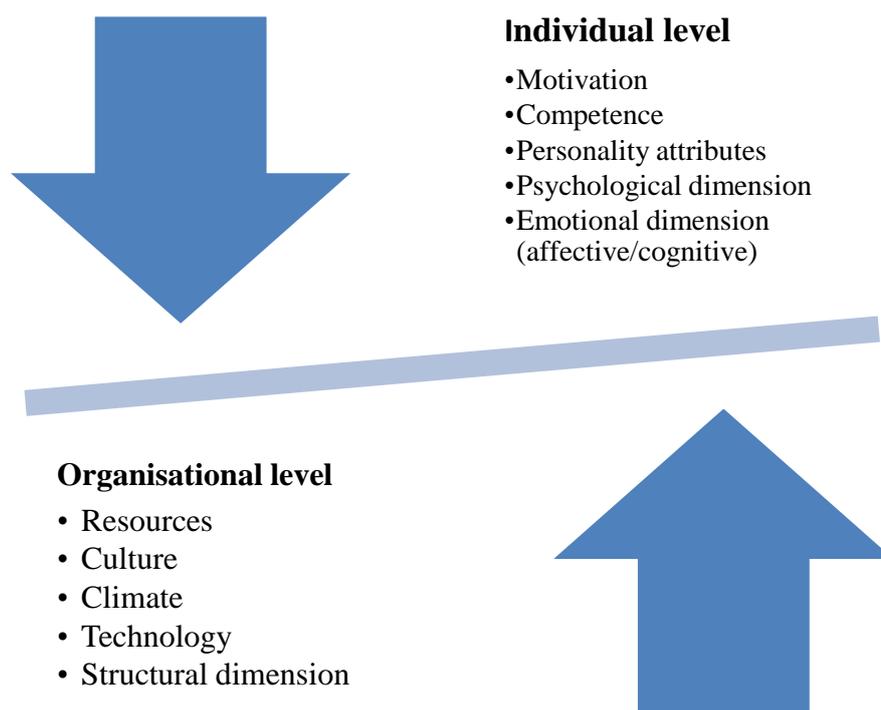
The main purpose of this paper is hence to address this research problem from a holistic perspective where all these key constructs are integrated and seen as subsystems of the system. The paper is hence structured as follows: change and transformation; postmodernism; strategic integrated communication; knowledge management; knowledge leadership; a theoretical framework for a knowledge organization; limitations and future research; and conclusion.

APPROACHES TO CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

In the context of this paper, the definition of change proposed by Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) has been adopted: *the shift in behavior of the whole organization to one degree or another* and transformation is seen as the step-by-step process of restructuring an existing organization by removing what does not work, keeping what does and implementing new systems, processes, infrastructure and cultural values where needed (Head, 1997). This ultimately needs resources, structural and cultural processes aligned with the strategic intent of the organization which could arguably be possible through knowledge management and strategic integrated communication. Hence transformation is seen more than the flow and management of information, but also includes connectivity, creativity and participation by all stakeholders to ensure relationship building through knowledge leaders as change agent to create sustainable knowledge organizations.

According to Crawford (2005:6) *nearly every modern organization is confronting the change in information systems, from ledger cards to a digital area*, which he refers to as the trend towards 'informatics', which arguably affects all aspects of the organization, including leadership, transformation and knowledge management. Change occurs at both individual and organizational level (Kim 1998) of which the key elements are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Change at individual and organizational levels



The most prominent approaches to organizational change management are summarized in Table 1 (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1986; Overman, 1996; Murphy, 2002; Jaatinen, 2002; Burnes, 2004; Senior and Flemming, 2006).

Table 1: Main approaches to organizational change management

Traditional approaches	Modern approaches
<p>Action Research Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and organizational issues • Collective approach • Active participation for problem solving • Learning process • Rational systematic analysis 	<p>Chaos Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic integrated communication principles of the systems theory • Study complex dynamic systems and processes • Reveal patterns of order from chaotic behaviors • Move away from order • Try to understand why systems do not function linear and predictable • Contribute to management of change, chaos and uncertainty instead of distrust and control • Participation, interdependence and relationships important
<p>Three-step Change Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfreezing, moving and refreezing • Old behavior discarded to adopt new ways • Focus on structural changes 	<p>Complexity Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roots from the systems theory
<p>Phases of Planned Change Approach (OD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on processes • Deal with change over a significant period of time • Holistic approach • Encourage participation • Ensures full support of top management • Involves a facilitator as change agent • Started to consider unpredictable and turbulent environments which need flexibility 	<p>Contingency approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External environment impact on organizational structure and management • Roots in systems theory • Try to understand interrelationships between systems and subsystems to define patterns of relationships between key variables • Develop congruence

The main criticism against the three traditional approaches is that they are too rigid, phases or steps are not chronologically ordered because of changes in the environment, that incremental and isolated changes rather than radical transformation are addressed, that they over rely on a management approach to reduce conflict, create order, control chaos and simplifying the complexities in the turbulent environment and that it will not work in all organizations.

Furthermore, the underlying viewpoint is that information is power which needs to be controlled hence the need for structures. It is hence argued that although these approaches were effective for many decades, the introduction of new technology, overload systems, better-informed employees (and stakeholders) and worldwide access to modernistic approaches, conflict or crisis usually resulted from poor planning and control. Because the focus shifted to dynamic environments moving away from planned change and organizational development, it is argued change and transformation should be managed at a strategic level. This supports the underlying purpose of this paper which sets out to emphasize the need for strategic integrated communication with the emphasis on true and interactive participation and a holistic perspective where all systems and subsystems are integrated to create shared ownership and commitment (Barker 2013). The emergence of transorganizational development also emerged, a form of planned change to assist with collaborations with other organizations to share resources and risk, mergers and acquisitions. Based on the critique that the contingency view is mechanistic in nature, Jaatinen (2002) also argued for a symmetrical contingency view on communication to leave space for strategic choice to seek a resolution for conflict during change. Furthermore, he argued that an important contribution of the chaos theory is that it touched on the participatory nature of the new approaches to change management.

Additionally, Jaatinen (2002) made convincing arguments of the importance of interdependence, participation and relationship building in terms of new approaches to change management. Jaatinen (2002:155) suggested *that there is interdependence between different subsystems in an organization (as the extension of the systems theory to the postmodern and complexity theories implies)* which is of specific significance in this study. Hence it is posited that the process of the system becomes important where all the subsystems should participate to add to the richness of information, knowledge creation, codification and storing, shared responsibility, trust, transparency, connectivity, creativity and relationship building. This argument is supported by authors like Grunig and Hung's (2000) who indicated the importance of the concepts of control mutuality, joint acceptance of degrees of symmetry, trust and satisfaction with the relationship to communication management and relationship building.

Most organizations tend to follow a combination of the planned and emergent approaches to change management usually based on their specific strategic goals and objectives. For the purpose of this paper, it is argued that the following key concepts derived from these approaches become a key foundation for a new point of view on change management from a postmodern perspective: interdependence and interrelatedness of systems and subsystems; accelerated rate of change to focus on continuous alignment of activities at a strategic level; constant problem-solving through active participation in decision-making; relationship-building; connectivity; participative communication; trust, satisfaction; networks of information and knowledge; borderless aggregates; culture; and processes and structures. These paradoxical and revolutionary developments form the basis for the discussion of the importance of postmodernism.

MODERNISM VERSUS POSTMODERNISM

In the literature, theorists who support a modernistic orientation to organizational communication focus on objective knowledge, universal laws, meaningful generalizations, absolute truths, objectivity and a belief in metanarratives (Woods, 1999; Irvine, 2014). In contrast some scholars questioned the viability of modernism in organizations and support contradictory viewpoints form a postmodern perspective, namely that it includes contained

knowledge, it lacks universal laws, limited generalizations exist, irrationality, subjective and the rejection of metanarratives (Firat and Dholakia, 2006; Goneos-Malka, Grobler and Strasheim, 2013). Authors like Lyotard (1984) and Jameson (1984) have been regarded by many as the originators of postmodernism because of their skepticism of the metanarrative and universal truths of modernism thinking. Most definitions of postmodernism hold the same beliefs and focus on culture as an underlying factor. For example, Hassam (1985:119) defines postmodernism as *a number of related cultural tendencies, a constellation of values, a repertoire of procedures and attitudes*; Clarke (2006) sees it as a cultural trend and a new phase in history; and Firat and Dholakia (2006:126) hold that is the *first and foremost cultural phenomenon*.

A recent line of research has shown that the relation between opinions of modernism rational versus postmodern rational are blurring and both schools of thought agree that a grand theory will not explain everything in strategic integrated communication (Grunig, 2006). For example, Overton-de Klerk and Verwey (2013) have criticized the postmodern theories as modernistic and outdated and argued that postmodernists reject absolute standards and grand theories, typical of the modernism approach, in favor of awareness and tolerance of differences, ambiguity and conflict and that a multi-paradigm approach has become necessary. Postmodern researchers like Goneos-Malka et al (2013) and Brown (2006) argue against the tradition of a single best approach and say that multiple beliefs could co-exist; hence it is argued that both modernism and postmodernism should be integrated in any perspective.

From a knowledge management viewpoint, networks of information and knowledge becomes key from a postmodern perspective to be able to react to constant influences and changes in the environment which necessitates ever-increasing networks and relationships with outside systems which Raatinen (2002:156) argues create 'borderless aggregates'. Postmodern contingency views responded to the challenge of planning for change and argued that although prediction is not possible, alignment of all systems makes an organization alert to changes and help them seek for a better alignment and strategic choices which can be active, proactive and reactive. Although it is realized that a blurring of lines exists between modernism and postmodernism, these viewpoints form the stance from which this study has been conducted.

STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

This study reflects on integrative models which stress the need to consider interrelations amongst contexts and theories. The definition proposed by Barker (2013) for strategic integrated communication has been adapted for the purpose of this paper: the process of strategically managing mutually beneficial organizational and stakeholder relationships where the planning thereof recognizes the added value of a strategic integrated communication approach through the integration of all functions. This process should be information driven, participative, innovative, interactive, and focus on consistency in brand, messages, knowledge creation and sharing, processes, culture and the strategic intent of the organization.

Barker (2013) also posited that by using the cliché of the current 'rapid changes in the environment and field of communication', it is probably essential to reconsider, re-examine and review the current situation in the field. In the past, the traditional media-centric approach of purchasing space and filling the space did not work. Today the 'creative idea' and 'creative integration' to solve actual organizational problems becomes key which emphasizes the need to refocus on the importance of a strategic integrated communication

approach with creative, innovative and motivational appeal to ensure knowledge creation and sharing takes place. At this point the importance of knowledge leaders makes business sense and becomes important to ensure a holistic and integrated approach is followed with interactive engagement and participation with stakeholders to the benefit of the organization. The importance of this argument is underlined by Martensson (2000) which argues that communication it is a missing link in strategic management and leadership approaches.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Although numerous research have been conducted on knowledge management the last 20 years, it was only in the late 1990s that the importance thereof in learning organizations were highlighted by Baines (1997) who suggested that leaders were responsible for learning, both personally and organizationally. Learning organizations are skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and to modify behaviors to reflect new knowledge and insights (Garvin, 1985). Senge (1990) for example argued that organizations need to be capable of learning in order to adjust to changes and expand their capacity continuously through innovation. In order to this, knowledge management is usually used in learning organizations; hence according to Singh (2008:5) *knowledge management and learning go hand in hand in organizations*. Where learning organizations present a paradigm shift from the more traditional organization to new perspectives of how organizations should function, how they should be managed and how they should cope with changes (Hitt, 1996), more recent approaches focuses on emerging 'knowledge organizations' which set the scene for the 2000s where the focuses shifted from the learning organization to the realization of the importance of knowledge management, knowledge leadership and change and the need for innovation. For example, Crawford (2005:13) argues that innovation, as a personal construct, *may be manifested outward through knowledge management behaviors*. Various authors contributed to provide a substantial theoretical basis for knowledge management and leadership. One such an example is a substantial research study conducted by Politis (2001) which found that self-management, transformational and transactional leadership styles are related to dimensions of knowledge acquisition, emphasizing the need for participative collaborative leadership in the face of transition to the knowledge society. In addition Rusly, Corner and Sun (2012:259) argue that substantial investment in technological infrastructure and processes *does not always guarantee successful knowledge management, rather it is claim that the main pillar of achievements rests on employee's willingness and commitment to participate in the initiatives*. Another example is from Crawford (2005) who established in his research findings that transformational leaders were significantly more innovative which is often associated with characteristics of knowledge leaders, especially their ability to create and manage information and knowledge. However, according to Singh (2008) information and knowledge are two different entities and that information should only be seen as a building block for knowledge which can in turn be used to create wisdom in organizational lives.

The findings in the study by Crawford (2005:14) provided evidence of a *growing interest in the relationship between the 'high touch' nature of leadership and the 'high tech' aspect of the workplace ... and demonstrated the link between person-centered transformational leadership and some technical construct, in this case knowledge management*. This is emphasized by Olukpe (2015) who posited that the importance of knowledge management in the organization should include both the capabilities to enable the capture and leverage of intellectual capital and the deployment of this capital to the advantage of the organization. According to Martensson (2000) the term 'intellectual capital' is the preferred umbrella term because it refers to the possession of knowledge, applied experience, stakeholder

relationships and professional skills which links to strategy to create value to the organization. Based on the conceptual roots of intellectual capital identified by Edvinsson, Roos, Roos and Dragonnetti (1997), the strategic contribution of knowledge are based on the way in which knowledge is created or developed as well as the way it is leveraged into value. In spite of this realization, knowledge creation and development is mostly examined from the learning organization perspective; whereas it is argued that in order to create this value, it should also focus on 'knowledge sharing' to enhance the value and ultimately gives an organization a sustainable competitive advantage. One major issue that is hardly been dealt with, is the integration of knowledge from both perspectives where the focus shifts from individual perspectives to an emphasis on knowledge residing within the organization as a whole. For the purpose of this study, intellectual capital is linked to both strategic integrated communication, human and monetary sources needed for the processes and structures *in* the organization; and knowledge-based resources which include the management of leadership styles, technology, stakeholder relationships, innovation, creativity, participation, strategic intent and corporate culture *of* the organization. The importance of creativity, innovation, participation and culture are according to Chase (1998) the heart of creating successful knowledge organizations.

Based on these arguments and because knowledge management is a well-established phenomenon in various interdisciplinary fields today with increased application to the organization and leadership perspectives, the theoretical basis chosen for this paper is the *knowledge management approach* which should be used by what is referred to as 'knowledge leaders' in emerging 'knowledge organizations' and be linked to other theoretical traditions in social sciences. In terms of the theoretical constructs, knowledge management includes three main components: technological (systems), communication (strategic integrated communication) and human (stakeholders) (Barker, 2008). According to Bo (2013:4), *a knowledge-based view proposes that 'knowledge' is the strategically important resource of a firm [knowledge organization]*". Ardichvili, Page and Wentling (2003) re-emphasize the importance of the human component of knowledge management and argue that one of the crucial aspects to determine organizational success is motivated by active participating members of the organization in all activities. Although most traditional approaches to knowledge management assumed this knowledge to be relatively simple, more recent approaches realize that knowledge is in fact complex, factual, conceptual and procedural. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), leading researchers in this field, the process of knowledge management is based on the ability of all members of the organization to add value to the [strategic] integrated communication business processes through the creation, communication, codification and coordination of both explicit and tacit knowledge storing. Tacit knowledge refers to *informal cognitive/mental and technical/concrete know-how and skills which are personal, context-specific and difficult to formalize or articulate because they are stored within the individual* (Van Dyk, Greeff and Barker, 2015:124). Bollinger and Smith (2001:46) see it as the *unarticulated knowledge that is in a person's head that is often difficult to describe and transfer*, which is arguably the key characteristic of emerging knowledge organizations. Because the focus of existing research is also on knowledge creation, codification and storing to the benefit of the organization, explicit knowledge refers to more formal and tangible, observable, precise and formally articulated and embedded in tools, processes and rules which are transferable through written documents (Nonaka, 1991). For the purpose of this paper and based on the argument that most existing research focuses on knowledge creation and storing, and less on *knowledge sharing* (Milner, 2007), this concept has been included as a focus area for this study. Where individual knowledge subsides within the human minds in terms of innovation, creativity, participation, skills, their

adaptability to change during transformation to name a few, organizational knowledge is formed through unique patterns of interactions, technologies, communication and humans which create and shape a unique organizational culture (Bath, 2001), which are indeed the profound components or knowledge management identified earlier. To build a knowledge culture in a dynamic organization, it is argued that this emerging knowledge organization should transform, develop and nurture systems and processes to ensure knowledge creation, storing, codification and sharing in a meaningful way to expand the 'individual knowledge' (implicit) to 'collective organizational knowledge' (explicit) which can be interpreted and applied or used to ensure learning is created to clarify and adapt the strategic vision of the organization during change. This viewpoint is substantiated by Fariza et al (2012:337) who said that it "represents a process of transforming an individual's justified beliefs to a higher level to form an organizational belief system, which enhances the individual-possessed knowledge".

One of the key discourses of the knowledge management perspective is hence the focus on explicit and implicit knowledge, but according to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) also include embodied, tacit and narrative knowledge and the 'absent presence' of the body as an essential part of everyday communication because it allows for the creation and sharing of knowledge (Barker, 2013). In spite of the growing interest in knowledge management, it has been critiqued by researchers like Andreeva and Kianto (2012) for being too optimistic which promises more than what it can deliver and that it is difficult to manage knowledge. However, Massingham (2014) addressed these concerns in an empirical study using action research from a critical systems perspective and provided empirical evidence that knowledge management can be used to manage knowledge resources (strategic integrated communication, human, monetary and information-based) and that it can be used during organizational change in terms of performance, strategic alignment, knowledge retention to enhance productivity and knowledge creation and sharing to improve problem-solving, but agreed that it is difficult to implement.

KNOWLEDGE LEADERSHIP

Since it was argued that emerging knowledge organizations are associated with adaptive approaches, the most prominent leadership theory used in the literature is usually the transformational approach. Transformational leadership emerged in the 1980s and differentiates between four important skills: self-awareness (reading one's own emotions and recognizing their impact, knowing one's strengths and weakness, self-worth and capabilities); self-management (emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, initiative and optimism); social awareness (empathy, service and organizational awareness of decisions and politics at various levels); and relationship management (inspirational to others, influencing and developing others, act as change agent or catalyst, managing conflict, building bonds and collaborative teamwork) (Van Dyk et al, 2015). Burnes (1978:20) first defined transformational leadership as a process in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of mortality and motivation", where the process of transformation is based on empathy, understanding, insight and consideration; not manipulation, power or coercion. According to Crawford (2005:8) *few researcher address the link between information technology and leadership, and even fewer address the relations between transformational leadership and knowledge management.*

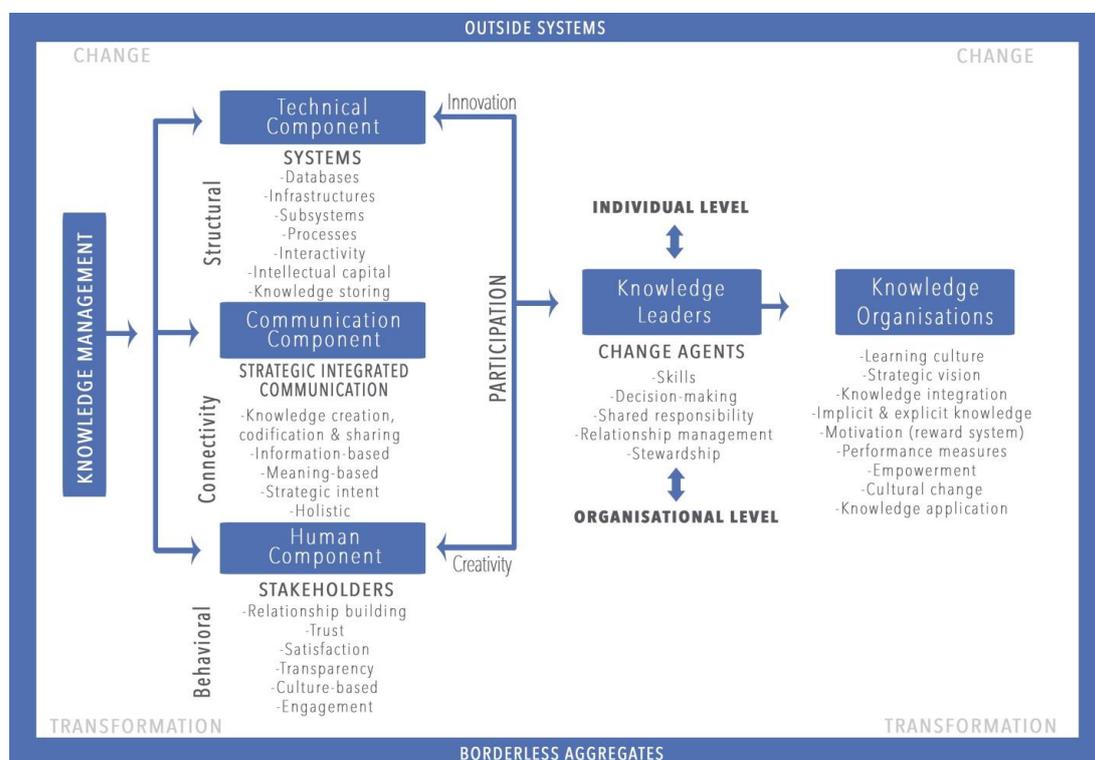
During the change process, Denrell (2005) came to the conclusion that leaders should comply to the following: empower individuals (like employees) to respond creatively; adopt personal and active attitudes towards individual and organizational goals to contribute to resonant

managerial (leadership) practices; should be self- and socially aware (and therefore be able to recognize, understand and react empathetically to his or her own and others' emotions and goals); be equipped with skills such as self- and relationship management (which are characterized by transparency, adaptability, collaboration and inspiration); should be associated with a supportive organizational climate due to a constructive organizational culture that could be related to leadership practices; and their role in the change process is to inspire people. This is in contrast to the traditional managerial approaches which focus mainly on rationality and control to maintain organizational goals, resources, structures and the people involved with these. Based on this, Singh (2008:6) highlighted the need for *knowledge leadership* which she argues should be evident throughout the organization and operate on all hierarchical levels from top to bottom and that the role of knowledge leaders is to *provide strategic visions, motivate others, effectively communicate, act as a change agent, coach other around, model good practices and carry out the knowledge agenda ... knowledge leaders should religiously explain the goals of knowledge management to all concerned*. Because knowledge management was presented as the theoretical foundation for this study, specifically the importance and role of change agents or experts which can manage all information at all levels (individual and organizational), the term knowledge leaders has been adopted and highlighted in the theoretical framework.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the above discussion, the author constructed a new theoretical framework mainly from a postmodern perspective but not excluding elements of modernistic perspectives that focuses on the relationship between the key constructs discussed above which is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Theoretical framework for knowledge management and knowledge leaders as change agents during transformation in emerging knowledge organizations



From Figure 2 it is deduced that knowledge management allows for organizational strategies based on *structural* elements including intellectual capital, systems, processes and knowledge codification and storing in databases (technical component), *connectivity* through strategic integrated communication which is knowledge-information-meaning-based (communication component) and focused on *behavioral* aspects to ensure relationship building which should be culture-based to obtain trust, satisfaction, transparency and engagement by all (human component). It is argued that if tacit knowledge is made explicit, individual knowledge can be transferred, shared and used at all organizational levels. Due to the difficulty to transfer tacit and individually owned knowledge to explicit and organizational knowledge, the major contribution is that if knowledge leaders as change agents apply knowledge management, it will lead to greater possibilities to manage and control this knowledge effectively, especially during change and transformation.

In Figure 2 it is hence posited that through the use of knowledge management, knowledge leaders can be used as change agents because it can either be described as an operational tool or a strategic tool. From a strategic perspective, knowledge management is firstly about the acquisition of information, secondly about the codification and storage of this information and knowledge in various databases which can be used for datamining, thirdly to make the information available and accessible to all hierarchical levels in the organization and lastly that this information should be *shared and used* through sharing, socializing, externalization and exchange of information. In order to do this, participation becomes a key element to ensure the three components of knowledge management (technical, communication and human) are implemented through connectivity, structural and behavioral constructs. This will lead to creativity and innovation which are key elements for emerging knowledge organizations. It is further argued that if knowledge management is implemented in the organization during change and transformation, knowledge leaders will emerge as change agents (or experts) with the necessary skills to enhance decision-making, shared responsibility, relationship management and stewardship at all levels of the organization (from individual to organizational levels). This emphasizes the need for knowledge leaders to have a sound understanding of people, processes, systems, strategic visions, etc. of the organization. In order to do so, these knowledge leaders should rely on strategic integrated communication to fulfil the roles of both collaborator and catalyst, in other words change agents. Hence it is argued that if these change agents or knowledge leaders respond to changes in the outside systems and borderless aggregates during transformation, knowledge organizations could be created. These knowledge organizations will then create a learning culture in line with the strategic vision through integration of both implicit and explicit knowledge. Hence reward systems and performance measure become important to ensure motivation takes place to empower people through the knowledge application or use which will ultimately lead to cultural change.

Lastly it is argued that in the long-term, this process will enhance the value of knowledge organizations, specifically in terms of its culture, knowledge creation and sharing to the benefit of all.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has limitations in its interpretations which are based on existing literature, the author's knowledge and interpretations thereof and the introduction of other viewpoints which indicate the importance of other avenues for further research. More rigorous research could be conducted, especially to refine and test these theoretical viewpoints in practice through the development of a measuring instrument for knowledge management which sets

the scene for envisaged future research. Despite concerns on the use of knowledge management by knowledge leaders in emerging knowledge organizations, it is argued that the proposed theoretical framework is a good starting point to explain the knowledge-human-organization-relationship and could be a benchmark for more general studies. Furthermore, in spite of the realization of the importance of postmodernist viewpoints, the fact remains that modernistic viewpoint will still remain to create this vision.

CONCLUSION

Grounded in a competence-based literature review of existing perspectives, this paper identified the most critical theoretical factors which provided impetus to the core concepts of this study. In line with the main goal of the paper to examine how changes in the organizational environment can be managed, it was argued that knowledge management can present knowledge leaders the opportunity to implement strategic integrated communication to ensure knowledge creation and sharing for sustainable relationship management to encourage the use of relationship-orientated systems and processes through a holistic approach. Moreover, the theoretical framework highlighted that knowledge leaders should acknowledge the strategic intent and vision of these emerging knowledge organizations. These integrations were theoretically justified and compatible with existing viewpoints, but probably went one step further by contextualizing it in a comprehensive theoretical framework. The challenge for knowledge leaders is to develop an organizational culture conducive to the *sharing* of knowledge and where *learning* becomes the norm.

While it is realized that it might be a little problematic to implement, it is argued if knowledge management is used by knowledge leaders as change agent, it can encourage and support a range of positive outcome in the dynamic changing environment and transformations of organizations. However, research has yet to reveal whether it is indeed implementable because research-based evidence is needed to provide the expected outcomes. In spite of this, the importance of this paper is re-emphasized by the growing interest in knowledge management which has according to Oluikpe (2015:351) *moved the topic from a relatively new discipline to an important strategic source for competitiveness.*

REFERENCES

- Ardichvili, A., Page, V. and Wentling, T., 2003. Motivation and barriers to participation in virtual knowledge-sharing communities of practice. *Journal of knowledge management*, 7(1), pp.64-77.
- Andreeva, T. and Kianto, A., 2012. Does knowledge management really matter? Linking knowledge management practices, competitiveness and economic performance. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 16(4), pp.617-636.
- Barker, R., 2013. Strategic integrated communication: An alternative perspective of integrated marketing communication?. *Communicatio*, 39(1), pp.102-121.
- Baines, A., 1997. Exploiting organizational knowledge in the learning organization. *Work Study*, 46(6), pp.202-206.

- Bhatt, G.D., 2001. Knowledge management in organizations: examining the interaction between technologies, techniques, and people. *Journal of knowledge management*, 5(1), pp.68-75.
- Brown, S., 2006. Recycling postmodern marketing. *The Marketing Review*, 6(3), pp.211-230.
- Burnes, B., 2004. *Managing change: A strategic approach to organisational dynamics*. Pearson Education.
- Chase, R., 1998. The people factor. *People Management*, 4(2), p.38.
- Crawford, C.B., 2005. Effects of transformational leadership and organizational position on knowledge management. *Journal of knowledge Management*, 9(6), pp.6-16.
- Denrell, J., 2005. Should we be impressed with high performance? *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14(3), pp.292-298.
- Edvinsson, L., Roos, J., Roos, G. and Dragonetti, N.C., 1997. Intellectual Capital: Navigating in the new business landscape.
- Goneos-Malka, A., Grobler, A. and Strasheim, A., 2013. Suggesting new communication tactics using digital media to optimise postmodern traits in marketing. *Communicatio*, 39(1), pp.122-143.
- Firat, A.F. and Dholakia, N., 2006. Theoretical and philosophical implications of postmodern debates: some challenges to modern marketing. *Marketing theory*, 6(2), pp.123-162.
- Grunig, J.E., 2006. Furnishing the edifice: Ongoing research on public relations as a strategic management function. *Journal of Public relations research*, 18(2), pp.151-176.
- Hassan, I., 1985. The culture of postmodernism. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2(3), pp.119-131.
- Head, C.W., 1997. *Beyond corporate transformation: A whole systems approach to creating and sustaining high performance*. Productivity Press.
- Hitt, W.D., 1996. The learning organization: some reflections on organizational renewal. *Employee Councelling Today*, 8(7), pp.16-25.
- Irvine, M., 2014. *Approaches to Pro-Mo*. [O]. <http://faculty.goergetown.edu/irvinem/theory/pomo.html> (Accessed 17 September 2015.)
- Jaatinen, M., 2002. New approaches to communication management for transformation and change in organisations. *Journal of communication Management*, 6(2), pp.148-165.
- Johnson, J.R., 2002. Leading the learning organization: portrait of four leaders. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 23(5), pp.241-249.
- Kanter, R.M., Stein, B. and Jick, T., 1992. The challenge of change.
- Kim, D.H., 1998. The link between individual and organizational learning. *The strategic management of intellectual capital*, pp.41-62.

- Lawrence, P.R., Lorsch, J.W. and Garrison, J.S., 1967. *Organization and environment: Managing differentiation and integration* (p. 1976). Boston, MA: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University.
- Mårtensson, M., 2000. A critical review of knowledge management as a management tool. *Journal of knowledge management*, 4(3), pp.204-216.
- Massingham, P., 2014. An evaluation of knowledge management tools: Part 1—managing knowledge resources. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 18(6), pp.1075-1100.
- Milne, P., 2007. Motivation, incentives and organisational culture. *Journal of knowledge management*, 11(6), pp.28-38.
- Murphy, M., 2009. Organizational Change and Firm Performance. 2002. *OCDE. Document de travail. Téléchargé le, 3*.
- Nonaka, I., 1991. The knowledge-creating company. *Harvard business review*, 69(6), pp.96-104.
- Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H., 1995. *The knowledge-creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*. Oxford university press.
- Oluikpe, P.I., 2015. Knowledge creation and utilization in project teams. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 19(2), pp.351-371.
- Overman, E.S., 1996. The new sciences of administration: Chaos and quantum theory. *Public Administration Review*, pp.487-491.
- Overton-de Klerk, N. and Verwey, S., 2013. Towards an emerging paradigm of strategic communication: Core driving forces. *Communicatio*, 39(3), pp.362-382.
- Politis, J.D., 2001. The relationship of various leadership styles to knowledge management. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 22(8), pp.354-364.
- Senior, B. and Fleming, J., 2006. *Organizational change*. Pearson Education.
- Singh, S.K., 2008. Role of leadership in knowledge management: a study. *Journal of knowledge management*, 12(4), pp.3-15.
- Rusly, F.H., Corner, J.L. and Sun, P., 2012. Positioning change readiness in knowledge management research. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 16(2), pp.329-355.
- Van Dyk, L., Greeff, W.J. and Barker, R., 2015. *Key concepts in organisational communication*. Juta: Cape Town.
- Woods, T., 1999. *Beginning postmodernism*. Manchester University Press.